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HUMORAL THEORY CIRCULATING IN RELIGIOUS LITERATURE IN ENGLAND, c.1300-1500

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Abstract

This thesis examines the appearance of humoral discourse in religious literature disseminated in England in the later medieval period. It employs focused case-studies drawn extensively from manuscripts and early printed sources to demonstrate the transmission of humoral theory in religious circles and how this changed over time, especially with the shift from Latin to the vernacular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. By demonstrating the transmission of humoral ideas outside the medical sphere in England in this period, this provides evidence for a 'medicalization' of society at this time. However, this study also demonstrates that there was increasingly a 'Christianization' of medicine at the same time, evident in the appropriation of humoral discourse in religious literature including sermons, pastoral guides, Rules for religious, works of religious instruction, and devotional and mystical texts.

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List of Abbreviations

BL	British Library
Bodl.	Bodleian Library
EEBO	Early English Books Online
CHBB	The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain
IMEP	The Index of Middle English Prose
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
JHM	Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
ORB	Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies

Introduction

Historiography: Medicalization Debate

The research conducted in this thesis will demonstrate that there was transmission of humoral ideas outside the medical sphere in England in the later medieval period. One of the implications of this wider availability of medical knowledge is that there was a corresponding 'medicalization' of society in the medieval period, a question which has previously been examined by historians of medicine.

The term medicalization has been in use by historians of medicine for some decades. It was originally used by sociologists in the 1960s and 70s to describe a process by which non-medical problems came to be defined and treated as medical problems.[1] The first sociological studies focused on the medicalization of deviance, but soon came to be seen to be applicable to a wide range of human problems that had entered medical jurisdiction.[2] A wider application of this idea was undertaken by writers including R. D. Laing, Ivan Illich and Michel Foucault, who produced a body of theory suggesting that the process of laying down the boundaries of what constituted 'the norm' for bodies and behaviour was a social construction that depended heavily on medical expertise and discourse.[3] Foucault in particular saw medicine in modern society as a means for solving arbitrary problems, which could simply be medicalized.[4] Foucault has been one of the most influential sociological writers on historians of medical history, who felt encouraged to move towards new approaches, as Oliver Faure has noted.[5] However, what Robert A. Nye deems the incompatibility of archival and field work undertaken by historians with the rigid ideological and conceptual

[1] Peter Conrad, 'Medicalization and Social Control', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 18:1 (1992), p.209.
[2] Peter Conrad, *The Medicalization of Society* (Baltimore, 2007), p.4.
[3] Robert A. Nye, 'The Evolution of the Concept of Medicalization in the Late Twentieth Century', *Journal of History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 39:2 (2003), p.116.
[4] See for example Michel Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic*, trans. A. M. Sheridan (New York, 1973).
[5] Olivier Faure, 'Michel Foucault, the Body, and the History of Medicine', *Society for the Social History of Medicine: Conference Reports* (1990), p.193.

framework expounded by Foucault, meant that by the end of the 1970s the term medicalization had become current among historians of health without any real consensus on the meaning of the term.[6]

There is disagreement among medical historians as to what the medicalization of society means for historical analysis. Some see it merely as a question of the distribution of physicians in time and space. One example of this approach is Danielle Jacquart's computer-assisted analysis of the medical community in France from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, where among the many practitioners listed she identifies 127 women.[7] Jacquart's work is based on Ernest Wickersheimer's resource, *Dictionnaire Biographique des Médecins en France au Moyen Age*, a biographical dictionary compiling all known practitioners of medicine in France in the medieval period.[8] This has been seen as a vital resource by historians of medieval medicine, such as Monica Green, for discussion of the medicalization of society at this time. However, this medical demography is very incomplete. So far, there is little to match Wickersheimer and Jacquart's resource in countries outside of France, especially elsewhere in northern Europe. C. H. Talbot and E. A. Hammond attempted to compile a list of practitioners in England for the medieval period in their *Medical Practitioners in Medieval England: A Biographical Register*, which has since been supplemented by Stuart Jenks and Faye Getz.[9] However, due to the paucity of source material, the challenge of identifying medical practitioners in England resulted in omissions and mistakes, as Faye Getz acknowledges. Furthermore, such work provides little information about the actual activity and social standing of physicians, or their interactions with patients.

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[6] Nye, 'The Evolution of the Concept of Medicalization', p.117.
[7] Danielle Jacquart, *Le Milieu Médical en France du XIIe au XVe Siècle: En Annexe 2e Supplément au 'Dictionnaire' d'Ernest Wickersheimer* (Genève, 1981).
[8] Ernest Wickersheimer, *Dictionnaire Biographique des Médecins en France au Moyen Age* (Genève, 1979).
[9] C. H. Talbot and E. A. Hammond, *The Medical Practitioners in Medieval England: A Biographical Register* (London, 1965). See also Stuart Jenks, 'Medizinische Fachkrafte in England zur Zeit Heinrichs VI (1428/29-1460/61)', *Sudhoffs Archiv,* 69:1 (1985), pp.214-27, and Faye Getz, 'Medical Practitioners in Medieval England', *The Society for the Social History of Medicine*, 3:2 (1990), pp.245-83.

In an attempt to correct this, other historians have focused on the question of medicalization from the point of view of the growing hold of medicine and doctors over society. Michael McVaugh and Joseph Ziegler have both studied the medicalization question in medieval southern Europe in terms of the increasing social status of physicians. Ziegler has charted the appearance of medical men as expert witnesses and/or testifiers at canonization procedures in southern Europe from the second half of the thirteenth century. He demonstrates that the community and the local ecclesiastical authorities expected the suppliers of medical services to contribute to the formal recognition of an apparent saint by ruling out the possibility that there was a natural explanation for a miraculous cure.[10] Ziegler uses this evidence to argue for the growing social prominence of physicians and their place in the community as evidence of the medicalization of society.[11] Similarly, Michael McVaugh's seminal work, *Medicine before the Plague*, examines the numbers of physicians practising in the Crown of Aragon in the decades before the Black Death. McVaugh argues that public enthusiasm for the learned medicine acquired from translations of Greco-Arabic medical learning led to the medicalization of certain social and legal institutions, thus preparing a social role for medical physicians.[12] Both Ziegler and McVaugh use a bottom-up approach to the question of medicalization by suggesting that it was patient- and society-led, rather than imposed by physicians.

This interpretation differs from the classic view of medicalization expounded by sociologists, who saw medicalization as a top-down process imposed by governments onto society, with the complicity and assistance of practitioners. Foucault coined the term 'medical gaze' to denote the dehumanizing medical separation of the patient's body from the patient's person or identity.[13] Following this train of thought, some

[10] Joseph Ziegler, 'Practitioners and Saints: Medical Men in Canonization Processes in the Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries', *The Society for the Social History of Medicine*, 12:2 (1999), p.191.
[11] Ibid., p.225.
[12] Michael McVaugh, *Medicine Before the Plague* (Cambridge, 1993), p.3.
[13] See Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic*.

historians see medicalization as denoting the conversion of individuals to new norms of behaviour regarding the body and health. This has been most prominent in discussion of hospitals as 'normalizing' institutions.[14] An example of this approach for medieval medical history is Joseph Shatzmiller's study, *Jews, Medicine and Medieval Society*.[15] However, rather than suggesting the top-down stimulus came from the state, Shatzmiller suggests it came from the physicians themselves in the creation of a medical profession that resulted in a 'medical marketplace'. Shatzmiller's primary focus is Jewish practitioners, noting the high proportion of Jewish medical practitioners in Mediterranean Europe (focusing on Provence, Spain and Italy). However, to answer why a minority group produced such a high proportion of medical practitioners, and why Jewish practitioners were so highly sought after by Christians as well as Jews, he examines the development of the medical profession as a whole in medieval southern Europe. Shatzmiller argues the growth of medical services, whereby practitioners began to see themselves as professionals in competition with each other and who were in favour of advancing their own interests, brought about changes to the collective mentality of people regarding medicine, health and the body. He argues that this was ultimately what caused the medicalization of the medieval west.

Historians of eighteenth-century Europe have been particularly keen to take up the sociological interpretation of medicalization as a top-down process, suggesting that from the second half of the eighteenth century the state and physicians formed an alliance to subjugate the people more effectively and with less overt force. However, more recent historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as Francisca Loetz and Olivier Faure, have challenged this view. Loetz has convincingly overturned this model, demonstrating that European states at this time lacked the resources, and more importantly the will, to exert an all-encompassing control over patients. Rather, she suggests that

[14] Faure, 'Michel Foucault, the Body, and the History of Medicine', pp.193-4.
[15] Joseph Shatzmiller, *Jews, Medicine, and Medieval Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1994).

although the ‘enlightened’ states did institute reforms, this led not to the suppression of other medicines and healers, but to a ‘bureaucratization’ evident in the collection of medically relevant data by the state.[16] Olivier Faure has argued for a bottom-up approach to medicalization in nineteenth-century France, identifying the behaviour and choices of ordinary citizens as the primary motors of change.[17] Such evidence accords with the findings of McVaugh and Ziegler in medieval Spain, who similarly favour a bottom-up stimulus for the process of medicalization. This suggests that across varying timespans of history and different localities within Europe, the medicalization of society was ‘demand-driven’.

The history of the medicalization of society is thus a complex field, and one which is still relatively underdeveloped in the history of medicine. There is a lot of discussion of whether there was a medicalization of society in the field of the history of medicine, but detailed analysis of this question for the medieval period remains patchy at best.

Several questions arise from the medicalization debate for the medieval period. Why does the medicalization of society in the Middle Ages seem to be a southern European phenomenon? Is this due to the greater availability of source material for southern Europe? Or is it that no-one has yet undertaken a detailed study of northern Europe to match Wickersheimer's for France, or the detailed study undertaken by McVaugh in Spain? The general impression, held by historians such as Monica Green, is that records which do exist for northern Europe tend to show similar concentrations of medical practitioners as southern Europe. But no-one has yet compiled such information for closer analysis the way Wickersheimer and Jacquart did for France, or McVaugh and others have done for Spain. In *Medicine Before the Plague*, McVaugh similarly states the need for systematic and fine-grained studies of medicine and society elsewhere in medieval Europe, with scattered data currently permitting only restricted comparisons

[16] Francisca Loetz, *Vom Kranken zum Patienten* (Stuttgart, 1993).
[17] Olivier Faure, *Les Français et Leur Médicine au XIXe Siècle* (Paris, 1993).

between areas.[18] Talbot and Hammond's *Biographical Register* for medieval England and Margaret Pelling's study of physicians and practitioners in early modern England provides some evidence for the situation in northern Europe, suggesting that source material does exist for this region.[19] Nevertheless, further investigation is still needed for the medieval period.

Furthermore, the medicalization question has so far only been examined for the medieval period in terms of numbers of medical practitioners and their influence and social standing in communities. Ziegler, McVaugh and Shatzmiller all approach the medicalization question from this perspective. Nonetheless, Shatzmiller defines medicalization as a growing interest in and appreciation of scientific medicine.[20] This leads to the question of whether this interest in learned medicine is evident in the transmission and dissemination of medical texts (and of medical knowledge more generally) in this period. Furthermore, given the arguments of McVaugh, Faure and others that medicalization was demand-driven, access to medical learning by non-practitioners provides a further area of research for examining the medicalization question. Given the established narrative for the late medieval period that the increase of lay literacy led to a demand for greater religious education and knowledge through textual dissemination, a similar process likely occurred to lead to a greater demand for new learned medical knowledge coming from Greco-Roman and Arabic medical texts in the Middle East. However, discussion of this is somewhat lacking in current historiography. One medical historian who has begun to look into tracking the transmission

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[18] McVaugh, *Medicine Before the Plague*, p.244.

[19] See Margaret Pelling and Frances White, *Physicians and Irregular Practitioners in London, 1550-1640* (Oxford, 2004) for a biographical database of medical practitioners in London in this period. Also see further work by Pelling, including *Medical Conflicts in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 2003); 'Medical Practice in Early Modern England: Trade or Profession?' in Wilfred Prest, ed., *The Professions in Early Modern England* (London, 1987), pp.90-128; 'Occupational Diversity: Barber-Surgeons and the Trades of Norwich, 1550-1640', *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 56:1 (1982), pp.484-511; Pelling and Charles Webster, 'Medical Practitioners', in Webster, ed., *Health, Medicine and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1979), pp.165-235.

[20] Shatzmiller, *Jews, Medicine and Medieval Society*, p.2.

of medical discourse is Thomas Gloning.[21] He has looked at the structure of humoral German terminology, which he analyses on the basis of an early German herbal text. His examination mirrors the medical system of humoral thinking with the linguistic system of lexicological organisation. But Gloning's work in this field is currently localised to Germany and dietetic texts in particular, which is of limited use for discussion of the medicalization question in England. Thus there is a much wider scope for examining the question of medicalization in this period than exists in current historiography, by studying the transmission of medical ideas and language across Europe.

The medicalization debate also leads to further questions about the wider permeation of medical discourse into everyday thought. Was humoral language widespread in late medieval society? Was the availability of medical texts, which were increasingly appearing in the vernacular during this period, responsible for the spread and availability of humoral knowledge? Many questions regarding the transmission of medical discourse remain unanswered by current historiography. How widely disseminated were medical texts? Who had access to these texts? Who were the presumed (and actual) readers for these works? Were ordinary people hungry for this knowledge for themselves, or were they content to receive it through the conduit of a learned physician? Such evidence regarding the transmission and readership of medical texts in northern Europe would add support to evidence of a demand from ordinary lay society for medical learning in southern Europe by McVaugh, Ziegler, and others. Furthermore, regarding the permeation of medical ideas and discourse into everyday thought and language, it is necessary to ask whether medical discourse was widely employed in texts outside of the medical sphere. If so, why was medical language used in this way? Who were such texts aimed at, and who had access to them? Did authors of non-medical works turn to humoral theory as an everyday example that would be easily understood? If so,

[21] Thomas Gloning, 'Humoraler Wortgebrauch in der Prosavorrede zeum deutschen "Macer" (13. Jh)', in Ralf Plate and Martin Schubert, eds., *Mittelhochdeutsch: Beiträge zur Überlieferung, Sprache und Literatur* (Berlin and Boston, 2011), pp.375-386.

this would suggest that humoral theory was almost universally recognised if an author could assume audience knowledge of it. Or are there other reasons for this? Does the crossover between religious and medical texts reflect the broader scientific learning of religious communities, who were the predominant producers and disseminators of texts at this time? Answering some of these questions could provide convincing evidence for the widespread use and understanding of humoral theory across society, which would demonstrate the universality of humoral theory and therefore add weight to the idea that there was a medicalization of society at this time.

A further key question is whether vernacular audiences for religious texts where humoral language appears were expected to understand the theory of the humors. Some historians, along with critics of Middle English literature, have suggested that the humors were a well-known diagnostic tool. Was humoral theory 'popular science'? If so, was this part of the process of 'vernacularization' in the later medieval period? A further interesting facet of this question is the appearance of humoral discourse in religious guides aimed at female audiences. The appearance of the humors is more evident in later vernacular religious texts. Although the tradition of using humoral discourse existed in Latin religious texts, this was mostly metaphorical rather than through direct practical discussion of the humors or complexions. The appearance of humoral discourse in vernacular religious texts in the later medieval period happened at the same time as many important medical texts were appearing in the vernacular, including learned scholastic medicine. Examining this process is important to understanding why humoral discourse appeared in some vernacular religious guides in this period.

Historiography: Medical Imagery in Religious Writing

The use of medical metaphors in religious writing in the medieval period has been well documented. One such example which occurs in many different religious texts throughout the Middle Ages is the image of Christ as *Medicus Animae*, or 'physician of the soul'. This imagery,

which was elaborated at length by St Augustine, became almost ubiquitous in medieval religious texts of instruction, devotional texts, mystical works, and sermons.[22] In the twelfth century, Aelred of Rievaulx's *Pastoral Prayers* included an address to God as a physician of souls, saying, "Lord, look at my souls' wounds [...] for you will see me as a good physician sees, intent upon my healing".[23] Nearly 200 years later, Walter Hilton advocated the importance of prayer as a means by which the sinful may "schewe his sooris to God as to a leche",[24] while in the first sermon of his *Festial* for Advent Sunday, John Mirk emphasised that Christ "was borne to bryng man out of sekenes ynto euerlastyng hele".[25] Carole Rawcliffe argues this concept drew heavily upon contemporary medical theory, while simultaneously bestowing implicit approval upon it.[26] Vivian Nutton traces the development of this metaphorical language to the long-held equation of sin with disease in Christianity, in which illness was considered to be a consequence of mankind's fallen nature.[27] R. I. Moore has drawn similar conclusions in his examination of twelfth-century metaphoric comparisons between diseases of the body and heresy as a disease of the soul.[28] However, what has attracted less attention is the use of humoral discourse by religious writers across different genres of religious texts throughout the medieval period. As far back as the fifth century, religious writers were using medical language of the four humors to express ideas about the relationship between body and soul, and the soul's relationship with God.

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[22] Rudolph Arbesmann, 'The Concept of *Christus Medicus* in St. Augustine', *Traditio*, 10:1 (1954), p.1.
[23] Aelred of Rievaulx, *Treatises and Pastoral Prayer*, trans. Mary Paul Macpherson, 2nd edition (Kalamazoo, 1982), p.110.
[24] Walter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, ed. Thomas H. Bestul (Kalamazoo, 2000), p.61.
[25] John Mirk, *Festial*, ed. Theodor Erbe (London, 1905), p.1.
[26] Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society in Later Medieval England* (Stroud, 1995), p.17.
[27] Vivian Nutton, 'Medieval Western Europe, 1000-1500', in Lawrence I. Conrad, Michael Neve, Vivian Nutton, Roy Porter, and Andrew Wear, eds., *The Western Medical Tradition* (Cambridge, 1995), p.76.
[28] R. I. Moore, 'Heresy as Disease', in W. Lourdaux and D. Verhelst, eds., *The Concept of Heresy in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1976), pp.1-11.

Joseph Ziegler and others have pointed out the richness of religious sources for examining medical culture, emphasising that "medieval culture was permeated by medical themes at all levels".[29] There already exists evidence for the cross-over between religious and medical spheres, as in the prolific use of physician imagery to describe Christ in religious texts of the medieval period. There is a danger that examining medical texts and discourse only in the context of the scene of medical practice gives only partial understanding of the impact of medicine on society. Thus, Ziegler emphasises how turning to sources which one would not normally use when writing about medieval medicine can widen the scope of study. Ziegler argues that the use of medical language and examples in religious texts did not merely serve as a rhetorical illustration, but became part of the logical proof of theology and natural philosophy in the medieval period.[30] As Peter Biller and Joseph Ziegler first pointed out over a decade ago in their book, *Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, ecclesiastical historians have tended to write in terms of two sorts of medicine in the medieval period: the superior medicine for the soul, provided by ecclesiastical agents; and the lesser medicine for the body, taken care of by medical practitioners.[31] Such a view remains unsatisfactory, ignoring the considerable overlap between the two evident in religious as well as medical texts of the period. Peregrine Horden has warned about dismissing the use of medical language and imagery in a religious context as merely metaphorical, highlighting the importance of the mission of the Christian Church to the whole man, which at least in the medieval period necessarily included body as well as soul.[32] This is certainly true of the attitudes towards the interconnection between body and soul evident in many texts of religious instruction. The strength of this causal link between body and soul meant that the state of one

[29] Joseph Ziegler, 'Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages', in Peter Biller and Ziegler, eds., *Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (York, 2001), p.8.
[30] Joseph Ziegler, 'Medicine and Immortality in Terrestrial Paradise', in Peter Biller and Ziegler, eds., *Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (York, 2001), p.241.
[31] Ziegler, 'Religion and Medicine', p.4.
[32] Peregrine Horden, 'Religion as Medicine: Music in Medieval Hospitals', in Peter Biller and Joseph Ziegler, eds., *Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (York, 2001), pp.145, 147 and 153.

impacted on the health of the other. Thus, far from being separate, the two 'medicines' were both necessary for the health of the soul. Sin was not only reflected in the physical appearance and health of the body, but conversely a diseased or imbalanced body could incline the soul towards sin. This was a highly dangerous state of affairs, which led many religious writers to advocate the use of medicine and regimen for the care of the body to lessen the risk of sin to the soul. This is reflected in many genres of religious writing, including sermons, Rules for female religious, and vices and virtues literature. However, it seems to be more prominent in the later medieval period, making a more forceful appearance in vernacular literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Research Outline

This thesis will examine the appearance of humoral discourse and ideas in religious literature disseminated in England in the later medieval period. Religious literature here will fall into four broad categories: penitentials and sermons; institutional religious sources (including Rules for religious); spiritual guides produced for the laity; and female mystical texts. It will not examine canonization texts or the sacraments, as these categories lie beyond the scope of this thesis.[33] This study will demonstrate the many examples of ways in which humoral discourse appeared in religious literature in this period, and the ways in which humoral theory was transmitted in religious circles. It will then go on to evaluate why humoral theory was prevalent in religious texts of the later medieval period in England, especially in the vernacular. This will include discussion of whether the appearance of humoral theory in religious literature can be seen as part of a process of medicalization of society in this period, although inevitably will not be able to address all of the questions of interest highlighted in the above discussion of medicalization due to limits of space and scope.

[33] For recent relevant scholarship on this topic, see Louise Elizabeth Wilson, 'Conceptions of the Miraculous: Natural Philosophy and Medical Knowledge in the Thirteenth-Century *Miracula* of St Edmund of Abingdon', in Matthew M. Mesley and Louise E. Wilson, eds., *Contextualizing Miracles in the Christian West, 1100 - 1500* (Oxford, 2014), pp.99-125.

This is a qualitative rather than a quantitative study, which will examine a broad range of texts in order to open up the subject rather than provide an exhaustive overview of examples of humoral discourse in medieval religious texts. The range of religious genres examined in this study demonstrates the interrelation of the different source material selected. Thus, fourteenth- and fifteenth-century vernacular works aimed at a broader lay audience expounded many aspects of earlier clerical pastoralia, such as the many Middle English reworkings of *Somme le Roi* which drew heavily on the preaching and confessional traditions. Furthermore, spiritual guidance texts produced for enclosed female audiences such as the thirteenth-century *Ancrene Wisse*, itself strongly influenced by the sermon tradition and penitential handbook genre, influenced later vernacular spiritual guides aimed at the laity and had an impact on the genre of female mystical writing. These different methods of religious exposition, ranging from sermons, to spiritual guides, to accounts of mystical experience, were all part of the wider transmission of religious ideas in the medieval period. It is therefore possible to trace the religious application of humoral ideas and discourse across different religious genres over time, over place, and across languages with the movement from Latin to the vernacular in all forms of religious writing by the late medieval period.

Given the time frame and locality of this research, the majority of texts examined will be in Middle English. This widens the sphere of research to include female and lay audiences as well as professional and clerical audiences, which is arguably of greater interest to the broader aspect of the medicalization debate favoured here. Furthermore, it fits in with the growth of the vernacular as the preferred language for medical texts in the later medieval period, allowing for comparison between the growing numbers of medical and religious texts in Middle English.

The primary analysis in this study is a comparative examination of the appearance of humoral discourse in religious texts. Comparison is made both with contemporary medical texts, and between different religious sources over time. Although the focus is primarily on humoral

language and the context in which it appears, also of interest to this study is the wider dissemination of medical ideas implicit in this engagement with humoral discourse. Thus, texts in which humoral discourse does not appear directly but in which humoral ideas are present fall under this enquiry, such as *Peniteas Cito* discussed in Chapter Two, and William Flete's *Remedies Against Temptations* examined in Chapter Four.

This research draws extensively on primary manuscript and printed sources. However, for popular source texts for which there are a large number of remaining manuscripts this study uses modern editions where available. In some instances, sources have been selected due to their popularity throughout the period. This is especially the case for the medical sources, the majority of which were selected on the basis of their widespread textual dissemination. Again, emphasis has been on selecting vernacular as well as Latin versions of texts, as these would have been accessible to a wider group of non-specialist readers illiterate in Latin. This also allows for direct linguistic comparisons with vernacular religious sources, as in Chapter Four. A further criterion for the medical texts examined here was to use a selection that would demonstrate the different types of medical works available. Thus, sources range from texts used in medical schools, to vernacular translations of professional texts, to vernacular practical verses. However, sources enjoying widespread dissemination have been juxtaposed with other sources for which there remains little evidence of widespread textual dissemination, but which have been chosen for their particular interest and relevance to this study. In individual instances where there is no direct textual evidence of dissemination in England, for example the *Life and Revelations* of Agnes Blannbekin discussed in Chapter Five, argument is made for the relevance of the text to the situation in England to justify selection for this study.

Research Contribution

In undertaking research that attempts to answer some questions regarding the availability and application of medical knowledge and

discourse outside the medical sphere, this study contributes to filling in gaps in historiography regarding the medicalization of society in the medieval period. By looking into the transmission of medical texts and attempting to track the use of medical discourse in non-medical texts, this research will go some way towards demonstrating the universality of humoral theory, and the desire for medical learning displayed by ordinary members of society. The focus of this study will therefore be on the transmission of medical ideas outside the sphere of medical practice, with an emphasis on the interpretation and application of humoral ideas by non-medical practitioners in a religious context for a non-professional audience. Furthermore, by focusing on England this research helps to rectify the lack of in investigation into northern Europe in terms of the medicalization question in the medieval period.

By highlighting that the appropriation of humoral discourse in religious contexts often went beyond the metaphorical to fulfil a joint physical and spiritual therapeutic role, this study adds to a relatively new but growing body of work by scholars focused on the 'medicine of words' provided by religious texts for the healing of the soul through the humoral workings of the body.[34] However, the focus of this study is the appropriation of medical terminology in religious texts, rather than the medieval belief in the power of religious words and texts to have a medical benefit in their own right.

The focus of this research is therefore as much on the 'Christianization' of medicine through the appropriation of humoral discourse in Christian theological, devotional and spiritual guidance texts to suit religious purposes, as on the medicalization of the religious sphere. This emphasises that the two phenomena should not be considered as separate or distinct from one another, but interrelated. As this study

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[34] See, for example, Daniel McCann, 'Medicine of Words: Purgative Reading in Richard Rolle's *Meditations on the Passion A*', *The Medieval Journal*, 5:2 (2016); Stephanie Lynn Volf, 'A "Medicyne of Wordes": Women, Prayer and Healing in Fourteenth-and-Fifteenth-Century England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Arizona State University, December 2008); Louise M. Bishop, *Words, Stones, Herbs: The Healing Word in Medieval and Early Modern England* (Syracuse, 2007). Many of the essays in Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa, ed., *Medicine, Religion and Gender in Medieval Culture* (Woodbridge, 2015), also examine this topic.

demonstrates, scholars of theology and medicine had shared concerns and interests due to the place humoral theory held in the medieval worldview as an important link between the heavens and earth. This study aims to bring together historiography on the history of medicine and the history of religion. Historians of medicine have tended to overlook the use of medical language in religious texts of the period, preferring to concentrate on questions of medical practice and learning within the medical sphere. Similarly, religious historians have traditionally either ignored the medical elements present in religious texts, or noted them in passing without further analysis. However, the appropriation of medical language for religious discussion of the connection between body and soul demonstrates the extent to which medical and religious spheres overlapped during the medieval period. The medieval world view did not distinguish between matters of the body and matters of the soul; a state demonstrated in this thesis through tracing the appearance of humoral discourse in different religious genres throughout the late medieval period.

Chapter One: Medical Background

What is Humoral Theory?

Humoral theory was a medical theory that was widely adopted by Greek, Roman and Islamic physicians from the time of the Ancient Greeks, and continued to influence European physicians until the modern period. It outlined the makeup and workings of the human body, in which an excess or deficiency of any of the four humors in a person was thought to directly influence their temperament and health. All diseases were thought to be caused by an imbalance of the four humors. The four humors of black bile, yellow bile, phlegm, and blood each had a corresponding temperament, and were linked to different organs in the body, different seasons of the year, and even different astrological conditions. Depending on which humor was more prevalent in the body, this affected an individual's humoral complexion. This had consequences not just for which illnesses an individual was more susceptible to, but also influenced their personality and appearance (known as physiognomy). This is summarised in Fig.1.

A key concept of the humoral model was the importance of natural heat for the digestion of food. This heat was responsible for coction of the humors, which eliminated any harmful excess of humors to keep balance in the body and avoid illness:

> everything eaten is first of all 'drunk down' into the stomach, where it undergoes a process of transformation, then received by the veins which lead from the liver to the stomach, and that it then produces the bodily humors, by which all other parts, including brain, heart, and liver, are nourished. But in the process of nutrition these parts became hotter than normal, or colder, or wetter, in accordance with the nature of the humors that predominate.[1]

Food was therefore 'cooked' in the stomach, and was distributed in increasingly refined form throughout the body. Faulty coction (or

[1] Galen, *Selected Works*, ed. Peter N. Singer (Oxford, 1997), p.169.

‘cooking’), or the failure of the body to rid itself of the superfluities of this cooking, was the cause of most diseases.[2]

Fig.1: Table of humoral properties

Humour	Season	Element	Organ	Qualities	Complexion	Personality traits
Blood	Spring	Air	Liver	Warm & moist	Sanguine	Courageous, carefree, amorous
Yellow bile	Summer	Fire	Spleen	Warm & dry	Choleric	Easily angered, restless, ambitious
Black bile	Autumn	Earth	Gall bladder	Cold & dry	Melancholic	Despondent, serious, irritable
Phlegm	Winter	Water	Brain/ lungs	Cold & moist	Phlegmatic	Calm, thoughtful, unemotional

Only a balanced humoral complexion had the appropriate amount of natural heat to achieve this. Women, who were considered to be naturally colder in complexion, were not able to rid themselves of superfluities through coction. These poisonous excess humors had to be purged via menstruation instead. Gynaecological texts such as *The Trotula*, which purportedly had its origins in the twelfth-century medical school at Salerno, emphasised the inferior humoral complexion of women:

[2] Faye Getz, ‘Introduction’, *Healing and Society in Medieval England: A Middle English Translation of the Pharmaceutical Writings of Gilbertus Anglicus* (Madison, 1991), p.xxxii.

> the stronger qualities, that is the heat and the dryness, should rule the man, who is the stronger and more worthy person, while the weaker ones, that is to say the coldness and humidity, should rule the weaker, that is the woman.[3]

One's humoral complexion could also change over the course of a lifetime: the young were considered to be hotter and drier in their complexions, while the old became cooler and moister as they 'lost' their natural heat with age. It was therefore essential to take an individual's humoral complexion into account when diagnosing and treating illness, to be sure of its effectiveness.

Medical theory was based on restoring the balance of the four humors. One popular genre of texts aiming to restore and maintain humoral balance for the purposes of good health was regimen. This focused on regulating the six non-naturals. These were diet, air, exercise, sleep, excretion and retention, and the passions (or emotions). Regimen advocated medical treatments such as purging excess humors, and prescribing food and activities of a contrary humoral complexion to the ailment (known as 'contraries'). All diseases were hot, cold, moist, or dry. A hot headache, for example, was accompanied by a red forehead, a fast pulse, red urine, and an aversion to hot things.[4] Hot diseases were therefore treated by cold remedies, and by the avoidance of anything that could induce heat, such as thinking, staying awake, bathing, and sexual excitement. Most diseases were treated by the prescription of foods or herbs of a contrary complexion. For example, lettuce, as a cold food, could be prescribed to cancel out an excess of heat, while mustard seed, as a hot food, would correct an imbalance of cold humors. Regimen also involved the purgation of an excess of humors, through blood-letting, vomiting, laxatives, and diuretics.

At the beginning of the medieval period, the medical tradition in England was based on vernacular Anglo-Saxon medical texts, typified by herbals

[3] Anon., *The Trotula*, trans. Monica Green (Philadelphia, 2002), p.65.
[4] Getz, 'Introduction', *Healing and Society in Medieval England*, p.xx.

and 'leechbooks' of medical remedies and practice.[5] England had the earliest medical vernacular in Europe, and the Anglo-Saxon medical tradition continued to be influential in England throughout the medieval period. By contrast, medical texts in which humoral theory was transmitted were exclusively in Latin. These scholastic texts were translated from Greek and Arabic into Latin in monastic centres in the Mediterranean, and came to form the basis for medical teaching in the newly influential medical faculties at universities on the European continent. Scholastic medical texts also circulated in England during this period, despite the smaller size and status of medical faculties at Oxford and Cambridge. However, by the end of the medieval period, many medical texts once again began to appear in the vernacular. Several influential scholastic Latin texts came to be transmitted in Middle English, alongside more popular regimens and physiognomy texts. This chapter will examine the medical textual tradition in both Latin and Middle English, focusing on the dissemination of such texts to provide evidence for the changing audiences for humoral medical texts in England during this period.

Tradition and Dissemination of Latin Medical Texts: Universities

The development of universities from the late twelfth century onwards shaped the study and transmission of medical knowledge in medieval Europe. Medicine became one of a small number of subjects taught in a university setting during this period, with faculties of medicine established in nearly all the universities before 1500.[6] Nancy G. Siraisi summarises the importance of the medical curricula in the universities, which:

> systematized the transmission and reinforced the authority of a body of medical books, concepts and techniques that provided the basis for medical practices and beliefs broadly disseminated throughout society.[7]

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[5] For discussion of Anglo-Saxon medicine, see Tony Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1994).
[6] Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine* (Chicago and London, 1990), p.48.
[7] Ibid.

The first medical school in the west was at Salerno, southern Italy.[8] It was closely associated with the Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino, where Constantine the African (an Islamic convert) had first translated basic medical texts from Greek and Arabic into Latin for the use of the scholars there. Translations of these Greco-Arabic medical works mainly came from Sicily and Spain, although North Africa and Syria were also important centres for translation and dissemination of these works. Arabic renderings of earlier Greek texts had initially been important as intermediaries from which scholars could base their Latin translation, but access to direct translations from the Greek increasingly came to be important.[9]

The medical doctorate offered at the universities throughout the medieval period was based on the medical curriculum developed at Salerno in the late eleventh century, studying the newly translated medical texts of Greek and Arabic origin.[10] A group of texts known as the *Ars Medicina* provided the basic conceptual framework for medical students pursuing their studies in the early universities. The *Ars* was originally a collection of five or six short medical texts put together in the environment of early twelfth-century Salernitan medical teaching to provide a systematic outline of Galenic medical theory, but by the end of the century had been adopted as the basic canon of texts for medical education throughout Europe.[11] During the thirteenth century this curriculum of key texts came to be studied in the new university faculties of medicine in Europe, continuing to be widely read and commented on in the universities throughout the medieval period. [12] The compilation underwent substantial modifications with additional texts added to the collection over time as they became available in translation, such as works by Avicenna and Averroes by the end of the thirteenth century. The combination of the *Ars* with a sub-group of texts

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[8] Faye Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1998), p.31.
[9] Gordon Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (New York, London, and Sydney, 1968), p.128.
[10] Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages*, p.69.
[11] Cornelius O'Boyle, *The Art of Medicine* (Leiden, Boston and Köln, 1998), p.82.
[12]Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities*, p.180.

became more formalised at this time, reflecting the fuller curriculum of medical studies in the universities.[13] Practical Salernitan works fell out of favour by the end of the thirteenth century, to be replaced by didactic works that reflected the growing scholastic use of the *Ars* in the classroom for commentary and interpretation, rather than practical application.[14]

This adaptation of the *Ars Medicina* reflected the success of a competing set of medical texts upon which university medical study could be based, a compilation known as the *Articella*. In the 1250s a fundamental change took place in medical teaching, led by the French universities at Montpellier and Paris, in which there was a complete restructuring of the traditional curriculum.[15] The existing canon of medical texts was altered, with the introduction of a new version based on fourteenth-century Italian commentaries on the *Ars*. This collection was composed of existing translations of Greco-Arabic texts that had been altered and added to specifically to function as the basis for the new university curriculum. This reflected the new techniques of exposition developing in the classroom, originating in France in the second half of the thirteenth century but which came to be adopted in the influential medical faculties in Italy by the end of the century.[16] Gordon Leff has demonstrated that at the northern European universities the study of medicine remained largely theoretical, employing commentaries based on the Arabic tradition.[17] O'Boyle argues that this created a concept of the 'canonicity' of medical texts, with the emphasis not on practical medical application of the theory but rather on authoritative interpretation.[18] Although the *Ars Medicina* remained popular until the fifteenth century, from c.1300 it was

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[13] O'Boyle, *Art of Medicine*, p.107.
[14] Ibid., p.115.
[15] Ibid., p.128.
[16] Ibid., p.129. The *Articella* was circulating in Montpellier by at least 1260, and in Paris probably by the 1260s but at least by 1282.
[17] Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities*, p.180.
[18] O'Boyle, *Art of Medicine*, p.8.

increasingly replaced by the *Articella*, which became the most popular medical textbook by the end of the century.[19]

There was thus an institutionalisation of medical learning in the universities through the translation of Arabic and Greek texts into Latin. But the situation in England was slightly different, as before the fourteenth century the universities of Oxford and Cambridge did not provide medical training. Those from England wishing to study medicine therefore had to travel to a university with a medical faculty abroad.[20] Oxford and Cambridge began to award medical degrees in the fourteenth century, although the size of their respective medical faculties remained small. Faye Getz has demonstrated that medicine was never a popular subject at the northern European universities during the medieval period, remaining consistently smaller than theology and law in terms of numbers of students.[21] However, many more students than were officially enrolled on medical courses studied medicine without proceeding onto a degree.[22] Medicine held a place beside theology, law and the arts as part of Godly learning due to scriptural injunctions about healing as a form of charity.[23] Furthermore, even those who did not undertake any medical study specifically would have been introduced to humoral concepts through the inclusion of Aristotle's natural sciences into the liberal arts programme from the mid-thirteenth century onwards.[24] This is reflected in the new content of the curriculum at the universities of Paris and Oxford, which provided a common metaphysical foundation for a comprehensive view of the world previously lacking in university teaching.[25] For example, a new scientific and metaphysical element was introduced into philosophy, especially at Oxford where Robert Grosseteste forged ahead with the development of science and metaphysics in the curriculum.[26] Faye Getz

[19] Ibid., p.133.
[20] Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages*, p.17.
[21] Ibid., p.66.
[22] Ibid., p.18.
[23] Ibid., p.67. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.
[24] Leff, *Paris and Oxford Universities*, p.127.
[25] Ibid., p.134.
[26] Ibid., p.135.

argues there was an especial closeness between the arts and medical faculties at Oxford and Cambridge, especially regarding the teaching of astrology.[27]

At the same time as these developments were taking place, between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries study of the liberal arts had become necessary before a student could enter the faculties of theology, law, or medicine.[28] This included members of the clergy, who would therefore come into contact with the new Greco-Arabic learning (which included a humoral understanding of the world) as part of the natural sciences, metaphysics and philosophy of the liberal arts course. Alan Coates's study of Reading Abbey demonstrates the numbers of monks this modestly sized abbey sent to study at university in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[29] In 1445 Reading Abbey had 35 monks, but still sent 9 recorded brothers to Oxford before the dissolution. Similarly, wardens' accounts for Canterbury College record the receipt of rent for rooms in college for the use of the monks of Reading throughout the fifteenth century.[30] It is therefore likely that members of the clergy who attended university, especially in England, would have been introduced to humoral theory and scholastic medical ideas.

As this section has demonstrated, university curricula provided for the transmission of authoritative medical texts across Europe. The medical texts and ideas studied and transmitted across Europe at this time formed the basis of medical knowledge and practice amongst the university educated, and not just those trained in medicine. By the fourteenth century, there was a wider diffusion of medical knowledge from the university world into scholasticism, theology, and natural philosophy. Although universities were increasingly accessible to lay men from wealthy families from the fifteenth century onwards,[31] higher

[27] Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages*, p.67.
[28] Ralph McInery, 'Beyond the Liberal Arts', in David L. Wagner, ed., *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* (Bloomington, 1983), p.250.
[29] Alan Coates, *English Medieval Books: the Reading Abbey Collections from Foundation to Dispersal* (Cambridge, 1999), p.91.
[30] Ibid., p.92.
[31] Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages*, p.18.

education was still dominated by members of the clergy. Monasteries were therefore also important centres for the accumulation and dissemination of medical knowledge in this period.

Tradition and Dissemination of Latin Medical Texts: Monasteries

In England, the medical faculties at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge only began awarding medical degrees in the late fourteenth century. The medical faculties at these universities remained much smaller in size and reputation than the longer established institutions on the continent, such as at Paris, Montpellier, and Bologna. The influence of Oxford and Cambridge on the availability and knowledge of Latin medical texts in England in the medieval period was therefore likely to be much smaller than elsewhere in Europe. Rather, the monasteries in England remained an important and influential means of the acquisition and transmission of medical texts in this period.

Learned medical practitioners in England were almost universally clerics until the later fifteenth century.[32] Clerical status allowed members of the Church to move freely to the continent for their education, under the patronage of the Church. The ability to study abroad was especially important in the study of medicine because of the small size of the medical faculties at Oxford and Cambridge, with the dominance of non-English medical faculties ensuring that the English medical faculties remained insignificant throughout this period. Furthermore, the Church in Britain had important commercial links to the European continent throughout the medieval period, allowing for the dissemination of ideas and learning. Monica Green suggests that, outside southern Italy,

> few other places in Western Europe had, at least in the twelfth century, so large a presence of Latin medical literature in their monastic houses, cathedrals and (perhaps) courts as England.[33]

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[32] Ibid., p.33.

[33] Monica Green, 'Salerno on the Thames: the Genesis of Anglo-Norman Medical Literature', in Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, ed., *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England c.1100 - c.1500* (York, 2013), p.221. This article also

Contacts between English clerical scholars with those in Spain and Sicily were especially important for the transmission of medical texts, where Arabic, Jewish, Greek and western Christian learning flourished under relative toleration.[34] Scientific learning was transformed by the west's discovery of Islamic scholarship, in which medicine was incorporated with science rather than separated from it. The international umbrella of the Church therefore allowed for the transmission and dissemination of texts that shaped how medicine was understood in the medieval period.

The translation of classical and Islamic medical traditions coming from northern Africa and the Middle East, especially after the capture of Jerusalem in 1099 by the Crusaders, came through the monasteries as well as through the prominent centre of medical learning and teaching at Salerno.[35] This led to a huge expansion in the numbers of Latin works of medicine, covering humoral theory, physiognomy, and natural theology. As discussed in the previous section, the importance of the sciences in theology meant that even a lesser, applied science like medicine was considered an important stepping stone in the learning process on the way to the ultimate science of theology, which was reflected in the structure of university curricula.[36] Many of the learned religious men who were writing in the medieval period, as university graduates, would therefore likely have studied humoral theory at some point in their lives.

Evidence for the ownership of medical texts in monasteries demonstrates that medical knowledge and humoral theory would have at the very least been known of by many male religious.[37] Monastic library catalogues demonstrate the number and variety of medical texts

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discusses Anglo-Norman vernacular medicine, demonstrating the breadth of available medical materials for which England was distinctive in the medieval period.

[34] Ibid., p.39.

[35] Nutton, 'Medieval Western Europe', p.140.

[36] G. R. Evans, 'Introduction', *The Medieval Theologians* (Oxford, 2001), p.xv.

[37] Vincent Gillespie lists the extensive number of medical manuscripts owned by Syon Abbey alone, many of which would have been based on translations from the classical and Arabic medical traditions. See Vincent Gillespie, *Syon Abbey* (London, 2001), pp.757-9.

owned by religious institutions in this period. Some of the most common medical texts to be found in monastic libraries include works by Constantine the African, Avicenna, Rhazes, John of Gadesden, and Gilbertus Anglicus, as well as various practical medical compendia and herbals. Of the some 6,000 volumes listed by Ker that survive from medieval institutional libraries, 8 were copies of Constantine the African; 11 copies of Avicenna; 3 copies of Gilbertus Anglicus; and 87 texts can be positively identified as containing medical material.[38] Some monastic houses owned more medical works than most. One example is the Benedictine Cathedral Priory of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Worcester.[39] The library was well stocked during the medieval period containing over 120 works, 8 of which were medical texts. Some were by named authors, including Gilbertus Anglicus, Constantine the African, and Avicenna. There were also several medical compilations, as well as a Salernitan work by Gariopontus, *Liber Passionarius et Simplicis Medicine*. Similarly, the Benedictine Cathedral Priory of St Cuthbert in Durham is recorded as owning 7 medical texts in a fairly large library collection of over 50 texts. These include works by Constantine the African, Bernardus de Gordonio and Avicenna, alongside more general medical tracts.[40] This library also held two encyclopaedic works containing learned medical knowledge, Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* and Bartholomeus Anglicus's *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (discussed in more detail below). A particularly large number of medical manuscripts are recorded in the library catalogue of the Benedictine Abbey of St Augustine in Canterbury. B. C. Barker-Benfield has identified at least 103 medical texts in the extensive library catalogue lists that remain.[41] As well as the usual medical authors alongside medical compendia, there is also a treatise on surgery.[42] Some monastic houses had a high proportion of medical works given the size of their libraries. One foundation, the Premonstratensian Abbey of John the Evangelist in

[38] See N. R. Ker, ed., *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, 2nd edition (London, 1964).
[39] Ibid., pp. 205-15.
[40] Ibid., pp.60-76.
[41] B. C. Barker-Benfield, ed., *St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury,* Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues 13 (London, 2008), items 1175-1278.
[42] Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, pp.40-7.

Soulseat, Wigtownshire, is recorded as only having one book in the medieval period, the medical works of Avicenna.[43] This is also the case for the Benedictine Priory of St Peter at Mersea in Essex, where the only recorded book owned was a *Medica*.[44]

Some of the most popular encyclopaedias that were owned by many monastic institutions contained sections on the theory of medicine. One example is the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville, which appears in the library catalogues of almost every monastic house and abbey listed in Ker. This contained a short book on medicine, which summarised the basics of humoral theory:

> Morbi omnes ex quattuor nascuntur humoribus, id est ex sanguine et felle, melancholia et phlegmate. [Ex ipsis enim reguntur sani, ex ipsis laeduntur infirmi. Dum enim amplius extra cursum naturae creverint, aegritudines faciunt.] Sicut autem quattuor sunt elementa, sic et quattuor humores, et unusquisque humor suum elementum imitatur: sanguis aerem, cholera ignem, melancholia terram, phlegma aquam. Et sunt quattuor humores, sicut quattuor elementa, quae conservant corpora nostra.[45]
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> [All diseases come from the four humors, that is, from blood, bile, black bile, and phlegm. (By these, healthy people are governed, and feeble people are stricken, for when they increase beyond their natural course they cause sickness.) Just as there are four elements, so there are four humors, and each humor resembles its element: blood resembles air, bile fire, black bile earth, and phlegm water. And as there are four elements, so there are four humors that maintain our bodies.][46]

In his discussion of the etymology of the names of each of the humors, Isidore also alludes to the ideas behind humoral complexion and physiognomy:

> Sanguis ex Graeca etymologia vocabulum sumpsit, quod vegetetur et sustentetur et vivat. Choleram Graeci

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[43] Ibid., p.180.
[44] Ibid., p.130.
[45] Isidorus Hispalensis, 'Medicina', in *Etymologiae* <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/isidore.html> [last accessed 25.11.2013].
[46] English translation from Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, eds. Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof (Cambridge, 2006), p.109.

vocaverunt, quod.unius diei spatio terminetur; unde et cholera, id est fellicula, nominata est, hoc est, fellis effusio [….]. Melancholia dicta ec quod sit ex nigri sanguinis faece admixta abundantia fellis […]. Sanguis Latine vocatus quod suavis sit, unde et homines, quibus dominatur sanguis, dulces et blandi sunt. Phlegma autem dixerunt quod sit frigida […]. Ex his quattuor humoribus reguntur sani, ex ipsis laeduntur infirmi. Dum enim amplius extra cursum naturae creverint, aegritudines faciunt. Ex sanguine autem et felle acutae passiones nascuntur [...]. Ex phlegmate vero et melancholia veteres causae procedunt.[47]

[Blood took its name from a Greek origin, because it is made vigorous, is nourished, and lives. The Greeks gave choler its name because it ends in the space of a day; hence it is called cholera, that is 'little bile', being an effusion of bile [...]. Black bile (melancholia) is so called because it is a large amount of bile mixed with the dregs of black blood [...]. Blood (sanguis) is so called in Latin because it is sweet (suavis); hence people who are dominated by blood are sweet-tempered and pleasant. They gave phlegm its name because it is cold [...]. Healthy people are governed by these four humors, and feeble people are afflicted as a result of them, for when they increase beyond their natural course they cause sickness. Acute sufferings [...] arise from blood and bile, whereas from phlegm and blood come long-standing conditions][48]

Isidore's work was compiled between the 610s and the 620s, and formed an encyclopaedia of much of the essential learning of ancient Greco-Roman and early Christian worlds. It was widely disseminated, evident in the huge number of copies that appeared across Europe. The text's careful organisation ensured access by topic to a reader requiring it for reference, while Isidore's clear and simple language added to the educational value of the work.

The encyclopaedic tradition was an important means by which medical information was passed on in this period, with works from late antiquity surviving in monasteries.[49] Many included simple medical remedies by

[47] Isidorus, 'Medicina', *Etymologiae.*
[48] Isidore, *Etymologies*, eds. Barney et. al., pp.109-10.
[49] Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages*, p.45.

writers such as Pliny, Cato the Elder, and Cassiodorus.[50] However, the full scale of the encyclopaedic tradition was not successfully transplanted to England until after the Norman Conquest, which saw the production of many more home-grown English encyclopaedias such as *De Proprietatibus Rerum* of Bartholomeus Anglicus.[51] Although it did not achieve anywhere near the same level of popularity as the *Etymologies*, a significant number of monastic institutions in England held a copy in their libraries. Bartholomeus Anglicus was a friar who studied at Oxford and Paris, compiling his encyclopaedia around 1245 as an aid to study the Bible. Although there is no evidence that Bartholomeus studied medicine himself, the work contains a large medical section based primarily on sources from the medical curricula at Oxford and Paris, such as the translations of Constantine the African of Haly Abbas and the *Viaticum*.[52]

De Proprietatibus Rerum contains a more extensive inclusion of humoral theory than Isidore's *Etymologies*. The version discussed here is the Middle English text, translated by John Trevisa in 1399 and extant in 8 manuscripts. This translation was later printed by Wynkyn de Worde around 1495. Unlike Isidore, Bartholomeus includes a chapter specifically on medicine entitled 'tractat de infirmitatibus et venenis' ('treatise concerning infirmities and drugs'):

> Good disposicioun of body is icleped hele, bi þe whiche mannes body in complexioun and composicioun is in suche state þat he may frelich and parfiteliche do his werkes and dedis. And ȝif kynde slidiþ out of þis temperantes it falleþ into iuel and sikenes. For of distemperaunce and v[n]euenes of humours yuel iliche and of one manere parties, as feueres and dropesie and oþir such.[53]

In this chapter Bartholomeus Anglicus discusses ailments and infirmities from the head downwards, in the standard order of medical treatises of the time. Rather than offering much practical medical

[50] Ibid., p.46.
[51] Ibid., p.48.
[52] Ibid., p.49.
[53] Bartholomeus Anglicus, *On the Properties of Things*, trans. John Trevisa, ed. M. C. Seymour and Gabriel M. Liegey (Oxford, 1975), p.342.

advice, the emphasis is on medical theory and knowledge of the humoral properties of drugs for medical treatment. He attributes his knowledge on the cause of diseases to medical authorities such as Constantine the African and Galen:

> Constantinus sayiþ þat hedeache hatte *cephalea* and comeþ in tweye maner: oþir of þinges þat beþ wiþoute, as of smytinge oþir of hote aier þat departiþ and dissouleþ oþir colde aier þat constreyneþ; in þe secounde maner, hedache comeþ of som cause þat is withinne, and þat oþir of som priue cause þat comeþ not but of þe heed, oþir of som verrey cause, as of þe stomak. And if þe ache comeþ of a priuey cause, oþir of yuel vise oneliche of qualite, namelich of coldenes oþir of hete, oþir of euel wise of humours (of blood oþir of flewme of coler oþir melencolia) and if þis ache comeþ and gooþ, it is token and signe þat it comeþ of þe stomak. Þerfore Galien seiþ if ache is in þe heed and comeþ of no cause þat is withoute, þanne scharpe humours greueþ þe stomak.[54]

Bartholomeus also outlines the humoral model of medical remedy:

> Þanne if superfluite is þe cause, þe cure is þe voydinge of superfluite […]. Ȝif þe rennynge is cold and moist, beste remedie is þe contrarye, hote and drye wiþholdinge and wastinge þe humour, as *ladanum*, *thus*, *storax*, *castorium*. Ȝif þe rennynge is hote, be it refreyned with cooled bamynge, as wiþ seþinge of roses in reyne water and wiþ þe same roses iholde to þe noseþrilles.[55]

This encyclopaedia is therefore an important repository of medical knowledge and humoral theory, with the popularity of the work especially in monastic contexts making it likely that such knowledge would have been freely available to many members of religious communities. However, humoral theory is not only present in the medical chapter of this work. Rather, it informs nearly every aspect of the knowledge enclosed in the encyclopaedia due to its emphasis on science, particularly natural science. The humors crop up in chapters on the elements, on the seasons, on the planets, and on the properties of man, animals, and plants. This demonstrates the importance of humoral

[54] Ibid., p.343.
[55] Ibid., p.347.

theory in the medieval scientific worldview, and that such knowledge would have been widely available to those in the religious community. Furthermore, the popularity of the Middle English translation of the work, especially in the fifteenth century when a print edition was created, suggests an expanded audience for this knowledge in the later medieval period.

As well as medical theory being transmitted through the encyclopaedic tradition, it is clear from looking at monastic library catalogues that a significant number of monastic institutions owned copies of scholastic medical texts outright. It is therefore evident that availability of knowledge of the humors was widespread in monastic circles. There is evidence that books owned by monastic institutions were indeed read by the brethren. Alan Coates's study of Reading Abbey demonstrates that library books were divided among different collections, and their different uses determined where they were housed.[56] Books for study were housed in the cloister, service books in the private chapels, medical books in the infirmary, and so on. This would have made access to books easier, and encouraged their use appropriately. Furthermore, at Reading full inventories of the books were kept to allow them to be borrowed by members of the house.[57] Paul Lee has similarly demonstrated that there was in practice an annual distribution of the books owned by religious houses to its members, in accordance with the Rule of St Benedict, in both monasteries and nunneries in England in the later medieval period.[58] Therefore books held by a religious order would almost certainly have been read by its members.

Religious houses which lacked a well-stocked library would nevertheless likely have had access to a wider number of books for private study through informal networks of book-lending that occurred within and between religious institutions. The Carthusian order in the later medieval period was particularly prominent in procuring, translating

[56] Coates, *English Medieval Books*, p.118.
[57] Ibid., p.119.
[58] Paul Lee, *Nunneries, Learning and Spirituality in Late Medieval English Society* (York, 2001), p.139. See Chapter Five for more on this.

and disseminating religious material not only to associated religious houses, but also to the laity. A. I. Doyle argues that “the exceptionally cohesive organisation of the Carthusians played a major role in the transmission and conflation” of key religious texts, such as Walter Hilton’s *Scale of Perfection* and the *Mirror of the Life of Christ* by Nicholas Love.[59] Michael G. Sargent has similarly examined booklists outlining gifts and loans made by Carthusian houses in England as evidence of the circulation of texts, not only within England but also with Carthusian houses on the continent.[60] The Carthusian convents of the east coast were allied to mother houses in Europe through which important continental texts were transmitted.[61]

Similarly, the friars provided a channel of communication by which the developments in continental traditions were brought to England. In his study of Dartford Priory in Kent, Lee has demonstrated the transmission of texts between Dominican houses.[62] Dominican friars, especially in East Anglia, provided direct links between England and the German Rhineland in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Lee provides the example of a Cambridge Dominican convent that had close links with a convent in Cologne, with a regular exchange of student friars between the two in the late fourteenth century.[63] Scholars have also suggested that kinship connections between members of religious orders at different houses meant that books may have passed between religious houses for which no evidence now survives.[64] Carole Meale has demonstrated the existence of networks between nuns, laity and secular clergy throughout the medieval period, with the movement of books going in both directions.[65] It is likely that such networks of textual

[59] A. I. Doyle, ‘Publication by Members of the Religious Orders’ in Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, eds., *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.113, 116.
[60] Michael G. Sargent, ‘The Transmission by the English Carthusians of Some Late Medieval Spiritual Writings’, *JEH,* 27:3 (1976), p.227.
[61] Lee, *Nunneries, Learning and Spirituality*, p.159.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., p.159.
[64] Ibid., p.145.
[65] See Carole Meale, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500* (Cambridge, 1993). See Chapter Five for more on this.

transmission were prevalent within male as well as female religious communities, resulting in the transmission of books between family and community networks to and from members of religious orders, as well as between religious houses.

Book-lending between religious institutions and family or community networks allowed individuals to study topics of interest to them, including science and medicine, even if their religious house lacked texts on the topic. Such is the case with Michael de Northgate, a brother of St Augustine's monastery in Canterbury. During his lifetime he compiled (and possibly translated) at least 24 manuscripts, which he donated to the library at St Augustine's upon his death.[66] These included a number of scientific books on subjects such as astrology and natural philosophy, demonstrating a keen personal interest in the subject.[67] There are also significant annotations in Michael de Northgate's hand in some of his manuscripts, suggesting that he studied them at length. The majority of the works contained in Michael de Northgate's compilations are not listed in the surviving library catalogue lists for St Augustine's, suggesting that he likely procured them himself by other means in order to copy them into his own compilations.[68]

Although the majority of evidence exists for the later medieval period, it is likely that networks of textual transmission amongst religious houses existed much earlier than this. As a result, even those monasteries or abbeys which lacked a well-stocked library would have had access to texts through the informal network of book-lending that occurred within and between religious institutions. As the example of individuals such as Michael de Northgate demonstrates, this would almost certainly have included the transmission of scientific works containing humoral theory.

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[66] Montague Rhodes James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover* (Cambridge, 1903), pp.197-406, catalogue nos: 69, 647, 649, 767, 782-3, 804, 841, 861, 876, 1063, 1077, 1155-6, 1170, 1267, 1275, 1536, 1548, 1595-7, 1604, 1654.
[67] See Sophie Page, *Magic in the Cloister* (University Park, 2013), esp. pp.18-20, 24-25.
[68] Ibid., pp. 196-406. See also Barker-Benfield, ed., *St Augustine's Abbey*. This example is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

A monastic context for the transmission of medical texts was important not only for Latin texts, but also for those in the vernacular. The next section will examine the emergence of a vernacular medical textual tradition in the later medieval period.

Tradition and Dissemination of Vernacular Medical Texts

Regimens were a popular type of medical text that quickly came to be disseminated in the vernacular. One example of a well-known regimen text, which was disseminated at first in Latin and later in the vernacular in England, is the *Secretum Secretorum.* This was a widely popular pseudo-Aristotelian work, circulating from at least the tenth to the seventeenth centuries.[69] Despite evidence suggesting Arabic origins, many manuscript versions claim it was translated from Greek. It contains much material of Greek origin, including a certain amount derived from genuine Aristotelian theory. However, it also contains much that is traceable to Middle Eastern Islamic sources. All known versions of the *Secretum Secretorum* derive from one of two Arabic versions, extant in about 50 manuscripts.[70] There were two main Latin versions of the Arabic text, from which all extant versions have been traced.[71] One is a translation made by John of Seville (Johannes Hispalensis) directly from the Arabic original in the mid-twelfth century, which is extant in about 150 manuscripts.[72] The other translation, by Phillipus Tripolitanus, was made during the first half of the thirteenth century and survives in more than 350 manuscripts.[73]

The text takes the form of an extended letter from Aristotle to Alexander. This reflects a common genre of the period, with a number of other extant letters purporting to be epistolary exchanges between two eminent figures, including several in Greek.[74] The *Secretum* therefore originated as a mirror for princes, a familiar medieval literary

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[69] W. F. Ryan and Charles B. Schmitt, eds., *Pseudo-Aristotle The 'Secret of Secrets': Sources and Influences* (London, 1982), p.1.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., p.2.
[72] Robert Steele, 'Introduction', *Secrees of Old Philisoffres* (London, 1894), p.ix.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ryan and Schmitt, eds., *Pseudo-Aristotle The 'Secret of Secrets'*, p.1.

from in which a wise man offers moral and political advice to an eminent leader.[75] The content of the text deals with specific advice for a prince, such as how to choose advisors, matters of dress, and so on. However, over time the *Secretum* gradually became a sort of encyclopaedic work, coming to comprise additional miscellaneous information on pseudo-scientific subjects such as astrology, physiognomy, alchemy, and magic. A significant section of the *Secretum Secretorum* deals with medical advice in the provision of a daily regimen. This advice is predominantly practical, advising on diet and lifestyle in order to prevent illness. However, most versions of the text also included theoretical explanation of the humoral makeup of the body, and discussion of the different humoral complexions. Further discussion of the humoral complexions, and the effect of the humors on personality and appearance as well as health, also occurs in the text as part of a section on physiognomy. Ostensibly the focus of this was how to pick a good advisor based on appearance and personality traits, but it allowed for a detailed discussion of the humoral complexions.

The wide variety of topics covered in the *Secretum* no doubt aided its popularity, as it was widely read in many different intellectual contexts. It came to hold a place in scholasticism, with Albert the Great and Roger Bacon both writing commentaries on it. M. A. Manzalaoui has identified excerpts from the *Secretum Secretorum* in a wide variety of genres: as material for summa and encyclopaedias; for illustrative exempla; and descriptive vignettes on the seasons.[76] The *Secretum* was also owned by a large number of monasteries in England, some of which held more than one copy. The library catalogue for St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury lists 6 copies of the work over the medieval period, 2 of which had previously belonged to Michael de Northgate who left the books to the Abbey upon his death.[77] Further proof of the text's popularity is the sheer number of translations in a variety of languages.

[75] Ibid., p.2.
[76] M. A. Manzalaoui, 'Phillip of Tripoli and his Textual Methods', in Ryan and Schmitt, eds., *Pseudo-Aristotle The 'Secret of Secrets'*, p.67.
[77] Barker-Benfield, ed., *St Augustine's Abbey,* items 1060-3.

There have been as many as 9 English versions identified, although not all are complete. Robert Steele has identified the earliest known English version, produced c.1410.[78] The text was also translated by English poets including Gower, Hoccleve, John Shirley, and William Forrest, suggesting a likely lay audience for these works.

Vernacular versions of the *Secretum Secretorum* were increasingly popular throughout the later medieval period because they provided an accessible form of medical knowledge and simple medical practice which could avoid the need for recourse to a paid physician. This is stated explicitly as the reason for translating the text into the vernacular in the *Secrees of Old Philisophres*, a fifteenth-century version translated by Benedict Burgh and John Lydgate into poetic verse. This excerpt is from the edition based on London, BL, Sloane MS 2464, the fullest and earliest known copy:

> And of Relw / specially shal i the teche, / Towchyng the tyme / And hour of his dyete, / So he nat wante / the presence of his leche: / To his Coplexioun / as it is moost meete, / Tyme set Atwen / Coold and heete, / With this Reward / by Resoun to expresse, / By good avys / that he doo noon excesse.[79]

The idea behind regimen was that by controlling one’s lifestyle, one could maintain humoral balance and prevent ill-health from occurring in the first place. This is evident in the *Secrete of Secretes*, another Middle English translation of the *Secretum Secretorum* c.1450:

> man is made of foure elementis, and foure contrary humoures, the whiche haue euer need to be susteynyd bi etyng and drynkyng, and ellis þe substaunce shulde fayle, and if a man ete and drynke out of tyme or ouyr moche it makith him febille, and to falle into dyuerse sleekness and many other inconvenientis, and if a man ete and drynke moderately and temperately he shalle fynde helthe to his lyf, strengthe to his body, and helthe of alle his lymes [bodily members].[80]

[78] Steele, ‘Introduction’, *Secrees of Old Philisoffres*, p.xiii.
[79]John Lydgate and John Burgh, *Secrees of old Philisoffres*, ed. Robert Steele (London, 1894), pp.39-40.
[80] Anon., ‘Secrete of Secretes’, in *Three Prose Versions of the ‘Secreta Secretorum’*, ed. Robert Steele (London, 1898), p.22.

A similar message occurs in another English version of the *Secretum Secretorum*, known as the 'Ashmole' version. This dates from c.1445 and is found in Oxford, Bodl., Rawlinson MS C.274 and BL, Royal MS 12.E.x.v:

> The conservaunce of helthe standith principally in ij thynges. First that a man vse conveneient metres according to his age, to the seson and tyme of the yere, and to the custome of his nature […] þat is to say, accordeth with his complexion […] [Secondly] that he be purged of all superfluous and corruptif humours.[81]

As this passage demonstrates, in order to avoid illness through correct diet and lifestyle it was necessary to know what your individual humoral complexion was. The different complexions were susceptible to different diseases, depending on which humor dominated. Each humoral complexion was associated with different properties, and therefore required different treatment to maintain a healthy balance. This was highlighted in the *The Gouernaunce of Prynces*, a translation from c.1422 of the *Secretum Secretorum* by James Yonge. This version is from an edition based on Bodl., Rawlinson MS B. 490:

> Compleccions bene iiij for a man is sangyne, or flewmatike, or colerike, or malyncoly. And ryth vp the foure complexcions or foure Humours of the body, whyche answaryth to the fouree Elementes, and to the foure tymes of the yeere. The blood is hotte and moysti to the lyekenesse of the heiere; ffleme is colde and moysti aftyr kynde of the watyr; Colre hoote and drye aftyr kynde of fyre; Malancoly colde and dry aftyr kynde of erthe.[82]

However, as *The Gouernaunce of Prynces* explained, it was not just diet that could cause an imbalance to the humors in the body. External factors, such as the elements, could also play a role:

> kindly [natural] heat, þat makes drye þe moystnes of þe body, and is norisshed and fedde with þe same moystnesse. Also by þe hete of þe sonne and dryenesse of þe wynd, þat makys drye þe moystnesse

[81] Anon., 'The Secrete of Secretes: the Ashmole Version', in *Secreta Secretorum: Nine English Versions*, ed. M. A. Manzalaoui (Oxford, 1977), p.50.
[82] James Yonge, 'Gouernaunce of Princes', in *Three Prose Versions of the 'Secreta Secretorum'*, ed. Steele, p.219.

of alle bodlyly þinges, & þay er fed with moystnesse of
alle bodily þinges.[83]

This allusion to the role of the six non-naturals in the maintenance of balanced humors in the body was the basis behind regimen. Regimen texts in the vernacular, then, were a combination of practical medical advice with some recourse to the theoretical basis of humoral theory. Their widespread popularity makes them a useful group of texts to study regarding the availability of humoral knowledge, especially in the vernacular, in the later medieval period. Furthermore, as Chapter Four will demonstrate, medical regimen texts can be usefully compared with spiritual guidance texts in the vernacular in this period. Both medical regimen and spiritual regimen in the vernacular had similarities not only in terms of a shared humoral and medical language, but even regarding the specific advice that appeared in both genres.

A popular related genre to regimen was complexions poetry, which focused on the physiognomic aspects of each of the humoral complexions rather than the medical implications. The complexions were one of the most popular aspects of humoral theory, appearing not just in medical texts, but also in vernacular poetry collections by well-known authors such as John Lydgate and John Gower. Complexions were one of the most basic aspects of humoral theory, but the widespread popularity of complexions poetry suggests it had a large appeal, perhaps because of its simplicity. One popular poem was by John Gower, which outlined the physical appearance and personality traits associated with each of the humoral complexions:

Of therthe, which is cold and drye,
The kinde of man Malencolie
Is cleped, and that is the ferste,
The most ungoolich and the werste;
For unto loves werk on nyht
Him lacketh bothe wil and myth:
No wonder is, in lusty place
Of love though he lese grace.
What man hath that complexion,
Full of ymaginacion

[83] Ibid., p.68.

Of dredes and of wrathful thoghtes,
He fret himselven al to nogtes.

The Water, which is moyste and cold,
Makth fleume, which is manifold
Foretel, slou and wery sone
Of every thing which is to done:
He is of kinde sufficant
To holde love his covenant,
Bot that him lacketh appetite,
Which longeth unto such delit.

What man that takth his kinde of thair,
He schal be lyht, he schal be fair,
For his complexion is blood.
Of all ether is non so good,
For he hath bothe will and myth
To plese and paie love his riht:
Wher as he hath love undertake,
Wrong is if that he be forsake.

The fyr of his condicion
Appropreth the complexion
Which in a man is Colre hote,
Whos propretes ben drei and hote:
It makth a man ben enginous
And swift of fote and ek irous;
Of contek and folhastifnesse
He hath a riht gret besinesse,
To thence of love and litel may:
Though he behote wel a day,
On nyht whan that he wol assaie,
He may ful evele his dette paie.[84]

Other anonymous poems on the complexions that circulated in medical compendia and in commonplace books were less complex even than Gower's rendering of the complexions. Some simply stated which humors were associated with each complexion, with a few examples of the personality traits of each. One example is a short anonymous poem on the complexions that appears in Bodl., Rawlinson MS A.393, a sixteenth-century collection of receipts and other medical writings. In this version, a person with a "fleumatike" complexion is "dull of

[84] John Gower, *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G. C. Macaulay, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1957), pp.243-4.

vndirstanding" and "full of color".[85] This demonstrates that the principles behind humoral theory were widespread in the vernacular, with even the most simplistic renderings such as complexions poetry referring to the humors by name.

However, it was not only the more popularised regimen and complexions texts that were available in the vernacular in this period, with increasing numbers of scholastic medical texts available in translation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. One of the first medical texts manifesting a resurgence of scholastic medicine in English was the uroscopy of Henry Daniel, written c.1379. Daniel was a Dominican friar, who produced his uroscopy in the vernacular from a compilation of Latin sources as a charitable act to enable those unlearned in Latin to have access to medical knowledge. Faye Getz suggests that medical translation was commonly undertaken as a form of charitable work by those within monastic communities.[86] However, Daniel chose to use the vernacular for this text not only as a tool for teaching, but also as a rhetorical aid to persuade readers of the usefulness of this type of medicine.[87]

Another important example of a scholastic medical text translated into Middle English in this period is Gilbertus Anglicus's *Compendium Medicinae*. Gilbertus was a prominent medical authority and practitioner in the thirteenth century, and his massive medical and surgical treatise was one of the longest medical texts ever written in Latin.[88] The *Compendium* attempted to cover all topics of medicine, and cited numerous Arabic authorities such as Avicenna and Averroes. In the mid-fifteenth century the Latin original was translated into Middle English. Getz has identified at least 13 remaining manuscripts of this translation, over 7 manuscripts containing significant extracts, and at least 1 printed copy.[89] This important text of scholastic medicine

[85] MS Rawlinson A.393, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, f.99r.
[86] Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages*, p.30.
[87] Ibid., p.86.
[88] Ibid., p.3.
[89] Getz, 'Introduction', *Healing and Society in Medieval England*, pp.liii-iv.

evidently proved to be popular in the vernacular, which retained much of the learned nature of the original text. The medicine presented in the Middle English text was not a 'dumbed down' version, but retained much of the medical theory of the original:

> somme sekenessis comen of fume and smokis þat fleen about a mannes brayn […] oþer sekenesses ben of humours þat ben y-turned to perstemes in sum parti of þe brayn, as frenesy þat is a postem of coler in þe foreparty of þe brayn.[90]

Like the Latin original on which it is based, the Middle English version of Gilbertus is a humoral medical text, with ailments and remedies arranged from the head downward and divided into 19 chapters. Getz suggests that the medieval translator made an effort to provide a medical work that was an independent unit, arranging the translation for easy reference.[91]. Nevertheless, it is not an entirely faithful translation, having been edited and adapted in parts. One example can be seen in the description of mania, with the Middle English version conflating the sections on 'mania' and 'melancholy'. Getz suggests that the translator did this not because he deemed the Latin version too difficult, but because the two medical conditions seemed much the same.[92] However, the text is shortened and simplified regarding the mechanics of epilepsy. Gilbertus describes the anatomy of the brain and the nerves, the finer points of humoral distinctions, proximate and distant causes, and the role of the moon. The Middle English translator condenses this material into a few short sentences, making the text shorter and easier to understand.[93] The translator also includes short introductory summaries for nearly all of the chapters. These summaries are the greatest departure from the Latin text, with Getz suggesting they represent the most powerful simplification of its technical material. Comparison of the Middle English *Compendium* with its Latin counterpart demonstrates that the translator was not only rendering the

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[90] Gilbertus Anglicus, 'Pharmaceutical Writings', in Faye Getz, ed., *Healing and Society in Medieval England: A Middle English Translation of the Pharmaceutical Writings of Gilbertus Anglicus* (Madison, 1991), p.6.
[91] Getz, 'Introduction', *Healing and Society in Medieval England*, p.xxxi.
[92] Ibid., p.xlvii.
[93] Ibid., p.xlvii.

material into a more accessible language, but also summarising, abridging, expanding, and explaining the text.[94] The Middle English version therefore made concessions to the intended lesser-educated audience for the text. However, despite such alterations to the original work, the provision of a Middle English translation of a scholastic medical text that did not remove the theoretical humoral elements proves the interest of a non-Latinate audience in humoral medical texts.

Getz demonstrates that a number of other scholastic medical works were available in Middle English translation in the fifteenth century, including such important and widely-circulated Latin texts as the surgeries of Lanfrank of Milan, Guy de Chauliac, and John Arderne; the herbal *Agnus Castus*; and the urocopy of Isaac Judaeus.[95] The translators of such works were therefore providing vernacular access to the best of contemporary Latin medicine.[96]

It has been estimated that the number of medical texts available in the vernacular in the fifteenth century was six times what it had been in the fourteenth century. Dorothea Waley Singer's survey of medical manuscripts in Britain gives a figure of 140 extant manuscripts for the fourteenth century, compared to 872 from the fifteenth.[97] Rossell Hope Robbins's subsequent examination of these figures led him to suggest that although the numbers of manuscripts are inflated, the general ratio is correct.[98] The printing-press allowed a further acceleration in output of vernacular medical texts. Paul Slack cites 153 medical titles published in England between 1486 and 1604, estimating that:

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[94] Faye Getz, 'Gilbertus Anglicus Anglicized', *Med.Hist.*, 26:4 (1982), p.439.
[95] Ibid., p.438.
[96] Ibid., p.442.
[97] Dorothea Waley Singer, 'Survey of Medical Manuscripts in the British Isles Dating from Before the Sixteenth Century', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine (Section of the History of Medicine)*, 12 (Suppl., 1919), pp. 96-107.
[98] Rossell Hope Robbins, 'Medical Manuscripts in Middle English', *Speculum*, 45:3 (1970), pp.393-415.

> there may have been some 166,000 medical books still in use in 1604, one for every twenty people or so, had they been equally distributed.[99]

The ownership of medical texts is more complicated than the assumption that Latin texts were owned by the university trained, while Middle English texts were owned by lay non-specialists.[100] Robbins's study of vernacular medical manuscripts gives examples of graduate physicians who owned fifteenth-century medical texts in Middle English, while correspondingly some who lacked formal university education owned texts containing large chunks of medical material in Latin.[101] Getz has also identified several medical texts owned by medical practitioners who lacked any formal education. These include a fifteenth-century compendium of short texts belonging to Essex bailiff and leech John Crophill, preserved in BL, Harley MS 1735; London barber-surgeon Richard Dod owned a Middle English version of Gilbertus Anglicus's *Compendium Medicinae* that is now BL, Sloane MS 5; and another London barber-surgeon, Thomas Plawdon, had a medical compendium which included a technical phleobotomy translated for him, found in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius MS 176/97.[102]

Furthermore, it is evident that members of the laity who never practiced or even studied medicine owned medical texts. An English translation of the surgery of Guy de Chauliac was made for a fifteenth-century Duke of Bedford.[103] An English recipe collection edited as the *Liber de Diversis Medicinis* was probably prepared by Robert Thornton c.1440, member of a prominent Yorkshire family and a well-known translator of Latin texts, but never a medical practitioner.[104] Another prominent example is the private collection of Humphrey Plantagenet, Duke of Gloucester, which was bequeathed to Oxford University. This included

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[99] Paul Slack, 'Mirrors of Health and Treasures of Poor Men: the Uses of the Vernacular Medical Literature of Tudor England', in Charles Webster, ed., *Health, Medicine and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1979), pp.238-9.
[100] Getz, 'Gilbertus Anglicus Anglicized', p.437.
[101] See Robbins, 'Medical Manuscripts in Middle English', pp.393-415.
[102] Getz, 'Introduction', *Healing and Society in Medieval England*, p.xvii.
[103] See M. Ogden, ed., *The Cyrurgie of Guy de Chauliac* (London, 1971).
[104] See M. Ogden, ed., *The 'Liber de Diversis Medicinis'* (London, 1938).

an outstanding list of medical books in Latin, among them the works of Avicenna, Bernard de Gordon, Constantine the African, Dioscorides, Galen, Gilbertus Anglicus, Hippocrates, and Rhazes. Getz says of the collection:

> Duke Humphrey's library was one of the finest collections in Europe, and it certainly cannot be deemed illustrative of the average book collector's holdings, but it does indicate that interest in 'university medicine' was not solely the province of the graduate physician.[105]

Medical texts were therefore owned by a variety of people, who cannot always be identified as medical practitioners.

Medical translations of learned, scholastic medicine were part of a larger movement towards vernacular writing that had strengthened in England during the second half of the fourteenth century. Dominicans and Franciscans, for example, were advocates of humanistic ideas about the use of the vernacular for teaching and writing at English universities.[106] Päivi Pahta and Irma Taavitsainen argue that the numbers of learned medical texts translated into the vernacular demonstrates their usefulness to all, not just those who practised medicine.[107] Translators simplified theories and replaced Latin terms to make learned texts more accessible, demonstrating that a wider audience for these texts was envisaged in vernacular translation beyond those who had formally studied medicine.

This was part of a wider process of vernacularization in England from the fourteenth century, whereby increasing numbers of texts in all genres of writing from scientific treatises, to literary works, to religious tracts, were produced in Middle English in a challenge to the dominance of Latin as the language of written discourse. Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp suggest that the increasing written use of Middle English was the result of a process of nationalisation and secularisation, paralleled by a

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[105] Getz, 'Gilbertus Anglicus Anglicized', p.437.
[106] Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages*, p.86.
[107] Päivi Pahta and Irma Taavitsainen, 'Vernacularization of Scientific and Medical Writing in its Sociohistorical Context', in Pahta and Taavitsainen, eds., *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English* (Cambridge, 2004), p.10.

growth in British vernacular literacy.[108] They point to the Hundred Years wars and the Lollard movement as examples of changing social attitudes that influenced the vernacularization movement. Jeremy Catto suggests that Middle English as a written language was shaped by the rapid adoption of the vernacular for highly sophisticated works produced from about 1370, by Chaucer and the other court poets, by William Langland, by the Wycliffite Bible translation, and by spiritual authors such as Walter Hilton.[109] He suggests this process occurred not as a "vehicle for national consciousness" but rather as a means of placing England alongside other European nations such as France and Italy that already had an illustrious vernacular.[110] Hence the Middle English crafted by Chaucer and others was full of words adapted from French and Latin. This meant that Middle English rapidly emerged as a sophisticated language of discourse, ready for its abrupt adoption that replaced French, and increasingly Latin, in many areas of literature (although it was much slower to be adopted in business and legal contexts, where Latin remained the standard for another century).

Medicine was in the vanguard of vernacular translation in the field of science in the later medieval period.[111] Pahta and Taavitsainen argue that part of the reason for this may have been the practical nature of medicine, which they suggest was undoubtedly "a major incentive for the social diffusion of academic knowledge in the field".[112] The vernacularization of many scholastic medical texts widened the available audience for such works beyond those literate in Latin. However, the most widely read vernacular medical texts were not university texts, but popularised regimens of health. In regimen medical advice became integrated into more general advice aimed at a royal or noble patron, which members of the gentry, merchant and emerging professional classes wanted to emulate. In practical terms, medicine

[108] Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, 'Introduction', in Hellinga and Trapp, eds., *CHBB III: 1400-1557* (Cambridge, 1999), p.2.
[109] Jeremy Catto, 'Written English: the Making of the Language', *Past and Present*, 179:1 (2003), p.38.
[110] Ibid., pp.31, 56.
[111] Pahta and Taavitsainen, 'Vernacularization of Scientific and Medical Writing', p.11.
[112] Ibid.

was the most suitable topic in the field of science for vernacular translation as it would have been of interest and practical use to a wide audience.

There is evidence for increased medical knowledge among the laity as a result of the availability of medical texts in this period. One example is *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines* by Henry, Duke of Lancaster. This is an allegorical and autobiographical account of Henry's sins and penance, composed in 1354. Henry wrote in Anglo-Norman, the dialect of French used in England among the upper classes. Throughout the book Henry employed medical metaphors, demonstrating his knowledge of both contemporary theory and practice. He used wounds as a dominant metaphor, envisioning himself as mortally wounded by sin and in need of medical help. The subsequent meditations show how his wounds are healed by Christ the physician, and nursed by the Virgin Mary.[113] Although Henry himself never studied medicine, he had connections with medical professionals such as Pascal of Bologna.[114] Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa argues that Henry's use of medical metaphors illuminates "the extent to which medical concepts had permeated the discourse of well-educated aristocrats".[115] It is possible that Henry's connections with medical professionals gave him the opportunity to acquire medical knowledge through them. However, as this section has demonstrated, he was not unique amongst the non-practicing laity in possessing knowledge of medical theory. Yoshikawa suggests that Henry's comprehension of medical matters in the *Livre:*

> reflects the increasing interest in health among the ruling class and, more generally, in late medieval English society.[116]

Another important point about *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines* is that it is a religious piece of writing, for the primary purpose of penance for the

[113] Henry of Lancaster, *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines*, ed. E. J. Arnould (Oxford, 1940).
[114] Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages*, p.29.
[115] Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa, 'Holy Medicine and Diseases of the Soul: Henry of Lancaster and *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines*', *Med.Hist.*, 53:3 (2009), p.398.
[116] Ibid., p.398.

author's sins and his spiritual salvation. Yet Henry chose to make extensive use of medical metaphor in his work, displaying his knowledge of medical theory in the process. Yoshikawa describes the work as understanding "the symbiotic relationship between medicine and religion".[117] Such overlap between religious and medical concerns in this period is evident across medieval literature, and is the focus of the next section.

Overlap of Religious and Medical Concerns

Humoral theory appeared in religious literature throughout the medieval period. One reason for this was that sin was closely associated with bad humors, resulting in the need for both spiritual and bodily health to be in balance. The health of the soul could be reflected in bodily illness, and humoral imbalances of the body could also directly affect the health of the soul by weakening resolve against sin. The humoral complexions thus played a vital part in an individuals' propensity to sin. Joseph Ziegler suggests that the idea of a connection between humoral complexion and the propensity to sin gained footing in religious circles in part because it solved the theological problem of why, if original sin was equal among all humans, some were more prone to sin than others. Hugh of St-Cher made this idea popular in the mid-thirteenth century by suggesting that while all inclinations to sin were equal among all people, propensity to sin resulted from the 'accidental' variable of individual complexion.[118] Furthermore, the interaction between body and soul required the balance of both in order to achieve greater closeness with God. Angel Gonzalez de Pablo has summarised this in terms of representing two states of perfection. The first state necessary was bodily health, which was an initial perfection from which to attain the second perfection, that of the soul.[119] This explains why medieval authors became increasingly concerned with the physical health of the body alongside the spiritual health of the soul.

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[117] Ibid.
[118] Ziegler, 'Medicine and Immortality in Terrestrial Paradise', p.215.
[119] Angel Gonzalez de Pablo, 'The Medicine of the Soul: The Origin and Development of Thought on the Soul, Diseases of the Soul and their Treatment, in Medieval and Renaissance Medicine', *History of Psychiatry*, 5:1 (1994), p.496.

However, at the same time spiritual concerns were also appearing in medical texts. The link between the body and soul in humoral theory meant that physical and spiritual health was a concern for theologians and medical practitioners alike. This led to a situation whereby medical and spiritual regimen, especially those produced in the vernacular, essentially gave the same advice. Many medical regimens recognised the importance of the health of the soul to that of the body. As a result, the advice offered in vernacular regimens often paralleled the spiritual guidance found in vernacular texts of religious instruction. One example is the *Secrete of Secretes*, where the author emphasised:

> desire nought worldly thingis that are passing and corruptible, but thynke that thou must leve alle and to go hens nakid. Caste than thi desiris vnto tho thingis that euer shulle laste, that is, the liif of the world perdurable, where that euyr is myrthe and ioye without ende. leue þe noughti lyf of bestis that euyr lyve in filthis.[120]

This advice against desiring worldly things, equating such desires with the life of beasts, is similar to the advice that could be found in many vernacular spiritual guides (discussed in Chapter Four). Thus, many medical regimens were mindful of religious as well as medical concerns, for the benefit of both the body and the soul.

John Lydgate's *Dietary* is a didactic poem in Middle English providing medical advice on diet, written in the fifteenth century. It enjoyed widespread popularity in England, surviving in 57 extant manuscripts and many more printed copies. Lydgate was a monk with an extensive poetic output covering many genres, from romance tales such as the *Troy-book*, to chivalric epics such as *The Siege of Thebes*, to didactic works such as the moralising *Fall of Princes*. The *Dietary* provides extensive medical advice covering all aspects of medical regimen, not just diet, and is concerned primarily with averting illness by preventing the cause. Lydgate opens the text by advising:

[120] Anon, 'Secrete of Secretes', ed. Steele, p.14.

> in two things standith all the welth / Of soule and of body, whoso hem use, / Moderat fode geyvth to man his helth, / And all surfetys doth from him remewe.[121]

Lydgate emphasised the importance of moderate diet for the benefit of both body and soul. However, this concern for the soul was not just a moral issue in the case of medical regimen. The interconnection of the body and soul was so intertwined that spiritual health was of crucial importance when dealing with bodily health. Since physical suffering was often regarded as a punishment for sin, the condition of the soul necessarily came to influence every aspect of medical care and treatment.[122]

This was reflected in the ruling of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, which threatened medical practitioners with excommunication if they treated anyone who had not first made a full confession. In explaining this ruling, the edict suggests that the benefit from confession will be to the body as well as the soul:

> Cum infirmitas corporealis nonnumquam ex peccato proveniat, dicente Domino, languido quem sanaverit: 'Vade et amplius noli peccare, ne deterius aliquid tibi contingat', decreto praesenti statuimus et districte praecipimus medicis corporum, ut cum eos ad infirmos vocari contigerit, ipsos ante Omnia moneant et inducant, quod medicos advocent animarum, ut postquam infirmis fuerit de spirituali salute provisum, ad corporalis medicinae remedium salubris procedatur, cum causa cessante cesset effectus.[123]
> [Since bodily infirmity is sometimes caused by sin, the Lord saying to the sick man whom he had healed: 'Go and sin no more, lest something worse happen to thee', we declare in the present decree and strictly command that when physicians of the body are called to the bedside of the sick, before all else they admonish them to call for the physician of souls, so that after spiritual health has been restored to them, the application of

[121] John Lydgate, 'Dietary', in Rossell Hope Robbins, ed., *Secular Lyrics of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1952), p.76.
[122] Carol Rawcliffe, 'Medicine for the Soul', in *Religion, Health, and Suffering*, eds. John R. Hinnels and Roy Porter (London and New York, 1999), pp.317-8.
[123] Anon, '22: Quod infirmi prius provideant animae quam corpori, Concilium Lateranense IV', in Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (London and Washington, 1990), i, p.245.

> bodily medicine may be of greater benefit, for the cause being removed the effect will pass away].[124]

Thus, the importance of the connection between body and soul had significance in both religious and medical contexts, with both having to balance the needs of one against the other.

This ruling by the Fourth Lateran Council demonstrates that the link between body and soul also worked the other way around. Not only were medical practitioners duty-bound to ensure their patients were free from sin before treatment to ensure their spiritual health, but it would also help the treatment of physical illness too. *The Gouernance of Lordschipes*, another Middle English version of the *Secretum Secretorum*, from London, Lambeth Palace, MS 501 (c.1400), warned of the dangers of impious living to one's mortal soul. In chapter 88, entitled 'Knowynge of the Soule', the anonymous author emphasises the need for good governance of the soul as well as the body, for:

> If þe sawle be þanne perfyt and fulfillyd byfore his departynge fro þe body, it shall þanne be ressayued of all sawly vertu, and þerby be enhyed, to þe heye perfeccion be ledde. And þanne it purchasys anoþer gouernance, to it come to þe sercle or to þe firmament of vnderstondynge, whore it shall wel lyk; and if it be noght wel perfyt þe sawle shall plunche into þe depnes of helle, and þare he shall take a gouernance of kaytefnesse with-outyn hope of lykynge.[125]

This link between the body and the soul is also spelled out explicitly in the *Gouernaunce of Prynces* (c.1422):

> hit is that the sowle whyche is the fourme of the body, useth the kynde and the complexcion and the propyrteys of the body, for ofte-tymes we sene opynly that the coragis of men ham chaungyth aftyr the Pascionys of the bodyes, and that apperyth in Dronkenesse, In amours, In frenesy, in Dreddys, in Soroufulnesse, in desires, and in delites. For in al this Passions of the body, the Sowle an the corage ham chaungyth. *And kynde is so grete a fellowe between*

[124] English translation from Anon, 'Canon 22 of The Fourth Lateran Council', in Rev. H. J. Schroeder, trans., *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils* (London, 1937), p.263.
[125] Anon., 'The Gouernance of Lordschipes', in *Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum*, ed. Steele, p.96.

> *body and sowle, that the Passyons of the body chaungyth the sowle; and the Passions of the Sowle, chaungyth the body* [my emphasis].[126]

The need to live virtuously is even given as the stated aim of the translator of the *Gouernaunce of Prynces*, in order to inform the unlearned "how that ye shal kepe youre sowle fro vices and ill maners, and vertuosly to lywe".[127]

The overlap between the concerns of spiritual guidance texts and medical regimen is evident in Gilbert Kymer's personal regimen for Duke Humphrey. This is the only surviving piece of medical writing by Kymer, who was a well-known physician, and dates from 1424. It forms a regimen of health for Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, which is dated 6th March of that year and was written in Hainault, Flanders. The document, which survives in a single fifteenth-century manuscript (BL, Sloane MS 4, pp. 63–102), has 26 short chapters dealing in detail with the Duke's mode of living. This acts as a 'spiritual regimen' as well as a medical regimen. Chapter 19 of the regimen 'On Coitus' focuses on the ill effects of the Duke's sexual appetite. It advises Humphrey to enjoy intercourse in moderation, and only with his wife.[128] Kymer warns that if the Duke does not heed his advice, he risks among other things impeded digestion, suppressed appetite, corrupt humors, cooling of natural heat, radical moisture being consumed, abominable diseases, impoverished masculinity, fatness, foolishness, shortened life, and even sterility.[129] In contrast, if he exercises intercourse with moderation, with God's favour Humphrey will be abundantly fertile with a succession of sons.[130] Kymer ends with the warning that if Humphrey continues with

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[126] Yonge, 'Gouernaunce of Prynces', p.218.
[127] Ibid., p.236.
[128] "Quare ita usum coitus moderetur, ut illo non utamini, nisi sub istis condicionibus concurrentibus", f.84v. A transcription of this chapter from Sloane MS 4 is also available (see Thomas Hearn, *Liber Niger Scaccarii* (London, 1774), ii, pp.556-8).
[129] "Coitus enim talis si continuetur, digestionem impedit, esuriem defalcat, siciem generat, humores corrumpit, spiritus depauperat, calorem naturalem infrigidat, virtutes defeccat, operaciones prosternit, humidum radicale consumit, membra liquefacit, morbos nepharios procreat, virum effeminat, amorem heroes et zelotipiam producit, oblivionem, pigriciem, negligenciam, et vercordiam parit, vitamque abbreviate, & de foecundo & de prolific sterile efficit.", f.84v.
[130] "Deo favente, per tempora, sanitate congaudendo, in felici filiorum successione habundanter eritis foecundati", f.85r.

his insatiable appetites, he will not only shorten his life but also condemn his soul.[131]

The intertwining of medical discourse in religious texts, and concern for religious guidance in medical regimens, is also evident in the way texts were transmitted in the medieval period. There are numerous examples of medical and religious treatises found together in manuscripts. In some instances, medical recipes or advice occurs within religious manuscripts as part of the main text. One example is Blairs College MS 6 (now catalogued as CB/57/6). This is a mid-fifteenth-century Latin Book of Hours. Although now suffering from damage, this was once a fairly ornate text with colourful images (such as f.2v) and decoration in gold leaf, likely created for a wealthy lay owner. Such books were consciously modelled on those used by the clergy in formal Church services, adapting complex liturgies for use by members of the laity at differing levels according to their education.[132] Books of Hours reflected a growing market for religious books specifically to cater for the needs of the laity from the thirteenth century onwards. The principal contents of Books of Hours originally consisted of private devotions, forming the basis of 'breviary' collections for the laity. This usually contained the 'Little Hours' of the Virgin, the gradual psalms, penitential psalms, the litany of the saints, and the office for the dead.[133] However, Blairs College 6 also contains medical advice in Middle English. This occurs near the beginning of the manuscript, within the first quire. Between the festival calendar and the Hours of the Virgin, on ff.10v-12r occurs the following advice in English for each month of the year, in the same scribal hand as the rest of the manuscript:

> Januarinis: in þis moneth of janneri whyche is gode to drynke and blodelatyng fostere: ffor vii days þer bene of perylle þe fyrste þe secunde þe fourte þe fyfte þe tenth þe fyftenth and þe xviii. Lat þe blode on seynt Batyldes daye [30th January].

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[131] "si ab incepto opera cicius non desistat, suis abbreviates diebus, diu naturalem occasum ante suum, imprudentissime se destruendo consumet.", f.85v.
[132] Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours* (New Haven and London, 2006), p.5.
[133] Ibid., p.6.

Febriarius: in þis moneth potage […] ete þou noght […] and on veyne on þe wyrste lat þe blode in þe xiii daye or in þe xxii daye. Two days þere bene of perylle þe vj and þe vij.

Marrius: in þis moneth […] ete metes […] and let þe no blode not in þe evn daye ou þe right arme […] days þere bene of perille þerin þe viii þe xiii and þe xv.

Aprilis: in þis moneth gode is to be letyn blode for who so lettes hym blode on þe riday in þe lefte arme in þat zere he schall haue none ake of þe heued or in þe thyrde day and he schal noght lose his syghte þat zere.

Mayus: in þis moneth erly ete and drynke. use hote metes [...] iiij days of perille þer bene. þe vij þe xv þe xvj and þe xx day. lat þe blode in þe ende of may in þe iiij day or in þe v day or in þe last day on whedir arme þou wylte […]

Junnis: in þis monet hath a day fastynge a lytelle draughte of watyr drynke: ale and mede in mesure drynke: ete letus […] and for grete need blode þou may lat þe in þe vii daye in þe xxvii daye in þe xxv daye in þe xxvi daye.

Julius: in þis moneth holde þe fro wemen for þe brayne gedyrs þan [?] and let þe no blode two days þer leue of þitte þe xv and þe xx.
Augustus: in þis moneth ete no wortes of hookes nor or toole ne let þe no blode. two dayes þer bene of perille þe xij y þe xx.

September: in þis […] þe frute þat is rype is gode to ete and it is gode to be letyn blode. who so letys hym blode on þe xvii daye of þe droppesy ne of þe pallesey […] ne of þe fallyng euel thar hym notte drede in þat zere.

October: in þis moneth muste þat is to saye netle wyne is gode to drynke and for need let þe blode one day þer is of perile þer [ends imperfectly].

Nouember: in þis moneth […] to euentre on þe heued veyne is gode and […] two dayes þer bene of perille þe xv and þe xxx.

> December: in þis moneth ete hote metes […] and blode þon myghte þe latte thre dayes þer bene of perille þe xv þe xiii and þe xviii.[134]

Following immediately on from this, the next folio begins the Latin Hours of the Virgin. The advice in this passage is purely practical in nature, outlining what to eat and drink, when to let blood, and when the perilous days are to let blood in any given month.

This information would have been pertinent to any household which owned such a primer. Books of Hours were often owned by aristocratic individuals, especially women. Rebecca Krug has demonstrated the importance of primers in the lives of medieval women, many of whom recorded family birth dates and other important events in their Books of Hours.[135] Primers often had a practical as well as religious function in medieval households in the later Middle Ages, such as to provide education for children. Michael Clanchy has demonstrated that it was a noblewoman's familial duty to introduce her children to religious writing while they were within the home environment.[136] Krug cites an aristocratic woman, Ann Stafford, who regularly gathered an audience of women and children from her household and family circle to read texts of religious edification together.[137] Ladies also introduced their children to literacy through prayer, turning to their domestic prayer books for this purpose.[138] Given the high rate of female ownership of Books of Hours among the aristocracy and gentry it made sense for women to turn to their primers to teach their children, especially as they were unlikely to have access to many other books within their own homes.

Eamon Duffy has examined the process of transmission within family and kinship groups, demonstrating that Books of Hours were

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[134] Blairs College MS 6 (CB/57/6), Scottish Catholic Archives, Edinburgh.
[135] Rebecca Krug, *Reading Families* (Ithaca and London, 2002), p.75.
[136] Michael Clanchy, 'The ABC Primer: Was it in English or Latin?', in Elisabeth Salter and Helen Wicker, eds., *Vernacularity in England and Wales, c.1300-1550* (Turnhout, 2011), p.18.
[137] Krug, *Reading Families*, p.81.
[138] Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1993), p.112.

sometimes also passed on outside of families.[139] Examples of the groups who benefitted from bequests of primers include godchildren, friends, chaplains, and servants. Although initially primers for the laity were the preserve of the rich, cheaper versions of primers were being produced in large numbers by the fifteenth century.[140] These effectively mass-produced primers made by stationers in England and France existed alongside more expensive Books of Hours, which continued to be commissioned by the wealthy. Duffy gives an example of this variation in price, with a York goldsmith paying 6d for a primer in 1490, in contrast to 9s paid for a more elaborate primer owned by a York baker in 1444.[141] This widened the potential lay audience for such texts beyond the very wealthy, with Books of Hours routinely owned and used by townspeople in the fifteenth century.[142] As a result, Books of Hours became an increasingly common devotional accessory, largely superseding the Psalters that had been popular up to this time (although a high proportion continued to be made for women).[143] Cheaper Books of Hours left blank pages intended for illustrations which could be bought or added separately.[144] However, this process allowed successive owners of primers to add their own written material in the blanks. One example can be found in Ushaw College, Durham, MS 43. This Book of Hours was commissioned by Richard of York, and decorated with his arms. However, the book later came to be bought second-hand by Edmund Asheton in the early sixteenth century for 3s, with the price he paid for the manuscript noted inside. Both families left traces of their ownership in the work, ranging from records of family births to added notes of private devotion.[145]

Given that primers therefore had a practical purpose, the inclusion of medical advice in the Blairs College Book of Hours could have been purely practical in function. The medieval model of the universe meant

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[139] Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, p.23.
[140] Ibid., p.4.
[141] Ibid., p.22.
[142] Ibid., p.21.
[143] Ibid., p.8.
[144] Ibid., p.83.
[145] Ibid., p.23.

that the heavens, planets and stars impacted on the world below by manipulating the weather, the elements, and the humoral balance of the body, which in turn had an impact on the soul's salvation. It was necessary to have knowledge of the workings of the planets and the elements on the humors in order to control not only physical health, but also the health of the soul. Maintaining humoral balance in the body was essential to help resist temptation to sin, and so the inclusion of advice to help achieve that in each month of the year within a Book of Hours is likely no coincidence. The rounds of prayer and contemplative exercises contained within this primer ensured the mortal health of the soul, while advice regarding correct diet and bloodletting pertained to the same effect of avoiding sin and remaining healthy in both body and soul for the benefit of spiritual salvation.

There are many further examples of medical and religious content occurring within the same manuscript. Bodl., Ashmole MS 750 is a miscellaneous text of religious provenance, which contains medical as well as religious material. C. H. Talbot identifies it as a fifteenth-century common place book,[146] with A. J. Fletcher describing it as a clerical miscellany.[147] It contains some practical material, ranging from recipes for soap (ff.99r-v), to recipes for writing materials (f.168v), to a list of indulgences for Syon monastery (ff.140r-141r). It is predominantly in Latin, but with some religious treatises in Middle English. These include sermons (ff.86r-89r), and religious tracts on the sorts of masses to be said to deliver a soul from purgatory (ff.11v-14r). The compilation also includes extracts from *Dives and Pauper* (ff.42v-48r), a version of Richard of Lavynham's treatise on the Seven Deadly Sins (ff.89r-96r), and a mystery play fragment (ff.89r-96r). However, there is also a significant amount of medical content in this miscellany. There are several recipes spread out throughout the manuscript, including one for the heart and phlegm (f.48r), while another outlines how to treat dropsy

[146] C. H. Talbot, 'The English Cistercians and the Universities', *Studia Monastica*, 4:1 (1962), p.217.
[147] A J Fletcher, 'The Preaching of the Pardoner', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 11:1 (1989), pp.27-9.

(f.204v). Medical and culinary recipes are intermingled in a section of some 95 household recipes in Middle English, which also include recipes for dyes and alchemy (ff.169v-179r). There is also a significant treatise of some 89 medical recipes in alphabetical order (ff.184r-194r). This seems to be incomplete, as it stops at the letter 'E'.[148]

Another example of an institutional religious miscellany containing medical content alongside religious is BL, Harley MS 978. The miscellaneous contents include religious pieces, such as antiphons in Latin and French (ff.2r-8v, 10v-11r), and 'De coniugio patris ac matris beari Thome martiris', with an incomplete French translation (ff.114v-116r). There are also miscellaneous pieces, including a musical scale (f.14r); a treatise on falconry in French (ff.116v-117r); an astrological calendar and prognostications (ff.15v-21r); a letter of commendation in the name of the Abbot of Westminster and a letter of credence (f.38r). As well as several didactic literary pieces, including 'Goliardic' and other verses (ff.38v-39v); Marie de France's Fables (ff.40r-67v); verses by Walter Map (ff.68v-102v); *Le Doctrinal Sauvage* in French (ff.103r-104r); *La Besturne* in French (ff.106r-107r); and *Song of Lewes* (ff.107r-114r). However, the manuscript also contains several medical texts of interest. These include part of the medical section of *Secretum Secretorum*, translated by John of Seville (ff.22r-23r, 35v-36v); Avicenna's *De conservatione sanitatis* (ff.23r-25v); signs of death in Latin and French (f.25v); glossaries of herbs and their hot or cold properties in Latin and French (ff.26r-27v); a version of *Lettre d'Hippocrate* in French (ff.27v-34v); verses on the plant 'scabiosa' (f.37r); and general practical medical recipes on topics such as constipation, vomiting and purgation, including medical verses on the four humors, blood, melancholy and biliousness (ff.35r-v). The medical contents make up 8 out of the 22 items in the manuscript, a significant minority. The use of Reading obits in the calendar and names in the list of music link this manuscript to Reading Abbey, confirming its

[148] Information on the contents of this manuscript from L. M. Eldredge, *IMEP IX: Handlist of Manuscripts containing Middle English Prose in the Ashmole Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford* (Cambridge, 1992), pp.22-6.

production in or for a religious house. The work of five hands, Coates suggests that the medical texts in this manuscript were part of the sections copied within Reading in the mid-thirteenth century.[149] Coates demonstrates the existence of copying at Reading in at least the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, identifying a standard 'Reading form' of the use of four main page layouts.[150] Furthermore, there is evidence of uniformity of script in texts known to be connected to Reading, with Coates able to identify the same scribe in more than one manuscript.[151]

These two examples demonstrate the availability, and, in the case of Reading Abbey, the copying of medical texts in monasteries in the medieval period. Examples of manuscripts containing medical knowledge produced in religious houses will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

Many household miscellaneous compilations owned by the laity also covered both religious and medical content. One well-known example is Lincoln Cathedral MS 91, the so-called Thornton manuscript believed to have been compiled by or on behalf of Robert Thornton, a fifteenth-century Yorkshire gentleman.[152] This manuscript is a compilation in both Latin and Middle English from the first half of fifteenth century, containing predominantly religious and literary romance material. This includes religious works such as *The Privity of the Passion (*ff.179r-189r), *The Mirror of St. Edmund* (ff.197r-209v), *De Miraculo Beate Marie* (ff.147r-148r), and *Þe Holy Boke Gratia Dei* (ff.237r-250v), as well as extracts of works by Richard Rolle and Walter Hilton. There are also several prayers, not only in Latin but also in English, such as five prayers devoted to the wounds of Christ (ff.212r-v), as well as an abridged Psalter with Office (ff.258v-264r). The miscellany also contains many literary works, such as the *Morte Arthure* (ff.53r-98v), and several romances, such as *Sir Ysambrace* (ff.109r-114v) and *The Romance of*

[149] Coates, *English Medieval Books*, p.75.
[150] Ibid., p.54.
[151] Ibid.
[152] For recent scholarship on Robert Thornton see Susanna Fein and Michael Johnston, eds., *Robert Thornton and His Books* (York, 2014).

Sir Perceval (ff.161r-176r). However, the manuscript ends with the *Liber de Diversis Medicinis* (ff.280r-321v), a fairly lengthy medical treatise in Middle English. The inclusion of a practical medical text in what is essentially a literary compilation is of note, suggesting that it was not incongruous for a medieval compiler to include such material alongside works of religious instruction and literature for enjoyment. Vincent Gillespie suggests that it is very likely that Thornton not only used his collection of texts for personal reading, but also made the book available for the general edification of his family and servants.[153] He also notes that the punctuation of the manuscript suggests presentation for oral performance. This demonstrates the wider availability of medical information in compilations such as this to all members of the household, not just the primary compiler of the work.

There are also examples of many medical and scientific compendia that contain religious treatises. One such example is Bodl., Digby MS 88 (c.1450), a primarily Latin text with some Middle English treatises. This is predominantly an astrological work, although it also covers other scientific and practical items. These include topics as diverse as palmistry (ff.44r-45v), a table of weights (f.43r), tokens of weather in English (ff.12v-13v), and an extract from a translation into English of Walter of Henley's book of husbandry (f.88v). It also contains some practical medical recipes (2 in English on f.78r and 5 in Latin on f.77v) and prognostications for perilous days (*Erra Pater* or 'prophecies of Edras' in English, ff.25r-26r, and an extract from John Somer's calendar of ominous or perilous days in English, ff.62v-77r). Medical theory also features in the manuscript, such as a diagram linking each of the planets with different organs in the body (ff.26r, 29v). One such interesting treatise is a compendium on the planets, the elements, the humors and the zodiac (ff.34r-37r), which ends with a macaronic summary of the characteristics of the elements and the humors. However, there are also several items dealing with religious topics. Near the beginning of the text is a series of fifteen items in both Latin

[153] Vincent Gillespie, *Looking in Holy Books* (Turnhout, 2011), p.19.

and Middle English on sacramental, liturgical, catechetical and other religious matters (ff.3r-12r). The manuscript also contains Middle English treatises dealing with the seven properties of sacramental bread (f.27v), a section from St. Gregory's Trental (ff.39r-40r), a treatise on the history of salvation from Adam to Christ (f.80r), and a devotional note on the calendar of the year (f.80r). Religious concerns therefore feature strongly in this predominantly scientific manuscript.

The evidence of many manuscripts compiled and transmitted in the medieval period that contained both medical and religious content side by side shows that the audience for such manuscripts did not differentiate between medicine and religion as separate spheres of learning or interest. Medical and religious ideas closely impacted on and influenced each other, resulting in a complex interweaving of ideas and an overlapping of the two spheres. Hence, religious texts contained humoral discourse, and medical regimens gave spiritual advice. The interconnectedness of these two spheres meant that it therefore was not uncommon to see medical and religious texts transmitted together in the same manuscript.

Concluding Remarks

This thesis will demonstrate how the overlap between medicine and religion had culminated by the end of the medieval period with humoral theory and language appearing in a religious context in all genres of religious literature, both in Latin and the vernacular. Medieval ideas about religion and medicine were intertwined through the believed connection between body and soul, resulting in learned medical theory appearing in religious contexts not only through the dissemination of medical texts alongside religious ones, but also through recourse to humoral theory in religious texts themselves. Far from being restricted to Latin texts, humoral language continued to be prevalent in Middle English religious texts, ranging from sermons to spiritual guides for the laity. This suggests that unlearned lay audiences would have had access to, and perhaps knowledge of, learned medical theory through religious sources. At the very least, it demonstrates that humoral

language had currency beyond the medical sphere for a variety of audiences, including those unlearned in Latin. This has implications for the argument in favour of a medicalization of society in the medieval period, outlined in the Introduction. These intertwined themes of vernacularization, medicalization, and change over time will form the basis for discussion in this thesis, which will demonstrate the widespread appearance of humoral discourse in a religious setting in this period.

Chapter Two: Penitentials and Sermons

One genre of religious writing in which medical imagery, and particularly humoral theory, appears throughout the medieval period is penitentials and sermons. This chapter will not just focus on homiletic material but also the broader literature of pastoral care in this period, such as scholastic *Summa* and confessional guides for parish priests.

Background

Beverley Maine Kienzle lists the defining characteristics of sermons in this period as the following: essentially oral in nature, designed to be preached to a live audience; instructive and exhortative; and concerned with faith and morals.[1] Sermons contained elements belonging to other genres, such as drama, narrative, poetry and fiction. Kienzle argues that these literary and dramatic qualities of sermons meant they did not exist in isolation.[2] Medieval Christian rhetoric developed from a common tradition, using models from Scripture, the classics, and patristic texts from both east and west. Especially influential on the sermon tradition were the writings of St Augustine and Gregory the Great.[3] After 1200, this combination of sources came to circulate in the Latin west as the *artes praedicandi*. These guides for preachers assembled together a body of conventions governing the sermon genre, as well as theological views on the importance and role of preaching.[4] Pastoral guides such as this were important in influencing the sermon tradition, which formed part of the wider pastoral movement (and associated pastoral literature) taking shape from the end of the twelfth century.

Sermons are distinguishable from homilies in the later medieval period. Kienzle defines the homily as exegeting "progressively on a complete pericope, phrase by phrase", while the sermon focuses on "certain

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[1] Beverley Maine Kienzle, ed., 'Introduction', *The Sermon* (Turnhout, 2008), p.151.
[2] Ibid., p.150.
[3] Ibid., p.157.
[4] Ibid., p.158.

phrases, words, or images to develop its themes".[5] The homily has at most three structural steps: narrative of the gospel, allegorical exegesis, and moral exegesis. By contrast, the sermon could often be much more complicated in structure.[6] Sermons came to prevail after 1200, coming to replace the earlier homilies. Written sermons formed a genre distinguished from the actual act of preaching, providing devotional or contemplative reading.[7] They appear within various types of manuscript collections, some alongside other preaching material, but also among collections of religious literature designed for individual reading. Kienzle has traced the appearance of sermons in different versions that represent different phases of transmission, from model sermon collections to versions designed for private reading.[8]

As with other religious genres that will be discussed in later chapters, the sermon tradition did not remain immune to the process of vernacularization that was occurring in the later Middle Ages.[9] Since the late eleventh century, sermons were understood to be the primary medium for Christian clergy to convey religious education to lay audiences. The emergence of Middle English as a language of literature in the later medieval period was therefore suitable for use in sermons as a medium for education and for the communication of ideas.[10] However, compared with the vast quantity of known Latin sermons, the number of remaining Middle English sermons is small: only 20 or so complete collections are known to remain, and the majority of these date from late in the period.[11] Furthermore, H. Leith Spencer highlights that many vernacular sermons were translations of Latin originals.[12] Spencer suggests this was because vernacular sermon writers felt they had no abiding authority. While English was coming to be viewed with increasing respect as a medium for writing during this period, there was

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[5] Ibid., p.162.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., p.159.
[8] Ibid., p.171.
[9] See Chapter One.
[10] H. Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1993), p.88.
[11] Ibid., p.615.
[12] Ibid., p.635.

a long-standing belief that complex doctrine could not and should not be expressed in English. Nevertheless, it is likely that more sermons were delivered in Middle English than the number of extant collections in the vernacular suggest. Kienzle argues that medieval sermons were a fluid genre, and that written sermon texts are an inexact reflection of actual preaching.[13] She points to evidence that sermons preached in the vernacular were generally taken down into written form in Latin. Equally, model sermons written in Latin were often delivered in the vernacular, with experienced preachers expected to be able to translate on the spot.[14] Latin sermons often incorporated snatches of Middle English (known as 'macaronic' sermons), demonstrating the inter-changeability between the two languages for preachers. There is virtually no proof that the surviving Middle English sermons were ever preached in the form in which they have been recorded, or indeed if they were ever preached at all. Rather, the fact that they were worked up for publication suggests they may have been intended as model sermons for the use of others, perhaps parish priests (who were expected to preach in the vernacular).[15] This implies that vernacular sermons would have been preached more often than the small numbers of remaining written works would suggest.

However, Middle English was not deemed suitable for use in sermons for all audiences. While priests with parish duties generally demanded sermon material in Middle English, the higher-ranking clergy and regular orders continued to write sermons in Latin.[16] Spencer has identified that a number of Middle English sermon collections were the work of secular priests, confirming the language divide in sermons depending on the intended audience for a work. Spencer suggests that monastic sermons generally would have been delivered in Latin inside the monastery, but in the vernacular outside. One proven exception is in Cistercian houses, where the rule specified that the vernacular was to

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[13] Kienzle, 'Introduction', *The Sermon,* p.168.
[14] Ibid., p.170.
[15] Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, p.609.
[16] Ibid., p.57.

be used for sermons on major feast days when the lay brothers were present.[17] However, this is further proof that the language in which a sermon was delivered was dependent upon the intended audience. The laity was customarily addressed in the vernacular, and clerical assemblies in Latin. In the case of mixed audiences, these could be addressed in the vernacular, or both languages could be used.[18]

The intended audience also influenced the content of sermons in the later medieval period. Spencer suggests that the increased emphasis on virtue and penance in sermons at this time reflected the growing diversity of lay society.[19] It is likely that many sermons written for lay audiences would have been addressed to an audience of mixed social standing and levels of education. Specific address to particular social groups is evident in the occasional use of estates literature in Middle English sermons.[20] One such example is the Paul's Cross sermon of c.1388 by secular chaplain Thomas Wimbledon, which dissects the duties of each of the three estates.[21] The use of the vernacular in sermons reflected their moral purpose, which was not only to teach, but to move the audience to embrace the faith. Many sermons in the later medieval period emphasised movement away from vice towards virtue and instructed on the doctrines of the Church, with the emphasis on confession and penitence reflecting the wider pastoral movement at this time.[22] Written sermons were therefore important preaching aids created to help priests, friars and masters with this public duty of bringing the laity to the faith.[23] Model sermons were produced by learned clergy for the benefit of the less learned, with Kienzle describing the sermon as providing an intermediary discourse for the translation of "clerical culture into the thought and linguistic forms of the laity".[24]

[17] Ibid., p.287.
[18] Ibid., p.601.
[19] Ibid., p.350.
[20] Ibid., p.67.
[21] For a modern edition see I. K. Knight, ed., *Wimbledon's Sermon 'Redde rationem villicationis tue': a Middle English Sermon of the Fourteenth Century* (Pittsburgh, 1967), esp. pp.71-6.
[22] Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, p.328.
[23] Ibid., p.327.
[24] Kienzle, 'Introduction', *The Sermon,* p.154.

Viewed in these terms, the long-standing use of the vernacular as the language of preaching (although not necessarily of written sermons) was an important part of the pastoral aims which informed all of the religious genres discussed in this thesis.

This chapter will focus on the use of medical theory in sermon literature in the medieval period, beginning with the Latin penitential tradition. The appearance of humoral language in the penitentials is mirrored in the sermons and preaching guides produced in Latin in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This is also replicated in the vernacular sermons of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which were predominantly based on earlier Latin sermon material.

Penitential Tradition

The penitential tradition was an important parallel to the early pastoral tradition, providing confessional guides for use in monastic, and later priestly, contexts. The use of medical imagery and language in the penitentials was influential on later sermons, many of which expanded upon the use of medical themes and language in a pastoral context.

One group of penitentials that was particularly influential in England were the Irish penitentials. The tenth-century penitential handbooks that were produced in England, both in Latin and the vernacular, stemmed from continental models that had in turn been derived from early Irish penitentials of the seventh and eighth centuries.[25] The penitential handbooks were distinguished from canonical collections or other law codes because they were pastoral, with a role not simply in preserving moral codes, but in enforcing them. The practical aspect of these penitential handbooks in providing a guide for priests enacting confession explains their long-standing popularity across medieval Europe. In England, penitentials were often combined into one large manuscript for reference. One example is the tenth-century manuscript, Oxford, Bodl., Bodley MS 311, which contained the Penitential of Cummean, the Theodoran penitential *Canones Gregorii*, an anonymous

[25] Allen J. Frantzen, 'The Tradition of Penitentials in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 11:1 (1982), p.23.

handbook and a canonical collection, all with an Old English gloss.[26] Stimulated by the reform movement of the tenth century, English bishops were increasingly preoccupied with penance, with their efforts to educate the clergy and the laity alike having important consequences for religious life and literary culture. Allen J. Frantzen suggests that the penitentials produced in the tenth century and beyond demonstrated the continuity of reformers with earlier traditions, while simultaneously departing from some aspects of received tradition. He argues that the penitentials and confessors's handbooks produced in England and on the continent at this time reworked familiar materials into texts with new forms and functions.[27]

Much of the material in the penitentials that circulated in England was derived from the ideas of John Cassian (c.360-470). Cassian was a hermit who spent many years with the ascetic monks in the Egyptian desert.[28] He later founded two Egyptian-style monasteries in southern Gaul. These foundations were some of the first such institutes in the west, and served as a model for later monastic development. Cassian composed three influential treatises: *De Institutis Coenobiorum et de Octo Principalium Vitiorum Remediis Libri XII* (*The Institutes of the Cenobia and the Remedies for the Eight Principal Vices*), *Collationes* (*The Conferences*), and *De Incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium* (*On the Incarnation of Christ Against Nestorius*).[29] Cassian developed medical imagery in his writing that resonated throughout the medieval period. However, rather than developing the imagery of Christ as a 'physician of souls' like his contemporary St Augustine, Cassian employed humoral language to focus on the sick soul of the sinner. John T. McNeill suggests that advancement in medical theory and practice in the second and third centuries influenced the ideas and

[26] See ibid., p.37 for a description of this manuscript.
[27] Ibid., p.53.
[28] Boniface Ramsey, 'Introduction', in John Cassian, *The Conferences*, trans. Ramsey (New York, 1997), p.5.
[29] Ibid.

practices of the Egyptian monks in the fifth century.[30] Cassian's *Collationes* were based on his time spent with the Egyptian monks and was demonstrably influenced by such ideas, in particular the use of the medical notion of 'contraries curing contraries' which Cassian employed in the context of sin and virtue.

Like Augustine, Cassian employed the metaphor of God as physician in the *Collationes*. However, Cassian directly employed medical language of the humors to further the imagery of the sick soul:

> Omnium uitiorum unus fons atque principium est, secundum qualitatem uero partis illius uel ut ita dixerim membri, quod in anima fuerit uitatum, diuersa uocabula passionum corruptionumque sortitur. Quod nonnumquam etiam morborum corporalium probatur exemplo, quorum cum una sit causa, in diuersa tamen aegritudinum genera pro qualitate membrorum quae fuerint occupata distinguitur. Etenim cum arcem corporis, id est caput uis noxii umoris obsederit, cefalargiae procreat passionem: cum nero aures oculosue peruaserit, in otalgicum siue opthalmicum uertitur morbum: cum se ad articulos quosque et ad manuum summa transfuderit, articularis atque chiragrica dicitur ualitudo: cum autem ad pedum ima defluxerit, podagra mutato nomine nuncupatur: totque uocabulis una atque eadem noxii umoris origo distinguitur, quot membrorum ceperit portiones.[31]
>
> [There is a single source and well-spring for all the vices, but, according to the nature of the part or what I might refer to as the member which has been damaged in the soul, it is called by the names of different passions and pathologies. This is also demonstrably the case sometimes with bodily illness: although they have one cause, they are nonetheless divided into different kinds of sickness in accordance with the nature of the members that have been affected. For when a harmful humor seizes forcibly upon the body's citadel – that is, the head – it produces a headache; when it gets into the ears and eyes it becomes otalgia or opthalmia; when it spreads to certain joints and to the extremities of the hands it is called arthritis and

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[30] John T. McNeill, and Helena M. Gamer, eds., 'Introduction' to *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A Translation of the Principle 'Libri Poenitentiales'*, 2nd edition (New York, 1990), p.44.
[31] Iohannis Cassiani, 'Collationes', in M. Petschenig, ed., *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vienna, 1886), xiii, pp.690-1.

> gout; but when it gets down to the feet its name is changed and it is called podagra. A harmful humor with one and the same origin is referred to by as many terms as there are parts of members that it has laid hold to.[32]

Cassian compared this process of harmful humors infecting the body to the way in which vice infects the reasonable part of the soul with various sins. Humoral theory permeates the logic of discussion throughout Cassian's text. In his discussion of the sin of lechery, Cassian refers to nocturnal emissions experienced by men, and why these can afflict even the most holy of men without the necessity of impure thought or desire. He turned to contemporary medical theory to explain this, emphasising that it results from a superfluity that is the natural process of concoction of food and drink. Thus, fasting is beneficial to the soul not just for the avoidance of gluttony but also to ward off the dangers of lechery or sexual impurity:

> escae potusque est nimietas castiganda. Horum namque redundantis istiusmodi umores propensius gigni necesse est, et quoniam concreti non possunt non egeri atque ab ipsius naturae lege propelli, sub occasione cuiuscumque pruritus atque inlusionis emergunt. Escarum uero satietate subtracta consequens est illas quoque inmundas egestiones tardius generari. Et ita fit, ut quemadmodum fluxus earum, ita etiam inlusio dormientes uel rarius uel subtilius inquietet, quia non tam egestio ex imaginatione quam imaginatio ex egestionis nimetate descendit.[33]
>
> [we must refrain from a surfeit of food and drink. A superfluity of these inevitably causes this kind of moisture [semen] to increase, and since, when it is accumulated, it must be expelled and released by the very law of nature, it is voided when there is an irritation or an illusion. But when there is no repletion in the matter of eating, these unclean emissions are generated more slowly. Thus an ejaculation, and so also an illusion, will disturb sleepers more frequently and not so strongly, because an emission does not

[32] English translation from John Cassian, *The Conferences*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (New York, 1997), p.837.
[33] Cassiani, 'Collationes', p.623.

> come so much from the imagination as the imagination comes from an excess of fluid].[34]

However, Cassian was keen to emphasise the need for balance and moderation in all things, including fasting. Again, this view is in line with humoral theory, which emphasised the need for balance in order to maintain health. Thus:

> in utraque enim parte sustinebit maximum detrimentum, quis quis inaequalitatem tenens nunc uentrem ieiuniorum ariditate constringit, nunc escarum nimietate distendit.[35]
>
> [Whoever acts inconsistently, at one time tightening his stomach with the dryness of fasting and at another bloating it with excess food, will in either case do considerable damage].[36]

Despite Cassian's assertions elsewhere in the *Collationes* of the temptations of the flesh, and his rejection of the body as a fleshly prison for the soul, he nevertheless emphasised the need for "temperate balance" by which to remain "unharmed by both extremes".[37] This applied not only to the needs of the soul, but to the needs of the body as well. This requirement to bear in mind the health of the body as well as that of the soul recurs in many religious texts throughout the medieval period, and is a recurring point of discussion in this thesis.

McNeill has noted the influence of medical practitioners and theoreticians on the circle of Egyptian monks with which Cassian was associated when writing the *Collationes*, and it is likely that this his use of humoral language is a demonstration of Cassian's own medical knowledge gained through this exposure. Despite his clear knowledge of humoral theory and his use of medical knowledge for practical purposes (such as to explain nocturnal emissions), Cassian's use of humoral language remains largely within the realms of imagery. By comparing the harmful effect of humors on the body with the effects of vice on the soul, Cassian arguably provided a more elaborate and

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[34] Cassian, 'Conferences', p.769.
[35] Cassiani, 'Collationes', p.61.
[36] Cassian, 'Conferences', p.101.
[37] Ibid., p.100.

learned extension of the imagery of a sick soul found in the writings of his contemporaries such as St Augustine. Nevertheless, his emphasis on the humors to explain some aspect of sin came to be more widely treated in some texts of religious instruction. Cassian's writings were particularly well-known in the early Celtic Church, and his distinction of eight capital sins came to establish a tradition in the penitentials that continued throughout the medieval period.[38] However, Cassian's writings remained influential in themselves: his *Collationes* have been recognised as influencing some of the later medieval texts studied in this thesis, such as *Ancrene Wisse*.[39]

One way in which Cassian's religious adaptation of medical ideas came to permeate more widely was through the penitential tradition, having a strong influence on the early Irish penitentials in particular.[40] Historians such as Frantzen and others have demonstrated that many of the Celtic penitential handbooks were arranged around Cassian's list of eight principal vices.[41] Penitentials were particularly popular in early Christian Ireland, coming to introduce this new form of penance to the west. Alongside emphasis on the vices, the penitential tradition conceived of the act of penance as a form of medicine for the soul. The idea of Christ as a healer of souls was prevalent in the patristic theology of the Church as this time, demonstrated in the writings of Christian authorities such as St Augustine. However, what was different about the penitentials was the inclusion of the humoral idea that contraries cured contraries within the notion of penance. The Penitential of Finnian notes:

> Sed e contrariis, ut diximus, festinemus curare contraria et mundemus ea de cordibus nostris et insinuamus uirtutes caelestes pro illis.[42]

[38] John T. McNeill, 'Medicine for Sin as Described in the Penitentials', *Church History*, 1:1 (1932), pp.14-26.
[39] Bella Millett, 'Introduction', *Ancrene Wisse* (Oxford, 2005), ii, p.xxxi.
[40] McNeill and Gamer, eds., 'Introduction', *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, p.19.
[41] Allen J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick, 1983), p.50.
[42] Anon., 'Penitentialis Vinniani', in Ludwig Bieler, ed., *The Irish Penitentials* (Dublin, 1963), p.84.

[By contraries, as we said, let us make haste to cure contraries and to cleanse away the faults from our hearts and introduce virtues in their places.][43]

While the Penitential of Cummean similarly emphasised:

> Statuunt ergo, ut octo principalia vitia humane saluti contraia, his octo contrariis sanentur remediis. Vetus namque proverbium est: contraria contrariis sanantur.[44]
>
> [The eight principal vices contrary to human salvation shall be healed by these eight contrary remedies. For it is an old proverb: Contraries are cured by contraries.][45]

This idea of contraries had flourished in the Methodist School in the second century, which had been highly influential on the writings of Cassian. In particular he had been influenced by Soranus of Ephesus, the most famous physician associated with the Methodist School, and whose writings dominated medical practice in the late classical period.[46] In the Irish penitentials influenced by Cassian's writings, penance therefore constituted a treatment in itself, effective towards the recovery of health that had been lost through sin. A further consequence of adopting medical ideas was the notion expressed in the penitentials that penance had to be adjusted to suit an individual's personality. Just as a physician altered his prescription based on the patient's individual humoral complexion, so should a priest take the individual into account when dealing with a transgression:

> Tanto maior potentia medici quanto magis creuit morbus egroti. Hinc procurantibus aliorum sanare uulnera solerter intuendum est cuius aetatis et sexus sit pecans, qua erudition inbutus, qua fortitudine exstat, quali grauatione conpulsus est peccare, quali pasione inpugnatur, quanto tempore in diliciis remansit, quali lacrimabilitate et labore affligitur et qualiter a mundialibus separatur.[47]

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[43] English translation from 'Penitential of Finnian' in McNeill and Gamer, eds., *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, p.92.
[44] Anon., 'Poenitentiale Cummenai' in F. W. H. Wasserschleben, ed., *De Bussordnungen de abendländischen Kirche* (Halle, 1851), p.463.
[45] English translation from 'Penitential of Cummean' in McNeill and Gamer, eds., *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, p.101.
[46] McNeill and Gamer, eds., 'Introduction', *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, pp.44-5.
[47] Anon., 'Paenitentiale quod dicitur Bigotianum', in Bieler, ed., *The Irish Penitentials*, p.198.

> [Let the power of the physician become greater in the degree in which the fever of the sick man increases. Hence those who take care to heal the wounds of others are to observe carefully what is the age and sex of the sinner, with what learning he is instructed, with what courage he is distinguished, with how great force he has been driven to sin, with what kind of passion he is assailed, how long he remained in sinful delight, with what sorrow and labour he is afflicted, and how he is separated from worldly things.][48]

Similarly, according to the Penitential of Columban:

> Diuersitas culparum diuersitatem facit paenitentiarum. Nam et corporum medici diuersis medicamenta generibus conponunt; aliter enim vulnera, aliter morbos, aliter tumores, aliter liuores, aliter putredines, aliter caligines, aliter confractiones, aliter combustiones curant. Ita igitur etiam spiritales medici, diuersis curationum generibus animarum vulnera, morbos, culpas, Dolores, aegritudines, infirmitates, sanere debent.[49]
>
> [Diversity of guilt occasions diversity of penalty; for even the physicians of bodies prepare their remedies in various sorts. For they treat wounds in one way, fevers in another, swellings in another, bruises in another, festering sores in another, defective eyesight in another, fractures in another, burns in another. So therefore the spiritual physicians ought also to heal with various sorts of treatments the wounds, fevers, transgressions, sorrows, sicknesses, and infirmities of souls.][50]

This furthers the imagery equating sickness with sin that is a familiar part of the writings of St Augustine and Cassian, but adds a further dimension by emphasising the need to take the circumstances of an individual sinner into account, just as a physician must take into account the humoral complexion of his patient before starting treatment.

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48 English translation from Anon., 'Bigotian Penitential', in McNeill and Gamer, eds., *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, p.149.

49 Anon., 'Paenitentiale S. Columbani', in Jean Laporte, ed., *Le Penitentiel de Saint Colomban* (Tournai, Paris, Rome and New York, 1958), p.94.

50 English translation from Anon., 'Penitential of Columban, B-text', in McNeill and Gamer, eds., *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, p.251.

The principles cited in the Irish penitentials were based on Cassian's observations of the custom of confession in the community of Egyptian monks that he visited in the fifth century. The influence of Cassian's writings spread, aided by missionary groups, across continental Europe and into Ireland. One channel through which eastern monasticism came to exert such a strong influence on early Irish monasticism and penitential practices was the commercial and monastic channels that existed between Ireland and France.[51] Another channel for eastern ideas to Ireland was through Iberia. Frantzen proposes that the evidence of Spanish influence on early Irish prayers suggests Spain may have served as a major route by which eastern monastic teachings reached Ireland.[52] However, this contact was two sided. After the development of the Penitential handbooks in Ireland, this tradition was spread to the continent through Irish foundations established there. Of key importance to the spread of the Irish penitential tradition to Europe and beyond was the mission of Irish monastic figures such as Columbanus.[53] Frantzen argues that the penitentials had always been intended for an audience outside of the monastic community, pointing out that none of the Irish penitentials failed to consider the conduct of lay people.[54] Furthermore, like the catechisms, the penitentials were written for easy recall, aiding their popularity.[55]

The idea of contraries and the humoral complexions were aspects of humoral discourse that remained popular not only in the penitential tradition, but also in the wider context of religious literature. The penitentials served as an important means of transmission of these ideas through their circulation on the continent. Medical imagery equating sickness with sin, and the inclusion of medical ideas of contraries and complexions, remained an essential part of the pastoral

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[51] Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to England* (London, 1972), pp.79-86.
[52] Frantzen, *Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp.26-7.
[53] Ibid., p.31.
[54] Ibid., p.36.
[55] Ibid., p.50.

tradition. This is evident in their inclusion in later confessional guides and sermons.

Sermons and Pastoral Guides: Eleventh to Twelfth Centuries

Written sermons, including didactic and pastoral guidance works compiled for lesser educated members of the clergy, followed the penitential tradition of using medical imagery throughout the Middle Ages.

One of the most influential examples of medical imagery appearing in a confessional context outside of the penitentials in England was *Peniteas Cito Peccator*. This brief poem was composed by William de Montibus (c.1140-1213). William was one of a number of theologians at Paris during the last part of the twelfth century whose teachings were characterised by an interest in practical, pastoral theology and in the training of clergy for exercising the care of souls. William later taught at the cathedral school in Lincoln, which was one of the most well-known schools in England.[56] William composed four encyclopaedic *Summae* for the purposes of teaching his students: an introduction to theology entitled *Numerale*; *Distinctiones theologice*, which collected theological and scriptural terms and distinguished their usages; *Proverbia,* a list of proverbs; and *Versarius*, a group of verses.[57]

One of William's more popular poems, the *Peniteas Cito* circulated independently as a guide to hearing and making confession. Joseph Goering says of the *Peniteas Cito* that it became "one of the most popular vehicles for conveying the essentials of penance to medieval European confessors",[58] enjoying an extraordinary popularity throughout Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Manuscript evidence from more than 150 extant witnesses suggests that this poem became one of the mainstays of primary education in grammar and theological schools.[59] Furthermore, it was printed, along with William's

[56] Joseph Goering, 'Montibus, William de (*d.* 1213)', *ODNB*.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Joseph Goering, ed., *William de Montibus: The Schools and Literature of Pastoral Care* (Toronto, 1992), p.107.
[59] Ibid.

gloss, at least 51 times between 1485 and 1520.[60] Vincent Gillespie notes that as well as being part of the regular collection of didactic reading texts, it also circulated widely in clerical miscellanies as a “valuably economic presentation of penitential commonplace.”[61] The popularity of *Peniteas Cito* was partly due to the fact that it is the first known confessional treatise written in verse, which made it especially suitable for education purposes. The poem made use of the popular medical imagery equating sin with sickness and confession with spiritual ‘cure’, a popular theme of penitentials (as discussed in the previous section). However, of greatest interest to this study is the reference in the poem to humoral notions such as contraries and complexions, which is one of the earliest examples of medical theory appearing in a religious didactic context:

> Antidotum spirituale
> Ut medici curant uario medicamine corpus,
> Non sanat febrem quod uulnus siue tumorem,
> Sic anime uarias egre poscunt medicinas.
> Opponas igitur anime contraria morbis:
> Propria det cupidus, se castret luxuriosus;
> Unuide liuorem depone, superbe tumorem;
> Sobrietasque gulam, patientia reprimat iram;
> Amoueat lesus rancorem, tedia mestus;
> Potus aque redimat excessus ebrietatis;
> Carnis delicias castiget uirga flagellans.
> Ut bene peniteat ablatum predo reponat.[62]
>
> [The spiritual antidote
> As doctors cure the body with various medicines
> (He does not heal a fever as a wound or tumour),
> So sickly souls demand various treatments.
> You should impose the contraries of the soul’s diseases:
> The avaricious man should give away his possessions;
> The lustful man should castrate himself.
> Envious man, put aside jealousy; proud man, put aside your puffing up.
> Sobriety restrains gluttony; patience, anger.
> Self-criticism removes resentment; sadness, sloth.]63

[60] Goering, ‘Montibus’, ODNB.
[61] Gillespie, *Looking in Holy Books*, p.6.
[62] William de Montibus, ‘Peniteas cito peccator’, in Joseph Goering, ed., *William de Montibus: The Schools and Literature of Pastoral Care* (Toronto, 1992), p.131.

The discussion of complexions in this paragraph of the poem reflects the type of humoral discourse seen in the writings of Cassian and the penitential tradition described in the previous section. The notion of contraries is here applied to diseases of the soul as a list of four sins. However, this seems to be an inferred reference to the four humoral complexions. As discussed in more detail in Chapter One, the humoral complexions were associated with different personality traits through physiognomy. The religious implication of this was that an individual's humoral complexion could influence which sins one was more likely to fall into. Avarice was associated with the cold, dry melancholic complexion; lust with the hot and dry sanguine complexion; envy with the cold and moist phlegmatic complexion; and anger with the moist, hot choleric complexion. This poem mirrors the application of humoral theory in the same confessional context as the penitential tradition. However, unlike the penitentials, the *Peniteas Cito* was not restricted to use by clergymen for confessional purposes. The didactic nature of this text, and its evident use in classrooms, suggests a more widespread audience. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, at the height of the popularity of the *Peniteas Cito*, this would likely also have included the laity. Although Church schools in England were initially founded to supply a literate clergy, by the fourteenth century many schools were providing education for those destined for lay careers in secular governing institutions. Marjorie Currie Woods, among others, has shown that many towns had schools that were open to any boy approved by the master, while some monasteries ran almonry schools for non-clerical students.[64]

The influence of William de Montibus's poem also ran beyond the classroom. Amongst his pupils was the famous pastoral reformer Bishop Robert Grosseteste, who similarly wrote of the need for clerics

[63] Translation from Marjorie Curry Woods and Rita Copeland, 'Classroom and Confession', in D. Wallace, ed., *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 2002), p.386.
[64] Ibid., p.378.

to assess an individual's humoral complexion before imposing penance, since complexion had a bearing on an individual's inclination to sin:

> Haec sunt diligenter consideranda in penitentcia iniungenda […] complexio: si colericus, vel sanguines, vel melancolius.[65]
>
> [These are to be carefully considered in imposing penance […] (of) complexion: if choleric, or sanguine, or melancholic].[66]

Templum Dei (c.1235-50) is one of Grosseteste's most famous works, surviving in over 90 manuscripts from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. This pastoral manual for priests contained the theology of confession, as well as useful tables and diagrams which summarised some of the more complex theological discussions on penance. However, even earlier than Grosseteste's manual for priests, a more extensive treatment of medical theory with regards to confession is found in Thomas de Chobham's *Summa Confessorum* (c.1216). In an extension of the imagery found in some of the early penitentials, Chobham envisages the priest throughout the text in terms of a medical doctor who must take into account the complex symptoms of his patient.[67] Chobham's *Summa Confessorum* was designed to aid priests in fulfilment of their duties. Cate Gunn suggests that the intended readership for this work may have been parish clergy, or those responsible for their training and education.[68] Duties of the parish priest, and their limitations, are set out in clearly defined chapters. The text further details the things necessary for a priest to know, especially how to hear confession and instruct the penitent. The emphasis is on satisfaction, as well as contrition and confession, which was essential for the sacrament of penance as it required some suffering. The language with which Chobham describes penance is both legal and

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[65] Robert Grosseteste, *Templum Dei*, eds. Joseph Goering and F. A. C. Mantello (Toronto, 1984), p.64.
[66] Translation is my own.
[67] Thomae de Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield (Paris, 1968). Such imagery was widespread in the Middle Ages, and has been the subject of much scholarship. For more on this imagery in the context of sermons, see Joseph Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion* (Oxford, 1998), especially pp.181-7.
[68] Cate Gunn, *Ancrene Wisse* (Cardiff, 2008), p.94.

medicinal: there must be a penalty for sin, but this acts as a medicine for the curing of the soul.[69] The same idea also appeared in the *Summula* published by Bishop Peter Quivil in the Synod of Exeter, 1287:

> Sed quia confession est curatio vulnerum anime, sicut oportet vulnera carnis ostendere medico vel cirurgico omnia nudata, sic oportet omnia vulnera mentis spirituali medico revelare, id est in omnibus circumstantiis et cum omnibus que peccatum possunt aliquatenus aggravare.[70]
>
> [Confession is the treatment of wounds of the soul, and just as it is necessary to expose naked all wounds to a physician or surgeon, so must all wounds of the conscience be revealed to the spiritual physician, that is, in all the circumstances and with everything that can compound a sin to some degree.][71]

The link between medicine and confession demonstrated in the writings of Chobham, Quivil and Grosseteste reflects the reasoning behind the necessity of confession given in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, Canon 21:

> Omnis utrisque sexus fidelis, postquam ad annos discretionis pervenerit, omnia sua solus peccata confiteatur fideliter, saltem semel in anno proprio sacerdoti, et iniunctam sibi poenitentiam studeat pro viribus adimplere, suspiciens reverenter ad minus in pascha eucharistiae sacramentum, nisi forte de consilio proprii sacerdotis ob aliquam rationabilem causam ad tempus ab eius perceptione duxerit abstinendum; alioquin et vivens ab ingressu ecclesiae arceatur et moriens christiana careat sepultura. Unde hoc salutare statutum frequenter in ecclesiis publicetur, ne quisquam ignorantiae caecitate velamen excusationis assumat. Si quis autem alieno sacerdoti voluerit iusta de causa sua confiteri peccata, licentiam prius postulet et obtineat a proprio sacerdote, cum aliter ille ipsum non posit solver vel ligare. Sacerdos autem sit discretus et cautus, ut more periti medici superinfundat vinum et oleum vulneribus sauciati, diligenter inquirens et peccatoris circumstantias et peccati, per quas prudenter intelligat,

[69] For some examples see Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, pp.6, 9, 17-20.
[70] 'Statutes of Exeter II (1287), Summula of Peter Quivil', in F. M. Powicke and C. R. Cheney, eds., *Councils and Synods* (Oxford, 1964), ii, p.1069.
[71] English translation from Woods and Copeland, 'Classroom and Confession', p.394.

> quale illi consilium debeat exhibere et cuiusmodi remedium adhibere, diversis experimentis utendo ad sanandum aegrotum. Caveat autem omnino, ne verbo vel signo vel alio quovis modo prodat aliquatenus peccatorem, sed si prudentiori consilio indiguerit, illud absque ulla expressione personae caute requirat, quoniam qui peccatum in poenitentiali iudicio sibi detectum praesumpserit revelare, non solum a sacerdotali officio deponendum decernimus, verum etiam ad agendam perpetuam poenitentiam in arctum monasterium detrudendum.[72]
>
> [All the faithful of both sexes shall after they have reached the age of discretion faithfully confess all their sins at least once a year to their own (parish) priest and perform to the best of their ability the penance imposed, receiving reverently at least at Easter the sacrament of the Eucharist, unless perchance at the advice of their own priest they may for a good reason abstain for a time from its reception; otherwise they shall be cut off from the Church [excommunicated] during life and deprived of Christian burial in death. Wherefore, let this salutary decree be published frequently in the churches, that no one may find in the plea of ignorance a shadow of excuse. But if anyone for a good reason should wish to confess his sins to another priest, let him first seek and obtain permission from his own (parish) priest, since otherwise he cannot loose or bind him. Let the priest be discreet and cautious that he may pour wine and oil into the wounds of one injured after the manner of a skilful physician, carefully inquiring into the circumstances of the sinner and the sin, from the nature of which he may understand what kind of advice to give and what remedy to apply, making use of different experiments to heal the sick one. But let him exercise the greatest precaution that he does not in any degree by word, sign or any other manner make known the sinner, but should he need more prudent counsel, let him seek it cautiously without any mention of the person. He who dares to reveal a sin confided to him in the tribunal of penance, we decree that he be not only deposed from the sacerdotal office but also relegated to a monastery of strict observance to do penance for the remainder of his life.][73]

This demonstrates the important implications of humoral theory in a confessional context in this period, which was reflected in the summary

[72] Anon., 'Concilium Lateranense IV', ed. Tanner, i, p.245.
[73] English translation from Schroeder, trans., *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils*, pp.259-60.

guides for parish priests and other didactic works of religious instruction that were being produced at this time.

However, the use of medical theory was not only confined to the context of confession in this period. Medical language also appeared in a monastic context, including writings by influential theologians such as Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153). The appearance of medical theory in Bernard's writings goes beyond the simplistic language of contraries and the imagery of medicine for the soul prevalent in contemporary confessional contexts. Rather, Bernard employed humoral language directly in a more complex way. One such example is the extensive use of humoral language in his *Sermons on the Song of Songs*. In Bernard's sermon 36, *On the Acquiring of Knowledge*, direct comparison is made between body and soul by comparing sin with corrupt humors of the body:

> Reliqui omnes audient: scienti bonum et non facienti, peccatum est ei, ac si per similitudinem dicat: Sumenti cibum, et non digerenti, perniciosum est ei. Cibus siquidem indigestus, et qui bonam non habet decoctionem, malos generat humores, et corrumpit corpus, et non nutrit. Ita et multa scientia ingesta stomach animae, quae est memoria, si decocta igne charitatis non fuerit, et sic per quosdam artus animae, mores scilicet atque actus, transfusa atque digesta quatenus ipsa de bonis quae noverit, vita attestante et moribus, bona efficiatur: none illa scientia reputabitur in peccatum, tamquam cibus conversus in pravos noxiosque humores? An non malos humor peccatum? An non mali humores pravi mores? An non inflationes et tortiones in conscientia sustinebit qui hujusmodi est, sciens videlicet bonum, et non faciens?[74]
>
> [Let all others heed the warning: he who knows what he ought to do and fails to do it, commits sin; just as food eaten but not digested is injurious to one's health. Food that is badly cooked and indigestible induces physical disorders and damages the body instead of nourishing it. In the same way if a glut of knowledge stuffed in the memory, that stomach of the mind, has not been cooked on the fire of love, and transfused and digested

[74] Sancti Bernardi, 'Sermones in Cantica Canticorum', in H. Hurter, ed., *Sanctorum Patrum Opuscula Selecta* (Paris and London, 1888), v, pp.319-20.

> by certain skills of the soul, its habits and actions – since, as life and conduct bear witness, the mind is rendered good through its knowledge of good – will no knowledge be reckoned sinful, like the food that produces irregular and harmful humors? Is not sin a humor of evil? Are not bad habits humors of evil? Will not a man in this condition suffer in his conscience inflammations and torments, since he does not act as he knows he should?][75]

Here Bernard extends the metaphor of bodily sickness for spiritual sickness from the *Christus Medicus* and penitential traditions. He is making a point about the soul, but he uses humoral imagery of the body to do so. This reflects the inextricable link between body and soul in medieval theology, developing the equation of sickness with sin through more extensive use of humoral language. By echoing the language and ideas of medical regimen in warning of the dangerous effects of poor diet on the balance of humors in the body, Bernard turns to the humoral ideas behind regimen to illustrate his point. As a highly learned man, Bernard would likely have had knowledge of (and access to) the newly emerging classical and Islamic medical science that was becoming increasingly available in the Latin west in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[76] As discussed in Chapter One, monasteries were important centres for the acquisition and translation of such texts, with informal networks between monasteries allowing for the dissemination of key works.[77] Bernard's appropriation of the ideas and language found in learned medical texts reflects the nature of the relationship between the body and soul. In this context, Bernard's use of the language of the body (as made up of the four humors) to discuss the health of the soul is a natural consequence of this interrelationship.

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[75] English translation from *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux: On the Song of Songs II,* trans. Kilian Walsh (Kalamazoo, 1976), pp.176-7.

[76] See Brian Patrick McGuire, ed., *A Companion to Bernard of Clairvaux* (Leiden and Boston, 2011) for recent scholarship on Bernard's education and influences. Although Bernard's medical knowledge is not touched upon, this collection of essays gives a sense of Bernard's thirst for knowledge and the value he placed on learning. As outlined in Chapter One, the importance placed on medical theory in the universities and in the medieval scientific worldview as second to theology meant that Bernard would almost certainly have had knowledge of humoral theory from a theological standpoint.

[77] See Chapters One and Five.

Bernard's use of humoral theory in *Sermons on the Song of Songs* suggests an intended audience literate in humoral theory, or at least aware of it. Interestingly these sermons were never delivered, but were instead written down for transmission to various religious houses.[78] Monastic sermons were diffused through an existing and expanding network of monastic houses at this time. There was regular communication between monasteries through exchange of letters and books, which could contain sermons.[79] Liturgical books were often among the first to arrive at new foundations, as gifts or loans to be copied out. Sermons were among the books considered most necessary for a monastery, due to their importance in the Rule of St Benedict.[80] David Bell's study of the holdings of English Cistercian libraries suggests that *Sermons on the Song of Songs* were widely distributed, and not just in Cistercian houses. This was in contrast to works by other Cistercians, which were likely to remain within Cistercian houses only.[81] Thus, they were designed for a more general monastic audience than just the monks at Clairvaux, but were still intended for an educated enclosed religious audience. Did Bernard assume this intended audience had knowledge of humoral theory? Perhaps his use of ideas and language lifted from medical regimen was intended as an 'everyday' example to aid understanding by illustrating his point. If so, this would be evidence for the existence of widespread learned medical knowledge in a religious setting. On the other hand, it is possible that Bernard's employment of such knowledge was part of existing homiletic tradition, reflecting the theological importance of the different sciences as a means of understanding God and His creation. Of interest to this debate is Mark S. Burrows's discussion of Bernard's use of allegory in

[78] Jean Leclercq, 'Introduction', *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux: On the Song of Songs II*, ed. Kilian Walsh, p.vii.
[79] Beverley Maine Kienzle, 'The Twelfth Century Monastic Sermon', in Kienzle, ed., *The Sermon* (Turnhout, 2008), p.285.
[80] Ibid., p.286.
[81] See David Bell, ed., *Libraries of the Cistercians, Gilbertines and Premonstratensians*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues 3 (London, 1992), and *An Index in Authors and Works in Cistercian Libraries in Great Britain*, Cistercian Studies Series 130 (Kalamazoo, 1992).

Sermons on the Song of Songs. He contends that Bernard was intensely aware of his audience, suggesting:

> Bernard's interpretive approach is meant to help monks read and translate not only the literal sense of the text but also the carnal experiences of the body.[82]

Burrows's description of Bernard's use of allegory reflects the attempt by Bernard and others among his contemporaries to use relevant metaphors reflecting lived experience as a means of explaining spiritual ideas to those new to the religious life. Bernard's use of humoral language can therefore be seen as an aid to achieve this double-reading of the spiritual meaning of the text alongside its more obvious meaning in relation to lived, bodily experience. Nevertheless, despite Bernard's use of such allegory for the purposes of what Burrows has termed an "interpretive guide to monastic life", this does not necessarily mean his audience understood correctly.[83] Bernard's assumed knowledge of humoral theory by his audience reflects his own learning, and possibly that of his monastic circle, but may not reflect that of the wider monastic community. Nevertheless, the fact that Bernard employed humoral discourse in his sermons is in itself of interest, and likely influenced later religious writers who also turned to humoral language.

However, Bernard's interest in medical learning was in terms of theory only, rather than medical practice. This was evident in his strong position against the use of physical medicine and the consultation of specialised medical practitioners by monks. In a letter addressed to the brethren of a local monastery, Bernard took a hard line. He insisted that despite living in an unhealthy region which was causing them to fall ill, the monks must not seek bodily medicines or the advice of physicians, because it was not in keeping with the religious profession.[84] Similarly, in Sermon 30:10-12 of the *Song of Songs*, Bernard makes clear his

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[82] Mark S. Burrows, 'Hunters, Hounds, and Allegorical Readers: The Body of the Text and the Text of the Body in Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermons on the Song of Songs*', *Studies in Spirituality*, 14:1 (2004), p.137.
[83] Ibid., p.115.
[84] Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, p.14.

disdain for those who turned to medical theory to ensure the well-being of the body when undertaking the religious life:

> Num Hippocratis seu Galeni sententiam, aut certo de schola Epicuri debui proponere vobis? Christi sum discipulus; Christi discipulus loquor: ergo si peregrinum dogma induxero, ipse peccavi. Epicurus atque Hippocrates, corporis alter voluptatem, alter bonam habitudinem praefert: meus Magister utriusque rei contemptum praedicat. Animae in corpore vitam, quam summo studio iste unde sustentet, ille unde et delectet, inquirit, atque inquirere docet, salvator monet et perdere […] Videsne hac sententia Magistri mei carnis sapientiam condemnari, per quam utique aut in luxum voluptatis diffluitur, aut ipsa quoque bona valetudo corporis ultra quam oporteat appetitur? Denique quod vera sapientia in voluptates non effluat, audisti profecto a Sapiente, ne inveniri quidem hane *in terra suaviter viventium*. Qui autem invenit, dicit: *Super salute et omnem pulchritudinem dilemi sapientiam*. Si super salutem et pulchritudinem, quanto magis super voluptatem et turpitudinem? Quid vero prodest temperare a voluptatibus, et investigandis diversitatibus complexionum ciborumque varietatibus inquirendis quotidianam expendere curam? Legumina, inquit, ventosa sunt, caseus stomachum gravat, lac capiti nocet, potum aquae non sustinet pectus, caules nutriunt melancholiam, choleram porri accendunt, pisces de stagno aut de lutosa aqua meae penitus complexioni non congruunt. Quale est hoc, ut in totis fluviis, agris, hortis cellariisve reperiri vix possit quod comedas? Puta te, quaeso, monachum esse, non medicum, nec de complexione judicandum, sed de professione.[85]
>
> [I do not know how far do you think that I ought to propose to you the opinion of Hippocrates or Galen, or, forsooth, that of the school of Epicurus? I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, and I speak to the disciples of Jesus Christ. If I had brought before you teaching other than His, I should have done very wrongly. Epicurus strives for the pleasure of the body, Hippocrates for its health; but my Master bids us to condemn both the one object and the other. Hippocrates uses all his efforts to sustain the life of the soul in the body; Epicurus seeks out, and teaches others to seek out, whatever can afford pleasure and delight during this life; but the Saviour warns us to lose this life (so that we may gain it) […] Do

[85] Sancti Bernardi, 'Sermones in Cantica Canticorum', v, pp.267-9.

you not see how these words of my Master condemn that wisdom of the flesh whereby a man either abandons himself to sensual indulgence or pays excessive attention to the body's health? You have heard from the Sage that true wisdom does not dissipate itself by living voluptuously; it is not found in the land of those who live for pleasure. But the one who does find it can say: ‘I loved wisdom more than health or beauty.’ If more than health or beauty, far more still than sensuality and debauchery. But why should a man bother to abstain from sensual pleasures if he spends so much time every day probing into the mysteries of the human constitution and devising ways of procuring variety in foods? ‘Beans’, he says, ‘produce flatulency, cheese causes dyspepsia, milk gives me headache, water is bad for my heart, cabbages bring on melancholy, I feel choleric after onions, fish from the pond or from muddy water does not agree with my constitution.’ Are you not actually saying that food to your taste is not available in all the rivers, the fields, the gardens and the cellars? Consider. I pray you, that you are a monk, not a physician; and that it is not your business to make a study of constitutions, but to obey your rule.][86]

This passage demonstrates the extent of Bernard’s medical learning, such as his references to the medical authorities of Galen and Hippocrates whose works were only just becoming known in Latin translation at this time. His familiarity with medical authorities and with key aspects of medical theory suggests that humoral theory was in common parlance by this period (at least among the well-educated). Furthermore, it suggests the widespread use of medical practices by monks more generally, signifying a certain level of medical knowledge in these communities. Nevertheless, Bernard’s outright rejection of medical practice (at least for those living the religious life) suggests that his recourse to humoral theory in the *Sermons* was intended as a metaphor only. By couching the idea of the endangered soul in the language of the unhealthy body, Bernard returned to the *Christus Medicus* metaphor: just as the unhealthy body required the ministrations of a corporal physician, so an unhealthy soul must turn to the spiritual physician of Christ for healing.

[86] Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs*, ed. Walsh, ii, pp.120-2.

This reflected the wider debate in the Church throughout the medieval period between rejection of medicine as unnecessary and counter to God's will, and embracing medicine as a practical science provided by God to ease the suffering of mankind.[87] Some theologians such as Bernard were strongly opposed to the use of medicine or the consultation of a medical practitioner, especially by those undertaking the religious life.[88] Their concern was that illness was either the result of sin, or sent as a trial by God. Either way, it was the duty of a Christian to embrace their heaven-sent punishment patiently, and look on it as an opportunity for salvation by ridding oneself of sin through earthly suffering. Furthermore, as all illness came from God, it was argued that a cure could only come through God's grace in the form of miracles.[89] However, there was some scriptural authority in favour of the medical profession in religious society. Christian supporters of medicine often turned to Ecclesiasticus 38 for this purpose:

> honora medicum propter necessitatem etenim illum creavit Altissimus a Deo est omnis medella et a rege accipiet dationem disciplina medici exaltabit caput illius et in conspectu magnatorum conlaudabitur Altissimus creavit de terra medicinam et vir prudens non abhorrebit illi nonne a ligno indulcata est amara aqua ad agnitionem hominum virtutis illorum et dedit homini scientiam Altissimus honorari in mirabilibus suis in his curans mitigavit dolorem et unguentarius facit pigmentum suavitatis et unctiones conficiet suavitatis et non consummabuntur opera eius pax enim Dei super faciem terrae fili in tua infirmitate non despicias sed ora ad Dominum et ipse curabit te averte a delicto et dirige manus et ab omni delicto munda cor tuum da suavitatem et memoriam similaginis et inpingua oblationem et da locum medico etenim illum Dominus creavit et non discedat a te quoniam opera eius sunt necessaria est enim tempus quando in manus eorum incurras ipsi vero Dominum deprecabuntur ut dirigat requiem eorum et sanitatem propter conversationem

[87] Rawcliffe, 'Medicine for the Soul', eds. Hinnels and Porter, pp.319-20.
[88] Leclercq, 'Introduction', *Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*, ii, p.vii.
[89] Robert Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2008), p.7.

> illorum qui delinquit in conspectu eius qui fecit eum incidat in manus medici.[90]
>
> [Honour the physician for the need thou hast of him: for the most High hath created him. For all healing is from God, and he shall receive gifts of the king. The skill of the physician shall lift up his head, and in the sight of great men shall be praised. *The most High hath created medicines out of the earth, and a wise man will not abhor them* [my emphasis]. Was not bitter water made sweet with wood? The virtue of these things is come to the knowledge of men, and the most High hath given knowledge to men, that he may be honoured in his wonders. By these he shall cure and shall allay their pains, and of these the apothecary shall make sweet confections, and shall make up ointments of health, and of his works there shall be no end. For the peace of God is all over the face of the earth. My son, in thy sickness neglect not thyself, but pray to the Lord, and he shall heal thee. Turn away from sin and order thy hand aright, and cleanse thy heart from all offence. Give a sweet savour, and a memorial of fine flour, and make a fat offering, and then give place to the physician. For the Lord created him: and let him not depart from thee, for his works are necessary. For there is a time when thou must fall into their hands. And they shall beseech the Lord, that he would prosper what they give for ease and remedy, for their conversation. He that sinneth in the sight of his maker, shall fall into the hands of the physician.][91]

Combined with the learned authority imbued to medicine in the medieval period through the assimilation of classical knowledge into medical theory, this provided an increasingly sure footing for the support of medicine by the Christian 'establishment'. As Joseph Ziegler points out, both authorities highlighted the interconnection between body and soul, and the need for both physical and spiritual medicine to counteract sin. Ecclesiasticus provided some of the basis for the idea that sin and disease were causally linked, suggesting, "he that sinneth in the sight of his maker, shall fall into the hands of the physician". The newly acquired learning of the Ancient Greeks also emphasised the necessity of medicine, evident from Aristotle's definition of man as

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[90] Ecclesiasticus 38: 1-15, Latin Vulgate <www.latinvulgate.com> [last accessed 30.09.10].

[91] English translation from Ziegler, 'Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages', p.3.

composed of body and soul.[92] It was therefore natural that the body followed the soul when it was disturbed, and that the soul also followed the body in its accidents. As the health of the body was intimately connected with that of the soul, maintaining the wholeness of the person through the art of medicine was of greater necessity and of higher status than all others except theology.[93]

As discussed in Chapter One, this was evident in the ordering of the university degree system whereby the medical art was one prerequisite for theological study (although this was not the case in England, where medicine was not routinely taught at Oxford and Cambridge). Medicine of the body was therefore of almost equal importance to medicine of the soul in the wider teachings of the Church. Isidore of Seville summarised this rationale in his *Etymologies*:

> Quaeritur a quibusdam quare inter ceteras liberales disciplinas Medicinae ars non contineatur. Propterea, quia illae singulares continent causas, ista vero omnium. Nam et Grammaticam medicus scire debet, ut intellegere vel exponere possit quae legit. Similiter et Rhetoricam, ut veracibus argumentis valeat definire quae tractat. Necnon et Dialecticam propter infirmitatum causas ratione adhibita perscrutandas atque curandas. Sic et Arithmeticam propter numerum horarum in accessionibus et periodis dierum. Non aliter et Geometriam propter qualitates regionum et locorum situs, in quibus doceat quid quisque observare oporteat. Porro Musica incognita illi non erit, nam multa sunt quae in aegris hominibus per hanc disciplinam facta leguntur; sicut de David legitur, qui ab spiritu inmundo Saulem arte modulationis eripuit. Asclepiades quoque medicus phreneticum quendam per symphoniam pristinae sanitati restituit. Postremo et Astronomiam notam habebit, per quam contempletur rationem astrorum et mutationem temporum. Nam sicut ait quidam medicorum, cum ipsorum qualitatibus et nostra corpora commutantur. Hinc est quod Medicina secunda Philosophia dicitur. Vtraque enim disciplina totum hominem sibi vindicat. Nam sicut per illam anima, ita per hanc corpus curatur.[94]

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[92] Ibid., p.5.
[93] Ibid., p.6.
[94] Isidore of Seville, ‘Medicina’, *Etymologiae*. See Chapter One for a full discussion of this text.

> [Some people ask why the art of medicine is not included in the other liberal disciplines. It is for this reason: the liberal disciplines treat individual topics, but medicine treats the topics of all. Thus the physician ought to know grammar, so that he can understand and explain what he reads. Similarly he must know rhetoric, so that he is capable of summing up the cases he treats with true arguments. He must also know dialectic in order to scrutinise and cure the causes of diseases with the application of reason. So also arithmetic, to reckon the number of hours in the onsets of illness, and their periods of days. Likewise with geometry, so that from his knowledge of the qualities of regions and the location of places, he may teach what a person should attend to there. Then, music will not be unknown to him for we read of many things that have been accomplished for sick people by way of this discipline – as we read of David who rescued Saul from an unclean spirit with the art of melody. The physician Asclepiades also restored a certain victim of frenzy to perfect health through harmonious sounds. Finally, he will be acquainted with astronomy, through which he may observe the logic of the stars and the change of seasons. For, as a certain physician says, according to their mutations our bodies are also changed. *Thus medicine is called the Second Philosophy, for each discipline claims for itself the entire human: by philosophy the soul is cured; by medicine, the body* (my emphasis)][95]

In his work on medieval hospitals, Peregrine Horden has demonstrated the practical implications of this school of thought. He has shown that medicine of the body was a paradigm for therapy of the soul, providing a model conceded by God. However, this was no mere metaphor. The ideal physician would minister to both the diseases of the soul and body.[96] This is especially true of the attitude towards medical learning and practice in religious writing in the vernacular, which increasingly accepted the use of medicine even by those leading the religious life. This is evident in the inclusion of practical medical advice in spiritual guides for religious communities. One example is *Ancrene Wisse*, a Middle English guide for anchorites, which included advice on how often

[95] English translation from Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, eds. Barney et.al., p.115.
[96] Horden, 'Religion as Medicine', p.145.

to have blood let.[97] This association between inward sins of the soul and outward sickness of the body therefore went beyond metaphor in many of the religious writings of the medieval period. Rather, it was a product of the close connection between the body and soul in medieval thinking.[98] Carole Rawcliffe suggests that the variety of medical metaphors in medieval literature reflected the symbiotic relationship that had developed between the Church and the medical profession. Far from being at odds, the 'two medicines' often found themselves in complete accord: self-indulgence was bad for health, and even worse for the soul.[99] Thus a member of the clergy, who may himself have studied medicine, would increasingly have considered it fitting to pronounce upon matters of health for the body as well as the soul. The appropriation of medical language of the humors therefore made sense in this context as a useful means of highlighting the effects of vice on the soul as well as the body.

Cate Gunn suggests that the development of the use of medical imagery and language in sermons paralleled the development of a new kind of preaching occurring in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries to suit the needs of a changed society.[100] Gunn suggests that the burgeoning numbers of sermons in this period, and the development of pastoral literature more widely, is evidence of a 'democratisation' of previously clerical or monastic modes of spirituality now made available to increasingly literate lay audiences.[101] Rhetorical techniques of thirteenth-century preaching therefore popularised a spirituality that had previously been the province of monasticism. Exempla in sermons became more common as preachers no longer relied on stories from Scripture or saints's lives, instead using short moral stories of contemporary life to appeal to a new lay audience. Sermons demonstrated an allegorical mode of thinking, whereby the

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[97] Anon., *Ancrene Wisse,* ed. Bella Millett, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2005). See Chapter Three for a full discussion of this text.
[98] Rawcliffe, 'Medicine for the Soul', eds. Hinnels and Porter, p.317.
[99] Ibid., p.320.
[100] Gunn, *Ancrene Wisse* p.108.
[101] Ibid., p.112.

known world in some ways represented and could reveal the unknown God.[102] Medicine was particularly suitable for this purpose. The status of medicine as a tool from God and its resulting position in university teaching as being close to theology made it a means of understanding God's creation, and in so doing brought one closer to God. Furthermore, on a practical level health of the body was of interest to all people, regardless of their levels of learning, which made it an accessible and interesting topic for many different kinds of audiences.

The suitability of medicine as a topic for preaching to both monastic and lay audiences continued into the later medieval period, with humoral theory and language appearing in sermons written in Middle English.

Sermons and Pastoral Guides: Fourteenth to Fifteenth Centuries

Sermons underwent yet another change in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with the appearance of written sermons in the vernacular. Such vernacular sermon collections also made use of humoral language, in particular sermon cycles that followed the Ecclesiastical year. The same ideas expressed in earlier sermons therefore remained a concern in sermon material for the fifteenth century.

Fourteenth- and fifteenth-century vernacular sermon collections were designed for a priestly audience lacking sufficient knowledge of Latin to be able to translate into the vernacular for the benefit of their congregations. The material for these vernacular compilations drew on material from earlier Latin sermons, but adapted them for the purposes of a vernacular audience. Some were direct translations, while many more drew on a vast body of Latin writing to form compilations.[103] These were essentially a digest of teaching, almost always by anonymous compilers working for the benefit of other priests. Spencer suggests that the anxiety of giving the laity access to translations and commentaries on Scripture may have led Middle English translators to

[102] Ibid., p.109.
[103] H. Leith Spencer, 'Middle English Sermons', in Beverley Maine Kienzle, ed., *The Sermon* (Turnhout, 2008), p.627.

look backwards to find standard older Latin commentaries, which would have been less contentious.[104]

One influential writer from an earlier period whose writings and ideas were repeated in later vernacular texts was Jean Beleth (fl.1135-1182), an influential twelfth-century French ecclesiastical writer, liturgist and theologian. Little is known of Beleth, other than his associations with educational institutions. He was said to have taught theology at Paris, a suggestion borne out by passing references in his own writing.[105] He was principally known for his *Summa de Ecclesiasticis Officiis* (more usually known as *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*), a full and detailed account of the liturgical practices of his day. It reported a number of the usages of the Church of Chartres, but circulated widely in England as well as in France.[106] In his *Summa,* Beleth was concerned with beards and body hair as outward symbols of sin. While body and facial hair testified to an appropriately hot male complexion, too much hair indicated a dangerous excess of heat. Such humoral imbalance was viewed negatively, especially if it was severe enough to produce physical signs. An excess of heat was commonly associated with moral and spiritual depravity, something which those in the Church were keen to avoid. Thus, in his chapter on the appearance of priests, Beleth was concerned to stress the need for priests and other members of the Church to remove excess facial hair as a symbol of inner corruptions:

> Barbas radere debemus et plattas, id est coronas, et tondere capillos. Rasio pilorum barbe, qui proueniunt ex superfluis humoribus stomachi sicut ungues ex superfluis humoribus cordis, significat, quod uitia et peccata, que in nobis sunt superflua, re/secare debemus. Capillos super aures tondemus, ut quinque sensus capitis expeditos ad seruiendum. Deo habeamus. Plattam radimus, ut per hoc nichil inter nos et Deum debere esse demonstremus.[107]

[104] Ibid., p.632.
[105] Henry Summerson, 'Beleth, Jean (1135–1182)', *ODNB*.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Iohannis Beleth, *Summa de Ecclesiasticus Officiis*, ed. Herbert Douteil (Turnhout, 1976), p.215.

[We must shave our beards and pate (top of the head), that is the crown, and cut our hair. Shaving of the beard hairs, which come forth from the superfluous humors of the stomach, just as nails come forth from the superfluous humors of the heart, to signify any such faults and failures in which we are superfluous, we must cut back (trim). Hair over the ears must be cut, in order to be unencumbered to serve as the head of the five senses. Consider God. We shave the pate, in order through this to show that there is nothing between us and God.][108]

This paralleled the idea of humoral theory where body and facial hair were believed to be products of a superfluity of hot humors, and corresponded with masculine properties. The sources of such ideas were the newly translated texts from the Middle East from the late eleventh century onwards, such as Constantine the African's *Liber de Coitu*:

> Dicemus in primis de illis hominibus qui fortes sont et prevalentes ad emittendum semen. Hiis nimirum testiculi sunt calidi et humidi temperate, verbi gracia [...]. Calor enim auget appetitum velet masculinum, frigiditas autem diminuit appetitum et femininum reddit. Si ergo natura testium fuerit calida, multus erit appetitus luxurie et plures gignuntur masculine et tempestive oriuntur pili circa pectinem et circa reliquum corpus. Si vero fuerit frigida, effeminati erunt homines et appetites deest et pili oriuntur tarde et pauci circa ilia. Si vero fuerit sicca, modicus erit appetitus et modicum et debile semen. Quod si fuerit humida, semen redditur multum et pili oriuntur plani et molles.[109]
>
> [We will first discuss those men who are strong and excel in producing semen. Their testicles are of course hot and moist in the right proportion […]. Warmth increases desire and masculinity, whereas cold reduces desire and renders effeminate. If a man has warm testicles, therefore, he will be very lecherous and conceive more boys; his pubic hair will appear at the right time, and also the hair on the rest of their body. But men with cold testicles will be effeminate and

[108] Translation is my own.
[109] Constantine the African, *Liber de Coitu*, ed. Montero Cartelle (Santiago de Compostela, 1983), pp. 96-98.

> without desire; their hair will appear late and will be scanty around the pubis and groin.][110]

Beleth's concerns about facial hair are repeated in several Middle English sermon collections in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. One such example is John Mirk's *Festial*, one of the most popular Middle English sermon collections of the fifteenth century (although the text was originally most likely written in the later 1380s).[111] There are 43 known manuscripts containing the *Festial*, although only half of these resemble Mirk's original text. Of the remaining manuscripts, 4 contain texts of a substantial mid-fifteenth-century revision. Susan Powell suggests that the complex transmission of the *Festial* was typical of a widely used text, the dissemination of which was accelerated by the advent of printing (between 1486 and 1532 a further 22 printed editions were produced). Powell argues Caxton's decision to print the *Festial* in 1483 must have depended on its appeal beyond the narrow market for which it had been originally written, demonstrating that a lay emphasis had already been introduced in certain recensions of the work.[112] Not only was the *Festial* the most widely read English sermon cycle in the fifteenth century, it was the most frequently printed English text before the Reformation.

The *Festial* comprised a selection of sermons based around the feasts of the liturgical year, compiled out of the immensely popular *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine to provide a ready-made sermon for all the principal feasts of the year.[113] Powell suggests the *Festial*'s sermons are:

> notable for their popular appeal by virtue of the simplicity of their language and structure, and Mirk's frequent recourse to narrative and *exempla*.[114]

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110 English translation from P. Delany, 'Constantinus Africanus' *De Coitu*: A Translation', *The Chaucer Review*, 4:1 (1969), pp.57-58.
111 For recent scholarship on this text see Judy Ann Ford, *John Mirk's 'Festial'* (Cambridge, 2006).
112 Susan Powell, 'Mirk, John (1382–*c.*1414)', *ODNB*.
113 See London, BL, Cotton Claudius MS A.ii, fol. 3v.
114 Powell, 'Mirk', *ODNB.*

Mirk repeats Beleth's direction for priests to shave their beards and clip their hair at Easter as a symbol of the removal of a superfluity of bad humors in the body:

> as John Belet tellyth and techyþe, on Scher þursday a man schalle dodde his hed and klippe his berd; and a prest schall schaue hys crowne, soo þat þer schall noþyng be bytwene God almyghty and hym. He schall also schaue þe herys of his berd þat comeþ of superfluyte of humors of þe stomak, and þar þe nayles of his hondys þat comeþ of superfluyte of humors of þe hert. So ryȝt as we schauen and scheren away þe superfluyte of fulþe wythout, so we schall schaue and schere away þe superfluyte of synne and of vyce within-forþe.[115]

Unusually for Middle English compilations, Mirk refers to the authority of Jean Beleth directly in this chapter on the appearance of priests. The same direction also appears in the *Speculum Sacerdotale*, a fifteenth-century Middle English sermon collection arranged around the key dates of the liturgical calendar in a similar structure to the *Festial*. However, here this idea appears without reference to Jean Beleth:

> knowe þat berdes commeþ of superfluite of humours of the body, and they betokeneþ þat we oweþ for to cutte away / synnes and vicis whiche ben superfluous and outrageus.[116]

Later vernacular sermon texts such as this make even more explicit the connection between superfluous humors and sin, not just equating bodily sickness with spiritual sickness, but also identifying the different sources of humors that have such physical effects on the body. Thus Mirk, following on from Beleth, attributes the beard to "superfluyte of humors of þe stomak", while fingernails "comeþ of superfluyte of humors of þe hert".[117]

Middle English sermons contain many other examples of humoral theory, with a notable example being *Speculum Sacerdotale*. This is an English translation of a Latin sermon collection, now incomplete, but

[115] Mirk, *Festial*, ed. Erbe, pp.125-6.
[116] Anon., *Speculum Sacerdotale*, ed. Edward H. Weatherly (London, 1936), pp.121-2.
[117] Mirk, *Festial*, ed. Erbe, pp.125-6.

which was very close to the translated text.[118] It was likely a compendium from which preachers could selectively compile their sermons, which is reflected in the loose form of the text and repetition of content. Only one incomplete manuscript version of *Speculum Sacerdotale* remains in Middle English, suggesting an apparent failure to achieve widespread popularity.[119] This may have been because the collection was made redundant by the popularity of John Mirk's *Festial*, which was very similar in design and content.

One of the most interesting sermons in *Speculum Sacerdotale* for the purposes of this study is the 'faste of the foure tymes', a sermon explaining why it is important to fast by linking the four fasts with the four seasons, the four elements, the four powers of the soul, and the four humors:

> The fowre tymes of the yere are these: winter, somer, heruest, and veer. And yche tyme hath thre monethes. And for we synne and trespass in yeche tymes and monethes, therefore it is ordeyned in holy churche that in yche of these iiii tymes we faste thre dayes in waschynge of ourse synnes þrouȝ prayingis, fastyngis, almes dede, and wakyngis. And for we mowe noȝt fast thre monethes, therfore we faste oonly thre dayes. Also it is to knowe that the world is made of fowre elementes: *scilicet*, fyre, ayre, erthe, and water. And of the same wyse is mannes body of fowre humours: *scilicet*, Latine, colera, sanguinis, flewmate, et melancholia. And so ther ben thre powers of the sowle: *scilicet*, yre, concupyscencye, and reson. By yre the sowle the sowle putteþ away euels. Be conscupiscency he coueteþ all goodnes. And by reson he may be warre that the yre stirt noȝt for to put a-way goodnes and the concupiscency passe noȝt for euel to be couetid. And reson oweþ for to holde riȝtwisnys bitwene yre and concupiscencie. But for we synne by the body whiche is made of the forseid fowre humours and by the sowle þat is wrrouȝt of the forsaid þre powers, forthe it is riȝt þat we faste fowre tymes / in the yere thre-dayes that we may wasshe bi that abstinence the corporalle and spiritual crymes þat we haue trespassed in a-ȝens God.[120]

[118] Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, p.22.
[119] Spencer, 'Middle English Sermons', p.627.
[120] Anon., *Speculum Sacerdotale*, ed. Weatherly, p.90-1.

Reference to the four humors here is not only used to highlight spiritual sickness, but also to illustrate the occurrence of the number four in nature. The logic is that since sin comes of the body, which has four humors, and of the soul, which has four powers, four is the correct number of times to fast each year as penance for sin. This idea is repeated several times, but worded slightly differently each time. Sometimes it is put across in a less complex way, for example by not giving the Latin names of the four humors:

> Also þey ben done fowre tymes in the yere, for there ben fowre humours in a man: *scilicet*, heete, moostness, coldenys, and dryness, of the whiche he takeþ delectacion of synnynge. And for we shuld refreyne these fowre humours fro synnynge, therfore we faste fowre tymes in the yere. Or thus: a man is i-made of rationabilite, irascibilite, concupiscibilite. And for þat þese schall be measured in vs, we faste in the yere fowre tymes and thre dayes, *scilicet*, in referring þe number of foure vnto the body and þe number of thre vnto the sowle […]
>
> The firste [fast] is for veer, that is moyste and warme, for somer, þat is hote and drye, for hervest cold and drye, winter colde and moyste: and we [are] to faste in veer for to tempere and keele þe noyous humoure of lecherie, in somer for to chaste in vs þe noyous heete of auarice, in heruest for to chate the drynes of pride, in winter for to chaste the colde of infidelite and of malice.[121]

Here each humor is described by its property, and matched to the time of year. This compares to a similar passage in a medical regimen known as the *The Gouernaunce of Prynces*. This was a Middle English translation from c.1422 of the popular Latin text *Secretum Secretorum* by James Yonge. As discussed in the Chapter One, the *Secretum Secretorum*, or 'Secret of Secrets', was a highly popular governance text of Arabic origin, purporting to be written by Aristotle to advise Alexander the Great. Like most regimens of its time, emphasis was placed on the role of the four humors in the complexions, and the effect this had on an individual's health:

[121] Ibid., pp.91-2.

> Compleccions bene iiij for a man is sangyne, or flewmatike, or colerike, or malyncoly. And ryth vp the foure complexcions or foure Humours of the body, whyche answaryth to the fouree Elementes, and to the foure tymes of the yeere. The blood is hotte and moysti to the lyekenesse of the heiere; ffleme is colde and moysti aftyr kynde of the watyr; Colre hoote and drye aftyr kynde of fyre; Malancoly colde and dry aftyr kynde of erthe.[122]

This version of the text then also goes on to discuss the humoral properties of the four seasons, measuring the time of year through holy days: "Yntyr begynnyth ate the feste of Seynt Clement, And duryth into the feste of Seynte Petyr".[123]

However, the description of the four humors found in the *Speculum Sacerdotale* sermon collection is not only interesting as part of this pattern of four. In this sermon the use of the humors goes beyond the merely metaphorical, as each of the four humors is explicitly matched to a particular kind of sin. This is a development of the humoral science of physiognomy, where the humoral complexions were assigned different characteristics. As discussed in the previous section, in a religious context this was extended to include the ways in which the different complexions were susceptible to different types of sin depending on their humoral temperament. However, this association was also evident in the advice of medical regimens such as the *Secrete of Secretes*, which associated certain humoral temperaments with a sinful nature. This was one of multiple Middle English translations of the highly popular *Secretum Secretorum*, like the aforementioned *Gouernaunce of Prynces*. The version quoted below is known as the Ashmole version, and dates from circa 1445:

> Fle perfor for all men of feble and yalow colour, for he is enclyned to vices, and to lechery.[124]

Physiognomy would perhaps have been the most well-known aspect of humoral theory among the laity in the later medieval period. John

[122] Yonge, 'Gouernaunce of Prynces', p.219. See Chapter One for more on this text.
[123] Ibid., p.245.
[124] Anon., 'Secrete of Secretes', in *Secreta Secretorum: Nine English Versions*, ed. Manzalaoui, p.91.

Gower and John Lydgate were two well-known English poets who produced late fourteenth-century vernacular poems on the complexions, which assigned characteristics to each of the humoral temperaments. As discussed in Chapter One, this complexions poetry was quite widely circulated in the later medieval period. In these poems, characteristics were assigned to each humoral complexion in a similar way that the *Speculum* assigned sins to each complexion. Gower focused on the humoral complexion of the individual, categorising the different temperaments by primarily focusing on personality traits.[125] The author of *Speculum Sacerdotale* applied this idea more specifically to warn the audience to beware of the sins which they were more likely to be disposed towards due to their individual humoral complexion, or at certain times of the year (with different humors believed to be more prevalent depending on the season).[126] This reflected the medieval belief that sin could be evident in physical signs on the body. As a result, many religious writers throughout the medieval period employed medical language of the humors to equate bodily sicknesses with the spiritual sicknesses of sin.

However, the multiple ways in which the same sermon was presented in *Speculum Sacerdotale* suggests provision for an audience not familiar with humoral theory. Spencer posits that this was ostensibly a collection of material for parish priests who were unlearned in Latin,[127] although the first chapter of the *Speculum* addresses both priests and laity. Nevertheless, presenting the same ideas in slightly different formats one after the other within the sermon, and the use of varying complexities of language, suggests that the author or compiler of *Speculum Sacerdotale* was providing choice for a parish priest to select a version of each sermon to fit different audiences. Although there is no way of knowing if this actually occurred in practice, it was certainly made possible by this sermon collection.

[125] For an example from Gower's complexions poetry see Chapter One.
[126] See Fig.1, p.18.
[127] Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, p.204.

The same humoral ideas are also evident in John Mirk's *Festial*. As in *Speculum Sacerdotale*, Mirk discussed humoral theory in relation to fasting and the four times of year when fasting should occur. Mirk similarly associated the need to fast with maintaining both spiritual and bodily health:

> Oure holy fadres of þe old lawe þay fasten foure tymes yn þe ȝere aȝeynes foure hygh festys þat þey hadden. Þen, for we schuld schew vs Goddys chyldyr, and sew þe trace of our holy fadyrs, þerfor we fast foure tymes of þe ȝere: furst yn March, yn Wytsontyde, betwyx þat heruest ys yn and þe sede-tyme, and befor Cristynmasse yn dede wyntyr. March ys þe tyme þat dryþe þe erþe of slobur and wete þat ys þeryn. Wherfor we fast þat tyme, forto dryeþ erþe of our body of humeres þat byþe boþe nyus to þe bodye and to þe sowle. That tyme þe humeres of lechery temptyþe a man most.[128]

Mirk demonstrates a concern for both bodily and spiritual health, due to the interconnection of the two. The warnings about the effects of different times of year on the balance of humors, and the need to fast to remedy this imbalance, reflected the advice of medical regimens such as the late sixteenth-century Middle English version of the *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* known as 'The Englishman's Doctor':

> In spring your dinner must not much exceed, / In summers heate but little meate shall need: / In Autumne ware you eate not too much fruite: / With Winters cold full meates do sittest suite.[129]

As a result of the connection between body and soul through the humors, sin could be physically manifest in the body. At the extreme end of this was disease, with certain diseases linked to certain sins. For example, leprosy was sometimes linked to sexual sin or sexual deviance.[130] This equation of the humors with sin in a physiological,

[128] Mirk, *Festial*, ed. Erbe, p.253.
[129] Anon., 'The Englishman's Doctor', in *The School of Salernum: The English Versions*, ed. John Harington (London, 1922), p.90.
[130] "Women are venomous during the time of their flowers and so very dangerous that they poison beasts with their glance and little children in their cots, sully and stain mirrors, and on some occasions those men who lie with them in carnal intercourse are made leprous". Anon., *Women's Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo Albertus Magnus*

rather than purely metaphorical, context is found in other types of religious literature in the later Middle Ages, especially in the vernacular. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Four, many vernacular works of religious instruction aimed at the laity employed the same language, also using the correct Latin and English names of the humors.[131] However, to find this imagery and language within a homiletic context is especially interesting, as this suggests a more widespread audience for this use of humoral language within a religious context.

This period saw a growth of private devotional reading, especially in lay households.[132] Some mirrored preaching compilations, such as the *Northern Homily*. This is described by Spencer as the 'lay counterpart' of Latin *Specula* available to clerics, intended for pious reading within the household rather than preaching.[133] This was due to increasing lay literacy and demand for books as a result of developments in the religious education of the laity after the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. This had been enhanced by a spread of interest in theological discussion outside the schools encouraged by the friars, and the promotion of pious reading in devout households, especially at mealtimes. This was most obvious among the nobility, but evidence from wills suggests devotional books were popular with lower social groups too.[134] Spencer suggests that examples of sermons on the Sunday gospels owned by members of the laity were intended for pious lay reading.[135] As well as written sermons, preaching and teaching of pastoralia also found verse expression in Middle English spiritual guides that were being produced in large numbers in this period, many of which had a lay audience in mind.[136] These included popular works such as Robert of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne*, the *Pricke of Conscience*, and *Cursor Mundi*. Vernacular pastoral texts were composed and

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'De Secretis Mulierum' with Commentaries, ed. Helen Rodney Lemay (New York, 1992), p.60.

[131] Anon., *Speculum Sacerdotale*, ed. Weatherly, p.93.

[132] Spencer, 'Middle English Sermons', p.607.

[133] Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, p.97.

[134] Spencer, 'Middle English Sermons', p.608.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., p.618.

circulated in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but their continued production into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries demonstrates their continued popularity.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine whether this new, more educated lay audience for sermons would have understood references to humoral theory. Audiences were becoming more demanding for knowledge in this period, and were better educated. However, as Spencer points out, this may have had unintended consequences regarding the content of sermons:

> given the need to steer a course between two evils: between talking down to one's audience (and thus seeming to patronise them) and speaking above their heads, there must have been a strong pressure to err towards the second, rather than the first.[137]

Furthermore, preachers may have struggled with the difficulties of explaining concepts heard in the vernacular for the first time to those who lacked academic training.[138] However, the inclusion of humoral theory in sermons in the vernacular remains significant. As Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa puts it:

> since preaching was one of the major means of mass communication in late medieval society, it helped the language of medicine to become common currency for a lay urban audience as well as for the nobility[139]

It also further indicates the compatibility of religious and medical language at this time. Humoral theory was therefore an important means of explaining the religious message, important enough to be preached to the laity in the vernacular, giving widespread currency to the language of the humors in a religious context in the process.

Concluding Remarks

As this chapter has demonstrated, it was believed in the medieval period that humoral imbalances of the body could directly affect the health of the soul by weakening resolve against sin or even actively

[137] Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, p.119.
[138] Ibid., p.124.
[139] Yoshikawa, 'Holy Medicine and Diseases of the Soul', p.401.

leading to sin. This was something that sermons and pastoral guides in the vernacular were especially concerned with, perhaps due to their intended audience. Lay audiences for vernacular texts would have been considered particularly vulnerable to temptation, due to their lived experience within the world. Spiritual guidance for this group was therefore particularly concerned to warn of the dangers of sin, and to help guard against it. This was a moral duty of the clergy, enshrined in legislation such as the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 and that of successive Councils, which decreed that priests should preach certain catechetic material to the laity in the vernacular. Many of the texts that provided sermons and pastoral guides for priests and the laity in English were based on earlier Latin material, especially works of eminent writers such as Bernard of Clairvaux, Robert Grosseteste, and Jean Beleth, among others. The inclusion of humoral theory in the theology and writings of religious thinkers in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries was therefore influential on writers throughout the rest of the medieval period, including those writing in the vernacular.

Chapter Three: Institutional Religious Sources

Texts produced by and for religious institutions in the medieval period demonstrate the availability and importance of learned medical knowledge in religious houses. As the first section of this chapter will demonstrate, medical knowledge was readily available in manuscripts owned by religious institutions. Some of these manuscripts were produced for practical medical purposes, providing remedies for use in infirmaries that were added to over time, and adapting medical advice to suit religious communities. While some manuscripts were repositories of medical learning, designed to provide medical knowledge for education purposes, others incorporated medical learning into a religious setting. This is the case with a religious dietary in a Middle English copy of the *Golden Legend*, which uses medical as well as religious reasoning to justify the need for fasting. The adaptation of both practical medicine and medical theory to suit religious communities is also evident in Rules for religious, particularly those aimed at female religious communities. This is the subject of the second section examining Aelred of Rievaulx's *Rule of Life for a Recluse* and the anonymous Middle English *Ancrene Wisse*, where the need for those following the religious life to embrace suffering while also accepting the practicalities of maintaining humoral balance to benefit both body and soul comes to the fore.

Medical Manuscripts Produced for Religious Institutions

As discussed in Chapter One, many English religious institutions in the medieval period owned manuscripts that contained medical content. This not only demonstrates the availability of learned medical knowledge in religious circles, but also the importance of medicine in religious contexts. This is further confirmed by evidence of manuscripts produced by and for religious houses in England which include medical content adapted for religious audiences.

Monastic manuscripts that combined regimen with material on the administration of the house, usually collated over some time, suggest

that they were written for the use of the house to aid in institutional governance. One such example is the manuscript compiled at the Benedictine Abbey at Reading in the fourteenth century, now London, BL, Harley MS 978, which contains a variety of different material. One of the booklets features the medical text *Lettre d'Hippocrate* and a version of *Secretum Secretorum*, as well as musical notations and a religious calendar. Taken alongside the appearance of a booklist written by William of Wicumbe and a list of Reading Abbots's obituaries found in the manuscript's other booklets, Alan Coates argues the contents of this manuscript suggest that it possessed a utilitarian function as the record and prompter of this Abbey's activities.[1]

Another example of this type of manuscript is BL, Additional MS 43405. This was compiled at the Benedictine Abbey of St Peter and St Paul at Muchelney in Somerset between the course of the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, and is known as the 'Muchelney Breviary'. This breviary was initially created in the thirteenth century, before being added to and adapted over time. It is now split into two volumes, BL, Additional MS 43405 and 43406. In 3 languages and more than 30 hands, dating from the twelfth century up to its dissolution, is a mass of material relating to the Abbey's spiritual and temporal affairs. The contents of the manuscript are predominantly religious in nature, containing many liturgical and devotional texts. These include an adaptation of the *Te Deum* as a hymn in praise of the Virgin Mary, here attributed to John Bracy, Abbot of Muchelney 1470-1489 (f.vi *recto*); and a list of psalms for use in times of private need (ff. 93r-93v, ff. 176r-177r, ff. xxixb *recto*-xxx *recto*). However, there are also items of memoranda, such as articles of visitation (ff.iv *recto*-iv *verso*) and homages performed by tenants (ff.xxviib *recto* and xxxi *recto*). The nature and variety of the contents has led the BL's catalogue to suggest that the breviary was written for use as a personal memorandum book by the abbots. Medical recipes are scattered throughout both volumes, while BL, Additional MS 43405 also contains a version of John of

[1] Coates, *English Medieval Books*, p.70.

Burgundy's plague text (ff.vii *verso*-ix *recto*) and a fifteenth-century dietary or regimen (ff.xii *verso*-xiii *verso*), both of which are adapted for monastic audiences. The adapter of these two medical texts remains anonymous, but they accord with the general purpose of the breviary to collate records of the abbey's interests and items of use in its administration.[2]

The main medical items in the Muchelney breviary are especially interesting for their adaptation to suit monastic audiences. This is evident in the version of John of Burgundy's plague treatise, ff.vii *verso*-ix *recto*. The adapter likely chose this text for its suitability for monastic life, as the succinct quadripartite structure of the original was ideal for men who lived by rules. It begins with its common incipit:

> Hic incipit tractatus perutilis contra morbum pestilencialem qui composuit P. de Burgalia qui tractatus in 4 partes divitur. (f.vii *recto*)

However, the scribe does not follow this promised four part structure in reality. Rather, the original structure is changed in favour of a more extensive treatment of phlebotomy. While this version still makes mention of food, drink and bathing, it is far more interested in the role of blood-letting as a means to prevent plague and control its spread both within the individual and the communal body. Much of the blood-letting material is an expansion of the passages from John of Burgundy's treatise. The most prominent of these is an elaboration of the section recommending certain actions within periods of 12 and 24 hours after infection. This is a more detailed and technical section on phlebotomy than is usually found in a regimen, assuming familiarity of the audience with the processes of blood-letting. As heat in the blood was associated with lust in humoral theory, this made blood-letting even more essential for those who had taken vows of chastity. It was therefore common for medical practitioners attending to monks to prescribe regular blood-

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[2] For more on Muchelney Abbey see Roger Midmer, *English Medieval Monasteries (1066-1540): A Summary* (London, 1979), pp.224-6; W. A. J. Archibald., *The Somerset Religious Houses* (Cambridge, 1892); and Dean Alford, *Muchelney Abbey and Church*, 2nd edition (Langport, 1925).

letting as a preventative health measure.[3] The extensive treatment of phlebotomy in this version of the text suggests it was written for use in a monastery, with ready access to trained blood-letters. An appendage to the tract reveals an attempt by the scribe to accommodate John of Burgundy's medical approach to blood-letting within monastic religious practices:

> Nota quod traditum habemus ab antecessoribus nostris quod si quis minuendus fuerit et dixerit Pater Noster et aue Maria in honore Dei et Sancto Marie et Sancte Muduuenne uirginis albatisse sine aliquo periculo mortis fleobotom iam suam transibit et hoc multociens expertum est unde versus: Muduuennam memora minuendi sanguis hora ut fias tutus interueniente minutus. (f.ix *recto*)
>
> [Note that we have handed down from our ancestors that if anyone who is to be bled says the Pater Noster and Ave Maria in honour of God and the Holy Mary and St Modwenna[4] the virgin abbess he will get through his phlebotomy without any danger of death and this has been proved many times, hence the verse: remember Modwenna at the hour of being bled, and you will be a safe minutus [monk to be bled] with her intervention.][5]

The treatment of food in this version of the treatise also accords with both monastic practice and dietetic theory, directing that gross flesh should not be eaten but replaced with foods that are easier to digest, such as chicken and fish (f.viii *verso*). Names of medical authorities are also removed from the text. Such moderations and additions demonstrate that this version was possibly adapted for Muchelney, and certainly for a monastic audience more generally.

[3] Nancy Siraisi has detailed how pious foundations and religious institutions retained the services of paid medical practitioners in Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Carole Rawcliffe has similarly demonstrated that monks at many English houses were treated by physicians, including regular phlebotomy. See Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine*, pp.38-9; Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul* (Stroud, 1999), p.161.

[4] A seventh-centry Irish nun (and later English saint) who was renowned for many healing miracles. I would like to thank Peregrine Horden for this identification. See Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and Miracles of St Modwenna*, ed. and trans. Robert Bartlett (Oxford, 2002).

[5] Translation is my own.

Also written with a monastic audience in mind is the fifteenth-century dietary found on ff.xii *verso*-xiii *verso*. This is demonstrated by the first line of the text: "Here follows a Regimen appropriate for monks, for conserving the health of their bodies [is] set forth in what follows".[6] The first paragraph further makes explicit reference to the monk's routine within the abbey's environment by advising upon conclusion of eating not to begin work immediately, but instead to spend a brief time inside or take a walk in the cloister.[7] The morning routine of this regimen is similar to that appearing in the *Secretum Secretorum*, which was popular with religious houses.[8] After rising, it advises the reader to stretch the arms, get dressed, and then expel the superfluities accumulated overnight through spitting and shaving.[9] This injunction to shave was essential for members of the clergy and religious orders by removing impurities. Shaving was simultaneously good for one's body and good for one's soul, removing inward impurities that caused ill health through opening of the pores, but also eliminating external signs associated with impurity and sin.[10] Its appearance in this Muchelney dietary further illustrates that this was a regimen specially adapted for use in a religious house. Furthermore, the foods and drink recommended in the dietary are suitable for a monastic audience. Thus, there is a declaration of the sinfulness of excessive drinking: "It is a sin to drink much, and to take wine excessively is anyhow especially harmful".[11] Instead, there is an emphasis on abstinence, directing, "If there is sin in the night, it is corrected by abstinence in the morning".[12] Moderate abstinence is described as "the greatest medicine".[13]

[6] "Regimen conueniens monachis pro corporibus eorum salubriter conseruandis patet in sequentibus", f.xii *verso*. Here and in notes 7-9, 11-15 the translation is my own.
[7] "Minus studere statim post replecionem, sed tunc conuenit mediocriter in camera uel in claustro deambulare", f.xii *verso*.
[8] See Chapter One.
[9] "[M]ane post extensionem brachiorum induat uestimenta et superfluitates secunde digestiue et tercie, hoc est per sputum et rastaciones, expellat", f.xii *verso*.
[10] See discussion of Jean Beleth in Chapter Two.
[11] "Peccatum in potu multum nocet et maxime et saltem excessiue sumere uinum", f.xii *verso*.
[12] "Si peccatum fit in nocte corrigatur per abstinenciam in mane", f.xii *verso*.
[13] "Abstinencia moderato [sic] est summa medicina", f.xiii *verso*.

Furthermore, there are frequent warnings on the dangers to health of consuming fatty and oily foods.[14]

The regimen is not only adapted for a monastic context, but also seems to reflect the particular situation at Muchelney where injunctions had been placed on the abbot to restore lax discipline in the community in 1455. One example is the demand from the injunctions that better, stronger ale be brewed by the abbey so the monks would not seek supplies in the town. This is answered by the provision of drinks which is the second item on a food list seemingly connected with the dietary, which follows it:

> [y]oure drynke schal be myddyl al fyne and stale and fresche w*ith* sage lyuys, rosemary and roderys, ros wyne. Other wyle usyth both seld wyte wyne, malmsey in the morwe tyre, or rumney at eve. (f.xi *verso*)

Frequent references to follow the dictates of authorities may have provided a model for the monks, who were urged by the injunctions to submit to their superiors. Several medical authorities are invoked. Isaac Judaeus, for his work *Dietis particularibus*, is noted once, while Galen appears within an anecdote common to many regimens in which he ascribes his father's one-hundred year life-span to the eschewal of fruit.[15] The authority most frequently cited is Avicenna, whose *Canon* is often given direct (if occasionally nonsensical) reference. This suggests it is likely that the author of the regimen compiled the text from a selection of works he was able to acquire. The morning routine section is indebted to the *Secretum Secretorum*, as already noted, while the references to medical authors may have come second-hand from compilations such as those discussed in Chapter One. However, G. Hardingham suggests that as this text most frequently cites writers such as Galen and Avicenna, the *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* may have provided the direct source for much of the material as well as being the

[14] "nec res assate per noctem retente ualent nec pinguia in fine mense nec prandii. Ibi prohibentur frixa et oleaginosa", f.xiii *verso*.
[15] "Galienus dicit de patre suo quod uixit centum annis quia non comedit fructus", f.xiii.

model for its disunified form.[16] Despite the promise of a coherent structure in its opening statement, the regimen is fragmented.[17] It moves from discussions structured by the six non-naturals to daily and seasonal routines, and also changes from prose to verse (such as f.xiii *recto*). The use of verse suggests this part of the text may have been intended as a mnemonic summary of learned material. This adds to evidence for a bespoke regimen, providing selection and adaptation of the more generalised concepts of medical regimen for a monastic audience.

A manuscript of similar interest is Oxford, Bodl., Bodley MS 549, which also contains a regimen rewritten and abridged for use within monastic contexts. This is a version of John of Toledo's regimen, adapted by the Carthusian monk Stephen Dodesham (d. c.1482). The *Bodleian Library Summary Catalogue* notes of this fifteenth-century manuscript:

> the latter part, mostly material connected with the Carthusian order, is in the hand of Stephen Dodesham, of Witham and later Sheen. It probably dates from his time at the latter house (after 1469); and, since the binding is contemporary, it seems reasonable to suppose that the earlier part of the manuscript, containing the Speculum extracts, also belonged to Sheen.[18]

Dodesham wrote many (mainly religious) works for a range of lay and religious audiences, including Syon Abbey.[19] In the short regimen of Bodley 549 (ff.92v-95v), Dodesham excerpted the parts of John of Toledo's regimen dealing with exercise, the causes of illness, foods, wine and the effect of seasons for a manuscript evidently written for the charterhouse at Sheen. The regimen is part of a range of material concerning a monastery. The *Summary Catalogue* notes that prior to having been bound with the first part of the manuscript in the sixteenth

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[16] G. Hardingham, 'The *Regimen* in Late Medieval England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2004), p.141.

[17] "Primo de qualitate cibi", f.xii *verso*.

[18] Falconer Madan and H. H. E. Craster, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford which have not Hitherto been Catalogued in the Quarto Series* (Oxford, 1922), ii, pp.295-7.

[19] A. I. Doyle, 'Stephen Dodesham of Witham and Sheen', in P. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim, eds., *Of the Making of Books* (Aldershot, 1997), p.111.

century, these sections are likely to have been bound together for some time. Other texts in the same section as the regimen include tracts on Carthusianism such as 'Tractatus de origine et veritate perfecti religionis', a treatise on the Carthusian order largely made up of extracts from the Fathers (ff.31r-85r), and John Barton's 'Symbolum fidei' (ff.96r-97r), a short piece suggesting additions to the Creed. 'Symbolum fidei' appears immediately after the regimen. This demonstrates the juxtaposition of medical material with the primarily religious content of the manuscript, while emphasising the usefulness of the adapted text in a monastic context. A. I. Doyle suggests the large handwriting in Bodley 549 would have aided the beginner reader, so the manuscript could have been designed for use in a pious secular household or a female religious community.[20] Sheen was the site of Dodesham's most elaborate productions, where he also produced a book on a much grander scale containing Lydgate's *Dietary*, the *Distiches of Cato*, and an allegory of spiritual life (now Glasgow, University Library, Hunter MS U. 4. 17, it was originally bound with Hunter MS U. 4. 16; the latter is in English and contains a poem on blood-letting). Despite the differences in scale and scope of the two regimens Dodesham copied, they reveal that the audience for both was likely to have been religious communities.

Another example of a manuscript read in a monastic context containing a dietary regimen is Bodl., Douce MS 372 (c.1438). This contains a Middle English dietary adapted for religious circumstances, which interrupts an English translation of the Golden Legend by Jacobus de Voragine. The manuscript was bequeathed by John Burton, a London mercer, to his daughter Katherine upon his death in 1460. She was a nun at the priory of St John the Baptist, Holywell, in London. An inscription inside the manuscript reads:

> [B]e hit remembryd that John Burton citizen and mercer of London past oute of this lyfe the xx. Day of Nouembe the yere [...] Mill. cccc. lx. [...] and the said John Burton bequethe to dame Kateryne Burton his douȝter a boke

[20] Ibid., p.111.

> callyd Legenda Sanctorum [...] and after hur decesse. to remayne to the Prioresse and the Couent of Halywelle for euermore, they to pray for the saide John Burton and Johanne his wife [...] (f.163v).[21]

The dietary, headed ‘Quarter Temper’ (ff.16r-v), justifies the religious practice of fasting through its effect on the body. The dietary shares similarities with the Middle English sermon ‘fast of the iiij tymes’ in *Speculum Sacerdotale*, discussed in the previous chapter. Like *Speculum Sacerdotale*, the dietary links the seasons and fasting to the four humoral complexions, while referring to John Beleth as the religious authority on this matter. However, unlike the *Speculum*, this text does not refer to the humors directly, but rather their properties: “And þe first is for that ver is hote and moyst, somer is hote and drye, autumpne colde and drye, wynt[er] cold and moyst” (f.16r). The dietary refers to the four humoral complexions and their physiognomic characteristics. Thus, the “sangwyne is lucucious and glad”, “the colerik is naturally angry and hatful”, “the malyncolious is naturally colde couetous and heuy”, and the “fleumatik is naturally moyst and slowe” (f.16v). Furthermore, the text links these complexions with specific sins:

> We fast in ver for that we sholde attempre þe noxing humo[r] of vnclennes in som[er] for þat we sholde chastise in vs the wretched hete of couestise. In autumpne for that we sholde chastise in vs þe drynesse of pride. In wynt[er] for þat qwe shold chastise the coldnesse of vntrouthe and of malice (f.16r).

This part of the dietary emphasises the number four, likening the four seasons to the four elements, and discussing the four ages of man. However, the primary interest of the text is the religious aspects of fasting. Thus, another reason for fasting is given as being a means of penance after confession:

> we fast iiii tymes of the ȝer to make satisfacion of that we haue mysdone in all the tymes of the ȝer. And this fast is ordeyned in iii dayes dayes so þat we di satisfacion in on day þat we haue mysdone in an hole

[21] For more on this dedication see David Bell, *What Nuns Read* (Kalamazoo, 1995), pp.148-9, and M. B. Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers* (London and Rio Grande, 1991), p.291.

> ȝer or they be do yn a mondisday for þat our lord was betrayed that day of judas in the Friday for he was crucified þat day and in the Saturday for in þat day he was buried and lay in þe sepulchre and þe disciples wer oorweful of þe dethof our lorde (f.16v).

Furthermore, fasts take place at times of religious significance:

> The ii reson is for that we fast iiij tymes in the ȝer for the first fasting ys made in marche in the first woke of lent for the dies sholde were drye in us yf thei myȝt not in all be quenched and þat þe erbis of v[e]rtuys ben in us yf þei myȝt nat in all be quenched and that // [f.16v] ȝe brought forth in vs fresh and grene and wote smelling. The ii fast is at whyt sonday for þan comyththe holi gost and we aught to be feruent in the holi gost. The iii Sonday is in Septembre before mighelmasse for in þat tyme fruits be gadered. Wherfor we aught ȝelde to god the fruits of good werkis. The iiii is made in December for þan the erbis dye and we sholde be mortised to þe world (ff.16r-v).

This emphasis on the religious aspects of fasting, and the lack of discussion of the humors by name, is likely due to the intended audience. That the dietary occurs in a popular religious work makes it unlikely that it was ever intended for practical medical purposes. Rather, the discussion of humoral complexions forms part of a wider assessment of the religious need for fasting by emphasising the preponderance to sin caused by different humoral temperaments. The link between body and soul meant that what was beneficial for the soul was beneficial for the body and vice versa.[22] The original lay owner of the text, and its transition into a female religious community, were two groups considered to be most susceptible to the influence of the humors on sinful behaviour. The adaptation of this dietary to suit a religious context demonstrates its intended purpose as a means to encourage fasting, not only for bodily health but primarily for spiritual salvation, in lay and female religious devotional contexts.

However, there is also evidence of medical texts copied into monastic miscellanies that were *not* adapted for their religious audience. One such example occurs in BL, Additional MS 12195. Claire Jones notes

[22] See Chapters One and Two.

that this manuscript, which dates to c.1461-83, likely belonged to the house of Austin Canons at Creake, north Norfolk until the late fifteenth century.[23] However, the manuscript contains several Carmelite religious tracts, suggesting that at least part of the manuscript was compiled by a Carmelite friar, likely of the priory of Burnham Norton in Norfolk. The manuscript also contains several medical recipes and treatises. Despite being predominantly created and owned within a monastic context, many of the medical treatises in this manuscript refer to men and women. One example is the experiments extracted from a book entitled 'Salus Vitæ', ff.122r-124r. This is an English translation of *Experimenta de corio serpentis* by Johannes Paulinus. It refers to both men and women, including a note on childbirth:

> For a woman þat trauaylyth. Writh þese wordis and bynd hym abowte hyr nakyd body [...] and make here smalle and do away þe meder (f.124r).

Furthermore, a later section of the manuscript compiled in a different hand contains a tract on childbirth, identified by Jones as *The knowynge of woman's kynde in chyldyng* (ff.157r-184v). Hardingham suggests that as "religious houses were keen to acquire the most up-to-date medical knowledge from the highest sources", this may have resulted in important medical texts being copied into compilations without being adapted to suit the context of the manuscript.[24] This seems to have been the case for this manuscript, suggesting that the medical treatise was added in the interests of medical learning rather than practice. While a member of a religious house was unlikely to ever need to know how to aid a woman in childbirth, the important place of medical learning at this time made such texts of interest at a theoretical, learned level in religious settings.

On the other hand, many manuscripts do provide evidence of medical practice as well as learning in religious institutions. One such example is a compilation of medical treatises produced at the Benedictine house

[23] Claire Jones, 'Vernacular Literacy in Late Medieval England: The Example of East Anglican Medical Manuscripts' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 2000), pp.105-12.
[24] Hardingham, '*Regimen* in Late Medieval England', p.133.

of Coventry Cathedral priory for use in the infirmary there. This forms part of BL, Royal MS 12 G.iv, which outlines the day to day workings of the monastery. Most of the medical material was written between 1375 and 1408 for use in the infirmary.[25] The compilation was initially the work of the monk John of Greenborough, head of the infirmary, who died after 1383.[26] Proof of the intended practical use of the medical items in this manuscript comes at the end of item 12, which concludes this section of the manuscript:

> Frater Iohannes de Grenborough per xxx annos et plus nuper infirmarius emebat istum librum vocatum Gilbertinum ad vtilitatem infirmorum in ecclesia Couentre existentium, et ea que in nouis quaternis sunt scripta compilauit a practicis phisicorum Anglie Hibernie Iudeorum Saracenorum Lumbardorum et Salernita[no]rum et expendebat multa in medicis circa compilationem illarum medicinarum. Multa in nouis quaternis suprascripta per practicam sunt vera, set plures phisici nolunt approbare ea, quia multi illorum ignorant practicam sed multa verba et vacua in ventum seminant (f.187v).
>
> [Brother John of Greenborough, infirmarer for more than thirty years, bought this book called 'Gilbertinus' for the use of the sick of the church of Coventry. And John compiled those materials written in the new quires drawn from books of practice of England, Ireland, the Jews, the Saracens, the Lombards and the Salernitans, and he paid much money to doctors for collecting their medicines. Many things in the new quires written above have been tested in practice, but several doctors refuse to approve of them because they do not know anything about medicine in practice, but waste time on spinning empty words].[27]

The medical compilation includes Gilbertus Anglicus's *Compendium Medicinae* which has been added to over time, meaning that it no longer constitutes a single, well-organised text (although it remains broadly organised under headings for particular ailments). It features a

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[25] For more detailed discussion of this manuscript, see Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England*, pp.33-5, and Monica Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine* (Oxford and New York, 2008), p.110.
[26] Peter Murray Jones, 'University Books and the Sciences', in Neil Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson, eds., *CHBB II: 1100-1400* (Cambridge, 2008), p.459.
[27] English translation by Peter Jones, Ibid.

large range of medical texts, including recipes, charms (such as a long charm against fever, f.184v), a section on physiognomy derived from the *Secretum Secretorum* (ff.137r-140r), and tracts on the plague (ff.157v-160r). As well as practical remedies, the text also contains much learned medicine. There are several sections on phlebotomy, including one derived from Avicenna and Bernard de Gordon (ff.200r-201r); astrological tables (f.132r, f.160r, ff.183v and f.185v); and an English treatise on urines (f.185v). The text is assembled from various medical sources, some of which are of uncertain identity.[28] Remedies in Latin, Anglo-Norman and Middle English are derived from a variety of sources, including a *Practica* obtained from "Edward of the University of Oxford who was the best surgeon in that area" (ff.188v-99v).[29] Other medical remedies in the text included personal recommendations.[30] More well-known medical sources quoted by name include Hippocrates, Galen, Esclepius, Avicenna, Rhases, and Bernard de Gordon. The variety of medical authorities referred to throughout the compendium illustrates the literary medical resources of a medieval monastery, and the links a monk such as John of Greenborough had with external medical practitioners. Although there is no evidence that this medical compendium is a record of actual practice undertaken at the monastery, Hardingham suggests that the items it contains were likely selected for the purposes of guiding treatment in the infirmary, as John of Greenborough himself attests in the colophon to his compilation.[31]

As well as providing evidence for medical practice alongside medical learning in monasteries, manuscript evidence also shows that medical material was adapted by those within religious institutions for practical, charitable use among the laity. John Mirfield, a London priest, is one

[28] Hardingham, '*Regimen* in Late Medieval England', p.146.
[29] "Hic incipit practica Edwardi universitatis Oxonie qui fuit optimus in illis partibus cirurgicus".
[30] "Hoc probatum est per magistrum Willelmum de Stafford", f.145r.
[31] Hardingham, '*Regimen* in Late Medieval England', p.146. For brief accounts of John of Greenborough see Richard Sharpe, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540* (Turnhout, 1997), p.260, and Carole Rawcliffe, 'On the Threshold of Eternity': Care for the Sick in East Anglian Monasteries', in Christopher Harper-Bill, Carole Rawcliffe and Richard G. Wilson, eds., *East Anglia's History* (Woodbridge, 2002), p.65 n.102.

such compiler and adapter. He produced a medical work known as the *Breviarium Bartholomei* between 1380 and 1395 for use at St Bartholomew's Hospital. This text incorporated a large number of charms and prayers, and was especially adapted for women's needs.[32] Mirfield also produced a second later work, the *Florarium Bartholomei*, which was a religious encyclopaedia covering the health of the spirit intended for monastic audiences. This contains only one section on medicine, most of which concerns regimen. Both texts drew on similar sources, but show differing attitudes to medicine due to their different intended audiences. Faye Getz suggests that the *Florarium* was prepared for a community of friars; hence the emphasis is on moderation and health of the spirit.[33] Whereas the *Breviarium* was prepared for the benefit of the secular poor, including women and children, providing lists of remedies devoid of the religious moralising found in the *Florarium*. Rather, the religious content in the *Breviarium* of prayers and charms was incorporated to mitigate the sufferings of the hospital's poor.

There is no evidence that Mirfield was himself a medical practitioner. In the prologue to the *Breviarium* he disclaims the name of physician, describing his charitable motives in compiling a prescription book for those who were too poor to acquire medical knowledge through access to a medical library.[34] More likely, he gained his medical knowledge from the many medical books and encyclopaedias available to those living the religious life.[35] The *Breviarium* is a compilation based on several medical authorities, including the *Cirurgia Magna* of Lanfranc of Milan, Bernard de Gordon's *Lilium Medicinae*, the *Canon* of Avicenna, and medical material derived from Bartholomeus Anglicus's *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (discussed in Chapter One), among others.[36] The *Breviarium* was therefore based on leading medical writers, providing

[32] Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages*, p.49.
[33] Ibid., p.52.
[34] Oxford, Pembroke College MS 2, f.11.
[35] See Chapter One.
[36] Perceval Horton-Smith Hartley and Harold Richard Aldridge, eds., *Johannes de Mirfield of St Bartholomew's, Smithfield: His Life and Works* (Cambridge, 1936), p.25.

the best available practice for St Bartholomew's and similar hospitals.[37] Nevertheless, it contains no anatomy, very little theory, and only a little indication of symptoms to allow a diagnosis. Rather, the compilation centres around remedies, with a list provided for each disease without recourse to the theories underlying their use. The complete *Breviarium* comprises 15 parts dealing with diseases from the head downwards, with clear divisions between subjects in the manner of scholastic medical texts. However, the text does not only make recourse to medicine for curing ailments. Prayer is advised for things medicine is powerless to help, for example to alleviate scrofula. The version of the *Breviarium* preserved in BL, Harley MS 3 also contains a late fourteenth century version of John Mirfield's prayer to St. Bartholomew (f. 302v). This reflects the important role of religion in medical treatment.

Despite the *Breviarium Bartholomei* originally being composed for practical purposes to be used in charitable hospitals of religious institutions, neither extant copy of the text bears any obvious evidence of having been used as such. Oxford, Pembroke College MS 2 is the only complete version of the *Breviarium*, prepared for the Benedictine Abbey of Abingdon, near Oxford, c.1380-95. It contains an astronomical calendar based on John Somer's meridian of Oxford (ff.1r-10v), in which is entered the 'Dedication to the church of Abingdon', dated 23rd October. It also contains the Shield of the Benedictine Abbey at Abingdon (f.11r). Although it is possible that the manuscript was produced at Abingdon Abbey, Hartley and Aldridge suggest more likely it was a copy commissioned for use by the Hospital of St John the Baptist, attached to Abingdon.[38] The manuscript contains navigation aids for ease of reference, such as paragraph headings, running chapter and paragraph numbers, and a contents list. The use of scholastic divisions in the layout of the text also aids reference. However, there is little evidence of annotations or marginalia in the manuscript, which remains in excellent condition with some ornate

[37] Ibid., p.34.
[38] Ibid., p.167.

decoration in gold leaf. Furthermore, it is a large and bulky manuscript, making it impractical as a portable text. This suggests that it was not a ‘working text’ to be housed in the infirmary and added to over time, in the manner of other manuscripts used in religious infirmaries such as BL, Royal MS 12 G.iv (discussed above). Instead this appears to be an instructional text designed for learning and reference, rather than a record of medical practice at Abingdon. One exception is four recipes for a sleeping draught, added by a fifteenth-century hand on hand f.298r. So while the text was occasionally made use of as a repository of medical knowledge, it was unlikely to have been used as a practical medical manual in an infirmary setting.

BL, Harley MS 3 is the only other extant copy of the text, and is of unknown provenance. In contrast to the Pembroke manuscript, it is not an easy reference work. Although *partes* and *distinctiones* are marked in the text in red, it lacks any running titles or marginal notes to allow easy location of a particular remedy. It also initially lacked a table of contents, with an alphabetical contents list added before and after the text by a later hand (ff.4r-5v, 302r-302v, with additions on f.3v). Furthermore, the handwriting is small and heavily abbreviated throughout. The cramped text is difficult to navigate as a result. There are multiple additions to the text, the most extensive of which are by John Dee. This sixteenth-century owner of the manuscript held a doctorate of medicine, but there is no evidence for him practicing medicine as a profession.[39] On ff.302v-303r he notes a recipe against worms in children, and another for the improvement of eyesight. Although no evidence exists for the original owner of the manuscript, it is of a much poorer quality than Pembroke MS 2. There is no decoration, and the scribe has endeavoured to keep the text to as few folios as possible. Although there is no evidence that the manuscript was used as a practical medical text in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it lacks the navigational aids that would have made it an easy reference text. While it was certainly used as a practical repository of

[39] R. Julian Roberts, ‘Dee, John (1527–1609)’, *ODNB*.

medical knowledge by a medically-educated layman in the sixteenth century, its earlier origins remain unknown.

John Mirfield's later text, the *Florarium Bartholomei,* is a religious encyclopaedia covering the health of the spirit. The medical chapter in the *Florarium* is in two parts. The first covers professional etiquette, while the second is a general guide to preserving health. This second segment contains identical advice to that found in the regimen section of the *Breviarium Bartholomei.* Faye Getz suggests that the *Florarium*'s medical chapter, which is a shortening of the material found in the *Breviarium*, is principally aimed at priests who have to take care not to injure or kill a patient during surgery or medical treatment, and thus interfere with their principal duties to God.[40] Another section is devoted to the duties of the physician, with criticism directed at the unlettered, the greedy, and women who presumptuously try to practise medicine in spite of their natural inability to do so.[41] But the *Florarium* presents medicine as only one among nearly 200 other topics, including chapters on the Holy Trinity, the sacraments, and the virtues. The volume, which fills nearly 300 folios, is found in 10 excerpted or imperfect versions, plus other attested copies.[42] However, there remian only 2 complete extant manuscripts, both from the early fifteenth century: London, Gray's Inn, MS 4 and BL, Royal MS 7 F.xi. Both of these appear to be the work of professional transcribers, according to Hartley and Aldridge.[43] Royal MS 7 F.xi contains evidence of religious ownership. A note on f.259r suggests that it once belonged to Thomas Baxter, vicar of Strikeford in Lincolnshire, and afterwards to the Order of the Trinity of Ashridge in Buckingham from 1518.[44]

It is interesting that the medical section in the *Florarium*, a compilation aimed at religious audiences, is almost identical to the advice found in

[40] Faye Getz, 'Mirfield, John (*d.* 1407)', *ODNB*.
[41] Ibid.
[42] See Sharpe, *Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland*, p.284.
[43] Hartley and Aldridge, eds., *Johannes de Mirfield of St Bartholomew's*, p.169.
[44] "Iste liber constat Thome Baxster vicario perpetuo ecciesie parochialis de Stikford; qui Ricardus contulit istum librum domui religiose [Augustinian Bonihomines] de Asherug ibidem in biblioteca permansurum, anno domini 1518", f.259.

the *Breviarium*. This suggests that the medical information was relevant both for personal use by religious audiences and for practical, charitable use to benefit the laity. The appearance of learned medical theory in both the *Florarium* and the *Breviarium* suggests the prevalence of humoral knowledge amongst religious audiences (although as the manuscript evidence demonstrates, some copies ended up in the hands of lay medical practitioners). As the incipit and explicit of the *Breviarium* demonstrates, John Mirfield produced his compilations for the specific purpose of educating his religious brethren in medical theory, not only for their own benefit within their institutions but also for practical purposes in charitable hospitals. This demonstrates the important role medicine played in a religious setting, and the perceived need for religious communities to be learned in medicine.

Rules for Religious: Background

As evident in manuscripts produced by and for monastic audiences, the link between body and soul and the role of the humors was a concern expressed in spiritual guides and compilations aimed at religious communities.

Use of medical terms is well-attested in Christian literature from at least the second century, as demonstrated elsewhere in this thesis. The appropriateness of using medical terminology was implicit in the theological motif of *Christus Medicus* developed by the Patristic authors. However, later on in the medieval period *Medicus* also became an apt term for bishops in the exercise of their pastoral ministry, especially as the result of the reform movement which focused on the 'cure' of souls. In Natalie Molineaux's study of the use of medical imagery in a confessional context, she suggests that Pope Gregory's writings in the sixth century "clearly attest to his familiarity with the metaphorical use of medical language in patristic literature", especially the reference to an abbot as 'physician of souls'.[45] She demonstrates how medical imagery provided a unifying theme in one of his best-

[45] Natalie Brigit Molineaux, *Medici et Medicamenti: The Medicine of Penance in Late Antiquity* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, and Plymouth, UK, 2009), p.254.

known treatises, *Liber Regulae Pastoralis* or *Book of Pastoral Rule*. This text contains a plethora of medical terms and images, which Molineaux argues may only properly be understood as a physician's manual for the treatment of spiritual ailments and diseases.[46] She argues the medical tone of the text should be set against the backdrop of Gregory's own experience as a survivor of plague. However, the text also forms a "versatile paradigm within which to negotiate the seemingly irreconcilable demands of the active and contemplative life".[47]

Of more relevance to the discussion here is Molineaux's examination of the figurative use of medical terms and images in the Benedictine Rule. In the Rule an abbot is likened to a *sapiens medicus*, or 'wise physician'. Furthermore, it describes "the ointments of exhortation, the medicines of the Holy Scriptures, and the cautery of excommunication" in discussing discipline.[48] Molineaux argues that the appropriation of medical terms in the Benedictine Rule is unique. She suggests this aspect of the Rule demonstrated a distinctively eastern Christian influence.[49] Molineaux shows how the precise terms of spiritual medicines or treatments found in the Benedictine Rule are essentially a reproduction of a third century eastern text, *Didascalia Apostolorum*. This Christian treatise presented as the work of the Twelve Apostles was originally written in Greek before its translation into Latin. The contents of the text form an early Christian 'Rule', covering the conduct and duties of bishops and deacons as well as liturgical rules, the education of children and the denouncement of heresy, among many other topics. It influenced Patristic writers, with elements of the text subsequently being worked into Desert literature such as the writings of John Cassian.[50] However, the *Didascalia* never achieved widespread popularity, coming to be superseded by the Apostolic Constitutions. In contrast, the sixth century Benedictine Rule came to inform western monasticism throughout the medieval period and beyond.

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[46] Ibid., p.256.
[47] Ibid., p.255.
[48] Ibid., p.253. From the Rule of St Benedict, 28:3-7.
[49] Ibid., p.254.
[50] Ibid.

It is evident that the figurative use of medical terms and imagery was widespread in Christian literature from the early medieval period, including such important and influential texts for the religious life as the Rule of St Benedict. However, Rules for those following the religious life by later Christian writers from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onwards also increasingly incorporated practical medical advice alongside spiritual guidance. This was especially the case for female religious, who were considered to be more susceptible to sin due to the porous nature of women according to the humoral model.[51]

Rules for Religious: De Institutione Inclusarum

In the mid-twelfth century, Aelred of Rievaulx's *De Institutione Inclusarum*, or *Rule of Life for a Recluse* (c.1160), provided a practical guide for a lone female recluse that weighed up both spiritual and bodily concerns. This treatise on the ordering of the external and inner life was written in the form of a letter from Aelred, Abbot of the Cistercian house at Rievaulx, to a female recluse. This proved to be a popular text throughout the medieval period, remaining in 6 complete manuscript versions, 3 excerpted versions, and 1 incomplete version.[52] Manuscripts of *De Institutione Inclusarum* are not only found within Aelred's own order of Cistercian houses, but were transmitted more widely to be held by Augustinian Canons, Carthusians, Benedictines, and Franciscans, as well as a copy located in Merton College, Oxford.[53] It was also translated into Middle English, with 2 known manuscripts remaining. One is the mid-fifteenth century Oxford, Bodl., Bodley MS 423. The version of the text that appears in this vernacular religious miscellany is a drastic reduction of the Latin original, with extensive abbreviation, conflation and omission.[54] The other version appears in the late-fourteenth century Vernon manuscript. The Vernon translation is longer than its original, with additions made by the translator. However, it omits the first section of the text on the Outer Rule, which deals with the

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[51] See Chapter One.
[52] John Ayto and Alexandra Barratt, 'Introduction', *De Institutione Inclusarum: Two Middle English Translations* (London, New York, and Toronto, 1984), p.xxxii.
[53] Ibid., p.xvii.
[54] Ibid., p.xii.

practical aspects of an anchoress's life. John Ayto and Alexandra Barratt argue that the nature of the translation of Aelred's text in the Vernon manuscript suggests it was not made specifically for inclusion in this collection, but must have existed in earlier versions that are now lost.[55] This highlights a wider transmission of the text than initial evidence would suggest. Aelred's text was especially influential within the genre of spiritual guides for religious women, with Ralph Hanna among others identifying Aelred's influence on later writings for women such as *Ancrene Wisse*, *Chastising of God's Children*, and *The Orchard of Syon*.[56] However, Aelred's text was also appropriated for male use. Hanna has identified it is a key source for 'The Cambridge Rule,' the oldest and longest English rule for hermits, and its later counterpart 'The Oxford Rule'. He also suggests that traces of Aelred's rule for recluses are discernible in *Speculum Inclusorum.*[57]

The majority of *De Institutione Inclusarum* is concerned with the inner life of the recluse, followed by the three-fold meditation which uses things past, things present, and things to come as meditative topics for private prayer and contemplation. However, the first half (which consists of 14 sections) deals with non-spiritual aspects of anchoritic life such as clothing and diet. It is here that Aelred provides practical advice pertaining to medicine. One example is Chapter Twelve, which deals with what food the female recluse should eat. Aelred provided different alternatives depending on the constitution of the recluse:

> Beatus Benedictus libram panis et eminam potus concedit monacho, quod nos inclusis delicatioribus et infirmioribus non negamus. Adolescentulis tamen et corpore robustis, ab omni quod inebriare potest abstinere utillimum est. Panem nitidum et cibos delicatos, quasi pudicitiae uenenum euitet. Sic necessitate consulat, ut et famen repellat, et appetitum non satiet. Itaque quae ad perfectiorem abstinentiam progredi non ualent, libra panis et emina lautioris potus contentae sint, siue bis comedant, siue semel. Unum

[55] Ibid., p.xviii.
[56] Ralph Hanna, '"Meddling with Makings" and Will's Work', in A. J. Minnis, ed., *Late Medieval Religious Texts and Their Transmission* (Cambridge, 1994), p.91.
[57] Ibid.

> habeat de oleribus uel leguminibus pulmentum, uel certe de farinaciis. Cui modicum olei, uel butyric, uel lactis iniciens, hoc condimento fastidium repellat; et hoc ei si ea die coenatura est sufficiat. Ad coenam uero parum sibi lactis uel piscis modicum, uel aliquid huiusmodi si praesto fuerit, apponat, uno genere cibi contenta cum pomis et herbis crudis si quas habuerit. Haec ipsa si semel comederit in die praelibato pulmento possunt apponi.[58]
>
> [St Benedict allows the monk a pound of bread and a hemina of wine. I would not deny this to a sick or delicate recluse, but it is much better for the young and strong to abstain from any kind of wine. White bread and dainty foods should also be avoided lest they poison her purity. The recluse should take counsel with necessity: satisfying her hunger without gratifying her appetite. Those who cannot achieve complete abstinence should be content with a pound of bread and a hemina of wine whether they have two meals or only one. She should have one portion of either green vegetables or beans or perhaps porridge; the addition of a little oil, butter or milk will save it from becoming monotonous. This will be sufficient even on days when she has supper. Supper should consist of a very small portion of fish or a milk dish, or anything of this nature that is available. She should be content with a single dish, to which fresh fruit or vegetables should be added if they are obtainable; these may also be eaten before the portion on days of one meal.][59]

Although he was prepared to allow some discretion on the question of diet, Aelred was keen to guide the recluse towards abstinence as the best state for purity of the soul:

> In Lent one meal a day should suffice, and on Fridays, unless ill-health prevent her, she should fast on bread and water.[60]

So there was a practical element to Aelred's advice, acknowledging that some female recluses would be unable to abstain from food entirely on fast days if they had a more delicate humoral complexion. However, the emphasis remained on spiritual concerns, ultimately placing purity of the soul above the needs of the body.

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[58] Aelredi Rievallensis, 'De Institutione Inclusarum', in C. H. Talbot, ed., *Opera Omnia* (Turnhout, 1971), pp.648-9.
[59] Aelred of Rievaulx, *Treatises and Pastoral Prayer*, pp.59-60.
[60] Ibid., p.60.

This instruction is retained in the fifteenth-century Middle English version of the text found in Bodley 423, with a more overt emphasis placed on the link between humoral complexion and sin:

> Fro al manere of mete and drynke that the semeth shulde enflaume thy compleccyon and make the prone and redy to synne, [abstyne the], but if thou be syke or feble. Abstyne the also from mete and drinke, as thou woldist vse a medicyn. Al-though Seint Benet in his reule ordeyned to monkes a certeyn weight of brede and a certeyn mesure of drynke in the day, yit natheles to yonge folke and mighty of complexion, it is suffred. Fle delicat metes and doucet drinkes al the while thou art not syke; fle hem as venym and poison, contrary to thy clene and chast purpose. Serue so thy need by etynge and drinkynge, that hunger be put away and thyn appetyt be not fulfilled, with oo manere of potage, of wortes or of peses or of benys, or elles of form[ente pot]age medled with mylke or with oyle, to put away or a-voyde the biternes; and with o kynde of fysshe, with apples or with herbes. And vpon the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, to vse but Lent metes […]. In Lente o manere of potage euery day, but siknesse it make; euery Friday bred and water.[61]

This Middle English rendering of the text makes more explicit the link between diet and sin, by advising that meat and drink are unsuitable not only for religious reasons but also because they will enflame the humors and make the recluse more prone to sin as a result. The text goes on to assert this link between diet and temptation in even stronger terms:

> mankynde needeth to be dryed by abstinence and other bodely affliccyons from vnclene and vnleeful humours and than nedith mankynde to be brused with yren hamours, that is with dyuerse temptacions.[62]

This point is also emphasised in the version of the text found in the Vernon manuscript, which makes clear that the recluse should "nouȝt be tempted, in glotony and drunkeschipe be ful of stynkynde humours".[63] This link between the health of the body and the health of

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[61] Aelred of Rievaulx, *De Institutione Inclusarum: Two Middle English Translations*, eds. John Ayto and Alexandra Barratt (London, New York, and Toronto, 1984), pp.8-9.
[62] Ibid., p.15.
[63] Ibid., p.29.

the soul was of great concern to medieval writers. Women living the religious life were considered even more vulnerable than men to temptation due to their more porous nature. Furthermore, the naturally cold complexions of women would have been more greatly affected by the 'enflaming' qualities of hot foods such as meat and wine. However, it is interesting that this concern is drawn out in more explicit terms in the Middle English renderings of Aelred's text. It is possible that this is due to the adaptation of the text for lay audiences, as both Bodley 423 and the Vernon manuscript are vernacular religious miscellanies containing texts suitable for the laity.[64] This question of mixed female religious and lay audiences will be discussed in more detail in the final two chapters.

Mention of the humors not only appears in the practical advice contained in the Outer Rule of *De Institutione Inclusarum*. Interestingly, humoral theory also makes several appearances in the Inner Rule. In one such example, Aelred warns:

> nunquam ab adolescentibus, sine magna cordis contritione et carnis afflictione castitas conquiritur uel seruatur, quae plerumque in aegris uel senibus periclitatur. Nam licet continentia donum Dei sit, et nemo posit esse continens nisi Deus det, nec ullis nostris meritis donum hoc, sed eius gratuitae sit gratiae ascribendum, illos tamen tanto dono indignos iudicat, qui aliquid laboris pro eo subire detrectant, uolentes inter delicias casti esse, inter epulas continentes, inter puellas conuersari et non tentari, in commessationibus, et ebrietatibus foedis distendi humoribus et non inquinari.[65]
>
> [the young never obtain or keep chastity without great contrition of heart and bodily affliction. Even in the sick and the aged it is not safe from danger. It is true that continence is a gift of God and no one can be continent unless God grant it to him. This is a gift which is not to be attributed to any merit of our own but to his free grace. Yet he judges as unworthy of so great a gift those whose refuse to undergo any toil to obtain it, expecting to remain chaste in the midst of pleasure,

[64] For recent scholarship on the Vernon manuscript see Wendy Scase, ed., *The Making of the Vernon Manuscript* (Turnhout, 2013).
[65] Aelredi Rievallensis, 'De Institutione Inclusarum', ed. Talbot, p.653.

> continent as they feast, free from temptation while consorting freely with young women. They would load themselves with unclean humors in banqueting and drunkenness without being defiled.][66]

This is in some respects a continuation of the practical advice found in the Outer Rule, again warning the recluse of the link between corrupt humors and temptation to sin. Abstinence is therefore not only important in ascetic terms, but also as a practical tool to reduce temptation to sin. This reference to the humors in the Inner Rule is not unique, with Aelred later suggesting:

> after the waters of baptism the body has to be macerated by fasting and so emptied of unlawful humors.[67]

This theme of the link between body and soul is a continuation of that found in other religious genres such as sermons and penitentials, but adapted for the intended audience of a female recluse. Hence Aelred's greater emphasis on practical advice regarding the need to fast and maintain abstinence in this context.

Nevertheless Aelred, like his near contemporary Bernard of Clairvaux (discussed in the previous chapter), suggests that those following the religious life must put the needs of the soul before that of the body:

> Vera enim discretio est animam carni praeponere, et ubi periclitatur utraque, nec sine huius incomodo illius potest salus consistere, pro illius utilitate istam negligere.[68]
>
> [True discretion is to put the soul before the body and where both are threatened and the health of the one can only be obtained at the price of suffering for the other, to neglect the body for the sake of the soul.][69]

However, unlike Bernard, Aelred was prepared to make exceptions for the sick, weak, or those who did not feel able to achieve complete abstinence. Thus, he advises: "when ill-health demands it, prepare

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[66] Aelred of Rievaulx, *Treatises and Pastoral Prayer*, p.66.
[67] Ibid., p.73.
[68] Aelredi Rievallensis, 'De Institutione Inclusarum', ed. Talbot, p.656.
[69] Aelred of Rievaulx, *Treatises and Pastoral Prayer*, p.70.

more nourishing food".[70] Indeed, a practical nutritious diet was considered important, with the inclusion of oil, dairy, fish, fruit and vegetables acceptable.[71] The emphasis of *De Institutione Inclusarum* was therefore on avoiding excess for the benefit of the soul, but without running the risk of illness or bodily weakening through excessive fasting. This difference can likely be accounted for by the intended audience of a female recluse. Unlike the monks for whom Bernard was writing, female recluses were not enclosed within an institution but rather chose to cut themselves off from the world while still essentially living within it. As with the initial audience for *Ancrene Wisse* (which will be discussed later in this section), female anchorites were often wealthy women choosing to pursue a religious life within the world, lacking the protection and physical enclosure of a monastic institution. It is likely these circumstances which Aelred had in mind in providing a more practical and less harshly ascetic version of the religious life for his female audience.

Furthermore, unlike writers such as Bernard of Clairvaux, Aelred did not merely employ humoral language in his writing in figurative terms. Rather, he emphasised the literal link between corrupt humors and sin as a result of the connection between body and soul that was increasingly coming to the fore in religious as well as medical thought in this period. Thus, it was of practical importance for recluses, especially female recluses, to maintain abstinence and avoid corrupt humors in order to minimise the temptation to sin. This reflects the development of a practical function of humoral language in a religious context occurring at this time in other religious genres, such as sermons and pastoral guides. In the case of *De Institutione Inclusarum*, this application of the humors makes sense in the context of the text as a practical manual for female religious leading a spiritual life. Rather than being used as a confessional or penitential tool, reference to the humors in Aelred's

[70] Ibid., p.49.
[71] Ibid., pp.59-60.

Rule serves to guide the recluse in the practicalities of her everyday living for spiritual, as well as medical, benefit.

However, this is less the case in the later vernacular versions of Aelred's text. Rather, both Middle English versions of the text are highly critical of those who seek to put bodily comfort above the pursuit of the religious life:

> Somme ther ben that wil not vse bodily affliccion by wakynge, by abstinence, by liggynge, by weryng and suche other, for drede of bodily infirmyte, lest thei shulde herby be chargeous to her frendes. This is an excusacion of synne, for few ether ben the wiche han this feruour to chastise her body so […]
>
> Alle men ben witty and wyse and discret now-a-days, for the drede of bodily siknes thei ben negligent aboute the helthe of her soule, as thou thei myghten bettir suffer, and were moor tolerable, temptacion than honger of the wombe: truly thei ben to fauourable to himself. Be war of that wyle, that for encheson of bodily infirmitye thou falle in-to vnleeful thoughts of fleshly lustes. For certeyn if it happe thou be syke or weyke, or thy stomak waxed rye for abstinence, than shal al maner likynges and fleshly delectacions be to the rather peynful than delitable or lustful.[72]

There is also a stronger emphasis on putting the spiritual health of the soul above the needs of the body:

> Hit is a noble and a verrey discrecioun to putte þe sowle tofore þe body; and þer þat þey beþ boþe in peril, and wit-oute greuaunce of þat on, þat oþer may not be saued, hit is ful skilful þat for profit of þe soule, þe body be put by-hynde.[73]

In this rendering of the original text, the subtlety of Aelred's message is somewhat lost. Rather than providing a balanced and practical approach to questions such as diet, the Middle English adaptations focus on the need for abstinence and favour a purely spiritual message, rather than dealing with the practicalities of an anchoritic life.

[72] Aelred of Rievaulx, *De Institutione Inclusarum*, eds. Ayto and Barratt, pp.12-13.
[73] Ibid., p.32.

As mentioned previously, this may be due to a different intended audience for the vernacular texts, both of which appear in Middle English religious miscellanies that would have been suitable for lay audiences. However, if this is the case, this is in contrast to Middle English translations of some other religious works. One such example is the Middle English adaptations of *Somme le Roi*, discussed in Chapter Four. These texts diluted the spiritual demands of traditional septenary and vices and virtues literature to provide more practical devotional guides to suit the worldly lives of an intended lay audience. However, these were designed to function as practical spiritual and devotional guides to aid the laity in their everyday spiritual lives. This is also the case with Aelred's original *De Institutione Inclusarum*, which was concerned with guiding the anchorite through the everyday practicalities of the religious life, including her outer as well as inner life. In contrast to this, the Middle English adaptations of *De Institutione* fulfil a different purpose. Aelred's text is re-worked to focus more on confessional and penitential material. Thus, the pastoral concern of the text is shifted away from the everyday aspects of religious life towards meditation on confession and penance. This could explain the shift away from a more balanced approach between body and soul towards a purely spiritual message, which would better suit the altered purpose of the Middle English versions. Such nuances regarding the adaptation of religious texts for different audiences and within different genres features throughout this thesis, and will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Rules for Religious: *Ancrene Wisse*

Another spiritual guide aimed at women pursuing the religious life from this period is *Ancrene Wisse* (c.1225-1240), an early Middle English guide for anchoresses. This text was heavily influenced by Aelred of Rievaulx's *De Institutione Inclusarum,* with Bella Millett suggesting Aelred's text provided the general model and content for *Ancrene Wisse*.[74] However, as a Rule for female recluses *Ancrene Wisse* had an

[74] Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, ii, p.xxxii.

even greater impact than its predecessor.[75] *Ancrene Wisse* addressed a new kind of audience: lay anchoresses who were literate in the vernacular, but less confident in Latin.[76] Ostensibly penned as a book of religious instruction for three lay sisters of noble birth enclosed as anchoresses, the text attained a far wider popularity among anchoritic communities, male monastic communities and even among the laity. The sheer number of surviving manuscripts attests to its popularity, with 17 known manuscript versions. 9 of these are in English, 4 in French, and 4 in Latin, with manuscripts dating from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.[77]

The text consists of an introduction followed by 8 distinctions, or 'partes', in the scholastic tradition. As with Aelred's *De Institutione Inclusarum, Ancrene Wisse* is split into an Inner Rule governing spiritual concerns, and an Outer Rule governing the body. The first part of the text is on devotions; the second part on how to control the five senses; the third on how anchoresses should behave; the fourth on the deadly sins, spiritual temptations, and their remedies; the fifth on confession; the sixth on penance; the seventh on love; while the final part is the Outer Rule, covering everyday practical matters ranging from clothing, possessions and occupations to diet and bloodletting.

Like the *De Institutione Inclusarum*, *Ancrene Wisse* also provided medical advice in a text that was predominantly concerned with providing guidance for the inner life of the contemplative. *Ancrene Wisse* tried to steer a course between the best spiritual guidance for the soul and practical advice for medical care of the body. The unknown author of the text employed the familiar metaphor of bodily sickness for spiritual sickness. One such example is the imagery of 'falling evil' (probably epilepsy) for trials of temptation of the flesh, by which even the most experienced anchoress could fall from a holy height:

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[75] Nicholas Watson, '*Ancrene Wisse*, Religious Reform, and the Later Middle Ages', in Yoko Wada, ed., *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse* (Cambridge, 2003), p.198.
[76] Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, ii, p. xxxvi.
[77] Yoko Wada, 'What is *Ancrene Wisse*?', in Wada, ed., *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse* (Cambridge, 2003), p.1.

> for muche neod is pet ancre of hali lif ant of heh habbe fallind uuel. Þet uuel ne segge Ich nawt pet me swa nempneo, ah, 'fallinde euuel' Ich cleopie licomes secnesse ooer temptatiuns of flesches fondunges, hwer-purgh hire puche pet ha falle dulneward of heli helnesse. Ha walde awilgin ells ooer to wel leoten of, ant swa to noht iwuroen. Þe flesch walde awilgin ant bicumen to fulitohen toward hire leafdi ȝef hit nere ibeaten, ant makie sec pe sawlevȝef secnesse hit ne temede. Ȝef hare nowoer nere sec wio uuel ooer wio sunne, pe licome ne pe gast – as hit timeo seldene – orhel walde awakenin, pet is pe measte dredfule secnesse of alle.[78]
>
> [For it is very necessary that an anchoress of holy and highly pious life have the falling sickness. I do not mean the sickness which is commonly so called; but that which I call falling sickness is an infirmity of the body, or temptation of carnal frailty, by which she seems to herself to fall down from her holy and exalted piety. She would otherwise grow presumptuous, or have too good an opinion of herself, and so come to nothing. The flesh would rebel and become too insubordinate towards its mistress, if it were not beaten, and would make the soul sick, if sickness did not subdue the body with disease, nor the spirit with sin. If neither of these were sick – which is seldom the case – pride would awaken, which is the most dangerous of all sicknesses.[79]]

Ancrene Wisse also refers to Christ as physician, and the healing power of confession – themes familiar from the penitential, confessional and pastoral sources discussed in the previous chapter:

> Flesches fondunge mei beon ieuenet to fot-wunde; gastelich fondunge, pet is mare dred of, mei beon for pe peril icleopet breost-wunde. Ah us puncheo greatte flesliche temptatiuns for-pi pet heo beoo pah greate ant grislichei Godes [briht] ehe, ant beoo muchel for-pi to drede pi mare. For pe oper, pe me feleo wel, secheo leche ant salue; pe gasteliche hurtes ne puncheo nawt sare, ne ne saluio ham wio schrift ne wio penitence, ant draheo to eche deao ear me least wene.[80]

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[78] Anon., *Ancrene Wisse,* ed. Millett, i, p.67.
[79] English translation from <http://www.bsswebsite.me.uk/History/AncreneRiwle/AncreneRiwle2.htm> [last accessed 12.01.2013].
[80] Anon., *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Millett, i, p.74.

[Carnal temptation may be compared to a foot wound; and spiritual temptation, which is more to be dreaded, may, because of the danger, be called a breast wound. But it seems to us that carnal temptations are greater, because they are easily felt. The other we do not notice, although we often have them, yet they are great and odious in the bright eyes of God; and are, for that reason, much more to be dreaded. For the other, which are sensibly felt, men seek a physician and a remedy. The spiritual hurts do not appear sore, nor do they heal them with confession, nor with penitence, and they draw men on to eternal death before they are in the least aware.][81]

The text also employs the by now familiar imagery equating spiritual sickness with sin:

ƿet oƿer dredfule estat ƿat te seke haueo is al frommard ƿis: ƿet is, hwen he feleo se muchel angoise ƿet he ne mei ƿolien ƿet me hondli his sar ne ƿet me him heale. Ƿis is sum ancre ƿe feleo se swioe hire fondunges, ant is se sare ofdred, ƿet ne gastelich cunfort ne mei hire gleadien ne makien to understonden ƿet he mahe ant schule ƿurh ham ƿe betere beon iborhen.[82]

[The other alarming state which the sick man has, is quite the opposite of this. It is when he feels so much pain that he cannot bear that any one should touch his sore, or apply a remedy to it. This is an anchoress who feels her temptations so forcibly, and is so sore afraid of them, that no spiritual comfort can gladden her, nor make her to understand that she may and shall, through them, be the better saved.][83]

However, *Ancrene Wisse* does not only use medical theory metaphorically. The anonymous author also uses medical knowledge for practical religious purposes. For the author of *Ancrene Wisse*, illness reveals one's true self and identifies one's purpose in the world:

Secnesse makeo mon to understonden hwet he is, to cnawen him seoluen, ant, as god meister, beat forte leorni wel hu mihti is Godd, hu frakel is ƿe worldes blisse.[84]

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[81] <http://www.bsswebsite.me.uk/History/AncreneRiwle/AncreneRiwle2.htm>.
[82] Anon., *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Millett, i, p.68.
[83] <http://www.bsswebsite.me.uk/History/AncreneRiwle/AncreneRiwle2.htm>.
[84] Anon., *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Millett, i, p.69.

[Sickness makes man to understand what he is, and to know himself; and, like a good master, it corrects a man, to teach him how powerful God is, and how frail is the happiness of this world.][85]

Enduring sickness can therefore have spiritual benefits, by emulating Christ's suffering and providing a trial of patience for the penitent as a remedy for sin. This argument reflects that of other Christian theologians such as Bernard of Clairvaux, discussed in the previous chapter. Unlike Bernard of Clairvaux, however, *Ancrene Wisse* provides for the practical use of medicine and recourse to physicians by the anchoresses. This is most evident in Part Eight on the Outer Life, which advises on blood-letting:

ȝe schulen beon idoddet, ooer ȝef ȝe wulleo ischauen fowr sioen i þe ȝer to lihtin ower heaued (beo bi þe her ieueset hwa-se swa is leoure), ant as ofte ileten blod, ant ȝef neod is oftre. Þe mei beo þer-buten, Ich hit mei wel þoilen. Hwen ȝe beoo ilete blod, ȝe ne schule don na þing þe þreo dahes þet ow greueo, ah talkie to ower meidnes ant wio þeawfule talen schurteo ow togederes. Ȝe mahen swa don ofte hwen ow þuncheo heuie, ooer beoo for sum worltlich þing sare ooer seke – þah euch worltlich froure is unwuroe to ancre. Swa wisliche witeo ow in ower blodletunge, ant haldeo ow i swuch reste, þet ȝe longe þrefter mahen i Godes seruise þe monluker swinken, ant alswa hwen ȝe feleo eani secnesse. Muchel sotschipe hit is leosen for an dei tene ooer tweolue.[86]

[You shall have your hair cut four times a year to disburden your head; and be let blood as often and oftener if it is necessary; but if anyone can dispense with this, I may well suffer it. When you are let blood, you ought to do nothing that may be irksome to you for three days; but talk with your maidens, and divert yourselves together with instructive tales. You may often do so when you feel dispirited, or are grieved about some worldly matter, or sick. Thus wisely take care of yourselves when you are let blood, and keep yourselves in such rest that long thereafter you may labour the more vigorously in God's service, and also when you feel any sickness, for it is great folly, for the sake of one day, to lose ten or twelve.][87]

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[85] <http://www.bsswebsite.me.uk/History/AncreneRiwle/AncreneRiwle2.htm>.
[86] Anon., *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Millett, i, p.161.
[87] <http://www.bsswebsite.me.uk/History/AncreneRiwle/AncreneRiwle2.htm>.

The practice of phlebotomy was considered especially important for enclosed religious, as celibacy led to a build-up of dangerous hot humors. Such a build-up of heat was also spiritually dangerous, as warmth increased desire. This would have been particularly true for women, whose naturally cooler complexions would have been more susceptible to the ill-effects of unnatural heat. *Ancrene Wisse* attributes the need to preserve bodily health in this passage to be better able to serve God fully. The emphasis on frequent blood-letting, not only during illness, but also when feeling dispirited, suggests a necessity to care for ones' health.

This practical advice is in sharp contrast to the previous sections of the text on the Inner life, where the author asserts the need to disregard a headache or other bodily weakness, for to indulge in care for one's bodily health risked the weakening of spiritual resolve and the soul falling into sin:

> Ah monie – mare hearm is – beoo se flesch-wise, ant swa ouerswioe ofdred lest hare heaued ake, leste hare licome febli to swioe, ant witeo swa hare heale, þet te gast unstrengeo ant secleo I sunne, ant þeo þe schulden ane lechnin hare sawle, wio heorte bireowsunge ant flesches pinsunge, forwuroeo fisitiens ant licomes leche […]. Nabbe ȝe iherd tellen of þe þreo hali men? Bute þe an wes iwunet for his calde mahe to nutten hate speces, ant wes orne of mete ant of drunch þen þe tweien oþre: þah ha weren seke, ne nomen neauer ȝeme hweat wes hal, hwet unhal to eoten ne to drinken, ah nomen eauer fororiht hwet-se Godd ham sende, ne makeden neaurer strengoe of gingiure ne of zedual, ne of clowes de gilofre.[88]
>
> [Yet many anchoresses, more is the harm, are of such fleshly wisdom, and so exceedingly afraid lest their head ache, and lest their body should be too much enfeebled, and are so careful of their health, that the spirit is weakened and sickens in sin, and they who ought alone to heal their soul, with contrition of heart and mortification of the flesh, become physicians and healers of the body […]. Have you never heard the story of the three holy men, of whom one was wont, for his cold stomach, to use hot spices, and was more

[88] Anon., *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Millett, i, p.139.

> interested about meat and drink than the other two, who, even if they were sick, took no heed of what was wholesome and what was unwholesome to eat or to drink, but always took directly whatever God sent them, nor ever made much ado about ginger, or valerian, or cloves?][89]

Here, the author makes recourse to the language of medical regimen by talking about various herbs and spices to remedy a cold stomach, but does so in order to mock those who put their bodily comforts first. By suggesting that what God provides should be enough, the author seems to be dissuading those pursuing a spiritual life from seeking medical treatment, and from taking any heed of their bodily needs at all. This intention would seem to be confirmed by an earlier passage in the text that describes the 'physician of hell':

> He haueo so monie buistes ful of his letuaries, þe leoere leche of helle, þe forsakeo an, he eot anooer foro ananriht, þe pridde, þe feoroe, ant swa eauer foro apet he cume o swuch þet me on ende underuo, ant he þenne wio þet birleo him ilome. Þencheo her of þe tale of his ampoules.[90]
>
> [The wicked leech (physician) of hell has so many boxes full of his electuaries, that to him who rejects one he offers another directly, and a third, and a fourth, and so on continually until he comes to such a one as he in the end accepts, and then he plies him with it frequently. Think, now, of the number of his phials. Hear now, as I promised, many kinds of comfort against all temptations, and, with God's grace, thereafter the remedies][91]

On the one hand, the author scorned those who did not bear bodily sickness with patience, even going so far as to condemn those who worried for their health and turned to physicians or regimens to ease their bodily pains. On the other, the final section of the text which deals with the practicalities of the anchoritic life seems to contradict this, advocating recourse to a physician for regular blood-letting so as to avoid bodily illness.

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[89] <http://www.bsswebsite.me.uk/History/AncreneRiwle/AncreneRiwle2.htm>.
[90] Anon., *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Millett, i, p.86.
[91] <http://www.bsswebsite.me.uk/History/AncreneRiwle/AncreneRiwle2.htm>.

To overcome the seemingly contradictory advice regarding blood-letting, the author asserts that it is permissible to try to avoid illness or physical infirmity as it prevents one from fully serving God. However, this is difficult to justify when compared to the overt criticism of regimen that is so strongly evident in the previous two passages. For the author of *Ancrene Wisse*, sickness was an important trial sent from God to be endured patiently, as "a brune hat forte polien, ah na ping ne clenseo gold as hit deo pe sawle".[92] Thus, it was also an opportunity to cleanse the soul through bodily suffering:

> Secnesse bet Godd send – nawt bet sum lecheo burh hire ahne dusischipe – deo beose six binges: (i) wescheo be sunnen be beoo ear iwrahte, (ii) wardeo toȝein beo be weren towardes, (iii) pruueo pacience, (iii[i]) halt ine edmodness, (v) mucheleo be mede, [(vi)] eveneo to martir bene bolemode. Pus is secnesse sawlene heale, salue of hir wunden, scheld pet ha ne kecche ma, as Godd sio pet ha schulde ȝef secnesse hit ne lette.[93]
>
> [Sickness which God sends – but not that which some catch through their own folly – does these six things: it washes away the sins that have been formerly committed; it guards against those that are likely to be committed; it tries patience; preserves humility; increases the reward; and makes the patient sufferer equal to a martyr. Thus is sickness the physician of the soul, and heals its wounds, and protects from receiving more; as God says that it should, if sickness did not prevent it.[94]]

As the author was keen to stress, however, the benefits of sickness only occurred when it was sent from God, and not when one fell ill as a result of purposefully weakening the body through excessive mortifications, fasting, and so on. This was a difficult line to tread, reflected in the sometimes conflicting advice offered in *Ancrene Wisse*.

Key to explaining this apparent contradiction is the implicit association between humoral imbalance and a propensity for sin. The author of

[92] Anon., *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Millett, i, p.69. English translation: "Sickness is a fire which is patiently to be endured, but no fire so purifies the gold as it doth the soul", <http://www.bsswebsite.me.uk/History/AncreneRiwle/AncreneRiwle2.htm>.
[93] Ibid., p.69.
[94] <http://www.bsswebsite.me.uk/History/AncreneRiwle/AncreneRiwle2.htm>.

Ancrene Wisse had to weigh up providing spiritual guidance for the care of the soul with the need for practical advice to follow the religious life outside the security of a monastic institution. Despite the elevated position of those pursuing the religious life (for whom temptation was often seen as a trial sent by God), the reality was rather more dangerous. This was especially the case for women, who were considered to be more susceptible to humoral imbalances due to their 'imperfect' nature. For the author of *Ancrene Wisse*, better a body aided to humoral good health through the attentions of a physician in order to keep the soul pure, than a fallen soul. Catherine Innes-Parker points out that Part Eight on the Outer Rule is omitted in every surviving Latin version of *Ancrene Wisse* bar one (BL, Cotton Vitellius E.vii, which has been badly damaged). She suggests that the intended audiences for the Latin versions required a different version of the Outer Rule, potentially meaning that the original Outer Rule was specific only to female audiences (or at the very least, those illiterate in Latin).[95] Cate Gunn summarises the dual spiritual and physical concerns of the *Ancrene Wisse*, saying: "The life of the anchoress is spiritual, but the imagery used to express it is physical".[96] She argues that this is not an incongruity of the text, but rather is in keeping with *Ancrene Wisse*'s use of affective piety and its democratisation of spirituality. Gunn argues that despite using Latin sources to inform not only the pastoral content but also the rhetoric of the text, *Ancrene Wisse* anticipated the vernacular spirituality that developed later in the fourteenth century.[97] Thus, the devotional routine outlined in the text is less demanding than the full canonical Hours undertaken in monastic institutions. Bella Millett suggests that this aspect of the text anticipates the content of later Books of Hours, which became highly popular among lay audiences in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[98]

[95] Catherine Innes-Parker, 'The Legacy of *Ancrene Wisse*: Translations, Adaptations, Influences and Audience, with Special Attention to Women Readers', in Yoko Wada, ed., *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse* (Cambridge, 2003), p.154.
[96] Gunn, *Ancrene Wisse*, p.53.
[97] Ibid., p.1.
[98] Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, ii, p.xxi.

Ancrene Wisse was a practical manual aimed at a female anchoritic audience. However, significantly the anchoresses addressed by *Ancrene Wisse* were members of the laity, who entered the anchorhold from the world rather than being professed nuns seeking a harsher life. This placed them in a new religious movement: while previously most anchoresses had been nuns, by the thirteenth century most anchoresses were lay. The author of *Ancrene Wisse* chose to address this new audience, in contrast to Aelred of Rievaulx and writers of many other spiritual guides aimed at religious women. *Ancrene Wisse* was thus a new kind of pastoral work, providing spiritual guidance to an audience that was both religious and lay (a rather anomalous status).[99] The appearance of medical imagery and humoral theory in *Ancrene Wisse* therefore reflects a text that was forging new pastoral ground. While the use of medical metaphor to reject the flesh was part of a much earlier tradition, the author of *Ancrene Wisse* was also forming a more original use of humoral knowledge for practical advice to aid the spiritual life, in the tradition of *De Institutione Inclusarum* laid down by Aelred of Rievaulx. Thus the seeming contrast between putting spiritual concerns above the body while also allowing preventative medical treatments such as blood-letting would not have seemed incongruous for an audience of female lay recluses. This highlights the different concerns religious writers had for different audiences, which will be discussed in greater detail in the final two chapters.

Ancrene Wisse remained an evolving and variable work that existed in many different versions. Several manuscript versions came to be addressed to different audiences over time. Latin versions of the text, such as those found in Oxford, Magdalen College MS 67, ff.1r-95r (c.1400), Oxford, Merton College MS c.1.5, ff.90r-165v (c.1300-50), and BL, Royal MS 7.C.x, ff.69v-124v (c.1500) frequently and inconsistently address an audience of “religious vel religiosa” (male or female religious).[100] Similarly, a French version in Cambridge, Trinity College

[99] Ibid., p.xxxvi.
[100] Charlotte D’Evelyn, ‘Instructions for Religious’, in J. Burke Severs, ed., *Manual of Writings in Middle English 1050-1500* (Connecticut, 1970), ii, p.459.

MS 83 is addressed to “homes et femmes de religion”. Furthermore, some English versions of the text also address a male as well as female audience. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 402 urges, "leoue mon ant wummon godd puncheo god of ure god" [Dear man and woman, God is concerned with our good], while BL, Cotton Titus MS D.xviii is adapted entirely for a male religious community.[101] As well as versions of *Ancrene Wisse* being adapted for a male religious audience, some manuscript versions show evidence of adaptation for a lay audience. A late fifteenth-century extract of the text found in BL, Royal MS 8 C.i contains a homily addressed to a lay congregation, with Millett describing it as a free adaptation of Parts Two and Three of *Ancrene Wisse* for a more general lay audience.[102] An extract of the text is also found in the Vernon manuscript, which contains a mix of works aimed at female religious audiences and broader lay audiences, demonstrating the broad appeal of *Ancrene Wisse*.[103]

The way in which manuscripts containing *Ancrene Wisse* changed hands over the course of the medieval period also demonstrates the appeal of the text to a breadth of audiences. One such example is BL, Cotton Nero MS A.xiv, which dates from the mid-thirteenth century and is the only known surviving manuscript to retain the original opening address to the three anchoresses. However, marginal annotations present in the text show that it later passed into male hands, with Innes-Parker suggesting that the manuscript perhaps came into the ownership of the Benedictine Abbey of Winchcombe.[104] BL, Cotton Cleopatra MS C.v was initially owned by a lay woman, Matilda de Clare, Countess of Gloucester. However, it was bequeathed to the house of Augustinian canonesses at Canonsleigh, Devon between 1284 and 1289, before passing into the hands of Robert Talbot, a prebendary of Norwich, at

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[101] Bella Millett, ed., *Annotated Bibliographies of Old and Middle English Literature, Vol. II: Ancrene Wisse, the Katherine Group, and the Wooing Group* (Cambridge, 1996), p.53.
[102] Ibid., p.55.
[103] Ibid., p.57.
[104] Innes-Parker, ‘Legacy of *Ancrene Wisse*’, p.149.

some point before 1558.[105] Another example is Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 402, which was copied in the early thirteenth century for a solitary anchoress. However, by c.1300 it had passed into the hands of John Purcell, who later gave it to the Abbey church of Wigmore.[106] Scholars including Millett and Innes-Parker have argued that the revisions evident in this manuscript are likely those of the original author of *Ancrene Wisse*.[107] If so, this would be evidence of an author later adapting his text for a lone anchoress. This would suggest that the initial author accepted the evolution and textual instability of his work, valuing function over textual integrity. Gunn argues that the text contains within itself different functions, allowing for the possibility of use by different readers and audiences. She suggests that much of the advice given in the text was applicable to a wider community of pious laity living in the world, while Part Five of the text dealing with confession was explicitly addressed to a more general audience, with the penitent often referred to as 'he' as well as 'she'. Only the final section of the text on the Outer Rule was addressed to anchoresses directly.[108]

Millett similarly suggests that the text also refers to potential, rather than actual, readers.[109] She points to the authorial voice as evidence, which often speaks generally in impersonal terms. This is in contrast to other texts of this genre such as Aelred of Rievaulx's *De Institutione Inclusarum* and Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, which speak to the individuals for whom these texts were initially composed and often in very personal terms. Millett agrees with Gunn that the Inner Rule of *Ancrene Wisse* in particular includes material of more general application, addressing a less clearly defined audience. This reflects the content of the multi-purpose pastoral models on which this part of the text is based, with the author of *Ancrene Wisse* perhaps refraining from

[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., p.150.
[107] See Innes-Parker, 'Legacy of *Ancrene Wisse*', p.150; Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, i, p.xl, and *Annotated Bibliographies of Old and Middle English Literature,* ii, p.32.
[108] Gunn, *Ancrene Wisse*, p.3.
[109] Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, ii, p.xxiii.

customising his source material too thoroughly in order to retain his text's potential for more general pastoral use as one of the first vernacular devotional resources of its kind in England at this time.[110]

Ancrene Wisse was especially influential as an early vernacular text that dealt with issues increasingly of concern to pious lay people and those entrusted with their spiritual charge, at a time when more lay people were seeking a religious vocation outside the traditional forms of religious life. Gunn suggests that the emphasis on penitence and confession in the text was for the benefit of a wider lay audience, either directly or through those concerned with their pastoral care.[111] Provision is made in the text for those less learned than anchoresses, with alternatives given if certain prayers are unknown. This makes for a simplified devotional routine based on repeated Paters and Aves instead of the Hours. The penitential nature of spirituality in *Ancrene Wisse* drew on the monastic, and specifically Cistercian, tradition, breaking up the monastic material on which it was based to make it more palatable for a non-enclosed audience.[112] *Ancrene Wisse* therefore made devotional material previously only accessible in Latin available to a wider group, taking clerical Latin pastoralia and translating and adapting it for a vernacular audience. As a result, Gunn suggests that the text is as much a work of pastoral literature as it is an anchoritic work, with much material on key pastoral topics such as confession and the seven deadly sins.[113] Furthermore, by providing such material in the vernacular *Ancrene Wisse* was at the cutting edge of pastoral literature in its successful adaptation not only of Latin devotional content, but also the rhetorical devices and structures of Latin pastoralia being developed as part of the sermon tradition at the schools in Paris in the thirteenth century.[114] Adapting Latin literature for a vernacular work intended for a lay or semi-regular audience in the first half of the thirteenth century therefore put *Ancrene Wisse* at the

[110] Ibid.
[111] Gunn, *Ancrene Wisse*, p.6.
[112] Ibid., pp.9-10.
[113] Ibid., p.95.
[114] See Chapter Two.

forefront of the dissemination of pastoralia, occupying a transitional position between its monastic roots and the developing lay piety of the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[115]

Nicholas Watson similarly places *Ancrene Wisse* within the development of what he terms an English 'vernacular theology'. He argues that the borrowing of Latin monastic material for vernacular works aimed at the laity resulted in the 'laicization' of devotional works, such as Nicholas Love's adaptation of Pseudo-Bonaventuran material for *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*. For Watson, the term vernacular theology can be applied to original texts written in the vernacular as well as those translated directly from Latin. He suggests that *Ancrene Wisse* and the genre of vernacular spiritual guidance texts that followed it from the fourteenth century onwards was at the forefront of a "laicizing trend towards thinking of any vernacular religious writing as aimed at a general Christian readership".[116] Gunn suggests that 'vernacular spirituality' is a better term than vernacular theology, which detracts from the personal and devotional nature of such texts. She argues that *Ancrene Wisse* reflects a spiritual life at the intersection between interior faith and outward expression of that faith in devotional practices. The growing emphasis on interior devotional experiences in *Ancrene Wisse* came to the fore in fourteenth-century mysticism, with writers as diverse as Walter Hilton, Richard Rolle, and Julian of Norwich infusing their devotional writings with personal interior experiences of spirituality.[117]

As this section has demonstrated, texts such as *Ancrene Wisse* were less concerned with the theory of theology than with its practical applications in daily devotional life.[118] This is evident in the different way in which humoral theory is applied in *Ancrene Wisse.* Unlike earlier Latin sermons and other pastoral material which used medical imagery metaphorically, guidance texts aimed at female religious allowed for

[115] Gunn, *Ancrene Wisse*, p.61.
[116] Watson, '*Ancrene Wisse*, Religious Reform, and the Late Middle Ages', p.201.
[117] Gunn, *Ancrene Wisse*, p.177.
[118] Ibid., p.176.

practical medical concerns alongside spiritual ones. The link between body and soul that formed part of humoral theory meant such practical considerations had implications for spiritual as well as physical health, allowing authors of texts such as *Ancrene Wisse* to be more lenient regarding medical concerns for their more susceptible female religious audience. This is a development that becomes ever more pronounced in spiritual guides in the vernacular, especially in fourteenth and fifteenth century works aimed at the laity.

Concluding Remarks

Ancrene Wisse marks the beginning of the development of vernacular devotional literature in this period, with changes to devotional works over the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries reflecting changing audiences over this time. The vernacular developments that followed *Ancrene Wisse*, including the changing application of humoral theory in spiritual guides in the vernacular to suit a more general audience, are important themes that are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Middle English Spiritual Regimen

Background: Spiritual Guides in Middle English

Spiritual guides in the vernacular, especially those aimed at the laity, were common in the later medieval period. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, religious guidance texts in the vernacular were part of a tradition of writing for the benefit of enclosed female religious. Writers including Walter Hilton produced works such as the *Scale of Perfection* for the benefit of a "goostli suster in Jhesu Crist", providing guidance and devotional material for a beginner contemplative.[1] Hilton was a fourteenth-century Augustinian monk associated with a northern circle of religious writers patronised by Bishop Arundel who were active in responding to emerging Lollardy.[2] Despite the initial intended audience of enclosed religious women for vernacular works of religious instruction by authors such as Hilton, there was an increasing demand from the laity for vernacular religious texts by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This resulted in an increasing cross-over between monastic and lay audiences. Rebecca Krug has demonstrated that vernacular religious works written for enclosed religious women and lay devotional texts increasingly drifted together, becoming almost inseparable in terms of content and tone by the end of the fifteenth century.[3] Texts originally written for enclosed religious communities or clerical audiences were adapted and translated to supply the needs of a wider lay audience.[4] This blurring of the boundary between lay and monastic audiences for devotional and instructional texts reflects the rise of the devout layman in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, discussed by W. A. Pantin among others.[5] As Eamon Duffy has demonstrated, the laity was making increasing demands for religious instruction and

[1] Hilton, *Scale of Perfection*, ed. Bestul, p.31.
[2] J. P. H. Clark, 'Hilton, Walter (*c.*1343–1396)', *ODNB*.
[3] Krug, *Reading Families*, p.191.
[4] Vincent Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion', in Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, eds., *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475* (Cambridge, 1989), p.317.
[5] W. A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1955), pp.253-4.

edification during this period.[6] Primers and Books of Hours became a convenient way to share in the monastic round of prayer for the increasing numbers of laity who sought to emulate monastic piety.[7] Vincent Gillespie has shown that the authors and compilers of some vernacular religious texts responded to the growth of the potential audience by referring explicitly to both priests and laymen as possible users for their works, especially from the fifteenth century onwards.[8] He suggests this is particularly the case for texts written initially for enclosed female religious. One such example is *Ancrene Wisse*, discussed in the previous chapter, which came to be addressed to the laity as well as its initial audience of female anchoresses.

Such guides provided spiritual direction for those unlearned in Latin towards virtue and away from sin in an attempt to ensure their salvation. This aim was evident in the prologues of many such spiritual guides, such as *Ayenbite of Inwyt*:

> Þis boc is ywrite / uoir englisse men þet hi wyte / hou hi ssolle ham-zelue ssriue / and maki ham klene ine þis liue. / Þis boc hatte huo þt writ / Ayenbite of Inwyt.[9]
>
> [This book is written / for Englishmen, that they may know / how to shrive their souls / and make them clean in this life. / This book is named by its author / Remorse of Conscience.][10]

Ayenbite of Inwyt (which loosely translates as *Remorse of Conscience*) was a translation of the Anglo-Norman spiritual guide, *Somme le Roi*. It was translated into Kentish dialect in 1340 by Michael de Northgate, a Benedictine monk of St Augustine's in Canterbury. He claimed to be translating this highly influential text into Kentish dialect for the benefit of those unlearned in Latin or French, perhaps the local congregations in Canterbury or the community of nuns at the Priory attached to his house.

[6] Eamon Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 2nd edition (London, 2005), p.62.
[7] Ibid., p.210.
[8] Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion', p.320.
[9] Michael de Northgate, *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, ed. Richard Morris (London, 1866), p.5.
[10] Translation is my own.

Similarly, the anonymous author of *The Book of Vices and Virtues*, another fourteenth-century Middle English translation of *Somme le Roi*, made the benefit of religious learning for the laity plain in his Prologue: "for þer may no man schryve him wel ne kepe hym fro synne but he knowe hem".[11] This argument for the importance of understanding sin in order to avoid it was a common theme in texts of religious instruction, and was often used to justify writing in the vernacular for the benefit of lay audiences. The prologue to the *Pricke of Conscience*, one of the most popular religious poems of the mid-fourteenth century which was erroneously ascribed to the Yorkshire mystic Richard Rolle, states that it is written in English for the benefit of lewd and unlearned men who "can no latyn understonde".[12] The author of *The Lay Folks' Mass Book*, a fifteenth-century English guide to the Mass for the laity, says that, so everyone can understand the Mass, "In-til englishe þus I draw hit".[13] In *Handlyng Synne*, an early fourteenth-century devotional poem based on the Anglo-Norman *Manuel des Peches*, Gilbertine monk Robert Mannyng emphasised the importance of lay education, using the example of the sacrament of baptism. He warns of a "mydwyff / þat lost a child boþe soule & lyff" due to her ignorance of how to perform an emergency baptism, arguing, "euery man boþe hyghe & lowe, / þe pyntes of bapteme oweþ to knowe".[14] Thus, Mannyng states his motivations for writing this text:

> For lewed men y undyr toke / On englyssh tonge to make þys boke /[…] þat may falle ofte to velanye / To dedly synne or outher folye / For swyche men haue y made þis ryme / þat bey may wel dyspende here tyme.[15]

The directive from the Church for the importance of lay religious education stimulated a sense of public Christian duty in providing works of spiritual guidance for the laity. This was influenced by the reform movement, which placed increasing expectation on the clergy to be

[11] Anon., *Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. W. N. Francis (London, 1942), p.68.
[12] Anon., *The Pricke of Conscience*, ed. R. Morris (London, 1863), p.10.
[13] Anon., *The Lay Folks' Mass Book*, ed. T. F. Simmons (London, 1979), p.6.
[14] Robert Mannyng, *Handlyng Synne*, ed. I. Sullens (London, 1983), p.240.
[15] Ibid., p.4.

better educated in order to undertake their pastoral duty. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 outlined the basic level of knowledge expected from the laity, and the duty of parish priests to provide religious education and instruction.[16] This edict was enthusiastically taken up in England, with nearly every diocese issuing statutes modelled on those of the Fourth Lateran Council, such as the Council of Oxford in 1222 and the highly influential Lambeth Council of 1281.[17] This laid down a compulsory programme of religious instruction to include the Fourteen Articles of Faith, the Ten Commandments, the Two Commandments of the Gospel, the Seven Works of Mercy, the Seven Virtues, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seven Vices, and the Seven Sacraments.[18] This led to the development of technical literature, with this programme of religious instruction becoming the basis for an increasing number of catechetic manuals. In the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries these manuals were mainly in Latin and aimed at aiding parish priests with their duties, such as the late thirteenth-century manual of pastoral theology *Oculus Sacerdotis* by English theologian William of Pagula. However, by the end of the fourteenth century such manuals were increasingly expounded in the vernacular, both to improve the knowledge of lesser educated clergy and to provide guidance to enable priests to teach the laity in the vernacular. Texts such as John Mirk's late fourteenth-century treatise *Instructions to Parish Priests*, which was itself derived from the *Oculus Sacerdotis*, not only included catechetic material in Middle English but also guided parish priests through their pastoral duties.[19] However, vernacular manuals of religious instruction also increasingly came to be aimed at the laity directly. Gillespie argues that there was a growing awareness and exploitation of the vernacular in catechetic contexts from the fourteenth century, with Latin works adapted and translated to supply the needs of a wider lay audience.[20] Many followed

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[16] Norman Tanner and Sethina Watson, 'The Least of the Laity', *Journal of Medieval History*, 32:4 (2006), p.401.
[17] Leonard E. Boyle, *Pastoral Care, Clerical Education and Canon Law, 1200-1400* (London, 1981), p.81.
[18] Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, p.193.
[19] John Mirk, *Instructions for Parish Priests*, ed. Gillis Kristensson (Lund, 1974).
[20] Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion', pp.317-8.

the catechetic layout set down by the Lambeth Council, such as *The Lay Folks' Catechism*, which was written in rhyming verse to aid memorisation.

The influence of Church legislation in motivating authors to provide religious instruction for the laity is evident in the guides themselves. *Speculum Christiani*, a popular fourteenth-century religious compilation of short English verses with Latin commentary, made direct reference to the Lambeth constitution:

> In constitucione Lambeth dicitur: We bydde and commaunde that euery curat expowne and declare openly to the pepil by hym-selfe or be a-nothyr on a solempne day or mo eche quarter ones: The articyles of the fayth, The ten commaundmentes, The two preceptys of the gospel, The seuen werkes of pyte, The seuen dedly synnes wyth ther braunches, The seuen principal vertuse, and The seuen sacraments of grace.[21]

Though the *Speculum Christiani* was later translated entirely into Middle English, the original mix of English and Latin suggests the primary audience was made up of parish priests. *The Lay Folks' Catechism*, a late fourteenth-century manual of elementary religious instruction originally intended for clerical use but also owned by members of the laity, also made reference to Church edicts. This time to Archbishop Thoresby of York, who granted "forty dayes of pardoun" for all to learn the contents of the book. Thus, the audience is directed to "cunnynly knowe þese sexe thyngys [For] þorwȝ hem ȝe schull knowe god almyȝty", for the "hele of oure sowlys".[22] A sense of duty in providing public religious instruction is evident in the emphasis many of the authors of these spiritual guides placed on the importance of education.

The dramatic increase in the number of religious texts in the vernacular in the later medieval period resulting from a sense of educational duty

[21] Anon., *Speculum Christiani*, ed. G. Holmstedt (London, 1933), p.6.
[22] Anon., *The Lay Folks' Catechism*, eds. T. F. Simmons and H. E. Nolloth (London, 1901), p.99.

to the laity is explored in Anne Middleton's concept of 'public poetry'.[23] She argues that Ricardian poetry aimed to be a common voice to serve the common good, with authors believing their poetry ought to justify itself within society as a moral force in essentially public terms.[24] Middleton demonstrates that works such as *Piers Plowman* encouraged social value of the 'common good', and that nobles undertaking public service should be motivated by the furtherance of virtue.[25] Thus, Middleton sees these authors as directing the reader towards virtuous behaviour. However, the spiritual guidance texts examined here differ slightly from this concept of public poetry, as clerical authors writing religious guidance texts for the benefit of the laity were concerned more with the means to virtue rather than virtue itself.

Middle English spiritual guides can be seen as part of the wider process of vernacularization occurring in this period. The choice by many religious writers to use Middle English instead of Latin was a key part of the development of vernacular literature more broadly. It also paralleled the vernacularization of medical texts at this time. As this chapter will demonstrate, devotional texts in the vernacular were produced to reflect growing and changing lay audiences for religious guides. Such vernacular works reflected earlier Latin traditions in the use of humoral theory and medical metaphor in pastoral contexts, but altered this earlier content to suit different audiences.

***Somme le Roi* and its Middle English Adaptations**

Many vernacular spiritual religious guides presented the humors as the link between spiritual and bodily health, in a continuation of the tradition discussed in previous chapters. The humoral discourse that appears in some spiritual guides could almost have been lifted from the popular medical regimens of the day. In a religious context, the humors came to be employed as a diagnostic tool for the soul as well as the body. In contrast to the use of humoral language and imagery in the twelfth and

[23] Anne Middleton, 'The Idea of Public Poetry in the Reign of Richard II', *Speculum*, 53:1 (1978), pp.94-114.
[24] Ibid., p.95.
[25] Ibid., p.97.

thirteenth centuries discussed in previous chapters, the use of humors in some fourteenth- and fifteenth-century devotional texts was not merely metaphorical. Rather, these texts moved beyond the trope of equating bad humors with sins to develop a functional, practical language. Maintaining humoral balance of the body could help to keep temptation at bay and this idea came to the fore in vernacular religious guides aimed at the laity, who needed all the help they could get to avoid sin as they lived in the world of temptation (in contrast to those leading the enclosed religious life). As Joseph Ziegler summarises of medieval thought:

> reasonableness cannot exist in the human person without the health of the body, which demands temperate humors that can only be regulated by the help of medicine.[26]

Especially in vernacular devotional texts, there was recognition that correct application of the humors could be used to 'diagnose' ailments of the soul. In this sense, vernacular devotional texts were presented as 'spiritual regimen'.

Some vernacular spiritual guidance texts are comparable to a contemporary medical regimen in form, style, and even language. Spiritual guides outlined the correct behaviour to ensure a virtuous life, and therefore a healthy soul. The upmost concern of many of these vernacular texts of religious instruction was to encourage the reader away from sin and towards virtue. In undertaking this, many authors described how to 'remedy' against vice, presenting the virtues as a 'medicine' against sin. Thus, the *Book of Vices and Virtues* emphasised how "synne is ariȝt gret seknesse, and þe schrift [confession] is þe medicine".[27] Similarly, *Speculum Vitae*, another English version of *Somme le Roi* produced in Yorkshire in the form of a devotional poem, states:

> says þus Saynt Gregor, / 'þou suld nogt think hard þarfore / þat þou feles here malady / Withouten þe on þi

[26] Ziegler, 'Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages', p.6. (See Chapter One).
[27] Anon, *Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. Francis, p.175.

body, / If þou be heled clene withinne / Of allekyn sekenes of synee'.[28]

This reflects the tradition of *Christus Medicus*, presenting the sinner as a sick patient: "the medicyn ayeins pride for man is the meekenes of Crist Iesus".[29] However, some spiritual guides in Middle English went further than this medical metaphor, employing medical language of the four humors to explore the importance of the physiological connection between body and soul.

One group of texts that exemplifies this is a group of Middle English adaptations of *Somme le Roi*, produced in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The *Book of Vices and Virtues*, *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, the *Mirroure of the Worlde* and *Speculum Vitae* were all based on two closely related thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman works, *Somme le Roi* and *Miroir du Monde*. This group of texts provides a case study for the appearance of humoral language in vernacular spiritual guides aimed at the laity. *Somme le Roi* was a vernacular manual of moral and religious instruction produced in 1279 by the Dominican Frère Laurent for King Philip III of France, for whom Laurent acted as confessor. *Miroir du Monde* is believed to be a contemporary text on which much of the *Somme* was based, dated c.1270-77.[30] The *Somme* in particular was highly influential, with more than 80 surviving manuscripts. The work formed part of a genre within spiritual instruction texts that focused on the vices and virtues, making use of the septenaries as the basis of a diagnostic model of pastoral care representative of the broader tradition of linking vice and virtue with sickness and health.

Of particular influence on the *Somme* and the *Miroir* were William Peraldus's *Summa de Vitis* and *Summa de Virtutibus*. Peraldus was a French Dominican writing in the first half of the thirteenth century, predating the *Somme* and the *Miroir* by a few decades. Peraldus's two tracts on the vices and the virtues were likely intended for use in

[28] Anon., *Speculum Vitae*, ed. Ralph Hanna (Oxford, 2008), i, pp.263-4.
[29] Anon., *The Mirroure of the Worlde*, eds. Robert R. Raymo, Elaine E. Whitaker, and Ruth E. Sternglantz (Toronto, Buffalo and London, 2003), p.123.
[30] Ibid., p.7.

preaching and pastoral care. In contrast, the *Somme* and the *Miroir* were popular examples of well-organised adaptations of septenary instruction for a broader vernacular audience. *Somme le Roi* was one of the earliest vernacular texts in this tradition, covering the basics of Christianity in a mnemonic order through linked patterns of seven. These groups were the Seven Petitions of the Pater Noster; the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost; the Seven Deadly Sins; the Seven Remedial Virtues; and the Seven Beatitudes and their Rewards. While the *Somme* is closer in tradition to vices and virtues literature than the septenaries, the septenary section takes up two-thirds of the whole text. Beginning with an introduction of the Seven Sins, Lorens founds his discussion of the septenaries through an extended introduction to virtue, including discussion of the art of dying and living well. The text culminates with a description of a garden, focusing on the tree of life and the well of life which are associated with the Seven Beatitudes and the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost. The text thus forms an ascendant pattern, whereby Lorens detaches the sins from his analysis of the virtues and their rewards.

There is one key aspect in which *Somme le Roi* and *Miroir du Monde* differ from the septenary tradition. The septenaries followed the tradition of John Cassian, who, in his *De Institutis Coenobiorum* and *Collationes,* transmitted the ideas of the Christian Desert Fathers in Egypt.[31] As discussed in Chapter Two, Cassian used medical language of the humoral complexions and the humoral idea of contraries curing contraries to further the Augustinian metaphor of the sick soul of the sinner. One later medieval example of this septenary tradition based on Cassian’s model is William Flete's *De Remediis Contra Temptaciones* (*Remedies Against Temptations*). *De Remediis* enjoyed considerable manuscript circulation, with 21 complete extant Latin manuscripts. However, it was also popular in Middle English translation, with 14

[31] See Cassiani, ‘Collationes’, ed. Petschenig. For an English translation see Cassian, *The Conferences*, trans. Ramsey. See Chapter Two for detailed discussion of this text.

known English manuscripts surviving in 3 different versions.[32] These extant manuscripts demonstrate that it was copied and owned by men and women, both lay and religious. Oxford, Bodl., Bodley MS 131 from the mid-fifteenth century was produced by a layman, John Morton of York. This manuscript eventually came to be owned by a member of the regular clergy, demonstrating the shared interest for this text among both lay and clerical audiences.[33] *De Remediis* made wide use of medical terms, but through discussion of the complexions rather than the individual humors. Thus Flete was more concerned to discuss personality types, for example the melancholic person, rather than an excess of melancholy. Flete wrote his original Latin text in c.1359, but there were several later Middle English translations and adaptations. These remained faithful to the original in using the ideas of complexion and physiognomy to link disease with sin.

Septenaries such as Flete's text took on the concerns of the penitential tradition in emphasising the role of an individual's complexion in the temptation to sin. In his discussion of temptation, Flete says:

> whether þou see hem [temptations], here hem or think hem, take non heed of hem, for they ben materis of grete mede, and no synne in no wyse, whether they ben trauelous or angwyschiouse þat comen of malice of þe feend, or of *yuel disposicion of mannes complexion* [my emphasis].[34]

However, Flete's discussion of the complexions was more advanced than that of the penitentials, incorporating humoral theory more fully. Thus, he linked the complexions with the emotions, which in humoral theory were believed to be the way in which the soul could act on the body:

> Leo þe pope seith þat it falleth sumtime þat goode and righteful soules ben sterd be þe feend, and somtyme be sterynge of complexion to angers, troubles, taryenges and diseses of dredes, þat it semeth to hem her lif a torment, and here deth an ese, in so moche þat

[32] Diana Webb, 'Flete, William (*fl.* 1352–1380)', *ODNB*.
[33] Innes-Parker, 'Legacy of *Ancrene Wisse*', p.162.
[34] William Flete, *Remedies Against Temptations: The Third English Version*, eds. Edmund Colledge and Noel Chadwick (Rome, 1968), p.221.

> somtyme for disese þei begynnen to dispeire both of here lyf of body and of here soule.[35]

Here, Fleet emphasised how complexion could affect the emotions, and in this way impact on both the body and the soul. However, Flete used the complexions rather than the individual humors to make this connection, emphasising the particular dangers of a melancholic complexion:

> It is weel knowen þat seknesse falleth to a man aftir the disposicion of his complexion, and Leo þe pope saith þat the feend aspyeth in euery man in what wyse he is disposed in complexion, and aftir þat dispocicion he tempeteth a man in his complexion; for þer as he fyndeth a man ful of humors of malencolie, he tempteth hym most with gostly temptacions.[36]

Flete was keen to demonstrate that an individual's complexion could easily tempt one into sin, but he argued that fore-warned was fore-armed:

> comforte ʒow in god, and beth glad þat þe feend hath envye on to ʒou, for whiles þe lyf is in the body he wil entarye alwey goddis seruauntis, for he is ful set aʒens hem, with al malice and velanye to disese hem in diuers maneris in al þat he kan and may.[37]

By treating the health of one's soul with the same importance and care as bodily health, then with God's grace the temptations of the Devil might be avoided.

Remedies Against Temptations in vernacular translation was likely intended as a guide for the wealthy laity, particularly the devout and well educated. As discussed above, evidence from extant manuscripts suggests a wide lay as well as clerical ownership of the text. Furthermore, some manuscripts were owned by nunneries: Cambridge, University Library MS Hh.i.11, which contained two English versions of *Remedies*, seems to have been produced in a nunnery. Similarly, London, BL, Harley MS 2409 was given by Maude Wade, the prioress

[35] Ibid., p.224.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., p.239.

of Swine (c.1473-82) to Joan Hyltoft of Nuncoton.[38] Thus there was evidently a strong female audience for the text, including lay women: a copy of the text in BL, Harley MS 1706 was owned by Elizabeth de Vere. Catherine Innes-Parker even suggests that a version of *Remedies* found in BL, Royal MS 18.A.x was adapted by a female author for a 'religious sister', possibly originating in an East Anglian nunnery.[39] Nevertheless, there is enough manuscript evidence to suggest that the audience of Flete's text (at least in the vernacular) was comprised of men and women, both lay and religious.

This could explain the emphasis on the complexions in *Remedies*. The complexions were one aspect of humoral theory that would likely have been well known and understood by the majority of people, which the prevalence of complexions poetry in Middle English by well-known authors such as Lydgate and Gower attests (see Chapter One). As Flete himself assumed, "It is weel knowen þat seknesse falleth to a man aftir the disposicion of his complexion". This would particularly have been the case for the inherently well-off audience of Flete's text, who would have been able to afford a physician. Physicians to private individuals would often diagnose a patient's humoral complexion and then provide them with a regimen to suit their particular complexion, with the aim of preserving health and preventing illness. Flete demonstrated that one could do the same to guard against sin, taking into account the emotions associated with each complexion and therefore the sins that were most likely to lead to temptation. Furthermore, the well-educated intended audience for *Remedies* likely explains the incorporation of more advanced aspects of the humoral theory surrounding the complexions, such as the role of the emotions. Nevertheless, Flete leaves out any discussion of the humoral theory behind the complexions.

Somme le Roi also emphasised the role of the humoral complexions in sin, using a quote attributed to St. Gregory to warn that the devil takes

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[38] Innes-Parker, 'Legacy of *Ancrene Wisse*', p.162.
[39] Ibid.

advantage of the weaknesses of each of the four complexions to drive man towards the particular sin to which he is most susceptible.

> Et si com dit sainz Greguoires, li deables voit mout soutieument l'estat de l'omme et sa meniere et sa complexion, et a quell vice il est plus enclins ou par nature ou par acoustumence, et de cele part il l'asaut plus fort: le colerique de ire et de descorde, le sanguine de jolivete et de luxure, le fleumatique de gloutonnie et de peresce, le melencolieus d'envie et de tristece.[40]
>
> [and as St. Gregory said the devil sees shrewdly the condition of the man and his manner and his complexion, and to which vice he is most inclined either by nature or by custom, and this is where he mounts his assault the strongest: (for) the choleric it is anger and discord, for the sanguine it is joviality and lust, for the phlegmatic it is gluttony and laziness, for the melancholic it is envy and sadness].[41]

However, the *Somme* expands the links between body and soul and sin and disease using the more complex scientific language of the humors. This Anglo-Norman text was highly influential in England, prompting several Middle English translations in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. These adaptations of the *Somme* effectively formed a Middle English literary tradition, incorporating not only the broader medical imagery linking disease with sin of the earlier septenaries, but also specifically employing humoral discourse.

The Middle English adaptations of the *Somme* followed the septenary tradition of the complexions playing a vital part in the dangers of sin, using the same quote attributed to Saint Gregory. *Ayenbite of Inwyt* translates this passage faithfully, with few additions:

> ase zayþ saint gregorie, þe dyeuel zyiȝþ wel sotilliche þe stat of þe manne / and his manyere / and his complexioun / and to huet vice he ys mest bouȝinde, oþer þe kende / oþer þe one. And of þo half him asayleþ stranglakest þanne colerik: mid ire: and mid discord. Þanne sanguinien: mid ioliuete / and mid luxurie. Þanne flewmatike: mid glotonye / and be

[40] Frère Laurent, *La Somme Le Roi*, eds. Edith Brayer et Anne-Françoise Leurquin-Labie (Paris, 2008), pp.268-9.
[41] Translation is my own.

> sleauþe. Þane melanconien: mid enuie / and mid zorȝe.[42]

While the *Mirroure of the Worlde*, translated from *Miroir du Monde*, contains almost exactly the same passage:

> The fende seeth the state of man ful sotilly, bothe his manere and his complexion and to what vice ho is mooste enclined outher be nature or be costome. And on that side he assaileth hym strongely: the colrique man with ire and with discorde, the sanguyn man with iolines and lecherie, the flematique with glotonye and slouthe, the malencolye with envie and hevynes.[43]

However, the *Somme* and its adaptations contain humoral discourse beyond that of the complexions. For the following discussion examples will be taken from the *Book of Vices and Virtues*. This translation, with 3 extant manuscripts, appears more frequently than the other Middle English versions, most of which remain in a single manuscript. The exception to this is *Speculum Vitae*, which remains in a much greater number of manuscripts. However, as will be discussed later, this version removes all references to humoral theory. The passages quoted from the *Book of Vices and Virtues* are also evident in *Somme le Roi*, unless otherwise stated. A direct comparison between the *Somme* and the Middle English adaptations can be found in Appendix A.

A key example of the use of humoral discourse in a religious context in this group of texts is a reference to the humoral properties of mustard seed, which is made use of in medical remedies*:*

> For he haþ þat bileue þat God spekeþ of in þe gospel þat is as þe grein of senefe, þat is mustard seed, þat is wel small and litle, but is it is riȝt strong and scharp, for it is hot in þe ferþe degree, as phisicions seyn. Bi hete is vnderstonde loue.[44]

This description is given in a metaphorical context for God's love. However, this is also a piece of practical medical information. The extremely hot properties of mustard seed made it useful in remedies against an excess of cold humors. The reference to degrees of heat

[42] Michael de Northgate, *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, ed. Morris, p.157.
[43] Anon., *Mirroure of the Worlde*, eds. Raymo et. al., p.288.
[44] Anon, *Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. Francis, p.142.

makes this passage unusual, as this is a more complex part of humoral theory usually found in scholastic medical texts by authorities such as Galen and Avicenna, which were based on classical Greek texts such as the works of Hippocrates. In the second book of Hippocrates's *Regimen*, for example, it is noted that "Mustard is hot and passes well by stool."[45] However, the idea of 'degrees' of properties of things reflects the organisation of the *Somme* and its adaptations around religious themes, which are separated into degrees. The point where this passage occurs is part of a wider discussion of the seventh degree of meekness. Nevertheless, the appropriation of humoral language of degrees of properties to reflect degrees of sins and virtues is unusual, especially for a vernacular text.

The advice given parallels that found in contemporary medical regimens in the vernacular. As part of the discussion of the sin of gluttony, the text warns:

> It is wel grete witte to be mesurable in etyng and drynkyng, for it noreschep gret hele; for moche folk diep or here day come bi outraious etyng and drynkynge, and also per-of comep moche sikenesses.[46]

While the spiritual danger of the sin of gluttony is discussed elsewhere in the text, the focus remains on advising the need for a balanced diet to avoid bodily sickness. This passage from the *Book of Vices and Virtues* is directly comparable to medical regimen texts. One example is Lydgate and Burgh's *Secrees of old Philisoffres*, a fifteenth-century Middle English version of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum*:

> Of mekil excesse / folwyth Corrupcioun, / Excesse of travaylle / Causith febylnesse / Thought sorwe / be greet Occasyoun, / To engender / greet Syknesse, And puttith folj / in froward distresse, / That vndigestion / with Oute Remedye, / Causith ofte sithe / by processe that they deye/[…]. Temperat dyete / and temperate travaylle, / Nat malencolyous / for noon Adversite, /

[45] Hippocrates, *Hippocrates*, trans. W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), iv, p.331.
[46] Anon, *Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. Francis, p.49.

> Meke in al trouble / glad in poverte, / Ryche with litel / content with suffysaunce; / Yif phesyk lake / make this thy gourernaunce.[47]

This emphasis on the dangers to bodily health from overeating, and the emphasis on moderation, is put in similar terms to that found in the *Book.* So not only the advice given but also the language employed is comparable to that of medical regimen.

In this religious context, the humors were employed as a diagnostic tool for the soul as well as the body. One oft-repeated phrase in this text is of evil humors:

> þou hast wikked humores in þi body þat schulle dryue þe to þe deþ, and in þe herte þou hast þe wikked tecches þat wol lede þe to þe deþ of helle.[48]

However, these "wikked humores" were not just a means of equating sin as a type of spiritual sickness. Rather, the humors played an active role in the spiritual as well as physical health of a person. This is reflected in the description of different sins caused by different humoral imbalances in the body, otherwise known as an individual's humoral complexion:

> as seynt Gregori seiþ, þe deuel seeþ wel sliliche þe staat of a man and his manere and his complexion and to what vise he is most enclyne to, or bi kynde, or bi wone, and on þat side he saileþ hym most. Þe colereke of wraþ and cunteke. Þe sanguyn of iolite and lecherie. Þe flewmatike of glotonye and slope. Þe malencolen of enuye and anger of herte.[49]

In this passage, the text associates different humoral complexions with different sins. Humoral complexions influenced personality, and could therefore allow clerics to 'diagnose' the types of sin that an individual might be more tempted by. This had its roots in the humoral idea of physiognomy, whereby a person's humoral complexion affected their personality. This idea was widespread in many medical regimens. One example is the *Gouernaunce of Princes*, another Middle English

[47] Lydgate and Burgh, *Secrees of old Philisoffres*, p.40.
[48] Anon., *Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. Francis, p.128.
[49] Ibid., p.156.

translation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum* by James Yonge:

> The sangyne [complexion] by kynde sholde lowe Ioye and lahhynge, and company of women, and moche slepe and syngynge; he shal be hardy y-nowe of good will and without malice; he shalbe fleshy, his complexcion shalbe light to hurte and to empeyre for his tendyrnesse, he shall haue a good stomake, good dygescion, and good delyueraunce […]. The fleumatyke by kynde he sholde be slowe, sadde, ful stille, and Slowe of answere; febill of body, lightly falle in palsey; he shalbe grette and fatte, he shall haue a febill stomak, febill digestion, and good delyeraunce. And as touchynge manere he shal be piteuouse, chaste, and lytill desire company of women […].The colerike by kynde he sholde be lene of body, his body is hote and drye, and he shalbe Sunwhat rogh; and light to wrethe and light to Peyse; of sharpe witte, wyse and of good memorie, a grette entremyttere, fulle-large and foolehardy, delyuer of body, hasty of worde and of answere; he loueth hasty wengeaunce; Desyrous of company of women moore than hym nedyth […].The Malencoly man sholde be lene of body and dry, he sholde haue good appetyde of mette, and comonely he Is a glotoun and good delyueraunce hathe of his belly. And as touchynge maneris, he sholde bene pensyfe and Slowe, and of stille wille, still and dedfull, and a small entremyttere. More latre Is he worthe than a colerike man, but he holdyth longyr wreth; he is of sotille ymagynacion as of hand-wrkys, and well arne wonyd the malencolik men be Sutill workmen.[50]

In this medical regimen, humoral complexions were discussed in terms of which illnesses they caused, rather than which sins they were associated with. Nevertheless, the underlying ideas associating humoral complexions with certain traits are the same as those evident in the *Somme* and its adaptations. Furthermore, the description of each personality type associated with each complexion in the *Gouernaunce of Princes* exactly parallels that found in the *Book*. Those of a sanguine complexion are jolly and virile (making them susceptible to worldly delights and lechery); those of a phlegmatic complexion are slow with good digestion (inclining them towards gluttony and sloth); the choleric

[50] Yonge, 'Gouernaunce of Princes', pp.219-220.

are witty and vengeful (making them prone to wrath and discord); while the melancholic is pensive and inward-looking (leaving them predisposed to envy and anger). This application of humoral theory as a diagnostic tool, evident in medical regimens, is here applied to the soul as well as the body by linking certain humors to sins as well as to diseases.

The *Book of Vices and Virtues* (and its source text *Somme le Roi*) consistently employed the humors in discussion of sin, but in the process provided practical medical advice alongside spiritual guidance. In the quote below, the importance of purgation is highlighted to cleanse both body and soul, of corrupt humors in the case of the body, and corruption caused by sin in the case of the soul:

> And ȝit more it fareþ bi þe sinful as bi hym þat weneþ he be strong and hol, and he haþ on hym his deeþ euele. For he haþ wykkede humores and corumped in his body, wher-of he mote dye wiþ-ynne a þre wekes or in lasse terme, and weneþ ȝit to lyue fourty wynter, as Helinanz seiþ in þe vers of deþ: 'Doþ awey ȝoure trufles and ȝoure iapes, for suche helen me vnder here cloþes þat weneþ to be strong and hole.' But þe Holi Gost is þe goode phisicion þat scheweþ hym his siknesse and meueþ þe humores wiþ-ynne hym & ȝyueþ hym a purgacion so bittre þat he delyuereþ and saueþ hym and makeþ hym hol and turne to þe lif.[51]

This need to purge excess humors from the body is repeated in many medical regimen texts, including the aforementioned *Secrees of old Philisoffres*:

> Of humours or flewm / whan superfluite / Doon habounde / in signe or degree, / Which in the body / cause Corrupcioun / Of qualitees / shulde be in proporcioun.[52]

However, the text combines the medical idea of purgation of humors with the religious idea of purgation of sins. The above passage from the *Book* embellishes the familiar religious imagery of Christ as a physician of the soul with humoral language. This demonstrates the suitability of

[51] Anon., *Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. Francis, p.127.
[52] Lydgate and Burgh, *Secrees of old Philisoffres*, p.63.

humoral discourse for religious texts, as a language of medicine (and therefore of the body) that fitted in with the pre-existing tradition of describing Christ as a healer of souls and the sinner as a sick patient. However, the inclusion of humoral language is more important than imagery alone. Rather, the humors played an actual role in spiritual as well as physical well-being. This is evident in the provision for guidance for the health of both body and soul, which emphasised the importance of balance in both. The humors played a vital role in this connection:

> Whan þes foure parties ben wel tempred, þan seyn men þat he is an temper man, as a man seiþ of a rote or of an herbe þat sche is a-tempre whan sche is not to colde ne to hote ne to drye ne to moisye. And riȝt as to a mannes body comen many seknesses bi þe distemperaunce of þes foure qualitees or of þes foure humores, also to þe hertes of men and women [þer commen] alle þe vices and alle synnes for þe distemperaunce of þes foure þinges.[53]

In this passage the qualities of the four humors are given, with emphasis on the need for a balanced humoral complexion. Furthermore, in making it clear that plants and herbs have such humoral properties as well as people, the text emphasises the practical role of medical remedies. Furthermore, there is overt acknowledgement that the link between body and soul means that the one impacts upon the health of the other.

The tradition of *Somme le Roi* and its Middle English adaptations such as the *Book* therefore incorporated established medical advice as well as spiritual guidance. The fact that a fifteenth-century owner of one of the remaining manuscript copies of the *Book of Vices and Virtues* (now San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 147) thought it entirely congruous with the text of the *Book* to add a recipe for a 'sotell powder' in the margins suggests that contemporary audiences observed this as well.

[53] Anon., *Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. Francis, p.152.

Comparison between the Adaptations

The *Book of Vices and Virtues* and *Ayenbite of Inwyt* are the earliest known translations of *Somme le Roi*, produced in the mid-fourteenth century. *Speculum Vitae* was likely produced in the late fourteenth century, while the *Mirroure of the Worlde* dates from the fifteenth century. Each of the translations seems to have been produced with different audiences in mind. Only one manuscript of *Ayenbite of Inwyt* exists, BL, Arundel MS 57, which is in Kentish dialect. It was likely produced for use in this part of England, perhaps as a preaching tool for local priests or for the monastic house that produced it. *Ayenbite of Inwyt* is the only Middle English translation of *Somme le Roi* where anything is known about its production. It dates to 1340, and was produced at St Augustine's monastery in Canterbury, Kent:

> Ymende. Þet þis boc is uoleuld ine þe eue of þe holy apostles Symon an Iudas / of ane broþer of þe cloystre of sa(yn)t austin of Canterberi / Ine þe yeare of oure lhordes beringe. 1340.[54]

There is also a note identifying the author:

> þis boc is dan Michelis of Northgate / ywrite an englis of his oȝene hand þet hatte: *Ayenbite of Inwyt*. And is of þe bochous of saynt Austines of Canterberi.[55]

This passage identifies the creator of the manuscript as Michael of Northgate, a Benedictine monk of St Augustine's at Canterbury, who was probably born within the parish of St Mary Northgate in Canterbury. Michael was a secular clerk, ordained as a priest in 1296.[56] He later entered the religious life to become a brother of St Augustine's monastery. Given the date of his ordination in relation to the date given in the manuscript, Michael must have been at least 70 by the time he wrote *Ayenbite*. This could explain the archaic nature of the script, which is a transitional style from the older book hand tradition to the new Anglicana, and the conservative nature of the language employed in the manuscript.

[54]London, BL, Arundel MS 57, f.94.

[55] Ibid., f.2r.

[56] Pamela Gradon, *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (Oxford, 1979), ii, p.12.

Michael was a prolific compiler of texts, with the monastic library catalogue of St Augustine's listing him as donor of 24 separate manuscripts to the library.[57] These included a number of scientific books on subjects such as astrology and natural philosophy, as well as patristic and didactic works. Of those manuscripts remaining, many are written in Michael's own hand and inscribed with his name, such as Oxford, Bodl., Bodley MS 464. This dates from c.1318 and contains works on astrology and astronomy. Another of the remaining manuscripts owned by Michael de Northgate is Cambridge, UL MS Ii.I.15, which contains treatises on arithmetic and astronomy, and a treatise on the sacraments. There are also significant annotations in Michael's hand in some of the manuscripts he owned, such as Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS D. 221. This demonstrates that he not only personally copied many of the manuscripts that were in his possession, but he also studied them before bequeathing them to the monastic library at St Augustine's. Michael was clearly an educated man, who was a practised compiler and copyist of texts.

However, evidence from BL, Arundel MS 57 suggests that Michael was also the translator of *Ayenbite of Inwyt*. The manuscript has been corrected with great care by the original scribal hand. The numerous additions and corrections to individual words suggest some uncertainty of translation by the author. One example is on f.31r, where "uanite" is corrected to "ydelnesse", while similarly on f. 13v "sabat" is corrected to "Zeterday". There is careful consideration of the translation, which in some instances is corrected more than once. On f.19v the initial translation of "fortune" is later rendered as "opcomynge", which is then substituted for "haþ". Similarly, in some instances a gap is left in the text with the original French word placed in the margin: "apeluchier" appears in the margin of f.91r; "foleant" on f.88v; and "cerceaus" on f.61v. This suggests that the author was unsure of how to translate these words into English, leaving spaces in the text to allow him to go back to them

[57] James, *Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover*, pp.197-406, catalogue nos: 69, 647, 649, 767, 782-3, 804, 841, 861, 876, 1063, 1077, 1155-6, 1170, 1267, 1275, 1536, 1548, 1595-7, 1604, 1654.

later. Furthermore, the translation is rather literal in nature. For example, on f.18r “de ceus” is translated first to “to ham”, and then corrected to “of ham”. The numerous corrections and gaps left in the text suggest that this manuscript was the translator’s original copy, a working text in progress rather than a finished version. It also suggests that the author was unsure of his translating skills, rather than a practised translator. Thus the text is translated word for word, rather than sense for sense, but with careful thought given to the choice of words.

Michael de Northgate seems to have been a practised copyist, but not a practised translator. Of the 24 manuscripts associated with him, *Ayenbite* is his only known attempt at translation. The library of St Augustine’s owned 2 copies of *Somme le Roi*. One belonged to Michael, and is now lost. The second has been identified as BL, Cotton Cleopatra MS A.v. Although this version of the text is close to *Ayenbite*, it is not the source from which it was translated. The missing manuscript owned by Michael most likely was the source from which he produced his translation. However, Michael’s Middle English version is not a pure translation of the original *Somme le Roi*. He added an author’s prologue at the beginning, highlighting his reasoning for producing the translation.[58] Furthermore, he ended the text with an English version of the *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, and Creed (f.94r), before adding two further treatises, one on the difference between men and beasts (f.96v), and one an English translation of the Pseudo-Anselm work, *De Custodia Interioris Hominis* (ff.94v-99v). Michael’s intent for the manuscript to be used as a reference text is evident in his use of chapter numbers and headings, and provision of a list of contents at the end of the manuscript. It is possible he intended his translation to be used as a teaching text, or perhaps as a preaching aid. Nevertheless, he provided the apparatus to allow *Ayenbite* to be used for reference. Combined with his donation of the text to the library at St Augustine’s, this suggests an intended religious rather than lay audience. As

[58] See Chapter Three.

previously mentioned he was connected to the nunnery of St Sepulchre's Priory in Canterbury, and this community of enclosed women were potentially his intended initial audience for his translation of *Somme le Roi* into Kentish dialect. As the beginning of this chapter outlined, there was a strong tradition in this period for male confessors attached to communities of enclosed women to provide translations of religious reading for their benefit. However, this does not rule out the possibility that Michael also intended the text to be used for teaching purposes, and perhaps to provide sermon material for his house or the neighbouring clerics at the church of St Augustine's. Marjorie Curry Woods and Rita Copeland suggest that Augustinian canons often served as vicars of the parish churches over which their priories had patronage. While there is no evidence that Michael would have served in this way himself, his production of a vernacular translation of *Somme le Roi* was within the context of "long established pastoral connections between such monastic communities and their parishes".[59]

Ayenbite of Inwyt may have been the first of the translations of *Somme le Roi* into Middle English, as although the *Book of Vices and Virtues* was produced at around this time, it has not been precisely dated. Like *Ayenbite*, the *Book* does not seem to have been widely circulated, surviving in only 3 extant manuscripts. These are BL, Additional MS 17013, a fifteenth-century manuscript containing only the *Book*; Huntington Library, HM 147 (c.1400), again containing only the *Book* but annotated by various owners, including the aforementioned fifteenth-century recipe for a 'sotell powder'; and BL, Additional MS 2283, a large fifteenth-century compendium of literary and religious works. As well as containing a copy of the *Book* which ends imperfectly (ff.92r-116r), this manuscript also includes *The Mirror of Life* (ff.33r-61r), a poem generally attributed to William of Nassyngton and founded on *Somme le Roi*, although it is not a close adaptation.

Given the limited number of manuscript copies surviving, even if the *Book of Vices and Virtues* had been produced before *Ayenbite of Inwyt*,

[59] Woods and Copeland, 'Classroom and Confession', p.400.

it is likely that the *Ayenbite* author would not have been aware of the existence of the *Book*, and vice versa. However, there is a potential closeness of locations identified by the dialects of the texts. The 3 extant manuscripts of the *Book of Vices and Virtues* are all of midlands dialect. Two have been narrowed down to a central east midlands dialect, which stretched from the eastern boundary of Oxfordshire to the western boundary of Essex, including south Buckinghamshire, south Hertfordshire, Middlesex and London. While the third manuscript is of a south west Midlands dialect, again covering the major book production centres of Oxford and London, but also Cambridge. As already discussed, the sole extant manuscript of *Ayenbite of Inwyt* is in Kentish dialect, consistent with its production at Canterbury. It is possible that the same academic or religious circles produced the authors of the two works. That the two versions were produced in slightly different dialects for use in different areas does not necessarily mean that their authors were unaware of other contemporary translations.

The *Book of Vices and Virtues,* the *Mirroure of the World,* and *Ayenbite of Inwyt* show strong similarities to each other in terms of the inclusion of humoral language and theory. They are all very close to their original source, *Somme le Roi.* Thus there is a very close similarity of translation between these texts, not only in terms of the phraseology and content, but also the point in the text where humoral language occurs. The first example concerns the steps of meekness, which each of the translations links to the humors. In *Ayenbite of Inwyt*:

> Ac ƿer byeƿ zome ƿet wel conne hyre defautes and hire pouerte / ac naȝt hit neueleƿ. Ƿeruore is ƿe oƿer stape: yuele / and playni his defautes and his pouerte. And ƿet he yuele his zorȝe and his zicnesse / he yerneƿ bleƿeliche to ƿe fisiciane / and zaiƿ ƿat he y-uelƿ ƿe kueade humours ine ƿe bodye, bliƿe he is huanne ƿet he may his purgi and keste out. And ƿeruore is ƿe ƿridde stape of myldenese / his zennes and his kueade wylles bleƿeliche beknawe / and ssriue / and his herte clensi.[60]

[60] Michael de Northgate, *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, ed. Morris, p.132.

The same passage is replicated almost identically in the *Mirroure of the Worlde*, again occurring as part of the discussion of the second degree of meekness:

> And whoosoo felith his woo and his pouerte rynneth gladly to a leche. For whoosoo felith his evil humores in his bodye hee is gladde whan he mye porge theym and caste theym oute. Therfore the iii degree of mekenesse is gladly to be clensed and porged and to be confessed of his synnes and his shredenesse.[61]

While the same idea occurs in the *Book of Vices and Virtues*:

> þerfore is þe secunde degree to fele and complayne his defautes and his pouerte, & who-so feleþ his sowre and his seknesse, he renneþ bleþeliche to a leche; and who-so feleþ wikkid humores in his body, he is glad whan he may purge hym and cast hem out.[62]

The choice of language is almost identical in these three passages, which closely match the same passage in *Somme le Roi*.[63] In other instances, the translation is a little different in each version. Furthermore, the structure of the texts varies slightly. One example is the extended imagery of sin as sickness and the necessity for dread or humbleness to counteract this. Each of the texts conveys the same idea, but in a slightly different way. *Ayenbite of Inwyt* says:

> Ateende þe zeneȝere is ase þe ilke þet wenþ by strang / an hol / and he heþ þane dyaþ onder his cloþes. Vor he heþ þe keude humours and corruptes ine þe bodye / huer-of he ssel sterue wyþ-inne ane monþe. And he wenþ libbe yet nourti yer / ase zayþ elyans ine uers of þe dyaþe. Do away þe scoffes and þe scornes, uor zuich me wrikiþ onder his cloþes wenþ by strang and hol. Ac þe holi godt is þe guode leche / þet amaystreþ his ziknesse / and chongeþ his humours. And him yefþ zuych a byter medicine: þet him helþ and him yefþ þet lif.[64]

The *Mirroure of the Worlde* expresses this same idea in very similar terms, although there are some subtle differences:

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[61] Anon., *Mirroure of the Worlde*, eds. Raymo et. al., p.256.
[62] Anon., *Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. Francis, p.130.
[63] For the source of this passage in *Somme le Roi* see Appendix A.6.
[64] Michael de Northgate, *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, ed. Morris, pp.128-9.

> a sinner farith as he that hatthe deethe vnder his clothis and wenyth to be hole and stronge. For he hatthe evil corrumped humeris in his bodye of the whiche he shalle dye within a moneth and wenyth too life xl winter, as Seint Clement seithe in his verses of dethe. And he seithe thus: Putte from ȝowe, seithe he, triffles and iapes. For siche couereth me with his clothis that weneth to be strone and hole and too life noo lesse than xl winter, þe whiche or viii days endeth his tyme. But the Hooly Gooste fareth as a goode leche the whiche sheweth hym his sekenes and chaungeth his humeres and ȝiffeth hym soo bitter a drynke that he helith hym and ȝiffeth hym liff aȝeyn.[65]

This passage is similar to *Ayenbite* in content and phrasing, but the unknown author of the *Mirroure* adds a reference to an authority, St Clement, that is missing from the *Ayenbite* version. This may reflect additional knowledge by the compiler, or differences in the version of the text each translator is working from. Furthermore, this passage occurs at a different point in the *Mirroure* to where it appears in the other Middle English versions. In *Ayenbite* and the *Book* the passage occurs as a branch of the Gift of Dread, one of the Seven Gifts. However, in the *Mirroure* it appears as part of the discussion of the goodness that virtue does, in the wider section on the virtues. This could be down to different source versions for these works. *Ayenbite of Inwyt* and the *Book of Vices and Virtues* are translations of *Somme le Roi* only, while the *Mirroure of the Worlde* is a composite of the material found in both the *Somme* and *Miroir du Monde*. In terms of structure, it more closely reflects the *Miroir* than the *Somme*. The *Miroir* makes a greater distinction between the vices and virtues, with the virtues discussed in tandem to the vices as their remedies.[66] This is in contrast to the traditional septenary structure of the *Somme*.

The *Book of Vices and Virtues* follows *Somme le Roi* most closely of all the translations in this particular passage:

[65] Anon., *Mirroure of the Worlde*, eds. Raymo et. al., pp.262-3.

[66] There is no modern edition for *Le Miroir du Monde*, which remains in only 5 known manuscripts. The structure of the *Mirroure of the Worlde* and its similarities to both *Miroir du Monde* and *Somme le Roi* is discussed by Raymo, Whitaker and Sternglatz in their ‘Introduction’, *Mirroure of the Worlde*, pp.6-10.

> And ȝit more it fareþ bi þe sinful as bi hym þat weneþ he be strong and hol, and he haþ on hym his deeþ euele. For he haþ wykkede humores and corumped in his body, wher-of he mote dye wiþ-ynne a þre wekes or in lasse terme, and weneþ ȝit to lyue fourty wynter, as Helinanz seiþ in þe vers of deþ: 'Doþ awey ȝoure trufles and ȝoure iapes, for suche helen me vnder here cloþes þat weneþ to be strong and hole.' But þe Holi Gost is þe goode phisicion þat scheweþ hym his siknesse and meueþ þe humores wiþ-ynne hym & ȝyueþ hym a purgacion so bittre þat he delyuereþ and saueþ hym and makeþ hym hol and turne to þe lif. Riȝt þus turbleþ oure lord þe herte þat he wole hele.[67]

The *Book* incorporates an authority into this passage that is absent in both *Ayenbite* and the *Mirroure*, referring to 'Helinanz' and the 'verse of death'. It is interesting that the *Book* is the only translation to include the authority attributed to this passage in *Somme le Roi*, perhaps due to it being lesser known.[68] However, the *Book* author extends the imagery of the physician beyond that present in the *Mirroure* to incorporate the idea of purgation. A similar end to the passage is present in the *Somme*, although this makes reference to a 'bitter poison' rather than using the direct medical term of 'purgation' that is employed in the *Book*.[69] This was an important part of the medical application of humoral theory, by cleansing the body of excess humors through purgatives such as laxatives, sweating, and blood-letting. This removal of excess or bad humors restored balance to the body. This fits with the use of medical language throughout the text, which emphasises the need to do for the health of the soul what one would do for the health of the body: in this instance, purging sin in the way that one would purge bad humors. However, purgation is not merely a medical term, but is associated with Scripture and had strong religious connotations in the medieval period. Purgation had Biblical origins associating it with the removal of sin. Jacques Le Goff points to the precedent of fire as a sacred symbol of cleansing and purgation.[70] Le Goff demonstrates that

[67] Anon., *Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. Francis, p.127.
[68] For the same passage in *Somme le Roi* see Appendix A.4.
[69] Laurent, *Somme Le Roi*, eds. Brayer et Leurquin-Labie, p.238. See Appendix A.4 for this passage.
[70] Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago, 1984), p.9.

the idea of purgation of sins was incorporated into the theology behind the developing concept of purgatory during the twelfth century, in which the fire of purgatory could wipe out a past period of existence to make a new period possible.[71] However, as well as the associations of purgation with fire, there is also some precedent in the Bible for purgation in medical terms. For example, Psalm 50:9 states, "Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed". This reflected classical medical advice still evident in medieval vernacular versions of texts such as the *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* that "Hysop is an hearbe to purge and clense".[72] This further demonstrates the medical knowledge evident in the *Book*, which makes use of humoral theory and language while never losing sight of the religious traditions and connotations associated with medical imagery in a religious context.

Despite the close similarities in content, translation and structure between the Middle English translations of the *Somme*, there are also some differences. The *Book of Vices and Virtues* proves to be unique in its representation of gluttony. All of the other translations, and the original *Somme*, use the imagery of the devil holding the glutton by the throat as a wolf holds a sheep, and refer to the glutton making a God of his belly,[73] both of which are absent from the *Book*. As demonstrated previously, the *Book* instead emphasised the medical benefits of moderate eating equally with the spiritual benefits of avoiding the sin of gluttony.[74] This is in contrast to the focus on the religious dangers of gluttony in the *Somme* and the other Middle English translations, which only refer to any medical benefits as a beneficial consequence. The medical slant of the *Book* is especially in contrast with *Speculum Vitae*, a translation of the *Somme* in which all reference to humoral theory is removed.

[71] Ibid., p.7.
[72] Anon., *School of Salernum*, ed. Harington, p.118.
[73] This is also evident in *Speculum Vitae*, which is discussed in the next section. For relevant passages see Appendix A.7.
[74] For this passage from the *Book* see p.164 above.

Humoral Theory Removed: *Speculum Vitae*

Speculum Vitae is an anonymous fifteenth-century Yorkshire translation of the *Somme,* although it has been attributed in some instances to William of Nassyngton. It remains in the largest number of extant manuscripts of all the Middle English adaptations of *Somme le Roi*. These are too numerous to examine for the purposes of this discussion, and so this thesis will rely on manuscript evidence provided in the modern edition of the *Speculum* by Ralph Hanna.[75] The *Speculum* is unique in being the only known Middle English translation of *Somme le Roi* into verse, and the only known northern translation. There are some minor differences in structure between the *Speculum* and its original source. Instead of reflecting the septenary structure of the *Somme*, the *Speculum* unifies the entire work as a discussion of the *Pater Noster*. It also reorders the presentation of the sins to separate them more clearly from the virtues. There are also some minor omissions, for example the imagery of the Beast of the Apocalypse and the Garden of Virtue, and the section on learning to die. These are some of the most unique and easily identifiable features of *Somme le Roi*, so it is interesting that they are left out of this translation.

Of greater interest for the purposes of this discussion, however, is that humoral discourse is entirely absent from *Speculum Vitae*. Hanna in his edition of the *Speculum* describes it as a careful translation of the *Somme*.[76] However, this version contains no reference to humoral theory whatsoever. Comparison with the *Book of Vices and Virtues* demonstrates similarity of translation throughout, with the exception of the extensive use of humoral theory in the *Book* which is absent from *Speculum Vitae*. Both texts are concerned with equating sin with sickness, emphasising that sin is an unseen sickness that corrupts in the same way as bad humors. However, *Speculum Vitae* renders this idea in a purely metaphorical way, emphasising the importance of the soul over the body without any recourse to humoral theory or language.

[75] Ralph Hanna, 'Introduction', *Speculum Vitae* (Oxford, 2008), i, p.lxx.
[76] Ibid., p.lxx.

There is a suggestion that cleansing the soul will also have an effect on the body, but this is overlooked as unworthy of further consideration. In contrast, the *Book of Vices and Virtues* couches the same idea in entirely corporeal language, utilising the theory behind the humoral complexions to warn about the effects of sin. In both instances, a corrupt soul and a corrupt body are presented as one in the same; but only in the instance of the *Book* is humoral discourse appropriated for this end.

One example is the comparison between the sections on gluttony in the two texts. The *Book of Vices and Virtues* presents a balanced approach between body and soul, warning of the ill-effects on both in order to present a dual reasoning for the dangers of gluttony.[77] However, *Speculum Vitae* takes an entirely different approach. Throughout the section on gluttony, the author repeatedly warns, "Glottony, as þis clerkes proues, / Es a synne þat þe bely luues".[78] The author ignores the ill-effects of poor diet and over-eating on the body, instead presenting gluttony as to choose the needs and wants of the body over the health of the soul:

> Godde bides a man fast for mede; / þe bely says, 'Nay!
> Þat war nat need; / Bot þou sal ete and drynk saddely /
> And fede þe wele to strengthe þi body'.[79]

As if to emphasise this point, the author warns, "þai sla þair awen saul gastly, / For þai make þair godde of þair bely".[80] The emphasis is on the health of the soul, presenting the dangers of gluttony only in terms of it being a deadly sin. The imagery of a glutton making a God of their belly is particularly striking, and summarises the *Speculum*'s simplistic presentation of a healthy and happy body versus an unhealthy and endangered soul.

The one exception to this is the aside that,

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[77] See earlier discussion in the previous section of this chapter. See Appendix A.7 for relevant passages.
[78] Anon., *Speculum Vitae*, ed. Hanna, ii, p.430.
[79] Ibid., p.432.
[80] Ibid., p.438.

> To halde and kepe ay Mesure wele / In etynge and drynkynge namely; / þat es a gret hele vnto þe body.[81]

This is the only time where suggestion is made that it is of benefit to the health of the body as well as that of the soul to have a measured diet. However, very little is made of this comment, and it contradicts the overall message presented in this section of the text. Furthermore, at no other point is reference made to bodily health or humoral theory. *Speculum Vitae* presents the body only in terms of metaphor, equating bodily sickness with spiritual sickness. Guidance for the health of the soul is the only concern of the *Speculum*, with no practical medical advice included. Apart from the instance regarding gluttony, described above, the one other exception is where the author warns against being too zealous in fasting or bodily mortifications, for if this causes sickness it prevents serving God.[82] This echoes *Ancrene Wisse*, a thirteenth-century guide for anchoresses which also placed the soul above the needs of the body, with the exception of this one piece of advice.[83]

Speculum Vitae does include some brief mentions of complexion, for example stating that a feeble complexion is no excuse for failing to undertake proper penance for sins. However, it does not link complexion to sin in the way that *Somme le Roi* does, in the tradition of the septenary texts.[84] Rather, *Speculum Vitae* contains allusions to ideas of uncleanliness more than the humors. This may be a simpler expression of the same idea of corruption associated with humors, but in a more generalised way:

> þis es a grete Frawardenes, / Bot þus duse a fole þat es witteles / So þat þat treacle war to hym / Turnes hym alle to pure venym, / And medecyne þat suld for hele be done / Hastes hym + to þe dede sone.[85]

This passage links sin to venom, and makes the same connection between medicine and spiritual healing seen in other religious genres discussed in this thesis by associating sin with disease. Other

[81] Anon., *Speculum Vitae*, ed. Hanna, ii, p.437.
[82] Ibid., p.174.
[83] See Chapter Three for detailed discussion of this text.
[84] See Appendix A.1 for relevant passages.
[85] Ibid., p.481.

translations such as the *Book of Vices and Virtues* often refer to bad or excess humors as wicked and venomous, which reflects the train of thought evident in *Speculum Vitae*.[86] Thus, the *Speculum* may contain the same ideas evident in the *Somme* linking sin to disease and medicine to spiritual health. However, this is through a general metaphor of uncleanliness or venom, rather than through humoral concepts such as the complexions, or the humors themselves. It is certainly the case that the *Speculum* emphasises the 'toxic' nature of sin, following the septenary tradition in this regard.

One reason for this lack of humoral discourse in *Speculum Vitae* may be to do with the intended audience for the text. The anonymous author of the *Speculum* claims in the prologue to the work to have written the text for a lay audience, uneducated in Latin. If the author expected the majority of his audience to be poorly educated, then his choice to leave out the references to the humors and humoral complexions from his source material could reflect the expectation that such scientific concepts would be too complex, and unknown to the majority of his audience. However, this claim in the opening prologue does not fit with the rest of the text. Although purporting to be written for those uneducated in Latin, and therefore likely also lacking a sophisticated religious education, it is long and complex. Despite being in rhyme to aid memorisation, the sheer length of the text may have proved daunting to those lacking a good education, or who were unused to navigating large texts. It is much longer and more explanatory than the *Book of Vices and Virtues*, for example. The *Book* makes similar claims to have been written for the purposes of a wider Christian audience unlearned in Latin, although as demonstrated earlier in the chapter this trope was frequently used by Middle English authors to justify their choice to expound on the Scriptures in the vernacular. Although the *Book* regularly addresses a 'holy sister' in Christ, a similar trope to that seen in Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* and the *Ancrene Wisse*, this

[86] See Appendices A.3 and A.4 for relevant passages.

would not necessarily preclude an imagined wider lay audience for the text by the author.

The preface to the *Book of Vices and Virtues* makes much of the importance of writing in the vernacular for those unlearned in Latin, which would include the laity as well as female religious.[87] Furthermore, the intention of a potential lay audience for the text is arguably reflected in the style, layout and content of the *Book*. It is much shorter than *Speculum Vitae*, while its emphasis on practical medical advice combined with the adaptation of religious instruction for those who are constrained by a worldly lifestyle is in marked contrast to the *Speculum*. The differing demands of a lay audience would have necessitated a worldlier and more practical interpretation of the religious life for those unable to devote themselves to it. This is reflected in the *Book*'s presentation of a more balanced approach between body and soul for the benefit of a lay audience, who had to combine the demands of a worldly life with religious and moral expectations. Catherine Innes-Parker has used testamentary evidence to show that at least one copy of the *Book of Vices and Virtues* was owned by a member of the laity. Agnes Stapleton, a devout widow, left many bequests to female religious houses in her will of 1448. Among the 10 books she bequeathed was a copy of the *Book of Vices and Virtues*.[88] This demonstrates the suitability of the text for a wide range of audiences, both lay and religious, including women as well as men. As discussed in reference to the *Ancrene Wisse* in the previous chapter, by choosing to use the vernacular an author would have knowingly made their work more readily available to lay as well as female religious audiences, in an expansion of the role of pastoral literature at this time.[89]

Authorial claims to be producing a vernacular text, particularly those of religious instruction, for the benefit of the uneducated laity was a common trope in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The argument

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[87] Anon., *Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. Francis, p.68.
[88] Innes-Parker, 'Legacy of *Ancrene Wisse*', p.167.
[89] This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five in the context of female reading circles and textual transmission.

for the importance of understanding sin in order to avoid it was a common theme in texts of religious instruction, and was often used to justify writing in the vernacular for the benefit of lay audiences. Writing in Middle English was relatively new in the early fourteenth century, especially in a religious context where the dominant language was still Latin. Authors may have felt the need to justify writing in the vernacular, with education of the laity being an established reason for doing so. However, this may not have reflected the audience actually intended for a work. Many religious works were written in the vernacular for the benefit of female religious, and indeed also for the benefit of lesser-educated clergy who may have had a poor standard of Latin. It is a priestly audience that the author of *Speculum Vitae* may actually have had in mind when he produced this text. Marjorie Curry Woods and Rita Copeland take an intended priestly audience as a given, describing *Speculum Vitae* as:

> an exhaustive confessional guide for parish priests, providing through elaborate division of the virtues and vices the material of detailed ethical and physiological enquiry.[90]

Another clue that the *Speculum* had a more sophisticated and experienced religious audience in mind is the emphasis placed on thought and contemplation, which occurs throughout. As a beginner's guide to contemplation it may have been suitable for a female member of a religious order, or perhaps an experienced and highly devout layperson. But the inclusion of theological questions, such as the nature of God and who God is, point instead to an intended religious audience, as such ideas would likely have been considered too easily misinterpreted for an unsupervised lay audience. Furthermore, the complex design of the text would have made it largely inaccessible to the laity, and perhaps also to the lower ranks of the clergy for whom it was probably intended.[91] *Speculum Vitae* was certainly written by a learned cleric, who makes reference to himself in the section on

[90] Woods and Copeland, 'Classroom and Confession', p.398.
[91] Ibid.

gluttony: "Glottony, *as þis clerkes proues*, / Es a synne þat þe bely luues [my emphasis]".[92] As well as providing confessional guidance, another possible purpose of this text could have been as a preaching aid, or a supplement providing material for sermons. This would explain the length of the text, and its presentation in verse to aid memorisation. Vincent Gillespie characterises the *Speculum* as "the nearest thing to a vernacular *summa* produced in the period", noting that:

> although probably written for oral performance and for an audience of little theological sophistication, most manuscripts contain an elaborate Latin apparatus.[93]

Some manuscripts, such as BL, Additional MS 33995, contain significant annotations suggestive of a working text with a practical function. This shows that the work would be consulted as well as listened to, not merely sequentially but also in a more selective way.

If the text was written for a priestly audience, this could explain the author's decision to leave out the references to humoral theory in his source text. While the inclusion of some contemplative material may have allowed a priest to preach basic contemplative content to an audience where suitable – such as an audience of female religious, or even to devout and well-educated laity – the text is in large part designed for a specific catechetical function, rather than as a devotional text. As a result, the *Speculum* is highly conservative in content and tone. Thus it removes some of the more conceptual imagery of *Somme le Roi*, such as the Tree of Life, to focus on the basic tenets of Christianity (such as the Pater Noster) and place greater emphasis on the vices and virtues. It is therefore possible that the humoral language present in *Somme le Roi* was also removed as a result of this reworking of the text to focus on the creed. Furthermore, as this chapter has demonstrated, humoral theory fulfilled a therapeutic function in *Somme le Roi,* allowing an individual to 'diagnose' his or her sinfulness. This application of humoral theory was more suited to a contemplative or devotional context, and therefore likely considered by the *Speculum*

[92] Anon., *Speculum Vitae*, ed. Hanna, ii, p.430.
[93] Gillespie, *Looking in Holy Books*, pp.169-70.

author to be irrelevant to his version of the text. This demonstrates the nuances of textual adaptation in this period. Why humoral theory does not appear in *Speculum Vitae* is therefore a complex question, with no obvious answers.

The *Speculum* is in some respects a simplification of the *Somme* for a vernacular audience by outlining complex religious ideas and traditions in a simplified form, likely as a teaching aid. It is arguably a more conservative and basic adaptation of the septenary tradition in this aspect. Unlike *Somme le Roi* and its other Middle English translations, the *Speculum* refrains from the inclusion of any scientific or complicated intellectual discussion. In this sense its purpose is closer to that of a teaching text. This is in contrast to the *Somme,* which developed the septenary tradition for a better-educated vernacular audience, incorporating humoral language to fulfil a therapeutic function for the soul as well as the body in a private devotional context.

Evidence for Lay Readership: Caxton's *Royal Book*

An English version of *Somme le Roi* was printed by William Caxton in the late fifteenth-century as the *Royal Book*. Although the move to printing occurred at the end of the period under discussion here, and is therefore largely beyond the scope of this thesis, the *Royal Book* adds a useful post-script to this case-study of lay audiences for the Middle English adaptations of the *Somme*.

The *Royal Book* is an example of an early English printed text, with the first edition printed by Caxton in Westminster in 1485. This was only a decade after Caxton first set up production in London around 1476.[94] The prologue to the work claims that Caxton translated the *Royal Book* into English himself, with Caxton stating that he:

> attende by the suffraunce of almyghty god to translate a book late delyuerd to me and reduce it out of frenssce in to our comyn englysshe tonge.[95]

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[94]Lotte Hellinga, 'Printing', in Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, eds., *CHBB III: 1400-1557* (Cambridge, 1999), p.67.

[95] William Caxton, 'The Royal Book', Westminster, 1485, *EEBO* (STC-21429-17_05), p.2.

The editor of the *Book of Vices and Virtues*, W. Nelson Francis, suggests that Caxton may not have known of the other Middle English translations of *Somme le Roi.* While the *Royal Book* is closest in style and diction to the *Book of Vices and Virtues*, Francis demonstrates that the wording is sufficiently different to establish the independence of Caxton's translation.[96] Caxton claims to have undertaken this translation at the "request […] of a singuler frende of myn a mercer of London".[97] Evidence for a lay patron for this work by a member of the merchant classes provides evidence for the type of audience interested in Middle English adaptations of *Somme le Roi*. The *Royal Book* itself evidently achieved some popularity, as it was reprinted in 1507. It was one of only a limited number of titles published by Caxton and his contemporaries in England in this early period, suggesting its popularity among the audience for printed works.[98]

Unlike the similarly popular *Speculum Vitae*, however, the *Royal Book* retained many of the references to humoral theory found in *Somme le Roi*. Thus, there is the passage attributed to St. Gregory in the *Somme* (although this attribution is missing from the *Royal Book*) warning that the devil is able to tempt a man with sins most inclined to his humoral complexion:

> the deuylles see moche subtylly the state of a man and his manere and his complexion and to what synne and to what vyce he is moost enclyned by nature or by custome / and to that parte wherto a man enclyneth hym self. Therto the deuyl assaylleth moost strongely / The coleryke man to wrath and ire. The sangueyn man to iolyte and to lecherye / The fluematyke to glotonnye and to slouthe, and the malencolyke to enuye and heuynesse.[99]

Another such example is the passage emphasising the need for balance of the humors:

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[96] W. N. Francis, 'Introduction', *Book of Vices and Virtues* (London, 1942), p.xxxviii.
[97] Caxton, 'Royal Book', 1485, p.2.
[98] Hellinga and Trapp identify 401 individual printed works published in Britain before 1501, which had spiralled to 4,000 by the first half of the sixteenth century. See Hellinga and Trapp, 'Introduction', *CHBB III: 1400-1557*, pp.17-18.
[99] Caxton, 'Royal Book', 1485, p.99. See Appendix A.1 for this passage in *Somme le Roi.*

> whan these four partyes been acoorded thenne it is sayd that a man is wel attempred whan he is not ouer colde ne ouer hote, ne ouer drye, ne ouer moyste. And in lyke wyl as to the body of a man comen ouer many maladyes for the dysatemperaunce of these iiii qualytees / or of these iiii humours / riyght so to the hert of a man comen to hym the vyces and synnes by the dsyatemperaunce of these foure maners.[100]

There is a lack of space here for detailed comparison of the *Royal Book* with *Somme le Roi* and other Middle English adaptations such as the *Book of Vices and Virtues*, although the relevant passages are laid out in Appendix A. It is clear from these examples that the *Royal Book* closely mirrors the humoral material found in the *Somme*. It even retains the more advanced medical images, such as that of the properties of mustard seed:

> the seed of mustard is moche lytel, but it is moche stronge and scharpe. And it is hote in the fourth degree as the physycens sayn. By the hete is understonden loue.[101]

However, interestingly this passage occurs in a different place in the *Royal Book* to *Somme le Roi*. In the *Royal Book* it is removed from the original context of degrees of meekness to sit as a bridging chapter between Humility and the Gift of Holy Dread. By removing it from the discussion of 'degrees' of virtue, it lacks the close harmony evident in the *Somme* (and other Middle English translations such as the *Book*) between medical and religious ideas and imagery. Caxton evidently exercised a degree of editorial adaptation of his source material, frequently rearranging the order of the text and grouping material into slightly different topics than the *Somme*. Francis notes that the contents are somewhat revised and lengthened, and rather freely translated up until the Deadly Sins tract, after which it is a much closer translation. He suggests that the copy of the *Somme* which Caxton was working from likely had a different Commandments tract than was standard.[102] However, not all of these changes occur in this portion of the text, with

[100] Ibid., p.96. See Appendix A.5 for this passage in *Somme le Roi.*
[101] Ibid., p.91. See Appendix A.2 for this passage in *Somme le Roi.*
[102] Francis, 'Introduction', *Book of Vices and Virtues*, pp.xxxvii-xxxviii.

smaller sections elsewhere also being moved around, such as the above example of the properties of mustard seed. Furthermore, scholars have demonstrated that Caxton often undertook editorial changes to many of the texts he printed, such as the *Canterbury Tales*.[103] In this context, it is interesting that Caxton chose to keep the humoral material in his version of the text despite the lay merchant status of the patron he was producing the text for. Humoral discourse is also retained in the second printing of the text in 1507:

> the holy ghost is lyke unto a good physycyn that sheweth to hym his maladye and sekenesse / and moeueth fro hym his humours.[104]

This second edition was likely produced in response to audience demand, containing several woodcuts which extended the text to 191 pages (from 161 in the 1485 edition).

Lay audiences would likely have been significant for printed works such as the *Royal Book*. Printing widened the market for books to include many more sections of the laity, with printers such as Caxton aiming at mass market audiences due to the reduced cost of printed books. Richard W. Clement notes that the price of printed books plummeted, "costing perhaps 20% or less of what it would cost to produce an equivalent manuscript."[105] Taylor suggests that the very process of printing therefore expanded readership, by increasing the availability of books to mass audiences.[106] Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp note that British printing was distinct from other European printed output due to its emphasis on the vernacular, "directed at the much-enlarged constituency who could read English".[107] Despite the reduced cost of printed works they still remained luxury items, with Margaret Lane Ford

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[103] Hellinga, 'Printing', *CHBB III: 1400-1557*, p.84.
[104] William Caxton, 'The Royal Book', Westminster, 1507, *EEBO* (STC-21430-17_06), p.100. See Appendix A.4 for this passage in *Somme le Roi.*
[105] Richard W. Clement, 'Medieval and Renaissance Book Production – Printed Books', *ORB: Books and Universities* <http://www.the-orb.net/encyclop/culture/books/medbook2.html> [last accessed 13.07.15].
[106] Andrew Taylor, 'Authors, Scribes, Patrons, and Books', in Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans, eds., *The Idea of the Vernacular: an Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory* (Exeter, 1999), p.364.
[107] Hellinga and Trapp, 'Introduction', *CHBB III: 1400-1557*, p.4.

suggesting that "book ownership was an attribute of high social status, which Caxton not only understood but was able to exploit".[108] Hellinga suggests that Caxton perceived the wide-ranging potential of trade in vernacular books in England that could not be met by the importers of printed Latin works from the continent.[109] Mary C. Erler has demonstrated that the first printed books in England were those expected to be in high demand with lay audiences, such as Books of Hours.[110] Religious works in Middle English were particularly prominent, making up an estimated 45% of books printed before 1500.[111] Printing enabled texts to be spread in different ways from manuscripts, through simultaneous rather than consecutive multiplication.[112] As a result, this widened the social milieu in which they circulated, both horizontally and vertically.

A significant level of ownership of early printed books, especially in English, has been identified by Ford among the gentry, merchants, those attached to royal courts, and members of Parliament.[113] Books printed by Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde were owned almost exclusively within these groups, while Caxton's epilogues and prologues to his works show that his target audience included royalty, nobility, gentry, and his own peers among the merchant class. Printers such as Caxton were dependent upon patronage for the procurement of texts, with Caxton patronised by Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy; her brother, Edward IV; his wife, Elizabeth Woodville; and her brother, Anthony Woodville.[114] Margaret Beaufort and her daughter-in-law, Elizabeth of York, were also early patrons of Caxton's printing.[115]

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[108] Margaret Lane Ford, 'Private Ownership of Printed Books', in Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, eds., *CHBB III: 1400-1557* (Cambridge, 1999), p.218.
[109] Hellinga, 'Printing', *CHBB III: 1400-1557*, p.67.
[110] Mary C. Erler, 'Devotional Literature', in Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, eds., *CHBB III: 1400-1557* (Cambridge, 1999), pp.500-1.
[111] Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book*, trans. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and David Wooton, 2nd edition (London and New York, 1997), p.249.
[112] J. Crick and A. Walsham, 'Introduction', *The Uses of Script and Print* (Cambridge, 2004), p.20.
[113] Ford, 'Private Ownership of Printed Books', p.213.
[114] Ibid., p.214.
[115] Carol M. Meale and Julia Boffey, 'Gentlewomen's Reading', in Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp, eds., *CHBB III: 1400-1557* (Cambridge, 1999), p.534.

Such patronage clearly put Caxton's books in the hands of royalty, but printing was also patronised by members of the laity much further down the social scale. Robert Thorney, a mercer, was a well-known patron of Wynkyn de Worde,[116] while a mercer similarly sponsored Caxton's production of the *Royal Book* (discussed above). As well as being produced on behalf of a lay merchant, there is further direct evidence for lay ownership of the *Royal Book*. What is now BL, Additional MS 37787 was gifted by Goditha Throckmorton in her will of 1530 to her niece, Elizabeth Throckmorton.[117] Elizabeth was the daughter of Robert Throckmorton, a privy councillor to Henry II.[118] She then married Thomas Englefield, son of the speaker of the House of Commons, evidently taking her copy of the *Royal Book* with her as she noted her new married name inside. Another copy of the *Royal Book* in Oxford, Bodl., Tanner MS 191 was left to a Margery Bakon, a Franciscan nun of Bruisyard, by a relative.[119] This shows a similar mixed audience of lay and female religious for the *Royal Book* as Innes-Parker identified for the *Book of Vices and Virtues*, with both texts passing freely between the two groups.

This case-study makes it clear that humoral theory was considered to be suitable for inclusion in vernacular devotional works aimed at lay audiences. With the exception of *Speculum Vitae*, all of the Middle English adaptations of *Somme le Roi* contain humoral discourse within this devotional context. Furthermore, evidence for lay ownership of both the *Book of Vices and Virtues* and Caxton's *Royal Book* demonstrates that there was lay interest in these works.

Concluding Remarks

This group of texts helps to demonstrate the nature of the transmission of religious works in the later medieval period. This chapter began by highlighting how vernacular religious texts initially designed for an

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[116] Ibid.
[117] Mary C. Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2002), pp.128-9.
[118] Ford, 'Private Ownership of Printed Books', p.215.
[119] Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, p.132.

audience of enclosed female religious came to be accessed by a wider lay readership in the later medieval period. Many authors responded to this growth in audience by producing religious devotional and guidance texts in the vernacular specifically for a lay audience. This range of audiences for vernacular devotional texts is demonstrated by *Somme le Roi* and its many Middle English translations. The *Somme* was composed for royalty; *Ayenbite of Inwyt* was perhaps written with a specific community of nuns in mind; the *Book of Vices and Virtues* and the *Royal Book* were likely produced for a lay audience; while the composer of *Speculum Vitae* altered the material of *Somme le Roi* for the use of priests. The wide influence of the *Somme* is evident in the number of later texts derived from it. As well as the extant Middle English translations discussed here, many other catechetic guides in the vernacular, such as the *Memoriale Credencium*, made extensive use of material from the *Somme* and the *Miroir*. Furthermore, many confessional texts and sermons were influenced by it, with some even deriving material from it.[120]

The use of humoral theory in vernacular religious texts can be seen as an aspect of vernacular theology, which involved explaining traditional religious ideas that were subject to easy misinterpretation by the lay, uneducated reader. The authors of religious works in the vernacular felt a responsibility to provide guides to basic religious knowledge for the benefit of the laity, or for priests responsible for the pastoral care of the laity. This is evident in Anne Middleton's concept of public poetry, discussed at the beginning of the chapter. However, authors of religious works in the vernacular, especially those aimed at the laity, were concerned with ensuring their audience did not misinterpret religious ideas. Allowing the laity unsupervised access to religious content in the vernacular, especially those laity not among the elite classes, was considered dangerous as it could lead some to err from the orthodox views of the Church. This is evident in attempts to control reading in anti-heresy legislation from the late fourteenth century onwards, such

[120] See Francis, 'Introduction', *Book of Vices and Virtues*, esp. pp.xxxvii-xlvii.

as Arundel's 1409 Constitutions prohibiting unauthorised translation of Scripture into the vernacular. Nicholas Watson describes Arundel's 1409 Constitutions as "the linchpin of a broader attempt to limit religious discussion and writing in the vernacular" in response to the laity's too-eager pursuit of religious knowledge in the fourteenth century.[121] Watson argues that the effect of this legislation was compliance from authors, creating an atmosphere of self-censorship.[122] As a result, he suggests, there was a sharp decline in both the number of religious works in the vernacular and their scope and originality in the fifteenth century.[123] However, in the case of many of the fifteenth-century vernacular works of religious instruction discussed in this thesis, Watson's argument carries little weight. Throughout the fourteenth century the vernacular increasingly came to be seen as an intellectual language in its own right. The use of scientific ideas such as humoral theory was no longer considered incongruous with the vernacular. This is evident in the numbers of medical texts in Middle English, including vernacular translations of Latin scholastic medical texts.[124] The growth of the vernacular is also evident in other important areas, such as administrative documents. The use of humoral discourse in religious writings in Middle English in this period can be seen as part of this development. Religious texts were not exempt from the growth in the status of the vernacular as an intellectual language in other spheres, as the inclusion of sophisticated scientific ideas in the form of humoral discourse in the vernacular devotional texts discussed here demonstrates.

This chapter has outlined the development of a functional language of the humors for religious application in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century devotional texts. Moving beyond the metaphorical use of medical imagery evident in religious writings of earlier centuries, the humors

[121] Nicholas Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409', *Speculum*, 70:4 (1995), p.824.
[122] Ibid., p.831.
[123] Ibid., p.834.
[124] This is discussed in the Introduction.

were increasingly considered to be a diagnostic tool for the soul as well as the body in a devotional context. This is particularly the case in religious texts in the vernacular, perhaps due to their intended audience and function. The humors were a useful tool for an educated member of the laity (or member of an female enclosed religious community) to use as a devotional aid to examine the state of his or her soul, not only as a metaphor for sin, but also to actively 'diagnose' their sinfulness and in turn resist the temptation to sin.

The use of the humors in this context raises the question of whether the authors of vernacular works of devotion expected vernacular audiences to have a good working knowledge of humoral theory. This fits in with the argument of some historians (outlined in the Introduction) that there was a medicalization of society in this period, by suggesting that humoral ideas were widespread. However, this may not have reflected reality. Just because some authors of Middle English texts assumed their audiences would have knowledge of humoral theory, it does not mean this was actually the case. Furthermore, it is possible that authors did not assume humoral knowledge among their intended audience. As discussed previously in the context of sermons, the tradition of religious exposition did not necessarily involve expecting or even desiring complete understanding from one's audience.[125] However, at the very least, it is evident that humoral theory was considered a suitable discourse by some vernacular authors for which to emphasise the links between body and soul for the benefit of spiritual health. As discussed elsewhere in this thesis, humoral theory was an important part of the religious worldview, and was the key to explaining the interconnectedness of body and soul as explored in this chapter. Furthermore, the extensive tradition of using medical ideas in the context of religious writing meant that humoral discourse continued to lend itself well to use in religious contexts, despite the shift from Latin to the vernacular as the dominant language in the later medieval period.

[125] See Chapter Two.

This chapter has also outlined the overlap in religious devotional works owned, circulated and read by female religious audiences and the laity. This shared audience for vernacular religious literature will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, which examines the appearance of humoral discourse in female visionary texts.

Chapter Five: Mystics

An interesting area of study to expand upon the questions raised in this thesis is the appropriation of medical imagery by female mystics in the later medieval period. The emphasis on the body in female mystical experience is illustrated through the external bodily expression of the religious appropriation of medical ideas and traditions discussed in this study. Thus Agnes Blannbekin's blood physically boils as a result of the heat of God's divine love in her body, which consequently has a negative impact on her physical health. Were such mystical experiences internalised bodily expressions of the religious metaphorical tradition of humoral imagery? It seems to be the case that female mystics (or at least their biographers) appropriated this existing tradition to explain, or perhaps even justify, bodily mystical experiences. The development of medical imagery and discourse in the writings of mystics such as Julian of Norwich and Agnes Blannebekin represents another interesting development in the tradition of medical theory appearing in a religious context, which is deserving of further investigation.

Background

A particular feature of the study of female mystical writing has been emphasis on sexualised language and imagery to the detriment of other implications of the body as a site of mystical experience. This is evident in the lack of thorough investigation into the links between religious writing, medical discourse, and the female body as the site of mystical experience in the medieval period. Ruth Gouldbourne has brought together medical and religious discourse for the early modern period in her study of the theology of the radical religious thinker Casper Schwenckfeld von Ossig (c.1490-1561), in *The Flesh and the Feminine*.[1] She argues that Schwenckfeld's theology challenged traditional understandings of what it meant to be female, positing the body as a site of religious experience and evoking medical discourse in

[1] Ruth Gouldbourne, *The Flesh and the Feminine* (Bletchley, 2006).

his subsequent reworking of natural theology. Investigations into the crossover between medical and religious discourse in the medieval period, however, have neglected female religious, who fall in between studies of religious and medical discourse regarding the female body.

A female mystical tradition developed in the later Middle Ages, in part due to the growth of new outlets for female religion, including non-cloistered groups who existed as semi-regulars living within the world. A proliferation of religious roles became available to women from the twelfth century, as a result of what Bernard McGinn terms a 'democratization' of Christianity whereby it became possible for the first time for all of the faithful to have a relationship with God, not just those following a monastic life.[2] Groups such as the beguines emphasised the body as the site of religious experience, coming to be particularly associated with the development of a female mystical tradition that emphasised this bodily experience. The beguinage movement developed in Western Europe from the thirteenth century onwards, and consisted of an unstructured, non-hierarchical, and non-cloistered religious life that encompassed both active and contemplative spirituality.[3] Elizabeth Petroff suggests that many beguines practiced an especially physical form of *imitatio Christi*.[4] This agrees with Caroline Walker Bynum's argument that religious women practised such bodily mortifications as the only means of *imitatio Christi* open to them, as they lacked wealth, land or important positions to give up.[5] Scholars including Bynum have suggested that there was particular identification of the feminine with the body in religious devotional and mystical texts written by and for women at this time.[6] A defining feature of female spirituality from the thirteenth century was an emphasis on the humanity (or more specifically the physicality) and suffering of Christ. Such affective piety was behind burgeoning lay spiritual movements from the

[2] Bernard McGinn, 'The Changing Shape of Late Medieval Mysticism', *Church History*, 65:2 (1996), p.198.
[3] Ernest W. McDonnell, *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture* (New Brunswick, 1954), p.3.
[4] Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, *Body and Soul* (Oxford, 1994), p.55.
[5] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Berkeley, 1987), pp.294-6.
[6] Ibid.

thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. However, in female mysticism this movement found expression in self-mortification such as fasting and flagellation, and involuntary bodily experiences such as weeping and seizures. Karma Lochrie argues that the particular appeal of this physical form of affective piety was tied up with the medieval medical and theological alignment of the female with the flesh.[7] The fleshly nature of women meant that they could practice a form of *imitatio Christi* expressed through the body, as a privileged instrument of redemption through Christ's suffering during the Passion. Female mystics such as Julian of Norwich often identified with the body of Christ, allowing a means of religious expression for women from which they were otherwise excluded.[8] As well as providing a means of redemption through signifying the frailty of the flesh, the female body was also considered to be more porous due to a lack of hot humors, making women more open to divine grace. However, the flip-side of this was that women were equally more susceptible to false spirits and temptation by the devil.[9]

Thus in developing a tradition of the body as a site of mystical experience, female mystics were laying themselves open to charges of heresy. As women were only permitted to speak with religious authority as divine visionaries, female mystics had to convince male ecclesiastical authorities of the validity of their special relationship with God.[10] The Church considered mystics, especially female mystics, to be more liable to problems of self-delusion or deception by the Devil. Jean Gerson in the early fifteenth century demanded greater care in testing the spirits of women visionaries, with his discourse of *discretio spirituum* (the discernment of spirits) becoming institutionalised within the Church and functioning as what Rosalynn Voaden has termed a 'control

[7] Karma Lochrie, 'Language of Transgression: Body, Flesh and Word in Mystical Discourse', in Allen J. Frantzen, ed., *Speaking Two Languages* (New York, 1991), pp.116-7.
[8] Ibid., p.118.
[9] See Dyan Elliott, *Proving Woman* (Princeton, 2004).
[10] Sarah Beckwith, 'A Very Material Mysticism: The Medieval Mysticism of Margery Kempe', in David Aers, ed. *Medieval Literature* (Brighton, 1986), p.49.

mechanism' for medieval visionaries.[11] Voaden suggests that this doctrine became, in effect, a discourse with which visionaries had to become familiar in order to fashion their behaviour and modes of expression in the correct way to meet this criteria.[12] Women therefore "had to be able to translate [their] experience into the masculine discourse".[13]

Female mystical authors therefore had to undertake the difficult task of presenting themselves as orthodox, while at the same time writing in a developing genre of the body as the site of mystical experience. To achieve this, many female mystics appealed to humoral language when describing their spiritual experiences, focusing particularly on the movement of heat through the body. This was the central tenet of humoral theory, which considered heat to be the most important property. The movement of heat around the body through the hottest humor, blood, was considered essential for the mechanism of digestion. This formed the fundamental understanding of the physiology of the body in the medieval period, as faulty coction due to lack of heat led to the failure of the body to rid itself of superfluities.[14] Medical learning stated that women were naturally of a colder disposition than men, which was the cause of menstruation as they did not have enough heat to turn the body's superfluities into useful substances, and therefore had to expel this poisonous matter. The pseudo Albertus Magnus text, *De Secretis Mulierum* (c.1300), states that, "the male must be of a hot, dry disposition, in relation to the female who is cold and wet".[15] But in contrast to this, some female mystics describe feeling the movement of heat through their bodies during periods of devotion, in an inversion of humoral theory. In *The Book of Margery Kempe* (c.1436), the scribe

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[11] Rosalynn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices* (Woodbridge, 1999*)*, p.56.
[12] Rosalynn Voaden, 'Women's Words, Men's Language: *Discretio Spirituum* as Discourse in the Writing of Medieval Women Visionaries', in Roger Ellis, ed., *The Medieval Translator* (Turnhout, 1996), v, p.65.
[13] Ibid., p.68.
[14] Gilbertus Anglicus, 'Pharmaceutical Writings', ed. Getz, p.xxxii.
[15] Anon., *Women's Secrets,* ed. Lemay, p.62.

describes Margery as feeling a heat in her breast and at her heart.[16] This sensation of burning heat in the heart and chest is one that is repeated by many visionaries across Europe during the later medieval period, both male and female. However, for female mystics these feelings of heat were particularly abnormal, expressed in bodily symptoms that went against the natural female disposition outlined by humoral theory.

Texts associated with three female mystics will be examined in this chapter: Agnes Blannbekin, Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe, all of whom appropriated medical ideas and language to varying degrees in their presentation of the body as a site of mystical experience.

Key Figures

One of the most striking instances of the appearance of humoral theory in a female mystical text is in the *Vita et Revelationes* (*Life and Revelations*) of Agnes Blannbekin (c.1318).[17] Agnes was a beguine under the tutelage of the Friars Minor, living in Vienna from about 1260 until her death in 1315.[18] The *Vita* of Agnes Blannbekin is an autobiographical account by her confessor, and follows the (by this time well-established) pattern of semi-hagiography for female visionaries on the continent. McGinn describes the text as a didactic work, consisting primarily of allegorical visions which are given immediate and explicit explanation for the benefit of the reader.[19] Very little is known of Agnes beyond the details present in the text. Her visions survive in 3 sources: Latin fragments in contemporary collections of excerpts from various medieval mystical texts; a (now lost) Middle High German fragment, which may have been a translation from the original Latin; and a print

[16] Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Barry Windeatt, 2nd edition (Cambridge, 2004), pp.193-4.
[17] The only modern English edition is *Agnes Blannbekin, Viennese Beguine: Life and Revelations*, ed. Ulrike Wiethaus (Cambridge, 2002).
[18] Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism* (New York, 1998), p.180.
[19] Ibid.

edition from 1731 by Bernhard Pez of a (now lost) eighteenth-century Latin manuscript copy.[20]

There is no evidence for the circulation of the *Life and Revelations* of Agnes Blannbekin in England during the medieval period, and thus it ostensibly lies outside the scope of this thesis. However, this work serves as an important case-study for the use of humoral discourse in female mystical works more broadly at this time, and also provides a comparison for the transmission of such ideas across Europe. Wolfgang Riehle has argued that the individual character of mysticism in any country can only be appreciated in a wider European context, so cross-continental was the mystical movement in this period.[21] In his study of Middle English mystics, Riehle has demonstrated that mystical texts travelled widely between European countries, and by the fifteenth century many works of continental female mystics had reached England.[22] The Low Countries played an especially key role in the dissemination of female mystical texts as far as England, with East Anglia an important arrival place for textual dissemination (such as Mechthild of Hackeborn's *Book of Revelations*, which reached England from northern Germany via the Low Countries).[23] Riehle highlights several striking parallels between English and northern German mysticism during this period.[24] It is not necessarily the case that these parallels are the result of the direct influence of one mystical tradition upon the other, especially considering the lack of evidence for circulation of German mystical texts in England before the fifteenth century. Such parallels were more likely the result of common recourse to the tradition of Latin Christian mysticism. However, similarities

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[20] Ulrike Wiethaus, 'Introduction', *Agnes Blannbekin, Viennese Beguine: Life and Revelations* (Cambridge, 2002), p.12.

[21] Wolfgang Riehle, *The Middle English Mystics*, trans. Bernard Standring (London, Boston and Henley, 1981), p.4.

[22] Ibid., p.165.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., p.166. Riehle suggests that both are intensely spiritualised and homiletic in character; there is a strong use of metaphorical language; an emphasis on divine grace, humility, suffering, and the complete abandonment of earthly ties; and a focus on how the soul can attain a state of perfection.

between the mystical traditions of the two localities demonstrate shared ideas expressed in mystical texts across Europe.

Furthermore, there is evidence that works associated with several continental European female visionaries circulated in England in the fifteenth century, both in Latin and the vernacular. Alexandra Barratt has demonstrated that such texts were owned not only by monastic and clerical audiences, but also lay men and women of the aristocracy, gentry, and urban middle classes.[25] These include the works of visionaries such as Elizabeth of Spalbek, Christina the Marvellous, Marie d'Oignies, Mechthild of Helfta, Elizabeth of Hungary, and Bridget of Sweden, all of which were circulated at least in part in Middle English in later medieval England. Continental female mystical texts in the vernacular were especially prominent by the early fifteenth century, aided by the translation and dissemination of such texts by Syon Abbey and the Carthusian Order.[26] Margery Kempe knew of specific works by Bridget of Sweden, Marie d'Oignies, Elizabeth of Hungary, Elizabeth of Spalbeck, Christina Mirabilis, Catherine of Siena, Mechthild of Hackeborn, and *The Book of Ghostly Grace*, possibly as the result of the connections of her Dominican confessor (an order known for supporting holy women on the European continent, supervising the beguines and the nuns of Helfta).[27] Such personal connections between religious orders across Europe certainly occurred, with the Dutch mystic Hadewych writing of her contact with religious individuals in England.[28]

So while there is no evidence for the circulation of Agnes Blannbekin's *Vita* in England in the medieval period, it arguably remains a useful source when placed in the context of a wider European female mystical tradition, which was evidently influential on English writers. The use of humoral discourse and imagery in the *Life and Revelations* reflects the

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[25] Alexandra Barratt, 'Continental Women Mystics and English Readers', in Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing* (Cambridge, 2003), pp.24-55.
[26] Ibid., p.253.
[27] Janette Dillon, 'Holy Women and their Confessors or Confessors and their Holy Women? Margery Kempe and the Continental Tradition', in Rosalynn Voaden, ed., *Prophets Abroad* (Cambridge, 1996), p.119.
[28] Riehle, *Middle English Mystics*, pp.32-3.

wider appropriation of medical ideas by female mystics across Europe in the later medieval period, including English mystics such as Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe.

The *Life and Revelations* of Agnes Blannbekin employs medical imagery and discourse at times in a similar way to the religious tradition seen in many other genres of religious writing. Thus, reference is made to Christ as Physician, or in this instance, Apothecary:

> He had an apothecary with medicines, which He Himself had prepared. And there were two kinds: some indeed promoted spiritual health, which made them three. He had and gave to some a sleep-inducing potion, which symbolises the grace of the Holy Spirit. When drunk, a person falls asleep to the world because of contempt (for the world) so that he does not care about worldly matters, much like somebody asleep with numbed senses does not feel anything. Secondly, He had a strengthening remedy, and it represents the invigoration of good will and the execution of a virtuous deed which the Lord guides. Thirdly, He had and administered a certain sweet and delightful powder […] and it symbolises the tasting of devotion through which God can be tasted at all times. There were also many sick with different kind of illnesses, all of whom found some suitable remedy […] And it was made apparent that the lepers represented those who indulged in debauchery, those with dropsy, avaricious people, and the blind, people full of pride […] Against leprosy, he administered different types of water extracted from diverse plants through the strength of fire and with the help of words, such as roses, violets and the like […] against dropsy, that is avarice, he gave a loosening remedy […] Against blindness, that is pride, He offered a desiccating paste.[29]

This passage employs much medical detail, such as the names of herbal remedies, and the variety of treatments employed by physicians ranging from the promotion of sleep to purgatives. Following the tradition of *Christus Medicus*, this medical imagery is a purely metaphorical one of spiritual sicknesses.

This is not the case elsewhere in the text, however, where medical discourse features in a different context. Agnes experiences the

[29] Blannbekin*, Life and Revelations*, ed. Wiethaus*,* p.31.

movement of heat through her body during periods of devotion in a manner that mirrors humoral theory, beginning at the heart and then expanding through the body with the movement of blood:

> when she wished to devote herself to contemplation, she felt in the body and the chest a miraculous fire of devotion, so that *the heat expanded physically throughout all of the body* [my emphasis].[30]

Then,

> all of the body began to be infused with great heat, which was not burning, but sweet, and soon she was completely encompassed in the spirit as well as interiorily.[31]

Rather than using medical imagery in a metaphorical context, the humoral idea of nourishing heat diffusing through the body is appropriated here to describe a physical experience in Agnes's body as a result of her religious devotion.

This has some similarities to the language of heat employed by male mystics throughout this period. In Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* (c.1380-1396), he uses such a metaphor:

> the mo stikkes are leid to the fier, the grettere is the flawme and the hottere is the fier. Right so the more diverse goostli werkynge that a man hath in his thought for to kepen hool his desire, the myghtiere and the more brennande schal be his desire to God.[32]

However, in this passage Hilton makes it plain that his description of burning desire for God is a metaphor only, by linking it to imagery of a fire being stoked. This is not a description of a physical sensation, but a metaphorical religious feeling as part of affective devotion. Richard Rolle's *The Fire of Love* (c.1340) describes a sensation of heat in similar language to that of some of the female mystics. In contrast to Hilton, Rolle emphasises the sensations of heat he experiences, making it clear that he is not using such language metaphorically:

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[30] Ibid., p.41.
[31] Ibid., p.49.
[32] Hilton, *Scale of Perfection*, ed. Bestul, p.179.

> I felt my heart begin to warm. It was real warmth too, not imaginary, and it felt as if it were actually on fire.[33]

However, Rolle demonstrates a very self-aware level of detachment that is absent from Agnes's *Vita*, using statements such as,

> *I catch myself* [my emphasis] growing cold: cold until once again I put away all things external, and make a real effort to stand in my saviour's presence: only then do I abide in this inner warmth.[34]

Using such language as "I catch myself" creates a sense that Rolle is an observer of his own body, putting less emphasis on bodily sensations in preference for intellectual observation. Furthermore, heat is not described in a humoral way, but features alongside a sensation of sweetness in a mystical experience that is less focused on the physical body.

With the exception of Rolle, male mystics predominantly employed language of fire rather than that of heat, with many using the phrase 'the fire of love'. In Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* (c.1400), he describes how Mary Magdalene felt "þe brennyng fire of His loue".[35] The anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* (c.1370) wrote, "You feel your affection flame with the fire of His love".[36] While Hilton in *The Scale of Perfection* assured readers, "the fier of love schal be ay light in the soule of a devoute man or woman".[37] This is indicative of religious devotion, providing the metaphor of a soul 'burning' with love for God, with direct biblical precedents.[38] These male mystics were keen to ensure the correct reading of a spiritual meaning behind this metaphorical language, with Hilton explaining:

> a bodili fier brenneth and wasteth al bodili thing where it cometh, right so gosteli fier, as is love of God, brenneth and wasteth fleischli loves and likynges in a mannys soule […] Alle men and women that speken of the fier of love knowe bot wel what it is, for what it is I can not

[33] Richard Rolle, *The Fire of Love*, ed. Clifton Wolters (London, 1988), p.45.
[34] Ibid., p.46.
[35] Nicholas Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, ed. Michael G. Sargent (Exeter, 2004), p.88.
[36] Anon., *The Cloud of Unknowing*, trans. Clifton Wolters (London, 1978), p.95.
[37] Hilton, *Scale of Perfection*, ed. Bestul, p.64.
[38] Luke 24:32; John 5:35.

> telle thee, saue this I may telle thee, *it is neither bodily, ne it is bodily feelid* [my emphasis].[39]

Hilton explicitly denies the possibility of religious experience through the body in complete contrast to Agnes's experiences, which are continually grounded within her body.

The appropriation of humoral discourse to describe the physical nature of Agnes's religious experience comes to the fore when she undergoes blood-letting:

> Once, when she underwent blood-letting, the blood almost boiled because of the heat so that the barber-surgeon as well as she wondered about it, because her food was meagre and simple, she did not use any stimulants [spicy herbs] and fasted every day. Still, the blood boiled hot. And as she was puzzled, she heard a voice within herself saying, 'This heat *does not stem from nature, but from grace* [my emphasis], because God ignites the soul with divine heat, and warms the soul kindled in such fashion. And this is the reason for this heat of the blood.'
>
> […] she thought to herself whether she could become ill from such an inflammation of the blood as described before, if she would not bleed. The voice immediately replied that this could happen, because the excess of heat in the blood itself could become so great that nature could not bear it. Bloodletting therefore leads to a diminishing of the heat, which makes it more tolerable. And the voice added by saying, 'Sometimes, blood will distribute the heat throughout the whole body to all limbs so that, when the blood has become hot through devotion, all limbs become pleasantly warmed, but without sexual overtones and blemish'.[40]

This passage emphasises the unnatural prominence of the movement of heat through Agnes's body, with the description of the role of blood in this process lifted directly from humoral theory. Using humoral discourse in this way draws greater attention to its inversion, with the usual female complexion altered from cold to hot. Further evidence for this interpretation of the passage is the assertion that such feelings of warming experienced by Agnes are without 'sexual 'blemish'. This

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[39] Hilton, *Scale of Perfection*, ed. Bestul, pp.63-4.
[40] Blannbekin, *Revelations*, ed. Wiethaus, pp.56-7.

demonstrates the association between hot-bloodedness and sexuality in humoral theory. Predominance of certain humors resulted in certain characteristics, divided into four different humoral complexions. Those with a predominance of blood had a sanguine complexion, which was considered to create the strongest sexual appetite. A Middle English practical astrological verse described those with a predominance of blood as "amorous".[41] As heat in the blood was associated with lust, this made blood-letting even more essential for those who had taken vows of chastity. By emphasising that the heat which Agnes experienced is free from sexual overtones, it must have a divine source as it does not have the same effect on the body as natural heat.

God's grace is the only possible cause of a heat contrary to nature, the 'voice' speaking in this passage stresses to Agnes. Perhaps to make this point even clearer, the voice sounds like a physician, giving greater authority to the dismissal of natural causes in favour of the divine. Parts of this passage could almost be from a contemporary medical text book, so similar is the use of humoral discourse. The popular *Cirurgie* of the thirteenth-century surgeon Lanfrank of Milan demonstrates the parallels between the mystical text of Agnes and medical teaching texts:

> he that hath an hoot complexioun, & a moist, may lightly [easily] have an hoot enpostyn – that is an hoot swelling [of excess humors] - & that may be the cause of an hoot fevere. What schalt thou thane do?[…] ellis lete him blood […] if strengthe and age acorde; or ventose [cup] him on the two buttokkis, if that he be feble […] The othere, of the cold complaxioun, schal not be leten blood, ne ventusid [cupped], for blood schulde be kept in him […] Ne we drede nought in him the fevere, for his complexioun is nought able to resceyve the fevere.[42]

Lanfrank emphasises the dangers of excess heat, which can only be relieved through blood-letting or cupping. This principle is also evident in the *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum*, which in direct comparison with Agnes's *Life and Revelations* makes reference to blood boiling as a

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[41] Linne R. Mooney, 'A Middle English Verse Compendium of Astrological Medicine', *Med.Hist.*, 28:4 (1984), pp.411.
[42]Lanfrank, *Science of Cirurgie*, ed. R. von Fleischhaker (London, 1894), pp.12-15.

result of excess heat: "may one ope a veine in either arme, / if boyling bloud of feare of agues urge".[43] The dismissal of other possible causes of excess heat in *Life and Revelations* by emphasising the meagre nature of Agnes's food is another reference to humoral theory, as it was believed that eating to excess or eating stimulating foods such as spices could cause excess heat in the body. The *Rosa Medicinae* of John Gaddesden (c.1314) advised avoiding salty, spiced, or highly flavoured foods for this reason.[44]

The medical expertise of the voice that speaks to Agnes fits the tradition of Christ as *Medicus Animae*. However, here Christ is not only a physician of diseased souls, but also of corporeal ailments. The *Vita* suggests that God has altered Agnes's body to this state to give her more strength for her devotion, with the resulting complications for health a side-effect of this unnatural change:

> Since she felt that during the partaking of the sacred body of the Lord, she was physically weakened because of the strength of the Spirit, she thought about how it was for the priests, who participated in the Communion every day, and why they did not weaken. And she was answered, '[…] God fills the souls of devout priests with the warm heat of devotion, the soul infuses heat into the blood and makes it warm, and from this the body receives strength to endure much, such as fasting, abstinence, vigils, the suffering of cold and hardship. The devout person is able to suffer more than other human beings, because he is also strengthened physically by the spirit. Likewise, because the male heart is by nature stronger than that of women, therefore devout women weaken more easily in the intention of devotion than men.'
>
> […] In regard to what she said about the soul's divinely infused heat also warming the blood and invigorating the body, she added this: when it is not too strong. Because if there is an excess of heat, the body's powers will be weakened.[45]

[43] Anon., 'The Englishman's Doctor', ed. Harington, p.130.
[44] John of Gaddesden, *Rosa Medicinae*, ed. H. P. Cholmeley (Oxford, 1912), p.33.
[45] Blannbekin, *Revelations*, ed. Wiethaus, p.58.

In keeping with the previous passage, an awareness of humoral theory is again demonstrated, such as the dangers of excess heat due to the need for balance in the humors to maintain health.[46] The difference between men and women is emphasised, following the humoral tenet that men were considered to be hotter in complexion than women, thus giving them greater strength. One possible implication of the unnatural heat experienced by Agnes is that she now has a humoral complexion similar to that of men. This could be the result of God's intervention to allow her to overcome her physical weakness by providing her with greater strength, for the same reasons as for priests. However, this point is only briefly touched on. Of greater importance is the inversion of nature that Agnes's experiences signify.

Much is made of the difference between grace and nature. The heat that Agnes experiences is not only unlike that seen in nature due to freedom from association with sexuality and lust, but is contrary to nature. This heat is so unnatural that it is in danger of causing Agnes to become ill, as the voice tells her in the first passage above.[47] By demonstrating the unnatural nature of these experiences, this account emphasises that Agnes was the recipient of divine grace. As the voice says,

> this heat does not stem from nature, but from grace, because God ignites the soul with divine heat [...]This grace […] reaches the soul [and] sets her on fire.[48]

Rather than natural heat, which would be seen only in the blood, this divine heat ignites the soul. Such language of a soul burning with religious devotion has precedents in the Bible as a metaphor for religious fervour, discussed above. However, what makes Agnes's case unusual is the bodily expression of this divine heat, especially given that women were less equipped to deal with excess heat than men due to their natural coldness. This makes it even more extraordinary that God

[46] Ensuring the humors were in balance was a central principle of Galen's medical writings, evident in 'The Best Constitution of Our Bodies' and 'The Mixtures'. For a modern edition of these texts see Singer, ed., *Galen's Selected Works*.
[47] Blannbekin*, Revelations*, ed. Wiethaus*,* pp.56-7.
[48] Ibid., p.98.

should choose a woman to receive His grace in this way. The emphasis on grace in the *Vita* was likely a means of validating Agnes's experiences. Robert Bartlett has demonstrated that the supernatural, as something contrary to nature, could only be brought about by God.[49] By suggesting that Agnes's experiences are unnatural through an inversion of humoral theory, her chronicler demonstrates her orthodoxy. Nevertheless, most interesting for the purpose of this study is the way in which humoral discourse is appropriated for this end in the *Life and Revelations*. Agnes and her confessor chose to turn to learned discourse of the body to explain and justify the physical nature of her religious experiences.

Not all female mystics concentrated solely on their own bodily experiences to achieve this. Julian of Norwich in her *Shewings* (c.1373 – 1390) initially focuses on the body of Christ, rather than on her own body, but she also turns to humoral discourse to describe the physical body. Julian wrote two closely linked works, *A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman* and *A Revelation of Love*.[50] This study will focus on the later *Revelation.* Both are first-person accounts of the same visionary experience, which took place during a near-fatal sickness when she was 30 years old. *Revelation* is a full-scale expansion and re-writing of *Vision*, at over four times the length. The dating of both texts is uncertain and has been debated by scholars, but Nicholas Watson and Jacqeline Jenkins argue that *Vision* was likely complete by the mid-1380s, while *Revelation* was not begun until at least the 1390s and finished any time before Julian's death (after 1416).[51] Julian's texts are the earliest known writing in English by a woman.[52] Watson and Jenkins suggest Julian was probably from an affluent background due to her level of education, social connections in later life, and love of courtly

[49] Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages*, p.7.
[50] Julian of Norwich, *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, eds. Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (Turnhout, 2006).
[51] Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins, 'Introduction', *Writings of Julian of Norwich* (Turnhout, 2006), p.3.
[52] Ibid.

language.[53] Little is known of her life beyond what is included in *Vision* and R*evelation*, although she was enclosed as an anchoress at the Benedictine convent of Carrow later in her life, after her visions took place. Evidence from surviving wills records several bequests made to her during her later years as an anchoress between 1393/4 and 1416, demonstrating her local reputation and wide social and religious connections.[54] The public reputation of Julian as an anchoress is further evident in the account of a meeting with her given in *The Book of Margery Kempe*.[55]

Julian's texts survive in only a few extant copies. A single manuscript version remains of *Vision* in London, BL, Additional MS 37790 (c.1413). While *Revelation* remains complete only in 2 seventeenth-century copies, Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale MS Fonds Anglais 40, and BL, Sloane MS 2499. A series of excerpts from *Revelation* have also been identified in a fifteenth-century manuscript of miscellaneous religious works, Westminster Cathedral Treasury MS 4. Marion Glasscoe suggests this manuscript preserves traces of the earliest copies of Julian's text presented for public circulation.[56] Watson and Jenkins similarly suggest that the variety of dialects and formats in which Julian's texts have been preserved demonstrate that copies were prepared for distribution beyond her locality of East Anglia.[57] Rather than being distributed systematically, they suggest a distribution model closer to that of *The Book of Margery Kempe*, of passage from hand to hand through circles tied through clerical networks, friendship, family networks, and institutional links.[58] Evidence of actual readers of the texts remains sparse, however, with the remaining complete manuscripts produced by monastic institutions.[59]

[53] Ibid., p.4.
[54] Ibid., p.5. For example, Isabel Ufford, aristocratic nun at Campsey in Suffolk and daughter of the Earl of Warwick, gave 20 shillings to Julian in 1416.
[55] For a modern Middle English edition see *Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Windeatt.
[56] Marion Glasscoe, 'Visions and Revisions: A Further Look at the Manuscripts of Julian of Norwich', *Studies in Bibliography*, 42:1 (1989), pp.103-20.
[57] Watson and Jenkins, 'Introduction', *Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p.11.
[58] Ibid., p.12.
[59] Ibid., p.13.

Nevertheless, Julian's text remains important for this study as evidence for the appropriation of medical discourse in female mystical texts. Regardless of who read Julian's works, it is evident that she (or her amanuensis) was aware of learned humoral discourse, and chose to use it to describe her religious experiences. As with the *Life and Revelations* of Agnes Blannbekin, Julian's works provide evidence for the wider transmission of medical ideas within religious contexts in this period.

From the opening of the text, Julian's emphasis is on the physical body of Christ, and her desire to have a physical religious experience posited in her body. She says of her visions:

> I desired a bodely sight, wherein I might have more knowinge of the bodily paines of our saviour, and of the compassion of our lady, and of all his true lovers that were living that time and saw his paines. For I would have be one of them and have suffered with them […]
>
> In this siknes I desired to have all maner of paines, bodily and ghostly, that I should have if I should die, all the dredes and tempests of fiends, and all maner of other paines, save the outpassing of the soule. And this ment I: for I would be purged by the mercy of God, and after live more to the worshippe of God because of that sicknes.[60]

This emphasis on the body of Christ brings to mind the affective piety of texts such as Nicholas Love's *Blessed Mirror of Jesus Christ*, which described the life of Christ emotively to encourage meditation on and empathy for Christ's suffering. Such devotion to the wounds of Christ was a common facet of late medieval religion, practised by both men and women.[61] However, rather than simply being content to meditate on Christ's suffering, Julian desires to experience Christ's bodily suffering for herself within her own body, as the ultimate means of *imitatio Christi*. Bynum examines the Eucharistic devotions and bodily chastisements practiced by many female mystics to demonstrate the positive religious

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[60] Julian of Norwich, 'A Revelation of Divine Love', eds. Watson and Jenkins, pp.127-8.
[61] Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval Devotional Lyric* (London, 1972), pp.133-4.

implications of associations of women with the weak body by providing greater opportunities for salvation through identification with the suffering flesh of Christ.[62] Lochrie asserts that the physical marks of suffering on Christ's body signified the possibility of redemption for female mystics, who desired to emulate Christ's transcendence of the limits of the fleshly body.[63]

Julian's *Revelation* directly focuses on the bodily experiences of Christ during the Passion. However, Julian's description of the Passion uses language closer to medical texts than that of the Bible. In one passage, Julian associates coldness in Christ's body with loss of blood, a hot humor:

> I saw the swete face as it were drye and blodeles with pale dying; and sithen more deade pale, languring; and than turned more deade into blew; and sithen more browne blew, as the flesh turned more depe dede. For his passion shewde to me most properly in his blessed face, and namely in his lippes, there I saw these four colours - tho that were before fresh and rody, lively and liking to my sight. This was a swemfulle change, to sen this depe dying. And also the nose clongen togeder and dried, to my sight, and the swete body waxed browne and blacke, alle changed and turned oute the fair, fresh, and lively coloure of himself into drye dying. For that same time that oure blessed saviour died upon the rode, it was a dry, harre wynde, wonder colde as to my sight. And what time that the precious blode was bled out of the swete body that might passe therfro, yet there dwellid a moister in the swete flesh of Crist, as it was shewde […]
>
> Blodlessehed and paine dried within, and blowing of the winde and cold coming from without, met togeder in the swete body of Christ. And these four, twain withouten and twain within, dried the flesh of Crist by process of time.[64]

The suggestion here that external factors such as wind and cold resulted in the drying of Christ's flesh illustrates the influence of the non-naturals on the balance of humors in the body according to

[62] Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, pp.294-6.
[63] Lochrie, 'Language of Transgression', p.135.
[64] Julian of Norwich, 'Revelation of Divine Love', eds. Watson and Jenkins, p.179.

humoral theory, with wind and cold specifically associated with dryness. Julian also associates loss of blood with the drying of Christ's body:

> And in this drying was brought to my minde this worde that Crist said: 'I thurst.' For I sawe in Crist a doubille thurst: on bodely, and another gostly [...] And I understode by the bodily thurste that the body had failing of moister, for the blessede flesh and bones was left alle alone without blode and moister. The blessed body dried all alon long time, with wringing of the nailes and weight of the body [...]
>
> I saw four maner of drying. The furst was blodlesse. The secunde, paine folowing after. The thurde is that was haning uppe in the eyer, as men hang a cloth for to drye. The fourth, that the bodely kinde asked licoure [lacked moisture], and ther was no maner of comfort ministred to him. A, hard and grevous was that paine, but moch more harder and grevous it was when the moistur failed, and all began to drye, thus clinging [withering]. These were two paines that shewde in the blissed hed; the furst wrought to the drying while it was moist; and that other, slow, with clinging and drying, with blowing of winde fro without that dried him more and pained with colde than my hart can thinke.[65]

This passage reflects the humoral belief that blood was a moist humor, the loss of which resulted in dryness and coldness. Such language of 'drying' mirrors humoral discourse indirectly, focusing on the humoral qualities of moist and dry rather than the humors specifically.

Following her vision of Christ's body, Julian has a visionary experience sited in her own body, which reflects Christ's fleshy suffering. She compares her body to Christ's, invoking the same language as she had previously used to describe Christ's crucified body:

> sodeynly all my body was fulfilled with sicknes like as it was before, and I was as baren and as drye as I had never had comfort but litille, and as a wrech morned and heved for feeling of my bodely paines and for failing of comforte, gostly and bodely.[66]

Here Julian describes feeling the same pain as Christ, using the same imagery of drying to emphasise the connection between her body and

[65] Ibid., pp.181-3.
[66] Ibid., p.331.

Christ's. Elizabeth Roberston has commented on the immediacy and intimacy of Julian's description of the Passion, with the blurring of boundaries between Christ's body and her own.[67] By employing humoral affiliations, Julian situates her visions of Christ within learned discourse while at the same time emphasising how her own body is changed as a result of her mystical experiences. Like Agnes Blannbekin, Julian turns to the established discourse of humoral theory to describe her mystical experiences. The shared corporeal discourse of the humors applied to both Christ's body and Julian's emphasises the fleshliness of Christ, which serves to raise the status of Julian's bodily experiences through the comparison with Christ.

Despite the sophisticated theology of her texts, Julian's epistemology remains grounded in experiences of the body.[68] Like her contemporary Margery Kempe, Julian experiences outbursts of weeping as an uncontrollable physical sign of her religious devotion, saying:

> maye we never stinte of morning ne of weping, nor of seeking nor of longing, till whan we se him clere in his blisseful chere. For in that precious sight ther may no wo abide nor wele faile.[69]

Julian posits her body as the site of her religious experience, using humoral theory to validate her visions. She therefore appropriates the tradition of appealing to medical imagery in religious writing in a different way, using the corporeal language of the humors to draw attention to the fleshliness of Christ's humanity.[70] By using identical humoral discourse to describe both Christ's body and her own, she highlights the closeness of bodily experience to emphasise her literal emulation of Christ's suffering. This forms part of what Sandra J.

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[67] Elizabeth Robertson, 'Medieval Medical Views of Women and Female Spirituality in the *Ancrene Wisse* and Julian of Norwich's *Showings*', in Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury, eds., *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia, 1994), p.156.

[68] Maria R. Lichtmann, '"God fulfylled my bodye": Body, Self, and God in Julian of Norwich', in Jane Chance, ed., *Gender and Text in the Later Middle Ages* (Gainesville, 1996), p.263.

[69] Julian of Norwich, 'Revelation of Divine Love', eds. Watson and Jenkins, p.347.

[70] Bernard McGinn suggests a novel feature of late medieval vernacular mystical texts was their dialogue with older Latin traditions. McGinn 'Changing Shape of Late Medieval Mysticism', p.204.

McEntrire terms Julian's appropriation of the inferior female body for an image of the salvation of humanity, by translating her own body onto that of the divine.[71] In this context, it is logical for Julian to turn to humoral theory as the learned discourse of the body as a means of authenticating her visionary experiences, and to posit the female body as an acceptable site of *imitatio Christi*.

The writings of Julian of Norwich form another interesting way in which a female mystic, writing within a slightly different genre of affective piety (rather than the semi-hagiographic account of Agnes Blannbekin by her confessor), employed humoral theory to provide authority for her writing and to authenticate her experiences.

The Book of Margery Kempe (c.1436-8) provides a contrast to both the *Life and Revelations* of Agnes Blannbekin, and the *Revelation of Divine Love* of Julian of Norwich. Rather than a semi-hagiographical work, or a focused account of a single visionary experience, Margery Kempe's book has been described as the first example of an autobiography in English.[72] Given the extensive scholarship surrounding Margery's text, it will only be considered in brief here. However, Margery provides an interesting contrast to the other mystics discussed in this chapter. While she is also granted religious fervour through the uncontrollable nature of bodily experience, which *The Book of Margery Kempe* endeavours to validate as evidence of divine grace, this is not ascribed to humoral theory. Nevertheless, the description of Margery's experiences demonstrates implicit awareness, either by herself or her confessor, of the general current of ideas in female visionary writing evident in the texts associated with Agnes Blannbekin and Julian of Norwich.

The embodied nature of Margery's religious experience is made plain, most notably in her bouts of weeping:

> Her dalayawns was so swet, so holy, and so devowt, that this creatur myt not oftyntmes beryn it, but fel down

[71] Sandra J. McEntire, ed., *Julian of Norwich: A Book of Essays* (New York and London, 1998), p.18.
[72] Lynn Staley, *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions* (University Park, 1994), p.1.

> and wrestyd wyth hir body, and mad wondyrful cher and contenawns, wyth boystows sobbyngys and gret plente of teyrs, sumtyme seyng, 'Jhesu, mercy', sumtyme, 'I dey!'[73]

Margery also experienced a feeling of heat in her body as a result of her religious fervour:

> Also owr Lord yaf hir another tokne, the which enduryd abowtyn xvi yer, and it encresyd evyr mor and mor, and that was a flawme of fyer, wonder hoot and delectably and ryth comfortably, nowt wasting but evyr incresyng, of lowe, for thow the wedyr wer nevyr so colde, sche felt the hete brennyng in hir brest and at hir hert, as verily as a man schuld felyn the material fyer yyf he put hys hand or hys finger therin. Whan sche felt first the fyer of love brennyng in her brest, sche was aferd therof, and than owr Lord answeryd to her mend and seyde: 'Dowtyr, be not aferd, for this hete is the hete of the Holy Gost, the which schal bren away alle thi synnes, for the fyer of lofe qwenchith alle synnes [74]

Scholars have suggested that this passage bears a strong resemblance to the work of Richard Rolle, with Windeatt suggesting the influence of Rolle's *Incendium Amoris* on this passage, a work that Margery states she often heard read to her.[75] However, Karma Lochrie argues Kempe's interpretation of Rolle uses language closer to the original Latin than to the Middle English version in circulation from c.1435, for example her use of the words 'ardowr' and languryn'.[76] Furthermore, a later reference to heavenly smells features only in Rolle's Latin work. Margery may have heard a literal translation of the Latin version by her priest as he read it to her, or perhaps this is evidence of Margery understanding Latin. Like Rolle, while the 'fire of love' is couched in corporeal terms in Margery's text, it is attributed to divine grace. There is no reference to humoral theory or any physical implications of this excess heat on Margery's physical body as is the case in the *Vita* of Agnes Blannbekin.

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[73] Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Windeatt, p.116.
[74] Ibid., pp.193-4.
[75] Windeatt, 'Introduction', *Book of Margery Kempe*, p.10.
[76] Karma Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh* (Philadelphia, 1991), pp.114-7.

Nevertheless, unlike the mystical experiences of Rolle, Margery's body is rendered uncontrollable by her religious experiences in the same way as that of other female mystics. Her irrepressible weeping is one such example, with the *Book* stating explicitly that this was entirely outside of Margery's control:

> whan sche knew that sche schulde cryne, sche kept it in as long as sche mygth and dede al that sche cowed to withstond it er ellys to put it awey, til sche wex as blo as any leed, and evyr it schuld labowryn in hir mende mor and mor into the tyme that it broke owte. And whan the body myth ne lengar enduryn the gostly labowr, but was ovyrcome wyth the unspekabyle lofe that wrot so fervently in the sowle, than fel sche down and cryed wonder lowed.[77]

Such ecstatic weeping has precedents in continental female mysticism, with Margery's confessor putting aside his own doubts about her after reading of Mary d'Oignies, who was similarly associated with weeping.[78] However, the explicit description of the uncontrollable body in this passage is typical of the overtly physical nature of Margery's piety throughout the *Book*, with Wendy Harding commenting that readers are continually reminded of Margery's corporeality.[79] Her uncontrollable body comes to the fore when she meets the Archbishop of York, where she is described as trembling violently:

> hir flesch tremelyd and whakyd wondirly, þat sche was fayn to puttyn hir handys vndyr hir cloþis þat it schulde not ben aspyed.[80]

Margery is aware of her excessive grounding in the body, striving to hide the physical expressions of her piety in front of the bishop. Despite maintaining this sense of propriety in the face of the Church hierarchy, Margery relies upon these outward signs of her piety to prove herself as the recipient of divine grace. Elizabeth Robertson suggests Margery's excessive crying is a reaction to her moist humoral state as a woman,

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[77] Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Windeatt, p.165-6.
[78] Ibid., p.294.
[79] Wendy Harding, 'Body into Text: *The Book of Margery Kempe*', in Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury, eds., *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia, 1994), p.180.
[80] Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Windeatt, p.249.

with such extreme bodily experiences a reaction to the medieval belief that women can only experience God through the body.[81]

If this is the case, why does the *Book* not ascribe Margery's bodily experiences to humoral theory as a means of validation, in the manner of other female mystics such as Agnes Blannbekin? Medical imagery is present in the text, such as when Christ tells Margery that her tears are 'pyment', a medicinal wine often used in remedies.[82] Michael Leahy has given this as an example of the use of medical register in a devotional context.[83] While this demonstrates recourse to medical imagery, it is possible that the more learned aspects of humoral theory were unknown to Margery and her scribe. However, one of her confessors and primary supporters was the learned Carmelite friar, Master Alan of Lynn, who was likely to have been knowledgeable of humoral theory given his level of education.[84]

Rather, it is more likely that the lack of recourse to humoral theory is due to the incongruity of such learned discourse with the tone of the text. Voaden argues that Margery fails to present herself consistently in the correct way to avoid accusations of heresy.[85] The bodily expressions of Margery's piety and her insistence on living in the world placed her in danger of heresy accusations, with the *Book* recording that she was accused several times throughout her life. Voaden attributes this to Margery's failure to employ the discourse of *discretio spirituum,* which contrastingly is evident in the works of Agnes Blannbekin and Julian of Norwich. She suggests that women who were educated, or able to form long-term clerical alliances (such as beguines and anchoresses), were more likely to learn the correct discourse and ways of presenting themselves as true visionaries: in other words, "to

[81] Robertson, 'Medieval Medical Views of Women and Female Spirituality', p.158.
[82] Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Windeatt, p.304.
[83] Michael Leahy, 'Sweet Wine and Anointing Oil: Vocabularies and Hierarchies of Healing in Croxton's *Play of the Sacrament*', (unpublished conference paper, Leeds International Medieval Congress, 09.07.2015).
[84] Windeatt, 'Introduction', *Book of Margery Kempe*, p.5.
[85] Voaden, 'Women's Words, Men's Language', p.74.

be able to use men's language to their advantage".[86] In contrast, Margery lacked a consistent relationship with a spiritual adviser to help her to present herself correctly, and her refusal to become enclosed exacerbates this problem. This may help to explain why *The Book of Margery Kempe* lacks recourse to humoral theory, in contrast to the works of her female contemporaries such as Julian of Norwich, as Margery was not versed in how to use 'men's language' to present herself successfully.

However, Marion Glasscoe suggests that Margery's modes of expression in the *Book* demonstrate an awareness of the ethos of female piety in Europe, and the way that uneducated people were instructed in the faith.[87] With this in mind, the appearance of learned humoral discourse would have contravened the aims of the text. Margery consistently presented herself as unlearned, such as relying on others to read to her, with Lynn Staley Johnson commenting that Margery's "persistent emphasis upon her illiteracy seems to be a key part of her persona".[88] Margery led an active life based in the world outside of the ecclesiastical establishment, rather than pursuing the learned, enclosed life of an anchoress such as Julian of Norwich. While it is likely that Margery was aware of the ideas and theologies that informed the works of other female mystics such as Julian of Norwich (perhaps including the use of learned medical discourse to explain and justify the body as a site of religious experience), she chose to model her text after female visionaries such as Bridget of Sweden, who also pursued the active religious life. Margery presented herself as simple and unlearned as part of this rhetoric, providing an alternative means of defence against heresy accusations.

This reading of the text raises questions about authorship, and to what extent Margery was in control of her own text. It is likely that all of the

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[86] Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices*, p.66.
[87] Marion Glasscoe, *English Medieval Mystics: Games of Faith* (London and New York, 1993), p.282.
[88] Lynn Staley Johnson, 'The Trope of the Scribe: The Question of Literary Authority in the Works of Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe', *Speculum*, 66:4 (1991), p.834.

women examined here were reliant on amanuenses to record their texts, male scribes who had control over the content of the works to a greater or lesser extent. This will be the focus of the next part of the chapter.

Question of Authorship

The question of authorship is important to this study, as it raises the question of whether recourse to humoral theory in the texts examined here was instigated by the female mystics, or their male supporters. It is possible that the instances of humoral language were added by male scribes. As demonstrated in Chapter One, monasteries were important places of translation, dissemination and storing of medical texts, to which the male monastics functioning as scribes for religious women would have had access. Furthermore, monks could treat each other for medical problems before recourse to a physician, whereas Monica Green has demonstrated that enclosed female religious had to have a male doctor coming in from outside to treat them.[89] Not only would enclosed religious males therefore have greater access to medical texts and practice, there were far higher rates of literacy among male religious (especially in Latin), allowing greater access to medical learning than for religious women. However, as this section will demonstrate, recent scholarship argues for greater involvement by female visionaries in the composition of their texts than has previously been assumed. Oral traditions allowed women access to texts through hearing them read aloud, while oral methods of composition could be employed by women. The involvement of female visionaries in the composition of their texts could therefore provide evidence for knowledge of humoral theory among religious women as well as male clergy.

The extent to which Margery Kempe was involved in the creation of her *Book* has been the subject of much scholarship, and so will not be

[89] Monica Green, 'Women's Medical Practice and Health Care in Medieval Europe', in Judith A. Bennett, ed., S*isters and Workers in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1989), pp.52-3.

discussed in full here. Despite the presence of a male intermediary in the text, recent scholarship has rehabilitated Margery's authorial presence. Many scholars argue that Margery held a cultural rather than fully textual form of literacy. Barry Windeatt, among others, has pointed out that even if Margery was unable to read, this was no barrier to accessing religious texts through her participation in what has been termed 'textual communities'.[90] Margery's priest read to her over a period of several years, providing her with access to many different devotional works.[91] Furthermore, the *Book* records Margery's oral authorship of the text, dictating to her confessor who then read it back to her, line by line, for her to check.[92] This form of literacy allowed Margery to compose her text with the aid of a male scribe, who served not only as amanuensis but also lent clerical authority to Margery's visions.

Evidence for a male intermediary is also apparent in the *Life and Revelations* of Agnes Blannbekin. The text was recorded by Agnes's confessor, an unknown Brother in the Franciscan order.[93] The work is narrated in the third person, suggesting he acted as chronicler rather than simply as an amanuensis. Scholars disagree regarding the extent to which Agnes's own voice is heard in the text. Albrecht Classen assumes Blannbekin's sole authorship of the work,[94] while Anneliese Stoklaska, according to Ulrike Wiethaus, "bemoans the textual erasure of any 'feminine' perspective".[95] It is evident from the text that Agnes could read but not write, and was sufficiently literate to read the Divine Office according to Bernard McGinn.[96] Furthermore, Wiethaus argues that the regular mention of companions of both sexes in Agnes's *Vita* gives the picture of her taking part in "a lively religious subculture

[90] Windeatt, 'Introduction', *Book of Margery Kempe*, pp.8-9.
[91] Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Windeatt, p.280.
[92] Ibid., p.49.
[93] Blannbekin, *Life and Revelations*, ed. Wiethaus, p.17.
[94] Albrecht Classen, 'The Literary Treatment of the Ineffable: Mechthild of Magdeburg, Margaret Ebner, Agnes Blannbekin', *Studies in Spirituality*, 8 (1998), pp.162-87.
[95] Wiethaus, 'Introduction', *Life and Revelations*, p.7, n.13. For the original in German see Anneliese Stoklaska, 'Die Revelationes der Agnes Blannbekin', *Jarbuch des Vereins fur Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, 43 (1987), pp.7-34.
[96] McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, p.18.

comprising Franciscans, enclosed nuns, and religious lay women".[97] Despite such evidence for Agnes's intellectual interests and abilities, there is a definite sense of mediation in the text between Agnes and the reader through her male chronicler. Thus, when Agnes describes the wound of Christ's left foot as being like a "three-step" the scribe intervenes to suggest that she does not mean a dance to denote a festive event, but that "she could not offer another similarity".[98] The scribe is also careful to explain Agnes's visions and interpret their meaning according to the orthodox teachings of the Church, for example emphasising her chasteness and the lack of sexual blemish associated with the heat she felt moving through her body to explicitly guard against any sexual overtones. However, Petroff points out that a confessor was bound to correct doctrinal errors or inconsistencies in the visions of female mystics under his care.[99] In so doing, this would guard against any suspicions of heresy and provide authority to the female visionary.

Such evidence of scribal mediation does not necessarily remove agency from Agnes in the act of composition of the text. Scholars such as Peter Dinzelbacher have commented on the poor nature of the Latin in the extant manuscripts, describing it as simplistic.[100] Wiethaus argues this is due to the closeness of the grammatical and rhetorical structure of the Latin text to Middle High German, suggesting it was originally based on Agnes's and her confessor's conversational exchange.[101] While McGinn has claimed that the text was composed after Agnes's death, Wiethaus counters that that there is no evidence in the remaining manuscripts to support this.[102] Much of the compositional structure of the work is in the form of a 'diary', suggesting it was written during or immediately after a meeting between the two. This comes to the fore

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[97] Wiethaus, 'Introduction', *Life and Revelations*, p.5.
[98] Blannbekin, *Life and Revelations*, ed. Wiethaus, pp.19-20.
[99] Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, 'Introduction', *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (New York, 1986), p.9.
[100] Quoted in Wiethaus, 'Introduction', *Life and Revelations*, p.7, n.14. For the original in German see Peter Dinzelbacher and Renate Vogeler, *Leben und Offenbarungen der Wiener Begine Agnes Blannbekin* (Göppingen, 1994), p.16.
[101] Wiethaus, 'Introduction', *Life and Revelations*, p.7.
[102] McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, p.18.

most clearly in the question-and-answer structure of some of the passages, such as: “I asked her whether the Blessed Souls move from one place to another. She answered, ‘No’.”[103] Wiethaus argues that events are recorded in the narrative without a “uniform overarching compositional intent”, but generally following the liturgical year in a unique format for mystical texts.[104] In this context, the *Life and Revelations* can be seen as a co-authored text, with the construction of two authorial personae of Agnes and her confessor. Despite his misgivings about the date of composition of the work, McGinn points to a vignette about Agnes’s thoughts on Bernard’s *Song of Songs* after hearing it read to her to suggest that,

> Agnes and her confessor deal with mystical issues through their joint attempt to understand the message contained in Bernard by way of a new revelation from the ultimate source in God.[105]

Petroff points out that it was common for female religious to dictate their revelations, autobiographical reflections, letters and devotional teachings to (commonly male) scribes, who were often their confessors or mentors. Such works were the product of a collaborative process, occupying a transitional position between oral transmission and authored religious text in one of the sole legitimate literary outlets for medieval women.[106]

The sense of conversation being reported verbatim in the *Life and Revelations* has led scholars such as Wiethaus to suggest that it was Agnes who determined the textual content.[107] As with *The Book of Margery Kempe*, the visible presence of the male clerical scribe in the text provides authority for the work. Thus the text reproduces the humility formula required of female visionaries as part of the discourse of *discretio spirituum*, with the scribe describing how Agnes was reluctant to share her visions with him:

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[103] Blannbekin, *Life and Revelations*, ed. Wiethaus, p.27.
[104] Wiethaus, ‘Introduction’, *Life and Revelations*, p.7.
[105] McGinn, *Flowering of Mysticism*, p.18. For the example from the text, see Blannbekin, *Life and Revelations*, ed. Wiethaus, p.83.
[106] Petroff, ‘Introduction’, *Medieval Women’s Visionary Literature*, p.9.
[107] Wiethaus, ‘Introduction’, *Life and Revelations*, p.10.

> And although she was strengthened by God through such signs, she almost always talked to me with fear and shyness, prompted by me with frequent requests. [108]

The process of textual production is therefore more complicated than has been allowed by some scholars. It is certainly unfair to dismiss Agnes as playing no part in the composition of the text, although it remains difficult to determine exactly how much authorial input she had.

Scholars such as Staley Johnson have emphasised the need to examine texts such as those of Agnes Blannbekin and Margery Kempe in terms of medieval concepts of authorship, rather than modern ones.[109] While female visionaries would almost certainly not have physically written their texts themselves, this does not mean they were not the authors of such works by dictating and shaping their own texts through a male scribe. Petroff demonstrates that oral methods of composition were particularly important for women, especially those composing in the vernacular. This is evident in the extensive presence of oral stylistic traits in women's religious writing in comparison to men's, suggesting a different form of composition for works such as *The Book of Margery Kempe* and the *Life and Revelations*.[110] Felicity Riddy suggests that literacy was not separate from orality in this period.[111] Rather, she argues that reading and the production of texts arose out of social relationships where literary practices were shared by those who could read and write and those who could not. Such blurred boundaries between writing, composing and reading are evident in the image presented in *The Book of Margery Kempe* of Margery dictating her text, having it read back to her, and then 'rewriting' it.[112] Michael Clanchy similarly emphasises that reading and speaking were far from mutually exclusive practices. Spiritual works were commonly read aloud during meals in medieval households, in imitation of monastic practices. Reading was more often linked with hearing or listening than with

[108] Blannbekin, *Life and Revelations*, ed. Wiethaus, p.37.
[109] Staley Johnson, 'Trope of the Scribe', p.827.
[110] Petroff, 'Introduction', *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*, p.29.
[111] Felicity Riddy, 'Text and Self in *The Book of Margery Kempe*', in Linda Olson and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, eds., *Voices in Dialogue* (Notre Dame, 2005), p.438.
[112] Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Windeatt, p.49.

seeing, especially among lay audiences, with the written word seen as an extension of the spoken word.[113] Similarly, composition was more often associated with dictating rather than the physical act of writing, due to the large amount of physical labour involved.[114] As Voaden asserts, what was most important in this period was the act of composition, not how it was undertaken.[115]

While scholars have successfully rehabilitated the authorial voices of female visionaries such as Agnes Blannbekin and Margery Kempe in semi-hagiographical or autobiographical accounts where the presence of a male scribe forms an integral part of the work, the situation is more complex for the *Revelation* of Julian of Norwich. Unlike the other texts examined here, there is no obvious male scribal influence on the work, with the narrative voice being Julian's own. Nevertheless, there remains debate among scholars as to whether Julian wrote the text herself, dictated it to a passive scribe, or whether it was the collaborative product of what Riddy and Watson have termed an 'editorial team' of Julian's supporters. The text does not mention the method of composition, Julian's sources, or level of education, with little mention of religious teachers through whom she may have accessed religious works. Watson and Jenkins point out the rarity of this for a female visionary text, which would usually feature a priest or other educated man serving as an active scribal presence.[116] However, the absence of an obvious male intermediary does not necessarily mean that Julian composed her text entirely alone. The lack of evidence for means of composition within the text fits with the complete rejection of all references to the world in favour of complete focus on Julian's visions, the text having been carefully put together so as to conceal its worldly history of composition in order to present it as a divinely inspired piece of writing.

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[113] Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, p.97.
[114] Ibid., pp.41, 97.
[115] Rosalynn Voaden, 'God's Almighty Hand: Women Co-Writing the Book', in Lesley Smith and Jane H. M. Taylor, eds., *Women, the Book, and the Godly* (Cambridge, 1995), p.56.
[116] Watson and Jenkins, 'Introduction', *Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p.7.

Julian's level of education remains a contentious debate among scholars. Despite Julian apparently professing illiteracy in Latin, Georgia Ronan Crampton argues this may have been a modesty topos.[117] Crampton acknowledges the possibility that Julian's visions came to her when she was unlettered, but that before composing the longer account in the *Revelation* she became literate in Latin.[118] It is likely that Julian was literate in the vernacular, with Diane Watt commenting that the courtliness of Julian's language suggests a privileged background that would have involved a vernacular education.[119] The most influential modern editors of Julian, Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, argue that the theological sophistication and learning in *Revelation* is itself evidence that Julian was literate in Latin.[120] Scholars such as Riehle concur with this view, arguing that Julian had knowledge of Latin theology.[121] Riehle points to the image of God seated in *Revelation* to represent how God is the seat of the city of the soul as one example of this. He points to the theological background of this unusual identification of the soul with a city, which is taken from allegorical interpretation of a passage in the New Testament (Luke 10:38) describing Christ's entry into Bethany, and the statement from the Book of Proverbs (Prov. 24:15) that the well-ordered soul can be compared to a city, to demonstrate what he terms Julian's deep-rootedness in the tradition of Latin medieval theology.

However, the evidence in favour of Julian's Latin literacy is far from conclusive. Glasscoe points out the lack of evidence that Julian was formally educated to a high degree.[122] She suggests that those scholars who argue in favour of Julian's Latin literacy based on the perceived theological sophistication of her text are themselves trained in the history of theology, meaning that they engage with her text in a certain

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[117] Georgia Ronan Crampton, 'Introduction', *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich* (Kalamazoo, 1994), p.3.
[118] Ibid., p.4.
[119] Diane Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing* (Cambridge, 2007), p.97.
[120] Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, 'Introduction', *Julian of Norwich: Showings* (New York, 1978), pp.43-59.
[121] Riehle, *Middle English Mystics*, p.131.
[122] Glasscoe, *English Medieval Mystics*, p.218.

way and find echoes of the Scriptures that may not reflect Julian's own education. There are no explicit learned references or Latin quotations in *Revelation*, and the text retains the air of a general vernacular exposition of the faith: it is careful to cover the essential topics of Christian theology in the first half, which Glasscoe argues is reminiscent of the vernacular sermon, before moving beyond pastoral theology in the second half to reflect on the nature of the union between the soul and God. Nevertheless, Denise Baker points out that the degree of sophistication of the Augustinian theology of Julian's text is at least as theologically sophisticated as works by her contemporaries such as Walter Hilton, suggesting that the two writers were drawing on the same sources.[123] Watson and Jenkins suggest Julian's level of education may have increased during her time as an anchorite.[124] This would explain her knowledge of late medieval theology, especially in *Revelation*, in which Julian's awareness of the theological implications of certain words and grammatical structures can only have been "the result of formal study" according to Watson and Jenkins.[125] As an anchorite in Norwich, Julian would have lived close to many learned religious men, with her text acknowledging that many churchmen believed in her visions. The re-working of her text in *Revelation* may therefore have involved the participation of such learned men; her Augustinian emphasis on God's grace could have been inspired through contact with an Augustinian friary on the same street in Norwich as her anchorage.[126] Watson and Jenkins also argue that works by continental female visionaries would have been known to Julian and her circle, due to Norwich's role as a regional centre with commercial links to the Netherlands, northern Germany and the Baltics, and its intellectual links through local monasteries to Oxford and Cambridge.[127] Staley Johnson

[123] Denise N. Baker, 'Julian of Norwich and Anchoritic Literature', *Mystics Quarterly*, 19:4 (1993), p.158.
[124] Watson and Jenkins, 'Introduction', *Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p.10.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Jay Ruud, 'Nature and Grace in Julian of Norwich', *Mystics Quarterly*, 19:2 (1993), p.74.
[127] Watson and Jenkins, 'Introduction', *Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p.3. They suggest evidence of the influence on Julian of affective continental texts in the Franciscan tradition such as James of Milan's *Stimulus Amoris* (*Prickynge of Love*)

argues that the revisions to the original work in *Revelation* shows a greater attentiveness to the way it would be read and understood, and an awareness of Julian's status as an author striving for authority.[128] Riddy agrees that the differences between *Revelation* and *Vision* can be attributed to Julian's evolving sense of herself as an author under a divine imperative to write for the profit of others, evolving beyond simply reporting her visions into an intentional teaching tool.[129] The complex process of retrospection and contemplation on the meaning of her showings evident in *Revelation* has led Riddy to propose a model of authorship for the text similar to other devotional works such as the *Chastising of God's Children* and the *Cloud of Unknowing*, which were produced within an "appropriate set of social institutions, even if it should involve but a small coterie of amateurs".[130] As an anchoress Julian was part of the ecclesiastical structure of her diocese, leading Riddy to argue that it would have been inconceivable for her to "publish a book in Norwich without official sanction and, very probably, official assistance".[131]

Nicholas Watson, drawing on Riddy's scholarship, agrees that the layout of *Revelation* suggests the presence of an editorial team.[132] He argues that Julian's text was influenced and sustained by what he terms an 'authorizing community', pointing to the set of reading instructions at the end of the Sloane manuscript of *Revelation* (which preserves most thoroughly the original Middle English language of the text) warning against such selective reading as heretics might undertake as possible

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and Johannes de Caulibus' *Meditationes vita Christi* (*Privity of the Passion*). Riehle suggests that Julian's visions fit the pattern of the late medieval female mystic developed on the continent in the composition of the text around each of her sixteen showings, while her three requests to God for grace specifically correspond to biographies of continental female mystics such as Christina Ebner and Marie d'Oignies. See Riehle, *Middle English Mystics*, pp.27-9.

[128] Staley Johnson, 'Trope of the Scribe', pp.829-31.

[129] Felicity Riddy, 'Julian of Norwich and Self-Textualization', in Ann M. Hutchison, ed., *Editing Women* (Toronto, 1998), p.103.

[130] Ibid., p.105.

[131] Ibid., p.106.

[132] Nicholas Watson, 'Julian of Norwich', in Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing* (Cambridge, 2003), p.211.

evidence of editorial intervention.[133] Further potential evidence for this is the use of chapter divisions referring to Julian in the third person, and the numbering of the showings in both extant versions of the long text, both of which are absent in the short text. Riddy points to evidence of cross-referencing between chapters that must have been written after the text was complete (some references are to chapters further ahead in the text), also suggesting editorial additions to the work.[134] She suggests that such 'textualization' is evidence of the presence of a clerical voice providing authority.[135] Riddy highlights the presence of northernisms in the Amherst manuscript of the short text, and the Sloane manuscript of the long text, as evidence of a collaborative oral process of composition between Julian and an amanuensis.[136] Watson agrees that the later *Revelation* must have been produced at least in consultation with learned clerics, which he argues is evident in the "juxtaposition of moments of revelation with formal expositions of orthodox teaching", such as a passage critical of prayers to saints being counterpointed with one about the many ways God desires to be sought.[137]

As with Margery Kempe, Riddy suggests an oral tradition also lies behind the learning evident in Julian's text.[138] Glasscoe agrees that Julian may well have absorbed theological concepts and terminology from conversation with (or teaching by) learned religious men, or from hearing readings.[139] Both scholars argue that the rhetoric evident in Julian's text is consistent with an oral tradition, suggesting that Julian belonged to an 'oral community' where texts were available to women through being read aloud, and through listening to English sermons.[140] In this context, Julian can be seen to inhabit an oral-literate culture,

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[133] Ibid., p.218.
[134] Riddy, 'Julian of Norwich and Self-Textualization', p.117.
[135] Ibid., p.118.
[136] Ibid., pp.111-3.
[137] Watson, 'Julian of Norwich', p.219.
[138] Felicity Riddy, '"Women talking about the things of God": A Late Medieval Sub-Culture', in Carol M. Meale, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, 1996), p.113.
[139] Glasscoe, *English Medieval Mystics*, p.218.
[140] Riddy, 'Women talking about the things of God', p.113.

rather than a learned monastic one.[141] The same can be said of Margery Kempe, who was accustomed to being part of a speech community 'talking about the things of God'.[142] Like Margery, Glasscoe posits that Julian may have dictated her text aloud to an amanuensis, commenting that the characteristics of her prose suggest "an author thinking aloud rather than polishing pre-formulated ideas".[143]

Julia Bolton Holloway argues for:

> a powerful women's textual community, fostered by the men who were their spiritual advisers and who were willing to be their amanuenses.[144]

Citing the *Book of Margery Kempe* as an example Holloway argues that although male scribes were involved in writing these texts their role was that of amanuensis only, with the female mystics entirely in control of their own texts. Rather than applying modern ideas about authorship, literacy and reading to female mystical texts, this section has demonstrated that it is more useful to consider them in their medieval context. Oral composition was often the only method of authorship available to women, and was commonly employed by female mystics with the support of their male confessors. Evidence for this method of composition within the texts examined here demonstrates female authorship for the works, albeit with the supervisory aid of male clerics.

In the production of their texts, female visionaries and their supporters considered humoral discourse to be important for highlighting traits integral to sanctity, in order to validate the body as a site for mystical experience.[145] Having established female composition for the mystical works discussed in this chapter, it remains to question whether the level of learning evident in such recourse to humoral theory in these texts

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[141] Ibid., p.108.
[142] Ibid., p.113.
[143] Marion Glasscoe, 'Introduction', *Julian of Norwich: A Revelation of Love* (Exeter, 1976), p.xviii.
[144] Julia Bolton Holloway, 'Bride, Margery, Julian, and Alice: Bridget of Sweden's Textual Community in Medieval England', in Sandra J. MacEntire, ed., *Margery Kempe: a Book of Essays* (New York, 1992), p.215.
[145] Dillon, 'Holy Women and their Confessors, or Confessors and their Holy Women?', p.126.

was available to religious women in this period. The next section will examine this, focusing on the transmission of and access to vernacular texts, including non-medical sources for humoral ideas.

Female Access to Textual Culture

Much scholarship in recent years has sought to re-establish the reputation of nunneries in England for learning in the later Middle Ages. This has focused not only on the literacy of nuns and the libraries of nunneries, but also access to books more generally by female communities, both religious and lay. The work of David Bell has been particularly notable, with his seminal work *What Nuns Read* piecing together a picture of well-stocked libraries for several English nunneries despite the much sparser remaining evidence for books owned by nunneries in comparison to male monastic houses, in large part due to the absence of comparative catalogues of books for nunneries as exist for large monasteries.[146] Bell uses evidence from remaining manuscripts to trace book ownership by nunneries as well as bequests made to nuns in this period, as books bequeathed to nuns would likely have found their way into the common libraries of nunneries due to personal possessions being forbidden. He identifies approximately 144 nunneries in England for the period c.1270-1536, and identifies around 150 manuscripts or printed books dating from the ninth to the sixteenth centuries that can be traced to 44 of these houses, two-thirds of which date from after 1400.[147] Building on the work of Bell, Mary C. Erler identifies a 1450 inventory of Benedictine nuns at Easebourne, Surrey, which records 24 books owned by a house that never exceeded 10 nuns.[148] Neil Ker notes that it is impossible to infer the size of a medieval library from the evidence of surviving books alone.[149] However, Barking and Syon nunneries both had libraries large enough for a librarian, with the remaining books traced to both institutions

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[146] David Bell, 'What Nuns Read: the State of the Question', in James G. Clark, ed., *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp.113-133.
[147] Bell, *What Nuns Read*, pp.33-4.
[148] Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, p.31.
[149] Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, p.xi.

including not only service books but many theological and devotional works.[150]

Eileen Power has demonstrated that nuns were expected to be literate, at least in the vernacular, preferably upon entry to an institution.[151] Anne Clark Bartlett has pointed out that nuns were often involved in the administration of a convent, requiring basic literacy, while many who entered convents were from lay backgrounds where commercial interests had required pragmatic or even professional degrees of literacy.[152] Bartlett argues that evidence from the Godstow cartulary of the nuns's request for English translations of their Latin documents, often seen as evidence of a decline of female learning in the later medieval period, in fact demonstrates their desire to take charge of their own business practises rather than relying on male intermediaries.[153] Further evidence that nuns were expected to undertake reading comes from additions to the Rule for Syon Abbey, which stipulate that a novice should bring her personal books with her on profession.[154] This also serves to demonstrate the overlap between lay and monastic reading in the later medieval period, which was especially the case for women due to the shared vernacular language of such devotional texts. The Rule of St Benedict stipulated that all the books owned by monastic institutions (including nunneries) would be divided between the nuns every year, and Paul Lee has shown that this certainly occurred at Barking Abbey.[155] The statutory number of nuns at Barking was 37, so if every nun had to receive a book every year, there would have been around 40 books in the library at least. Bell has identified a book cupboard and a female librarian in charge of the books at Syon Abbey, which were also distributed annually in accordance with the Rule of St Benedict.[156] As well as being encouraged by the Rule of St Benedict, many

[150] Ibid., p.36.
[151] Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries, c.1277-1535* (Cambridge, 1922), pp.244-5.
[152] Anne Clark Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers* (Ithaca and London, 1995), p.17.
[153] Ibid., pp.24-5.
[154] D. H. Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2007), p.83.
[155] Lee, *Nunneries, Learning and Spirituality*, p.139.
[156] Bell, *What Nuns Read*, p.42.

monastic guides and Rules for religious women, such as *Ancrene Wisse* and Aelred of Rievaulx's *De Institutione Inclusarum*, also directed religious women to set aside time for daily reading. Erler has highlighted the growth of privacy within communal settings during this period, both within households and nunneries, which she suggests led to the growth of private rather than communal reading.[157] Roberta Gilchrist has identified archaeological evidence of a move towards separate cells and living spaces in late medieval nunneries, in a move away from shared dining and communal sleeping spaces.[158] This is also evident in episcopal strictures against private rooms, with Power identifying 14 female houses issued with such reproves, often on several occasions, between 1279 and 1472.[159] Erler suggests this was a reflection of the development of private space in lay households, which provided space for private reading and devotion.[160] Thus, not only did nunneries own books, they would almost certainly have been read by the nuns.

Evidence for female reading circles, both within and without religious communities, has been identified by several scholars. There is evidence for the transmission of texts between nunneries and monastic institutions, with Erler identifying a letter written in the late fifteenth century by Thomas Beston, the librarian of the male house at Syon, outlining Syon's dissemination of spiritual writings to another female house.[161] A. I. Doyle has similarly demonstrated that there was a regular exchange of books between Dartford Priory and Barking Abbey through the interconnections of noble families at the two religious houses, at the centre of which was Elizabeth Vere, Countess of Oxford.[162] He identifies at least one Middle English manuscript, BL,

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[157] Mary C. Erler, 'Private Reading in the Fifteenth-and-Sixteenth-Century English Nunnery', in James G. Clark, ed., *Culture of Medieval English Monasticism* (Woodbridge, 2007), p.134.
[158] Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture* (London and New York, 1994), pp.127, 189-91.
[159] Power, *Nunneries*, pp.316-23.
[160] Erler, 'Private Reading', p.125.
[161] Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, pp.42-3.
[162] A. I. Doyle, 'Books Connected with the Vere Family and Barking Abbey', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, 25 (1958), pp.222-243.

Additional MS 10596, which passed from Dartford to Barking.[163] Lee argues that the contents of Syon Abbey manuscripts, many of which include texts disseminated by the Carthusians, connects the nunnery with the spirituality of the male orders, demonstrating that the Carthusians at Sheen procured and translated several texts specifically for the nuns at Syon.[164] Bell identifies a particular Carthusian at Sheen, William Darker, who copied a number of manuscripts in the vernacular for the Syon sisters.[165] Like the Carthusians, the Dominican Order maintained strong links with its houses on the continent. Lee argues that such links were especially important for the Dominican nunnery at Dartford due to the centrality of the Dominican order to the strong tradition of female spirituality and vernacular religious writing in Germany and the Low Countries.[166] He argues that Dominican friars likely provided a channel of communication by which developments in continental Dominican traditions and learning were brought to Dartford Priory.[167] As part of this transmission of texts between monastic houses, nunneries often had books created especially for them. A Dominican friar made a translation into English of the *Book of the Craft of Dying* for the nuns at Dartford, for whom he may have been a chaplain.[168] While Bishop John Fisher of Rochester wrote two original texts for his half-sister, Elizabeth White, who was a nun at Dartford: both *A Spirituall Consolation* and *The Wayes to Perfect Religion* address Elizabeth directly.[169] Confessors also played an important part in the provision of books for the nuns under their care, with James Grenehalgh gifting an annotated copy of a printed *Scale of Perfection* to Syon's Joan Sewell in 1500.[170] Thus, circulation of texts between religious houses and individual members of religious communities was

[163] Ibid., p.233.
[164] Lee, *Nunneries, Learning and Spirituality*, pp.143, 188. Vincent Gillespie has noted the role of the Carthusians more generally in the dissemination of texts for religious use, including to secular priests. See Gillespie, *Looking in Holy Books*, pp.19-46.
[165] Bell, *What Nuns Read*, p.74.
[166] Lee, *Nunneries, Learning and Spirituality*, p.149.
[167] Ibid., p.159.
[168] Ibid., p.168.
[169] Ibid., p.170.
[170] Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, p.44.

common practice in this period, with reading material shared between both male and female houses as part of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century monastic culture.

However, nunneries were not only reliant on male monastic houses or individuals for their provision of books. Despite an often limited income, many nunneries purchased their own books second-hand, or even commissioned new ones: a Book of Hours that survives from Dartford Priory was commissioned by Sister Emma Wynter.[171] Barking Abbey was a particular centre of literary activity in the later medieval period, commissioning many vernacular translations for the benefit of the nuns there.[172] Erler points out:

> in a culture which elevated reading's role in spiritual development, religious may sometimes have used such monetary gifts [bequests for prayers] to buy books or have them written.[173]

From the late fifteenth century, houses such as Dartford and Syon were prompt to take advantage of the availability of new, cheaper printed materials. Almost half of early English printed books known to have been owned by women were owned by nuns.[174] Doyle suggests that vernacular works were often held by individual nuns, in contravention of the rules against private ownership of property.[175] Erler suggests that evidence of direct book exchanges between nuns was part of new patterns of acquisition and circulation of books from the mid-fifteenth century, such as common-profit books designed to pass successively from owner to owner.[176] She points to parallel arrangements for the passage of books between groups outside of religious communities, involving scholars, parish priests, and interested lay men and women.

Bartlett has demonstrated that there was a massive increase and diversification of female book ownership from the fourteenth to the

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[171] Lee, *Nunneries, Learning and Spirituality*, p.207.
[172] Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*, p.138.
[173] Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, p.117.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Doyle, 'Books Connected with the Vere family and Barking Abbey', p.232.
[176] Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, p.135.

sixteenth centuries, particularly of Middle English devotional texts, with significant ownership of such works by laywomen for the first time in this period.[177] She identifies a sophisticated level of literacy, especially among noble women, but literary culture also began to disseminate among non-noble women at this time.[178] This fits in with the pattern of growing literacy and book ownership among larger sections of the male laity in the later Middle Ages identified by M. B. Parkes, who attributes this in part to the cheaper production of books. While books remained a luxury item, they increasingly came within reach of a much broader section of the population, with Parkes asserting that by the end of the fourteenth century in England it was possible to acquire devotional tracts for less than one shilling.[179]

Accordingly, gifts to nunneries between 1349 and 1501 show a doubling in the numbers of books bequeathed, with a noticeable shift from Latin liturgical books to vernacular devotional books being gifted.[180] Lee suggests that books acquired through legacies or gifts formed a significant source of books owned by nunneries in the later medieval period.[181] Evidence from wills is particularly useful for tracing books that were owned by nunneries but which no longer survive. In 1495, Cecily, Duchess of York, bequeathed to her granddaughter at Dartford a copy of the *Legenda Aurea*, the life of St Catherine of Siena, and the life of St Matilde, none of which survive. Cecily also left another granddaughter, the prioress of Syon Abbey, a copy of Bonaventura and Hilton in English, and the revelations of St Bridget, demonstrating the shared audience for devotional texts among lay and religious women.[182] Aristocratic women often patronised individual female houses, with Doyle demonstrating that Barking Abbey was supported by several generations of Vere women.[183] It was not only aristocratic women who

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[177] Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers*, pp.7-10.
[178] Ibid., p.12.
[179] M. B. Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', in D. Daiches, ed., *The Medieval World* (London, 1973), p.564.
[180] Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, pp.41-2.
[181] Lee, *Nunneries, Learning and Spirituality*, p.169.
[182] Ibid.
[183] See Doyle, 'Books Connected with the Vere family and Barking Abbey'.

owned and bequeathed such vernacular devotional texts, however. In her will of 1448 Agnes Stapilton, a gentry widow, bequeathed to four Yorkshire female houses (Arthington, Esholt, Nun Monkton, and Sinningthwaite) copies of the *Prick of Conscience*, *Chastising of God's Children*, *Book of Vices and Virtues*, and a vernacular copy of Bonaventura.[184] Erler cites this as an example of the mixed female lay and religious audience for these works by the mid-fifteenth century, with a shift to bequeathing texts for personal devotion rather than liturgical or patristic texts once deemed more suitable for religious houses.[185] This also provides evidence of the successful dissemination of newer meditative and ethical works, which were circulating fairly rapidly after their composition.[186] A text such as the *Chastising of God's Children* was a popular feature of wills barely 40-60 years after its initial composition.

There are also occasional instances of nuns gifting books to laywomen, although such evidence is much rarer.[187] Erler has identified the example of Elizabeth Hull, Abbess of Malling, who gifted a book to the infant Margaret Neville (whose father was a patron of Mereworth with an interest in Melling) at her baptism in 1520.[188] Marilyn Olivia has demonstrated that a number of Norfolk nuns were at the centre of a network sharing vernacular religious works that also involved local laity.[189] The Bridgettine house at Syon was similarly responsible for the dissemination of much late medieval spiritual writing, with Erler suggesting that the Syon nuns's regular sponsorship of printing imitated a continental model unmatched by any other English house.[190] By the late fourteenth century laypeople had come to occupy the place in the educational hierarchy previously held by nuns, with the corresponding lay demand for books helping to explain the extensive literary

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[184] Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, p.39.
[185] Ibid., p.40.
[186] Ibid., p.41.
[187] Ibid., p.45.
[188] Ibid., p.46.
[189] Marilyn Oliva, *The Convent and the Community in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp.67-72.
[190] Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, p.85.

exchanges between them. Physical circulation of books often occurred through female networks (many based on family relationships) across the divide of secular and religious life.[191] However, such transmission of texts could also occur exclusively through circles of laywomen, with Margaret Beaufort's circle noted by Carol Meale as a prominent example of the exchange of books as gifts between laywomen.[192] The evidence for many forms of book transmission suggests that such systematised book exchange was widespread by the mid-fifteenth century, with books becoming more accessible to new audiences including women.[193] As a result, female intellectual and spiritual exchange was supported by access to books through shared female reading communities, involving laywomen as well as nuns.[194]

This can be linked to the process of vernacularization in the later medieval period, with much more knowledge becoming available in Middle English. Part of the impetus for this translation, especially in the case of devotional works, was the necessity of religious reading matter for nuns and anchoresses to provide for suitable private reading as stipulated in the Rule of St Benedict.[195] As the majority of religious women in England were illiterate in Latin, especially from the thirteenth century onwards, this required the production of new vernacular devotional texts to suit their needs. Bell demonstrates that more than two-thirds of non-liturgical books known to have been owned by nunneries after 1400 were in English, many of which were new compositions.[196] Some of these works originated within nunneries, such as *The Clensyng of Mannes Sowle* which originated at Syon Abbey.[197] A leading role in supporting English theological works was shown by

[191] Ibid., pp.24-5.
[192] Carol Meale, '"[…] alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englisch, and frensch": Laywomen and their Books in Late Medieval England', in Meale, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, 1996), p.144.
[193] Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety*, p.28.
[194] Ibid., p.99.
[195] Bella Millett, 'Women in No Man's Land: English Recluses and the Development of Vernacular Literature in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', in Carol M. Meale, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, 1996), p.91.
[196] Bell, *What Nuns Read*, p.71.
[197] Ibid.

nuns, especially at larger institutions such as Barking Abbey. Sibilla de Felton, Abbess of Barking from 1394 to 1419, owned several vernacular books, two of which, *The Clensyng of Mannes Sowle* and *The Mirror of the Life of Christ*, were such early copies that Doyle has suggested "Sibilla and her community were at the fore-front of the public for such English theology".[198] Furthermore, as has already been noted, the sisters of Syon Abbey were quick to engage with new possibilities brought by printing.[199] D. H. Green argues that the demands and influence of lay female readers helped to shape and foster the development of new vernacular literature through engagement with literature as readers, patrons, and commissioners.[200]

Female readers, especially nuns, were therefore at the forefront of English spirituality in the later medieval period. Bell suggests that the fifteenth century was not a productive period for men's monasteries in contrast, with the study of theology now the prerogative of the universities. This is reflected in the limited numbers of books acquired by monasteries in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries compared to previous centuries.[201] This is in contrast to the evidence for nunneries, which demonstrates that the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw a vast increase in the number of books acquired by English nunneries. This has led Bell to argue that the spiritual life of English nuns was fuller in this period than for some of their male counterparts, with greater access to the most up-to-date devotional books.[202]

Female access to books in the later medieval period was therefore much better than previously thought, both for lay and religious women, with the process of vernacularization allowing religious women in particular unprecedented access to a wide range of reading materials.

[198] Doyle, 'Books Connected with the Vere Family and Barking Abbey', p.240.
[199] Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*, p.252.
[200] Ibid., p.248.
[201] Bell, *What Nuns Read*, p.76. He notes that the exception to this is the Carthusian order.
[202] Ibid., p.77.

Female Access to Humoral Theory

The rehabilitation of late medieval female access to books in the latest historiography coincides with a corresponding argument by recent medical scholars that many women would have had knowledge of at least basic medical theory and practice, whether lay or enclosed. Monica Green has suggested that high levels of literacy in the vernacular within female religious communities made them a prime locus for engagement with vernacular medical literature, while enclosed women were increasingly expected towards the end of the medieval period to strive for some level of self-sufficiency in treating medical ailments before turning to the services of a male physician.[203] Further evidence is supplied by Katherine Park in her study of female dissection in Italy, where she cites the case of Clare of Montefalco, who was autopsied and then later embalmed by her fellow nuns after her death in 1308.[204] Clare's body was opened by Sister Francesca, who removed and cut open her heart, among other organs, before recourse to the nuns's physician.[205] This suggests some level of medical knowledge and practice among these nuns, especially at a time when autopsy was still rare. However, Sister Francesca was the daughter of a physician, so such medical knowledge could have been unusual for nuns.[206] Nevertheless, in returning to the question of whether nuns would have had medical knowledge through access to texts, some answers can be found in Bell's study of books owned by English nunneries. In the list of books that Bell identifies as belonging to English nunneries in the late medieval period appears the pseudo-Aristotelian text, *Secretum Secretorum*.[207] Furthermore, several nunneries also held copies of *Etymologiae* by Isidore of Seville, a Latin compendium of knowledge from Ancient Greek and Roman sources.[208] This contained an entire

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[203] Monica Green, 'Books as a Source of Medical Education for Women in the Middle Ages', *Dynamis*, 20:1 (2000), pp.332-3.
[204] Katherine Park, *Secrets of Women* (New York, 2010), p.39.
[205] Katherine Park, 'Making the Body Speak: Female Sanctity and the Origins of Human Dissection', in Piero Camporesi, ed., *The Incorruptible Flesh* (Cambridge, 1988), p.2.
[206] Ibid., p.8.
[207] Bell, *What Nuns Read*, p.223. See Chapter One for detailed discussion of this text.
[208] Ibid., p.240.

book on medicine, which focused on humoral theory rather than medical practice.[209] Although the number of medical texts owned by nunneries is small, the fact that some out of the small number of English monasteries for which evidence remains owned medical works is nevertheless significant. Kate Harris has argued that extant manuscripts do not provide a true picture of books in circulation in the medieval period, as the most popular works were likely read to pieces, while other factors of size, cheapness, and obsolescence affected manuscript survival disproportionately.[210] It is arguable that any surviving evidence is indicative of the wider potential existence of medical texts in nunneries.

As discussed in Chapter One, the availability of medical texts among religious circles is well evidenced. Much work has been done into the textual transmission of medical works across northern Europe, especially between the Low Countries and east England. There was a movement of texts along trade routes and between communities, such as those of university scholars and members of the Church, both of which were important international agencies for such exchanges.[211] Monasteries had long served as sites of dissemination of classical and Middle Eastern texts, including the medical works of authors such as Galen and Avicenna. Middle English translations of medical texts were widespread in the later medieval period, such as the writings of Gilbertus Anglicus, an early thirteenth-century English writer whose Latin medical texts were translated into English in the fourteenth century. This demonstrates the extent of medical knowledge available outside of a university setting, with the popularity of vernacular translations confirming a wider audience beyond those literate in Latin. Some simplified vernacular medical texts that were widely circulated,

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[209]Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies,* eds. Barney et. al., pp.109-116. See Chapter One for discussion of this text.

[210] Kate Harris, ‘Patrons, Buyers and Book Owners: Evidence for Ownership and the Role of Book Owners in Book Production and the Book Trade’, in Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, eds., *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.165-6.

[211] See Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries* (Woodbridge, 1988), and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion* (Notre Dame, 2006).

such as the *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* (reputedly based on a twelfth-century text from the medical school at Salerno), were written in rhyming verse to aid the novice reader, or for reading aloud. Practical poetic verse dealing with the simplest ideas about the four humors was also widespread in the medieval period, including the English works of John Gower, which contained verses outlining the different humoral complexions. Linne Mooney argues that such texts exemplify the permeation of humoral ideas into vernacular works aimed at the lesser educated, who would therefore have been exposed to the language and basic ideas of humoral theory, if not the more sophisticated scholastic theory and natural theology present in Latin university texts.[212]

Thus the basics of humoral theory would have been fairly widely known and understood, not just among the elites literate in Latin but also among those literate in the vernacular, demonstrating the sharing of humoral discourse across several different platforms. The availability of medical knowledge outside of university and monastic settings provides evidence of female engagement with learned culture. Even those illiterate in Latin but with access to vernacular textual cultures, such as enclosed religious women, or wealthy nobility and merchant classes with an interest in learned culture, would likely have had some understanding of humoral theory. Carole Rawcliffe demonstrates that the head of a household would have been expected to have some medical expertise, while the emphasis of humoral theory on the importance of diet and the use of herbal remedies formed a natural link to the female role of food preparation.[213] Women in noble, merchant or other burgess households would likely have had some simple practical medical knowledge, or even access to vernacular medical texts. Monserrat Cabré, in her study of a manuscript of the *Trotula* produced by a physician to the Catalan-Aragonese court, suggests that some vernacular medical texts were in fact aimed at a lay audience.[214] Cabré

[212] Mooney, 'Middle English Verse Compendium of Astrological Medicine', p.406.
[213] Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society*, pp.178-9.
[214] Monserrat Cabré, 'From a Master to a Laywoman: A Feminine Manual of Self-Help', *Dynamis*, 20:1 (2000), p.371.

demonstrates that the compiler of this manuscript selected and reworked the *Trotula* text for use by laywomen, evident in the extensive additions regarding cosmetic advice.[215] However, Monica Green argues that there is little European-wide evidence for many women owning books of domestic medicine themselves, although she does allow for the possibility of such books owned by the male head of house being accessible to women.[216] Nevertheless, there is a lack of evidence for ownership of medical texts, especially by women.

Even so, the appearance of humoral discourse in mystical works of visionaries such as Agnes Blannbekin and Julian of Norwich can be seen as evidence of some knowledge of humoral theory by religious women in the later medieval period. However, women would not necessarily have needed access to medical works in order to have an understanding of humoral theory. Although evidence for direct female access to medical texts is sparse, as has been demonstrated in this thesis many popular religious works in circulation during this period contained humoral theory. Agnes Blannbekin heard the *Song of Songs* by Bernard of Clairvaux, which her confessor read to her before discussing it together.[217] As demonstrated in Chapter Two, this text contained several references to humoral theory in a religious context. Another popular religious work that included humoral discourse was *The Chastising of God's Children.*[218] There is much evidence for female ownership, both lay and religious, of this work. The text was likely originally composed for a female religious audience, c.1382-1408. Later print copies were regularly gifted between nuns, for example circulating between the houses of Syon and Campsey in the early sixteenth century. However, from near the beginning of its history there is also evidence for lay female ownership of this text, with two lay women, Agnes Stapilton in 1448 and Mercy Ormesby in 1451, bequeathing manuscript copies to nunneries. Printing also helped it to become a

[215] Ibid., p.389.
[216] Monica Green, *Women's Healthcare in the Medieval West* (Aldershot, 2000), p.19.
[217] Blannbekin, *Life and Revelations*, ed. Wiethaus, p.83.
[218] Anon., *The Chastising of God's Children*, eds. Joyce Bazier and Eric Colledge (Oxford, 1957).

standard work for both audiences, with Erler suggesting that the *Chastising* represented a confluence between secular and religious women's reading.[219] This moral religious treatise was an anthology based on Middle English translations of principal authorities. Made up of short, easily comprehensible sections, it borrowed heavily from writers including Henry Suso, Jan van Ruusbroec, Isidore of Seville, St Augustine, Aelred of Rievaulx, St Anslem, John Cassian, and other works of vernacular theology such as *Ancrene Wisse*.[220] The text provided a guide for a beginner contemplative, stressing the dangers of the contemplative life, how to overcome them, and how tribulations benefit the soul.

Despite removing the more complex uses of humoral language prevalent in its source material, humoral discourse appears in the work. One example is the discussion of bad humors, which originates from *The Spiritual Espousals* of the fourteenth century Flemish mystic Jan van Ruusbroec:

> Of suche euel humores sum men bien changed out of hir owne kyndeli complexion, and fallen into dropsie and oþer infirmytees. Also sumtyme of vnkyndeli humors wrexen þerlous feueres, bi whiche sikenesse aftir long languor men oft siþees in. In þe same maner, whanne such men of goostli lyueng, or […] of oþir ȝifitis of god fallen awei fro soþfastnesse, and bi negligence and infirmetie goon out fro god and out fro þe scole of loue, anon þei waxen so sike þat euer þai fallen fro vertues, or ellis þai fallen into perel of deep […] and dien bi longe continuaunce of goostli sikenesse […]
>
> whan suche men wexen sike for coold, þanne þei fallen into dropesie, and anon þei bien ouercharged wiþ water, þat is to seie, þei desiren worldly goodis.[221]

This is almost a word for word translation of a similar passage in *The Spiritual Espousals*, but removes a more complex astrological part of the passage. As a result, it also removes the wider context for the use of humoral theory in this passage. The imagery of bodily sickness

[219] Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, p.125.
[220] Joyce Bazier and Eric Colledge, 'Introduction', *The Chastising of God's Children* (Oxford, 1957), pp.44-6.
[221] Anon., *Chastising of God's Children*, eds. Bazier and Colledge, pp.124-5.

equated with spiritual sickness is less overtly grounded in the link between the body, the soul, and the heavens through the humors. However, astrological discussion of the humors in relation to the planets appears elsewhere in this Middle English text, although in a much shortened form. Again, this imagery is used as a metaphor for the influence of God's love on the soul, which the vernacular compiler of the *Chastising* is keen to make clear:

> Aftir the seienge of philosofers, whanne ȝe seen þe sunne in hiȝ in þe middil of May, than haþ þe sunne double þe uertu of wirchinge in trees, erbis, and al þinge growynge. If þe planetis þanne whiche gouerne þe nature bien wele ordeyned, aftir þat þe tyme of þe ȝere askiþ, þanne drawiþ þe sunne þe humours vp into þe eir, of þe which comeþ dew and reyn, wherbi þe fruyte of þe erþe profiteþ and is multiplied. Now to oure purpose: in þe same maner, whanne the cliere sonne, oure lord iesu, is lift in oure hertis aboue al oþer þinge, if oure kynde þan of bodily disposicioun be wele ruled aftir discrecioun, if uertues, whiche I clepe goostli humours, bien enhabited bi longe excercises, whiche uertues shulen be presented wiþ þankynges and worschippes to þat clier sunne iesu, þanne sumtyme of al þese uertues comeþ a swete reyn of an inward biholdynge and an heuenli dew of swetnesse of þe godhede.[222]

In this Middle English rendering, the link between astrological conditions and the humors becomes a simple image for the effect of God's love on the soul, rather than the original's emphasis on the nature of the connection between the physical and the spiritual through the action of the humors in which humoral theory and discourse plays an important part beyond the merely metaphorical. As was the case with the Middle English adaptation of Aelred of Rievaulx's *De Institutione Inclusarum*, discussed in Chapter Three, the nuances of an intended audience and purpose for a text often affected the way in which humoral discourse was employed. Nevertheless, in adapting the material to suit a lesser educated female religious audience, the compiler of the *Chastising* retains a fairly complex discussion of humoral theory.

[222] Ibid., p.102.

This is one fruitful area of evidence for the dissemination of humoral ideas in a non-medical context, which has so far escaped much comment by medical historians. As this thesis demonstrates, humoral discourse was in common use in many popular religious works disseminated throughout the medieval period, both in Latin and the vernacular. It is therefore possible that such religious sources provided a means for women, especially religious women, to be introduced to humoral concepts and ideas. An awareness of the tradition of the use of medical imagery in religious contexts, including the humors, may help to explain why female visionaries and/or their biographers also turned to humoral discourse when composing the mystical texts discussed in this chapter. Why female visionary texts may have employed humoral language is the focus of the final section.

Why Humoral Theory?

As has been suggested throughout this chapter, one explanation for why female mystics turned to humoral discourse in an attempt to validate their experiences is that emulating existing precedents of medical imagery in the religious tradition would have helped to give legitimacy to the developing genre of the body as a site of mystical experience. The texts examined here formed part of an emerging genre of the body as a conduit for mystical experience, at a time when women were being increasingly excluded from religious life or heavily controlled within it. Dyan Elliott argues that during the later Middle Ages holy women, especially mystics, were perceived as a substantial threat to the Church (and patriarchal society at large) due to increasingly misogynistic views of women and fears regarding the hidden power of the female body.[223] It was also believed that female bodies were more prone to mystical visions and religious rapture as a result of their bodily defects.[224] This could be to the disadvantage of female mystics however, as it led to the belief that women were at greater risk of deception by the devil. In Jean Gerson's *De Probatione Spirituum*

[223] Elliott, *Proving Woman*, p.1.
[224] Dyan Elliott, 'The Physiology of Rapture and Female Spirituality', in Peter Biller and A. J. Minnis, eds., *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body* (York, 1997), p.157.

(c.1415), he suggested the need for an investigation of spirits in cases of visionaries to determine whether they really came from God, "especially in the young and in women, whose enthusiasm is excessive, eager, changeable, unruly, and therefore untrustworthy".[225] Such views about female vulnerability and the inferiority of their religious and mystical experiences were also held by men outside the hierarchy of the Church, such as Richard Rolle, who advised:

> Women […] might even despair of salvation, for they feel themselves lost if they do not get advice and help from men. Reason undoubtedly is less lively in them, and so they are easily led astray and quickly overcome. They are in much need of the counsel of good men.[226]

Petroff goes so far as to suggest that visibility was dangerous for female mystics, arguing that:

> the profound misogyny of the medieval world made it inevitable that any woman who achieved prominence was open to accusations of transgression, of sinning against conventional female behaviour.[227]

This is also the suggestion of Nancy Caciola, who in her study of parallels between divine and demonic possession concludes that such women were divisive figures within their communities rather than unifying ones, arguing that there was an "institutional mistrust" of female mystics.[228]

As Voaden and others have argued, female mystics and their supporters were aware of these problems and so took steps to avert the suspicions of the Church. Their weakness brought them closer to the humanity of Christ and therefore provided a means of salvation through emulation of Christ's physical suffering at a time when affective piety surrounding the Passion was considered especially meaningful, evident in the movement devoted to the Five Wounds of Christ. By emphasising their bodily experiences as beyond nature, female mystics were

[225] "praesertim in adolescentibus et foeminis, quarum est ardor nimius, avidus, varius, effrenis, ideoque suspectus". Jean Gerson, 'De Probatione Spirituum', in P. Gloriuex, ed., *Oeuvres Completes* (Paris, 1973), ix, p.181.
[226] Rolle, *Fire of Love*, ed. Wolters, p.175.
[227] Petroff, *Body and Soul*, p.166.
[228] Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits* (Ithaca, 2003), p.1.

demonstrating an awareness of this problem by ensuring their experiences could only be attributed to God's grace. In suggesting that their mystical experiences were changing their bodies in such an unnatural way by inverting humoral theory, this served to emphasise their orthodoxy. Elizabeth Robertson suggests that aspects of medical theory surfaced in the writings of female mystics in response to their theological status, which was drawn from medical theory.[229] Humoral views of the female condition enabled an emphasis on blood, tears, and other physical experiences in accounts of female spirituality by providing an opportunity for visionary women to explore and even benefit from the traits of femininity outlined in medieval medical theory. According to Robertson, while such views did not *prohibit* women's access to God, they did *condition* women's approach to God.[230] Thus, in one sense the physical embodiment of the visionary experiences of women such as Agnes Blannbekin and Margery Kempe can be seen as an internalisation of the humoral tradition. This is especially evident in the case of Agnes Blannbekin, who takes to literal extremes the 'fire of love' of her devotion to God through physical heat which affects her body.

The use of humoral theory by female mystics and their male mediators therefore serves to demonstrate the authority of these women by inverting a well-known sphere of learning, which as this thesis has demonstrated already served as established imagery in religious writing. Thus such texts present a paradox of submission to a patriarchal system by turning to humoral theory while at the same time overturning it, allowing for subversion of patriarchal norms through recourse to God's grace. Furthermore, by placing humoral theory within an emerging tradition of writing about the body as a site of mystical experience, these texts identified a specifically female sphere of experience by emphasising associations of women with the body within learned culture and theology. Using humoral language to describe the

[229] Robertson, 'Medieval Medical Views of Women and Female Spirituality', pp.142-67.
[230] Ibid., p.149.

body as a site of religious experience was therefore an acceptable means to demonstrate engagement with learned culture to add validity to this emerging genre of mystical writing. By turning to medical learning, female mystics were able to give credence to their bodily experiences, offering validation of the body as a site of religious experience.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has examined the way in which female mystics turned to the existing use of medical metaphor in a religious context, in particular the appearance of humoral discourse, but adapted it to suit their own needs. This is an interesting alternative means by which humoral discourse was appropriated in religious writing, situating bodily religious experiences within a learned discourse that allowed female mystics to describe and explain their spiritual experiences in a way that accorded with the demands of *discretio spirtuum* by highlighting their orthodoxy and position of grace. In contrast to the other genres of religious writing examined here such as sermons, this recourse to humoral theory was not an attempt to explain religious doctrine through the use of everyday imagery, but to justify a new type of religious experience by demonstrating its basis in religious tradition. As Riehle summarises,

> There was a deliberate effort [by mystics] to remain within the accepted teachings of the Church, and the use of already existing linguistic forms was a kind of theological insurance. Yet, despite a certain tendency amongst the mystics to adapt to the language handed down through tradition, the leading lights amongst them were perfectly capable of changing the emphasis and filling the traditional modes of expression with new life, whilst still remaining within the framework of traditional teaching.[231]

The appearance of learned medical discourse in the writings of female visionaries also demonstrates widespread knowledge of humoral theory in the later medieval period. Some medical knowledge was evidently held by these female mystics (or at the very least by their confessors),

[231] Riehle, *Middle English Mystics*, p.4.

gained directly through access to medical texts or, more likely, second-hand through the tradition of humoral discourse appearing in religious literature. However, of equal value to this study is that some female mystics and their supporters considered humoral discourse to be a suitable medium to prove their sanctity. Scholars such as Felicity Riddy have demonstrated the importance of reading circles and textual communities to the transmission of works such as those of Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich, with passage through the hands not only of clergy but also pious laypeople. In his study of the appearance of excerpts from Julian of Norwich's writing in Westminster Cathedral Treasury MS 4, Hugh Kempster demonstrates evidence of lay ownership for this manuscript, which he argues was always intended for a lay audience.[232] Watson and Jenkins have argued that Julian's supporters were responsible for the copying of her writings for wider dissemination beyond East Anglia, such as in the Westminster manuscript. This suggests that Julian's use of humoral discourse within a fairly sophisticated contemplative work was not considered incongruous with a lay audience.[233] This demonstrates the validity of investigating religious literature, including mystical texts, for evidence of the transmission of humoral theory in non-medical sources for lay as well as religious audiences in the later medieval period.

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[232] Hugh Kempster, 'A Question of Audience: The Westminster Text and Fifteenth-Century Reception of Julian of Norwich', in Sandra J. McEntire, ed., *Julian of Norwich: A Book of Essays* (New York and London, 1998), pp.257-89.
[233] Watson and Jenkins, 'Introduction', *Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p.11.

Conclusion

Why Humoral Theory?

As this thesis has demonstrated, humoral discourse was widely employed in a variety of religious texts throughout the medieval period. Although it is difficult to trace the origins of the use of humoral discourse in religious texts, it had become widespread by the twelfth century, spreading through the works of influential writers such as John Cassian, Bernard of Clairvaux and William de Montibus. Initially this took the form of a natural development of the *Christus Medicus* metaphor, employing imagery of medicine of the body to demonstrate the necessity of spiritual medicine for the soul. This reflected the connection between body and soul in medieval thought, and the belief that outward bodily sickness reflected inner sin (an idea which was heavily influenced by the newly acquired Latin translations of classical and Arabic medical thought in the eleventh and twelfth centuries). Many religious writers employed humoral discourse metaphorically to emphasise spiritual concerns. This reflected the intended audience for such texts of enclosed male religious, who were advanced contemplatives. The metaphorical use of humoral discourse in sophisticated religious works by authors such as Bernard of Clairvaux reflected the suitability of medical learning for conveying theological ideas of the interconnection between body and soul.

The medieval world view did not distinguish between matters of the body and matters of the soul, reflected in the inclusion of medical learning in the process of pursuing the study of theology. Humoral discourse therefore made sense in a religious context due to the status of medicine as a means of knowing God, second only to the study of theology. Medicine took an important place in higher education beside theology, law and the arts as part of Godly learning due to scriptural injunctions about healing as a form of charity. Furthermore, the importance of the sciences in theology meant that even a lesser applied science like medicine was considered an important stepping stone in

the learning process on the way to the ultimate science of theology, which was reflected in the structure of university curricula in the later medieval period. Medicine of the body was therefore a paradigm for therapy of the soul in the wider teachings of the Church, providing a model conceded by God.

The creation of religious works aimed at different audiences led to developments in the religious application of humoral theory over time, particularly in vernacular religious texts. Rules for enclosed female religious necessarily included practical advice regarding diet, bloodletting, and other medical treatment. This acknowledgement of the need for practical medical advice alongside spiritual guidance was provided for groups especially vulnerable to sin such as women and the laity, as the close intertwining of body and soul meant that the health of one necessarily impacted on the health of the other. The *Ancrene Wisse* followed monastic tradition in rejecting the flesh, but allowed some provision for religious women to follow medical regimen. This was in order to ultimately benefit the soul, both by reducing the amount of time with which service to God was inhibited by bodily infirmity, and, more crucially, reducing temptation to sin through maintenance of the humors. In adaptation of religious guides for a lay audience, however, a greater balance was emphasised between care of the body and care of the soul. In these adaptations, the link between body and soul emphasised the necessity of perfection of bodily health as an initial state before perfection of the soul could be attempted.

This resulted in later medieval texts, especially those in the vernacular, moving beyond metaphorical imagery of medicine for the soul. Rather, the use of medical language of the body emphasised the physical link between body and soul through physiognomy. Not only were sins visible in one's appearance, personality, and bodily sicknesses, but an individual's humoral complexion could also increase susceptibility to sin. Hence the repeated warnings of the *Speculum Sacerdotale* to beware falling into different types of sin at certain times of year, due to humoral imbalances increasing temptations. This more overt inclusion of

humoral theory and the need to take care of the body as well as the soul in order to ensure spiritual health came to the fore in vernacular texts of religious instruction composed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which increasingly were aimed at a broader lay audience. *The Book of Vices and Virtues* recognised that spiritual and medical advice could often be saying the same thing: what was good for the body was also good for the soul and vice versa, for example in the instance of gluttony. Thus, turning to the language of medical regimen had the dual benefit of providing advice for bodily health (necessary to ward off temptation), while also drawing attention to the importance of spiritual health by using the body as a paradigm for the soul. This development of a more balanced approach between the needs of the body and needs of the soul was also evident in vernacular sermon material, such as John Mirk's *Festial*, which made similar use of humoral discourse. This reflected the needs of a lay audience, who had to balance spiritual considerations with worldly ones. Acting on the pastoral duty set out by the Church in response to lay demand for spiritual and devotional material, some religious authors provided vernacular works of spiritual regimen in which the humors functioned as a diagnostic tool for the soul as well as the body.

Humoral theory was therefore part of the religious worldview due to the interconnectedness of body and soul. As demonstrated in the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux and others, humoral discourse allied itself naturally to the explanation of theological ideas about the interconnectedness of all things, providing a suitable metaphor intended for well-educated audiences. Humoral theory was an important means of furthering the religious agenda from the late Antique period through to the end of the medieval period and beyond. Humoral theory provided the explanation for the connection between heaven and earth as everything was made up of the same four elements, not only on Earth but also the firmament, the stars and the planets, providing a link between physical bodies and the heavens. Hence the link between sin and illness as part of this interconnectedness between body and soul.

Humoral theory was especially important in this context because it provided a means by which to explain original sin. The sin of Adam and Eve was evident in all subsequent human bodies through their imperfect humors, with the resulting diseases a punishment for this original sin.[1] Thus, when Jesus Christ took human form he had a perfect humoral complexion, as he was without sin. Furthermore, while all inclinations to sin were equal among all people, propensity to sin resulted from the 'accidental' variable of individual complexion.[2] The interaction between body and soul required the balance of both in order to achieve greater closeness with God, with bodily health an initial perfection from which to attain the second, greater perfection of the soul.[3] This explains why religious authors writing in the vernacular became increasingly concerned with the physical health of the body alongside the spiritual health of the soul. Especially in the case of the laity, who needed all the help they could get to avoid sin, maintaining humoral health of the body could help to keep temptation at bay, and thus it was reasonable for religious authorities to advocate medical intervention to aid in the avoidance of sin.[4]

But if humoral theory was such an important part of the religious worldview, why was humoral discourse not universally present in religious texts? One key reason for this is the intended purpose and audience for a particular work. A recurring feature of this thesis has been the nuances between different texts and adaptations, with authors and compilers employing humoral theory in different ways and for different purposes depending on the intended audience and function for a particular work. Thus, Aelred of Rievaulx's *De Institutione Inclusarum* employed the humors to guide a female recluse in the practicalities of her everyday living for spiritual, as well as medical, benefit. However, a later vernacular adaptation of Aelred's text shifted the pastoral concern of the work away from the everyday aspects of religious life towards

[1] Ziegler, 'Medicine and Immortality in Terrestrial Paradise', pp.201-242.
[2] Ibid., p.215.
[3] Gonzalez de Pablo, 'Medicine of the Soul', p.496.
[4] Ziegler, 'Religion and Medicine in the Middle Ages', p.6.

meditation on confession and penance, changing the way humoral discourse was employed in the text to favour a more metaphorical interpretation. Furthermore, *Speculum Vitae* removed all references to the humors present in its source text, *Somme le Roi*, likely due to the alteration of the material to suit a catechetical function for a priestly audience; while the *Chastising of God's Children* watered down the more complex theological uses of humoral discourse in a mystical work, the *Spiritual Espousals* of Jan van Ruusbroec, to suit the devotional purposes of a female religious audience by changing the focus to meditation on the effects of God's love on the soul. Expanded audiences for religious works later in the period often resulted in authors having to wrestle with contradictions in their attempt to adapt religious theology initially conceived for male, monastic contemplatives for alternative audiences. This comes to the fore in *Ancrene Wisse*, which attempts to follow the monastic tradition of complete rejection of the flesh while acknowledging the necessity for some exceptions to this, such as allowing blood-letting for the maintenance of health due to the more precarious situation of female religious (caused by their porous flesh and cooler complexions which resulted in a greater risk of spiritual temptation), especially for anchorites who lacked the protection of enclosure.

Another potential reason for humoral theory not appearing universally in religious works may be due to concerns about unsupervised lay access to such knowledge, for example in the case of *Speculum Vitae*. Some scholars such as Michael Leahy have suggested that tension existed around the availability of medical knowledge with some authors wishing to control it. This may especially have been the case among some religious authors, who disliked the intrusion of medicine onto the spiritual sphere. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, the monastic religious tradition in particular rejected medicine as counter to the Christian belief of suffering being sent from God, which could only be cured by God's intervention. This debate surrounding medicine continued throughout the Middle Ages, and would likely have created

controversy in some religious circles regarding the appropriation of medical learning in religious literature. This could explain the absence of humoral theory in *Speculum Vitae* despite extensive use of humoral discourse in *Somme le Roi*, with the highly conservative nature of the *Speculum* reflecting a religious tradition that may have rejected medical learning, especially in a vernacular work likely intended to serve as catechetical material for sermons delivered to the laity. Authors of religious works aimed at the laity in particular were concerned with ensuring their audience did not misinterpret anything. Allowing the laity unsupervised access to theological content in the vernacular, especially those not among the elite classes, was considered dangerous as it could lead some to err from the orthodox views of the Church. Joseph Ziegler notes that Dionysius the Carthusian reminded the audience for his sermons in vain that he called sin a fever or a corrupted humor for the sake of comparison only,[5] suggesting concerns at least among some religious authorities that medical comparisons were being taken too literally by unsophisticated audiences. Nevertheless, there is a lack of evidence for this supposition, which can only remain in the realms of speculation for the works examined in this thesis.

Key Theme: Medicalization

This research has attempted to examine the medicalization question outlined in the Introduction in the context of transmission of humoral discourse in a religious setting. Humoral discourse features prominently in the religious tradition throughout the medieval period, in genres ranging from penitentials, sermons, pastoral guides for priests, instructional religious works for religious communities and spiritual guides for the laity, to mystical texts. The clerical authorship of the works examined here demonstrates a level of medical knowledge among male religious, with transmission of humoral learning evident among male monastic and priestly groups. However, these texts have also provided some evidence for the transmission of humoral knowledge to a wider group of vernacular audiences, including female

[5] Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion*, p.179.

religious and the laity. A shared female religious and lay audience for many of the vernacular works examined in this thesis demonstrates the availability of second-hand medical knowledge through the appropriation of humoral discourse in vernacular religious works available to those literate in Middle English. Evidence for the existence of reading groups demonstrates the transmission of such works across social circles and across religious and lay boundaries. However, it was not just those literate in the vernacular or with direct access to texts that would have been exposed to the humoral discourse present in the works examined here. Many of the devotional, catechetical and instructional religious texts examined in this thesis would likely have been read aloud to a wider audience, by the head of the household in emulation of monastic reading practices, by literate patrons of reading circles, or by priests and confessors (as was the case with Margery Kempe). Furthermore, the appearance of humoral theory in sermons designed to be preached to the laity in Middle English demonstrates an almost universal audience for this material.

As discussed throughout this thesis, the appearance of humoral discourse in the religious works examined here does not necessarily guarantee an understanding of humoral theory among lesser educated audiences. Even so, it is arguable that exposure to such discourse would nevertheless have had an impact upon audiences. As discussed in the case of Margery Kempe in Chapter Five, she was likely aware of the religious appropriation of medical imagery evident in the many religious works she heard read to her, regardless of whether she fully understood the humoral and theological contexts. Furthermore, the appropriation of humoral discourse in a non-medical sphere adds weight to the argument that humoral theory was ‘popular science’ in the medieval period, likely known about and recognised almost universally by audiences even if they lacked detailed understanding beyond the basic concepts.

This thesis has therefore provided evidence for the transmission of, and demand for, medical knowledge outside of a medical textual setting,

and outside the sphere of medical practitioners (or those with a medical education). The use of humoral discourse by authors of religious texts demonstrates knowledge of medical learning at least within the religious sphere, although access to this knowledge by the laity in the later medieval period through sermons and other religious texts containing humoral discourse demonstrates a wider circle of transmission of such knowledge. The question of exactly how widespread humoral knowledge was among the audience for such religious texts however, especially among the laity, is likely to remain unanswerable. Just because the author or compiler of a work included humoral theory, this did not mean that either his intended or actual audience had knowledge of it. However, at the very least, it is clear that there was widespread knowledge of humoral theory and a desire for medical learning in religious circles. Furthermore, this provides evidence for medieval England, an area where traditional evidence for medicalization of society is lacking due to the absence of evidence of medical practitioners.

Key Theme: Vernacularization

Another key theme of this thesis has been the vernacularization process that occurred in the later medieval period. Vernacularization is an important part of the medicalization debate, as the availability and transmission of medical theory in Middle English at this time was an important means by which medical knowledge was transferred through wider society in medieval England, becoming accessible to those not literate in Latin. As discussed in Chapter One, medical science in particular was an important site for translation into the vernacular, reflected in the large numbers of medical texts produced in Middle English including translations of scholastic medical texts. The later medieval period saw the development of the vernacular as a learned language in its own right, especially as the discourse of science. However, as this thesis has demonstrated, religious literature was another important area where the vernacularization process took place, with authors appealing to new, expanded vernacular audiences as part

of the renewed pastoral emphasis of the Church to provide spiritual instruction to the laity. The success of Middle English as a written language is evident in its widespread currency by the end of the medieval period, coming to replace Latin in many spheres. Marleen Cré and others have demonstrated that it was not just lay and female audiences who used the vernacular, but that by the fifteenth century Middle English was increasingly used in monastic contexts as well.[6] The vernacular had therefore become a universalised medium in England by the end of the medieval period.

The use of the vernacular can help to explain the developments over time highlighted in this thesis between the religious tradition of medical ideas, imagery and language in Latin texts, and the later uses of the same ideas in different ways by vernacular religious authors. As Nicholas Watson and others have demonstrated, the challenge of using the vernacular for authors and compilers was to explain ideas that could be subject to easy misinterpretation by the lay, uneducated reader. The religious learned men who wrote in Latin would have already known about the links between body and soul, sin and illness, and the part of the humors in this, and would have expected their audience to share this same knowledge. So humoral ideas and their wider implications, such as the interconnectedness of body and soul and hence the influence of bodily health on spiritual health, only needed to be implicit in these more sophisticated Latin texts. By contrast, the vernacular audiences for the adaptations of these works would likely not have shared the same level of education, and hence lacked existing knowledge about these more complex theological and scientific ideas. The challenge for vernacular adaptors of works containing these sophisticated ideas was to convey them clearly for a less sophisticated audience. Hence the situation in the *Ancrene Wisse* where it frequently seems at odds with itself, as a result of grappling with the challenge of

[6] Marleen Cré, 'Women in the Charterhouse? Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Divine Love* and Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls* in BL, MS Additional 37790', in Denis Renevey and Christina Whitehead, eds., *Writing Religious Women* (Cardiff, 2000), p.49.

having to explain established religious ideas for a new audience. Many adapters of religious material for vernacular audiences often removed some of the subtler nuances of their source material, such as the Middle English translation of Aelred's *De Institutione* which adapted this spiritual guide for a female recluse for a more confessional and penitential purpose to suit a lay audience, removing some of the ambiguities about the status and role of the physical body to favour a purely spiritual message in the process.

Nevertheless, the shift away from metaphorical uses of medical imagery in religious works towards the development of a practical, functional application of the humors in a devotional context came to the fore in many vernacular works, especially Middle English spiritual guidance texts for the laity which took on the form of 'regimen for the soul'. Unlike guides written for female religious such as *Ancrene Wisse*, which had to balance the monastic tradition of rejection of the flesh with care of the body to ward against the greater risk of temptation to religious women, spiritual guides for the laity were able to more loosely adapt the religious way of life. Thus, the *Somme le Roi* tradition replicated in many Middle English versions allowed for a more practical attitude to the body by maintaining humoral balance in order to avoid spiritual temptation, as the intended lay audience had to live within the world without the protection of religious enclosure. Furthermore, the well-educated lay audience intended for *Somme le Roi* and its Middle English adaptations were likely increasingly interested in the vernacular medical texts in circulation during this period. The popularity of medical regimen texts, which allowed patients to maintain health and ward off disease without recourse to a physician, paved the way for the development of works of spiritual regimen by vernacular religious authors. Texts such as those in the *Somme le Roi* tradition drew on the same principles as medical regimen, employing the humors as a means by which educated members of the laity could 'diagnose' their own sinfulness in the same way as their humoral complexion, and then follow a regimen in order to maintain spiritual as well as physical health.

The availability of medical discourse in the vernacular in a variety of texts, including many religious sources, adds to the evidence for a medicalization of society in this period. The vernacularization process, not only for medical texts themselves but also for religious works containing humoral discourse, considerably widened the scope of audiences who would have come across humoral learning beyond the medical sphere.

Future Work

This thesis has provided a survey of the appearance of humoral discourse in four different genres of religious writing over the course of the later medieval period. This series of focused case-studies has provided a broad overview of the topic, allowing for examination of the research questions with a focus on change over time. The nuances of the application of humoral discourse in different religious contexts to suit different purposes highlighted in this thesis demonstrates the potential for detailed research to be undertaken for many more religious texts in order to present a more complete picture. Constraints of space and time have prevented closer textual examination of potential sources, provenance, and authors for the works examined here, further investigation of which would prove useful for tracing the development of the humoral tradition in religious texts more closely, and perhaps allow pin-pointing of exact changes and developments taking place over time.

Further research into female mystical texts is potentially a particularly fruitful area, as the appropriation of medical discourse in the texts examined in Chapter Five provides an interesting contrast to the traditions seen elsewhere in this thesis. Questions remain to be answered about the extent to which female visionaries themselves had access to medical knowledge, and further evidence might be found as to the reasoning behind why they or their male confessors turned to humoral discourse. There is much opportunity for comparison with continental mystical traditions, which influenced English female mystics such as Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe. There is also the

potential for comparison with male mystical works, again including continental as well as English traditions.

However, the main contribution of this thesis has been expanding the medicalization debate to examine non-medical sources. Evidence has been gathered from textual dissemination (and the dissemination of humoral discourse in particular), rather than focusing on physicians given the current lack of evidence of numbers of physicians in England at this time. This thesis has confirmed the fruitfulness of religious sources for study of the dissemination of humoral knowledge and discourse, opening up this sphere to further potential research. Much work is also currently being undertaken by scholars of literature into the appearance of humoral discourse in plays and literary works in this period. This is another interesting area for evidence of medicalization, and would provide a useful comparison with religious literature to help determine how widespread humoral discourse was in late medieval society. Such studies also need to be brought together with scholarship into evidence for readership of medical texts in this period, such as current research focusing on the evidence provided by manuscripts themselves. This reflects a renewed emphasis on evidence for readership and access to medical texts, especially by non-medical practitioners. Research into how widespread humoral discourse was in the medieval period and the extent to which this can be considered part of a medicalization of society at this time leads back to questions employed by medical historians about how society perceived physicians, and the role physicians themselves played in the spread of humoral discourse. However, as this study and others have shown, this question can also be examined through non-medical sources, such as the satire of a physician in The Croxton Play of the Sacrament to name but one example under current investigation by scholars.

Also linked to this debate are bigger questions about the relationship between medicine, science and theology in this period. As this thesis has demonstrated, medicine and theology were particularly closely intertwined in the Middle Ages. As posited in the Introduction, and

evidenced throughout this thesis, the appropriation of medical discourse and learning for religious purposes throughout this period can be seen as much as a Christianization of medicine as a medicalization of society. Nevertheless, the debates within the medieval Church regarding the place of medicine in Christian society, and the nuanced ways in which humoral discourse was appropriated by different religious authors over time for different ends, prevents this from being a uniform conclusion. Nonetheless, such subtleties and nuances provide opportunities for much more investigation into this topic of research, in which religious literature and other sources should be considered in tandem with the medical sphere in order to attempt to answer questions about the place of medicine in wider society in the medieval period.

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Appendix A

Comparison of *Somme le Roi* and its Middle English Adaptations

A.1: Role of Humoral Complexions in Sin

This is as attributed to St. Gregory

Somme le Roi:

> Et si com dit sainz Greguoires, li deables voit mout soutieument l'estat de l'omme et sa meniere et sa complexion, et a quell vice il est plus enclins ou par nature ou par acoustumence, et de cele part il l'asaut plus fort: le colerique de ire et de descorde, le sanguine de jolivete et de luxure, le fleumatique de gloutonnie et de peresce, le melencolieus d'envie et de tristece.[809]

Book of Vices and Virtues

> as seynt Gregori seiþ, þe deuel seeþ wel sliliche þe staat of a man and his manere and his complexion and to what vise he is most enclyne to, or bi kynde, or bi wone, and on þat side he saileþ hym most. Þe colereke of wraþ and cunteke. Þe sanguyn of iolite and lecherie. Þe flewmatike of glotonye and sloþe. Þe malencolen of enuye and anger of herte.[810]

Ayenbite of Inwyt:

> ase zayþ saint gregorie, þe dyeuel zyiȝþ wel sotilliche þe stat of þe manne / and his manyere / and his complexioun / and to huet vice he ys mest bouȝinde, oþer þe kende / oþer þe one. And of þo half him asayleþ stranglakest þanne colerik: mid ire: and mid discord. Þanne sanguinien: mid ioliuete / and mid luxurie. Þanne flewmatike: mid glotonye / and be sleauþe. Þane melanconien: mid enuie / and mid zorȝe.[811]

[809] Laurent, *Somme Le Roi*, eds. Brayer et Leurquin-Labie, pp.268-9.
[810] Anon., *Book of Vices and Virtues*, ed. Francis, p.156.
[811] Michael de Northgate, *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, ed. Morris, p.157.

Mirroure of the Worlde:

> The fende seeth the state of man ful sotilly, bothe his manere and his complexion and to what vice ho is mooste enclined outher be nature or be costome. And on that side he assaileth hym strongely: the colrique man with ire and with discorde, the sanguyn man with iolines and lecherie, the flematique with glotonye and slouthe, the malencolye with envie and hevynes.[812]

The Royal Book:

> the deuylles see moche subtylly the state of a man and his manere and his complexion and to what synne and to what vyce he is moost enclyned by nature or by custome / and to that parte wherto a man enclyneth hym self. Therto the deuyl assaylleth moost strongely / The coleryke man to wrath and ire. The sangueyn man to iolyte and to lecherye / The fluematyke to glotonnye and to slouthe, and the malencolyke to enuye and heuynesse.[813]

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[812] Anon., *Mirroure of the Worlde*, eds. Raymo et. al., p.288.
[813] Caxton, 'Royal Book', 1485, p.99.

A.2: Mustard Seed

Somme le Roi:

> Li grains de seneve est mout petiz, mes il est mout forz et mout aspres, car il est chauz ou quart degree, si comme digent li fisicien: par chaleur entnet on amour. (p.262)

Book of Vices and Virtues:

> For he haþ þat bileue þat God spekeþ of in þe gospel þat is as þe grein of senefe, þat is mustard seed, þat is wel small and litle, but is it is riȝt strong and scharp, for it is hot in þe ferþe degree, as phisicions seyn. Bi hete is vnderstonde loue. (p.142)

Ayenbite of Inwyt:

> þet is ase þet zed of mustard huerby hi may hote to þe stones an to þe helles / and hi hem bouȝeþ. Þet zed o mustard is wel smal / ac hit is wel strang / and wel bitinde. uor hit is hot ine þe uerþe degree / ase ziggeþ þise fisiciens. be hete: me onderstant / loue. (p.143)

Mirroure of the Worlde:

> Absent.

Royal Book:

> the seed of mustard is moche lytel, but it is moche stronge and scharpe. And it is hote in the fourth degree as the physycens sayn. By the hete is understonden loue. (p.91)

A.3: Evil Humors

Somme le Roi:

> mes par aventure tu as les humours ou cors qui te menront a la mort, et en l'ame tu as les meurs mauveses qui te remerront a la mort d'enfer se le grace Dieu ne t'en desfent. (p.239)

Book of Vices and Virtues:

> þou hast wikked humores in þi body þat schulle dryue þe to þe deþ, and in þe herte þou hast þe wikked tecches þat wol lede þe to þe deþ of helle, but þe grace of God rescow þe. (p.128)

Ayenbite of Inwyt:

> ac par auenture þou hest þe humours ine þe bodye þet þe ssolle lede to þe dyaþe. And ine þe zaule þou hast kueade þeawes þet þe ssolle lede to þe dyaþe of helle: bote þe grace of god: þe ne werie. (p.129)

Mirroure of the World:

> But peradventure [perhaps] thowe hast siche humores in thy body that shalle brynge the to thy dethe, and in thy soule thowe hast evil condiciones the whiche shall brynge the to the deth of helle if the grace of God rescowe the not. (p.263)

Speculum Vitae:

> þis es a grete Frawardenes, / Bot þus duse a fole þat es witteles / So þat þat treacle war to hym / Turnes hym alle to pure venym, / And medecyne þat suld for hele be done / Hastes hym + to þe dede sone.[814]

[814] Anon., *Speculum Vitae*, ed. Hanna, ii, p.481.

A.4: Importance of Purgation

This is as attributed to Helianz in some versions

Somme le Roi:

> Derechief, li pechierres est ausi comme cil qui cuide ester forz et sains et il a ja la mort desouez ses dras, car il a les humeurs mauveses et corrumpes ou cors, dont il morra dedenz. I. mois, qui cuide encores vivre. XL. anz, si com dit Helinanz es Vers de la Mort: 'Ostez vos chufles et vos gas, Que tiex me couve souex ses dras Qui cuide ester forz et sains.' Mes li Sainz Esperiz est li bons mires qui li moustre sa maladie et li esmuet ses humours et li donne tele poison si amere que il le guarist et li rent la vie. (p.238)

Book of Vices and Virtues:

> And ȝit more it fareþ bi þe sinful as bi hym þat weneþ he be strong and hol, and he haþ on hym his deeþ euele. For he haþ wykkede humores and corumped in his body, wher-of he mote dye wiþ-ynne a þre wekes or in lasse terme, and weneþ ȝit to lyue fourty wynter, as Helinanz seiþ in þe vers of deþ: 'Doþ awey ȝoure trufles and ȝoure iapes, for suche helen me vnder here cloþes þat weneþ to be strong and hole.' But þe Holi Gost is þe goode phisicion þat scheweþ hym his siknesse and meueþ þe humores wiþ-ynne hym & ȝyueþ hym a purgacion so bittre þat he delyuereþ and saueþ hym and makeþ hym hol and turne to þe lif. (p.127)

Ayenbite of Inwyt:

> Ateende þe zeneȝere is ase þe ilke þet wenþ by strang / an hol / and he heþ þane dyaþ onder his cloþes. Vor he heþ þe keude humours and corruptes ine þe bodye / huer-of he ssel sterue wyþ-inne ane monþe. And he wenþ libbe yet nourti yer / ase zayþ elyans ine uers of þe dyaþe. Do away þe scoffes and þe scornes, uor zuich me wrikiþ onder his cloþes wenþ by strang and hol. Ac þe holi godt is þe guode leche / þet amaystreþ his ziknesse / and chongeþ his humours. And him yefþ zuych a byter medicine: þet him helþ and him yefþ þet lif. (pp.128-9)

Mirroure of the World:

> a sinner farith as he that hatthe deethe vnder his clothis and wenyth to be hole and stronge. For he hatthe evil corrumped humeris in his bodye of the whiche he shalle dye within a moneth and wenyth too life xl winter, as Seint Clement seithe in his verses of dethe. And he seithe thus: Putte from ȝowe, seithe he, triffles and iapes. For siche couereth me with his clothis that weneth to be strone and hole and too life noo lesse than xl winter, þe whiche or viii days endeth his tyme. But the Hooly Gooste fareth as a goode leche the whiche sheweth hym his sekenes and chaungeth his humeres and ȝiffeth hym soo bitter a drynke that he helith hym and ȝiffeth hym liff aȝeyn. (pp.262-3)

A.5: Humoral Balance

Somme le Roi:

> Quant ces IIII parties sont attrempees, adonc dit on que li hons est attrempez, ausi comme on dit d'une racine ou d'une herbe que ele est attrempee, quant ele n'est ne trop chaude ne trop froide ne trop seiche ne trop moiste. Et ausi comme au cors de l'omme viennent trop de maladi[b]es par la destrempance de ces IIII qualities ou de ces IIII humours, ausi ou cuer de l'omme viennent tuit li vice et tuit li pechie par la destrempance de ces IIII meurs. (pp.263-4)

Book of Vices and Virtues:

> Whan ƿes foure parties ben wel tempred, ƿan seyn men ƿat he is an temper man, as a man seiƿ of a rote or of an herbe ƿat sche is a-tempre whan sche is not to colde ne to hote ne to drye ne to moisye. And riȝt as to a mannes body comen many seknesses bi ƿe distemperaunce of ƿes foure qualitees or of ƿes foure humores, also to ƿe hertes of men and women [ƿer commen] alle ƿe vices and alle synnes for ƿe distemperaunce of ƿes foure ƿinges. (p.152)

Ayenbite of Inwyt:

> Huanne þise uour deles [emotions] byeþ atamed / þanne zayþ me þet þe man is attempre. Ase me zayþ of one rote / oþer of one herbe / þet hi is attempre / huanne hi is ne to chald / ne to hot / ne to wet. Alsuo ase to þe bodye of man / comeþ alle eueles uor þe destempringe of þise uour qualities / oþer of þise uour humours: alzuo of þe herte of þe manne comeþ alle þe uices / and alle þe zennes be þe distemperance of þise þeawes. (p.153)

Mirroure of the Worlde:

> Whan these iiii parties be tempred than men saye that a man is temperat, lyche as men saye of a roote and of an herbe that it is temperat whan it is neyther too colde ne too hoote, ne too drye ne too moiste. And liche as in the bodye of a man al maladyes cometh be distemperaunce of these iiii qualitees or of these iiii humores, on the same wise intoo the herte of man commeth alle evils and al synnes be the diustemperaunce of these iiii humores. (p.284)

Royal Book:

> whan these four partyes been acoorded thenne it is sayd that a man is wel attempred whan he is not ouer colde ne ouer hote, ne ouer drye, ne ouer moyste. And in lyke wyl as to the body of a man comen ouer many maladyes for the dysatemperaunce of these iiii qualytees / or of these iiii humours / riyght so to the hert of a man comen to hym the vyces and synnes by the dsyatemperaunce of these foure maners. (p.96)

A.6: Meekness

Somme le Roi:

> Et qui sent sa doleur et sa maladie, il queurt volentiers au mire; et qui sent les mauveses humeurs ou cors, liez est quant il les puet purgier et geter hors. Et por ce est li tierz degrez d'umilite ses pechiez et ses maus volentiers regehir et confesser et son cuer espurgier. Mes il sont aucun conoissanz leur defautes et sentenz, et dolanz en sont et bien se confessant, mes ne voudroient a nul fuer que autre les seussent si comme il font. (p.242)

Ayenbite of Inwyt:

> Ac þer byeþ zome þet wel conne hyre defautes and hire pouerte / ac naȝt hit ne ueleþ. Þeruore is þe oþer stape: yuele / and playni his defautes and his pouerte. And þet he yuele his zorȝe and his zicnesse / he yerneþ bleþeliche to þe fisiciane / and zaiþ þat he y-uelþ þe kueade humours ine þe bodye, bliþe he is huanne þet he may his purgi and keste out. And þeruore is þe þridde stape of myldenese / his zennes and his kueade wylles bleþeliche beknawe / and ssriue / and his herte clensi. (p.132)

Mirroure of the Worlde:

> to fele and to pleyne is seknes, his defaultes, and his pouertee. And whoosoo felith his woo and his pouerte rynneth gladly to a leche. For whoosoo felith his evil humores in his bodye hee is gladde whan he mye porge theym and caste theym oute. Therfore the iii degree of mekenesse is gladly to be clensed and porged and to be confessed of his synnes and his shredenesse. (p.256)

Book of Vices and Virtues:

> þerfore is þe secunde degree to fele and complayne his defautes and his pouerte, & who-so feleþ his sowre and his seknesse, he renneþ bleþeliche to a leche; and who-so feleþ wikkid humores in his body, he is glad whan he may purge hym and cast hem out. (p.130)

A.7: Gluttony

Book of Vices and Virtues:

> It is wel grete witte to be mesurable in etyng and drynkyng, for it noreschep gret hele; for moche folk diep or here day come bi outraious etyng and drynkynge, and also per-of comep moche sikenesses. (p.49)

Speculum Vitae:

> Godde bides a man fast for mede; / þe bely says, “Nay! Þat war nat need; / Bot þou sal ete and drynk saddely / And fede þe wele to strengthe þi body. (p.432)