Early Social Performance

FEMALE PERFORMANCE AND SPECTATORSHIP IN A MEDIEVAL NUNNERY

THE *ELEVATIO* AND *VISITATIO SEPULCHRI* OF BARKING ABBEY IN PRACTICE

by
AURÉLIE BLANC

ARC HUMANITIES PRESS

EARLY SOCIAL PERFORMANCE

Further Information and Publications

www.arc-humanities.org/series/book-series/

FEMALE PERFORMANCE AND SPECTATORSHIP IN A MEDIEVAL NUNNERY

THE *ELEVATIO* AND *VISITATIO SEPULCHRI* OF BARKING ABBEY IN PRACTICE

by

AURÉLIE BLANC

ARC HUMANITIES PRESS

A grant from the **Swiss National Science Foundation** has
made possible the Open Access publication of this volume.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

© 2024, Arc Humanities Press, Leeds

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International Licence.

The authors assert their moral right to be identified as the authors of their part of this work.

Permission to use brief excerpts from this work in scholarly and educational works is hereby granted provided that the source is acknowledged. Any use of material in this work that is an exception or limitation covered by Article 5 of the European Union's Copyright Directive (2001/29/EC) or would be determined to be "fair use" under Section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Act September 2010 Page 2 or that satisfies the conditions specified in Section 108 of the U.S. Copyright Act (17 USC §108, as revised by P.L. 94-553) does not require the Publisher's permission.

ISBN (Hardback): 9781802702415
ISBN (Paperback): 9781802702255
e-ISBN (PDF): 9781802702811

https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.21570588

www.arc-humanities.org
Printed and bound in the UK (by CPI Group [UK] Ltd), USA (by Bookmasters),
and elsewhere using print-on-demand technology.

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations . . . vii

Acknowledgements . . . ix

Introduction. Women and Medieval Drama: The Evidence from England . . . 1

Transcript of the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri* . . . 35

Chapter 1. Medieval Spectators and Participants in the Barking Abbey *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri* . . . 39

Chapter 2. Contemporary Spectators and Participants: Performing the Barking Abbey Ceremonies in 2018 . . . 133

Conclusion . . . 187

Appendix 1. Interview Questions . . . 195

Appendix 2. Script of the 2018 Production of the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri* . . . 196

Bibliography . . . 223

Index . . . 243

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1.1. Sketch of the thirteenth-century seal of Barking Abbey.......... 48

Figure 2.1. Programme of *La visite au tombeau de Barking Abbey: Une pièce de théâtre médiévale*. 138

Figure 2.2. First venue: the church of the Abbey of La Maigrauge, Fribourg. 141

Figure 2.3. Second venue: the steps of the Aula Magna, University of Fribourg. 142

Figure 2.4. Ground plan of Barking Abbey. 152

Figure 2.5. Sepulchre of La Maigrauge, 1345–1360. 181

To Elisabeth

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BOOKS, LIKE PERFORMANCES, are collective enterprises and I would like to thank the many people who contributed to this book's composition and completion. It could not exist without them.

My thanks first go to the Medieval Institute at the University of Fribourg, whose support has been invaluable.

Research for the book was undertaken as part of the SNSF Medieval Convent Drama Project. I am indebted to the SNSF for their generous help and encouragement. My colleagues on the project, Olivia Robinson, Matthew Cheung-Salisbury, and Elisabeth Dutton, provided me with guidance, gently steered me in the right direction when I found myself lost, motivated me with their passion, and read and reread my drafts. I am most grateful for their constructive criticism and their kindness.

Part of the project consisted of staging modern performances of convent drama. Tamara Haddad, Sandy, Christoph, Olivia, Dinah, Mathieu, David, Sylvia, Felicia, and Guillaume joined me either backstage or onstage for our two performances of the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri*. All my thanks go to them for their help, their patience, their joy, and their moving performances. My thanks further extend to the nuns of La Maigrauge and of Le Pâquier who welcomed us in their houses so generously.

Written first as a doctoral thesis, this book underwent significant changes before publication. I am grateful for the time spent by Katie Normington, Olivia Robinson, and Elisabeth Dutton on improving my thesis. I would also like to thank the team at ARC Humanities, Anna Henderson, Tania Colwell, Martine Maguire-Weltecke, Pamela King, and other readers for their thorough reviews and their helpful insights.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to my family and friends. Jacqueline, Eric, Marie, Pauline, Claire, vous êtes fantastiques. Christoph, "and also with you."

Introduction

WOMEN AND MEDIEVAL DRAMA

THE EVIDENCE FROM ENGLAND

IN THE EARLY fifteenth century, the Benedictine House of Barking, under the leadership of Abbess Sybil of Felton, commissioned the writing of an Ordinal and Customary destined to record its liturgy and customs for the benefit of future abbesses.[1] The Ordinal and Customary's account of Easter day describes two ceremonies generally named in scholarly literature the *Elevatio* (elevation/raising) and the *Visitatio sepulchri* (visit to the sepulchre).[2] On that day, the nuns, clergy, and laity of Barking had gathered in the abbey church early in the morning to attend and celebrate the office of Matins. As Matins drew to a close and the third responsory had been sung, the abbess began the *Elevatio*. She led her nuns, as well as priests and clerics, to the Mary Magdalen chapel. Once they had reached the chapel, they closed its door behind them: they were now representing the scriptural patriarchs and prophets, trapped in Hell, awaiting Christ and their deliverance. They would not have to wait long: a second group of priests and clerics, along with the officiating priest who represented Christ, soon came towards them. Christ knocked on the chapel's door three times, commanding that it open. When it did, the two groups reunited; they processed, as one, towards another part of the church where a sepulchre had been prepared to repre-

1 Harper, *Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy*, 60–61. Ordinals are focused on the organization of the liturgy. They do not necessarily feature the full content of liturgical chants, but they detail their order in liturgical services. As for customaries, they collect the customs and duties of a religious community, including those relating to its liturgy. The only extant manuscript of the Barking Ordinal and Customary (University College, MS 169) is now in the Bodleian Library. It contains chant *incipits* as well as rubrics detailing the movements of the performers. Notated chant is however missing from the manuscript. It would probably have been written in other liturgical books owned by the house (graduals, processionals, or antiphonals). The *Visitatio sepulchri* from the Abbey of Wilton is for example recorded in a processional and contains musical notation. For more on liturgical books see Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England* and Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office*.

2 All citations from the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* are taken from the transcript given at the end of this introduction. All translations and chant expansions are taken from the forthcoming edition of the ceremonies, Robinson, Dutton, Blanc, and Salisbury, eds., *Theatre in the Convent*.

sent the tomb of Christ. At the tomb, the officiating priest entered the monument, took from it a Host, and lifted it, facing the congregation assembled in the abbey church.[3] He was representing Christ's Resurrection, his miraculous rising from the tomb three days after his death. Once this moment of "Resurrection" had passed, the religious men and women of Barking turned and processed towards the altar of the Holy Trinity; they were this time representing Christ and his disciples on their way to Galilee.

Then, the *Visitatio* began. Three nuns, chosen for this task on the previous day, made their way out of the ranks of the conventual community and into the Mary Magdalen chapel. There, instead of their usual black habits, they were vested in surplices and helped into white veils by their abbess who proceeded to absolve them. Carrying silver *ampullae* (liturgical vessels) in their hands, they were ready to represent the three Marys (named here Mary Magdalen, Mary mother of James, and Mary Salome)—the women who visit Christ's tomb. Lamenting the cruel death of Christ, the women slowly advanced towards the sepulchre. They met a first angel there (represented by a deacon), and then a second inside the tomb. They kissed the place where the body of Christ had been lain and Mary Magdalen took the *sudarium* (cloth wrapped around Christ's head) with her. Yet in spite of the angels' words, they could not believe in Christ's Resurrection, and they continued to lament even as they exited the sepulchre. However, the women soon understood what had happened, as Christ appeared from behind the altar, first to Mary Magdalen alone and then to all three Marys. Overwhelmed with joy, they kissed his feet before turning to the congregation and announcing the Resurrection to them. The rest of the nuns echoed the Marys and proclaimed the news of the Resurrection to the congregation. The priests and clerics representing the disciples then walked towards Mary Magdalen who told them what had happened. The ceremony ended with all its participants singing the good news.

The Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* constitute remarkable examples of female performance in medieval England. While evidence of women performing in medieval drama remains infrequent for England,[4] particularly in

---

3 Many of the reflections on the lay congregation present in this book were published in Blanc, "Performing Female Authority."

4 Women are recorded as having performed publicly in Passion and Saints' plays, as well as in convent drama, in France, the Low Countries, and German-speaking territories. Muir, "Women on the Medieval Stage," 107–19; Muir, *Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe,* 54–56. The term "convent" was used in the Middle Ages to "designate a foundation whose members had not taken full vows, especially not

the case of cycle plays, morality plays, interludes, miracle plays, or saints' plays, further evidence of this practice has been revealed in recent scholarship focused on other performative activities.[5] James Stokes, Katie Normington, Alison Findlay, Gweno Williams, Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, and Lynette Muir have begun to locate and analyse such evidence. Their work already demonstrates—according to Stokes—that women's contribution to "dramatic culture" was "significant" in the late medieval and early modern period.[6]

Extant records show women from various social strata taking part in public parish entertainments[7] including May games, dancing, hocktide games, and performances sponsored by local guilds, as well as in court-related performances involving Christmas revels, masques, plays, and tournaments. Stokes even states that women-inclusive parish drama—rather than Corpus Christi drama—was at the centre of traditional entertainment in most Lincolnshire parishes. From the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, some women are also described in records as tumblers, dancers, acrobats, minstrels, and singers. A few documents even suggest that women took part in public civic pageants. The London Goldsmiths' castle pageant, for example, seems to have included four maidens in 1377, three in 1382, and one in 1392.[8] In Coventry, the Smiths' accounts of 1562 reveal the apparent participation of two women in their pageant. In Chester, one of the guild pageants—the *Assump-*

---

that of poverty, which allowed them to be active in secular life." Koslin, "Robe of Simplicity," 256. The word *monasterium* would have referred to enclosed houses of men and women religious. However, *conventus* was also used to designate the "corporate body" of these houses. Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession*, 5. This is for example the case in the Barking Abbey Ordinal and Customary. In this book, I will be using the term "convent" in its modern, broader sense, to mean house or community of women religious.

5 Women's participation in medieval drama could also consist of "backstage" work: women acted as stagehands, they made and cared for props, costumes, sets, and banners. They prepared the performance space, nursed sick players, lodged them, and provided food and drink. They could also exert a more direct influence on the content of dramatic entertainment by sponsoring it. Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama*, 41–44; Stokes, "Women and Mimesis," 180, 183, 186–87; Stokes "Women and Performance," 37; Williams, Findlay, and Hodgson-Wright, "Payments, Permits, and Punishments," 48–49.

6 Stokes, "Women and Mimesis," 188.

7 From the fourteenth century onwards.

8 Stokes, "Women and Performance," 25–43; Stokes, "Women and Mimesis," 176–82, 183–87. For more on the Goldsmith's pageant, see Osberg, "The Goldsmiths' 'Chastel' of 1377."

tion play—may have been performed by "wives" as early as 1499–1500.[9] In Wells, during Queen Anne's 1613 visit to the city, two shoemakers' adolescent daughters seem to have taken major parts in the guild's play.[10] In Norwich, a pageant in a Lord Mayor's show featured four maidens representing the "fower Carnall vertews," each giving a speech. When the queen visited the town in 1578, a pageant incorporating women, men, and children was presented to her.[11] The Coventry Shearmen and Tailors' pageant—written in a late fourteenth century manuscript—may have included women singing, although female roles were otherwise played by men.[12] Girls perhaps also participated in the Digby play, *The Killing of the Children*.[13]

These examples all feature lay women, but religious women also performed according to the Barking Ordinal and other medieval records. Dramatic activities are regularly mentioned in relation to medieval monastic houses.[14] In 1329, for instance, Bishop John de Grandisson sent a mandate to the Augustinian canonesses of Canonsleigh Abbey, instructing them not to leave the enclosure of their abbey, and if they did, only to go so far as to be able to return within a day. One of the reasons the bishop gave for

9 The term "wife" could apparently designate a "female dignitary, working woman, widow who continued her husband's trade, widow, or married woman." Williams, Findlay, and Hodgson-Wright, "Payments, Permits, and Punishments," 49. Dillon believes that the mention of the Chester wives refers to their funding of the pageant rather than to their performance of it. Dillon, *Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre*, 70.

10 Stokes, "Women and Mimesis," 177. Four more guilds may have used female players on this occasion.

11 Stokes, "Women and Mimesis," 183.

12 Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama,* 41–44.

13 Muir, *Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe,* 55. The list of players on fol. 157v makes reference to female virgins. See *Late Medieval Religious Plays*, ed. Baker, Murphy, and Hall Jr., lxii–lxiii, 115. Gibson also believes that "Anna Prophetissa" seems to have been played by a woman. Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, 99.

14 For examples from male monastic houses, see *REED: Kent*, ed. Gibson, lxxxvi–lxxxvii; Johnston, "Bicester Priory Revisited," 16–17; Johnston, "'Amys and Amylon,'" 15–18; *REED: Devon*, ed. Wasson, 328–29; *REED: Lancashire*, ed. George, 114–44; *REED: Sussex*, ed. Louis, 182–87, 252–57; *REED: Shropshire*, ed. Somerset, 127, 144, 171–75, 363–64; *REED: Dorset/Cornwall*, ed. Conklin Hays and McGee / Joyce and Newlyn, 247–48, 320–21; *REED: Canterbury*, ed. Gibson, lxvi–lxvii, 69–70, 834, 909–10, 1242; *REED: Herefordshire/Worcestershire*, ed. Klausner, 306–8; *REED: Somerset*, ed. Stokes, 804–6; *REED: Staffordshire*, ed. Somerset; *REED: Lincolnshire*, ed. Stokes, 350–51, 525, 723. See also Dillon, *Language and Stage*, 32–33; Beadle, "Plays and Playing at Thetford Priory," 4–11.

his admonishment was the need to prevent the canonesses from seeing the *publicis & mundanis spectaculis* (the common and worldly shows)—possibly drama—that they were apparently attending.[15] The sisters of the Augustinian Convent of Limebrook/Lymbrook were similarly reprimanded in 1437, according to the register of Bishop Thomas Spofford.[16]

This register, however, contains an additional prohibition for the nuns: "Wee [says Bishop Spofford] forbede alle maner of mynstrelseys enterludes dawnsyng or reuelyng with in your sayde holy place." This implies that religious women did receive entertainers and that some even hosted festive games either in their nunnery or in their church. The prioress of the Cistercian Priory of Nun Cotham too was asked in 1531 by Bishop John Longland that she "suffer nomore herafter eny lorde of misrule to be within your house, nouther to suffer hereafter eny such disgysinges as in tymes past haue bene used in your monastery in nunnes apparel ne otherwise."[17] This injunction suggests that revels were organized over the Christmas period with an apparently external Lord of Misrule presiding over them. The phrasing of Bishop Longland may indicate that the nuns participated in "disgysinges" dressed either in their own habits or in other clothes, but it may also mean that people entered the nunnery along with the Lord of Misrule and performed dressed as nuns.[18] The nuns of Barking Abbey seem to have hosted various forms of entertainment as well. In 1308, they were reprimanded by Bishop Baldock for allowing "tumultuous assemblies" (including dancing and wrestling) to take place in the Barking parish and abbey churches around the time of the feasts of St Ethelburga and St Margaret.[19] The 1461–1490 accounts from the Benedictine Priory of St Mary de Pré in St Albans also show expenses for May games and payments to harpers and players for New Year and Twelfth Night. Harper Robert Abbot seems to have entered the precinct of St Michael's Priory in Lincolnshire, as he apparently fled with nun Agnes Butler in 1440.[20] In 1441, the male priory of St Swithun in Winchester may have paid "the boys of the almonry, together with the

---

15 Young, "Theatre-Going Nuns," 26. English translation by Young.

16 *REED: Herefordshire and Worcestershire*, ed. Klausner, 187–88.

17 *REED: Herefordshire and Worcestershire*, ed. Klausner, 188; *REED: Lincolnshire,* ed. Stokes, 1:348–49, 2:429, 455–56, 524.

18 On the Lord of Misrule, see Twycross and Carpenter, *Masks and Masking*, 44–46, 162–64. They also discuss the meaning of the term "disguising" 128–49.

19 "Houses of Benedictine Nuns: Abbey of Barking," ed. Page and Round.

20 See *Visitations of Religious Houses*, ed. Thompson, 348; Dugdale, *Monasticon anglicanum*, 360.

boys of the chapel of St Elisabeth, dressed up after the manner of girls, dancing, singing and performing plays before the Abbess and Nuns of St Mary's Abbey in their hall on the Feast of the Innocents."[21]

Festive celebrations on the Feast of the Innocents were thus conducted in convents, as was also the case in male religious houses. There, one of the most frequently mentioned traditions was that of the Boy Bishop, which was connected to the festivities of Innocents' Day and St Nicholas' Day.[22] In cathedral and monastic churches, the Boy Bishop was elected on the eve of the feast of St Nicholas and performed many of the services conducted on Innocents' Day in place of the bishop. His rule could at times continue for a fortnight and was accompanied by festivities, plays, processions, and dances.[23] The inventories of the women's Benedictine priories of St Mary's Cheshunt in Hertfordshire and of Sts Mary and Sexburga in Sheppey—compiled during the Dissolution of the Monasteries—contain references to costumes for child bishops. In 1487–1488, the Priory of St Mary de Pré recorded the admittance of "seint Nicholas clerks" on Holy Innocents' Day.[24] As for the Benedictine Abbeys of Barking, Godstow, and Carrow: they all had girls step into the shoes of their abbess on that same day.[25]

Conventual houses further appear to have been involved in, or at least associated with, external performative events. The parish church of All Hallows in London, which belonged to Barking Abbey, rented its pageants to the male Augustinian house of Holy Trinity for Easter 1513–1514, to the Skinners' company in 1519, and to John Scott, who may have been one of King Henry VIII's players, at the beginning of the sixteenth century.[26] In 1509,

---

21 Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, 309–13; Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, 1:361n5. The recent edition of *REED Hampshire* (2020) has however cast substantial doubt as to whether this information is true. The medieval accounts containing it, which were first mentioned by Thomas Warton, cannot be traced. Warton moreover seems to have engaged in fabricating medieval sources on other occasions. See *REED Hampshire*, ed. Greenfield and Cowling.

22 See for instance: *REED: Devon*, ed. Wasson, 8–9, 12, 287; *REED: Hampshire*, ed. Greenfield and Cowling.

23 Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, 311–13; *REED: Ecclesiastical London*, ed. Erler, xxv–xxvi.

24 Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, 313; Dugdale, *Monasticon anglicanum*, 360.

25 Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, 312–13n978. In the 1404 Barking Ordinal, this ceremony does not seem to include the laity anymore. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:33–35.

26 *REED: Ecclesiastical London*, ed. Erler, xliv, lxxiv, xxxii–xxxiii, 27, 40, 47, 48; Sturman, "Barking Abbey," 132.

Bishop Fitzjames sent an injunction to the nuns of Wix not to permit "any public spectacles of seculars, javelin play, dances or trading in the streets or open places."[27]

Nuns even participated in performances themselves. Public dancing occurred at the Benedictine Priory of St Helen's Bishopsgate in 1439, according to Dean Reginald Kentwood. He advised the nuns to dance only at Christmas "and other honest tymys of recreacyon among ȝowre selfe vsid in absence of seculers."[28] In 1379, the Bishop of Salisbury forbade the nuns of Wilton to entertain themselves with plays or games.[29] In 1442, one of the sisters of the Cistercian Priory of Catesby was accused of spending the night in the company of "Austin friars at Northampton and [she] did dance and play the lute with them in the same place until midnight, and on the night following she passed the night with the friars preachers at Northampton, luting and dancing in like manner."[30] The most substantial type of evidence for performances by women in a conventual setting comes from the Benedictine Abbeys of Barking and Wilton. According to the early fifteenth-century Barking Ordinal and Customary and to a fifteenth-century Wilton processional, both houses staged dramatic liturgical ceremonies (commonly called *Depositio* (laying down/burial), *Elevatio*, and *Visitatio sepulchri*) in their abbey church on Holy Week.[31] As stated above, these depicted the story of Christ's Resurrection (for the *Elevatio*), and of the visit of the three Marys to his sepulchre (for the *Visitatio*). The *Depositio* took place on Good Friday and showed the burial of Jesus. Such ceremonies were usually sung in Latin plainchant, as was most of liturgy.[32] Their content borrowed from all four gospels and from existing liturgical chants, but it also featured chants found only in such ceremonies, as well as original material. While men and women religious performed them, lay people were occasionally in attendance.[33]

27 Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, 385; "Houses of Benedictine Nuns: Priory of Wix," ed. Page and Round.

28 *REED: Ecclesiastical London*, ed. Erler, xliv, lxxiv, 24–25.

29 "Houses of Benedictine Nuns: The Abbey of Wilton," ed. Pugh and Crittall.

30 *Visitations of Religious Houses*, ed. Thompson, 50. Translation by Thompson.

31 The terms *Visitatio sepulchri*, *Ad visitandum sepulchrum* or *ad visitationem sepulchri* were at times used in medieval texts (twelfth to fifteenth centuries) already. See for instance *Liturgische Osterspiele und Osterfeiern*, ed. Lipphardt, 2:306, 3:773, 991, 1074.

32 Salisbury defines plainchant as "music with a single melodic line and no rhythmic information given in the notation." Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 78.

33 Campbell, "Liturgical Drama and Community Discourse," 565. There is evidence

Depositiones, *Elevationes*, and *Visitationes* were not produced in women's religious houses only. On the contrary, most of them seem to have originated in male monasteries and collegiate churches. In England, extant *Visitatio* ceremonies can be connected not only to Barking and Wilton, but also Winchester (tenth, early eleventh century), Canterbury (eleventh-century copy of the tenth century *Regularis Concordia*), and Norwich (partial ceremony from the thirteenth or fourteenth century). Furthermore, two mentions of *representacio resurreccionis* (representations of the Resurrection) may reference to *Visitatio* ceremonies taking place at the cathedral of Lichfield (twelfth century) and the abbey of Eynsham (thirteenth century).[34] Extant *Depositio* ceremonies have been attached to Canterbury (eleventh century), Durham (fourteenth century), Exeter (fourteenth century), Hereford (fourteenth century), Norwich (thirteenth to fourteenth centuries), Oxford (fourteenth century), Salisbury (twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries), and York (early sixteenth century); extant *Elevatio* ceremonies to Canterbury (eleventh century), Exeter (early sixteenth century), Hereford (fourteenth century), Norwich (thirteenth to fourteenth centuries), Salisbury (thirteenth century), and York (early sixteenth century).[35]

Such ceremonies were popular not only in England but also all over Europe. Evidence from the Continent shows how beloved they were in men's and women's monasteries. It further reveals a broad variety of performative activities taking place in nunneries. Evidence of such activities has been discovered in France: Poitiers Sainte-Croix (thirteenth century), Troyes (thirteenth century), and Origny (fourteenth century); in the Low Countries (Huy, fifteenth century): in German-speaking regions including Essen

---

in ceremonies from German-speaking territories of a more direct participation from the laity (Nuremberg, Essen, Diessen, for example). Meredith, "Latin Liturgical Drama," 94.

34 Dolan, *Le drame liturgique*, 173–75; Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, 2:377; *REED: Staffordshire*, ed. Somerset.

35 *REED: Canterbury*, ed. Gibson, lxv–lxvi, 910–11; *Liturgische Osterspiele und Osterfeiern*, ed. Lipphardt, 2:538–78 (Lipphardt also edits a sixteenth-century account of a *Depositio* and *Elevatio* from Durham, 549.); Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:136–37, 561, 563, 133, 145–46, 561, 155, 167, 238, 138–39, 134, 555, 146–47, 254. Sepulchres existed in many other places in England, which may indicate that *Elevatio*, *Depositio*, and even *Visitatio* ceremonies took place in those churches. Sheingorn, *Easter Sepulchre*; Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 2:512–13. Dublin and Edinburgh also hosted similar Easter ceremonies (*Depositio*, *Elevatio*, and *Visitatio* for Dublin, *Depositio* for Edinburgh). *Liturgische Osterspiele und Osterfeiern*, ed. Lipphardt, 2:550–51, 5: 1464–72.

(fourteenth century), Andernach (fourteenth century), Asbeck (sixteenth century), Brescia (1438), Gandersheim (tenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries), Gernrode (ca. 1500), Havelberg (fifteenth century), Lichtenthal bei Baden-Baden (thirteenth century), Marienberg bei Helmstedt (thirteenth century), Medinberg bei Lüneburg (ca. 1320), Münster (ca. 1600), Nottuln (fifteenth century), Regensburg-Obermünster (sixteenth century), Salzburg (fifteenth century), Wienhausen (fourteenth century), Wöltingerrode (thirteenth century), Rupertsberg (Hildegard von Bingen, twelfth century); in convents from Prague (twelfth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries); and from Italian and Spanish regions.[36] These were not all *Depositiones*, *Elevationes*, and *Visitationes*: at times, these activities resembled the drama performed by the laity (and defined by the contemporary critical framework as "drama"). A manuscript from the Carmelite convent of Huy, for example, features five plays written in the vernacular, some of them allegorical and some presenting the events surrounding the birth of Christ.[37] They may have been designed for private performances—by nuns for nuns—as is still the case in some Carmelite communities today.[38] Similar circumstances perhaps surrounded the performance of the plays of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim and Hildegard of Bingen, although these were written in Latin. Hrotsvit was a tenth-century canoness of the royal and imperial foundation of Gandersheim. She composed plays resembling those of Terence but presenting Christian ideas and promoting the virtues associated with a religious life.[39] As for Hildegard of Bingen, her *Ordo virtutum* (Order of the Virtues) was a moral allegory. The *Ordo* was not meant to be spoken but sung and was accompanied in its manuscript by musical notation.[40]

36 See Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 143–44; Muir, *Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe*, 54–56. For information on Italian convent drama, see Weaver, *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy*. For more on Spanish convents, see Arenal, Schlau, and Powell, *Untold Sisters: Hispanic Nuns*.

37 On Huy, see Robinson, "Feminizing the Liturgy"; Robinson, "Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 617"; Muir, "Women on the Medieval Stage"; Cohen, *Mystères et moralités*.

38 The Carmelite sisters of Le Pâquier, interview by Olivia Robinson and Aurélie Blanc, January 2018, Fribourg, Switzerland.

39 Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages*, 72–73; Davidson, "Women and the Medieval Stage," 99–113.

40 The question of whether the plays of Hrotsvit and Hildegard were meant to be performed has been debated. Weaver, *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy*, 49; Simon, "Preface," xiii; Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages*, 55, 63. On the Ordo, see Alstatt, "The *Ordo virtutum* and Benedictine Monasticism"; Fassler, *Cosmos, Liturgy, and the Arts*.

There is then a vast diversity in the performative activities associated with convents: in addition to nuns taking an interest in performances and at times leaving their enclosure to see them, sisters also welcomed entertainers within their walls, and they even performed themselves in a variety of events. The term "convent drama"—commonly used in scholarly literature to refer to the performance of women religious—thus encompasses a multitude of public and private events.[41] In England, these include dancing, playing the lute, and performing Holy Week ceremonies such as those of Barking and Wilton. What unites them is a similar context of production and performance. They were produced—in part at least—by women in monastic houses: they were generally sponsored by women, may have been composed by them, and they were performed and witnessed by them.

The evidence presented so far shows that when one examines a wide range of performative activities, women's participation in the culture of performance no longer seems rare. Building on the work conducted by Muir, Williams, Findlay, Hodgson-Wright, and Stokes, this book continues to explore such performance in medieval England. Keeping in mind the apparent prohibitions imposed by medieval ideas about women's bodies and speech in the Middle Ages, I nevertheless hope to further contribute to the study of female performance.[42] My focus will be the convent drama at Barking Abbey—in particular, the house's *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* ceremonies. These two ceremonies feature the performance of women prominently and they can almost be considered the same performative event, since they took place consecutively. I chose to concentrate on one convent due to the relative independence of Benedictine houses in the medieval period. Neither liturgy nor customs were identical in different houses. They each had their own church, they did not deal with the same parishioners, nor did they benefit from the same patrons. Following the recommendations made in Matthew Cheung Salisbury and C. Clifford Flanigan's work on the study of liturgical material, I address these specificities rather than offering a more general analysis of convent drama in England.[43] The number of studies already con-

---

41 See Matthews, "Textual Spaces / Playing Spaces"; Matthews, "The Bride of Christ"; Robinson, "Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 617"; Robinson, "Feminizing the Liturgy." Weaver uses the term "convent theatre" in *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy*. Because of the diversity of events performed in women's monasteries, I would however avoid presenting convent drama as a literary genre.

42 See for example Minnis, "Religious Roles," 49–50, 57; Elliott, "Flesh and Spirit," 13–31; McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls," 216–17, 235–36.

43 Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 86; Salisbury, "Rethinking the Use of

ducted on this house by historians and archaeologists, and the association of Barking with a wide range of extant documents and performative activities, confirmed this decision.

"Liturgical Drama"

Barking Abbey has been tied, as mentioned above, with dancing, wrestling, and girl-abbess ceremonies. The house's main dramatic activities, however, appear to have been its *Depositio*, *Elevatio*, and *Visitatio sepulchri*. These types of ceremonies—the more theatrical *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* in particular—have often been categorized and edited as "liturgical drama."[44] Karl Young and Walther Lipphardt have produced authoritative editions of extant ceremonies.[45] Other editions include those of Susan Rankin (who transcribes the texts and music of French and English liturgical drama), Diane Dolan (who focuses on French and English Easter liturgical drama), Anne Bagnall Yardley (who edits and translates the Wilton and Barking ceremonies), J. B. L. Tolhurst (who edits the Barking Ordinal), and Pamela Sheingorn (Barking).[46] One of the main difficulties encountered by these editors comes from the ceremonies' embeddedness in the liturgy, from which they are inevitably separated once edited.[47]

Indeed, much of the scholarly discussion around these ceremonies has focused on their apparent—and confusing—blend of drama and liturgy. They do possess theatrical features: the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, for example, clearly imply a conscious representation of someone other than oneself; they tell a narrative story with the help of dialogue and movement, and indicate that the nuns, priests, and clerics who performed them were meant to behave like the scriptural figures that they were portraying (emotions included). For instance, the nuns portraying the three Marys are

Sarum," 122; Flanigan, "*Visitatio sepulchri* as Paradigm," 17.

44 Lange, *Die lateinischen Osterfeiern*; *Drames liturgiques du Moyen Âge*, ed. de Coussemaker; Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*; *Liturgische Osterspiele und Osterfeiern,* ed. Lipphardt.

45 Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*; *Liturgische Osterspiele und Osterfeiern*, ed. Lipphardt.

46 Rankin, "A New English Source"; *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin; Dolan, *Le drame liturgique*; Yardley, *Performing, Piety*, 243–54; "The Liturgical Dramas for Holy Week," ed. Yardley and Mann; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst; Sheingorn, *Easter Sepulchre*.

47 Flanigan, "The Fleury Playbook," 350.

described in the Barking manuscript as "illa que speciem / pretendit marie magdalene" (the one showing the outward appearance of Mary Magdalen); "secunda que mariam iacobi prefigurat" (the second one, who represents Mary [Mother] of James); and "Tercia maria vi/cem optinens salomee" (the third Mary taking on the role of Salome). The Marys are also instructed to show emotions: they should sing *flebili uoce et sub/missa* (in an afflicted and humble voice) as they lament the death of Christ. The ceremonies moreover make reference to dressing in ways that would evoke these scriptural figures.[48] The first angel is said to be wearing a white stole (*alba stola*) as are the angels at the grave according to Scriptures.[49] Yet, *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* ceremonies differ from most medieval drama because of their liturgical context, their prevalent use of Latin as the language of performance, their musical characteristics, and their non-lay performers. How should they therefore be classified and studied?[50]

The use of the fraught term "liturgical drama" already illustrates this issue of classification.[51] Peter Meredith defines liturgical drama as "the theatrical action growing out of and to an extent remaining within the annually recurring services of the Christian Church, the liturgy."[52] Yet identifying what is and is not drama and what is and is not liturgy is a challenge. The term "liturgical drama" has been used to classify a wide range of texts from "brief musical and verbal texts" generally found in liturgical books—including *Depositio*, *Elevatio*, and some *Visitatio* ceremonies—to a "small number of highly developed literary and musical forms, mostly of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which are readily recognized as drama."[53] Definitions are only made fuzzier by the use of various other terms to designate "liturgical plays" ("church drama," "medieval Latin drama," *Feier* (ceremony/feast),

---

48 For more on the use of costume in *Visitatio* ceremonies, see Ogden, "Costumes and Vestments."

49 See Mark 16:5; Matthew 28:3; John 20:12.

50 On the classification of a text affecting its study by modern scholars, see Gittos, "Researching the History of Rites," 31; Symes, "Early Vernacular Plays," 795.

51 Discussions of this term include Accarie, *Le théâtre sacré*; Norton, *Liturgical Drama and the Reimagining of Medieval Theater*; *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin, 1, 5; Palazzo, "Performing the Liturgy," 488; Petersen, "Liturgical Drama: New Approaches," 636.

52 Meredith, "Latin Liturgical Drama," 55.

53 Flanigan, "Medieval Latin Music-Dramas," 22; Campbell, "Liturgical Drama and Community Discourse," 575–87.

and *Spiel* (game/play)), all outlining different limitations for the genre.[54] This confusion about the definition of liturgical drama, and what the genre should or should not include, stems from the difficulty of defining drama, liturgy, and the difference between the two. When does a performance stop being drama and become liturgy? Or the reverse? Is it even possible for drama to be "liturgical"?

The question of the boundary between drama and liturgy has been a central preoccupation of the research on liturgical drama since its beginning. Scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, such as Lange, collected and edited examples of liturgical plays. They thus had to decide what they considered dramatic enough to feature in their editions. Much like his predecessors, E. K. Chambers believed that the task of scholarship was to accumulate facts. He argued that a "genuine ludic impulse existed among the half-pagan ordinary people of the Middle Ages" and was interested in liturgical drama because he saw it as a means for these people to break free from the bonds of ecclesiastical control.[55] Although Chambers' pioneering study and his factual collection proved highly influential, his view of drama as freeing itself from liturgy did not endure in later scholarship. Yet, the interest of scholars in tracing the limit between drama and liturgy has remained at the heart of the research on liturgical drama.

Chambers' work was followed by that of two scholars central to this field: Gustave Cohen with *Le théâtre en France au Moyen-Âge, vol 1. Le théâtre religieux* (1928) and Karl Young with *The Dramatic Associations of the Easter Sepulchre* (1920) and *The Drama of the Medieval Church* (1933). Cohen asserts that all religions have the potential to generate drama because cults spontaneously take a theatrical aspect. Liturgical drama is an integral part of the Divine Office that evolved towards the "profane" thanks to an increasing dramatic instinct and the addition of more realistic elements.[56] Young, for his part, begins by defining drama and ritual before establishing the limit between them. Drama is impersonation and Mass is a "genuine renewal" of past events where Christ is present in the consecrated elements.[57] Therefore, while liturgy is theatrical and can be conducive to drama—dialogues

54 The terms *Feier* and *Spiel* mostly come from the German scholarly tradition. While English-speaking scholars acknowledge and at times discuss their use, they tend not to adopt them in their own research. See Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:412; Flanigan, "Medieval Latin Music-Dramas," 32–37.

55 Flanigan, "Medieval Latin Music-Dramas," 23–24; see Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage.*

56 Cohen, *Le théâtre en France*, 5–6, 10–16.

57 Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:80, 85.

are sung, at times by different people, and it features various movements and postures—the lack of impersonation prevents it from being genuine drama. Although the controversial Amalarius of Metz (eight to ninth centuries) and Honorius of Autun (twelfth century) claimed that Mass was drama, this remains an impossibility according to Young.[58] Ceremonies of the Holy Week, such as the *Depositio* and the *Elevatio*, do not contain impersonation either, nor do the Feast of Fools and the Boy Bishop ceremonies.[59] Like Cohen, Young believes that the older, simpler dramatic ceremonies are liturgical while later ones—from the *Visitatio sepulchri* onwards—come closer to drama.[60] These conclusions were overwhelmingly accepted by scholars for the next three decades.[61]

This relative stagnation in scholarship ended with O. B. Hardison Jr.'s pivotal *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (1965). Hardison's work is mostly notable for his widely accepted attack on Young's evolutionary development, but it also claims that the bias of earlier scholars against religion made them underplay the religious elements in liturgical plays. Drawing on Amalarius of Metz and Honorius of Autun, Hardison affirms that Mass was consciously interpreted as drama at the time liturgical plays first appeared: "religious ritual was the drama of the early Middle Ages."[62] While he acknowledges differences between the sacred drama of the Mass and twelfth and thirteenth century liturgical drama which displays "a search for representational modes which preserves a vital relation to ritual," both remain drama. Hardison adds that the criterion of impersonation used by Young to define drama proves problematic.[63] It is a nineteenth-century concept ill fitted to the Middle Ages, a time when the "line between art and reality was much less definite."[64] While Hardison's view of the Mass has not been widely accepted by scholars, his methodology—viewing the liturgy as the main context in which these plays should be understood—has left a last-

58 Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:80, 83–84.

59 Young, *Dramatic Associations*, 72; Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:90–100, 109–14.

60 Young, *Dramatic Associations*, 128; Cohen, *Le théâtre en France,* 5, 6.

61 Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama*, 2–4. See Craig, *English Religious Drama*, for one of the influential followers of Young.

62 Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama*, viii, 35–79.

63 Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama*, 252.

64 Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama*, 32.

ing impact.[65] His work created a division in the field of studies on liturgical drama between scholars who agree with his arguments, even his perception that Mass is drama, and those who follow Young, yet must now acknowledge the shortcomings of his work.

Followers of Young, whether explicitly or not, include Rosemary Woolf in *The English Mystery Plays* (1972), although she defines impersonation in more detailed terms than he did. According to her, mimetic action is rare in the liturgy, but verbal impersonation happens often. For instance, the choir singing the *Magnificat* impersonates the Virgin. These two types of liturgical impersonation—verbal impersonation and mimetic action—are brought together in dramatic impersonation.[66] Woolf recognizes the problem, underlined by Hardison, of defining drama according to modern criteria and tries to determine whether liturgical drama was perceived as drama in the Middle Ages. She acknowledges that genre is determined not only by the text's intrinsic qualities but also by its audience. Woolf sees the twelfth century as a turning point when liturgical plays started to develop away from the liturgy into genuine drama, and to be perceived as such.[67] William Tydeman (1978) follows in Woolf's footsteps with *The Theatre in the Middle Ages*. The *Visitatio* in the *Regularis Concordia* contains the mention of the Marys looking around "as if" searching for something: Tydeman argues that this element of mimesis gives the *Visitatio* a "degree of representation missing from the Mass," but he refrains from asserting whether the ceremony is drama.[68]

Taylor and Nelson (1972) also contest Hardison's arguments. If ritual is drama but there is also, as Hardison says, a shift towards "representational modes," how is the shift possible if there was no difference to begin with?[69] Diane Dolan (1978), Drumbl (1981), and Maurice Accarie (1979) all follow Young's view of the Mass as well.[70] Dolan opposes Hardison and his follower Sticca. The latter, while acknowledging that a medieval audience would not have perceived liturgy as drama, asserts that the vestments, the roles during the service, the dialogue, and the action are all proofs of the dramatic nature of Mass. Dolan disagrees. Vestments are symbols, neither signs of impersonation, nor a disguise. Accarie agrees with Young that liturgical drama differs

---

65 Petersen, "Liturgical Drama: New Approaches," 626.

66 Woolf, *English Mystery Plays*, 6, 21.

67 Woolf, *English Mystery Plays,* 25, 28, 35, 40, 77.

68 Tydeman, *Theatre in the Middle Age*, 32, 38.

69 Taylor and Nelson, "Introduction," 1–3, 8–10.

70 Flanigan, "Medieval Latin Music-Dramas," 21.

from the liturgy but opposes him when it comes to impersonation. Accarie's essential contribution to the field is to draw attention to the importance of looking at each local text before drawing general conclusions.[71]

Accarie's methodology is part of a new trend in scholarship, visible in de Boor (1967), Ogden (2002), Rankin (1989), Dolan (1978), Lipphardt, and Campbell (1981).[72] However, Campbell differs from Accarie and agrees with Hardison about the importance of liturgy in defining liturgical drama, as do Fletcher Collins and Flanigan.[73] Flanigan rejects Young's reliance on impersonation to delimit drama from liturgy and defines both according to their relation to their audience. Liturgical ritual is a communal experience where imitation makes present in the community an event of the past. Drama is only imitation and draws a clear line between audience and actors. Flanigan adds, leaning on Woolf and de Boor, that the genre of a work can be changed by the reviser of a text or by the audience. While early *Visitationes* were meant to be "dramatic rituals," a fifteenth-century audience would have understood them as drama. Since ritual and drama rely so thoroughly on audience reception for their definition, the shift from one to the other cannot be clearly defined and depends on their spectators.[74]

Helmut de Boor follows Hardison in contesting Young's evolutionary and impersonation theories. He does not believe, however, that the "plays" are drama but instead that they are liturgical ceremonies.[75] In *Die Textgeschichte der lateinischen Osterfeiern* (1967), he produces a textual history of dramatic liturgical ceremonies with the aim of discovering the building of traditions and networks of influence between them.[76] De Boor and his German colleagues Hans Jürgen Diller and Theo Stemmler work with the distinction between *Feier* and *Spiel*, established since Lange, rather than with the terms "ritual" and "drama."[77] The ceremonies he treats in this book are

---

71 Accarie, *Le théâtre sacré*, 22–24, 32.

72 See de Boor, *Die Textgeschichte der lateinischen Osterfeiern*; Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*; *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin; Dolan, *Le drame liturgique*; *Liturgische Osterspiele und Osterfeiern,* ed. Lipphardt; Campbell, "Liturgy and Drama."

73 Campbell, "Liturgy and Drama," 294; Flanigan, "The Fleury Playbook," 351; Fletcher Collins, *Production of Medieval Church Music-Drama*, 24.

74 Flanigan, "The Fleury Playbook," 351, 361–64, 369; Flanigan, "Medieval Latin Music-Dramas," 29, 33.

75 de Boor, *Die Textgeschichte der lateinischen Osterfeiern*, 4, 15.

76 de Boor, *Die Textgeschichte der lateinischen Osterfeiern*, 1–20.

77 Flanigan, "Medieval Latin Music-Dramas," 33.

Feiern: texts used in a liturgical ceremonial and found in liturgical books. De Boor does not believe any characterization is present in these ceremonies; participants merely symbolize the figures that they represent. The *Spiel*, on the other hand, does not belong to the liturgical sphere. It can be in Latin or in the vernacular, performed in a church or not, it can pick its sources and modify them.[78] The significant contributions of German and French (most notably Gustave Cohen) scholars to the study of liturgical drama show the pan-European scope of this field of research. The ceremonies studied share strong similarities and come from many regions of Europe. Research on liturgical drama therefore tends not to confine itself to one country but to respond to and use the work of scholars from various European countries.

The importance given by Hardison to liturgy remained central to studies in this field in the 1990s. Yet scholars also continued to refute some of Hardison's arguments. Lynette Muir, for example, refuses in her work to see Mass as drama (1995), and John Wesley Harris (1992) contests Hardison's use of Amalarius, who, for him, did not make a play out of Mass. He instead showed how every detail of the service could be "interpreted as an image of one of the events of Jesus' last days." The priest would at times identify with Jesus and the deacons with the disciples, but the identification remained too fluctuating to be comparable to that of a play. Amalarius' ideas, though popular, were moreover seen as heretical by the Council of Quiercy. Harris understands the early *Visitationes* as "imaginative recreation(s)" approaching drama through the use of "as if."[79] Tydeman, in *A Documentary History: The Medieval European Stage 500–1550* (2001), similarly challenges Hardison's use of Amalarius. Tydeman believes an element of mimesis connected to the *Regularis Concordia*'s "as if" makes these ceremonies more than liturgy, even if they do not fall into characterization or impersonation.[80] In the same book, Peter Meredith argues that Amalarius and Honorius were writing about the "theatre of the imagination rather than actualized theatre." He refuses to enter the debate over ritual/drama. Since the intention of writers and the reception of audiences are difficult to determine, whether these ceremonies are defined as drama or not is often based on the personal

78 de Boor, *Die Textgeschichte der lateinischen Osterfeiern*, 2–3, 5, 8–9.

79 Muir, *Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe*, 46; Harris, *Medieval Theatre in Context*, 23–26, 31.

80 Tydeman, "General Introduction," 4–5.

response of critics. What is true is that "theatrical actions exist to varying extents within or on the edges of the liturgy."[81]

Scholars then come almost universally to acknowledge the embeddedness of "liturgical drama" in liturgy, but also increasingly refuse to establish a firm line between drama and liturgy.[82] Dillon (2006) adds that distinguishing one from the other would be a "false binary."[83] The use of the *Regularis Visitatio*'s "as if" as evidence that these ceremonies contain an element of drama, also spreads among scholars. David Bevington argues that the "as if" indicates moments of drama within these ceremonies without preventing them from moving back and forth between drama and liturgy.[84]

Having surveyed the scholarly field of "liturgical drama," I would like to present my own position on this question of drama and liturgy. I agree with the current consensus emphasizing the importance of liturgy in the study of *Elevationes* and *Visitationes*: no longer are they defined as "para-liturgical" or separate from liturgy as had been argued previously.[85] This change in perception advocated by the field of liturgical drama is supported by recent scholarly redefinitions of medieval liturgy. While the term "liturgy" today tends to refer, as exemplified by the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, to "all the prescribed services of the Church, as contrasted with private devotion," it was not understood to have this meaning in the Middle Ages.[86] Its anachronistic use when discussing medieval worship practices is

---

81 Meredith, "Latin Liturgical Drama," 55, 58.

82 See Bourgeault, "Liturgical Dramaturgy," 126–28; Davidson, *Illustrations of the Stage and Acting*, xvi; Beckwith "Ritual, Church, and Theatre," 65, 80; Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 17. Beckwith does not focus on women's drama or on liturgical drama but instead on the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*. She offers insights in the debate on the delimitation between ritual and liturgy.

83 Dillon, *Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre*, 25–26, 88–95.

84 Bevington, "Staging Liturgy in the Croxton Play," 243. See also Harris, *Medieval Theatre in Context*, 31; Dillon, *Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre*, 142; Tydeman, *Theatre in the Middle Ages*, 38; Tydeman, "General Introduction," 5.

85 Scholarship which separates "liturgical drama" from liturgy include Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:114; Flanigan, "Medieval Latin Music-Dramas," 28–33. Scholarship which acknowledges its inclusion in liturgy includes Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*; Dillon, *Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre*; Harris, *Medieval Theatre in Context*; Tydeman, "General Introduction," 3–5; Bevington, "Staging Liturgy in the Croxton Play"; Flanigan, "*Visitatio sepulchri* as Paradigm," 14–16; Davidson, *Illustrations of the Stage and Acting*, xvi; Palazzo, "Performing the Liturgy," 488.

86 Flanigan, Ashley, and Sheingorn, "Liturgy as Social Performance," 638.

problematic because the boundary between "official" liturgical practices and "para-liturgical" practices was more ambiguous at the time.[87] The term "liturgy"—for lack of a better one—in a medieval context, therefore refers to: "the ritualized public celebration of the faith of the Church," "the prayers and rituals of the worshipping Church in all its different guises," "the organized and structured worship of God, especially in churches which emphasize order and dignity."[88] Medieval liturgy was not dictated by "fixed 'top-down' directives" only but was instead flexible and incorporated "a wide spectrum of worshipful activities."[89] Recent studies—by Helen Gittos, for instance—insist that more medieval texts than commonly acknowledged are liturgical. Gittos argues that although medieval liturgy may seem to have consisted of ceremonies conducted in churches, sung in Latin, and celebrated by a priest, some liturgical ceremonies—such as the Rogation days' processions—were performed outdoors, others were spoken in the vernacular, and priests were not necessarily present for all liturgical celebrations.[90] Moreover, while the liturgy of the High to Late Middle Ages was to a certain extent standardized, it was far from being fixed: variety was one of its essential components.[91] At Barking Abbey, for instance, feasts celebrated local saints such as St Erkenwald and St Ethelburga, and featured chants composed for the particular occasion.[92]

In this context, it becomes difficult to deny that *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* ceremonies were liturgy. They are mostly found in liturgical manuscripts where they are part of larger liturgical ceremonies—such as the Matins on Easter Day[93]—and are generally not marked as different from the other,

---

87 It was more common for manuscripts to mention specific types of offices, books, and texts than to contain the umbrella-term of "liturgy." The word only started to be used in this way in the mid-sixteenth century. Gittos and Hamilton, "Introduction," 4; Symes, "Liturgical Texts and Performance Practices," 239–40.

88 Heffernan and Matter, "Introduction to the Liturgy of the Medieval Church," 1; Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 2.

89 Symes, "Liturgical Texts and Performance Practices," 239–40, 260; Palazzo, "Performing the Liturgy," 473–74; Gittos, "Researching the History of Rites," 30–32.

90 Gittos and Hamilton, "Introduction," 6; Flanigan, Ashley, and Sheingorn, "Liturgy as Social Performance," 63–68; Symes, "Liturgical Texts and Performance Practices," 263–65; Rubin, "Sacramental Life," 223.

91 Gittos, "Researching the History of Rites," 13–20; Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 9, 13–42.

92 Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 179, 192, 198.

93 This is the case at Barking Abbey.

"non-dramatic," sections of these ceremonies. Their differences from religious house to religious house, as well as the occasional use of the vernacular in some of the French and German *Elevationes* and *Visitationes*, do not necessarily mark them as distinct from liturgy either.[94]

If they are liturgy then, are they also drama? The two share important features. The definitions of liturgy discussed above describe it as a structured and public event, and so is drama. Drama usually presents "an action (or the mimetic representation of an action) through actors who incarnate or show characters for an audience gathered to receive it at a time and place that may or may not be specified in advance."[95] Like most theatre, liturgy takes into account its "audience" and attempts to optimize the effect that it will have on them: it usually takes place in a church, in a kind of "set," a space designed to supply ideal acoustics, light, and seating for such an event. This is a space in which specific areas are assigned to specific parts of the ceremony, much as a play may use various "locations" to which actors go in different scenes. Participants in the liturgy also follow a structured "script" (generally written down in liturgical books) describing, as a dramatic script would, the words that they should say, the movements and gestures that they should make, the clothes that they should wear, and the objects that they should handle. These objects and clothes can be spectacular: they can be made of or covered with precious metal and gems. The ceremonies incorporating such objects and clothes can themselves be spectacular: they can feature a large number of participants in an impressive space, all moving in a nearly choreographed manner.[96]

While liturgy and drama have similarities, for many of the scholars mentioned above, liturgy cannot simultaneously be drama.[97] Whether a performance qualifies as one or the other can at times be inferred through context and form: medieval drama is often in the vernacular, often performed by the laity in secular spaces while liturgy is generally performed in a church, by religious men and women, and sung in Latin. Yet, Gittos's work proves that medieval liturgy was at times performed outside, could be in the vernacular, and did not always require the presence of religious men and women:

---

94 The Origny *Ludus paschalis*, for instance, and the Troyes *Visitatio* include French.

95 Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre*, 388.

96 Dillon, *Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre,* 28–31.

97 Norton, *Liturgical Drama and the Reimagining of Medieval Theater*; *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin, 5; de Boor, *Die Textgeschichte der lateinischen Osterfeiern*, 2–4, 8–15. They are not included in Records of Early English Drama, nor is any other "liturgical drama." "Series Methodology," REED Online.

the line between drama and liturgy thus cannot be established by these means. Further criteria have been brought forward by scholars to separate drama from liturgy; these seem to coalesce into three main strands. First, drama implies the passive spectatorship of an audience rather than the participation of a congregation, required for liturgy.[98] Second, drama is often defined and contrasted with liturgy because of its use of impersonation.[99] And finally, drama is associated with entertainment while liturgy is a serious event focused on prayer and devotion.

However, I—along with many other scholars—find these criteria lacking, especially when applied to medieval drama.[100] The term "medieval drama" itself has been questioned by scholarship. According to Dillon, the words "drama" and "dramatic" were very rarely used before the seventeenth century; "performance" was not used as it is today until the eighteenth century; "theatre" does not seem to have referred to the art of performance until the seventeenth century; and the medieval terms "play," *ludus* (game/play), and "revels" could mean any kind of game, festivity, or performance.[101] These terms are therefore modern impositions on events and texts the medieval perception of which remains difficult to ascertain. Their use can lead scholars to misunderstand medieval drama by associating it with modern drama. As expressed by Butterworth, assumed equation between the two frequently leads to "inaccuracies in understanding brought about by unconscious, unthinking and misleading analysis."[102] This equation seems to have influenced some of the criteria presented above.

Indeed, witnesses to most medieval plays were not passive onlookers. They often stood at the same level as the players who could walk through the crowd; they were frequently addressed and were not separated from the action by a "fourth wall" or by lighting. Their good will was essential to create a "dramatic illusion" and to ensure the success of the performance.[103]

---

98 On the congregation, see Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 43–65.

99 Granger, *The N-Town Play*, 23.

100 See Woolf, *English Mystery Plays*, 25, Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama*, 32; Tydeman, *Theatre in the Middle Ages*, 38.

101 Dillon, *Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre*, 141–46.

102 Butterworth, *Staging Conventions*, 1, 3, 19, 20, 57, 96, 112–19. On this question, see also Normington, *Medieval English Drama*, 17; Symes, "Early Vernacular Plays," 779, 829–30; Knight, *Aspects of Genre*, vi–vii, 1; Mills, "Approaches to Medieval Drama," 36; Twycross, "Codes and Genres," 454–57.

103 Twycross, "Playing 'The Resurrection,'" 274–76; Twycross, "The Theatricality of Medieval English Plays," 54–55; McGavin and Walker, *Imagining Spectatorship*, 170.

Drama and liturgy are therefore performative collective experiences which require not only participants but also spectators to acquire meaning.[104]

As for the perception of drama as impersonation, it is true that drama, unlike most liturgy, explicitly requires its participants to take on a role. While, during Mass, the celebrant is meant to represent Christ, he "does not personify Christ," but only stands as his "permanent representative."[105] Impersonation, as defined by Karl Young, is different from representation and based instead on pretence: "in some sort of external and recognizable manner the actor must pretend to be the person whose words he is speaking, and whose actions he is imitating."[106] Impersonation may thus seem like a clear point of limit between drama and liturgy. Yet acting in medieval plays appears to have been an experience far-removed from modern notions of impersonation.[107] Butterworth says: "the importance of this kind of playing was not to stress verisimilitude but to create signs, signals, and action that, by their very nature, could be communicated and detected as such, and not to be confused with real action or real situations."[108] Players stood in place of their "characters," or, as Butterworth prefers to call them, "personages." They were simultaneously distinguishable from these "personages"—often wearing their own clothes and remaining recognizable—and they "represented" them through various signs and symbols.[109] *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* ceremonies come close to medieval theatre scripts in that they include similar—if at times more inconsistent—mentions of "acting" (or "representing"). While these theatre scripts spoke of acting "as if, as though, and ase hit were," the Barking *Elevatio* saw the abbess, the prioress, and the convent follow the priests and clerics *sicut sunt priores* (as if they

104 See Granger, *The N-Town Play*, 22.

105 Granger, *The N-Town Play*, 26.

106 Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:80. Other scholars discussing impersonation as a criterion include Taylor and Nelson, "Introduction," 10; Dunn, "Voice Structure in the Liturgical Drama," 61–62; Craig, *English Religious Drama*, 19. See Woolf, *English Mystery Plays*, 5 for a more nuanced approached to the definition of "impersonation."

107 See also Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama*, 252. Scholars questioning "impersonation" also include Mills, "Approaches to Medieval Drama," 38; Tydeman, *The Medieval European Stage*, 5.

108 Butterworth, *Staging Conventions*, 179; Beckwith, *Signifying God*, xv–xvii, 3, 59–62, 139–56.

109 Butterworth, *Staging Conventions*, 92–95, 109–21. The term "represent" seems to have meant "stand in place of" according to early sixteenth-century sources.

were the patriarchs).[110] Participants in dramatic liturgical ceremonies, like those in medieval drama, remained recognizable. In the fourteenth-century Rouen *Visitatio*, for example, the clerics representing the Marys continued to wear liturgical vestments, but they chose them carefully to signify their "personages."[111] Taking into account this medieval approach to representation, "impersonation" fails to clearly separate drama from—at least some—liturgy, such as the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* ceremonies.

Finally, drama was not as distinct from worship in the Middle Ages as it might be today:[112] it had instructional, memorial, civic, and religious functions, and it certainly served, as did liturgy, to appeal to the devotion of its witnesses.[113] It was often performed on religious occasions which also involved liturgical ceremonies; it could be performed in churches, although this remained rare; it may have involved clergy in its composition, sponsorship, and audience; it frequently depicted scriptural narratives similar to those shown at Barking, and it included at times scriptural and liturgical citations (often in translation) as well as liturgical chants.[114]

For example, some of the words pronounced by Christ in the York *Crucifixion* pageant were taken from the York Breviary, where they had been borrowed from the Book of Lamentations (1:12). The York *Pentecost* pageant used Latin quotations from a Lesson contained in the York Missal for Whit Monday, taken from Acts 10:42–48.[115] Sections of the York *Resurrection* and *Appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalen* pageants, of the Chester Skinners' Play, of the Towneley *Resurrection* pageant, and of the N-Town *Announcement to the Three Marys* and *Appearance to Mary Magdalen* pageants even

110 Scherb, *Staging Faith*, 47. Butterworth lists examples of vernacular "stage directions" in the Coventry Weavers' Play, in the Chester *Noah* pageant, and in the Chester *Abraham* pageant, and of Latin "stage directions" in the Chester *Moses and the Law* pageant, in the Chester *Slaughter of the Innocents* pageant, and in the Chester *Purification* pageant, 92–95, 102–21.

111 Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:370–72. The three deacons portraying the Marys wore dalmatics and wore their amices on their heads *ad similitudinem mulierum* (in the likeness of women).

112 Recent developments in the field of medieval drama have emphasized connections between religion and medieval plays. See Happé, "A Guide to Criticism," 355–56.

113 Granger, *The N-Town Play*, 9, 83.

114 Dillon, *Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre*, 3, 24–27, 177; Butterworth, *Staging Conventions*, 27. See also *REED: York*, ed. Johnston and Rogerson, 1:358; *REED: Somerset*, ed. Stokes, 1:236, 238.

115 King, *York Mystery Cycle*, 145, 167.

closely resemble—and were probably inspired by—*Visitatio* ceremonies. Both the ceremonies and these pageants articulate scriptural texts and add to them in a similar way to create a narrative. They share non-scriptural scenes, such as the laments of the Marys and the laments of Mary Magdalen.[116] Moreover, while the York, Chester, and Towneley pageants are mostly written in English, they feature a liturgical chant typically used in *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* ceremonies: the *Christus resurgens* (Christ rising).[117]

Two other plays, *Christ's Resurrection* and *Christ's Burial* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS eMuseo 160 (ca. 1520)), which were meant to be performed "on part on Gud Friday afternone, and þe other part opon Ester Day after the Resurrection in the morowe," display—in *Christ's Resurrection* in particular—close ties with *Visitatio* ceremonies and with the Easter liturgy.[118] As the Marys rejoice after the Resurrection, they start to sing the Easter liturgical sequence often present in *Visitatio* ceremonies: *Victime paschali laudes* (to the paschal victim). As in *Visitationes*, the chant is split between different figures—Mary Magdalen, the three Marys, and the disciples. This play, which mostly resembles lay vernacular drama, thus seems to contain part of a *Visitatio* ceremony, as well as other liturgical chants.[119] Another example of significant liturgical citation can be found in The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, which starts like a vernacular drama, but ends with a procession during which the Host is taken into the church and the hymn *O sacrum*

116 The Marys' laments are found in the *Resurrection* pageants of York and Towneley, in the Chester *Resurrection* pageant, and in the N-Town *The Announcement to the Three Marys*. The laments of Mary Magdalen are included in the York *Appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalen* pageant, in the Chester Skinners' pageant, in the Towneley *Resurrection* pageant, and in the N-Town *The Appearance to Mary Magdalen* pageant. *The York Plays*, ed. Beadle, 1:366–85; *The N-Town Play*, ed. Spector, 359, 360, 365; *The Towneley Plays*, ed. Stevens and Cawley, 335–55; *Chester Mystery Cycle*, ed. Lumiansky and Mills, 339–56. The laments of the Marys are a standard feature of *Visitatio* ceremonies, and the laments of Mary Magdalen appear in the extant English *Visitatio* texts.

117 A later addition at York but deemed "genuine" by Meg Twycross. It is also found in pageants from Towneley and Chester. Twycross, "Playing 'The Resurrection,'" 280–81; King, *York Mystery Cycle*, 163; *The York Plays*, ed. Beadle, 1:371, 362; *Chester Mystery Cycle*, ed. Lumiansky and Mills, 345.

118 *Late Medieval Religious Plays*, ed. Baker, Murphy, and Hall Jr., lxxxv. According to this edition of *Christ's Burial* and *Christ's Resurrection*, the two plays in are actually "one religious drama, or acted meditation." lxxv, Lxxxi, lxxxii, lxxxv.

119 *Late Medieval Religious Plays*, ed. Baker, Murphy, and Hall Jr., 190, 192.

convivium (O sacred banquet) is sung. The *Te Deum* (O God, we praise you) closes the performance.[120]

Familiar liturgical patterns and citations may have incited spectators to perceive what they were witnessing as a devotional moment and to participate in it with prayers, as was recommended during liturgy.[121] Prayer was also a feature of some medieval plays, such as the Digby *Killing of the Children* and the *Conversion of St Paul*, which begin with a dedication to the honour of God and frame their narrative action with "more or less formal prayers"—encouraging performers and spectators to engage in worship.[122] Medieval drama was thus tied to devotion; it also frequently made use of the liturgy, referenced it, responded to it, or took place in close connection with it.

The three criteria presented above therefore fail to provide a clear separation between medieval drama and liturgy. The two in fact shared features. Both worked as a commentary: liturgy glossed and commented on Scriptures and on the Christian experience while, according to Beckwith, drama commented on and interacted with liturgy, as well as with Scriptures.[123] Drama also accomplished what Christ had prescribed during the Last Supper and what was a central purpose of liturgy: it was a way of remembering his Passion.[124] Granger even argues in *The N-Town Play* that medieval drama and liturgy were both "forms of ritual performance," "not least through their use of

120 *Croxton Play of the Sacrament*, ed. Sebastian, lines 840–1007. It is not certain that the procession incorporates the audience and enters a real church; possibly the "chirche" mentioned is a scaffold representing a church. See Dutton, "The Croxton Play of the Sacrament."

121 Scherb, "Liturgy and Community," 478; Granger, *The N-Town Play*, 28–30, 95, 140.

122 Scherb, *Staging Faith*, 43. The *Conversion* starts with a prayer in the vernacular using elements of the *Ave Maria* (Hail Mary) and ends with the singing of the chant *Exultet celum laudibus* (Let Heaven exult with praises). The *Killing of the Children* starts with an indication that it takes place on the feast of Saint Anne. It ends with Anna Prophetissa encouraging the virgins to worship Jesus, our Lady, and Saint Anne. The Poeta then explains that this "matere" was shown to the audience "in the worshippe of Oure Lady and hir moder Seynt Anne." *Late Medieval Religious Plays*, ed. Baker, Murphy, and Hall Jr., 1, 23, 96, 115.

123 Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 48; Granger, *The N-Town Play*, 173; Beckwith, *Signifying God*, 135.

124 Luke 22:18–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25: "Do this for a commemoration of me." I have chosen the Douay-Rheims translation of the Bible for all English Biblical quotes. This translation is based on the Latin Vulgate, which would have been the version available to the nuns of Barking Abbey. See also Beckwith, *Signifying God*, xvii, 3; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:308–9.

formalized language, costume, and gesture" which helped the creation and definition of a community by promoting "commonly held values."[125]

Further evidence continues to suggest how enmeshed drama and liturgy could be in the Middle Ages. Mutual influence between them appears to have been significant. It produced texts unconcerned with "maintaining the proprieties we have imposed upon [them]: the lines between drama and liturgy."[126] The *Shrewsbury Fragments*, for example, were copied in an early fifteenth-century liturgical manuscript and contain a player's parts and cues for the roles of the third shepherd, the third Mary, and, it seems, Cleophas. These parts combine spoken English with Latin chants and, the manuscript suggests, were performed on religious feasts—Easter day and Easter Monday. The rest of the manuscript contains mostly processional liturgical ceremonies with musical notation. The *Fragments* therefore join elements associated with lay drama (the use of apparently spoken vernacular, the parts and cues) with features attached to liturgical ceremonies (the inscription in a liturgical manuscript, the use of Latin set to music, the connection with religious feasts). The part of the Mary especially resembles a *Visitatio* and uses some of the chants found in this type of ceremony, while the part of the shepherd bears a strong resemblance to the York pageant on the same subject.[127]

Another example of performance defying a clear definition as either drama or liturgy appears to have taken place in London. According to the Churchwarden's Accounts for 1529–1530, a carpenter was paid at St Dunstan in the West to make a stage for Palm Sunday. Other London parishes rented costumes, wigs, and hangings for that feast.[128] We know from liturgical documents that numerous churches and abbeys performed a somewhat dramatic liturgy on Palm Sunday. It involved a procession where the Host or a bier represented Christ and where the faithful held palm-branches.[129] It could include dialogues and stops at different stations. At Winchester, for example, according to a twelfth or thirteenth-century manuscript, a dialogue was exchanged between two of the groups present for the procession.

125 Granger, *The N-Town Play*, 7–8, 22.

126 Symes, "Early Vernacular Plays," 794, 828.

127 *Non-Cycle Plays*, ed. Davis, xiv–xxii, 1–7, 124–33.

128 *REED: Ecclesiastical London*, ed. Erler, xxvii–xxviii. Butterworth, *Staging Conventions*, 32, 116.

129 This was the case at Barking as well. See *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:85–87.

One of these groups spoke it *quasi discipulis* (as if they were the disciples). At Salisbury, a boy was dressed as a prophet, and at Wilton Abbey a priest represented Caiphas.[130] How different from these were the London performances? Were they intended to be separate from liturgy or were they an even more dramatic version of the liturgical examples mentioned above?

The same question could be asked of various Resurrection or Easter "plays." Many of these were tied to churches and some featured sepulchres, but their costumes and props were often more elaborate than those usually found in *Visitatio* ceremonies. The Wells Cathedral Communar's account rolls, for example, document the acquisition of fabric, wigs, beards, and costumes in 1417–1418, 1418–1419, and 1470–1471 for performances around Easter. The 1470–1471 entry states:

> Et soutum pro ij libris de canabo bro crinalibus fiendis ad iij marias ludentes nocte pasche vj d. Et solutum pro iij quoyfes empties ad dictas iij marias. iij. d. Et solute pro iij quarterijs de ffustike at tincturam dicti crinalium vj. d. Et solutum Christine Handon pro tinctura & facture dictorum Indumentorum iij d.
>
> And paid for two pounds of hemp for making wigs for the three Marys playing on the night of Easter, six d., and paid for three coifs bought for the said three Marys, three d., and paid for three quarts of fustic for the dying of the said wigs, six d., and paid to Christine Handon for the dying and making of the said costumes, twelve d.[131]

Were the Wells' performances *Visitatio* ceremonies using "costumes" that resembled those found in lay drama or were they lay drama?[132]

There are other records of performances whose genre remains unclear. Among these are an *Officium pastorum*—a play/ceremony about the shepherds at the Nativity—apparently performed in Lincoln cathedral in the mid-fifteenth century, and an *Officium pastorum* and a *Peregrinus* (journey to Emmaus) held at Lichfield in the twelfth century. Another *Peregrinus* is

130 Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:90–94; Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 128.

131 *REED: Somerset*, ed. Stokes, 248, 838. See 243, 834 for the other entries.

132 There are many other similar examples recorded between the twelfth and the sixteenth century. See *REED: Berkshire*, ed. Johnston; Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, 87, 92; *Liturgische Osterspiele und Osterfeiern*, ed. Lipphardt, 5: 1615–33; Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, 2:108, 107, 248–50, 339, 376–77, 379–80, 384, 389–90; *REED: Oxford*, ed. Elliott and Nelson, Johnston and Wyatt (City), 1:38, 52, 61, 63; 2:928, 933, 944, 949, 951; *REED: Devon*, ed. Wesson, xii, 209; *REED: Staffordshire*, ed. Somerset; *REED: Lincolnshire*, ed. Stokes, 2:649, 1:106.

recorded in a twelfth-century manuscript from the Priory of Durham.[133] An *Officium stellae* (a Magi "play") was performed at Yarmouth in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century and at York in the thirteenth century. While these Latin "plays" were often part of liturgy, this was not the case for all known *Peregrinus* and *Officium stellae*.[134]

In view of this complex interplay between drama and liturgy, it does not seem that a clear limit between them was established in the Middle Ages, nor do they seem to have been perceived as antithetical. Medieval drama and liturgy could be similar in terms of content, purpose, language, even form, and texts and performances which seem impossible to define (and perhaps did not need to be defined) as either one or the other were created in the Middle Ages. In the context of medieval drama and liturgy, I therefore believe that the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri* ceremonies, which were liturgy, may also be considered drama.

However, a few scholars have argued for another—convincing—criterion which separates drama from liturgy: the belief in the effectiveness of the performative event as a ritual. As described by Penny Granger or C. Clifford Flanigan, this difference comes down to the perception that drama and liturgy have distinct consequences: one is a re-enactment and the other a re-living of an event. In a play, the actors and spectators are aware that what they are witnessing is not reality but a representation. In liturgy, on the other hand, "the worship and presence of God in the ceremony are not fictive." Liturgy is a liminal moment creating a "bridge between the human and wholly Other," between past and present and allowing participants to "experience [past] events as present events."[135] Participants believe in the efficacy of the ritual to "assist believers as they prepare to meet with God."[136]

---

133 See McKinnell, "A Twelfth-Century Durham Play." This play was staged as part of the REED North-East project, and the performance is described in Ravelhofer, "Regional Performance as Intangible Cultural Heritage."

134 The Durham *Peregrini* play, for example, contains no music or rubrics, and is preserved not in a liturgical manuscript but in a miscellany. Ravelhofer "Regional Performance as Intangible Cultural Heritage," 170. See also Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 2:484, 522, 541, 451, 439–43. About Lichfield, see *REED: Staffordshire*, ed. Somerset.

135 Granger, *The N-Town Play*, 19; Flanigan, "*Visitatio sepulchri* as Paradigm," 10–12, 30.

136 Heffernan and Matter, "Introduction to the Liturgy of the Medieval Church," 1–5; King, *York Mystery Cycle*, 161. For more on the purpose of liturgy, see Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 62.

Were they to lose this belief, liturgy would become a show.[137] Liturgy and drama are thus differentiated by the perception of their participants and of their audience/congregation.

Even if we take the criterion of belief as a point of divide between them, spectators and participants may have fluctuated in their perception of the ceremonies, and it remains difficult to use this criterion to determine whether *Elevationes* and *Visitationes* are drama or not. They were part of larger liturgical ceremonies, yet there are signs that they were recognized—at least by some medieval people—as close to drama, or as something that resonated with other dramatic experience that they might have had. This is attested by the Fleury Playbook, a twelfth-century collection compiling liturgical texts (a *Visitatio*, for instance) with other dramatic texts.[138] Dislodging the liturgical texts from their context, the Playbook's composers seem to have perceived an existing similarity between them and the other texts in the collection.[139] The inclusion of part of a *Visitatio* ceremony in the early sixteenth-century MS eMuseo 160 *Christ's Resurrection* play also seems to show that its composers felt a closeness existed between this type of performance and lay vernacular drama.[140] It is also possible, as argued by John Wesley Harris, among others, that the similarities of *Elevationes* and *Visitationes* to drama, stronger in certain parts of the ceremonies, may have resulted in spectators and participants oscillating in their perception of them: at times experiencing them as more of a dramatic "show," before being

137 This was discussed for example during the Reformation—and in pre-protestant texts. Their writers were keenly aware of the duality existing between inward thoughts and outward actions, between words spoken and real faith. They did not believe that religious ceremonies contained truth but thought instead that they were empty of substance and inefficient. Stripped of its essence, liturgy was reduced to a performative "show." Beckwith, *Signifying God*, xv–xvii, 3, 59–62, 139–56.

138 Four miracle "plays" of St Nicholas, an *Officium stellae*, an *Ordo Rachaelis* (play about Rachel and the massacre of the innocents), a *Visitatio*, a *Peregrinus*, a *Conversion of St Paul*, and a *Resuscitation of Lazarus*. *The Conversion of St Paul* and the *Resuscitation of Lazarus* mention various elements of "set" dividing the space, and there is no evidence that they were performed in church. The plays of St Nicholas are all rather extensive; they do not mention who their performers were, nor can they all be clearly attached to liturgy. Flanigan, "The Fleury Playbook," 360; Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:471–76, 690, 393–97, 665–66; 2:84–92, 110–17, 199–211, 219–24, 316–23, 330–34, 343–60.

139 Bevington, "Fleury Playbook"; Flanigan, "The Fleury Playbook," 348–72.

140 *Late Medieval Religious Plays*, ed. Baker, Murphy, and Hall Jr., 190. The *Carmina Burana* manuscript from Benediktbeuern also collected six Latin "liturgical plays" along with a compilation of poems. Meredith, "Latin Liturgical Drama," 132.

reminded of their liturgical nature.[141] As expressed by Flanigan in "Medieval Liturgy and the Arts," "the line is fluid and depends on the audience."[142]

Medieval *Visitationes* and *Elevationes* were therefore, I believe—at times at least—both liturgy and drama. In spite of this belief, in agreement with the work done by Butterworth and Normington among others I will avoid categorizing them as "drama" or referring to them as "liturgical drama" in this book. I will further refrain from using the terms "play," "prop," "set," and "actor" unless I am discussing modern drama. I have decided to be cautious in my choice of words because of the controversy surrounding these terms and of the negative connotations that the word "drama" has acquired among certain scholars. "Drama"—a word never used in relation to the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* in the Middle Ages—brings with it associations and concepts which may distort the understanding of the ceremonies. I will instead refer to the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri* as dramatic liturgical ceremonies.[143] This terminology aims to emphasize their liturgical context while recognizing their performative features—which will be the focus of this study.

Approach and Methodology

This book will explore the Barking Abbey *Visitatio* and *Elevatio*; but, more specifically, it will reflect on the potential effects of these ceremonies and their dramatic features on their spectators and participants. The nunnery of Barking must have valued such features, since it included them in its liturgy, and must have believed in their effectiveness. I define participants as those who sang the lines and physically took part in the ceremonies; and spectators as those who heard and witnessed the ceremonies.

Much like previous scholars working on convent drama, I believe that to understand the impact the ceremonies may have had, it is necessary to reflect on their staging,[144] but also on the lives, liturgical and performative

141 See for example Harris, *Medieval Theatre in Context*, 31; Dillon, *Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre*, 142; Tydeman, *Theatre in the Middle Ages*, 38; Bevington, "Staging Liturgy in the Croxton Play," 243.

142 Flanigan, "Medieval Liturgy and the Arts," 30.

143 Following the example of Flanigan, "Medieval Liturgy and the Arts," 31.

144 See for example Tydeman, *Theatre in the Middle Ages*; Meredith, "Latin Liturgical Drama"; Fletcher Collins, *Production of Medieval Church Music-Drama*; Bourgeault, "Liturgical Dramaturgy"; Faulkner, "Harrowing of Hell"; Davidson, *Illustrations of the Stage and Acting*; Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama*.

practices, literacy, spirituality, and relationships of their spectators and participants.[145] Studying the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* in this context will provide a better understanding of the complex interplay between performance and those involved in it. As is increasingly the case in medieval studies, my methodology will be interdisciplinary, incorporating history, history of art, and archaeology, as well as research on drama and performance. I will refer to historical sources—manuscripts related to Barking Abbey and to other Benedictine houses—including manorial records, liturgical documents, devotional texts, and the main source for performative practices at Barking Abbey: its Ordinal and Customary. Performance research, which has been used in recent work on medieval musicology and on medieval and early modern drama, will also form an important part of the methodology adopted in this book.

As argued by Elisabeth Dutton in "A Manifesto for Performance Research," the performing and witnessing of a medieval play is a process similar to academic work: it engages critical thinking and invites us "to observe, interpret, and reflect." Performance research allows a greater focus on the circumstances of performance—a specific place, occasion, or the collaborative work necessary to the staging of a play, for instance—and to the significance that they can bring to that play.[146] Drama is and was generally meant to be performed; it cannot be fully understood if researchers neglect its performance. And neither can liturgy: according to Gittos, interest in performance and in its relationship with text should be "highly relevant to students of medieval liturgy." It illuminates the differences which existed between what was written down and what was performed: music and the sense of space and time, for instance, were essential during the performance of a rite and deeply influenced its effects on the congregation.[147]

Studying performance remains challenging. The ephemeral nature of performative events means that even when reproduced in the same place and by the same performers, they are never identical. Textual witnesses to these performances do not and cannot tell readers exactly how the performances were conducted: Gittos, Symes, Pfaff, and Salisbury warn, when

---

145 See Pappano, "Sister Acts: Conventual Performance"; "The Liturgical Dramas for Holy Week," ed. Yardley and Mann; Matthews, "Textual Spaces / Playing Spaces"; Robinson, "Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 617"; Brazil, "Performing Female Sanctity"; Weaver, *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy*.

146 Dutton, "A Manifesto for Performance Research," 249–52.

147 See Gittos, "Researching the History of Rites," 37; Flynn, "Approaches to Early Medieval Music and Rites," 59, 69–71.

discussing written liturgical sources, that their uses, what they record and fail to record, and the agenda behind their creation make them unreliable guides to understanding the performance of medieval liturgy. Such sources may have been written to capture and/or control performance, to establish definitive texts and transmit them, to censure innovation and stop improvisation, to create unity, or to help memory.[148] Moreover, they are unable to fully depict the multisensory experience of medieval liturgy, which involved music, light, fragrances, the use of space, vessels, and vestments, and the presence of multiple participants. Although these uncertainties need to be taken into account when studying the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, it remains possible to examine the "performativity" of the ceremonies. This can be done by considering them alongside other sources of information on their apparent use, on local liturgy, and on the reasons behind their composition, and by examining the manuscript for clues about their performance. These clues can be detected in indications of gestures and postures or in the format of the manuscript.[149]

Similar issues affect the study of spectatorship. When testimonies from medieval spectators exist, they can be said neither to represent the opinion of all spectators, nor to recount their perception of every moment and detail of the performance. The question of subjectivity is another—often overlooked—problem. Spectators may have reacted to a performance as a community, by laughing together for example, but they probably all felt somewhat differently towards it. This depended on a large variety of factors such as their rank, status, social networks, gender, view of the stage, awareness of other spectators and of the performers, political views, religious opinions, and position in space. They may have responded in various ways to certain props and sensory stimulations, to "characters," and to prompts from the script towards specific groups. A similar diversity could probably be observed in participants in performative activities. With these limitations in mind, this book will build on the work done on spectatorship by Katie Normington, Sarah Carpenter, Greg Walker, and John J. McGavin, taking into

148 Gittos, "Researching the History of Rites," 20–21, 23; Symes, "Liturgical Texts and Performance Practices," 241; Symes, "The Medieval Archive," 30, 33–36, 51; Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 8–9; Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England*, 3–4; Granger, *The N-Town Play*, 53. Butterworth discusses this issue when speaking of vernacular drama. Butterworth, *Staging Conventions*, 13.

149 Symes, "Liturgical Texts and Performance Practices," 243, 256, 267; Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 70–71.

account the Barking ceremonies' conditions of performance and pursuing these scholars' interest in the multiplicity of spectatorship.[150]

McGavin and Walker incorporate in their work some of the findings resulting from the "cognitive turn" in drama and performance studies, which focus on the constant adjusting of spectators between emotionally absorbing what they are seeing (and adapting it) and being self-aware. Such adjusting would have been especially prominent when watching medieval drama, which did not attempt to be naturalistic. This discourse on drama is further complicated when one considers liturgical ceremonies because faith and the perception of the efficacy of liturgy were "real" in one sense to their medieval spectators and participants.[151] While I will rely on some of the findings of cognitive theory, it will not be my main approach, nor will I attempt to dissect the adjusting of the Barking spectators and participants during the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. Instead, I intend to examine moments in the ceremonies which may have led these spectators and participants to become engrossed in the performance, to reflect on the ceremonies and their content, or to feel self-aware. I am interested in the potential consequences of these moments for the nuns, clergy, and laity of Barking. I will moreover direct my focus towards performers, as well as spectators, and towards a type of performative activities left either little or un-explored, my aim being to bring additional critical attention to such activities and to contribute to the scholarly discourse on women and medieval drama.

In a first chapter, I concentrate on the medieval spectators of and participants in the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. After identifying the people involved, I will present the surviving texts of the ceremonies and comment in close detail on the clues that they give about what actually happened during their performances: I consider words, music, gesture, and—to use dramatic terms—"props," "costumes," and "blocking." I examine the effects of the ceremonies on those involved, in the light of the historical context of the house and its surroundings. The performance of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* seems to have been a devotional, identity-defining, community-building, and educational experience for the nuns and clergy of the abbey and for the laity witnessing them. In the second chapter, I explain how hypotheses built on the

150 See McGavin and Walker, *Imagining Spectatorship*, 4, 18–20, 26, 36–39, 42, 68; Normington, *Medieval English Drama*, 3–16; Carpenter, "New Evidence," 3–12.

151 McGavin and Walker, *Imagining Spectatorship*, 18–19, 44–50. See also McGavin, "Medieval Theatricality and Spectatorship," 491–92; Twycross, "Playing 'The Resurrection,'" 276. On audiences and spectatorship, see also Purcell, *Shakespeare and Audience in Practice*.

medieval texts of the ceremonies were tested and refined through a modern performance experiment, staging the Barking Abbey *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* as part of the Medieval Convent Drama project in 2018 (all the research done for this book was conducted in the context of this project, based at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, and supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation).[152] This last chapter will explore the challenges and the value of this modern performance of the Barking ceremonies, as well as the response of modern spectators and participants to it. The nuns of a local religious house, along with our lay spectators and performers, illuminated with their responses both specific questions about these particular ceremonies and broader questions about liturgy and drama. I conclude with a mention of other conventual ceremonies before discussing the enduring ties between Barking Abbey and performance.

This book is very much a book of two halves. Its structure follows my own approach to the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*: I was first confronted with the ceremonies' Latin text, then tried to understand this text by researching its historical context, and finally put my theories in practice by staging a modern performance of the two ceremonies. Readers are invited to join me on this journey of research and performance, beginning with the transcript of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* given below. I hope that the transcript will serve as a point of reference and reveal some of the challenges faced when approaching the Barking liturgical dramatic ceremonies. Alternatively, readers are welcome to deconstruct this journey: those with a knowledge of medieval liturgy and monasticism, and/or interested in modern performance, may wish to consult Chapter 2 first.

152 I worked on this project with Prof. Elisabeth Dutton, Dr. Olivia Robinson, and Dr. Matthew Cheung Salisbury. Their collaboration and guidance have been invaluable.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE BARKING *ELEVATIO* AND *VISITATIO SEPULCHRI*

Oxford, University College, MS 169, pp. 119–24[1]

[*Elevatio*] (p. 119) Nota quod secundum / antiquam consuetudinem ecclesiasticam resurexio dominica / celebrate fuit ante matutinas et ante aliquam campane / pulsacionem in die pasche et quoniam populorum concursus tempo/ribus illis videbatur deuocione frigessere. et torpor huma/nus maxime accrescens. venerabilis domina Domina Katerina / de Suttone tunc pastoralis cure gerens vicem. deside/rans dictum torporem penitus exstirpare. et fidelium deuocio/nem ad tam celibem celebracionem magis excitare: / vnanimi consororum consensu instituit. ut statim post tercium. / Responsorium. matutinarum die pasche fieret dicte resurexionis cele/bracio et hoc modo statuetur processio. In primis eat domina / abbatissa cum toto conuentu et quibusdam sacerdotibus et cle/ricis capis indutis quolibet sacerdote et clerico palmam et / candelam extinctam manu deferentem intrent capellam sancte / marie magdalene. ffigurantes animas sanctorum patrum ante / (p. 120) aduentum christi ad inferos descendentes et claudant sibi ostium / dicte capelle. deinde superueniens sacerdos ebdomadarius ad dictam / capellam approprians alba indutus et capa cum duobus / diaconis. vno crucem deferente cum uexillo dominico desuper/ pendente albo cum turribulo manu sua baiulante et alijs / sacerdotibus et clericis cum duobus pueris cereos deferentibus ad / ostium dicte capelle incipiens ter hanc antiphonam Tollite portas / qui quidem sacerdos representabit personam Christi ad inferos / descensuram et portas inferni dirupturam. et predicta antiphona / vnaquaque uice in alciori uoce incipiatur quam clerici to/ciens eandem repetant et ad quamquam incepcionem pul/set cum cruce ad predictum ostium. figurans dirupcionem / portarum inferni. et tercia pulsacione ostium aperiat. Deinde / ingrediatur ille cum ministris suis interim incipiat / quidam sacerdos in capella existente antiphonam A porta inferi / quam subinferat cantrix cum toto conuentu. Erue domine / et cetera. Deinde extrahet sacerdos ebdomadarius omnes essentes / in capella predicta. et interim incipiat sacerdos antiphonam. Domine ab/straxisti. et can-

[1] There are many abbreviations in the manuscript. See *Liturgische Osterspiele und Osterfeiern*, ed. Lipphardt, 5:1458–60; Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:164–66, 381–85; "The Liturgical Dramas for Holy Week," ed. Yardley and Mann; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 107–10; Sheingorn, *Easter Sepulchre*, for other—slightly different—transcriptions.

trix subsequatur. Ab inferis. Tunc omnes / exeant de capella id est de limbo patrum. et cantent / sacerdotes et clerici antiphonam Cum rex glorie. processionaliter per medium / chori ad sepulcrum portantes singuli palmam et can/delam designantes victoriam de hoste recuperatam / subsequentibus domina abbatissa. priorissa et toto conuentu / sicut sunt priores. et cum ad sepulcrum peruenerint: sacerdos / (p. 121) ebdomadarius sepulcrum thurificet et intret sepulcrum incipi/endo versum Consurgit. deinde subsequatur cantrix. christus tumu/lo versus Quesumus auctor versus Gloria tibi domine. et interim asportabit cor/pus dominicum de sepulcro incipiendo antiphonam. Christus resurgens / coram altari verso uultu ad populum tenendo corpus domini/cum in manibus suis inclusum cristallo. deinde subiun/gat cantrix: ex mortuis. et cum dicta antiphona faciant processio/nem ad altare sancte trinitatis cum solenni apparatu vide/licet cum turribulis et cereis conuentus sequatur cantando predictam / antiphonam cum versu Dicant nunc et versiculo: Dicite in nacionibus Oratio Deus qui / pro nobis filium tuum. et hec processio figuratur per hoc quomodo christus pro/cedit post resurexionem in galileam. Sequentibus disci/pulis.

[*Visitatio*] Quibus peractis: procedant tres sorores a domina abba/tissa preelecte et nigris vestibus in capella beate marie / magdalene exute: nitidissimis superpellicijs induantur / niueis velis a domina abbatissa capitibus earum superpositis. sic / igitur preparate et in manibus ampullas tenentes argenteas / dicant. Confiteor ad abbatissam et ab ea absolute. in loco / statuto cum candelabris consistant. Tunc illa que speciem / pretendit marie magdalene. canat hunc versum. Quondam / dei. quo finito: secunda que mariam iacobi prefigurat. alterum / respondeat versum. Appropinquans ergo sola. Tercia maria vi/cem optinens salomee. tercium canat versum. Licet mihi / vobiscum ire. Post hec chorum incedentes flebili uoce et sub/missa hos pariter canant versus. Heu nobis internas men/ (p. 122) tes. Hijs versibus finitis. magdalena sola dicat hunc versum. Heu / misere. Jacobi respondeat. Heu consolacio nostra. Salome / Heu redempcio israel. Quartum uero uersum omnes simul concinant / scilicet. Iam iam ecce. Tunc marie exeuntes a choro: simul dicant / Eya quis reuoluet. Cum autem uenerint ad sepulcrum. clericus / alba stola indutus. sedeat ante sepulcrum illius angeli gerens / figuram qui ab ostio monumenti lapidem reuoluit. / et super eum sedit. Qui dicat illis. Quem queritis in sepulcro / O cristicole. Respondeant mulieres. Ihesum nazarenum queri/mus. Angelus uero subinferat. Non est hic surrexit. Cumque dixerit / venite et videte: ingrediantur sepulcrum et deosculentur lo/cum ubi positus erat crucifixus. Maria uero magdalene / interim acccipiat sudarium quod fuerat super caput eius:

et secum / deferat. Tunc alius clericus in specie alterius angeli in sepul / cro residens: dicat ad magdalenam. mulier quid ploras / Illa autem subiungat. Quia tulerunt dominum meum. Deinde duo / angeli simul concinentes dicant mulieribus. Quid queri/tis viuentem cum mortuis et cetera. Tunc ille de resurexcione domini / adhuc dubitantes: plangendo dicant ad inuicem. Heu do/lor et cetera. Postea maria magdalene suspirando concinant / Te suspiro et cetera. Tunc in sinistra parte altaris appareat per/sona dicens illi. Mulier quid ploras. quem queris. Illa uero / putans eum esse ortolanum respondeat. Domine si tu sustu/listi eum et cetera. persona subiungat. maria. Tunc illa agnos/cens eum pedibus eius prosternatur dicens Raboni persona / (p. 123) autem se subtrahens: dicat noli me tangere et cetera. Cum perso/na disparuerit: maria gaudium suum consociabus communicet / uoce letabunda: hos concinendo versus. Gratulari et le/tari et cetera. Quibus finitis: persona in dextera parte altaris tribus / simul occurrat mulieribus dicens. Avete nolite timere / et cetera. Tunc ille humi prostrate: teneant pedes eius et de/osculentur. Quo facto: Alternis modulacionibus. hos versus / decantent. maria magdalene incipiente. Ihesus ille na / zarenus et cetera. ffinitis hijs versibus. Tunc marie stantes / super gradus ante altare uertentes se ad populum canant hoc / Responsorium. Alleluia surrexit dominus de sepulcro. Choro eis respondente / ffinitis hijs sacerdotes et clerici in figuram discipulorum / christi procedant dicentes. O gens dira. Tunc vnus illorum / accedat et dicat marie magdalene. Dixit nobis maria et cetera / Illa autem respondeat. Sepulcrum christi. Angelicos testes. digi/to indicet locum vbi angelus sedebat. et sudarium prebeat il/lis ad deosculandum hunc adicientes versum. Surrexit christus / spes nostra. Tunc subiungatur a discipulis et a choro hij ulti/mi versus. Credendum est. et scimus christum. Postea incipi/at magdalena. Christus resurgens. clero et choro pariter suc/cinente Hijs itaque peractis: solenniter decantetur a sacerdote/ incipiente ymnus. Te deum laudamus. et interim predicte sacerdotes in / capellam proprijs vestibus reinduentes cum candelabris per / chorum transeuntes orandi gracia sepulcrum adeant: et ibi brevem / oracionem faciant. tunc redeant in stacionem suam usque abbatissa / (p. 124) eas iubeat exire ad quiescendum.

Chapter 1

MEDIEVAL SPECTATORS AND PARTICIPANTS IN THE BARKING ABBEY *ELEVATIO* AND *VISITATIO SEPULCHRI*

THE RESIDENTS OF Barking Abbey—nuns, priests, and clerics—were heavily involved in the performance of their *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri*: the abbess began and ended the proceedings, the nuns and clergy represented various scriptural figures, they sang the chants recorded in the Barking Ordinal, and they moved between the choir, the sepulchre, the chapel of Mary Magdalen, and two more altars, carrying various objects. Yet the Ordinal does not mention any effect the ceremonies may have had on these residents. On the other hand, a note preceding the ceremonies announces that the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were moved to this later part of Matins and possibly modified in the second half of the fourteenth century by Abbess Katherine of Sutton with the aim of improving the laity's devotion:

> Nota quod secundum / antiquam consuetudinem ecclesiasticam resurexio dominica / celebrate fuit ante matutinas et ante aliquam campane / pulsacionem in die pasche et quoniam populorum concursus tempo/ribus illis videbatur deuocione frigessere. et torpor huma/nus maxime accrescens. venerabilis domina Domina Katerina / de Suttone tunc pastoralis cure gerens vicem. deside/rans dictum torporem penitus exstirpare. et fidelium deuocio/nem ad tam celibem celebracionem magis excitare: / vnanimi consororum consensu instituit. ut statim post tercium. / Responsorium. matutinarum die pasche fieret dicte resurexionis cele/bracio et hoc modo statuetur processio.

> Note that according to an ancient ecclesiastical custom, the Resurrection of the Lord was celebrated on Easter day before the Matins and before any bell ringing. And since the congregation of the people in those times seemed to grow cold in devotion and human apathy increasing greatly, the venerable lady, Lady Katherine of Sutton fulfilling her role of pastoral care, desiring to eliminate completely the said apathy and provoke more greatly the devotion of the faithful towards such a renowned celebration, instituted with the unanimous consent of the sisters that the said celebration of the Resurrection should be done immediately after the third responsory of Matins on Easter Day and that the procession was to be accomplished in this way.

The note testifies to the presence of the *populus* (people) witnessing the ceremonies; it also portrays them as the target audience. Yet the *populus* would

not have experienced the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* as directly as the house's nuns, priests, and clerics who, positioned in the church's chancel, would have seen and heard them most clearly, and actively participated in their performance.

In this first chapter then, I would like to examine the ways in which the medieval performance of the ceremonies may have affected and have been intended to affect its various spectators and participants. I will investigate the nuns and clergy of the house, as well as the laity of Barking to better understand their beliefs, expectations, and relationships with one another. This contextual part—based on the study of historical records, of the abbey's liturgical and literary culture, and of medieval lay devotion—will then be combined with an analysis of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* and of the ways in which—often through the use of dramatic means—they responded to this context. They seem to have addressed two significant preoccupations of their spectators and participants: the question of devotion and the question of self-definition.

Identity of Spectators and Participants

Nuns and Clergy

The nuns of Barking had long enjoyed ties to the English royalty and nobility, although at the time of the Ordinal they also came from the local gentry and from wealthy tradesmen's families.[1] Abbesses Sybil of Felton and Katherine of Sutton illustrate the diverse origins of these women. While Felton was the daughter of Sir Thomas Felton, a Knight of the Garter from Norfolk, Sutton seems to have belonged to a local family.[2] It is unclear how many nuns lived in the monastery when the Ordinal was written. However, they were forty-two in the mid-fifteenth century, thirty-three in 1499; the statutory number was thirty-seven, and thirty nuns and an abbess were recorded at the Dissolution.[3]

---

1 Oliva, "The Convent and the Community," 105–21.

2 Katherine of Sutton may have been related to Sir John Sutton, lord of the manor of Wivenhoe in Essex. Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 41, 44; "Ancient Parish of Barking: Manors," ed. Powell; "Wivenhoe: Manors and Other Estates," ed. Cooper. She may also have been related to the Lincoln family of Sutton or Lexington. If she was related to Hugh of Sutton, prior of Holy Trinity in Dublin, this may explain the similarities between the Dublin and Barking *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* ceremonies. Dolan, *Le drame liturgique*, 126, 187–89.

3 *Charters of Barking Abbey*, ed. Kelly, 62; Barratt, "Keeping Body and Soul Together," 235, 237.

As for the priests and clerics of the abbey, their number varied but there were nine priests at Barking by the end of the fifteenth century and, according to the Ordinal, at least four priests, three deacons, three subdeacons, and various acolytes, thurifers, and cross bearers at the beginning of the century.[4] They were appointed and paid by the abbess who tasked them with celebrating private and public Masses in the abbey church, as well as participating in the Divine Office.[5] It is also possible that they conducted administrative work as clerks, secretaries, or archivists for the nuns. Archbishop Peckham's 1279 injunctions indicate that they lodged in the abbey precinct. The injunctions also reveal concern over the clergy's closeness with the sisters: for instance, Peckham admonishes priests not to go through the nuns' cloister after the service of the dead.[6] Nuns were therefore not entirely removed from the clergy. The liturgy did not separate them either: the Ordinal makes it clear that they could see and interact with each other.[7] The relations of the priests and clerics with the nuns may thus have been cordial and collaborative, but they may alternatively, as was regularly the case in nunneries, have been plagued by disagreements over power and money.[8] Such a challenge to the abbey's authority is recorded at Barking at the end of the fourteenth century when the vicar refused to fulfil this duty. He was compelled to do so in 1414 after the nuns appealed to the pope, but he and his successors continued to dispute the abbey's authority until at least 1452.[9] Little else is known of the priests and clerics of Barking Abbey. Neither their literary culture nor their access to the books associated with the nunnery has been recorded, although we can assume that they would have known the abbey's liturgy and that they were probably familiar with its history and with broader liturgical matters. Because of these unknowns, this chapter will grant more attention to the nuns of Barking.

---

4 "The Liturgical Dramas for Holy Week," ed. Yardley and Mann, 5; Sturman, "Barking Abbey," 140–44, 157–60, 326–32; Chettle and Loftus *History of Barking Abbey*, 56.

5 Oliva, "The Convent and the Community," 48–49.

6 Gilchrist, *Contemplation in Action*, 134–36; *Registrum epistolarum fratris Johannis Peckham*, ed. Trice Martin, 1:81–86.

7 See Hamburger, "Art, Enclosure and the *Cura monialum*," 112. Nuns were frequently separated from the clergy by screens, or they had their own emporium. This does not seem to have been the case at Barking.

8 See Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession*, 183–90.

9 "The Ancient Parish of Barking: Abbeys and Churches Founded before 1830," ed. Powell.

The *Populus*

While the term *populus* refers to those who had not entered a religious life, it fails to provide further information about the laity attending the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* of Barking Abbey on Easter Day.[10] A clue to the identity of these spectators can be found in the Ordinal, when, on the Day of the Dedication of the Church, *parochiani* (parishioners) were said to be present in the abbey church *sicut in die pasche* (as on Easter day).[11] The *populus* who witnessed the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* thus appears to have been constituted—at least in part—of Barking parishioners. These parishioners lived on a large parochial territory located within the Hundred of Becontree in Essex, itself submitted to the abbey's lordship from the time of King Stephen.[12]

The number of parishioners alive at the time of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* is difficult to determine. Two accounts exist but they date from 1050 and 1670—considerably earlier and later than our period—and measure different things. In 1050, the Domesday Book indicated that the manor of Barking (which included the parishes of Dagenham and Barking) contained a population of 250, making it the most populous in Essex. In 1670, 461 houses were counted in the parish.[13] These figures can give us an order of magnitude but cannot accurately represent the number of parochial spectators.

The dominant employment in this rural parish was farming.[14] Other occupations recorded in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries comprise fishing and tanning in the borough of Barking, the production of wool on the abbey lands, and its shipping from the town wharf along with leather.[15] The parishioners—and spectators of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*—then appear to have come from different social classes and held various types of employment. They ranged from fishermen, village officials, craftsmen, labourers, servants, and tenants, to families in charge of a manor. However, the word *populus* may alternatively have designated a smaller group of people. In the

10 Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 152.

11 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:257.

12 "Hundred of Becontree," ed. Powell; Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 61.

13 A nearly contemporary map of the borough of Barking (1653) reveals that around 170 houses stood in the town at the time. "The Ancient Parish of Barking: Introduction," ed. Powell. Chettle and Loftus estimate that there were about five to six hundred tenancies in the parish in 1456. Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 63.

14 "The Ancient Parish of Barking: Agrarian History, Markets, and Fairs," ed. Powell.

15 "Borough of Barking," ed. Powell.

Middle Ages, the word was applied to those who were not members of religious orders, but it also at times referred to those who were not members of the nobility.[16] As we shall explore later, the abbey of Barking was embroiled in various troubles with its parishioners, especially with those of the lower classes. It may therefore have wished to target its dramatic liturgical ceremonies specifically towards them.

While Latin was probably not understood by many of the Barking parishioners, some may have been able to follow the content of the liturgical chants sung during the *Elevatio* and the *Visitatio*. In his influential book *The Stripping of the Altars*, Eamon Duffy argues that the liturgy would not have been a completely different experience for them than for the rest of the laity. On the contrary, there was "a remarkable degree of religious and imaginative homogeneity across the social spectrum, a shared repertoire of symbols, prayers, and beliefs."[17] In the case of Barking Abbey's *Visitatio* and *Elevatio*, the content of the chants supported and enriched the more general messages of renewal and salvation conveyed by the ceremonies.

Barking Abbey was clearly not an isolated monastery. The town of Barking, which seems to have mostly grown and expanded after the construction of the religious house (ca. 666), stood nearby.[18] This proximity led to various interactions between the religious and lay inhabitants of Barking. Such interactions were partially tied to the religious function of the monastery. Intercessionary prayers and obits spoken for donors by the abbey's nuns and priests, Masses for the Dead said at the chantries in the abbey church, and the burials of lay individuals in the church or its cemetery were all valued practices at the time. They were thought to help the souls of the dead, whose fate was a source of deep concern.[19] These services were provided by the Barking nuns and clerics in exchange for a monetary donation, making

16 Gaffiot, Félix. "populus," in *Dictionnaire latin français*, ed. Gérard Gréco (2016), accessed September 17, 2024; "populus," in *The Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. Richard Ashdowne, David Howlett, and R.E. Latham (Oxford: Oxford University Press and Turnhout: Brepols, 1967–2014).

17 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 3. On literacy in the Middle Ages, see Bell, "What Nuns Read: The State of the Question," 120–21.

18 "Borough of Barking," ed. Powell; "The Ancient Parish of Barking: Abbeys and Churches Founded before 1830," ed. Powell.

19 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 338, 350; Oliva, "The Convent and the Community," 275–91. According to the Ordinal, obits were composed both of a Mass said by the clergy and of liturgical chants sung by the sisters. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:359, 362; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:8. On medieval nuns as valued intercessors, see Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 225–90.

them accessible first to the wealthy, although bequests to religious houses by guilds and poorer parishioners are also recorded.[20] At Barking, there is evidence of parishioners, generally tenants of the abbey, being buried in the abbey church or commemorated in obituaries in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[21] The nuns further helped the souls of the faithful by singing an Office of the Dead almost daily and by saying the full office of nine lessons for the dead once a week.[22]

The laity could moreover improve their chances in the afterlife by visiting the shrines of local saints Ethelburga, Hildelith, and Wulfhilde, and a twelfth-century Rood, all located in the conventual buildings. In 1400, Pope Boniface even granted a relaxation of penance for those who prayed at the Rood on specific days.[23] The abbey's involvement in the spiritual well-being

---

20 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* 30–34.

21 According to the Barking Ordinal, at least five lay benefactors of the abbey were buried in its church: Thomas Fulkynge, William Dun (who probably gifted the free tenement of Downshall manor, located within the parish of Barking, to the religious house in 1250), Sir John de Cokerinne, Lady Mary (the sister of Abbess Sybil of Felton), and her mother Joan. Three of them are also said to be remembered through liturgical services (Fulkynge, Dun, and Cokerinne). Dun, at least, thus seems to have been a parishioner. Further lay benefactors of the abbey, some of whom may have belonged to the parish, are mentioned in the house's obituaries—included in the Ordinal's *Kalendarium* (Calendar). Thomas Samkynon, for example, was probably abbess of Felton's squire. According to the Barking Abbey Manor Rental of 1456, a Thomas Samkynon held a messuage in the parish of Barking. It is moreover possible that his family—Sampkyn or Samkyn—held two manors in the same parish: the manor of Fulks (1440) and the manor of Wyfields (fourteenth century). Another potential parishioner is Walter Taillour; he may also have belonged to a local family since the 1456 Rental makes mention of a Thomas Taillour, the owner of a house in Barking town. Extant wills identify some of the nunnery's other lay benefactors. Among them is the Sutton family, who were possibly related to Abbess Katherine and to Prioress Isabella Sutton, and who owned the manor of Wangey, at the limit between the parishes of Barking and Dagenham. However, apart from the Suttons, these benefactors do not appear to have been parishioners. Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 40–45; Bamford, "Bequests Relating to Essex," 262, 264, 258; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:1–12 and 2:361–62; Vickers, "Barking Abbey Rental"; Cawley and FMG, "Lords Montagu"; "Ancient Parish of Barking: Manors," ed. Powell; "Dagenham: Introduction and Manors," ed. Powell.

22 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:16 and 2:359, 370; Harper, *Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy*, 105–6. Some of the Barking chants for the office of the dead are recorded in a hymnal (Cambridge, Trinity College, 1226) and in a Book of Hours (Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Dd.12.56). Yardley, "Chants for the Holy Trinity," 184.

23 Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey,* 40.

of its parishioners continued with its responsibilities of parochial care: Barking was meant to nominate and maintain priests for both the parish church and the nunnery's appropriated churches.[24] It moreover summoned parishioners to its own church on certain feast days, celebrating the liturgy with them. This was the case on Good Friday, Palm Sunday, Rogation Days, the Feast of St Mark, Ascension Day, the Feast of St Ethelburga, and the Day of the Dedication of the Church.[25] On Maundy Thursday, it was the poor who were called to the monastery, where the nuns washed their feet as part of the *Mandatum* (foot washing) ritual.[26]

In addition to these spiritual connections and benefits, parishioners had more temporal ties to the abbey. Barking was a powerful monastery: it ranked third in wealth among the nunneries of England and had been granted royal patronage since the reign of King Edgar.[27] Its abbess was titled as a baron—a rare privilege shared only with the abbesses of Wilton, Winchester, and Shaftesbury. She enjoyed but was also bound to manage—with the help of various officials—the house's extensive estates. As a lord, the abbess and her nunnery supplied land to their tenants and expected either money, goods, or labour in return. The monastic community encountered the laity in other circumstances as well: when they hired workers to fix the conventual buildings, when they purchased food and other necessities, when they acted as patrons or were handed bequests, when they gave alms to the poor and managed their lepers' hospital in Ilford. Relations could at times visit them and the monastery also housed boarders, corrodies, and children. Servants and farm workers were regular fixtures in the abbey, their presence necessary for its smooth operation. This range of interactions between

24 In the Late Middle Ages, the laity were generally meant to at least attend Matins, Mass, and evensong on Sundays, services on feast days, on the day of their yearly communion and confession. The Barking laity usually attended these services in the parish church of St Margaret. It had been their parish church since around 1300. "Abbeys and Churches," ed. Powell; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 11; Oliva, "The Convent and the Community," 42–50.

25 The feast of St Mark took place on April 25, the Day of the Dedication of the Church on July 13, and the Feast of St Ethelburga on October 11. See *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:94, 124–27, 96–101, 84–88, 127–130 and 2:257–59, 218–20, 319–20 for a description of these ceremonies.

26 The Ordinal indicates that the feet of the poor were washed by the abbess in her chapel, by the prioress in the chapter house, and by the other nuns in the cloisters. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:94.

27 "Houses of Benedictine Nuns: Abbey of Barking," ed. Page and Round; "Religious Houses: Introduction," ed. Page and Round; Sturman, "Barking Abbey," 367, 41–43.

the Barking laity and the religious house provided parishioners with a multifaceted image of this nunnery, which held a significant role for their community. It was at once a provider of spiritual assistance and charity, a lord, an employer, and even a host.[28]

Participation in the Ceremonies

Having introduced the spectators and participants in the Barking Abbey *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri*, I will now investigate the nature of their participation in the ceremonies. While the nuns, clergy, and laity present in the abbey church on Easter Sunday all watched these liturgical ceremonies, they participated to various degrees in their performance. The parishioners witnessed it from the nave, where their view may have been obstructed by a choir screen and/or a *pulpitum* (screen).[29] As for the nuns and clergy, they were responsible for this performance—singing and moving as directed by the Ordinal and Customary. Yet, in addition to their role in the ceremonies' performance, they may also have been involved in their creation.

From the early years of the religious house, the nuns of Barking were readers, composers, buyers, and sponsors of written texts. In the Anglo-Saxon period, they produced—under Abbess Hildelith (d. 712)—and influenced the creation of written works, and they transmitted their knowledge with their monastic school.[30] Styli from this period—

28 For evidence and examples of these ties between the abbey and the laity, see Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 25–46, 53–65, 69; Sturman, "Barking Abbey," 109, 168–205, 216, 299, 391, 394, 476–77, 484; "The Ancient Parish of Barking: Agrarian History, Markets, and Fairs," ed. Powell; Oliva, "The Convent and the Community," 41–42, 65, 154–56, 221, 279–87, 253–55, 293, 305; Wogan-Browne, "Barking and the Historiography of Female Community," 296; Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, 69–74, 146–48, 150, 157–58, 198, 261–84, 401; Warren, *Spiritual Economies*, 65–67; Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession*, 47–55, 61, 153–58, 232; "The Ancient Parish of Barking: Introduction," ed. Powell; "Houses of Benedictine Nuns: Abbey of Barking," ed. Page and Round.

29 Rood screens were standard in churches in England at this time, although no record of them can be found for Barking Abbey. A *pulpitum* is however mentioned in the *Ordinal*. Bond, *Screens and Galleries*, 157–59; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:27. Wiles, basing himself in part on the work of Kate Matthews, believes that the altar behind which the priest representing Christ appeared and disappeared in the *Visitatio* was situated in front of the *pulpitum*. Wiles, *Short History of Western Performance Space*, 47.

30 Hildelith produced a now lost *libellus* (short book) relating the origins of the abbey and the life of her predecessor St Ethelburga. This same *libellus* was used by Bede when he wrote his ca. 731 *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*. Weston, "The

perhaps used by the nuns—were further found on the site of the abbey.[31]

Although it is difficult to say whether this culture persisted uninterrupted, post-Conquest sisters are known to have corresponded with leading churchmen, such as Osbert of Clare, prior of Westminster (works from ca. 1120s–1150s).[32] Two of the sisters moreover composed Anglo-Norman translations and adaptations of Latin lives of saints: the *Life of St Edward* by an anonymous nun (ca. 1163–1166) and the *Life of St Catherine of Alexandria* by Clemence of Barking (earliest manuscript ca. 1200).[33] The nunnery also sponsored various written works, all connected with the house's history or saints. The role of sponsor—adopted by many medieval women—seems to have implied a certain involvement in the works commissioned.[34] At Barking, Abbess Mary Becket, sister of Thomas, commissioned Guernes (Garnier) de Pont-Sainte-Maxence to compose *La vie de Saint-Thomas le martyr de Cantorberie* (1173–1175). Adgar's *Gracial*, the first known translation in the vernacular of the Latin miracles of Mary—patron saint of the abbey church—appears to have been written under the patronage of Abbess Maud/Matilda (1175–1198). Finally, Abbess Aelfgifu commissioned Goscelin de Saint-Bertin (ca. 1058) to write texts on three of Barking's foundational saints: Abbesses Ethelburga, Hildelith, and Wulfhilde. Goscelin acknowledges that his work is based partly on Bede but adds that he obtained information from sister Judith/Vulfruna, whom he considers a reliable and authoritative source.[35] It seems evident from surveying the literary

---

Saint-Maker and the Saint," 57, 69; Weston, "Conceiving the Word(s)," 149–50; Hollis, "Barking's Monastic School," 34–37.

31 "An Exploration of Barking Abbey: Exhibition." Valence House.

32 Hollis, "The Literary Culture of the Anglo-Saxon Royal Nunneries," 176.

33 They translated and adapted an Aelred de Rievaulx version of the life of Edward (1161–1163) and the *Vulgata* version (eleventh century) of the life of Catherine. See Russell, "The Cultural Context of the French Prose Remaniement," 290; Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing*, 80; Robertson, "Writing in the Textual Community," 25; Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*, 223, 245.

34 Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*, 203, 251. There are many examples of medieval women sponsoring literature. According to Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, between the twelfth and the fourteenth century, these women generally belonged to the gentry, the nobility, or the urban elites (as did the nuns of Barking Abbey). Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*, 1.

35 Goscelin composed *The Life and Miracles of St Ethelburga*, *The Life and Miracles of St Wulfhilde*, a shorter and a longer translation of Saints Ethelburga, Hildelitha, and Wulfhilde, a vision about their translation, and lessons on the translation of St Hildelith. Slocum, "Goscelin de Saint-Bertin," 74, 80–81; Colker, "Texts of Jocelyn of

Figure 1.1. Sketch of the thirteenth-century seal of Barking Abbey. From *A Sketch of Ancient Barking and its Abbey*, compiled and revised by E. Tuck. © Alamy.

production at Barking Abbey that, from the seventh to the twelfth century, the nuns of Barking—or at least some of them—were regarded as learned. They read in the vernacular, but they were also able to read in Latin: letters in Latin were addressed to them, they commissioned Goscelin's work, and translated saints' lives.[36] However, one may wonder what the state of their literacy was at the time of the Ordinal.[37] Were the sisters who performed and witnessed the Latin *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* able to understand their content? Is it perhaps even possible that they wrote the ceremonies themselves?

It seems that the nuns of Barking continued to present themselves—to the outside world and to their community—as learned. The conventual seal used at Barking Abbey from the thirteenth century until the Dissolution in 1539 featured Barking abbesses holding books in their hands, showing the importance of the written word for this religious community (Figure 1.1).[38]

Evidence suggests that, in practice, the sisters could read at least basic liturgical Latin. The ability to read and to sing liturgical texts was sometimes listed in the Late Middle Ages among the requirements for women to enter monastic life, so that they could fulfil their main task in the choir. This is the

---

Canterbury," 387, 391. On literary patronage at Barking, see also O'Donnell, "'The Ladies Have Me Quite Fat,'" 96; Bérat, "The Authority of Diversity"; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 20, 32.

36 The word "reading" should also be understood in a broad sense. It can mean reading aloud for another, reading for oneself, or simply listening to another reading aloud. Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*, 4–6; Meale, "'Alle the bokes,'" 133.

37 On nuns' literacy and their books, see Bell, *What Nuns Read*; Bell, "What Nuns Read: The State of the Question."

38 Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 35, 237.

case in Bishop Gray's 1432 injunctions to the nuns of Elstow. He orders the abbess not to admit any woman to the monastery unless she is:

> nisi in in cantu et lectura et aliis requisitis in hac parte doctam, vel ex verisimili in proximo de facili imbuendam, et talem que onera chori [illegible word] ceteris religionem concernentibus poterit suportare.
>
> taught in singing and reading and the other necessary things in this part, or it is probable that in the near future she may easily be instructed and will be able to manage such things as the burden of the choir [and] the other things concerned with religion.[39]

Some of the sisters may even have had a more advanced command of liturgical Latin: the *cantrix*, for instance, who was responsible for the appropriate performance of the liturgy, had to understand it to handle various liturgical books and to choose some of the chants.[40]

The Barking Abbey nuns also probably understood non-liturgical Latin texts. Reading in the vernacular but also in Latin seems to have been particularly encouraged in the nunnery. According to the Rule of St Benedict, certain times of the day were reserved for reading. During the mid-day meal in the refectory, a *lectrix* read sermons, tracts, saints' lives, extracts from the New Testament, Mass texts, or commentaries while the rest of the sisters ate. These could be in the vernacular or in Latin. Every evening, a reading—the "collation"—was conducted in the chapter house before compline.[41] Other moments were dedicated to the *lectio divina*: the daily reading, ruminating, and internalizing of scriptural texts (in Latin).[42] Reading was seen as a spiritual practice, as a way into prayer because it allowed the intellectual and emotional assimilation of texts. It would both educate and stir the readers' feelings for the love of God. Understanding the texts was necessary for

---

39 Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 76–77. Similar requests are made in the 1521 injunctions to the Augustinian sisters of Burnham and the injunctions to the Premonstratensian house of Irford. Moreover, Thomas de la Mare, Abbot of St Albans between 1349 and 1396, ordered that in the subordinate nunnery of St Mary de Pré new nuns should be literate and profess the Rule of St Benedict in writing. Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*, 133–34; Power, *Medieval English Nunneries*, 245. Power does add however that "professions were often written by others, and the postulant only put his or her cross."

40 Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 52–60, 180.

41 Lindenbaum, "Drama as Textual Practice," 394. See also Yardley, "Musical Education of Young Girls," 50.

42 *Règle de Saint-Benoît*, ed. Schmitz, 111–13. The Ordinal indicates that the nuns of Barking were in possession of the Rule. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:67.

these benefits to be felt. The importance of reading—of the *lectio divina* in particular—is emphasized in additional manuscripts contemporary with or acquired around the time of the Ordinal and in the Ordinal itself.[43] The latter recommends—as does the Rule of St Benedict—that, to ensure that the nuns were indeed reading during the times allocated for this activity, nuns called *circuitres* go about the monastery. Like the Rule, it describes at length the distribution of books to the sisters, which took place on the first Monday of Lent.[44] The value given to reading is further emphasized by the Ordinal's indication of the presence—rare in English nunneries—of an *armaria* (a book cupboard) and of a librarian at Barking.[45]

The books of the *armaria* seem to have included a variety of works in Latin. Barking is the English nunnery attached to the second largest number of extant books: at least fifteen.[46] In addition to liturgical books, these are liturgical tracts, gospels, as well as devotional treatises. While these books appear to indicate a decline in the use of Latin—standard in nunneries from the thirteenth century onwards—they also testify to its continuous use in the house until at least the fifteenth century.[47] The Latin texts associated with Barking are a twelfth-century manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library,

43 These manuscripts are Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodl. 923, containing *The Clensyng of Mannes Soule*; *Olim* Foyle, MS, previously owned by William Foyle of Beeleigh Abbey, Essex and now privately owned, containing William Flete's *De remediis contra temptationes*; MS privately owned, previously in the library of Allan Heywood Bright of Barton Court and containing *A Mirror for Recluses*. Kirchberger, "The Cleansing of Man's Soul," 292–94; see also Everett, "A Critical Edition," 83–84; Lamothe, "An Edition of the Latin and Four Middle English Versions," 1–2, 216; Jones, "*A Mirror for Recluses*," 427. See Erler, "Private Reading," 136–43, 145–46; Hutchison, "Devotional Reading in the Monastery," 218–22.

44 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:67–70; 2:374; *Règle de Saint-Benoît*, ed. Schmitz, 111–13. The Ordinal extensively quotes here the 1225 Decrees of the General Northampton Chapter. Sturman, "Barking Abbey," 312, 231.

45 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:67. There are references to libraries for the nunneries of Syon, Campsey, St Sexburga, and Nunnaminster, and references to a librarian at Barking, Syon, and Nunnaminster. Barking Abbey probably owned more than forty books since the Ordinal indicates that there were books in the *armaria* in addition to the books given to the nuns. Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 42, 45–48.

46 There are significantly fewer books associated with English nunneries than with continental ones. English monks also seem to have possessed more books than nuns. It is difficult to say whether English nuns read substantially more than is provable today or whether they simply had fewer books than monks and continental nuns. Wogan-Browne, "Women's Formal and Informal Traditions," 85.

47 Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 64; Barratt, "Small Latin?," 64–65.

Laud lat. 19) containing the *Song of Songs* and *Lamentations*, and two manuscripts from the twelfth and thirteenth century (?Cardiff, Public Library, 3.833 and 1.381) including seven *vitae* (lives) of saints, Defensor de Ligugé's *Scintillarium*, Beleth *Summa de ecclesasticis officiis*, and an extract from Comestor's *Historia scholastica.* Three fifteenth-century manuscripts—*Olim* Foyle, MS; London, British Library, Add. 10596; ?Nijmegen, U.L (Radboud university), 194—containing both Latin and Middle English texts have also been connected to the Essex nunnery.[48] Peckham's 1279 Latin admonitions to the monastery moreover seem to show that the language was understood by its nuns. The sixteenth-century will and inventory of William Powsnett, the abbey's last steward, may further confirm the continuing study of Latin at Barking. It mentions twenty-nine books said to have come from the nunnery, many of them in Latin. Their acquisition is difficult to date, however, and some or all may have been in the possession of the steward rather than the nuns.[49] Yet, the accumulation of evidence—the use of Latin in nonliturgical books up to at least the fifteenth-century, the references found in the Rule of St Benedict and other manuscripts concerning reading, and the requirements of liturgical offices—shows that the sisters of Barking Abbey would most likely have understood the *Elevatio* and the *Visitatio sepulchri*, as well as other Latin texts present in the nunnery.

Such a knowledge of Latin makes their involvement in the creation of the ceremonies—a mixture of liturgical chants, scriptural texts, and seven apparently unique chants—more likely. There is no evidence that the sisters wrote—in the sense of wrote out, as scribes—the *Elevatio*, the *Visitatio,* or the Ordinal but it is possible that they did. Some English women religious were able to write, and records indicate that the sisters of Barking may have been used to writing: Goscelin de Saint-Bertin identified eleventh-century nun Vulfruna (Judith) as the scribe of a missal,[50] sisters may have provided additions and corrections transforming a gospel book for liturgical use in the twelfth century,[51] five nuns signed their names in books associated with the house, and a fifteenth-century cellaress may have written an account

48 Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 106–7.

49 Bell, "What Nuns Read: The State of the Question," 117–18.

50 Yardley, "Liturgy as the Site of Creative Engagement," 278. On Judith/Vulfruna, see Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 40, 65–70. See also Bugyis, "Female Monastic Cantors," 151–71.

51 Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 148–71

herself (in English).[52] A fifteenth-century rental for Barking moreover mentions other "rentals maintained by the abbey's abbess, sacristan, and cellaress."[53] References to writing are also included in the Ordinal (where nuns are warned not to write in books) and in a contemporaneous Barking manuscript, *The Mirror for Recluses* (where recluses are recommended the "writyng of holy and edificatif thynges of deuocyoun").[54] However, like most monastic houses, Barking employed clerks who could have written texts for the nuns—including the Ordinal and Customary.[55]

Even if the sisters had not written this text with their own hands, they may have composed it. Composing can be more frequently attributed to medieval women than scribal work.[56] However, composers regularly employed scribes who at times contributed to the text or edited what had been dictated to them: it is often difficult to separate clearly the intent of the composer from the influence of the scribe.[57] In the case of Barking, the identity of the Ordinal's scribe(s) remains unknown, as does their contribution. The manuscript's composition too remains undocumented. The liturgy of Barking was most likely composed over centuries and, while it contains some seemingly unique chants, it tends to follow certain liturgical conventions and to adopt widespread practices. Even the most distinctive aspects

---

52 On the cellaress, see Barratt, "Keeping Body and Soul Together," 235. See also Oliva, "The French of England," 90–91; Oliva, "Rendering Accounts," 51–54; O'Mara, "Female Scribal Ability," 103; Oliva, "The Convent and the Community," 142. Oliva believes that the kitcheners' account of Campsey Abbey was written by nuns, as were the Barking, Blackborough, Carrow, Markham, Bungay, and St Radegund's obedentiaries' accounts. On convent drama being written by a nun, see Robinson, "Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 617," 95 (on the Carmelite convent of Huy).

53 Oliva, "Rendering Accounts," 67.

54 Jones, "*A Mirror for Recluses*," 427–28; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:67.

55 A payment to a clerk is mentioned in the Barking cellaress' account. Oliva, "Rendering Account," 59. There is further evidence of women writing in England, but it tends to remain vague until the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. More evidence of women copyists or *scriptrix* (scribes) comes from the Continent. See O'Mara, "The Late Medieval English Nun," 76–92; Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*, 185–89; Meale, "'Alle the bokes,'" 134; Robinson, "A Twelfth Century *Scriptrix*," 86; Blanton, O'Mara, and Stoop, "Introduction," xxv, xxxii; O'Mara, "Female Scribal Ability," 91–95, 98–102.

56 On writing in the Middle Ages, see Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*, 181; O'Mara, "Female Scribal Ability," 88–89; Smith, "*Scriba*, *Femina*," 29; Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing*, 2–7.

57 Boffey, "Women Authors and Women's Literacy," 160–62, 165; Coakley, "Women's Textual Authority," 90–95.

of this liturgy may have been composed by priests and not by nuns: there is sixteenth-century evidence of chaplains creating chants for the feasts of local saints Hildelith and Wulfhilde.[58]

Yet the nuns of Barking are regularly presented by the Ordinal as having a significant say in the liturgy of the abbey. Their contribution is visible in a statement made at the beginning of the Ordinal, which claims that Abbess Sybil of Felton ordered its production:

> Memorandum quod Anno domini Millesimo quadringentesimo quarto domina Sibilla permissione diuina Abbatissa de Berkyng hunc librum ad usum Abbatissarum in dicta domo in futurum existencium concessit. et in librario eiusdem loci post mortem cuiuscumque in perpetuum commemoraturum ordinauit. donec eleccio inter moniales fiat. tunc predictus liber eidem electe in Abbatissam per superiores domus post stallactionem deliberator.

> It will be recorded that in the year of the Lord 1404, Dame Sibilla, by divine permission abbess of Barking, gave and ordered this book for the use of the future Abbesses living in the said house and as a perpetual reminder for them, [stipulating] that after the death of any abbess the book [should be kept] in the library of the same place until an election takes place among the nuns. At that point the aforesaid book is given over by senior nuns of the house to the nun who has been elected abbess, after her installation.[59]

Felton, with the assent of the conventual community, is further credited with various decisions affecting the liturgy of the house—she requested, for instance, that the *Salve festa dies* (Hail, great day) be sung on Trinity Sunday—and so is Abbess Katherine of Sutton.[60] The note preceding the *Elevatio* and the *Visitatio* moreover asserts that the ceremonies were moved and perhaps modified according to the will of Katherine of Sutton and with the unanimous consent of the sisters. Alterations to the liturgy were also made by the *cantrix* (the nun responsible "for the correct performance of the sung liturgy"), who could choose some of the chants sung during liturgical services.[61]

---

58 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:vi; Sturman, "Barking Abbey," 332.

59 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:13; translation by Yardley in "Liturgy as the Site of Creative Engagement," 271.

60 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:141 and 2:257, 346, 222; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst; Yardley, "Liturgy as the Site of Creative Engagement," 271–74.

61 Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 52–60. See for example, *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:281.

None of these references proves that nuns were the creative minds behind the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. However, they show their instrumental role in shaping some of the house's liturgical ceremonies and in initiating the composition of the Ordinal and Customary, which recorded an approved version of this liturgy. The nuns of Barking Abbey may therefore have participated in the composition of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. They would at least have approved of their content and have influenced their performance. Performance itself can be understood as composition since it adds to and can change the written text.

Having considered the participation of the laity, nuns, and clergy of Barking in the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio*, I will now explore these ceremonies' potential effects on their spectators and performers. The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* of Barking Abbey are carefully crafted: the liturgical ceremonies join gospel excerpts, liturgical chants, chants found only in these types of ceremonies, and (it appears) original material in a unique way to present a specific version of the scriptural events that they depict. Many of their themes would have been familiar to the nuns, clergy, and laity of Barking and seem to respond to the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s context of creation: the ceremonies show an interest in exploring various forms of devotion, as well as in the experience of women religious and its ties with the nunnery of Barking. However, their dramatic features mark them as unusual—at least according to the extant documents on the nunnery and its surroundings. This mixture of familiar themes with unusual tools and its likely consequences on the ceremonies' spectators and participants will be discussed in the next section.

An Emphasis on Devotion

Medieval devotional practices provide an essential context for understanding the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri*. Devotion informed many aspects of medieval life, even more so in the case of nuns and clerics who spent much of their day performing liturgical ceremonies and were valued for their prayers.[62] At Barking too, members of the abbey seem to have been keenly interested in the subject. Documents show, for instance, their sense of responsibility to cultivate the devotion of the laity: the nunnery repeatedly included the *populus* in liturgical ceremonies, and it was responsible for numerous churches, whose priests it chose and managed. The abbey further showed its care for the soul of its parishioners by providing a preacher on Rogation Days.[63]

62 See for example, Jones, "*A Mirror for Recluses*," 424–31.

63 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:124–25.

Such a sense of responsibility was common among the medieval clergy and religious institutions, even more so after Lateran IV (1215) and the Lambeth Council (1281), and their insistence on pastoral care. Parish priests were reminded by various treatises and manuals—such as *De informacione simplicium* (1281), the *Lay Folk's Catechism* (1357), John Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests* (fourteenth century), William of Pagula's *Oculus sacerdotis* (early fourteenth century), and the *Manipulus curatorum* (fourteenth century)—that they were bound to prepare the laity for the afterlife and to inform them of their religious and moral duties. At Barking, *The Clensyng of Mannes Soule*—although not clearly addressed to priests—belongs to this same tradition of "religious instructional manuals."[64]

In this context, the note recorded in the Ordinal before the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* claiming that "the venerable lady, Lady Katherine of Sutton fulfilling her role of pastoral care, desir[ed] to eliminate completely the said apathy and provoke more greatly the devotion of the faithful towards such a renowned celebration," shows the abbey's concern for the state of their parishioners' devotion. The note's wording—its use of the word *torpor* (apathy) especially—may indicate what the abbey felt was amiss with the devotional life of the Barking laity. This word was associated with Sloth and recognized as one of its offspring. It was described in such a way, for instance, in the *Ancrene Wisse*, a rule or manual for anchoresses: "The Beore of hevi slawthe haveth theose hwelpes: torpor is the forme: thet is, wlech heorte - unlust to eni thing - the schulde leitin al o lei i luve of ure Laverd" (The Bear of sluggish sloth has these whelps (or, cubs): *torpor* is the first: that is, a lukewarm heart—lack of desire (or, disinclination) for anything—which should blaze completely in flame for love of our Lord).[65] Committing the Sin of Sloth generally meant failing in one's religious duties: delaying penance, arriving late or failing to come to church, and, if present, not engaging with the content of the liturgical services.[66] The *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* were performed early in the morning and the *populus* perhaps struggled to wake

64 Everett, "*The Clensyng Of Mannes Soule*," 266, 269–71; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 53–58.

65 We do not know whether the nuns of Barking had access to the *Ancrene Wisse*. This text, written between 1234 and 1250, seems to have been first destined to three sisters of noble birth who became anchoresses. However, many of its versions contain mentions not only of anchoresses as its readers but also of nuns, virgins, married women, and even men. *Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Hasenfratz. Translation by Hasenfratz.

66 Mirk, *Instructions for Parish Priests*, ed. Peacock, 36–37; Wenzel, "Sloth in Middle English Devotional Literature," 304–7, 314.

up to witness them. Their lack of attendance may have been understood as a lack of devotion. The abbey's decision to postpone the ceremonies to a later point of Matins was then perhaps a way of addressing this issue and of ensuring that more parishioners would be in church at the time of their performance. It may also have been a way of maximizing the effect of the performance: the sun would be rising at the very moment the Resurrection was performed. The spectacular effect, as well as the symbolism of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, would thus have been increased.

Barking Abbey's interest in devotion would also have been directed towards the religious community itself. Drawing on evidence from the houses of Barking, Godstow, and Wherwell, Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis explains that the duties of medieval abbesses and prioresses towards their nuns included "provisioning their houses with material goods for their sustenance and with books and texts for their liturgical observance and edification, and directing the spiritual progress of consorors both in and outside the hours of prayer."[67] The spiritual health of the community was therefore of paramount importance not only to the bishops visiting the house, but to the nuns themselves. This is also attested at Barking by the house's literary culture, which includes the creation and dissemination of texts meant to improve their readers' devotion. Clemence of Barking and the nun translating the *Life of St Edward* both claim that their translations were undertaken with the purpose of making Latin texts more accessible, and thus helping save those reading them. In two other Barking texts—Adgar's *Gracial* and Nicholas Love's *The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ*—the composers frequently intervene in the narratives that they are presenting to guide their readers.[68] Saints' lives, as well as the *Mirrour*, are moreover punctuated with prayers which worshippers can easily adopt for themselves.[69] In these instances of didacticism, teaching is generally a moral act with moral benefits. It is an "act of devotion," but it is also a means to increase the devotion of readers, whether by explaining religious concepts to them, by presenting them with exemplary lives of saints, by showing them what the power of God can do, or, in the case of Nicholas Love, by increasing their compassion for Christ and his sacrifice.[70]

67 Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 10.

68 See for example, Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 209–13.

69 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 321, 323; *La vie d'Edouard*, ed. Bliss, 38; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 60–65, 273.

70 Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing*, 72–75; Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 119. At

As I will explore in the next section of this chapter, the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri* may therefore have been part of the house's devotional efforts: they taught their lay and religious spectators and participants about Scripture and lives of saints, strengthened their compassionate devotion for Christ, helped them understand the liturgy, and educated them on the important subject of penance. These forms of devotion were both essential to the devotional culture of the nunnery and typical of the Late Middle Ages.

Scriptures and Lives of Saints

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* attest to the nunnery's interest in scriptural and hagiographical stories: the narrative they present derives from such texts, and some of their chants are direct scriptural citations.[71] This interest in Scriptures and lives of saints, as might be expected in a convent, was widespread at Barking, judging from the books owned by the house. These include commentaries on various scriptural extracts, the gospels in Latin, and manuscripts containing saints' lives.[72] As explored when discussing the nuns' literacy, two sisters even translated and adapted *vitae* in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (the *Life of St Catherine* and the *Life of St Edward*), and the nuns practised the *lectio divina*, the reading of and meditating on Scriptures and lives of saints.[73]

Barking, see Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 7–10; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 209.

71 Scriptural citations are from Matthew (28:6, 9–10): *Non est hic surrexit* (He is not here; for he is risen), *Avete nolite timere* (Hail, do not fear); from Mark (16:3): *Quis revolvet nobis* (Who has rolled away for us); from Luke (24:5): *Quid queritis viventem cum mortuis* (Why do you seek the living one among the dead?); from John (20:13, 15–17): *Mulier quid ploras* (Woman, why do you weep), *Quia tulerunt dominum meum* (Because they have taken away my lord), *Mulier quid ploras, quem queris* (Woman, why do you weep? Whom do you seek?), *Domine si tu sustulisti eum* (Lord, if you have taken him away), *Maria* (Mary), *Raboni* (Rabbi), and the *Noli me tangere* (Do not touch me).

72 A formula of the text of Matthew 5:22, a Latin commentary on Daniel 5, and a Latin commentary on Matthew 5:22; Defensor of Ligugé's *Scintillarium*; an extract from Peter Comestor's *Historica scholastica*; an extract from Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*; Jerome's prefaces to the gospels. William Powsnett's will further lists a Latin Bible, Jacob of Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, Dionysius the Carthusian's commentary on the psalms and commentary on the four gospels, a commentary on the canonical epistles, and a commentary on the Pauline Epistles. Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 117.

73 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:67. The Ordinal refers to the Rule of St Benedict and describes the distribution of books at the beginning of Lent.

The *lectio divina* was undertaken in monastic contexts in order that readers should come to understand and know scriptural stories, but it was to be followed by the *meditatio* during which the contents of the texts were memorized. This time of meditation led readers to absorb what had been read and to make it their own. By reading in such a way, they learned about scriptural and hagiographic stories, but they also absorbed the words of these stories and the examples set by their figures.[74] All knowledge, including moral knowledge, was thought to be gained through memorization: memorization was thus at once the basis of scholarly learning and a "moral obligation." Reading taught information, ways of conversing and composing well, but also built "character, judgment, citizenship, piety," and helped readers make moral judgements.[75]

Memorization could be undertaken when reading but also when looking at images. The actions of reading and of observing images were likened to each other by churchmen such as Gregory the Great or Abbot Albert Crispin (twelfth century). Liturgical commentators Beleth and Durandus (both probably read at Barking) argued that images could help the viewer remember: images were able to recall an "object, event, person, or narrative sequence."[76] According to medieval theories of memory, it was thus simpler for most people to remember what was visual. If what had to be remembered was not an image, it ought to be made into an image in one's mind. To facilitate the formation of such memory-images, texts at times attached images to more abstract concepts. For example, the Rule of St Benedict regularly uses visual meditational aids, such as Jacob's ladder, to help readers memorize the stages of humility. Readers were encouraged to form memory-images that were "striking and vivid, rare and unusual." Seeing already striking images helped this process of memorization considerably.[77]

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, which mix text with images, therefore appear perfect for *lectio* but also for *meditatio*. They were moreover unusual and visually striking:[78] they displayed a spectacle—including processions, beau-

---

The section of the Rule referring to the distribution of books (chapter forty-eight) is the one recommending careful reading and meditating (*lectio divina*) as part of the work of monks. *Règle de Saint-Benoît*, ed. Schmitz, 111.

74 Erler, "Private Reading," 145; Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 10, 88, 118, 164.

75 Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 9, 68–71, 106, 150, 168–69.

76 Kroesen and Schmidt, "Introduction," 9; Scherb, *Staging Faith*, 46; Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 221–22. See also Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 54–55.

77 Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 60, 22–27, 73, 139–41; Scherb, *Staging Faith*, 51–54.

78 While no other liturgical ceremonies at Barking are as close to drama as the

tiful vestments and vessels, movements, and lights—in the impressive church of Barking Abbey, which, after the sombre period of Lent when its images and sculptures had been veiled or removed, was heavily decorated on Easter Day.[79] Some of the features of the ceremonies match medieval advice on forming memory-images even more closely. Albertus Magnus, for example, recommends his readers form memory-images that would not only be striking but also grouped in a scene "in which the order among them is expressed through physical action," and if possible, asks that these images come from a variety of sources. The Barking ceremonies offered such images to their spectators and participants: they ordered their moving images to tell a story, and the physical action of performers led from one image to the other. They also presented a variety of images, some performed by nuns and clerics, some part of the decoration of the church.

While images were felt to be easier to remember, other senses—when attached to images—were also considered useful for memorization. Mnemonic advice in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries "stresse[d] synaesthesia in making a memory-image": the memory-image would be more striking, surprising, and memorable if it was not just a picture but also possessed a sound, smell, taste, or involved the sense of touch.[80] The impression produced by the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* had such a synesthetic quality. Spectators saw the ceremonies, but they also heard the chants sung by the participants and smelled the incense of the thuribles. Participants further experienced the ceremonies through their sense of touch and through the movements of their bodies.[81] For the nuns, watching the ceremonies may therefore have

---

Elevatio and *Visitatio*, the other services attended by the laity according to the Ordinal share similarities with the two Easter ceremonies. Apart from the *Mandatum*, all included processions and the use of either a shrine, a tomb, or a sepulchre. See *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:94, 124–27, 96–101, 84–88, 127–130 and 2:257–59, 218–20, 319–20 for a description of these ceremonies.

79 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 4: 202. The church of Barking Abbey was the largest recorded in Essex at the time with a length of 103 m [337 ft]. Clapham, "The Benedictine Abbey of Barking," 69–87.

80 Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 78, 223–29, 245, 257; Scherb, *Staging Faith*, 50.

81 Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 229–31; Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 179–82. Another woman religious, Hildegard of Bingen, spoke in her *Symphonia* of the act of singing as creating an "image" which then imprints itself on the *memoria* of singers and allows them to achieve contemplation. De Hemptinne and Gongora, "Introduction," xii; Gongora, "*Feminea forma* and *virga*," 24–26. Drama and images in general were already perceived in the Middle Ages as being conducive to the teaching and the strengthening of devotion. See Woolf, *English Mystery Plays*, 43; Lipton, "Images and their Uses," 254–66, 270–71, 281; *Touching, Devotional Practices*, ed. Carillo-Rangel,

been close to a moment of *lectio divina* and *meditatio*. Yet, according to medieval theories on memory, the ceremonies' specific qualities would have helped all spectators and participants remember them—and the story that they told.

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s dramatic features would also have helped those watching—whether they were nuns, clerics, or lay people—understand the story itself. A linear narrative, but also various "props," "costumes," movement, light, as well as "actors," were helpful tools for clear and efficient storytelling. They would have been particularly valuable for those who might not have understood the content of the chants. Spectators were first cued to identify the scriptural story told by the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* thanks to objects carried by the figures represented, which often referenced Scriptures or pictorial depictions—some of which were perhaps visible in the abbey church—of these scriptural passages. The *ampullae* used in the *Visitatio*, which were vessels generally containing water and wine for Mass or holy oil, recalled the ointments brought by the Marys to the tomb of Christ.[82] The *sudarium* taken from the sepulchre visually referenced the death and Resurrection of Christ. It was seen in John 20:5–7 by Simon Peter and the other disciple when they entered the empty sepulchre. Linen cloths are mentioned in a similar passage in Luke 24:12, and they were wrapped around the body of Christ after his death, according to Matthew 27:59, Luke 23:53, John 19:40, and Mark 16:46. As for the palms of the patriarchs and prophets in the *Elevatio*, they were generally understood to be a sign of joy and victory.[83] Christ, who was commonly associated with light (which was in turn associated with the joy, hope, and eternal life at the heart of Easter

---

Nieto-Isabel, Acosta-Gracia; Williamson, "Sensory Experience in Medieval Devotion"; Caseau, "The Senses in Religion," 90, 93. For examples of visual and synesthetic devotion in the books owned by the Barking nuns, and of their didactic purpose, see *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:189; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 177–79, 209, 214–16, 271–72, 255, 280; Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 9–10, 270–71, 285, 288.

82 See Mark 16: 1; Luke 23: 55–56, 24: 1. Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture*, 188.

83 "quolibet sacerdote et clerico palmam et / candelam extinctam manu deferentem intrent capellam sancte / marie magdalene. ffigurantes animas sanctorum patrum" (each priest and cleric carrying in his hand a palm and an unlit candle. They enter the chapel of St Mary Magdalen, representing the souls of the Holy Fathers). Palm branches were symbols of the victory of the spirit over the flesh and of the faithful over their enemies. They were associated with the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; John 12:12–19), as well as with Revelations 7:9. In the Middle Ages, martyrs were often represented carrying them. Palm branches thus became associated with triumphant martyrdom as well.

Day), was recognizable in the *Elevatio* in part because he was surrounded *cum duobus pueris cereos deferentibus* (with two boys carrying candles).[84] The ties between light, Christ, renewal, and holiness were expressed during other feasts familiar to the laity—most significantly Candlemas—and would therefore probably have been understood by them, as well as by men and women religious.[85] The *Elevatio* also shows Christ carrying the Lord's standard, whose use here recalls iconographic depictions of the Harrowing of Hell.[86] As for the altar, behind which Christ appears to the Marys, its traditional association with death likely helped clarify for spectators and participants that it was the dead—and now resurrected—Christ who was returning at this moment of the ceremony.[87]

"Costumes"—such as the white stoles of the angels—also served to tell a clear story. In this case, they reminded spectators of the white garments worn by the angels in the gospels. Clothes further helped create visual groups and provide information about the characters. The Marys' *nitidissimis superpellicijs* (most beautiful surplices) and *niueis velis* (white veils), for instance, contrasted with the black worn by the other Benedictine nuns. They drew attention to these figures, positioning them as central in the *Visitatio*, and indicated these women's purity and innocence while also tying them to the joy of the Resurrection.[88] The use of *candelabris* (candelabra), carried around the nuns portraying the three Marys, had a similar effect. The Marys' shared connection with light simultaneously marked them as a

84 On the ties between light and Christ, see for example Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 4:136.

85 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 15–18.

86 "deinde superueniens sacerdos ebdomadarius ad dictam / capellam approprians alba indutus et capa cum duobus / diaconis. vno crucem deferente cum uexillo dominico desuper/ pendente" (afterwards, the officiating priest coming, dressed in an alb and cope, approaching the said chapel with two deacons—one bearing the cross with the Lord's standard hanging above it); "pul/set cum cruce ad predictum ostium. figurans dirupcionem / portarum inferni" (he [the priest representing Christ] strikes with the cross the door previously mentioned, representing the destruction of the gates of Hell).

87 "persona in dextera parte altaris tribus / simul occurrat mulieribus dicens" (the person [Christ] approaches the three women together from the right side of the altar). On the altar and death, see Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:35.

88 Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung*, 749–52; Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 123–24. See Luke 24:4; Mark 16:5; Matthew 28:2–3; John 20:12.

group, focused attention on them as the most visible "characters," and designated them as associates of Christ.

Interactions between figures, through gestures but also through dialogue and the expression of emotions, provided additional information about their relationships and status. The nuns portraying the three Marys were directed by the Ordinal to sing, at times together and at times separately: they formed audible as well as visible groups, who could come together in unison. Just before they arrive at the tomb, for instance: "Quartum uero uersum omnes simul concinant / scilicet. Iam iam ecce" (they all sing the fourth verse together, namely: Now, now, behold). They also ought to express the feelings of their "characters": the Marys sing "in an afflicted and humble voice" and, as Mary Magdalen tells the other Marys about having met the resurrected Christ, she does so "with a joyous voice." This provided further clarity as to the identity of these figures and their ties to each other, but it also had the benefit of charting the progression of the story from sadness towards the joy of the Resurrection. As for their kissing and prostration, they showed the sacredness of the figure of Christ, who also became recognizable to spectators.[89]

The gestures and movements of the performers continued to recall scriptural stories and their iconographic representations. The *Elevatio*, for instance, evoked the Gospel of Nicodemus and its mentions of "gates" and "doors" by enclosing those portraying the souls in Hell behind the door of the Magdalen chapel: "intrent capellam sancte / marie magdalene. ffigurantes animas sanctorum patrum ante / aduentum christi ad inferos descendentes et claudant sibi ostium / dicte capelle" (they enter the chapel of St Mary Magdalen, representing the souls of the Holy Fathers descending to Hell before the coming of Christ, and they close on themselves the door of the said chapel). As Christ had called out three times in this gospel for the doors to open, so the priest representing him at Barking sang three times. He accompanied each chant with a knock, visually and aurally expressing his desire to enter the gates: "pul/set cum cruce ad predictum ostium. figurans dirupcionem / portarum inferni" (he [Christ]strikes with the cross the door previously mentioned, representing the destruction of the gates of Hell). In the *Visitatio*, a cleric was sitting in front of the sepulchre: "illius angeli gerens / figuram qui ab ostio monumenti lapidem reuoluit. / et super

89 For example: "Tunc ille humi prostrate: teneant pedes eius et de/osculentur" (Then they, having prostrated themselves on the ground, hold his feet and kiss them). On kissing and prostration, see Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:244–51, 414, 368–69.

eum sedit" (assuming the traits of this angel who rolled the stone from the entrance of the monument and sat upon it), and another sat inside the sepulchre: "Tunc alius clericus in specie alterius angeli in sepul/cro residens" (Then, another cleric, in the aspect of the second angel, sitting in the sepulchre). Both reminded spectators and participants of depictions of angels at the tomb.[90]

The space used by the performers was imbued with rich layers of symbolism. The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were mostly performed in the eastern section of the church. This visually and symbolically connected them to the Resurrection, which they were representing. According to the gospels, the Resurrection had taken place early in the morning, just before sunrise.[91] The space of performance, with its associations with sunrise and with the sacred, and also the time of the performance—at Matins, before and as the sun was rising—helped spectators understand the story that the ceremonies and their performers were telling.[92] Yet the performers of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were not confined to the eastern section of the abbey church. The nuns portraying the Marys began the *Visitatio* in the west, and as they went towards the sepulchre, advanced in the choir. Their move west–east suggested their progress from ignorance to realization. By contrast with the eastern end of the church, the western side stood for the material, the non-spiritual, death, and sins.[93] In the *Elevatio*, as the clergy and nuns marched to Hell, they probably went out of the choir in the direction of the west and walked down a few steps. Choosing such a place to represent Hell fitted the symbolism of the church space: the place and time of performance thus contributed to interpretation of the events presented in the ceremonies.[94]

---

90 See Matthew 28:2; John 20:12; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4.

91 Matthew 28:1; Luke 24:1; Mark 16:2; John 20:1.

92 Harper, *Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy*, 74; Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:232.

93 The symbolism attached to the western and eastern sides of churches was probably understood by the laity present in the Barking Abbey church. Many churches had their main entrance built on their western end which became associated with the outside world. The high altar was usually placed on the opposite side of the church, marking it as the most sacred. This symbolism was moreover visible in church décor and architecture: scenes of the Last Judgement, for instance, which were regularly represented near a church's main entrance, often presented the damned souls on the western side of this entrance and the elected souls on its eastern side. See for example the Abbey Church of Payerne, Switzerland (wall paintings from about 1200).

94 Harris, *Medieval Theatre in Context*, 39–40.

The first effect of the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* on their spectators and participants was therefore to present them with a recognizable and memorable version of the story of the Resurrection, referencing Scriptures and iconographic depictions. For those familiar with this story, the ceremonies may have complemented their pre-existing knowledge and impressed the events on the memory through a non-textual medium. For spectators less well versed in Scriptures, they provided cues—through their use of a familiar space, of liturgical "props," of liturgical or common iconographic gestures and "costumes," and through the expression of emotion—to help the viewers understand and keep in mind the story they told, the relationships between their main figures, and the feelings that these figures were experiencing.

Knowing and remembering such scriptural and hagiographical stories was fundamental to the devotional lives of medieval people. Such stories gave them examples to follow: the cult of saints and the writing of the lives of saints were valued largely for that reason.[95] In the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, performers and spectators were presented with and even enacted examples of devotion—probably encouraging them to adopt a similar kind of piety. The scriptural and hagiographical story told by the ceremonies would have enabled those knowing and remembering it to pray with compassion for Christ, to direct their thoughts and efforts towards penance to ensure a peaceful afterlife, and to pray correctly during liturgical services. These significant strands of late medieval devotion are all addressed by the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri*, as will be explored in the rest of this chapter.

Compassionate Devotion

By the thirteenth century, "compassionate devotion to the suffering of Christ" had become widespread in England.[96] Such devotion focused on the image of the suffering Christ;[97] it stressed the importance of Christ's humanity, the magnitude his sacrifice when he had died for the sins of humankind, and thus the greatness of his love for the faithful. The faithful were urged to realize not only intellectually but also emotionally how important this sacrifice had been: they ought to have compassion with Christ. Only then would "all holy enflame and burn out [their] hearts in his love"; only then would they truly love Christ and therefore follow his example by keeping away

95 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 169.

96 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 234–35; McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, 2.

97 McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, 2.

from sin.[98] For such a realization to happen, meditation on the life of Christ was encouraged. Many texts, some in Latin and some in the vernacular—the first of which seem to have emerged in the eleventh century—aimed to "teach their readers…how to feel" by guiding them in such meditations.[99] As described in Nicholas Love's influential *Mirrour*, a translation and adaptation of pseudo-Bonaventure's *Meditationes de vitae Christi*, those meditating should imagine themselves present at the Passion: "mak[e] hym self as present in all that byfelle aboute the passioun and crucifixioun and effectuously / besily / auisely / and perseuerantly."[100] They should visualize Christ and his suffering, but also try to imagine how the people witnessing these events—the Virgin Mary in particular—had felt and take them as examples of devotion.[101] Mary was also a reminder of Christ's humanity, since his human side came from her and her lineage. To help the faithful feel compassion during their meditations, medieval texts and iconographic representations regularly emphasized in an extreme manner her distress, as well as that of other figures present during the Passion, and described the suffering of Christ in graphic details.[102]

The nuns of Barking Abbey would have been familiar with this type of devotion. McNamer argues that "compassionate meditation originated as a practice among female religious," and it seems to have been especially important for nuns and recluses.[103] Women religious were *sponsae Christi* (Brides of Christ), and it was essential for them to love Christ "rightly." They would in this way prove their value to their husband and ensure the validity of the marriage. Loving him rightly meant loving him with compassion. Cultivating such compassion was thus essential for the nuns' performance and

98 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 218; see also 285–87. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 234–36; Aers, "The Humanity of Christ," 17.

99 McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, 1–2.

100 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 218, 237; see also 285, 288.

101 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 216–18, 227. See also Gilchrist, *Contemplation in Action,* 143; Johnson, "Marian Devotion," 392; McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, 1.

102 See Erler, "Private Reading," 146; Aers, "The Humanity of Christ," 20–21; Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 302–8.

103 McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, 7. On women and affective devotion, see also Elliott, "Flesh and Spirit," 13–33; Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama*, 84–86; Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*; Newman, *Virile Women*.

realization of their identity.[104] At Barking, interest in this kind of devotion is attested by Abbess Sybil of Felton, who purchased Love's *Mirrour*, one of the most popular proponents of such devotional practices. The *Mirrour*, while probably meant for lay and religious men and women, informs its readers that the text it adapts was addressed specifically to a poor Clare, thus stressing its importance for women religious.[105]

Apart from the *Mirrour*, many of the works associated with the abbey of Barking insist on love: either the love of Christ, the Virgin Mary, God, and the saints for the faithful, or the love of the faithful for them. They present such love—which is often expressed in extreme ways—as a gateway to salvation: Christ's love has resulted in his sacrifice for the faithful and the faithful's love deepens their devotion and leads them to redemption.[106] Christ's humanity and his Passion are also regularly referenced, in Adgar's *Gracial* for instance.[107]

In addition to these texts, the liturgy of Barking Abbey would have encouraged reflection on the sacrifice and love of Christ, as his Passion and Resurrection were celebrated during Holy Week through complex liturgical ceremonies. Every day of the week mirrored a day in the life of Christ. Easter Sunday—the day of his Resurrection—was a time of affective change, both for Christ and for his followers. In the liturgy, mourning was followed by joy, and all were encouraged to rejoice and to laud God.[108] This same change is urged in Love's *Mirrour*: only those who have true compassion for the Passion of Christ can feel true joy for his Resurrection. This joy should be felt every Sunday but more specifically on Easter day. Compassionate devotion thus encompassed more emotions than just grief and sorrow.[109]

---

104 McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, 15–16.

105 McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, 128–30.

106 *St. Catherine*, ed. MacBain, lines 1357–64, 1449, 1482–83, 2560–63, 2662, 2677–78, 2687; Auslander, "Clemence and Catherine," 166. See also Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 157; *La vie d'Edouard*, ed. Bliss, 191–92; Kirchberger, "The Cleansing of Man's Soul," 290–91.

107 Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 219–21, 281–82. See also *St. Catherine*, ed. MacBain, lines 1400, 1437, 2655–56; Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 251–55.

108 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:89–107; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:84, 117–19; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 4:199–200, 210–11.

109 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 278–79.

Such liturgy would have been attended and performed by the nuns and clergy of Barking Abbey, but it would also have been—at times in the abbey church and at others in their parish church—witnessed by the laity of Barking. Compassionate devotion was also popular among the laity who, like men and women religious, were incited in the Late Middle Ages to imagine the salient moments of Christ's life either during worship or at home.[110] Visual representations were seen to be particularly conducive to such devotion. This was especially true in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when numerous images were produced either in primers or for parish churches, where they were often maintained by the laity. The image of the crucifix dominated rood screens, standard in English churches at the time, and framed every view the parishioners could have of the chancel, thereby connecting liturgical services with devotions to the Passion. Images of the Lord rising out of the sepulchre and showing his wounds (called Our Lord's Pity or the Image of Pity) were also popular, as were those of Christ resurrected, of the *arma Christ* (weapons of Christ), and of the *pieta* (the Virgin Mary holding her son).[111]

Compassionate devotion therefore probably informed the spiritual practice of the spectators of and participants in the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. The two ceremonies continued and expanded on this tradition through their content as well as their performative features. While the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* do not depict Christ's Passion, they focus on the humanity of Christ, on his death and Resurrection, and on love and compassion.[112] The emphasis on his humanity is already visible in the *Visitatio*'s choice of characters: Mary mother of James and Mary Salome were widely considered to be the daughters of St Anne and the sisters of the Virgin Mary. They "provided a symbolic affirmation of the rootedness of the Incarnate Christ within a real human family," thus recalling Christ's humanity.[113] In the Barking ceremony, both these women and Christ were represented by human, fragile bodies,

110 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars,* 19, 235–38.

111 Parker, "Architecture as Liturgical Setting," 269; Hamburger, "Art, Enclosure and the *Cura monialum*," 121–26; Lipton, "Images and their Uses," 277–78.

112 While the *Elevatio* focuses more on salvation than on the death of Christ, it ends with a prayer praising Christ's sacrifice: "Deus qui / pro nobis filium tuum <crucis patibulum subire voluisti, ut inimici a nobis expelleres potestatem>" (God, for us, you wanted to submit your son <to the yoke of the cross, to drive out the power of the enemy from us.>).

113 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 181.

further emphasizing for spectators and participants Christ's Incarnation in all its "fleshly reality."[114]

The *Visitatio* also focuses on Christ's Passion and on the sorrow of those loving him. As the ceremony begins, the Marys weep and lament his terrible death. The Ordinal's rubrics indicate that the Marys sing "together these verses in an afflicted and humble voice," that they address each other "while lamenting," and that Mary Magdalen is "sighing." In addition to the rubrics, the chants also express their grief and mention Christ's suffering:

> Heu nobis internas men/tes <quanti pulsant gemitus pro nostro consolatore, quo privamur misere, quem crudelis Iudeorum morti dedit populus> (Alas, what great laments <beat our inner thoughts for our consoler, from whom we are miserably deprived, whom the cruel people of the Jews delivered to death.>)
>
> Heu / misere <cur contigit videre mortem salvatoris?> (Alas, miserably! <Why has it happened, [that we] see the death of the saviour?>)
>
> Heu consolacio nostra <ut quid mortem sustinuit> (Alas, our consolation, <that he endured such a death.>)
>
> Heu redempcio israel <ut quid taliter agere voluit> (Alas, redemption of Israel, <that he was willing to accomplish such a deed.>)

The Marys are here realizing emotionally and rationally the sacrifice of Christ. Like Mary Magdalen and her two companions in the *Mirrour*, who "toke in her mynde the peynes the turmentis of here dere maistre" when walking to the tomb, the Marys of the *Visitatio* are performing compassionate meditation by remembering the Passion and emotionally responding to it.[115]

Spectators and participants in this ceremony may have followed their example and felt the same compassion. Studies on spectatorship have regularly used cognitive theory to explain spectators' affective responses. This theory suggests that "human beings empathize with others and learn to share their actions, intentions, and emotions by spontaneously mirroring them in their own motor system."[116] In the case of drama, cognitive scholars believe that spectators constantly shift between being aware that they are watching a play, decoding what the play is attempting to do and to say to

---

114 Robinson, "Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 617," 114–18; Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama*, 72–73.

115 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 265–68.

116 McGavin and Walker, *Imagining Spectatorship*, 44–48. See also McConachie, *Engaging Audiences*.

them, and empathizing with "characters" as they would with other human beings.[117] Such empathy draws spectators into the story performed in front of them. In the case of the *Visitatio*, spectators and participants may have been especially prone to feel the sorrow and compassion expressed by the Marys because, as argued by Meg Twycross in her study of the York Resurrection pageant, these three women could serve as "embodiments of mourning" and channels for the spectators' own feelings: at Barking, as at York, the Marys do not lament their own specific fate but express instead common tropes of compassionate devotion. The spectators of the *Visitatio* were thus not presented with highly individualized responses to Christ's death, but rather with examples of devotion, which they could appropriate.[118] Performers—the nuns portraying the three Marys especially—were perhaps even more moved by the ceremonies. As will be explored in the next part of this chapter, nuns were incited to feel an association with the Marys. They may also have been aware of a belief, traced by Esther Meier to the beginning of the thirteenth century, which stated that outward gestures of prayer reflected or affected one's inner state of mind.[119] Performing the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, expressing the compassion and devotion of these three exemplary women, may have encouraged the nuns representing them to feel the same.

Watching and performing such affective reactions thus guided both spectators and participants towards the appropriate feelings that they should harbour about the death and Resurrection of Christ. The Marys expressed their feelings through their words and their behaviour, but their sorrow and joy may also have been tied to the—now lost—music of their chants. While most scholars agree that liturgical plainchant did not contribute to characterization or to the affective expression of "characters" in liturgical ceremonies, they recognize that it carried symbolic and liturgical layers.[120] Music in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* did not function as it would in an opera or in a modern musical, but I believe that it did possess the ability to stir feelings. Compositions specific to the ceremonies would have stood out to the nuns and clerics familiar with the liturgy of their house. These compositions were almost universally tied to affective situations, either to the laments of the

---

117 See McConachie, "Falsifiable Theories for Theatre," 555–68; Stevenson, *Performance, Cognitive Theory, and Devotional Culture*, 95.

118 Twycross, "Playing 'The Resurrection,'" 284–85, 294.

119 Meier, "Turning toward God."

120 Hughes, "Liturgical Drama," 52–53; Woolf, *English Mystery Plays*, 40; Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 180; Hiley, *Western Plainchant*, 263.

Marys or to their joy at the Resurrection of Christ.[121] Music would therefore have brought attention to these passages. Differences in pitch and emphasis may even have caused affective responses for the spectators and performers.[122] In the Middle Ages, music was perceived by some as a trigger of feelings, which could then lead to prayer: Isidore of Seville, for instance, quotes Augustine in his description of music as helping souls to be moved and feel piety.[123] Music, as well as the enactment of feelings, thus perhaps facilitated for the Barking nuns, clergy, and parishioners their compassionate meditations on this scriptural passage.

Not only do the *Visitatio*'s Marys express their feelings, they also articulate their intense love for Christ and mention his dead body—two other important components of compassionate devotion. The reason they have woken up so early is, after all, to see this body: "Iam iam ecce <iam properemus ad tumulum, unguentes dilecti corpus sanctissimum>" (Now, now, behold <now, we must hasten towards the tomb, anointing the most sacred body of the beloved>). The Marys' inability to find Christ's body distresses them: when Mary Magdalen is asked by an angel why she is weeping (*Mulier, quid ploras?*), she says: "Quia tulerunt dominum meum <et nescio ubi posuerunt eum>" (Because they have taken away my Lord <and I don't know where they have put him>). The human, dead body of Christ, which has gone through torments and pains, is therefore the focal point around which the story of the Marys is articulated. It is him that they wish to honour, him that they are looking for, him that they weep for. Christ as a man rather than Christ as God is the object of their attention and affective reactions. The focus of these figures on the body of Christ is also expressed elsewhere in the *Visitatio*, when they touch either a substitute for this body or the body itself: the Marys "teneant pedes eius et de/osculentur" (they hold his [Christ's] feet and kiss them), then "deosculentur lo/cum ubi positus erat crucifixus" (they kiss effusively the place where the crucified one had

---

121 The seven chants seemingly unique to Barking Abbey are: *Quondam dei* (At a certain time, God's), *Appropinquans ergo sola* (Therefore, approaching alone), *Licet mihi vobiscum ire* (It is permitted for me to go with you), *Te suspiro et cetera* (I sigh to you et cetera), *Gratulari et letari et cetera* (Give thanks and rejoice et cetera), *Ihesus ille nazarenus et cetera* (Jesus of Nazareth et cetera), *O gens dira* (O cruel people).

122 Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 174, 178–80, 200.

123 Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 49. See also Durandus and Adgar: Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:169–76; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 265–75.

been put), and Mary Magdalen "sudarium prebeat il/lis ad deosculandum" (presents the *sudarium* for them [the disciples] to kiss).

Touching and kissing were regularly incorporated into late medieval devotional practices: images, but also liturgical vessels, were kissed and touched by the faithful. Tactile devotion was probably familiar to the nuns of Barking Abbey, although it was generally done in private in the monastery. It was perceived as an expression of worship and respect, but also love.[124] Touch was thus easily tied to compassionate devotion.[125] Such haptic love was often connected with the figure of Mary Magdalen. Durandus, for instance, when describing the Mass, states that the kissing of the chalice by the priest signifies that the priest is present "de toute l'affection de son cœur" (with all the affection of his heart), as had been Mary Magdalen when she wept at the tomb of Christ. Kissing the chalice also represents the kissing of Christ's feet by the Marys.[126] When performing the *Visitatio*, the participants publicly enacted these scenes of longing for and touching Christ. The three nuns therefore represented through their performance the experience of the exemplary Marys, but they also themselves touched an image of Christ, as they would probably have been used to doing during their private devotional time.

The emphasis on touch in the ceremonies seems to be contradicted by another type of devotion expressed during the *Visitatio* and tied to Mary Magdalen. While Mary Magdalen was associated with touch in the Middle Ages, she was just as much associated with unrealized touch. This was due to a passage in John (20:17), which the *Visitatio* depicts by extensively quoting from the Vulgate: after the Resurrection of Christ, when Mary Magdalen recognized him, she attempted to touch him but he said:

> Noli me tangere <nondum enim ascendi ad patrem meum. Vade autem fratres meos et dic eis: ascendo ad patrem meum et patrem vestrum, deum meum et deum vestrum>
>
> Do not touch me, <for I have not yet ascended to my father. But go to my brothers and tell them: I am ascending to my father and your father, to my God and your God>

---

124 See for example at Barking: Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 118–20; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:261.

125 Lipton, "Images and their Uses," 255, 280; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:203; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:149–50.

126 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:368–69.

The Mary Magdalen of the *Noli me tangere* was at times presented as an example for the faithful: they too ought to look “beyond corporeal sight” and believe in the Resurrection; they too ought to believe by watching rather than touching the body of Christ (the consecrated Host in this case); they too ought to turn from grief to joy, from death to life.[127] The *Visitatio* depicts this journey of Mary Magdalen: her focus on touch is challenged with the *Noli me tangere* when Christ directs her towards higher realities.[128] However, later in the *Visitatio*, all three Marys touch the feet of Christ. This second passage—taken from Matthew—seems to invalidate the first. Yet, the women do not need this touch to believe in the Resurrection: after her first meeting with Christ, Mary Magdalen already “communicates her joy to her companions with a joyous voice” and exhorts Mary mother of James and Mary Salome to rejoice.[129] The *Visitatio* thus first shows Christ teaching Mary Magdalen that he is more than a man. It is only when she has understood this that Christ—appearing from the right side of the altar, the side of joy, Heaven, and the Resurrection—allows her to touch him. This echoes the version of this scene found in the *Mirrour*.[130]

The performance of the Barking ceremonies thus presented a complex and contrasted version of exemplary devotion. It reminded spectators and participants that Christ was more than a man and invited them to follow the example of Mary Magdalen: to recognize him as the resurrected Son of God before worshipping him in an affective and tactile way. Yet it also focused—through its textual content and dramatic features—on fundamental elements of compassionate devotion: on Christ’s body and humanity, on the suffering that this body had gone through, and on mapping the emotional journey of those who had loved Christ and witnessed his death.

The performance’s dramatic features also probably facilitated for spectators and participants another component of compassionate devotion: the process of imagining themselves watching the life of Christ. The Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* echo here textual meditations on Christ’s Passion. As argued by McNamer, these “script-like texts...ask their readers to imagine

---

127 Eggert, “Textile Perspectives,” 267; Baert, “An Odour, A Taste, a Touch,” 125; Taschl-Erber, “Between Recognition and Testimony,” 89–91. For more on medieval interpretations of this passage, see De Pril and Dupont, “The Four Latin Church Fathers,” 112–15, 117; Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 265–68; Beckwith, *Signifying God*, 84–85.

128 Dümpelmann, “Visual – Textile – Tactile,” 243–45.

129 *Gratulari et letari et cetera* (Give thanks and rejoice et cetera).

130 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 269–70.

themselves present at scenes of Christ's suffering and to perform compassion for that suffering victim in a private drama of the heart." Ties with drama are thus already present in these texts, which draw attention to the act of witnessing and often use the first-person singular to involve readers.[131] Yet the public performance of this "private drama of the heart" at Barking abbey may have helped spectators and participants in their imagination. While the experience would have differed from a private moment of devotion, which they might have experienced when reading meditative texts, it may have nourished such future moments.[132]

Like the images conducive to compassionate devotion found in medieval churches and manuscripts, the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* had a visual quality. They presented a living tableau, and they also created ties with existing iconography: they took place in a church, filled with images—some of which probably depicted the death and Resurrection of Christ. The sepulchre used for their performance, for instance, may have recalled (and included) the Image of Pity, where the Lord rose out of the sepulchre with his wounds on display.[133] The two ceremonies thus helped their spectators and participants visualize the scenes of the life of Christ. The action of watching was then emphasized by the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* through their performative nature. As explained by McGavin and Walker in their book *Imagining Spectatorship*, the lack of realism in medieval drama—also present in the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio*—led spectators to constantly adjust between being engaged in the story performed and being aware of the illusion. Awareness of the illusion was accompanied for spectators by an awareness of their part in it: they were watching this illusion; they were witnessing a performance.[134] The Barking spectators were thus made aware of the very thing that they ought to do when meditating on the life of Christ: imagine themselves *watching* this life. Furthermore, the figures of the Marys were witnesses to the Resurrection. Spectators watched these women witness Christ resurrected: this double act of witnessing would probably have heightened their awareness of it, but also emphasized the similarity between them and the exemplary Marys.

131 McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, 7, 12, 17–18.

132 On the differences between a private and collective experience of such compassionate devotion, see Lipton, "Witnessing and Legal Affect," 158.

133 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 108–9.

134 McGavin and Walker, *Imagining Spectatorship*, 37; McGavin, "Medieval Theatricality and Spectatorship," 489–90.

While performance of the *Visitatio* demonstrated the importance of watching when it came to devotion, it was not merely a visual experience, but a synesthetic one. Although the senses were, as discussed earlier, important for memory, they could also be tied to compassionate meditation. This is expressed by Love in the *Mirrour* when he praises Mary Magdalen for "casting her eyes and her heart and her ears into hym [Christ] only."[135] When praying, both the heart and the senses should thus be focused on Christ. The dramatic features of the two Barking liturgical ceremonies may have served this purpose and have drawn the spectators towards Christ. As for the performers, the ceremonies engaged their senses even more extensively. Such participation was recommended by compassionate meditations, which asked the faithful not only to visualize scenes of the life of Christ, but to imagine themselves inside these scenes. This imaginative inclusion of the self was probably facilitated for the participants in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* who performed these Scriptural scenes with their own bodies and voices.[136]

Spectators may also have felt included in the ceremonies' scriptural narrative due their ties with the people and objects included in their performance. Nuns and clergy would have seen their sisters and brothers playing active parts in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. The liturgical objects and vestments used for the ceremonies would have been familiar to them, as would have been the "set" (the church of Barking Abbey): they all belonged to "their" community. To a lesser extent, the local laity may have felt the same, especially if they knew some of the performers. Parishioners were moreover included in the ceremonies in two other ways. Firstly, they participated through their bequests made to the abbey church. An object that they had financed may have been used in these performative representations of Scriptures: Christ could have risen out of "their" sepulchre, the Marys carried "their" candles. The prestige of Barking Abbey attracted numerous donors external to the parochial territory: no recorded fourteenth- and fifteenth-century benefactors seem to have been parishioners. However, it is probable that some Barking parishioners also made—perhaps smaller—donations to the abbey. Even poorer people are frequently recorded as donating to churches: the endowments of light, in particular—generally made either for the sepulchre, for church images, or for altars—has been described by

135 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 156.

136 For more conventual multi-sensory practices in relation to "affective piety," see Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent*, 19–37.

Duffy as the "the single most popular expression of piety in the wills of the late medieval laity."[137]

The second instance of the laity's inclusion in the Barking Abbey *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* was of a more direct kind. The Ordinal records two addresses to the *populus* in the ceremonies: the first occurring at the end of the *Elevatio*, the other towards the end of the *Visitatio*. These addresses presented to spectators the Resurrection and its announcement:

> et interim asportabit cor/pus dominicum de sepulcro incipiendo antiphonam. Christus resurgens / coram altari verso uultu ad populum tenendo corpus domini/cum in manibus suis inclusum cristallo

> And in the meantime, he [the officiating priest] takes the Lord's body from the sepulchre, while beginning the antiphon: Christ rising...in front of the altar, his face turned towards the people, while holding the Lord's body enclosed in crystal in his hands

> Tunc marie stantes / super gradus ante altare uertentes se ad populum canant hoc / Responsorium. Alleluia surrexit dominus de sepulcro

> the Marys then, standing on the steps in front of the altar, turning themselves towards the people, sing this responsory: Alleluia the Lord has risen from the sepulchre.

These two moments modified the lay spectators' relation to the ceremonies and included them more clearly in the celebrations they had been witnessing. In the *Visitatio*, the laity found itself in the role of the first people who had heard of the Resurrection. The *Elevatio*'s instance of inclusion featured the Host—signifying Christ resurrected—presented by a priest to the *populus*. The use in this case of the Host as Christ, instead of a priest, had the benefit of transforming what had been in its first part a representation of scriptural events into a moment which, much like the Mass, made these events present once more. The Host did not look like Jesus, although it is possible it was encased in a wooden image of Christ. Yet using it in the *Elevatio* put the congregation in the Real Presence of Christ and allowed them to experience the event of his Resurrection alongside him.

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri* of Barking Abbey, through their content, their synesthetic and performative nature, and their various types of inclusion therefore had the effect of fostering compassionate meditation: they helped spectators and participants imagine themselves present at the scriptural scenes performed in the Barking Abbey church and feel compas-

137 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 34–35, 361–62.

sion for Christ and for those who loved him. The use of the Host also encouraged such piety due to its connection to the Passion of Christ: the Host was linked to the narrative of Maundy Thursday and to the sacrifice of the Mass, and it effectively showed the "gift of grace" obtained through Christ's Passion. Those witnessing the *Elevatio* would have been reminded of the sufferings endured by Christ for their salvation.[138]

Penance

Compassionate meditation was thus intimately tied to salvation. This was due to its focus on Christ's sacrifice, but also because it was perceived to be efficient in making people follow his example. If they felt guilt and grief about his death as well as tremendous love for him, they would be keener to live a pious life.[139] Such an opinion was for instance expressed in William Flete's *De remediis contra temptationes*. This treatise, written in the same Barking manuscript as Love's *Mirrour*, presents "consolation and practical remedies for spiritual temptations" and advises readers to practise compassionate devotion. Flete insists on the wounds of Christ and on the importance of thinking about his Passion to escape evil: "and hyȝe þee to hym and hyde þee in þe pit of hys syde, þenkyng on hys passioun, and holde þee stille þere; and þe enemye schal not fynde þee."[140] The devotional focus on Christ's suffering was therefore accompanied at Barking—as well as more broadly in the Late Middle Ages—with a focus on keeping away from sin and on penance. Flete's *De remediis*, as well as other Barking texts such as *The Clensyng of Mannes Soule* and the *Chastising of God's Children*, are all directly concerned with this subject, and examples of penance appear in further works associated with the nunnery.[141]

---

138 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 108–9; Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 9, 106, 296. Parishioners may have been particularly aware of such connections between the consecrated Host and Christ's Passion because certain sepulchres were used for the feast of Corpus Christi as well. Corpus Christi fraternities were also often those in charge of the maintenance of the Easter sepulchre. Aers, "The Humanity of Christ," 24.

139 Kieckhefer, "Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion," 102–3.

140 Lamothe, "An Edition of the Latin and Four Middle English Versions," 64, 216–17.

141 Lamothe, "An Edition of the Latin and Four Middle English Versions," 1–2, 37, 64; Everett, "*The Clensyng Of Mannes Soule*," 265–71; Everett, "A Critical Edition," 29–31. See also Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 245–46; *La vie d'Edouard*, ed. Bliss, 166, 189; *La traduction champenoise de La vie des pères*, ed. Grossel, 382–86.

This is unsurprising at a time when fears about the torments of Purgatory were prevalent.[142] To avoid such torments and reach Heaven rapidly, it was essential to know both how to avoid sins and how to do penance. Such knowledge was to be imparted to men and women religious but also to the laity. High to late medieval manuals for the instruction of the clergy insisted on the necessity of teaching parishioners the basis of the faith. A schema for the instruction of the laity and of the priests instructing them was established at Archbishop Peckham's 1281 Lambeth Council. It was recorded in the influential *De informacione simplicium*, more widely known under the name *Ignorantia sacerdotum*.[143] The *Clensyng*, found at Barking Abbey, shows the influence of these Councils. These texts' central catechetical concerns were the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Seven Sacraments, the Seven Works of Mercy, the Seven Virtues, and the Seven Deadly Sins, all tied to the question of penance.

The nunnery of Barking therefore seems to have been concerned with the penance of its members, but also with that of its parishioners. The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* appear to belong to the abbey's means of protecting its nuns, clergy, and laity and of directing them towards a happy afterlife. The two ceremonies took place on Easter Day, a day associated with salvation because it celebrated Christ's sacrifice and triumphant return, but also because it was the traditional day of confession before the annual communion of the laity.[144] Holy week in general was focused on penance and salvation. Penitents were usually expelled from the community on Ash Wednesday and reconciled by the bishop on Maundy Thursday. On Good Friday, parishioners were encouraged to kneel around the sepulchre and lament their sins. This paschal time was commonly understood to be a time of regeneration, during which the faithful were invited to return to the Lord, to ask for forgiveness, and to remember the benefits made possible for them by Christ's death and Resurrection.[145]

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* echo this Easter penitential focus and probably reminded spectators and participants of their salvation and of the pen-

142 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 338, 350; Rousseau, *Saving the Souls of Medieval London*, 2.

143 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 53–54.

144 Nuns generally received communion about once a month. McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, 346.

145 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 36; Dudley, "Sacramental Liturgies in the Middle Ages," 229–30. See also Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 4:99–225; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:89–101.

ance they ought to do to attain it. First, they presented a scriptural story to them. As stated in Flete's *De remediis*, meditation on such stories was one of the best protections against sin.[146] This story is moreover that of the victory of Christ over sin and death. In the *Elevatio*, the souls of the prophets and the patriarchs praise this victory in their chants.[147] In the *Visitatio*, Christ's Resurrection and the hope that it represents for the salvation of believers are spoken of by various figures. The Marys, for instance, call Christ *salvatoris* (saviour) and *redempcio israel* (redemption of Israel). The disciples and the choir then beg the resurrected king for mercy: "Scimus christum <surrexisse a mortuis vere; tu nobis, victor rex, miserere>" (We know that Christ really <is resurrected from the dead; O you victorious king, have mercy on us>).

The *Visitatio* also features the figure of Mary Magdalen, who was considered "the example of perfect penance."[148] When she wept, kissed and washed the feet of Christ at the house of Simon the Leper—as recounted in the *Mirrour*, the *Gracial*, and the *Clensyng*—Christ praised her actions, her selflessness, her devotion, and her regret.[149] While the *Visitatio* did not include this famous scene of repentance, it showed Mary Magdalen kissing the feet of Christ at the tomb. The connection between these two moments is made by the *Mirrour*: after Mary Magdalen recognized Christ resurrected, "she ran to hym / and fallynge doun to the erthe wolde haue kissed his feet / as sche

146 Lamothe, "An Edition of the Latin and Four Middle English Versions," 64. It is also presented as a remedy against Sloth in *The Ancrene Riwle*, ed. Sharples. This translation is based on the Nero (London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero, A.xiv) manuscript, collated with parts from the Titus (London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus, D.xviii) and Cleopatra (London, British Library, MS Cotton Cleopatra, C.vi) manuscripts. Hasenfratz's edition is based on the Corpus version of the *Ancrene Wisse* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 402).

147 *Cum rex glorie* (When the king of Glory), *Consurgit Christus tumulo* (Christ rises from the tomb), *Quesumus auctor* (We pray you, O source), *Gloria tibi domine* (Glory to you O Lord), *Christus resurgens ex mortuis* (Christ rising from the dead).

148 Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 204. In Barking texts, as was the case for much of the Middle Ages since Gregory the Great (560–604), Mary Magdalen, the repentant sinner in Luke 7, and Mary of Bethany are seen to be the same woman. De Pril and Dupont, "The Four Latin Church Fathers," 119.

149 Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 15; Dinkova-Bruun, "The *Noli me Tangere* Motif," 140. For more on Mary Magdalen and penance at Barking, see Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 117–21, 157; Everett, "A Critical Edition," 26; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 279. On the Feast of Mary Magdalen, the chants *Quoniam multum* and *O mirum et magnum* were sung at Barking. They refer to Luke 7:47–49 and to the woman washing the feet of Christ. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:261.

was wonted bifore."[150] The inclusion in the *Visitatio* of the prostration of Mary Magdalen, and later, of the three Marys before Christ could also, as discussed by Ogden in his study on gestures, convey repentance—perhaps here because the Marys had been mistakenly searching for his body.[151] As mentioned when discussing compassionate meditation, the *Visitatio* further presented to its spectators and participants the *Noli me tangere* scene, also significant to the perception of Mary Magdalen as an example of penance. It was believed to be an additional step in her journey from sin to perfection. According to various texts, including the *Legenda aurea* which may have been known at Barking according to Powsnett's list, Mary Magdalen continued after the Resurrection to move towards the spiritual life and even became a hermit in Sainte-Beaume.[152] This new role must be understood in the context of the "intensification of confession in everyday life as a personal path to salvation and perfection" in the thirteenth century, and it tied Mary Magdalen even more closely to penance.[153]

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* further contained penitential practices that converged around the figure of Mary Magdalen. The three women portraying the Magdalen and the other Marys had to be purified before the beginning of the *Visitatio*. This moment of purification included a confession with the *Confiteor* (I confess).[154] It also strongly recalled the descriptions of confession found in *The Clensyng of Mannes Soule*, which spoke of washing the soul and making it white.[155] The use of a white "costume" in the performance of the *Visitatio* visually depicted what the *Clensyng* stated was happening to the souls of those who confessed—in this case, to the souls of the three nuns. These nuns changed their clothes just as they were about to represent the three Marys: this change seems to have implied that the Marys, as well as the nuns, were pure. Moreover, the change of clothes and—it seems—the *Confiteo*r took place in the chapel of Mary Magdalen, binding her once more

150 See Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 117–19, 250–51, 268–69.

151 Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 166.

152 See Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 124–42. The legend of Magdalen as a hermit seems to have been circulating in Europe by the mid-ninth century already. By the thirteenth century, this idea had become widespread among preachers. The location of her grotto only appears in texts from the twelfth century onwards.

153 Baert, "An Odour, A Taste, a Touch," 118–24; Dinkova-Bruun, "The *Noli me Tangere* Motif," 140.

154 For other uses of the *Confiteor* in the Barking liturgy, see for instance *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:356.

155 Everett, "A Critical Edition," 1–2.

with confession and penance. Through visual and audible means, as well as the use of familiar gestures and of the abbey church, the performance of the *Visitatio* therefore tied penance practices known to the nuns and clergy of Barking—and perhaps to members of the laity—to Mary Magdalen (and to a lesser extent the other two Marys).

After establishing the Marys as penitential figures, the *Visitatio* invited the three nuns representing them to follow their example. Like Mary Magdalen who had gone through penance before she could have her insight during the *Noli me tangere* and then lead a holy life, sisters had to confess and be purified first but could then perform part of her journey towards perfection. For the three nuns portraying the Marys, performing this ceremony which contained both effective purification rituals and the story of Mary Magdalen, would have shown them—and those watching them—the power granted by purification and penance.

The performance of penance continued in the *Elevatio*, which is even more focused than the *Visitatio* on the theme of the salvation of the soul. It is one of the rare extant *Elevationes* to dramatize the Harrowing of Hell.[156] In this ceremony, the clergy as well as the entire convent of Barking represented trapped souls asking Christ to release them and bring them to Heaven:

> quidam sacerdos in capella existente antiphonam A porta inferi / quam subinferat cantrix cum toto conuentu. Erue domine <animam meam>

> a certain priest being inside the chapel begins the antiphon: From the gate of Hell…To which the *cantrix* adds with the whole community: Bring out, O Lord, <my soul>

Their dramatic performance was also "real"; they played trapped souls that represented all those in need of salvation – including the performers. They thus enacted their own hope of going to Heaven after death. Christ's redemptive sacrifice, which had allowed for their salvation, must have been particularly present in the mind of the priest portraying Christ. During the *Elevatio*, he stood in for Christ, just as Christ at his death had stood in "for both God and humanity—in God's place and on behalf of humanity, making possible the founding atonement."[157]

---

156 Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 149. Barking is the only known female religious house attached to a Harrowing of Hell ceremony.

157 *sacerdos representabit personam Christi* (the priest represents the person of Christ). See Beckwith, *Signifying God*, 71.

For the clergy and nuns of Barking Abbey, active participation in the performance of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* therefore enabled them to witness but also to perform acts of penance and requests for salvation in a narrative depicting the Resurrection of Christ the saviour. They were reminded both of the importance of these events for the salvation not only of scriptural figures but of all humankind, and of their responsibility to honour Christ's sacrifice by following the examples of these figures (by repenting their sins and by living a pious life).

The laity present in the abbey church were not as directly involved in the ceremonies, but they were—as explored when discussing compassionate devotion—included in other ways. The parishioners' bequests to the religious house also may have led them to reflect on their own penance and redemption and may have emphasized for them the ties of Easter with salvation—essential to the understanding of this feast. This is because the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* prominently featured two popular types of bequests associated with the Resurrection: the sepulchre and candles. While candles were relatively affordable, only someone wealthy could have afforded to donate a sepulchre. Yet the "middling and respectable poor" could also, as individuals or members of guilds, have funded sections of Christ's tomb, or participated in its maintenance.[158] According to Duffy, sepulchres were essential to the celebrations of Holy Week in England: every church was supposed to have one and churchwardens' accounts show expenses related to its acquisition. Little is known about the Barking Abbey sepulchre and its origin. It must have been large enough to allow a minimum of two people inside and was built, at least partly, on Good Friday by the sacristan.[159]

Both this sepulchre and the candles used in *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* were symbols of death. As the Marys approached the sepulchre and then kissed it, they lamented the death of their Lord. The Barking sepulchre may furthermore have been built on a tomb: this was common practice and, obviously, emphasized its identity as a place of the dead, while inviting comparison and contrast between Christ's death and that of individuals buried in Barking Abbey. As for candles, they were regularly used during death-related cel-

---

158 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 3, 122, 30–33, 134–35, 349.

159 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:107–9, 98. In the *Visitatio*, an angel was seated inside, and the three Marys entered to kiss the place where Jesus had been laid. They might have taken turns to enter, and the sepulchre might then only have needed to accommodate two people. It might also have been large enough for four. For more on sepulchres, see Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 32; Harris, *Medieval Theatre in Context*, 37–39; Sheingorn, *Easter Sepulchre*, 3–25.

ebrations or near death-related objects, such as the Easter sepulchre. Those donated for the sepulchre by guild members were often burnt at the donor's funeral.[160] Candles thus played a similar role to sepulchre donations: both associated the members' death with Christ's, but—because of the significance of Christ's sacrifice and Resurrection—they also displayed hope for their salvation. There is a record at Barking of one candle which could have served this purpose. It was burnt in front of the sepulchre from Good Friday until Easter Sunday: "Et tunc abbatissa offerat cereum qui iugiter ardeat ante sepulcrum nec extinguatur" (And then the abbess presents a candle that should burn without interruption in front of the sepulchre and not be extinguished). Various other candles—possibly donated by the parishioners or other lay benefactors—were part of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*: they accompanied Jesus, his victory over death, figures who were saved by him (patriarchs and prophets), and figures essential to the narrative of the Resurrection (the Marys). They tied salvation to Christ's Resurrection and, as a proxy for their donors, might have reassured them as to their soul's fate.[161] The sepulchre also came to signify victory over death: in the *Elevatio*, the priest retrieved the Host from it to symbolize the Resurrection, and at the end of the *Visitatio*, the empty tomb was transformed into a symbol of life. Mary Magdalen pointed towards it when she announced the news of the Resurrection:

> Sepulcrum christi <viuentis, et gloriam vidi resurgentis>. Angelicos testes <sudarium et vestes>. digi/to indicet locum vbi angelus sedebat
>
> I have seen the sepulchre of the <living Christ and the glory of the resurrected one; the angelic witnesses, the *sudarium* and the clothes.> She indicates with her finger the place where the angel was sitting

Such bequests were further associated with salvation because they were perceived to be means to help one's soul exit Purgatory. In exchange for them, churches and religious communities prayed for their donors.[162] Patrons also hoped that those seeing their donations would pray for them. These prayers could even be recompensed by the intervention of the dead in favour of those praying.[163] Seeing the sepulchre and the lights in the *Elevatio*

160 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 34–37, 96, 361–62.

161 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 37.

162 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 4:224; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 3, 122, 30–33, 134–35, 349.

163 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 115–16, 40, 349.

and *Visitatio* may have encouraged lay spectators to pray for donors in the hope of helping these donors' and/or their own souls.

The second type of inclusion of the laity in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*—the display of the Host—may have stirred similar feelings. The Eucharist was considered helpful for the dead: Masses dedicated to them were perceived as effective in shortening their time in Purgatory. Seeing the Host could have reminded spectators of the importance of prayers for the souls of the deceased. If they had not yet confessed, the consecrated Host could moreover have inspired repentance. In the Late Middle Ages, there was an anxiety about taking the Host without being reconciled with God, a sense of fear before the Judge.[164] Seeing the Host may thus have helped the laity understand and prepare for the momentous and potentially dangerous event of communion.[165] The priest's gesture in the *Elevatio* differed however from the Elevation and display of the Host at Mass. During Mass, the priest turned his back to the people. He performed a "ritual re-enactment of the Last Supper" on behalf of those present in church. Through this "sacrifice of the Mass," "the world was renewed and the Church was constituted."[166] The Elevation was thus an act done for the community of the faithful yet performed without acknowledging them. In the *Elevatio*, on the other hand, the priest faced the *populus* and presented the Host *to* them: *verso uultu ad populum* (his face turned towards the people). Such a deliberate display—in a moment which is meant in the *Elevatio* to represent the Resurrection—may have shown, more clearly than the Elevation did, the people's inclusion in the benefits gained from Christ's death and his Resurrection: it was for their salvation that he had died.

This display of the Host, as well as the probable inclusion of bequests in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, would therefore have encouraged the laity to think about penance and salvation. They would have been reminded of their death, but they would also have been given hope by seeing their death tied with Christ's Resurrection. Underlining the significance of the Resurrection for the laity's salvation, the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* may have suggested

164 McCue, "Liturgy and the Eucharist," 433–37; Everett, "A Critical Edition," 4, 44–45.

165 It is specifically said, in a sermon from the late fourteenth-century Vernon Manuscript, to help counteract Sloth and its effects. Wenzel, "Sloth in Middle English Devotional Literature," 310–13; The Vernon Manuscript, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Poet. a. 1, fol. 196v. See also Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 95–100; Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 148–52, 155–56, 65–69.

166 Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 3, 5; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 91.

to them that they too, like Christ, could gain victory over death. The ceremonies moreover invited parishioners to participate in their salvation by encouraging them to pray for the souls of others and to reflect on the afterlife in the hope that they would prepare for their own death.

Once they had repented, confessed, and atoned for their sins, the medieval faithful were urged to avoid further sinning. At Barking, Flete's *De remediis* and *The Clensyng of Mannes Soule* would have offered nuns and clergy guidelines to help the soul remain pure. These treatises encourage praying and reading Scriptures, but Flete also speaks of the importance of not spending too much time alone and of allowing some recreation. He further emphasizes the singing of psalms as helpful for devotion. While the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were perhaps not perceived as recreational, they had dramatic qualities and a communal aspect, they presented scriptural stories, featured liturgical chants, and invited prayer. They thus fit remarkably well Flete's recommendations for fighting against sin and strengthening the faith.[167] They also match the *Clensyng*'s emphasis on meditation: like the *Mirrour*, the *Clensyng* presents meditation as a moment of remembering and focusing on God and on Christ's Incarnation and Passion.[168] As was explored when discussing compassionate devotion and the reading of Scriptures—where such meditation was already encouraged—the performance of the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* favoured a memorial, meditational focus on the life of Christ.

Through their dramatic features, their scriptural content, their inclusion of bequests, their display of the Host, their involvement of performers in penitential activities, and their presentation of the Marys as penitential examples, the Barking ceremonies may thus have had the effect of encouraging penance among their spectators and performers, and they may also have kept them away from sin after they had been cleansed.

Worship during the Liturgy

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* may further have fulfilled a devotional purpose due to their ties with liturgy. Like these two ceremonies, liturgy in general recalled the life and actions of Christ, although it did so through a symbolism that was not necessarily clear to uninitiated observers.[169] Yet it was essential for those performing and watching liturgy to understand it,

---

167 Lamothe, "An Edition of the Latin and Four Middle English Versions," 1–2, 27, 209.

168 Kirchberger, "The Cleansing of Man's Soul," 294.

169 Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:83–84; Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 48–60, 222.

because they were meant to respond to it with prayer and, as expressed by the *Clensyng of Mannes Soule*, such prayer was considered to be especially important.[170] Barking Abbey seems to have been keen to facilitate a better understanding of liturgy and thus, to make such prayer possible. In addition to texts about the Eucharist, the nunnery possessed a Latin commentary on the *Pater Noster* (*Olim* Foyle, MS), an anonymous *De sacramento altaris* (?Cardiff, Public Library, 3.833), John Beleth's influential *Summa de ecclasiasticis officiis*, *L'assomption de Notre Dame* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Fr. 1038), and Durandus' *Rationale*, a foundational treatise on the liturgy, its meaning, and its symbolism. Powsnett's will further reports two collections of sermons.[171]

While the abbey's nuns and clergy were thus encouraged to understand their liturgy, this was also probably the case for the lay people living in their surroundings. Liturgy was a different experience for the laity than it was for nuns and clerics. During the services, parishioners were confined to the nave; they were not involved in calls and responses and were rarely addressed.[172] Yet, for them, as well as for those in religious orders, the recommended behaviour was participation through prayer. From the fourteenth and early fifteenth century, manuals and treatises—such as the *Lay Folk's Mass Book* or John Lydgate's *The Noble History of the Exposition of the Mass*—increasingly recommended that the laity use prayers during the liturgy which either paraphrased what happened in the various moments of the Mass or explained these moments according to the Passion and to Christian doctrine. Developments in late medieval devotion continued to

170 Kirchberger, "The Cleansing of Man's Soul," 292.

171 Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 117.

172 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 111–13. There were some exceptions during which the laity could participate more fully. In parish churches, parishioners could at times go through the Rood Screen and the clergy sometimes went into the nave. Parish Sunday Mass was neither the only, nor the most common way for the laity to attend Mass. Many lay people did so on weekdays, when shorter ceremonies were generally celebrated at side altars, which they could approach more closely. Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 44. Some of the Barking Ordinal ceremonies seem to have been quite inclusive. On the *feria secunda* (Monday) after the fourth Sunday after Easter, the people were called for a procession which went through the nave of the church. On that day, a priest also provided a preacher to preach to the people. On Palm Sunday, two deacons turned towards the people to sing. On the feast of St Mark, the people took part in the procession which went through the nave. If the weather was bad, the procession stopped there, and the Mass was said in the nave. If the weather was good, the procession moved towards the cemetery and therefore included the dead of the parish. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:125, 86 and 2:219.

display a growing interest in understanding the events made present during liturgical services. The sixteenth century *Meditatyons for Goostely Exercise, in the Tyme of the Masse*, for instance, interpreted the gestures of the priest and related them to the Passion. For many parishioners, liturgy thus found itself intimately linked to the events of Christ's life, death, and Resurrection. Knowledge of these events was acquired either through direct teaching (via confessions and the clergy's sermons) or by indirect means: via prayers, images, poems, primers, carols, or even drama.[173] The Barking ceremonies constitute another example of these indirect means.

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s first contribution to devotion during liturgical services is thus, as explored when discussing Scriptures, its clear presentation of a scriptural story essential for the understanding of the liturgy. Their dramatic features in particular helped participants and spectators—even those poorly acquainted with the scriptural narrative the ceremonies presented—understand the nature of the actions and emotions of scriptural figures, as well as the feelings that they should harbour towards them. The two Barking ceremonies further directed their spectators and participants to realize and remember that the scriptural events they presented were essential for the understanding not just of these ceremonies but of liturgy in general. By depicting recognizable scriptural events, the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* contextualized certain common liturgical features. Nuns, clerics, and lay people who may not have known all the meanings and symbolism of these features but who recognized the scriptural story told by the ceremonies were given clues to understand this symbolism. In the *Visitatio*, for instance, Christ appears behind the altar. The common association between altar and Christ was here visually expressed.[174] Moreover, Christ's interactions with the altar in the *Visitatio*—the priest representing Christ appeared first on the left side of the altar and then on its right ("Then a person appears from the left side of the altar, saying to her [Mary Magdalen]"; "These verses finished, the person approaches the three women together from the right side of the altar")—echoed the movement from left to right of the priest during Mass. According to Durandus' interpretation of the Mass, this movement recalled the passage of Christ from death to eternal life, as well as the arrival

173 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 19, 63–69, 118–20; Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 65.

174 On the altar, see for instance Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:33–41.

of the time of victory. By including this liturgical movement in a representation of the Resurrection, the *Visitatio* explained the meaning behind it.[175]

The symbolism attached to the space of the church, evoked above, may also have been better understood because of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. The ceremonies show the Resurrection of Christ happening on the eastern side of the church, visually associating the place with this event. They may additionally have helped explain the symbolism commonly attached to the time of the ceremonies' performance, the office of Matins. This office signified, according to writers such as Durandus, the shift from sadness to joy and the deliverance of the faithful from sin, darkness, and the devil through the Resurrection.[176] By performing a representation of the Resurrection of Christ during that office, the ceremonies made this symbolism apparent.

The broader symbolism of the liturgical year was perhaps also clarified by the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. They were performed on Easter Day, at the end of the rather "theatrical" Holy Week. That week featured several ceremonies containing dramatic features and at times presenting a linear narrative. On Palm Sunday, a procession signified the entry of Christ into Jerusalem; on Maundy Thursday, the feet of paupers and of nuns were washed to remember Christ washing the feet of his disciples. On Good Friday, the death and the entombment of Christ were represented through the *Depositio* ceremony during which priests acted like Nicodemus and Joseph and placed an image of Christ in the sepulchre.[177] These ceremonies culminated, in the case of Barking, with the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, the house's most dramatic liturgical ceremonies. The abbey therefore depicted the last days of Christ's life and his Resurrection using dramatic features. By doing so, it helped spectators and participants understand that liturgical feasts were organized—in part—around the events of Christ's life.[178] It also explained the significance of Holy Week ceremonies and of Easter Day. For both Christ and his followers, Easter Day was a time of passage from one state to another: through his Resurrection, they were now saved. Performed early in the morning, the two ceremonies allowed their spectators and participants to understand the meaning of the day's liturgies and fostered their ideal devotional behaviour

---

175 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:69–74; Scherb, *Staging Faith*, 42.

176 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 3:3–5, 52, 74–77.

177 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:84–101.

178 Heffernan and Matter, "Introduction to the Liturgy of the Medieval Church," 6–8.

during these liturgical celebrations. Like the Marys, they were encouraged to replace their laments with joy.[179]

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* also contextualized liturgical gestures. They clarified the meaning of kissing and prostration by depicting pious figures such as the Marys performing these gestures towards Christ in moments of worship, love, and respect. They showed the celebrant turn towards the people, perhaps explaining in this way the significance of the priest's turns towards the people during Mass. According to Durandus, these recalled Christ greeting Mary Magdalen, the women, and the apostles after his Resurrection—some of the scenes depicted in the *Visitatio*.[180] The meaning of certain liturgical objects was also illuminated by the ceremonies. For instance, the display of the *sudarium* in the *Visitatio* may have recalled the folding of the corporal at the end of the Eucharistic celebration. The corporal represented, according to Durandus, the linen cloths in which Christ had been buried and the *sudarium*. The *Visitatio* helped spectators and participants understand the symbolic ties between corporal and *sudarium*.[181] Finally, the liturgical chants sung and heard during the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were placed by the ceremonies in their scriptural context, making their content plainer.

Such content was even in some cases explained through performance: when, after having seen Christ, Mary Magdalen announces the news of the Resurrection to the disciples, her gestures visually express the content of her message both to the disciples and to the spectators and participants present in the abbey church of Barking. She "indicates with her finger the place where the angel was sitting, and she presents the *sudarium* for them [the disciples] to kiss" as she says: "Sepulcrum christi <viuentis, et gloriam vidi resurgentis>. Angelicos testes <sudarium et vestes>" (I have seen the sepulchre of the <living Christ and the glory of the resurrected one; the angelic witnesses, the *sudarium*, and the clothes>). Many of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* chants were sung on less representational liturgical occasions at Barking Abbey, especially around Easter.[182] Those which do not feature in

179 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 4:199–200, 211.

180 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:79, 86–87.

181 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:175–78, 370, 399–400; Bourgeault, "Liturgical Dramaturgy," 128.

182 The *Elevatio* chants *A porta inferi* (From the gate of Hell) and *Domine abstraxisti* (O Lord you have removed) were antiphons sung in the Barking Holy Saturday liturgy. The *Consurgit*, *Quesumus auctor*, and *Gloria tibi domine* were all parts of the hymn *Ad coenam agni* (The Lamb's banquet) sung during Easter Week, the Easter Octave,

other parts of the Ordinal are taken for the most part from the gospels. From Matthew come the *Non est hic surrexit* (28:6) and the *Avete nolite timere* (28:9–10). This exact passage was read in the Barking Abbey church on Holy Saturday.[183] The gospel heard on the following day has as *incipit*: *Maria Magdalene*, which makes it difficult to recognize. What is certain is that it would also have told the story of the Marys at the tomb of Christ.[184] From Mark comes the *Quis revolvet* (16:3) and from Luke the *Quid queritis viventem cum mortuis* (24:5–7). The Gospel of John contains the *Mulier quid ploras* and the *Quia tulerunt dominum meum* (20:13), the chants *Mulier quid ploras, quem queris* and *Domine si tu sustulisti eum* (20:15), *Maria* and *Raboni* (20:16), and the *Noli me tangere* (20:17). This passage from the gospel was sung again on the *feria quinta* (Maundy Thursday) during Easter Week. On the Sunday of Easter Week, the gospel *Una sabbati* (On the first day of the week)—either from Luke or John—showed the Marys at the sepulchre.[185]

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s chants, as well as the altars, the space of the church, the gestures, and the objects used in the ceremonies, were thus regular components of the liturgy at Barking, cuing spectators and participants to connect them to other liturgical celebrations. It then seems that the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio*, with their striking visual and synesthetic features, served as support to the comprehension of other ceremonies—especially

and until the Ascension. Both the *Christus resurgens* (also found in the *Visitatio*) and the *Dicant nunc* (The Jews should now say) were Easter Day antiphons, which reoccurred until four days after the Pentecost. The *Tollite portas* (Break down your gates) was sung during Advent and on certain feasts celebrating the Virgin Mary. The *Dicite in nacionibus* (Tell in all nations) was used on Easter Day and during Easter Week, and the *Deus qui pro nobis filium tuum* (God, for us, you wanted to submit your son) was a collect for Holy Wednesday also used during Easter Week. The *Visitatio sepulchri* ceremony contains fewer chants found in other Barking Abbey liturgical celebrations. The ones I could trace were the *Surrexit dominus de sepulchro* (The Lord rises from the sepulchre), which was frequently sung from Holy Saturday until the Ascension, and the Easter Sequence *Victimae paschali laudes*, which was sung during Vespers on Easter Day, during Easter Week, and for the Magna Missa on all Sundays until Ascension Sunday. *Surrexit christus* formed part of the *Victimae paschali laudes* but was sung on its own from Easter Day until the Easter Octave. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:21, 89–90, 102, 106–7, 110–24, 126, 128, 131, 134–36; 2:169, 211.

183 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:105.

184 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:107, 111. John seems to me to be the most likely possibility here. The name Maria Magdalena occurs towards the beginning of John 20.

185 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:114–15.

those performed around Easter. The faithful could remember their experience during Easter Matins and could reflect in their prayers upon the stories they had seen presented, upon their meaning, and upon the emotions they had felt or witnessed. They would thus have been able to understand that the scriptural events told by the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were also made present during less representational liturgical ceremonies.

The nature of liturgy itself—this re-living of past scriptural events in the present—may have been made easier to understand because of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. Because the two ceremonies represented such events in a recognizable way, performing them came much closer to re-living scriptural events than most liturgical ceremonies did. Yet, as mentioned when discussing inclusion and compassionate devotion, performers represented these events using their own familiar and liturgical means. They were nuns and clerics of the abbey, not figures from Scriptures. Their "costumes" and "props" were liturgical: palms were most notably present during the Palm Sunday celebrations;[186] thuribles, the monstrance, candelabra, as well as the cross were especially important in processions.[187] The *Visitatio*'s *ampullae* were used at Mass or for chrism, unction, or coronation ceremonies. As for the *sudarium*, taken by the Marys from the sepulchre, it was perhaps a liturgical object as well. *Sudarium* designates the cloth used to wrap the head of Christ, but Durandus also calls two pieces of cloth by this name: the small corporal covering the chalice before the sacrifice and the maniple.[188] The clothes used in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were also regularly featured in the Barking liturgy. When performing the *Elevatio*, priests wore *capis* or *capa* (copes), which were the standard vestments for liturgical occasions other than Mass, and nuns seem to have been in their usual black Benedictine habits.[189] In the *Visitatio*, the clerics portraying the angels were attired in a white stole and the three nuns representing the Marys wore white surplices.[190] While nuns are not said to wear white surplices and veils elsewhere in the Barking liturgy, they did change out of their standard habits on great

186 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:85–87.

187 McLachlan, "Liturgical Vessels and Implements," 362–63, 368–80.

188 Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture*, 188; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:175–77, 189–90, 235.

189 Koslin warns against the use of the term "habit" because it is both imprecise and designated a specific set of outer garments for Benedictines in the Middle Ages. Koslin, "Robe of Simplicity," 269. See also Eggert, "Edification with Thread and Needle," 59; Elliott, "Dressing and Undressing the Clergy," 58.

190 The second cleric portraying the angel is presumably dressed in the same way

feasts. At times (Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul, Day of the Dedication of the Church, Feast of St Laurence) they were even vested in white, which is unusual among Benedictines.[191] The surplice itself is a liturgical vestment, indispensable to clerics. The performance space was the abbey church of Barking in which performers prayed daily among images of the scenes and of the people that they were now representing. Their dialogues were partly taken from Scriptures, but they also featured non-scriptural texts and were all sung to a music closely tied to religious life: liturgical plainchant.

The performance of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* was therefore not a realistic re-enactment of scriptural times. Instead, it mixed past and present, the scriptural and the liturgical. This mixture of time was not as visible in more "usual" liturgy, which was performed in the same space as the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* and with similar music but was less representational. The mixing of time was, however, a standard feature of medieval drama, where contemporaneous language, references, and props were used when depicting scriptural stories.[192] The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, amplifying and adding to the features of "standard" liturgy through their dramatic elements, thus presented in a visual and tangible way what liturgy was believed to accomplish. Watching and participating in such a performance may have helped spectators and participants understand the nature of liturgy itself.[193]

The ceremonies' visible fusion of past and present may also have facilitated the understanding of another aspect of liturgy, central to the celebration of the Mass: the consecration of the Host. With Lateran IV and its official approval of transubstantiation, a "new Eucharistic theology" was consolidated. Eucharistic devotional practices grew, as did the belief that looking at the Host was potentially miraculous. The Elevation of the Host became the high point of the Mass, and its consecration the most impor-

---

as the first, since he is said to be *in specie alterius angeli* (in the aspect of the second angel).

191 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:27, 85 and 2:246, 257, 258, 274, 372, 374, 384, 385, 386. The Barking *Visitatio* is not the only *Visitatio* during which nuns wore special clothes: the Marys in Gernrode wore white wimples and veils with red crosses on each side and, in Regensburg, they wore a special habit with wide sleeves. White was also worn at Troyes, Wilton, and Origny. Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 149, 151.

192 Dillon, *Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre*, 99; Tydeman, "Introduction," 27.

193 McGavin, "Medieval Theatricality and Spectatorship," 480–81. See also Mecham, "A Northern Jerusalem," 154–55.

tant moment of the ceremony.[194] As indicated by instructional manuals, the understanding of the nature of the Host was essential for people to respond to it during liturgical celebrations but also to receive it in an appropriate manner.[195] At Barking, the Host appears in the *Elevatio*, where it was carried by a priest. This same priest began the ceremony by portraying Christ: *sacerdos representabit personam Christi* (The priest indeed represents the person of Christ). Yet, when the Resurrection was shown, the priest did not seem to represent Christ but only to carry the Host, which *was* Christ: "interim asportabit cor/pus dominicum de sepulcro incipiendo antiphonam. Christus resurgens" (he [the officiating priest] takes the Lord's body from the sepulchre, while beginning the antiphon: Christ rising...). It is intriguing to note that, during the *Elevatio*, the body of Christ taken out of the sepulchre was *inclusum cristallo* (enclosed in crystal), whereas during the Good Friday *Depositio* ceremony, an image of Christ was "buried" in this same sepulchre: *deponentes ymaginem [...] crucifixi* (taking down the image from the cross). The abbey may have replaced the image with a Host in a monstrance before the beginning of the *Elevatio*. Alternatively, it perhaps used an image of Christ with a hollow space in its breast which contained the Host enclosed in crystal. In either case, the variety in the representations of Christ and the lack of a clear separation between them, between the Host (perhaps set in a human-like container) and the human priest, would have highlighted the role of the priest as the vicar of Christ on earth. It would also, I believe, have helped explain the nature of the Eucharistic Host.[196] The consecrated Host was understood to be not a piece of bread but the body of Christ. Its unusual nature, as described by Miri Rubin in her book *Corpus Christi*, was expounded in many medieval texts. The books held at Barking also contain various Eucharistic miracles connecting body and Host.[197] Similarly, the performance of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* tied the Host to Christ as a person, perhaps facilitating the understanding of transubstantiation. During transubstantiation, Christ was present in the Host, although he did not visibly appear to be. By including

194 Parker, "Architecture as Liturgical Setting," 310; Kieckhefer, "Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion," 96–100.

195 Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 107, 294–95.

196 For more on drama and the Eucharist, see Zyk, *Shadow and Substance*.

197 Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 106–16; Rubin, "The Eucharist and the Construction of Medieval Identities," 45–50. At Barking, see Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 301–24; *La vie d'Edouard*, ed. Bliss, 120–21, 192–93.

the Host in the story of the three Marys looking for Christ, the Barking ceremonies also showed that although the faithful—much like the Marys—might not see Christ, he was present with them.

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* thus had the effect of guiding their performers and participants in their understanding of the liturgy: they informed them as to the liturgy and the Host's nature, they fostered their knowledge of liturgical symbolism, explained the ties of liturgy with Scriptures, and encouraged them to pray appropriately during liturgical services.

Through their dramatic features and their performative nature, the Barking Abbey *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were therefore able to contribute to the devotional concerns and interests of this religious house in their own, unique ways. They proposed a mixture of the visual, the narrative, the aural, and the haptic, which guided their spectators and participants in their quest for salvation, both by educating them to improve their devotional practices and by being themselves an intense moment of devotion. After having watched and performed them, the Barking nuns, clergy, and laity, would have expanded their knowledge and memory of certain scriptural stories, would have been cued in their compassionate devotion for Christ, would have felt urged to do penance and keep away from sin, and would have gained a better understanding of liturgy.

An Emphasis on Women

In addition to devotion, the Barking Abbey *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* had other potential effects on their spectators and participants. Many of these seem tied to a noticeable element of the abbey's literary and material culture, also echoed in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*: an interest in women. Although the books of the abbey explore the life of many important men—the *Life of Edward* is concerned with a male saint, as are some of the texts by Goscelin de Saint-Bertin, most of *La vie des pères*, and Guerne's *Life of St Thomas Becket*—they also largely focus on women's experiences, actions, and on their place in the history of Christianity. Several *vitae* make female saints—either local or early Christian saints—their subject. The *vitae* translated and adapted by the nuns of Barking moreover tend to increase the role of women in these stories.[198] Clemence's *Life of Catherine*, for example, expands Catherine's speeches and the role of the Empress, and makes numerous mentions of the

198 See Wogan-Browne, "'Clerc u lai, muïne u dame,'" 68–70; Fenster, "'Ce qu'ens li trovat, eut en sei,'" 135–37, 143.

Virgin Mary and of a heavenly choir of Virgins.[199] The Virgin Mary features prominently in other Barking texts: among them Adgar's *Gracial*, which is entirely dedicated to her miracles, and Love's *Mirrour*, which grants more attention to Mary and to Mary Magdalen than scriptural texts do.[200] While little material culture survives from Barking Abbey, the three extant conventual seals of the house all depict women: Saints Ethelburga, Hildelith, the Virgin Mary, and abbesses (see Figure 1.1).[201]

Women are also very much present in the liturgy of Barking Abbey. The Ordinal's *Kalendarium* (Calendar) records an impressive number of feasts associated with female saints. Mary—the patron of the abbey and of its church—is especially revered. Anglo-Saxon and early Christian saints, as well as virgin martyrs, are highly celebrated too.[202] Eighteen of these feasts are *principale* or *duplex*, the two highest levels of religious festivals. The feast of Mary Magdalen, for example, holds the rank of principal feast, reflecting the importance of the devotion to the saint at Barking.[203] Women could also be associated with spatial features of the Barking Abbey church, where most of this liturgy took place. The Virgin Mary was the dedicatee of two altars, one in the nave and one in the Salve chapel. The high altar was dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin and to St Ethelburga. The altar of the Resurrection shared its dedication with Saints Mary Magdalen and John the Evangelist.[204] Two chapels at least were dedicated to women: the chapel of St Mary Magdalen and the Lady Chapel—also called the Salve Chapel. The prominence of women in liturgy was intensified by the presence at Barking of the relics of St Anne and St Mary Magdalen. These were processed around the choir on their feast day and on the day of the presentation of the relics. Even more prominent were the feretry of Saints Ethelburga, Hildelith, and

199 *St. Catherine*, ed. MacBain, lines 581, 902–16, 960, 1755, 1779–82, 1847–48, 2588–89, 2600.

200 Mary is again the subject of interest in *L'assomption de Notre Dame*, a translation of Pseudo-Melito of Sardis' *Transitus beatae Mariae Virginis* purchased by Sybil of Felton. Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 250–51, 263, 277, 281, 287.

201 Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 32, 67; Fowler, "Some Essex Monastic Seals," 166.

202 Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 197–200; Yardley, "Chants for the Holy Trinity"; Sturman, "Barking Abbey," 318–20, 343. See *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:1–12 for a list of saints.

203 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:261, 381–83.

204 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:1–12, 26, 108 and 2:282, 298, 376, 385–87.

Wulfhilde, which stood in the Saints' Chapel and were also incorporated in liturgical ceremonies.[205]

Although it is unclear whether the Ordinal presents an accurate depiction of the performance of liturgy at Barking Abbey, it at least suggests that women held important roles within worship. The *cantrix*, the sacristan, the prioress, and the abbess, especially, are frequently mentioned in the manuscript as active participants in services.[206] While the abbess remained the bishop's hierarchical inferior and did not appear to command priests during liturgical ceremonies, her presence there was prominent, chiefly on great feast days. For instance, she marked the beginning of the procession on certain principal feasts, such as the Ascension, by starting the *Salve festa dies*: "ordinata processione sicut decet in tali solennitate. Abatissa incipiat Salue festa dies" (The procession having been appointed as it is fitting in such solemnity, may the abbess begin the *Salve festa dies*). The abbess then closed the procession—an honour usually reserved for the clergy.[207] The abbess of Barking also at times gave abbatial absolution and blessing to other nuns, which was unusual and generally not recommended in the Late Middle Ages.[208]

205 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:288, 383; Clapham, "The Benedictine Abbey of Barking."

206 See the Ordinal's description of the Purification of Mary (*Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:188–90) or of the Ascension (*Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:127–30) for examples of these women participating in the liturgy. For moments when the convent sings without the presence of the clergy, see Christmas (*Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:28). Nuns singing the Divine Office on their own was likely not problematic in the Middle Ages when their status was the same as that of unordained monks. Black, "The Divine Office," 45–46; Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 50–71, 186–87. For more on nuns reading the gospels, see Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 133–72.

207 For examples at Barking, see *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:27, 127–30, 134–36 and 2:189, 319–22. See also Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 50–58, 185–87; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:47–52 on processions.

208 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:356–57. According to Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:153, an abbess cannot bless her nuns, hear their sins at confession, read the gospels, or preach publicly. See also Harper, *Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy*, 40. Bugyis provides and discusses evidence that confession within the conventual community and without the presence of priests happened in England during the Anglo-Saxon period and the central Middle Ages. It seems to have been increasingly discouraged in the later medieval period, although it continued—as is the case at Barking—in certain houses. Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 173–224.

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* echo this interest in women. The *Visitatio* presents Mary Magdalen and the sisters of the Virgin Mary as its protagonists.[209] Moreover, most of the ceremonies' performers were women. Not only were they more numerous, but they also sang more chants than the clergy (counting the repetition of the *Tollite Portas* (Break down your gates), men sang around twenty-six chants and women thirty-one). They thus would have made a greater visual and aural impression on spectators. While the priests began many of the chants, the *cantrix* often continued and expanded what they had started. The abbess held a leading role in the ceremonies as well. She gave the signal to begin and end them:

> In primis eat domina / abbatissa cum toto conuentu et quibusdam sacerdotibus et cle/ricis capis indutis quolibet sacerdote et clerico palmam et / candelam extinctam manu deferentem (First, the lady abbess goes with the whole convent and with certain priests and clerics dressed in copes, each priest and cleric carrying in his hand a palm and an unlit candle); tunc redeant in stacionem suam usque abbatissa / eas iubeat exire ad quiescendum. (Then, they return to their place until the abbess orders them to go out to rest).

She also changed the clothes of the women portraying the three Marys, and absolved them:

> nitidissimis superpellicijs induantur / niueis velis a domina abbatissa capitibus earum superpositis (they are dressed in most beautiful surplices, snow-white veils having been placed on their heads by the lady abbess); dicant. Confiteor ad abbatissam et ab ea absolute… (they say to the abbess: I confess. Once absolved by her…).[210]

The Depiction of Women at Barking Abbey

In addition to emphasizing the presence of women, the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* echo the depiction of women at Barking Abbey, presenting their spectators and participants with a multifaceted and specific image of women which would have influenced their perception of the ceremonies. The *Visitatio*'s Marys, although they first doubt the truth of the Resurrection, later parallel the behaviour displayed by St Catherine in her *Life*, by Mary in the *Gracial* and the *Mirrour*, and by Mary Magdalen in the *Mirrour*: they show meekness,

209 This is not unusual, but convent *Visitatio* tend to make the roles of the Marys, especially that of Mary Magdalen, more central than men's do.

210 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:107–9.

obedience, and submission to the will of God and of Christ.[211] Yet, women's obedience did not prevent them from playing an important role in the history of Christianity.[212] Two women, in particular, have been celebrated as central to this history and feature directly and indirectly in the *Visitatio*: the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalen.

The Virgin was understood, through her chaste motherhood, as instrumental for the Resurrection and the salvation of humanity. The *Gracial* and the *Mirrour*—among many other medieval texts—present her as the new Eve who repairs the fault of her female predecessor by giving birth to the saviour.[213] The *Mirrour* further compares the Resurrection of Christ to his birth "as he went first oute of his moderes wombe / clene virgyne in his natiuite / withoute sorwe or wemme of synne."[214] Mary Magdalen too was strongly connected to the Resurrection. As I will explore below, she is a witness to and transmitter of the event. At Barking, the altar in the abbey church dedicated at once to her, to St John, and to the Resurrection, reinforced the perception of her importance in this episode.[215] The *Visitatio*'s use of the chapel of Mary Magdalen further underlines this importance. While Mary Magdalen is central to the *Visitatio*'s depiction of the Resurrection, the Virgin Mary is not featured in the ceremony. However, the presence of her half-sisters—Mary Salome and Mary mother of James—is a reminder of her role in the life of Christ. She—and by extension her family—is the source of his humanity, which enabled him to be sacrificed for the sins of Humanity. This connection to her lineage was emphasized in the nunnery on Marian feasts: on the feast of the Annunciation, for example, the chant *Egredietur* (There shall come forth), speaking of the root of Jesse from which Christ was born, was sung.[216] At Barking, women were thus presented as central participants in the Resurrection, one of the most important events of Christianity.

---

211 *La traduction champenoise de La vie des pères*, ed. Grossel, 363; Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 20–22, 34, 119, 164, 255, 277. See also chants sung on Marian feasts: *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:295–97.

212 See Borgehammar, "A Monastic Conception of the Liturgical Year," 18–22.

213 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 33; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 230. See *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:170–72, 188–90, 209–12, 279–82, 295–97, 340–41, for chants expressing this. See Sticca, "The Literary Genesis of the Latin Passion Play," 56–58 for more on this tradition.

214 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 262.

215 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:282.

216 See Isaiah 11:1. Mary's mother Anne was at times used to represent the lineage of Christ. She could be depicted as the centre of the Holy Kinship. Robinson,

Women celebrated in Barking texts were also depicted as especially close to God and to Christ. This closeness was due to their love, which was regularly expressed—often through tears, laments, sighs, and the kissing of Christ's body.[217] This is the case in the *Visitatio*, as mentioned when discussing compassionate devotion, as well as in the *Mirrour*. When the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalen help anoint the body of Christ, for instance:

> Maudeleyn saide: I pray ȝow suffer me diȝte these feete / at the whiche I fonde so moche grace. And thay suffrynge her askynge / sche helde the feet and loked vppon hem wepynge and almost faillynge for sorwe: and riȝt as sche byfore in his lif wische hem with teres of compunccioun / now moche more sche wascheth hem with teres of grete sorwe and inward compassioun: for as he verray sothfastnesse witnessith of her /sche loued Mykel and therefore sche wepte mykel.

In addition to the tears and the laments, Magdalen touches Christ's feet here. She does so multiple times in the *Mirrour* and in Barking liturgical chants.[218] Touch was certainly an important part of the devotion of the Middle Ages, as testified by numerous manuscripts containing devotional images which were repeatedly touched and kissed. However, the faithful were encouraged to harbour a spiritual rather than a physical love for Christ and God. Women were also generally forbidden—apart from communion—to touch the body of Christ. The emphasis put in the Late Middle Ages on the sacrament of the Eucharist led this sacramental right to be reserved for priests.[219] While the Barking liturgical and literary culture does not depict women handling the consecrated Host, it contains numerous examples of women touching and kissing either Jesus' body or a substitute for it. In the *Mirrour*, Mary Magdalen kisses the sepulchre, a gesture that mirrors the Marys kissing

---

"Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 617," 113–18; Warren, *Spiritual Economies*, 123–28; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:209–12. See also *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:279–82, 295–97, 340–41, 170–72, for more chants and readings about Mary's—and thus Christ's—lineage.

217 See for example, the chant *Dilectus meus* (My beloved), sung on the feast of St Mary Magdalen. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:264. For more examples, see *Ordinale and Customary* 2:207–9, 297–98, 319–22; 1:134–36. See also Newman, *Virile Women*, 138.

218 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 185, 234, 243, 246–48, 251–52, 259, 263–64, 265, 267–70, 277, 288, 297; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:261, 264. See also Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, 249 for Mary sighing with grief, 260 and 264 for the Marys sighing and weeping, 287 for the Virgin sighing and resting her head on her son's chest.

219 Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 12–13.

"effusively the place where the crucified one had been put" in the *Visitatio*.[220] In this ceremony, when Christ appears to the Marys, they "hold his feet and kiss them." The same gestures are found in the *Mirrour*, as the Virgin, Mary Magdalen, and later the three Marys touch and kiss Christ resurrected.[221] The white clothes of the *Visitatio*'s Marys, as well as the lights accompanying them denote their purity and chastity and would have emphasized the non-sexual aspect of this touch.[222]

The presence of such tactile devotion in *Visitatio* ceremonies is rare. The scriptural passage describing the Marys kissing the feet of Christ is taken from Matthew and occurs in six extant *Visitatio* ceremonies, three of which come from women's houses. The Barking *Visitatio* is the only one where touch seems to have occurred in performance. Furthermore, while the Gospel of Matthew (Matt. 28:9) describes the Marys touching the feet of Christ—"tenuerunt pedes ejus, et adoraverunt eum" (they took hold of his feet, and adored him), the Barking Ordinal increases the intensity of their touch by instructing the nuns not only to hold his feet but also to kiss them: "teneant pedes eius et de/osculentur" (they should hold his feet and kiss them). This passage from Matthew had been frequently used in the earlier Middle Ages to describe the relationship between nuns and God. However, as women's access to liturgical practices decreased, it was often omitted from re-tellings of the Resurrection in favour of the *Noli me tangere*.[223] Barking Abbey seems to have gone against this trend and to have emphasized the importance of touch between Christ and the women following him as a non-problematic and significant part of their devotion. The abbey's *Visitatio* thus expressed in a visual and haptic way the words of the *Mirrour*, which assert that touching Christ and showing strong emotions are a worthy expression of deep love. According to the *Mirrour*, touch can also denote the love of Christ for the people whom he allows to come near him.[224]

---

220 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 118–19, 248–54.

221 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 264, 267–70, 277, 285. The disciples do as well.

222 Both light and the colour white were associated with chastity and purity in the Middle Ages and at Barking: see for example *La vie d'Edouard*, ed. Bliss, 126–27, 135, 150, 168, 185; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 93, 144, 189, 191; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:209–12, 188–90, 279–82, 295–97, 340–41, 170–72; 1:134–36; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:168–72.

223 Pappano, "Sister Acts: Conventual Performance," 45–48.

224 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 118–20. See also *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:261. Touching and weeping are not entirely gendered

Not only are the Virgin and Mary Magdalen therefore repeatedly described at Barking as loving Christ better than most, they are also said to be especially loved by him. In the *Mirrour*, Mary Magdalen is even named "his special byloued."[225] After his Resurrection, it is to women that he chooses to appear first, as emphasized by the *Mirrour*, by the liturgical chant *Mane prima* (Early the first day) sung on the feast and octave of Mary Magdalen, and by the *Visitatio*.[226] In that ceremony, spectators and participants were able to witness a representative of Christ appear to the Marys—although they were aware that it was only a representation. As indicated in the Ordinal, the appearances and disappearances of Christ in the *Visitatio* are choreographed. By moving in front of and behind the altar at specific times, he alternates between being visible and invisible to the Marys:

> Tunc in sinistra parte altaris appareat per/sona (Then a person appears from the left side of the altar); Cum perso/na disparuerit (When the person has disappeared); persona in dextera parte altaris tribus / simul occurrat mulieribus (the person approaches the three women together from the right side of the altar).

Because the performance of the *Visitatio* was a highly visual medium, it drew attention to these moments of seeing Christ.

However, women did more than witness these events. The Barking literary and liturgical culture repeatedly shows women, through their love for Christ, as mediators between him and others. They can act as intercessors, but they can also, as depicted in the *Mirrour*, the *Gracial*, Clemence's *Life of St Catherine*, and in the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio*, be tasked to spread the words of Christ.[227] The *Gracial* and the *Life of Catherine* show women convert-

---

expressions of love. The *Mirrour*, for instance, does describe men mourning and expressing penance through tears and touch. See Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, 248, 257, 272, 280–81. However, these men tend not to express their emotions as extremely and frequently as women do. This is perhaps because of the tradition of women as leading mourning in the biblical world. See Sautter, "Women, Dance, Death, and Lament," 93, 97.

225 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 118, 157, 176, 189, 196, 237–40, 248, 267, 268–70, 277, 284, 287. See also Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 49, 150–51.

226 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 263, 268; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:261, 264.

227 A depiction which was common in the Middle Ages: see for example Johnson, "Marian Devotion," 400–409; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:134–36 and 2:264, 261, 279–82, 308–10, 319–22; Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 33–36; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 113–20, 228, 232–33, 241; Lamothe, "An

ing pagans and redressing a lack of faith in Christians through their public speech.[228] These texts do not devalue the Virgin and Catherine's words because of their gender, nor are the women presented as completely passive beings through which the voice of God speaks—a frequent justification for female public speech. While Clemence says that the rhetorical feats accomplished by St Catherine are due to God's intervention, she also makes it clear that Catherine can argue against any *dialeticien* (dialectician) even before her trials with the emperor.[229]

In the *Visitatio*, three sisters stood in for the Marys who were transmitters of the good news of the Resurrection. To do so, they changed into clothes that further signalled these figures' mediating characteristic. While the sisters' white garments have been discussed in the context of confession and purification, they also recall the clothes worn by the angels and suggest a kinship between them. Such kinship is present in the Barking literary and liturgical culture as well, where some holy women are surrounded by and interact with angels. Angels comfort St Catherine in her cell and take her to Heaven; they follow the Virgin in the *Gracial* and appear to the Marys at the tomb in the *Mirrour*.[230] In Scriptures, as well as in the Barking texts, angels act as the messengers of the divine.[231] The perception of the Marys as messengers may have been further strengthened by the connection between the white clothes they wore and some of the saints in the Barking literary and liturgical culture. In the *Gracial*, saints are depicted as processing together dressed in white and accompanied by singing and light, as are the Marys in

---

Edition of the Latin and Four Middle English Versions," 218. See also Euphresine in *La traduction champenoise de La vie des pères*, ed. Grossel, 375. Even the seal of Barking Abbey shows women as intercessors. Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 234–37.

228 Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 216–18, 269–71; *St. Catherine*, ed. MacBain, lines 201–308, 367–68, 425, 643–1099.

229 *St. Catherine*, ed. MacBain, lines 14–44, 379–80, 543–68. On Clemence and female public speech, see Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing*, 73–80; Foster, "Clemence of Barking," 13–14; Auslander, "Clemence and Catherine," 164, 175; Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*, 223–28; Ferrante, *To the Glory of Her Sex*, 187–88.

230 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 23, 266, 291; *St. Catherine*, ed. MacBain, lines 1487, 2588–89, 2592–610. Angels are not only connected to women: they act as messengers and companion to Christ and to male saints in Heaven as well. See for example *La vie d'Edouard*, ed. Bliss, 174, 168, 111; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 170, 189.

231 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 266, 272; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 186.

the *Visitatio*. The Marys are thus tied to this saintly group whose main task, according to the *Gracial*, is to act as mediators. They intercede in favour of souls and fulfil missions given to them by God. Another connection between saints and white clothes can perhaps be found in the Barking liturgy, when nuns wear white on the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul and on the Feast of St Laurence.[232]

The use of light in the performance of the *Visitatio* continues to reinforce this perception of the Marys as messengers. Candelabra are mentioned in the *Visitatio*, where they follow the nuns portraying the Marys: "dicant. Confiteor ad abbatissam, et ab ea absolute. in loco / statuto cum candelabris consistant" (they [the Marys] say to the abbess: I confess. Once they have been absolved by her, they position themselves with the candelabra in the place appointed earlier). It remains unclear whether the candelabra accompanied the Marys during the entire ceremony or not, but a second mention is made of them at the end of the *Visitatio*:

> cum candelabris per / chorum transeuntes orandi gracia sepulcrum adeant: et ibi brevem / oracionem faciant. tunc redeant in stacionem suam usque abbatissa /eas iubeat exire ad quiescendum.
>
> crossing with the candelabra through the choir, they go towards the sepulchre in order to pray. And there, they make a short prayer. Then, they return to their place until the abbess orders them to go out to rest.

Candelabra were widely used lighting sources in medieval churches. They would have carried one or more candles and their size varied depending on their use.[233] Those featured in the Barking *Visitatio* were handheld and, according to the Ordinal, were carried by six *iuuencule* (schoolgirls).[234] Their use there may have recalled the scriptural image of the disciples—most famously found in the Gospel of Matthew, as well as in Mark and Luke—as a lit candle on a *candelabrum*:

> You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before

232 Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 190–91.

233 Vincent, *Fiat lux*, 98–103.

234 According to notes by Dame Laurentia McLachlan, in *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:369, the *iuuencule* were probably receiving their education in the nunnery. They are not novices, who are called *scolares* at Barking. See also Yardley, "Musical Education of Young Girls," 52–54. She believes that the *iuuencule* were probably aged eight to fourteen.

> men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.[235]

Liturgical commentators explained that the disciples' lights existed because they had been lit by Christ's true light. They were meant to guide others towards this true light and to transmit the Lord's teachings.[236] This image can recall Pentecost when the disciples received the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire—as seen in the *Mirrour*, for example.[237] At Barking, the light under the bushel was also tied to Mary Magdalen, for instance in the chant *O mundi lampas*, sung on the octave of her feast:

> O mundi lampas et margarita praefulgida quae resurrectionem Christi nuntiando apostolorum apostola fieri meruisti Maria Magdalena semper pia exoratrix pro nobis adsis ad deum qui te elegit.

> O shining light of the world and radiant pearl, you who proclaimed the Resurrection of Christ to the apostles and thus became an apostle yourself, Mary Magdalene, intercede for us always with God as a gracious intercessor, who has chosen you.[238]

The chant associates her both with light and with the apostles. This echoes the tradition of Mary Magdalen as the *apostola apostolorum* (apostle of the apostles), which emphasized her function as witness and transmitter.[239] This tradition did not necessarily imply that she was a preacher like the disciples: according to some churchmen, her transmission of the good news of the Resurrection was a private affair rather than a public preaching.[240]

---

235 Matthew 5:14–16. See also Mark 4:21–23; Luke 8:16, 11:23.

236 Bührer-Thierry, "Lumière et pouvoir," 527–37. See for instance Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:37, 45.

237 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 298. A few of the chants sung at Barking on the Pentecost also refer to light. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:134–36.

238 *Ordinale and Customary,* ed. Tolhurst, 2:264.

239 See Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 277. According to Jansen, it is impossible to find the exact origins of this phrase. She finds no reference to it before the twelfth century and, by then, it had "already passed into common currency." Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 62–63. A decree published on June 3, 2016, by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament, and "expressly wished" by Pope Francis, cites Rabanus Maurus' *De vita beatae Mariae Magdalenae, XXVII* (ninth century) as an earlier source for this phrase. See Holy See Press Office "Bulletin: Mary Magdalene, Apostle of the Apostles"; Roche, "Apostle of the Apostles."

240 Minnis, "Religious Roles," 54–56; Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 56–57.

Yet, the tradition also at times extended into presenting Mary Magdalen as a fully-fledged disciple who went on to preach in Marseilles. Such a narrative was most famously told in the *Legenda aurea*, which is listed at Barking in Powsnett's list.[241] In this context, the candelabra surrounding the Marys in the *Visitatio* enhanced the perception of their roles as messengers, as guiding lights.

The ceremony moreover seems to have emphasized Mary Magdalen and the other Marys' nearly disciple-like status by showing them spreading the news of the Resurrection to the disciples—"Tunc vnus illorum / accedat et dicat marie magdalene. Dixit nobis maria et cetera / Illa autem respondeat. Sepulcrum christi <viuentis, et gloriam vidi resurgentis>" (Then one of them [the disciples] approaches and tells Mary Magdalen: Tell us, Mary et cetera… Now, she replies: I have seen the sepulchre of the <living Christ and the glory of the resurrected one>), to the nuns—"Choro eis respondente" (the choir answering them), but also to the *populus*—"Tunc marie stantes / super gradus ante altare uertentes se ad populum canant hoc / Responsorium. Alleluia surrexit dominus de sepulcro" (the Marys then, standing on the steps in front of the altar, turning themselves towards the people, sing this responsory: Alleluia the Lord has risen from the sepulchre). At a time when preaching was associated with Christ, his disciples, and their successors, it was generally seen as unfit for women.[242] St Paul equated women speaking in public on religious matters with "teaching and usurpation of authority over men, to whom they should instead be obedient and from whom they should learn at home."[243] Women were usually advised in the Middle Ages to be a converting example through their actions rather than their speech.[244] The *Visitatio*, however, presents women who speak publicly to a mixed "audience," transmit the words of Christ, and convince others to follow these words: they effectively preach. In contrast with some *Visitationes*—such as

---

241 Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 119–21; Blanton, "The Devotional Reading of Nuns," 188; Baert, "An Odour, A Taste, a Touch," 123.

242 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 122, 125, 158–60; Everett, "A Critical Edition," 7–8; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:131.

243 Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*, 229–30; Minnis, "Religious Roles," 47–51.

244 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:28, 168–72; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:134 and 2:350–55.

the Fleury ceremony, the disciples neither question their words nor check themselves that they are indeed true.[245]

In performance, the *Visitatio* further emphasized these traits attributed to the Marys at Barking Abbey—as well as in some broader medieval trends—through their dramatic features. The three nuns portraying the Marys had to sing and "act" this transmission of scriptural words with their voices and bodies. They did not perform it in a vacuum but in public, in front of lay and religious spectators. Their announcement was repeated by the conventual choir. Female voices were thus dominant in proclaiming—and perhaps preaching—the announcement of the Resurrection. This is highly unusual in medieval performative events. When female scriptural or hagiographic preachers were depicted in public plays or performances, they were generally represented by men, which suggests that the "female performance of feminine sanctity was potentially subversive." Such figures moreover tended to be presented as models of private devotion rather than as examples because of their public acts.[246]

Women in the Barking literary and liturgical culture—*Elevatio* and *Visitatio* included—can thus perform actions usually reserved for men, but they are even at times more explicitly associated with male behaviour. Both Marine and Euphresine in *La vie des pères* dress as men and serve as monks in a monastery. They are just as devout as their brothers, if not more so, and their "disguise" is never treated as an issue. On the contrary, it is a way for them to be close to Christ without attracting attention. Euphresine loves nothing more than reading in a manner resembling the *lectio divina*. She is so skilled at remembering what she read that "ele fu bone clergesse, si que tuit s'en mervoilloient" (she was a good clergy woman, and all marvelled at it).[247] A similar female command of liturgy appears in the *Gracial*, where Mary teaches a monk how to sing compline.[248] Female figures at Barking could even be connected to Christ himself. The Barking *Life of Saint Catherine*, for example, emphasizes her resemblance to the Son of God. Her suffering as she walks to her death accompanied by lamenting women recalls Christ's walk to Calvary. She dies on a Friday, "A l'ore que Deu la suffri, /

---

245 At Fleury, the women arrived at the tomb first but did not understand what was happening and the disciples were the ones who interpreted the empty sepulchre as the sign of the Resurrection. Pappano, "Sister Acts: Conventual Performance," 53.

246 Sanok, "Performing Feminine Sanctity," 285–88.

247 *La traduction champenoise de La vie des pères*, ed. Grossel, 360–75, 377.

248 Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 268–69.

Ki par sa mort nus ad salve" (At the time that God suffered it, / He who saved us by his death). She is also granted by God—in a moment reminiscent of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of mankind—that all those who love her, mourn for her, and remember her be received in Heaven *en gloire* (in glory).[249] The preaching and the mentions of light attached to many of the Barking women—those in the *Visitatio* as well—further create a link between them, the disciples, and Christ.

There therefore seems to be a tradition at Barking Abbey of depicting women as meek and obedient, but also as central to the history of Christianity and as especially close to God and Christ. Some of them are even preachers who, while they are the instruments of God, are themselves capable, learned, and efficient. The Marys of the *Visitatio* echo but also reinforce this tradition. What would have been the effect of presenting the ceremony's spectators and participants with such a depiction of women? The answer to this question emerges when we consider the ways in which the nunnery's literary and liturgical culture, and the two ceremonies, encourage an association between the three holy women, the sisters portraying them, and the nuns of Barking Abbey in general.

Associating Performers with Scriptural Figures

Nuns were commonly seen to share traits with holy women—the Marys included. They certainly had much in common, according to the Barking manuscripts. Like nuns, women in these texts are frequently accompanied by or associated with other women: a choir of virgins, for instance, visits St Catherine in Clemence's text and follows the Virgin Mary in the *Gracial* and in some of the liturgical chants dedicated to her.[250] In the *Visitatio* too, the Marys behave like a small community: they move together, sing, and interact with each other, as seen in these examples:

> incedentes flebili uoce et sub/missa hos pariter canant versus (they sing together these verses in an afflicted and humble voice); Jacobi respondeat ([Mary mother of] James replies [to Mary Magdalen]); marie exeuntes a choro: simul dicant (the Maries, leaving the choir, say together); plangendo dicant ad inuicem (say to one another, while lamenting); maria gaudium

249 *St. Catherine*, ed. MacBain, lines 2508–50, 2643–45, 2568–610.

250 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:279–82. See also *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:182, 353–55; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 38, 171–72; *St. Catherine*, ed. MacBain, line 1847; Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 228, 240, 246, 250–55, 262.

suum consociabus communicet (Mary communicates her joy to her companions).

Their community further mirrors that of the nuns. Mary Magdalen acts like an abbess, leading the other women and speaking in their name: she is the first to encounter Christ and it is she who announces his Resurrection to the Marys and to the disciples. The disciples listen to her announcement and follow her lead when singing the *Christus resurgens*, as the priests followed the abbess' lead during the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* ceremonies.

Both nuns and holy women were also attached to the rhetoric of love and chastity and called Brides of Christ.[251] The love that holy women show Christ in Barking texts—also shown by the Marys in the *Visitatio*—triumphs over the love they might have for worldly things and for people. This same detachment was recommended to nuns.[252] The nunnery of Barking moreover boasted some of its own saints, whose lives it valorized and publicized by commissioning Goscelin de Saint-Bertin to write the *vitae* of abbesses St Ethelburga and St Hildelith, by commemorating them in its liturgy, and by composing chants and devotional prayers in their honour.[253] The local miracles that these women had accomplished during their lives, or that had occurred after their deaths, were emphasized in this material. Yardley notes the "personal connection" that the nuns of Barking had with these saints: they were members of the same community, prayed at their shrines in the abbey church, and regularly sang chants presenting them as their intercessors and predecessors.[254] The holy abbesses of Barking—Ethelburga in particular—were moreover repeatedly described, like the Virgin Mary, as

251 See, among many other examples, some of the chants sung on the Consecration of a Virgin ceremony at Barking, *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:353–55. See also Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:168–72; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 228, 240; Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 32, 165; *La traduction champenoise de La vie des pères*, ed. Grossel, 367, 376; *St. Catherine*, ed. MacBain, lines 582, 1357–60, 1629, 1761, 1903, 2503, 2544, 2560–63, 2662. Religious men swore chastity, but this trait was more often emphasized as essential for women. Warren, *Spiritual Economies*, 4–7, 17–18, 27; McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, 323.

252 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 161, 190; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:261, 308–10, 193, 262–63.

253 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:3, 9, 10 and 2:207–9, 297–98, 319–22. See also Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 179–180, 200; Yardley, "Chants for the Holy Trinity."

254 Yardley, "Chants for the Holy Trinity," 185–86; Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 27.

"mothers."[255] The name of "mother" was also attributed to the abbesses who succeeded them.[256] The seal of the abbey—which would have been visible not only to the conventual community but to outsiders as well—continued to present the nuns of Barking in close proximity to their holy abbesses and saints, including the Virgin Mary (see Figure 1.1). The placement of the figures on the seal appears to depict previous abbesses as intercessors between a praying sister and the figures of saints and Christ. There therefore seems to be a network of connections tying together holy women, the early and holy abbesses of Barking, and the house's later abbesses.[257] The nunnery itself was dedicated to both Ethelburga and Mary.[258] Such a network encouraged an association between the medieval nuns of Barking and the holy.

Both the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalen were moreover often presented in medieval texts as particular models for consecrated women.[259] The *Mirrour*, for example, explicitly directs virgins and maidens to follow Mary's example of solitary prayer and silence. As for Mary Magdalen, she was seen as a model of contemplative life—as explained by St Bernard—due to her fervent love of and devotion to Christ, as well as her meekness, patience, and silence.[260] Yet the association encouraged between nuns and Mary Magdalen because of her contemplative qualities may have led the nuns of Barking to connect with her other qualities, such as her role as a preacher. This is certainly what Goscelin does in his *Vita sanctae Wulfhildis* (Life of St Wulfhilde), where he emphasizes these women's roles as witnesses and transmitters: "The faithful testimony of this kind [from the nuns of Barking about Wulfhilde] is not to be disdained: we learn from the angelic first messenger

255 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:170–72, 188–90, 200–202, 207–12, 279–82, 295–98, 319–22, 340–41; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 175–76, 230; Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 32, 196, 281. On this subject, see Yardley, "Chants for the Holy Trinity," 180–81, 187–89. Goscelin de Saint-Bertin explicitly compares the holy abbesses of Barking Abbey with the Virgin Mary and with the women at the tomb of Christ. Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 28.

256 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:351–53. On abbesses and prioresses as mothers, see Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 78–132.

257 Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 234–40.

258 Gilchrist and Oliva, *Religious Women in Medieval East Anglia*, 28–29.

259 Rice, "Temples to Christ's Indwelling," 122–23; Hamburger and Suckale, "Between this World and the Next," 85–96; Shanks, "Introduction," 1–9; Baert, "The Pact between Space and Gaze," 203.

260 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 27, 156–59, 299. See Davidson, "On the Use of Iconographic Study," 47–50.

of our Lord's Resurrection Mary, and from the crown of women saints and prophetesses."[261] The example of Mary Magdalen was therefore a complex one, exhorting nuns to follow her qualities in their contemplative life, but also perhaps showing them that they could participate to some degree in the active life—although it was usually closed to monastic men and women. The inclusion of the chant *Fidelis discipula* (faithful disciple) on the feast of Abbess St Ethelburga, the use of the *Veni creator spiritus* (Come, Creator Spirit) both on the feast of Pentecost and on celebrations essential to the nuns' identity, as well as the nuns' involvement with the surrounding laity, may indicate that they had integrated this multifaceted view of their duties as women religious.[262]

The *Visitatio* continues to show the nuns of Barking in this light and to encourage their association with the holy women that they were representing. These nuns, unlike the laity who stood in the nave behind a *pulpitum*, were the privileged witnesses of the events of the Resurrection represented in the *Visitatio*. Their experience of this performance mirrored the Mary's experience of witnessing the Resurrection. When the Marys announced the Resurrection, they were echoed first by the choir of nuns. Nuns thus publicly positioned themselves as the Marys' successors and followers. Their roles as transmitters were already suggested in the *Elevatio* where, while priests led the chants, the *cantrix* completed their *incipit*s. Her actions here presaged those of the Marys in the *Visitatio*: this nun transmitted and commentated upon the words spoken by someone of greater spiritual authority. By performing, but also by having devised or at least approved of these ceremonies, the nuns showed themselves as women transmitting the story of other women transmitters.

The *Visitatio* also had the effect of associating nuns with the three Marys and their specific depictions in this ceremony because three nuns publicly embodied these scriptural figures. They were instructed by the Ordinal to move as they might have moved, speak the words that they had spoken, carry objects resembling those they had carried, dress in clothes reminiscent of their clothes, and copy their behaviour and emotions, as attested by multiple rubrics. For example: "the one showing the outward appearance of Mary Magdalen; the second one, who represents Mary [mother] of James;

---

261 O'Donnell, "'The Ladies Have Me Quite Fat,'" 99–100.

262 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 158–65; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:261, 319–22. The *Veni creator spiritus* was sung on the Consecration of a Virgin, the Blessing of the Abbess, and the Profession of the Moniales. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:350–55.

the third Mary taking on the role of Salome." These three sisters thus followed in the footsteps of the Marys when performing. While this may have had a devotional effect on performers and participants, as explored earlier, it also facilitated an association between performers and the figures that they publicly embodied. This was also the case for the priests and clerics of the house. While they were already commonly associated with Christ, his disciples, and angels, performing the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* strengthened this connection.[263]

The ceremonies continued to tie scriptural figures to their participants through their use of liturgical clothes, objects, and music. As performers were singing during the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, they were uttering some of the scriptural words that had been spoken by such figures. Yet they were also setting their words to a kind of music extremely familiar to them and to the ceremonies' spectators. For the nuns and clergy of Barking, this music was so central to their daily life that they may have associated its sound and by extension, the story of the Resurrection presented with such means, with themselves. But this type of music was also, as explained by the *Gracial* and the *Mirrour*, present in Heaven. There, it was sung by the same scriptural figures that the nuns and clergy of Barking were representing (such as the prophets and patriarchs, the Virgin Mary and her choir of virgins, and the angels).[264] Holy figures and religious men and women were thus unified through their shared singing of liturgical chant. Like music, the objects handled by the participants and the clothes they wore in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were liturgical and familiar to them. These vestments and habits were also essential in establishing and representing the identity of religious men and women: during the ceremonies of Ordination (for priests) and of Consecration (for nuns), the change into these clothes was understood as the moment when they became a new man or a new woman—and, in the case of the sisters a *sponsa Christi*.[265]

---

263 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:199–205, 73–74, 42–44, 76, 81, 179; Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 141–42. See also at Barking: in the *Life of St Edward*, in Adgar's *Gracial* and in Love's *Mirrour*, angels and saints are described in a manner recalling clerics. *La vie d'Edouard*, ed. Bliss, 111–12; Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 186–90; Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 289; *St. Catherine*, ed. MacBain, lines 1771–72.

264 Benoit, *Le Gracial d'Adgar*, 269–71; Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 289. See Slim, "Music and Dancing," 141; McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, 327.

265 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:219; Koslin, "Robe of Simplicity," 268; Elliott, "Dressing and Undressing the Clergy," 57.

For the clergy, the clothes that they wore during the liturgy and during the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were also perceived in the Middle Ages to have descended from the vestments worn in early Christian times. Furthermore, according to writers such as Durandus, each blessed item of clothing worn by the clergy had a specific significance related to the life of Christ.[266] Yet vestments did more than merely refer to the life of Christ, they blended past and present, the body of the wearer with that of Christ, the apostles, or the saints.[267] Wearing such clothes to represent early Christian figures—and particularly Christ himself—must have seemed appropriate to the clergy of Barking Abbey. The decoration of their vestments may have further affected this view. Extant priestly vestments from the time of the Ordinal are frequently embroidered with images of the life of Christ, while the tunicles and dalmatics of deacons and subdeacons feature depictions of saints and apostles. Some of them, such as two copes from St Mary Gdansk, are even decorated with the *Noli me tangere* scene, depicted in the *Visitatio*.[268] Had the Barking priest representing Christ worn such vestments, he would have carried with him the scenes of the Resurrection that he was mirroring with his performance. This juxtaposition of Christ's actions with their representation by the priest would have made the connection between Jesus and the celebrant more explicit.

Clothes, music, and objects all helped spectators and participants identify the "characters" of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* but, because these features of the ceremonies were also liturgical, they did not visually separate these "characters" from the religious performers portraying them. The representation of scriptural figures and stories with medieval monastic liturgical means, the superposition of the past and the familiar, may have had a devotional effect on spectators and participants, as explored earlier in this chapter, yet it also probably reinforced for spectators and participants the association that they may have felt existed between these figures and religious men and women. It may furthermore have tied these figures to the nunnery of Barking in general.

An additional means for encouraging such an association with that nunnery was space. The Barking Abbey church, in which the two ceremonies

---

266 Elliott, "Dressing and Undressing the Clergy," 55–56, 59; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:212–23, 223–99.

267 Eggert, "Edification with Thread and Needle," 62.

268 The copes are from the fourteenth and fifteenth century. Eggert, "Edification with Thread and Needle," 53, 57, 61; Eggert, "Textile Perspectives," 256–61.

were performed, had replaced a previous church in the twelfth century.[269] It contained and united layers of memory of and from past and present sisters, as well as of former and current events which took and had taken place there.[270] As a church, it was also a sacred place symbolically tied to the life of Christ, to his sacrifice for humanity, to his Resurrection, to the spread of Christianity, and to the Christian Church.[271] It was therefore linked both to the nunnery and to the story of salvation—joining local and scriptural history. The Barking abbey church was moreover associated with saints and miracles, increasing its sacral prestige. While the miracles were said to have taken place in the previous church, they nevertheless tied the most sacred space of the Barking community to the holy.[272] The church's decorations continued to combine the local with the scriptural: although these often showed scriptural scenes, they were likely commissioned by or donated to the abbey and were perhaps made in its surroundings.[273] The liturgical chants sung during the *Elevatio*, such as the *Tollite portas*, further connected the church with scriptural events: this chant occurred during both the Harrowing of Hell scene in the *Elevatio* and the ceremony of the Dedication of the Church.[274] For the nuns and clergy of the nunnery, and perhaps for the local laity, performing the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri* in this space must therefore have contributed to their feeling of a connection existing between this community and sacred history.

Finally, the lack of a clear limit between performers and their "role" in the *Elevatio* and, at times, in the *Visitatio* possibly worked to reinforce this

269 Pevsner and Radcliffe, *Essex: The Buildings of England,* 68.

270 On abbesses buried in the church, see Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama*, 151; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:361–62. For more on monastic spaces, see Gilchrist, *Contemplation in Action*.

271 Palazzo, *Liturgie et société*, 124–25, 147. See also Parker, "Architecture as Liturgical Setting"; Spice and Hamilton, "Defining the Holy," 1–23; Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture*, xxi–xxii, 169; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:11–40, 73–74.

272 Weston, "The Saintly Female Body," 19–20; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:207–9.

273 In 1911, archeologist Alfred Clapham undertook a dig of the site. Unfortunately, because the conventual buildings had been previously dug for gravel, it was not possible for him and his team to find much evidence either of what the internal layout of the church had been or of its medieval décor. Clapham, "The Benedictine Abbey of Barking."

274 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:84–85; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:257–58.

sense of association between religious performers and scriptural figures. In the *Visitatio*, performers are often referred to by the name of the figure they represent ("Mary Magdalen sighing," for instance). In the *Elevatio*, the abbess is still called abbess by the Ordinal even though she is part of a group meant to represent the *priores*. As for the celebrant, he begins the ceremony by portraying Christ but later reverts to being a priest who carries the Host (which IS Christ). Fluctuations in representation continue to abound in the *Elevatio*: nuns, priests, and clerics at times clearly represent a personage and, at others, seem to celebrate the liturgical ceremony as themselves. Transitions between these different stages of representation are usually not marked by the Ordinal, perhaps leading performers and spectators to conflate more easily the inhabitants of Barking Abbey with scriptural figures.

This is not the case, however, with the beginning of the *Visitatio*. According to the Ordinal, the *Visitatio* began with the nuns portraying the Marys changing their clothes—from their black habits into white surplices and veils—and confessing to the abbess: "dicant. Confiteor ad abbatissam et ab ea absolute" (they say *I confess* to the abbess. Once absolved by her…).[275] As explored when discussing penance, both these actions can be perceived as purifying: the colour white and the surplices themselves were associated at the time with innocence, purity, and chastity, and confession was meant to wash away one's sins.[276] Purification perhaps gave nuns a greater closeness with the scriptural figures that they were representing: once purified, they were permitted to physically and audibly re-enact their journey. Yet, by changing their outward appearance and their inner selves, it also distanced them from the roles that they were about to portray. While identification probably did not happen, I would argue that the multiple elements tying scriptural figures and performers together at Barking ensured that an association could have been made between them.

There is a final—unusual—type of association which I have not yet discussed: the one between the Barking nuns and the *priores* and disciples of the *Elevatio*. In the Middle Ages, women were at times depicted among the *priores*—the people who had died before Christ and deserved to be saved—but the main *priores* tended to be men. In the *Mirrour*, for instance, only "Adam and his progenie / and after Noe / and Abraham / and Moyses / and

---

275 This confession is not the sacrament of penance, which is done in private by a priest. No comparable change of clothes is recorded in the Barking liturgy. Everett, "A Critical Edition," 3.

276 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:219–20, 278–80.

Dauid / with alle othere holy fadres and prophetes" are explicitly named.[277] The words *priores* and *sanctorum partum* (Holy Fathers) used in the Ordinal are moreover masculine. This representation by women of male scriptural figures is unusual; the only other extant example of this practice comes from the Benedictine nunnery of Origny-Sainte-Benoîte, where a nun appears to have represented God during Easter Week.[278] At Barking, this representation is neither discussed nor presented as problematic. On the contrary, in a later part of the *Elevatio*, the female community goes on to portray the disciples going to Galilee:

> conuentus sequatur cantando predictam / antiphonam cum versu Dicant nunc et versiculo: Dicite in nacionibus Oratio Deus qui / pro nobis filium tuum. et hec processio figuratur per hoc quomodo christus pro/cedit post resurexionem in galileam. Sequentibus disci/pulis

> The convent follows, singing the aforementioned antiphon with the verse: the Jews should now say..., and the versicle: Tell in all nations... The prayer: God, for us, you wanted to submit your son. And by these means, this procession represents how Christ proceeded after his Resurrection into Galilee, the disciples following.

The performance of the dramatic liturgical ceremonies thus seems to reinforce a sense of connection between the Barking sisters and holy men. This is not a first at Barking, as was revealed when exploring the depiction of women in the house's literary culture. This performance also perhaps suggests an association between religious women and men of the Church in general. The liturgy of Barking already blurs boundaries between the tasks of the clergy and those of religious women. While the significance given to the Eucharist usually forbade women to enter the sacred space around the altar, the nuns of Barking frequently approached this space during the liturgy.[279] In the *Visitatio* too, the Marys come near the altar behind which the figure of Christ appears: "Tunc marie stantes / super gradus ante altare"

277 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 262. See also 30, 289–90.

278 *celle qui fait Deus* (the one who makes/does [performs] God). Livre de la Trésorerie d'Origny-Sainte-Benoîte, in Saint-Quentin, Médiathèque municipale, MS 86, p. 301. The plays from the Carmelite Convent of the White Ladies of Huy do not specify whether their performers were men or women, and it is possible that women played male roles. However, none of their plays are specifically Easter ceremonies.

279 See for example *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:188–90. See also McLaughlin, "Women and Men," 189; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:177–78. On the evolution of the role of women within the Church, see Palazzo, *Liturgie et société*, 93–96.

(the Marys then, standing on the steps in front of the altar). As discussed when examining the prominent place of women in the abbey, the religious confidence of the nuns of Barking continued to be displayed in the behaviour adopted by the abbess and *cantrix* during the house's liturgy. In the *Visitatio*, the abbess' actions were reminiscent of the bishop's duties during the Consecration of a Virgin ceremony and of the priest's during the nuns' profession. As for the absolution, while it was not entirely unknown for an abbess to offer it in the central and late Middle Ages, it was more usually reserved to priests.[280] The attribution of traditionally male and often clerical responsibilities to women thus does not seem to have been entirely out of the ordinary at Barking Abbey.

The purification, which took place before the *Visitatio*, may also have contributed to this association between religious women and the clergy. Similar acts of purifications can be found in other *Visitationes*, all of them featuring women.[281] This suggests that these rituals were meant to appease anxieties connected to performance by women in the Middle Ages. By cleansing the bodies of three nuns portraying the Marys, purification may have been a means of reminding spectators and participants that these were bodies dedicated to God and removed from the World: their thoughts towards them ought therefore to remain pure. It may also have been a means of protecting liturgical clothes and objects from impure touch.[282] Yet purification also recalled the Last Supper, and by association, the priests' purification before and during Mass: Christ washed the feet of his disciples before the Last Supper—"the firste messe" as the *Mirrour* describes it—as a way of forgiving their sins and inciting them to forgive others.[283] The priests' purification included a washing of the hands, saying the *Confiteor*, and a change of clothes. Unlike religious women, priests did not purify to protect those watching them, but they did undertake it to prepare themselves for their

280 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:351, 353–55; Koslin, "Robe of Simplicity," 266–69; Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama*, 155.

281 Acts of purification were performed at Origny, Barking, Troyes, and Wilton. They involved saying the *Confiteor*, washing the hands of the three nuns, and/or changing their clothes. Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 145–46.

282 Normington, *Gender and Medieval Drama*, 52–54; Stevenson, "Rhythmic Liturgy, Embodiment, and Female Authority," 255–56. On anxieties around women and their bodies, see McLaughlin, "Women and Men," 192; Elliott, "Flesh and Spirit," 12–36; Minnis, "Religious Roles," 47–52; McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls," 220, 236, 254.

283 Love, *Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf*, ed. Hogg and Powell, 203. See Harper, *Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy*, 141–43; Bugyis, "Women Priests at Barking Abbey," 327.

role—here as vicar of Christ.[284] In the case of Mass, as in the *Visitatio*, purification took place before the start of a liturgical ceremony and allowed the individual to perform such a ceremony.

The clothes worn during the *Visitatio* by the three nuns were also tied to the clergy. *Superpellicijs* (surplices) were the most common clerical vestments, shared by all orders of clerics, and worn during their ordination ceremony.[285] At Barking, they are mentioned two other times in the Ordinal—on the Feast of the Ascension and on the Feast of the Annunciation—and were in both cases worn by priests.[286] Later in the *Visitatio*, after the Marys had been purified, they carried *ampullae* with them and were flanked by candelabra. *Ampullae* were used by priests during Mass. According to Durandus, their symbolism tied them closely to men of the Church: the *ampulla* containing wine represented the preachers passionately transmitting their knowledge; the *ampulla* containing water stood for the doctors who drank the science of salvation.[287] As for the candelabra, they were usually carried by clerics in the Barking liturgy, particularly during processions.[288]

Purification may thus have been the first step in a series of actions associating the nuns portraying the Marys with the clergy. Suddenly, they were dressed like them, carried items usually attributed to them, and were even allowed to perform acts otherwise reserved for them. The Marys were the ones who saw and touched Christ, whereas the (human) male figures only saw and held a substitute for his body—the *sudarium*—given to them by Mary Magdalen. Mary Magdalen handed this "relic" to the disciples who kissed it, in a moment recalling communion.[289] Furthermore, the Marys touching the priest portraying Christ may have reminded spectators and

---

284 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:212–14, 223, 29–32, 42, 56–58, 401–2.

285 Harper, *Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy*, 27–29; Elliott, "Dressing and Undressing the Clergy," 58–59.

286 Bugyis, "Women Priests at Barking Abbey," 325. See *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:129 and 2:210.

287 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:190. See also Bugyis, "Women Priests at Barking Abbey," 325–26. Bugyis discusses the possible contents of the *ampullae* at Barking and compares them with the containers used in other *Visitatio* ceremonies.

288 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:22–23, 29, 84–88, 96–107, 124–27, 129 and 2:188–90, 209–12, 218–20.

289 Kissing was associated with communion at Sunday Mass, according to Duffy, when the kissing of the Pax worked as a substitute for communion. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 125.

participants of the events that they had just witnessed during the *Elevatio*, when the priest alone had been authorized to touch the consecrated body of Christ. The act of kissing, as the nuns did with the feet of Christ and with the sepulchre during the *Vistiatio*, was also repeatedly performed by the celebrant priest during Mass, when he kissed the gospel book, the paten, the chalice, and the altar multiple times.[290] The purification undertaken by the sisters of Barking was therefore an ambivalent process: it drew attention to their impurity but also showed that they were able to gain, much like priests, extensive liturgical powers once they had been purified.[291] Performing the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* probably continued to strengthen the existing association between the nuns of Barking and holy and/or clerical men. As Anne Bagnall Yardley suggests, this perhaps led to the three nuns representing the Marys being called *sacerdotes* (priests) at the end of the *Visitatio* and being "in some sense seen as clerics or priests."[292]

The ties existing at Barking between scriptural figures, nuns, and clergy were thus reinforced through the performance of the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. This performance is likely to have encouraged the ceremonies' spectators and participants to think of the *priores*, the Marys, the angels, the disciples, and of Christ as examples for and perhaps as close to the nuns and clergy. The ceremonies moreover presented their own version of such scriptural figures. The Barking *Visitatio* and *Elevatio*, while resembling other ceremonies of this kind, appear to be unique: this combination of scriptural texts in this specific order and of additional chants is not found elsewhere. The ceremonies also contain rare or distinctive elements: they depict the Harrowing of Hell in connection with the Resurrection, emphasize the Marys' individuality and emotions, show the Marys touching Christ and the disciples as immediately convinced by the women's testimony.[293] As is the case in the rest of the abbey's literary, liturgical, and even material culture, they increase the focus on women and present a specific depiction of

---

290 Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama*, 154; Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:147–60, 244–51, 319, 366–69, 405, 414.

291 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 2:402.

292 "The Liturgical Dramas for Holy Week," ed. Yardley and Mann, 10–12. See also Bugyis, "Women Priests at Barking Abbey."

293 The ceremonies contain a unique rubric acknowledging the doubts of the women (*dubitantes*), and the Barking *Visitatio* seems to be the only one where the three Marys kissed the feet of Christ in performance. Mary Magdalene's *suspirando* (sighing) is found only in this *Visitatio* and in the one from Coutances. Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 149.

them. This depiction is further highlighted through performance: preaching and teaching, for instance, were physically enacted by participants in front of the spectators. The convent of Barking—who had if not written, at least approved of the ceremonies—was therefore able to tell this story publicly in a way that aligned with its ideas and ideals.

The Effects of Performance: Community and Identity

Both the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s depiction of scriptural figures and their emphasis on the closeness existing between these figures and the members of Barking Abbey would have influenced the perception of the ceremonies and may have started, for spectators and participants, a reflection on their identity as individuals and as a community. For the nuns, performing the Barking ceremonies may have strengthened their sense of community. Community was an essential component of Benedictine monastic life according to the Rule of St Benedict and, later, to the frequent reports of episcopal visitors.[294] As mentioned earlier, the *Visitatio* reflects on this question by emphasizing the communal aspect of the Marys' relationship. When watching and performing this ceremony, the nuns of Barking may have realized how exemplary this female community was. They may even have been brought closer together through performance: the sisters portraying the Marys had to be constantly aware of each other to coordinate their singing and their movements. If successful in their coordination, they would have mirrored each other as though they were one body, one voice.

However, the *Visitatio*'s depiction of community is more complex than these moments of unison suggest. The Marys are given a certain individuality: they have names (Mary Magdalen, Mary mother of James, Mary Salome), which is far from standard in *Visitatio* ceremonies, and they sing their own chants.[295] Their individual singing features mostly at the beginning of the ceremony, hinting that this behaviour is perhaps less desirable than the united singing of the later part of the *Visitatio*. Yet all three Marys also make their individual voices heard when they sing to the resurrected Christ *Ihesus ille nazarenus* (Jesus of Nazareth) one after the other (*alternis*).

---

294 See Gilchrist, *Contemplation in Action*, 108; Theisen, "Community and the Shape of Christian Salvation," 1–8; Clark, "Introduction," 3–13.

295 Mary Magdalen sings the *Quondam dei, Heu misere* (Alas, miserably), *Quia tulerunt dominum meum, Domine si tu sustulisti eum, Raboni, Gratulari et letari et cetera, Sepulcrum christi*, and starts the final *Christus resurgens*. The chants *Appropinquans ergo sola*, *Heu consolacio nostra* and *Licet mihi vobiscum ire, Heu redempcio israel* are attributed, respectively, to Mary mother of James, and Mary Salome.

Like the conventual community, the community presented in the *Visitatio* is made of sisters and led by one woman but it also at times operates as a unit, and at others allows its members to have unique, equally important voices. When the Marys sing their laments for instance, none of them emerges as dominant. While performing the *Visitatio* may thus have served as a way of strengthening the communal feeling at Barking, it may also have contributed to a reflection on the inner workings of the monastic community and on the place of the individual within such a community. In the Late Middle Ages, nunneries began to be less focused on constant communal life. Nuns were often divided into small groups (or *familiae*) to eat, and they created cells for themselves with curtains.[296] The *Visitatio* perhaps commented on this issue by presenting the Barking spectators and participants with a distinctive depiction of a harmonious female community. Such a community tends towards the communal without erasing the individual.

Ideas about community and identity may further have been influenced by the emphasis put by the ceremonies on the ties between the nuns of Barking and holy and/or religious men. Such ties may have led spectators and participants to reflect on the liturgical powers of nuns and to perhaps believe that these could exceed the standard functions attributed to religious women. We do not know how such assertions of power were perceived by the clergy of the house. While, according to Eric Palazzo in *Liturgie et société*, rituals "contribuent à réduire les antagonismes d'une société en exprimant les hiérarchies nécessaires à l'intérieur d'elle" (contribute to reduce the antagonisms in a society by expressing the necessary hierarchies within such a society), liturgy fails here to respect these hierarchies, perhaps leading instead to *antagonismes*.[297] The performance of the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* probably made both sisters and clergy reflect on the role of women and men within liturgy but also perhaps within society, within the Church, and within the history of Christianity. Such reflections would have been further fuelled by the extensive role given to women in the Barking ceremonies—both as performers and as figures in the narrative that they told. While women did not play the most sacred roles of Christ and the angels, while they did not fully subvert traditional hierarchy, their performance suggests that they were fully part of the Church and were (and had been) able to perform key roles within it. The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* may therefore have unsettled the clergy of Barking Abbey, but they may also have had the opposite effect.

296 Erler, "Private Reading," 134–46.

297 Palazzo, *Liturgie et société*, 14. See also Hiley, *Western Plainchant*, 2–3.

They depicted men and women as equals in fulfilling some of the roles in the *Elevatio* and, rather than keeping them apart, had them process and sing together.[298] The performance of the ceremonies thus perhaps strengthened the sense of community existing between the male and female residents of the abbey, encouraging them to work together as the followers of the *priores* and of the disciples.

This performance may have caused further reflections about identity through its inclusion of light, white garments, and of a change of clothes. Seeing and carrying these objects and performing these actions would have brought nuns back to their involvement in another ceremony performed in their abbey church: the Consecration of a Virgin (and Widow). In this ceremony, nuns were confirmed into their community. They were first *induta uestibus albis* (dressed in white clothes) and were then given new habits and new veils, which were blessed by the bishop. Once changed into these clothes, the virgins came back into the church with a lit candle, and they officially became Brides of Christ.[299] During the *Visitatio*, nuns mirrored some of the actions performed in this foundational ceremony for their identity as women religious. This may have encouraged them to recall their monastic vows and their role as Brides of Christ. It perhaps led them to think of the *Visitatio* as another important moment in the definition of their identity and to integrate some of the features displayed by the Marys to this definition. Nuns were to be obedient, chaste, and to leave all property behind, but they could also be mediators, be physically close to Christ, and have an important place in the liturgy.

This interpretation may also have affected the six *iuuencule* who carried candelabra near the Marys. They had not gone through the Consecration ceremony and were most likely schoolgirls.[300] By accompanying the figures of the Marys, the *iuuencule* perhaps created a more specific association between themselves and the Marys. While these girls may not necessarily have pursued a religious life, there seems to have been a strong presumption, in most medieval abbeys, that they would.[301] As some of these future nuns would during the Consecration ceremony, the Marys were dressed in

298 On the importance of procession for community, see Palazzo, *Liturgie et société*, 59–64.

299 Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 169–71, 182–84; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:353–55.

300 They were chosen on Holy Saturday by the abbess to perform this task. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:103 and 2:369.

301 See Yardley, "Musical Education of Young Girls," 52.

white and carried candles, and both groups of women had much to learn.[302] Indeed, although the Marys begin the *Visitatio* with good intentions, they do not trust in the Resurrection. However, they end the ceremony triumphantly: they encounter Christ himself and announce his Resurrection to both spectators and disciples. Their journey is therefore physical, emotional, but also religious: they learn to trust in Christ unconditionally, they gain a better understanding of his miracles and sacrifice, and they grow in their religious authority.

By following the Marys during the ceremonies' performance, the girls may have perceived these women and their journey as models to follow in their future either as novices or as professed nuns. It was customary for novices to learn by doing rather than through theory only. They followed more experienced nuns and gradually took on responsibilities.[303] This is what the *iuuencule* were tasked to do in the *Visitatio*: as they walked alongside the Marys, they learned what their behaviour ought to be in imitation both of their senior nuns and of the three Marys. Yet the *iuuencule* did more than accompany the Marys: they held the candelabra. This act had the benefit of materializing two scriptural mentions of light, essential to their understanding of the role of nuns. The first was the passage from Matthew mentioned earlier about the *candelabrum* and the disciples. In the *Visitatio*, the *iuuencule* actually held up this guiding light for all to see. However, while transmission of light was deemed important, liturgical writers such as Beleth or Durandus advised that one should remember to tend to one's own light. They used the parable of the wise virgins—sung on several feasts at Barking Abbey, during the Consecration of a Virgin ceremony, and often seen as a model for consecrated women—to illustrate this idea.[304] When performing the *Visitatio*, the *iuuencule* repeated the actions of the wise virgins and of previous holy women, while looking forward to their roles as novices and consecrated virgins. Holding the candelabra demanded focus and such focus was also to be dedicated to maintaining their inner light, their faith, and their purity. The parable of the wise virgins was perhaps echoed by the *ampullae* carried by the three Marys as well. These containers were at times used to carry oil and could be tied to the oil that the wise virgins remem-

302 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:353–55; Koslin, "Robe of Simplicity," 266.

303 Stevenson, "Rhythmic Liturgy, Embodiment, and Female Authority," 265–66.

304 The chants *Audivi vocem* and *Media autem*. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:353–55; Sheingorn, *Easter Sepulchre*, 57. The parable was further associated with Easter and the wait for the Resurrection of Christ.

bered to bring for their lamps. The *ampullae*, the candelabra surrounding the Marys, and the *Visitatio*'s change of clothes were therefore a reminder of and an instruction in the promises made during the transformative ceremony of the Consecration of a Virgin. They recalled the events of this ceremony, materialized light metaphors essential to the understanding of the role of women religious, and connected nuns and *iuuencule* with prestigious scriptural female role models.

Through their depiction of women and their association of scriptural figures with their performers, the Barking dramatic liturgical ceremonies may thus have affected their religious spectators and participants in their understanding of both their community and identity. Performing the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* taught younger girls about their future responsibilities, reminded experienced women religious of their duties, and presented them with perhaps less common definitions of their roles; it also showed them an ideal female community, stressed their power as women religious, and encouraged collaboration between them and their male counterparts.[305]

The Effects of Performance: Power and Prestige

In addition to redefining the identity and community of the members of the abbey to direct them towards their ideal behaviour, the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* of Barking Abbey bestowed a certain prestige and power onto them. Witnessing and representing the story of the Resurrection in this space, with this music, these clothes, and "props" probably gave the Barking nuns and clergy a greater sense of the sacredness of their community and of its inclusion in the history of Christianity. The ceremonies' portrayal of women and the connection they created between scriptural figures and religious participants would also have affected the laity. The clergy was associated with holy figures, while the nuns' performance suggested that they were the successors of significant male and female saints. The sisters of Barking were even vested with nearly sacramental powers, which was highly unusual at the time. This was probably known to the laity watching the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. High and late medieval focus on the sanctity of the Host was expressed in a multitude of texts in the vernacular, such as "the *Lay Folk's Mass Book*, poems, carols, exempla, and sermons."[306] It positioned priests as

305 On drama and identity, see Sponsler, *Drama and Resistance*, 33.

306 Blanc, "Performing Female Authority," 81.

the privileged and necessary mediators between the divine and the rest of the congregation.[307]

In addition to the roles performed by nuns and clergy during the ceremonies, the parishioners' own "role" in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* further communicated to them the authority of the Barking nunnery. As established earlier, the performance of the ceremonies physically excluded parishioners: they did not stand in, nor perhaps did they have a clear view of, the performance space. Access—and the lack of access—created a hierarchy, at the bottom of which was the laity. Unlike the nuns and clergy of Barking, they were not allowed to come too close to the scriptural events depicted by the dramatic liturgical ceremonies.[308] However, there are two moments of inclusion attested in the manuscript.[309] Such inclusions positioned the monastic community as transmitters (here, of the news of the Resurrection), but they simultaneously gave lay spectators the silent role of those receiving this news. The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* thus revealed the response expected from them by Barking Abbey and reminded them of the appropriate behaviour that they should adopt.[310] This selective inclusion might have made the parishioners realize both the efforts of the religious house to transmit sacred texts and narratives to them and the house's exclusive access to such sacred material.

The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri* of Barking Abbey therefore had the effect of reinforcing the abbey and the nuns' authority. This strengthened authority was tied to the sacred and, as such, spiritual. Yet, the performance of the *Elevatio* and the *Visitatio* encouraged the formation of connections between the abbey's spiritual and temporal authorities—inviting spectators and participants to amalgamate the two. It did so through the position of lay spectators in the church, the wealth of the spectacle presented, and the role given to the abbess. When the amalgamation had successfully been achieved, the abbey could now emphasize its spiritual authority—which was easier to do during liturgical services and harder to challenge—and simultaneously strengthen its temporal authority.

307 Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 9, 13, 104–28, 297–99; Rubin, "The Eucharist," 44–59.

308 Bevington, "Fleury Playbook," 103.

309 Perhaps three according to Ogden and Findlay who place the altar of the Holy Trinity in the nave. Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 226; Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama*, 150–52.

310 See McGavin and Walker, *Imagining Spectatorship*, 112, 179, 181.

During the performance of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, the first cue leading spectators to amalgamate the nunnery's spiritual and temporal powers was the performance space. The effects of this space on the nuns and clergy have already been discussed; what was its effect on lay witnesses to these ceremonies? The abbey church of Barking was the largest in Essex according to extant records; it stood both as a representative of the Church and as a display of the abbey's wealth and prestige.[311] On Easter Day, it would have been decorated with its richest furniture and decoration. For spectators making their way inside, the sight must have been impressive and perhaps intimidating. The performance further showed off the nunnery's wealth, by including dazzling liturgical vestments and vessels, as well as incense. These costly items were often gifted or sponsored by wealthy patrons, such as the nuns' relatives (who were mostly members of the nobility or the gentry) or the royal family. Such patrons tended to leave a mark on their donations: family or individual emblems are frequently recorded on stained-glass windows, draperies, or in private chapels.[312] It seems to have been customary in late medieval England for lay benefactors who could afford it to own private chapels and altars in monastic churches: there were at least several chantries in the Barking abbey church.[313] As lay spectators entered the space to watch the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, they would therefore have been exposed to these visible ties between the Barking abbey church and the nobility, such ties associating temporal authority with a respect for the nunnery's spiritual authority.[314]

This same space continued to associate temporal and spiritual authority through the position of the spectators and performers. While the laity was confined to their own space in the nave, that space itself was divided:

311 It had an impressive length of 103 m [337 ft]. Clapham, "The Benedictine Abbey of Barking," 69–87.

312 There is no specific record of private chapels at Barking, but "chantries" (either a chapel or a private altar) are listed. The first known chantry was founded around 1398 at the tomb of St Ethelburga by Dame Joan of Felton (mother of Abbess Sybil). The second was at the altar of the Resurrection. The third was dedicated to St Edward and placed in the graveyard. "Abbeys and Churches," ed. Powell; "Houses of Benedictine Nuns: Abbey of Barking," ed. Page and Round. On commemoration and patronage, see *Memory and Commemoration*, ed. Barron and Burgess.

313 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 114–16, 139–41, 370.

314 Bradley Warren discusses wealth at Barking: "the symbolic capital available to the Benedictine brides of Christ works in concert with the aristocratic origins of the Barking nuns to enhance their ability to command social and spiritual respect." Warren, *Spiritual Economies*, 58.

men would have stood either in front of the women or north of them. There was also the possibility for some noble men to sit in the choir next to nuns and priests of a similar social class. These divisions of a sacred space based on social hierarchy seem to imply that social rank directly relates to one's access to the sacred.[315]

The last cue encouraging the amalgamation of the nunnery's temporal and spiritual authorities during the performance of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* was the role of the abbess. Although her role was not as extensive as that of the Marys or of Christ, it clearly expressed her significant power. It was she who supervised the beginning and end of the ceremonies, which—the Ordinal states—had been arranged by her. She held a similar decision-making role when dealing with the house's temporal affairs, handling income, and overseeing the management of lands.[316] Although she delegated authority onto conventual sisters and clergy (in the case of the ceremonies) or officials (in the case of her temporal power), she could reclaim it when needed—as she did at the end of the *Visitatio*. The ceremonies' performance further demonstrated to the laity the right behaviour to adopt towards the abbess by showing the nuns and clergy of Barking's obedience towards her.

For the nuns and clergy of Barking and for their parishioners, the ties between the abbey's temporal and spiritual authorities did not start with the performance of these dramatic liturgical ceremonies. These ties were developed gradually, based on their spiritual and temporal relationships with one another, their perception of their roles, and "their understanding of the abbey's connections with great patrons and local high-ranking families."[317] This nunnery was not only a religious authority but also a temporal lord, and it required obedience from its parishioners under both statuses. Because the abbey's two statuses were not always clearly distinct, they could be understood as one, or at least, as related to each other. Religious feasts celebrated both with parishioners and members of the abbey, for instance, mixed the spiritual and the temporal. They displayed Barking's religious authority by rewarding parishioners with indulgences (on the Day of the Dedication of the Church and on the Feast of St Ethelburga) but promising them excommunication if they did not attend liturgical services (on that same Day of

---

315 Palazzo, *Liturgie et société*, 125; McLaughlin, "Women and Men," 188–89. See also Wiles, *Short History of Western Performance Space*, 45 on sacred space.

316 On the role of abbesses and prioresses in English medieval nunneries, see Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 78–132.

317 Blanc, "Performing Female Authority," 78.

the Dedication of the Church).[318] Yet, as shows of wealth and prestige, these same feasts displayed Barking's temporal authority. On Rogation Days, the procession through the abbey's land and the agrarian content of the prayers further reminded the parishioners of the house's temporal role towards them. While Barking Abbey was important for their spiritual life, it was also involved in their working life: the nunnery acted as their landowner, protector, and the recipient of some of the product of their labour.[319] Rogation Days' liturgy, and medieval liturgy in general, can moreover be tied to the temporal, because it was a way of regulating social relations. This was especially true during feasts celebrating the Eucharist, which had a particular focus on community.[320] The Feast of Corpus Christi, for example, generally included a procession making clear the social rank of its participants and the power of the civic authorities in a "sacral embodiment of social reality."[321] Sunday Mass too, was a time when social hierarchies could be displayed and reinforced by establishing the dominance or the power of certain groups of people. The order in which the pax was passed around the church, for example, or in which the portions of the holy loaf were distributed, could create tensions precisely because it was understood to reflect the social order.[322] At Barking Abbey, the house's royal patronage, as well as the nuns' social status, further contributed to this amalgamation between temporal and spiritual power. Abbesses—some royal and many noble—were remembered every year by the nunnery, thus providing a regular reminder of the long-standing ties between holiness and rank at Barking Abbey.[323]

---

318 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:257–59.

319 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:124–27.

320 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 49, 12, 93; Palazzo, *Liturgie et société*, 103–11.

321 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 11–12, 26, 43–44. Corpus Christi was celebrated in England from 1318 "and was conceived and presented in late medieval communities as a celebration of the corporate life of the body social, created and ordered by the presence of the body of Christ."

322 Flanigan, Ashley, and Sheingorn, "Liturgy as Social Performance," 712–14. Both the holy loaf and the pax can be understood as substitutes for communion, according to Rubin. The pax was given by the officiating priest to the rest of the clergy. After having kissed it, they handed it to the congregation, who kissed it in turns. It was supposed to encourage prayers for peace and thus stood as a symbol of harmony. As for the holy loaf, it was brought to church by a different household every Sunday. After having been blessed at the end of the service, it was given to the parishioners. Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, 73–76; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 125–27.

323 Records list Maud, the illegitimate daughter of King Henry I (abbess 1175–about 1200), and Maud, the illegitimate daughter of King John (abbess 1247–1252),

Even before the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were performed, connections between the temporal and spiritual authorities of the abbey had therefore already been instituted at Barking. Such connections were re-established and perhaps reinforced during the two ceremonies. Performing the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* would thus have affected the perception of the religious house by investing it with and reminding spectators and participants of its multifaceted power and prestige. For the nuns, this performance may have given them a greater confidence in their spiritual and temporal authority. As for the parishioners present in the abbey church, they too may have seen their perception of the nunnery of Barking, but also of themselves, altered.

This may have been intentional on the part of Barking Abbey, which specifically targeted the laity with these two liturgical ceremonies, according to the note preceding them. While the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* seem to have been intended to improve the *populus*' devotion, their performance was not undertaken in a context of perfect harmony between Barking Abbey and its parishioners. In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, various troubles afflicted Essex and complicated this relationship. Around the time the ceremonies were apparently modified (1358–1377 under Abbess Katherine of Sutton) and recorded (1404 under Abbess Sybil of Felton), tensions were rising between the Barking tenants and their monastic lord. Records from the 1320s already show that some tenants refused to perform customary work and others left their manors without license. In the 1350s, 1370s, and 1380s, they were accused of "overloading the common," cutting trees without permission, and letting their sheep trespass. In 1346, documents report that the tenants of the Ingatestone manor were avoiding the "suit of mill" they owed the abbey. The year 1379 saw the tenants of this same manor request that their labour services be replaced by a sum of money.[324]

---

as abbesses of Barking. Queens Maud, the wife of Henry I, and Maud, the wife of Stephen, were given the custody of the abbey. It is not clear what this custody entailed. "Houses of Benedictine Nuns: Abbey of Barking," ed. Page and Round; Sturman, "Barking Abbey," 400–402; Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 54. For more information on the nuns' social background, see Oliva, "The Convent and the Community," 346, 108. Some abbesses were moreover appointed by royal authority: Aelfgifu, for example, became an abbess "by both divine and royal blessings." Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns*, 5.

324 Records mention that tenants refused to work at the manors of Ingatestone (1322, 1394) and Bulphan (1395). Eight Ingatestone tenants were moreover reported missing (1399). The term "suit of mill" refers here to the requirement for tenants to use their lord's mill to grind their corn. Another incident, which took

Their defiance of the abbey's authority may have been encouraged by the house's spiritual reputation at the end of the thirteenth and in the fourteenth century. Some of the reports made at the time by visiting bishops are not kind towards the nunnery and its inhabitants. In 1279, Archbishop Peckham reprimanded the sisters for their performance of the liturgy, their inappropriate behaviour, and their disregard for the enclosure.[325] The fourteenth-century reports of the bishop of London continued to find faults with the sisters' behaviour. In 1397, he reproached the abbess of Barking her private use of funds taken from the house's lepers' hospital. In spite of these problems, the abbey of Barking must not have been considered an entirely disreputable religious house: it continued to receive bequests from the laity.[326] However, and although evidence is fragmentary, such bequests mostly came from inhabitants of London or from nuns' families rather than from local parishioners.

If parishioners had doubts or harboured negative feelings towards the nunnery, these would only have been exacerbated by the house's financial issues. Successive epidemic outbreaks—including the Black Death—plagued the abbatial lands. This already difficult situation took a turn for the worse when floods of salted water repeatedly damaged the abbey's lands in 1361 and in 1376–1377 (under Abbess Katherine of Sutton).[327] Not only did the floods create a financial burden for the nunnery, but they also caused problems for its marshland tenants, who were supposed to participate in the repairs. They were pressed multiple times to maintain the sea walls and dikes on their tenements.[328] Tensions caused by these financial issues were

---

place in or before 1363, may indicate dissent and disrespect toward the nunnery's authority: habits, books, and other belongings of two nuns and one servant were stolen. Poos, *Rural Society after the Black Death*, 240–42, 247; Dyer, "Social and Economic Background to the Rural Revolt of 1381," 30; Sturman, "Barking Abbey," 83–87, 102, 248–52; Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 40–45.

325 "Houses of Benedictine Nuns: Abbey of Barking," ed. Page and Round.

326 Moreover, in 1345, 1350, and 1398, abbesses Maud of Montagu and Sybil of Felton were granted papal indults *de plenaria remissione* (plenary remission). Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 40–45; "Houses of Benedictine Nuns: Abbey of Barking," ed. Page and Round.

327 Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 38–39, 42–43; Knowles, *Religious Orders in England*, 48.

328 The state of the abbey's land does not seem to have improved quickly: the floods still left it looking like a "broad like or pond" in 1380 and they had reduced the house's income to four hundred marks a year by 1382. Barking's financial issues deprived the nunnery of its manors of Marks, Valence, and East Hall, among

already high by 1384 and, in 1395, they had risen to such a degree that the bishop of London had to exhort the house to stop its "strife and debate" with its parishioners. This "strife and debate" is the most overt confrontation recorded between the abbey and the parishioners of Barking. Because of temporal problems—financial issues—the nunnery amalgamated the two vicarages in Barking. This affected the parishioners in their spiritual life and seems to have been at the root of the open "strife."[329]

Lay resentment against monastic landlords was also visible during the 1381 rising, which was especially widespread in South Essex. Many religious houses were targeted by the insurgents: buildings were destroyed, charters burnt, and goods stolen at the abbeys of Hatfield Regis, Waltham, and Stratford Langthorne—all neighbours of Barking Abbey.[330] Barking itself does not seem to have experienced such acts of violence during the rising. However, records describe the burning of documents at its manor of Ingatestone and they report the murder of its former steward, John Bampton, whose house was then pillaged. Bampton was Essex Justice of the Peace and therefore represented both seigneurial and royal authority.[331]

There is no evidence that those rising against monastic landlords or rejecting Barking Abbey's authority were part of the *populus* who attended the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri*. Yet, the local tensions between

---

others. The crown attempted to help the house by granting it the appropriation of the churches of Hockley (1382) and Lidlington (1410), liberties in the Hundred of Becontree (1392), and by exempting it for ten years from payment of tenth up to fifty pounds a year (1409). "Borough of Barking," ed. Powell; "Houses of Benedictine Nuns: Abbey of Barking," ed. Page and Round; Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 43–44; Sturman, "Barking Abbey," 61, 70.

329 "Houses of Benedictine Nuns: Abbey of Barking," ed. Page and Round; "Borough of Barking," ed. Powell; Sturman, "Barking Abbey," 70–74, 133.

330 "Priory of Hatfield Regis or Broadoak," ed. Page and Round; "Hundred of Becontree," ed. Powell; "The Abbey of Stratford Langthorne," ed. Page and Round; "Abbey of Waltham Holy Cross," ed. Page and Round; Dyer, "Social and Economic Background to the Rural Revolt of 1381," 10–12.

331 John Bampton had been both steward of Barking Abbey from 1356 to 1368 and an official responsible for carrying out the collection of the unpopular poll-tax. The identity of the rebels remains unknown, although they appear to have mostly been tenants and not members of the gentry. Village officials, however, also seem to have participated in the rebellion. Dyer describes these rebels as having emerged from a "wide spectrum of rural society." Dyer, "Social and Economic Background to the Rural Revolt of 1381," 12–15, 30–34, 38–39, 40–41; Hilton, "Introduction," 1–3. See also Poos, *Rural Society after the Black Death*, 232–37; Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 43, 53. 69.

landlords and laity, especially when added to the financial issues and transgressive behaviour of the nunnery, must have affected the lay spectators present in the abbey church on Easter morning. These men and women may have agreed with the prevalent anger against landlords and their privileges; they may alternatively have felt anxious in this climate of uncertainty.

Extant documents do not record the actions Barking Abbey may have taken against the 1381 rising. However, they contain evidence that the abbey responded to the laity's disobedience: fines were issued for their refusal to work, to use the mill, or for trespassing. In 1380 and again in 1384, the nunnery created commissions to force labourers to repair sea walls. If they refused, they were liable to being arrested and imprisoned.[332] Between 1399 and 1401, there was even an incident involving Abbess Sybil of Felton and others, who, in a quarrel with John Hooke of Blackmore, Essex, were convicted of armed trespass.[333] Such contests to the abbey's authority (it was also simultaneously contested by neighbouring lords) seem to have encouraged Barking Abbey to take action to reinforce and maintain its interests (especially under Abbesses Maud (ii) de Montagu and Sybil of Felton). The abbey received, for instance, royal grants upholding its privileges, and both abbesses obtained confirmations of the house's charters.[334] Sybil of Felton also probably engineered the creation of the Ordinal and Customary, recording and therefore granting more weight and prestige to the saints, customs, and liturgical peculiarities of Barking Abbey.[335] This was apparently done without requiring the assent of the bishop of London, further demonstrating the independence and power of the religious house, which possessed worthwhile traditions that ought to be recorded.

Considering these practices and the general context of dissent in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Essex, I believe that the note preceding the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* and its claim that the ceremonies were modified to improve the *populus*' devotion should be re-examined. Medieval devo-

---

332 Sturman, "Barking Abbey," 73, 113, 180, 251.

333 Hooke was perhaps a villein, freed by clerk William Sapy without the permission of Barking Abbey. Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 45, 53; Kew, The National Archives, SC 8/335/15842 (petition of Sybil de Felton).

334 Chettle and Loftus, *History of Barking Abbey*, 43–45, 53; "Hundred of Becontree," ed. Powell.

335 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:13. A short text written towards the beginning of the Ordinal claims that Sybil of Felton was made abbess through divine permission. A bishop is mentioned neither there nor in relation with the composition of the Ordinal and Customary. Readers are not told whether his authorization was given or required in that matter.

tion—or the lack of it—was at times tied to the temporal. This is the case in Mirk's *Festial*, which not only states that failing to attend liturgical ceremonies could be, as discussed earlier, linked to Sloth, but also that it could imply Pride—a lack of respect for and attention to God.[336] And although the sin of Sloth was often associated with religious duties, it could be related in certain texts (such as *Piers Plowman* or the Barking text *The Clensyng of Mannes Soule*) to more temporal failings. Among them is listed, for instance, noncompliance with work duties.[337]

Medieval devotion was understood to consist not only of private or shared prayers, but also of actions such as charitable deeds, bequests to churches and religious houses, pilgrimages to shrines and holy places, and the funding of structures such as bridges or roads.[338] These all had substantial effects both on the soul of the person performing them and on the lay and religious communities which benefitted from them. It thus seems possible that devotional acts of this kind may have been perceived at Barking as signs of respect for the house. These devotional acts were moreover tied to temporal business. They were regularly recorded in wills, with the hope that they would reduce time spent in Purgatory and mend the testators' offences against the Church (religious houses included). Such offences are described in Mirk's *Instructions for Parish Priests*, the most serious of them being punishable by excommunication. These include:

> breaking or disturbing the peace of the Church; taking away or withholding her lands, rents, or freedoms; withholding, destroying, bearing away tithes or consenting to it; burning a church or any other place or consenting to it; destroying the Church's goods; and disturbing the peace of England and betraying the realm.[339]

Considering this complex understanding of devotion, it is possible that the behaviour of the Barking parishioners, tenants, and insurgents in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was perceived as a lack of devotion and even as a sin: they avoided work, acted against the interests of the Church and the Crown, burned buildings and documents, and failed to respect the peace.

---

336 Mirk's *Festial* was a fifteenth-century vernacular collection of homilies, written mostly for the benefit of priests. Mirk, *Mirk's Festial*, ed. Erbe, 149.

337 Wenzel, "Sloth in Middle English Devotional Literature," 316–17; Langland, *Piers Plowman*, ed. Schmidt; Everett, "A Critical Edition," 51–52.

338 Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 355–56, 367; Kieckhefer, "Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion," 77–82.

339 Blanc, "Performing Female Authority," 73. See Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 126–29, 355–57; Mirk, *Instructions for Parish Priests*, ed. Peacock, 21–24.

If the Abbey of Barking felt that its parishioners had failed in their devotion, as the Ordinal states, it thus perhaps associated such failure with a lack of respect for the general authority of the house. Furthermore, the Barking Ordinal and Customary was composed at a time when offences against the Church could be understood as devotional failures even if they concerned temporal matters. In such a context, the note preceding the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* seems to reference the fraught relationship between the nunnery and its parishioners—both under Abbess Katherine of Sutton and Abbess Sybil of Felton—and to reflect the house's desire to improve the situation. Its solution seems to have been to move a temporal problem into the spiritual sphere: if the note's reference to devotion was tied at least in part to temporal disobedience, encouraging such devotion would have counteracted such disobedience. I am not suggesting here that the abbey believed that their liturgical dramatic ceremonies would prevent all dissent among their parishioners, but by moving them to an earlier time of Matins, the house made them more accessible to what seems to have been its target audience. The *Elevatio*, the *Visitatio*, and their depiction of the nunnery's power, would thus have reached their troublesome spectators.

Populus, nuns, and clergy all took part in and were all affected by the medieval performances of the Barking Abbey *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* in various ways. Although these ceremonies were part of liturgy, the abbey shaped this liturgy, using codes belonging to drama. This concoction seems to have encouraged the devotion of spectators and participants, to have helped nuns, clergy, and laity define their identity, and to have impressed onto the laity—and perhaps the clergy—the authority held by the nunnery. To explore these effects of the two liturgical ceremonies, I have based myself in this chapter on the Barking Ordinal, on historical documents, and on the literary and liturgical culture of the house. However, there is much about the ceremonies that remains elusive today. When analysing performative events, scholars must grapple with the ephemeral nature of the experience of performance. While much of this experience will never be known, one of the ways in which scholarly focus can be brought to performance is by staging medieval performative events. I chose—working within the larger frame of the Medieval Convent Project—to experiment with such a method and, in 2018, staged the Barking *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* ceremonies. The following chapter will focus on the modern spectators of and participants in this production and on their perceptions of the Barking ceremonies to further improve the understanding of their medieval predecessors and of the ways in which the performance of the Barking ceremonies affected them.

Chapter 2

CONTEMPORARY SPECTATORS AND PARTICIPANTS

PERFORMING THE BARKING ABBEY CEREMONIES IN 2018

Performance Research

Staging conventual plays and ceremonies has been an integral part of the Medieval Convent Drama Project since its conception. Three of the project's productions were presented in front of a mixed audience of sisters and laity (the Huy *Nativity* in December 2017, the Barking Abbey *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* in April 2018, and the Origny *Ludus paschalis* (Easter play) in April 2019), and one of the Huy plays (*Pelerinage de la vie humaine* (Pilgrimage of Human life)) was shot as a film (December 2021). I directed, in collaboration with my colleagues at the Medieval Convent Drama Project, the 2018 Barking Abbey production on which I will focus in this chapter.[1] It was performed in two different venues—in the church of the Cistercian Abbey of La Maigrauge in Fribourg and on the steps of the Aula Magna at the University of Fribourg. The decision to stage medieval performative events in such a way was partly a result of the distance we felt existed between the project and its setting in Fribourg. While the town possesses a long Catholic history as well as numerous religious houses, it lacks specific manuscripts that would allow the study of local medieval convent drama. Performance was therefore a means to share our research on convent drama with a wider audience, who might, due to Fribourg's culture and history, be interested in this subject. Exchanges with people external to the project were also beneficial to us: we were keen to hear their opinion of the Barking ceremonies, particularly when these opinions were informed by a knowledge of liturgy and of Catholic customs. They were able to draw our attention to elements we had not previously deemed important, to continuing or similar traditions, and to the use of drama and performance for religious purposes. Their reactions were particularly valuable for reflecting on intended and possible medieval reactions to the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*.

---

1 See www.youtube.com/watch?v=CF4eL-BonO0 for a film of this production in the abbey church of La Maigrauge.

These modern responses had to be considered carefully because the production we presented to our audience was different from those performed at Barking Abbey. Even when modern performances attempt to be faithful to the time of the play or ceremony that they bring to life, they encounter a multitude of problems. First, they must deal with the play-text. This text may fail to describe costumes, sets, props, movements, and location in detail. Modern directors, stage managers, and actors must therefore make decisions about these missing pieces of information. While their solutions can work well in performance, this does not mean that things were done or always done in this way in the Middle Ages.[2] Even if the text is more descriptive, recreating costumes, sets, props, movements, or location exactly remains impossible. Furthermore, what the text describes might not be what was done in performance. The Ordinal, for instance, may be a record of existing ceremonies and the way in which they were performed at Barking, or it may be a prescriptive text, instructing those about to "stage" the ceremonies. They may not have followed the instructions written in the Ordinal and even if they did, improvisation could have taken place and mistakes could have been made in performance.[3] The written version of the Barking ceremonies may alternatively represent an ideal, which the convent desired to transmit, or the version it felt should be performed, rather than what was really performed on Easter Day.[4]

In addition to these textual concerns, modern productions must deal with human factors: audiences and performers. Understanding the response of medieval spectators and participants to the Barking Abbey ceremonies is already a complex task because of the multiple and varied possible effects of performance. No two performances of the same play/ceremony in the same space by the same performers will elicit the same reactions. Even spectators and performers involved in one performance will not all react to it in the exact same way.[5] These concerns are complicated when performance research is used because the plays/ceremonies are then performed by modern actors in front of modern audience members. These people do not approach what they see or perform with the same beliefs, expectations, and

---

2 Dutton, "A Manifesto for Performance Research," 252.

3 See Davidson, "Improvisation in Medieval Drama."

4 Gittos, "Researching the History of Rites," 21–23; Symes, "Liturgical Texts and Performance Practices," 239–41.

5 McGavin and Walker, *Imagining Spectatorship*, 1; Taylor, *Moment by Moment by Shakespeare*, 2; Dutton, "A Manifesto for Performance Research," 252.

knowledge as their medieval counterparts did. Their relationship with one another may also differ from those of medieval spectators and performers, who were often members of a close community.[6] Their acting and reactions thus probably do not replicate those of the Middle Ages and, even if they may be similar, we cannot be sure of it. Performance research—like many disciplines focused on understanding the past—does not provide researchers with definite answers. What it can do, however, is allow these researchers to explore possibilities.

These possibilities can be practical: performance research draws attention to the ways in which a play/ceremony is put on and works. This can mean for example working out the size of a set used in a specific performance space, the number of performers that can fit in this space, or the ways in which its acoustics work. These practicalities of performance are essential to understanding drama and liturgy but remain invisible on the page. Another set of possibilities that can be explored through this kind of research concerns the effects of performance. While modern performance does not claim to reconstruct medieval performance, it bears similarities to it. Both are embodied practices where a text is enacted in front of spectators. As such, performance research can "reconstruct aspects of an audience's experience." It can raise questions and generate thoughts, for instance, about the effects of music or of the type of staging practised in the Middle Ages.[7] Staging medieval plays or ceremonies can therefore illuminate such texts in unpredictable and unexpected ways: either by emphasizing their practical aspects or by exploring their potential effects.[8]

Preparing, rehearsing, and performing the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* did raise unforeseen questions and bring enriching possibilities and fresh interpretations to the research that had gone before. This chapter will draw on my experiences and those of actors and spectators to reflect on the project's staging of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri*. A first part will be dedicated to explaining staging choices and describing the production our modern audience and actors experienced. The second part will explore their responses to the performances and the ways in which this experiment and the reactions it elicited may further our understanding of the ceremonies' impact on their medieval spectators and participants.

---

6 Twycross, "The Theatricality of Medieval English Plays," 27.

7 Dutton, "A Manifesto for Performance Research," 253–55.

8 Dutton, "A Manifesto for Performance Research," 259.

La Visite au Tombeau-Pièce de Théâtre Médiévale de l'Abbaye de Barking: Staging Choices

As I prepared our production of the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri*, I hoped that, while obviously not identical to the medieval productions of the ceremonies, it would come as close to them as was achievable with our means and knowledge.[9] This method had its challenges: even if our performances had been perfectly similar to those of Barking Abbey, we could not know whether they would have affected each spectator and participant as they have ours. Another solution would have been to adapt the ceremonies' language, references, and themes to modern expectations in order to produce an effect approaching that of the medieval ceremonies. I attempted for a while to imagine how a modern religious house would create this kind of dramatic liturgical ceremony. Yet I was not sure what to keep or what to change in ceremonies that have no modern liturgical equivalent. This type of adaptation would further have erased some of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s essential features, such as the music. The project's academic interest in medieval dramatic liturgy and my knowledge of the continuous presence of Latin in some liturgical chants of present-day Catholic liturgy were additional reasons convincing me against this option.[10] I moreover did not feel that transforming the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* to avoid alienation would be useful when modern viewers of various religious beliefs and backgrounds might still feel, in some cases, alienated by modern Catholic liturgy. In spite of the differences between modern and medieval actors and spectators, I therefore decided to direct a version of the ceremonies which would approach as closely as possible their performance in the Middle Ages.

However, there was another profound difference between our project and these medieval performances to consider. Our general aim in staging the ceremonies was fundamentally other than that of the nuns and clergy of Barking Abbey had been. Ours was an academic project intending to further research on the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*—on their dramatic aspects in particular—and, if possible, to capture the attention of a modern audience. The Barking nuns also intended to affect their spectators, but their explicit purpose was first a devotional one.

9 We began working on the script in December 2017 and started rehearsing in February 2018. Our budget was one thousand francs.

10 For instance, the *Salve regina* (Hail queen) and the *Regina celi* (Rejoice, queen of Heaven).

Differing from the Text and Context: Breaking with the Liturgical Framework

Such a difference of purpose was partly the reason behind our deliberate decision to remove the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* from some of their liturgical framework and to rename the Barking ceremonies: *La visite au tombeau: Pièce de théâtre médiévale de l'abbaye de Barking* (The Visit to the Sepulchre: A Medieval Play from the Abbey of Barking). Disassociating the ceremonies from the liturgy in which they were originally inserted gave the audience and performers a very different experience from that of medieval spectators and participants who, presumably, attended the entire Matins. We settled on this option because of our background and our intention to appeal to a varied audience, as well as the time and means available to our production. Had we attempted to be faithful to the Ordinal, we should have performed the Matins in the morning. This was not feasible in our first venue, the Abbey of La Maigrauge, which had its own Matins, and it was too early to attract a significant lay audience. To prevent some of this disconnection from liturgy, we asked conventual communities to take on the staging of either the whole Barking Abbey Easter Day Matins ceremony, or, if that was not possible, of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* only. A female religious community would have approached their performances with a purpose closer to that of medieval nuns than we ever could. Despite changes in conventual life and in the liturgy, modern and medieval nuns share similarly structured days, as well as a knowledge of and dedication to the liturgy. The scale of the task proved too daunting, however, and discouraged the communities we contacted. They understandably were not able to conduct a months-long experiment which would have involved learning numerous chants and movements.

We therefore resolved to use lay actors who were, for the most part, students at the University of Fribourg.[11] Personal faith drew some of them to the project, but it was not a condition for their participation. For reasons of space, time, and budget, only the speaking parts were cast: Christ, the three Marys, the two angels, a disciple, and two candle bearers/choir members. This meant that our actors were noticeably fewer than the medieval participants in the Barking ceremonies had been. Their task was also different from that of their predecessors: they were playing members of the medieval abbey of Barking who were themselves representing figures in a scriptural narrative. This was explained to them at the beginning of our

11 Christoph, David, and Dr. Olivia Robinson were not, or were no longer, students at the University of Fribourg.

LES ACTEURS

Prêtre officiant / Jésus : Christoph Mayer

Prêtre de la chapelle / Disciple : Mathieu Bach

Diacre 1 / Ange 1 : Guillaume Babey

Diacre 2 / Ange 2 : David Bruegger

Abbesse : Dinah Marti

Cantrix / Marie Madeleine : Sandy Maillard

Marie Salomé : Sylvia Wiederkehr

Marie mère de Jacques : Felicia von Allmen

Novice 1 : Olivia Robinson

Novice 2 : Aurélie Blanc

Costumes et Accessoires : Jacqueline Blanc, Elisabeth Dutton, Tamara Haddad, Céline Sidler, Claire Torrent

Publicité : Christoph Mayer, Olivia Robinson

Adaptation texte et musique : Aurélie Blanc

Aide musicale: Mathieu Bach, Sandy Maillard, Christoph Mayer

Mise en scène : Aurélie Blanc

REMERCIEMENTS

Nous voudrions remercier sincèrement tous ceux qui qui nous ont généreusement aidés :

Abbaye de la Maigrauge
Jacqueline Blanc
Pauline Blanc
Chanoine Bernard Broccard
Matthew Cheung Salisbury
Elisabeth Dutton
ECG Fribourg
Fond National Suisse
Abbé Sylvain Gex-Fabry
Erica Longfellow
Conor McDonough
Université de Fribourg

LA VISITE AU TOMBEAU

medievalconventdrama.org

La pièce

Sybille de Felton, abbesse de l'Abbaye anglaise de Barking, commandita en 1404 la création d'un Ordinaire, un livre contenant un descriptif de la liturgie utilisée dans l'abbaye. La version des Matines de Pâques donnée dans ce dernier inclut deux cérémonies (l'*Elevatio* et la *Visitatio Sepulchri)* qui ont attiré l'attention des chercheurs intéressés par le théâtre, car elles mentionnent explicitement les rôles que prennent les participants, ainsi que les costumes spécifiques à ces rôles. Ces 'pièces de théâtre' font partie d'un ensemble de cérémonies toutes très semblables, jouées dans des couvents et monastères en Europe médiévale. Dans le cas de Barking, les 'acteurs' étaient les sœurs de l'abbaye, ainsi que le clergé qui y résidait.

Ce sont donc ces deux 'pièces' que nous allons vous présenter dans une mise en scène qui tente de se rapprocher de celle qui se faisait dans l'abbaye de Barking. Il demeure cependant impossible de les recréer parfaitement. Le lieu (l'abbaye est malheureusement détruite), les costumes (pour lesquels il nous faudrait un budget colossal), le nombre de participants (trente sœurs, une dizaine de prêtres et diacres, ainsi qu'au moins deux garçons portant des bougies) ne sont pas reproduits à l'identique. Le public lui-même ne peut vivre la même expérience que le pouvait un public médiéval possédant d'autres habitudes, d'autres connaissances et attentes. La subjectivité entre également en compte dans la mise en scène et le jeu des acteurs qui ne sont que vaguement décrits dans l'original. On se rend compte en répétition des informations qui nous manquent : certains gestes étaient évidents pour les participants ; certains lieux simplement appelés 'le lieu habituel'. Musique et chant forment un autre aspect des pièces pour lesquels l'incertitude demeure. L'Ordinaire ne contient en effet aucune partition. La reconstitution s'est fait au moyen de musique provenant de pièces de théâtre similaires venant d'Angleterre et du nord de la France.

Vous êtes ainsi sur le point de voir une interprétation des pièces de l'abbaye de Barking. Sans prétendre présenter la 'vérité', notre mise en scène se propose d'explorer ces pièces, leurs effets sonores et visuels, et leur fonctionnement dans l'espace de l'église.

Nous avons eu la chance d'être généreusement accueillis par l'Abbaye de la Maigrauge qui nous a permis d'utiliser la copie de leur saint sépulcre. Celui-ci est contemporains des pièces que nous jouons et aurait pu être utilisé de manière semblable dans la liturgie de Pâques. Il relie pour nous le Fribourg médiéval et l'abbaye maintenant disparue de Barking.

Bien qu'imparfaite d'un certain point de vue, cette mise en scène nous apporte énormément d'informations, de remises en question (concernant par exemple les mouvements dans l'église) et nous force à nous intéresser à des aspects de la pièce sur lesquels nous serions autrement passés rapidement, comme l'ordre des processions ou encore la composition des vêtements liturgiques. Elle démontre à quel point le chant, qui ne saute pas aux yeux en lisant l'Ordinaire, est central à la cérémonie et change sa perception. Les répétitions ont également rendu clair à quel point ces 'pièces de théâtre' ne le sont pas vraiment, ou du moins pas seulement, et s'insèrent dans la liturgie. Il est problématique pour nous de 'jouer' ainsi des cérémonies que relèvent de la foi, particulièrement dans une église. Nous avons donc opté pour un ostensoir vide plutôt que contenant une hostie et avons été attentifs à traiter ce projet avec respect. Nous espérons que vous comprendrez notre démarche de recherche et de désir de compréhension de ces cérémonies.

Dans le reste de ce programme vous trouverez un résumé en français des pièces. Merci encore pour votre présence et je vous souhaite de passer un beau moment avec nous.

Aurélie Blanc

Résumé

Les pièces de Barking commencent par la Descente aux Enfers, avant de représenter la Résurrection du Christ et de se terminer par la Visite des trois Marie au tombeau.
Au début, les sœurs, accompagnées par des prêtres et diacres, se rendent dans la chapelle de Marie Madeleine qui symbolise les enfers. Le prêtre officiant, représentant le Christ, avance vers la chapelle avec deux diacres. Il donne trois coups à la porte et lui ordonne de s'ouvrir. Au troisième coup, celle-ci s'ouvre et ils entrent dans la chapelle. Tous sortent ensemble, les sœurs et le prêtre de la chapelle représentant les patriarches et les prophètes, et ils font une procession vers le saint sépulcre.

Là, le prêtre officiant encense le sépulcre avant d'en sortir un ostensoir contenant le corps consacré du Christ. Il chante avec la cantrix la Résurrection du Christ. Tous forment à nouveau une procession et marchent en direction de la chapelle de Marie Madeleine.

Une fois quelques changements de costumes effectués, tous se mettent en place. Trois sœurs portent maintenant des voiles et des surplis blancs. Elles confessent à l'abbesse, avant de commencer à jouer les trois Marie. Elles se lamentent et s'avancent lentement vers le sépulcre. Une fois arrivées, elles aperçoivent tout d'abord un ange qui leur annonce que le Christ n'est plus là et est ressuscité. Les Marie embrassent le sépulcre mais continuent de se lamenter. Le second ange interpelle Marie Madeleine qui ne sait pas où on a mis le corps du Christ. Jésus lui apparaît ensuite (joué par le prêtre officiant). Il lui demande de ne pas le toucher car il n'est pas encore monté vers son père et d'aller annoncer sa Résurrection. Marie Madeleine l'annonce avec joie aux deux autres Marie puis Jésus leur apparaît à toutes les trois. Elles embrassent ses pieds et annoncent à tous la Résurrection. Leur annonce est reprise par les autres sœurs. Un disciple vient ensuite vers Marie Madeleine pour lui demander ce qu'elle a vu. Elle répond et il proclame sa joie, d'abord seul, puis avec les autres sœurs. Enfin, tous chantent ensemble que le Christ est ressuscité.

Figure 2.1. Programme of *La visite au tombeau de Barking Abbey: Une pièce de théâtre médiévale.* Reproduced by permission.

rehearsals but was not insisted on and, as I will explore later, the actors responded to it in different ways. Our actors' modernity meant that they were unfamiliar with the medieval ceremonies they were performing but their lay status created an additional layer of separation between past and present performances. The actors' purpose in performing, much like that of the creative team behind the production, their liturgical training and, for some, their religious beliefs, did not match those of the nuns and clerics of Barking Abbey. Although our first performance took place in a monastic house, as had the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* in the Middle Ages, what modern audience members saw was a lay, academic reconstruction of medieval liturgical ceremonies, whose aim and conception differed extensively from the devotional intent and the liturgical context of the Barking Abbey *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri*.

Watching our actors rehearse in costume in the La Maigrauge church, I became conscious of how problematic it was to see lay performers impersonate—for non-religious reasons—religious men and women in a religious building, in front of people who were, in some cases, practising Christians. Our performance had the potential to create confusion between reality and pretending. It might also have been perceived as disrespectful to the beliefs of some spectators because it turned liturgy into a dramatic spectacle. To make our project's intentions and our respect for the liturgical context of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* clear, I felt the need to announce them in our programme and in a speech before the beginning of the performance (see Figure 2.1).

We moreover refrained from using a Host in the monstrance and left it empty instead. For the same reasons, we decided against performing the whole Matins and limited ourselves to the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. Reducing our performance to these ceremonies was a way of ostensibly distancing our production from real liturgy. We found it more respectful to limit ourselves to the dramatic aspects of the Barking liturgy—which are the focus of our study—rather than to treat the entire Matins as a play to be performed in front of an audience. Removing the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* from some of their liturgical context changed their effect on actors and spectators. We would have liked to have avoided such a disassociation but our identity as academic researchers, as well as the constraints of casting our production, unfortunately prevented such an outcome. However, not all liturgical aspects of the Barking ceremonies were discarded: our first venue, for instance, expressed the liturgical nature of the ceremonies.

Differing from the Text and Context: Using Local Spaces and Traditions

When looking for venues, we quickly realized that we would not be able to use Barking Abbey church: while performing the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* in their original location (which is now a park) was not unimaginable, with the building gone, we would not have been able to learn about the performance of this script in a church space.[12] We resolved to use regional spaces instead: we performed the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* in a thirteenth-century church belonging to the Abbey of La Maigrauge in Fribourg and in an outdoor space situated in front of the Aula Magna of the University of Fribourg (Figures 2.2 and 2.3).

This outdoor setting was chosen to contrast with the first location in the hope that it might emphasize different aspects of the ceremonies. While not liturgical, it allowed the actors and the audience to experience a space closer in size to the medieval venue and better suited to the length of the chants. The number of performers did not match those of the original convent, however, and they often looked isolated. By contrast, the first venue was chosen for its appearance and function: its connection with an active religious house which has strong ties with the Benedictine tradition, its medieval architecture, and the possibility of using a copy of a fourteenth-century wooden sepulchre, made it the most "historically accurate" space in Fribourg to attempt a performance of the Barking Abbey ceremonies.[13]

While the first venue possessed features that made it "liturgical" and "medieval," it was also a local place. By deciding to use the La Maigrauge church and its sepulchre, we thus departed from the Barking Abbey medieval performances and anchored ours in the history of Fribourg. The Barking sepulchre did not look like the wooden chest found in the La Maigrauge church: it was—at least partly—a temporary structure able to contain two people.[14] Our use of the La Maigrauge Abbey sepulchre and church were thus instrumental in suggesting the "medieval" to our actors and audience, but they suggested the "local medieval" rather than the Barking "medieval." This departure from the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s text and context does, how-

---

12 Most of the church is gone but its outline was re-built after Clapham's archaeological excavation and its shape and size remain visible.

13 Both dates roughly match those of the Barking Abbey church building and of the ceremonies' performances as described in the Ordinal.

14 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:98.

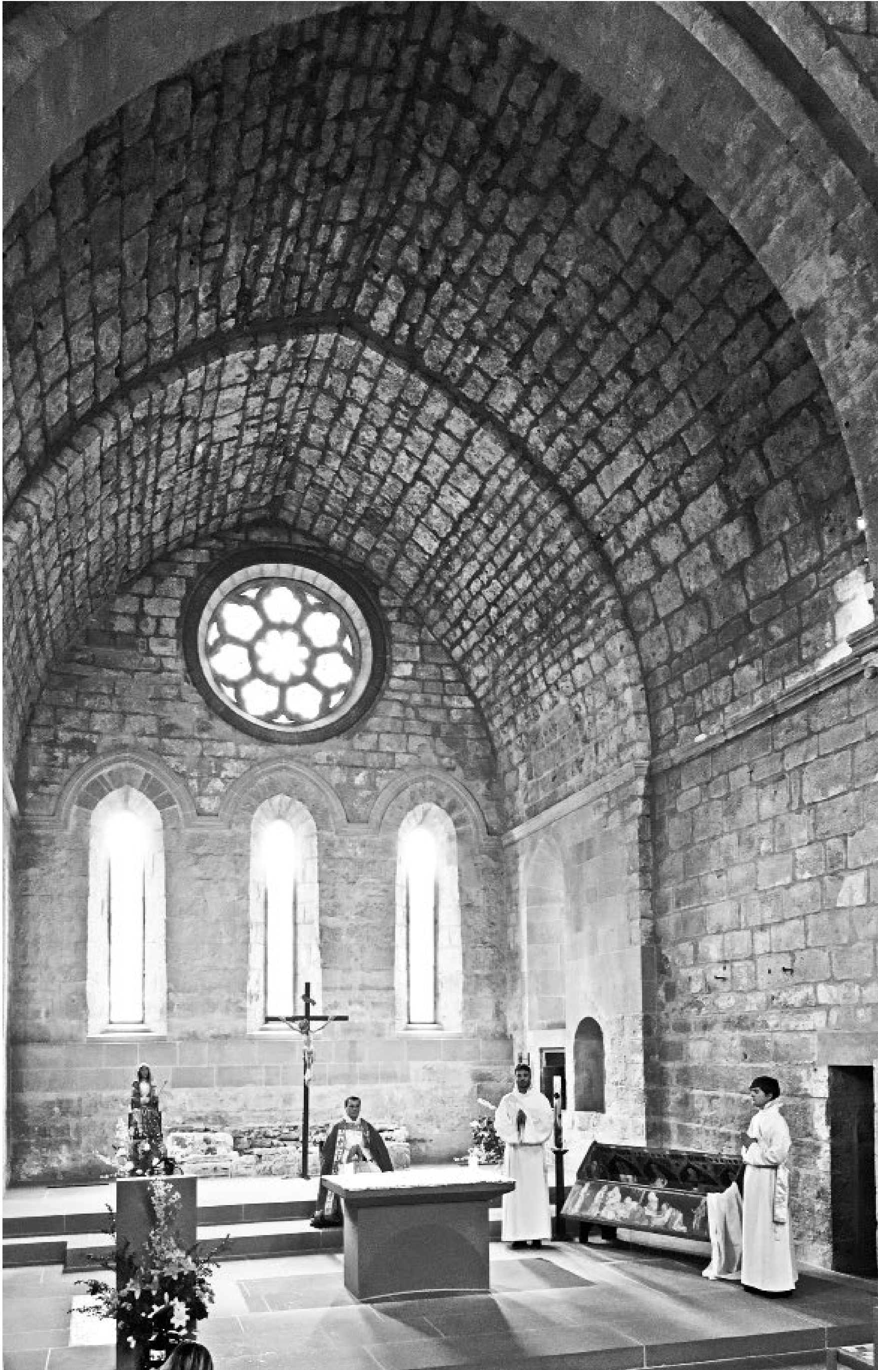


Figure 2.2. First venue: the church of the Abbey of La Maigrauge, Fribourg. Photograph by Tamara Haddad, 2018. Used with permission.

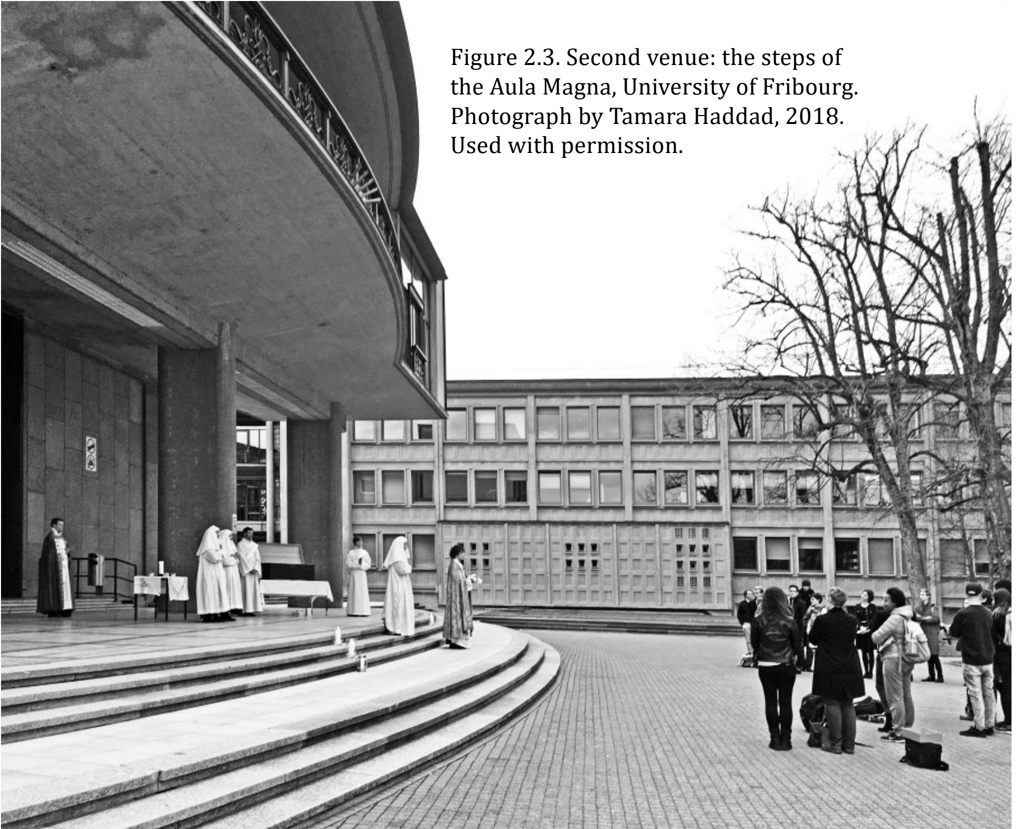


Figure 2.3. Second venue: the steps of the Aula Magna, University of Fribourg. Photograph by Tamara Haddad, 2018. Used with permission.

ever, mirror in some ways the familiarity that the sisters and inhabitants of Barking had with their local abbey church.

Although we were aware of and had to adapt to these many differences between our production and the medieval performances of the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, we nevertheless attempted to make as many staging choices as possible based on the indications provided in the Barking Ordinal in order to produce performances that would resemble their medieval counterparts. However, such a method cannot guarantee success since—as mentioned earlier—even if the Ordinal was followed perfectly by the nuns and the clergy of Barking during performances, it does not provide information about every aspect of these performances. Missing pieces of information became especially noticeable as I was preparing the script and rehearsing with our actors. I noticed, for instance, that we did not know whether the priests processing at the beginning of the *Elevatio* should start singing the *Elevamini* (Be lifted up) as soon as they entered the church or whether they ought to wait until they reached the doors of Hell. We were unaware of

both the gestures an abbess should perform as she absolved the three nuns about to represent the Marys and of the Marys' response. We were unsure what to make of Christ "appearing" (*appareat*) and "disappearing" (*disparuerit*) on the left and right side of the altar: would he walk backwards as he left or turn his back to the women? Was he visible before he "appeared"? We wondered how and how many times an altar should be censed, how many candles should be placed on the altar, how high a monstrance should be held and for how long. When the Marys kissed Jesus' feet, would they kiss them in turns or all together? The Ordinal provided few indications about processions and their order, about the transition between the *Elevatio* and the *Visitatio*, about the handling of "props" (which seemed to disappear or appear out of nowhere), about the lighting of candles, and about the position of non-speaking performers. It thus forced us to make these decisions ourselves.

To do so, we turned to liturgy and to medieval images. I hoped that they would enable us to make choices in accordance with the ceremonies' text and context. Yet, in practice, we did not always remain faithful to either text or context because of a mixture of practical constraints, mistakes, and a desire to present our research in an engaging way to our audience. The result of these choices was the production of a unique version of the Barking *Visitatio* and *Elevatio*.

Remaining Close to the Text and Context: Liturgy as a Source of Information

Expanding our knowledge of liturgy in general and of medieval liturgy in particular was essential to our understanding of the ceremonies' context and helped fill some of the gaps we encountered. However, liturgy was unable to offer entirely reliable answers to our staging questions. Medieval religious houses had their own traditions, their own feasts, and rituals.[15] Such specificity became once more evident when we were staging our production. While the Barking Ordinal states that the nuns followed the clergy during the processions of the *Elevatio*, the Dominican friar who was advising us declared that the clergy usually went last. We wondered whether the indication from the Ordinal was a mistake made by the manuscript's scribe or composer, whether this practice was unique to Barking Abbey, or whether it was a widespread tradition. In this instance, we decided to follow the Ordinal's instructions rather than the more standard liturgical rule since they seemed to bring us closer to the local specificity of medieval liturgy.

15 See Salisbury, *Worship in Medieval England*, 13–43.

Liturgical knowledge nevertheless remained valuable to us as it offered plausible—if not verifiable—solutions to our questions. Although not specific to Barking Abbey and at times not medieval either, these solutions were grounded in the ceremonies' liturgical context. Liturgy helped us decide the way in which the priest playing Jesus should knock on the doors of Hell (with the bottom of his cross) and in which the nuns should position themselves during confession (kneeling). It determined the order of the clergy in procession (the deacon carrying the thurible went first, followed by the deacon carrying the cross, the officiating priest went last), and the reaction to the elevation of the monstrance (all actors knelt).

We moreover made extensive use of *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* ceremonies from approximately the same period and area in the hope that their "stage directions" would be more explicit than those of Barking Abbey. These liturgical ceremonies proved especially valuable in terms of movement and gestures. They prompted us to direct the Marys to kneel as they kissed the sepulchre and to make actors step back when they showed fear, bow their heads in sign of respect, clasp their hands to express sadness, bend their bodies to communicate mourning. Slow movement tended to indicate sorrow and running to connote joy. The intensity of the singing generally evolved during a *Visitatio* ceremony from its initial sadness to a louder, more sonorous sound, exultantly announcing the Resurrection.

Elevatio and *Visitatio* ceremonies were also used to decide which costume the actors should wear. They—Barking ceremonies included—generally show their performers in liturgical vestments, although these seem to have been adapted to circumstances and figures. The Barking Ordinal remains vague concerning the "costumes" worn by Jesus and the disciples (portrayed by priests and clerics) in the *Visitatio* and it does not include all the vestments worn by other participants. The *Elevatio*'s mention of the priests in copes persuaded us to leave them in this vestment for the following ceremony but even this solution raised questions. We did not know what colour the copes were, whether they had a hood, whether the priests wore a stole or a maniple. Research on liturgical vestments was therefore necessary to help us dress the clergy appropriately for early fifteenth-century Easter Day Matins without (hopefully) forgetting any of the numerous layers prescribed. In the case of the actors portraying the disciple and the angels, we chose to respect the usual liturgical colours of white and gold.[16] However, we

---

16 Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung*, 734–35, 750–51. See also Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:278–80.

gave Jesus a red cope. This choice was supported by other *Visitatio* ceremonies, which show Jesus in either white or red vestments.[17] Dressing Jesus in white would have been appropriate for Easter Day; he would have shared this colour with the other participants who all benefitted from the grace of Christ resurrected. It would also have drawn attention to his divine nature, which is emphasized in the *Visitatio* through the inclusion of the *Noli me tangere* scene. Yet, given the possibility, we felt that dressing him in red fitted the elements of compassionate devotion present in the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, and we chose to focus on that aspect of the ceremonies. Red is a reminder of Christ's blood: it was worn at Barking on Good Friday and was generally the colour of feasts associated with Christ's Passion, the Apostles, the Evangelists, and the Martyrs.[18] The colour also had the benefit of making Christ visually stand out, which facilitated the identification of this figure by the audience.

Since the Barking Ordinal contains no notated music, other *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* ceremonies were also instrumental in providing musical options to choose from for our production (see Appendix 2). I selected chants from the Dublin *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* (from the church of St John the Evangelist, belonging to the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity) from the Rouen *Visitatio* (Rouen Cathedral), and from the Wilton *Visitatio* (Benedictine women's house). These seemed to share the greatest textual similarities with the Barking Abbey ceremonies and were neither too geographically nor chronologically remote.[19] When chants existed in all three ceremonies, I tried to

---

17 The Dublin ceremonies describe the clothes of the disciples in detail. They were barefoot, wore albs without decorations and, over the albs, John had a white tunicle and Peter a red one (tunicles were similar to dalmatics but they were frequently coloured and decorated). At Meissen, both apostles wore red dalmatics. In Prague and Rheinau they wore copes. I went for a dalmatic / tunicle because the Barking and Dublin ceremonies seem closely related. The Christ of Fleury changed between looking first like a gardener and then like Christ with a white dalmatic and a chasuble. In Chiemsee, Christ wore a dalmatic, a chasuble, and a crown, and he was barefoot. At the Mont Saint-Michel, Christ had a red alb, and in Coutances he was given a silk cope. I decided that the priest portraying Christ in the *Elevatio* would continue to do so in the *Visitatio*. Therefore, our actor wore the cope indicated in the *Elevatio* for both ceremonies. Young, ed., *Drama of the Medieval Church*, 1:331, 345, 347–50, 372, 385, 395–97, 409; *Liturgische Osterspiele und Osterfeiern*, ed. Lipphardt, 5:1510–12.

18 Durand, *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*, ed. Barthélemy, 1:281; *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:97–99, 100.

19 According to Lipphardt, the Dublin ceremonies are found in two late fourteenth-century manuscripts; the Rouen *Visitatio* is found in an early thirteenth-century manuscript. *Liturgische Osterspiele und Osterfeiern*, ed. Lipphardt, 5:1464, 1478.

privilege continuity and selected sequences of chants from one of them. My choices were facilitated by the similarities existing between many of these chants; they often possessed a common melodic base. I nevertheless struggled to find texts and music for the seven seemingly unique chants of the Barking *Visitatio*. We could have mirrored the nunnery's creativity and composed new musical pieces, but we chose instead, chiefly for reasons of time, to replace these seven chants with chants taken from the *Visitatio* ceremonies cited above, as well as from other northern French dramatic liturgical ceremonies.[20] Our reliance on these ceremonies—which, while similar, all differ from each other and cannot be proven to have directly influenced each other—was an imperfect solution. It had the benefit, however, of providing us with staging options that existed around the time and area of the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*.

Remaining Close to the Text and Context: Images

Another source of information we used were illuminations taken from medieval manuscripts whose date and location also approached those of the Ordinal.[21] We replicated gestures found in the Queen Mary psalter, for instance. This manuscript shows nuns kneeling with their hands together as they confess to their abbess. It then depicts the abbess blessing them with her right hand while holding the crozier in her left hand.[22] Representations of the three Marys at the tomb likewise revealed gestures that we adopted in our production: as the actor playing the angel sang *Venite et videte* (Come and see), he copied the movements commonly attributed to this angel and

---

Altstatt believes that the Wilton manuscript dates from the fourteenth century. Altstatt, "'Re-membering the Wilton Processional," 690–732.

20 See Appendix 2. On creativity and Barking Abbey, see Yardley, "Liturgy as the Site of Creative Engagement," 267–82.

21 On the connections and exchanges between medieval art and theatre, see Plesch, "Words and Images"; Davidson, *Drama and Art*, 1–14, 100–125; Twycross, "Beyond the Picture Theory."

22 Psalter of Henry VI, in London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian, A.XVII, fol. 74v (French origin, this miniature was added in England around 1430); The Queen Mary Psalter, in London, British Library, MS Royal, 2 B VII, fol. 219r (early fourteenth century); London, British Library, MS Arundel 233, fol. 96v (thirteenth-century English psalter); London, British Library, MS Egerton 945, fol. 214r, fol. 237v (late thirteenth-century French manuscript); London, British Library, MS Harley 2975, fol. 73v (Germany, fifteenth century); Hours of the Umfray Family, in London, British Library, MS Sloane 2468, fol. 227v (France, fifteenth century).

pointed first towards the sepulchre and later upwards.[23] We additionally consulted medieval images to gather information on medieval nuns' clothing. The Ordinal does not describe their standard habits, nor could we find many secondary sources on this subject.[24] We thus largely based our costumes on pictorial representations of Benedictine nuns. Illuminations, as had liturgy, gave us options that seemed as rooted as possible in the medieval and liturgical context of the Barking ceremonies. They enabled us to offer our modern spectators a visual and aural experience not too distant from what had been experienced during the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s medieval performances.

This process of preparing to perform the ceremonies would have been vastly different for the nuns and clergy of Barking. No information has survived about such preparations, but the nuns probably learned the ceremonies as they did much of liturgy. As novices, they would have observed and participated in rituals and have been instructed by the novice mistress. Then and once professed, they would have followed the guidance of the abbess and *cantrix* during the liturgy.[25] While there was probably some space for the community and especially for the performers to make "staging" decisions—about the way in which to move and sing—they would not have experienced the same difficulties as we did preparing the ceremonies: they knew their church, their house's liturgy, the liturgical vestments that should be worn on such an occasion, many of the chants that should be sung, and gestures that should be performed. These would also have been passed on year after year. We did not possess the same knowledge. Therefore, attempting to transfer the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* from the page to the stage had the benefit of drawing our attention to the multitude of elements that are not spoken of in the Ordinal but that would have influenced the reception of the ceremonies among their spectators and participants. Christ wearing white clothes would have conveyed a different message than Christ

---

23 We used these manuscripts as inspiration: De Lisle Psalter, in London, British Library, MS Arundel 83 II, fol. 133r (early fourteenth-century English Psalter); London, British Library, MS Harley 2449, fol. 167v (Netherlands, late thirteenth century); London, British Library, MS Harley 2930, fol. 12v (Netherlands, last quarter of the thirteenth century).

24 The secondary sources I consulted either focused on liturgical vestments only or spoke of the changes nuns made to their standard habits (for example Caroll-Clark, "Bad Habits.") After our production, I found two useful sources on the subject: Kuhns, *The Habit*; Koslin, "Robe of Simplicity," 255–74.

25 Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 50–68.

wearing red; a priest closing a procession would have signified something other than an abbess doing the same thing; a performer kneeling would not have suggested the same reverence as one standing. The priest representing Christ would also have had a different effect depending on whether he was visible during the whole *Visitatio* or whether he appeared suddenly in the middle of the ceremony. Modern rehearsals encouraged us as researchers to show caution when confronted with the unknown but also—given that this "unknown" would have affected spectators and participants—to discuss it and to explore various possibilities.

Differing from the Text and Context: The Script and its Translation

Although we wished to stage the Barking ceremonies in a way that would be faithful to their text and context, we occasionally distanced our production from them. Such a departure was not always made consciously. It happened, for instance, as a consequence of translating the ceremonies. We performed the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* in Latin, but I translated the "stage directions" in the script given to the actors and inserted a translation of the chants in the script's footnotes (see Appendix 2). My wish was to create a script that would resemble a modern theatre script and would be simple for the actors to understand and work with. I based my editing work on the manuscript of the Ordinal and Customary, as well as on the editions of Tolhurst, Lipphardt, Young, and Yardley and Mann, but I added scene and speech markers, a character list, and my own layout and font to provide clarity. As I mentioned earlier, I also added musical notation to the script, and translated it. My translation remained literal and often retained the Latin syntax and word order; I hoped that this would help the actors understand each word they were singing.[26] This approach was meant to allow actors to know what they were saying and doing, while presenting the audience with a text resembling the one heard in the early fifteenth century. As discussed in Chapter 1, I believe that the nuns and clergy of Barking understood—at least broadly—the content of the ceremonies. It seemed important for their performance that modern actors did as well. While some medieval lay spectators may also have understood Latin, a modern audience was unlikely to do so. Modern spectators were therefore provided with an explanatory

26 As I presented this script to actors during the first rehearsal, I noticed that my efforts towards clarity had not been entirely successful. I had not modified speech markers in stage directions and the actors playing the deacons did not realize it was their turn to move when the "clergy" was mentioned. Fully adapting the script to modern performers would therefore need more adjusting.

programme summarizing the content of the ceremonies (see Figure 2.1). This may have given them an advantage over some lay people attending the Barking performances, although medieval spectators were perhaps more exposed to scriptural stories and to the performance of these ceremonies and thus better equipped to understand them.

The modern translations then seem in some ways justified but they can easily result in mistakes and may therefore modify the effect of the production. I noticed this issue in the case of Latin words whose meaning had undergone a transformation by the time of the Ordinal. *Ampulla*, for instance, designated a "vase" or "vessel" according to classical dictionaries but, in a medieval liturgical context, it indicated a specific container which could be filled with consecrated oil, wine, or water.[27] Unfortunately, I did not translate the word appropriately prior to the production. Our Marys did not carry liturgical vessels to the tomb of Christ but silver boxes and vases. The choice of prop, made because of a mistranslation, thus had the effect of distancing the Marys from the ceremonies' liturgical context instead of connecting them to it.

My other modifications to the text of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*—made to facilitate the organization of the rehearsals by dividing the ceremonies into scenes and to save time by presenting the actors with an easily readable script—may have had a similar distancing effect. Although I had not planned this departure from the liturgical ceremonies' context, the script I gave the performers made the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* look like plays rather than liturgy.

Differing from the Text and Context: Modern and Practical Choices

At other times, our production consciously departed from the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s text and context because neither known liturgical practices, nor the examination of other dramatic liturgical ceremonies, nor even the Ordinal's text offered fitting solutions to our staging problems. In those cases, we tested the possibilities at our disposal, and based our decisions on what worked practically and on what suited our modern venues, means, and expectations.

---

27 Gaffiot, Félix. "populus," in *Dictionnaire latin français*, ed. Gérard Gréco (2016), accessed September 17, 2024; *Glossarium mediae et infimae latiniatis* (1883–1887), Du Cange, Charles du Fresne, et al. *Glossarium mediae et infimae latiniatis*, ed. Léopold Favre (Niort: Léopold Favre, 1883–1887), available online at http://ducange.enc.sorbonne.fr/AMPULLAE1.

One such case was the question of acting. Gestures, movements, and emotions are mentioned in the Ordinal, but they are not systematically described. As explained above, liturgical texts, practices, and pictorial depictions provided me with options that had been used in the Middle Ages for the representations of such scriptural scenes. As useful as these sources were, however, they did not convey how understated or extravagant the gestures were meant to be. Even if they had attempted to explain it, I might not have understood it accurately: the perception of what "good acting" is and of the meaning of gestures is rooted in place and time.[28] Our use of these "medieval" gestures was therefore in accordance with our modern sensitivities. For instance, I wanted Christ, when he revealed himself to Mary Magdalen, to stand as he did on medieval images of the scene. As the actor attempted this pose in rehearsals, those watching him could not help laughing at the "sassiness" they felt Jesus displayed. We kept this gesture in the final performances but toned it down to make it more acceptable to modern eyes. My direction therefore generally privileged broad gestures which were inspired by medieval liturgy and imagery, but which remained a product of a twenty-first century frame of reference.

Another instance of departure from text and context was the attribution of palms and candles in the *Elevatio*. They are mentioned at the start of the ceremony when they were carried by the priests and clerics representing the patriarchs and prophets who went inside the Mary Magdalen chapel. As all exited the chapel at the end of the ceremony, it is unclear whether all priests and clerics or the first clerical group only held them in their hands. When rehearsing with these props, we decided to give them to the nuns and to the one priest who went to the Mary Magdalen chapel with them. It made sense to attribute them to the clergy exiting Hell since they already held them in their hands. However, since we had reduced the number of priests and clerics from about ten to four, only one actor would have carried the palms. This seemed odd and underwhelming.[29] We felt justified in giving nuns these props "designantes victoriam de hoste recuperatam" (indicating victory regained over the enemy) since the female community, as well as that one priest, are said to portray the prophets and the patriarchs who triumphantly exited Hell.[30] However, this approach was motivated by our

28 See Butterworth, *Staging Conventions*, 94–108.

29 The second clerical group had their hands full already and could not have taken them. One deacon carried a cross and another the thurible, and the priest was about to lift the monstrance from the sepulchre.

30 "The priests and clerics sing the antiphon: When the king of glory… in a pro-

limited number of actors and our wish to have more than one person carry the palms.

Apart from the number of performers, the other factors which conditioned some of our most daring choices were the spaces we chose for our performances. We especially adapted to our first venue (La Maigrauge church) and maintained many of these staging decisions in our second venue (University of Fribourg). As I was preparing our performances, I realized that the information available on the arrangement of the original Barking Abbey church space was unfortunately limited. Archaeological excavations have not been able to discover the internal layout of the church. Yet, in order to stage the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, I had to situate several altars, a Mary Magdalen chapel, and the sepulchre. While their position in the Barking Abbey church is unknown, the Ordinal informed me of some of their spatial relations with one another: one had to walk through the choir to go from the sepulchre to the Mary Magdalen chapel and the sepulchre was built near an altar, probably the high altar: "Sacriste…sepulcrum iuxta altara preparetur. Ubi sancta crux fuerit adorata decenter collocetur" (the sepulchre should be prepared next to the altar where the holy cross should be appropriately placed when it will be worshipped).[31] Most scholars believe that the Mary Magdalen chapel was one of the two small side chapels found in the transept of Barking Abbey church. In *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama*, Alison Findlay argues instead that it was the chapel located behind the high altar in the space called the Saints' Chapel by archaeologist Alfred Clapham (Figure 2.4).[32] I tend to disagree with her conclusions because the Ordinal's indications seem to situate the Mary Magdalen chapel on the western side of the choir.[33] On the other hand, that solution is not exempt from problems:

---

cessional manner through the middle of the choir in the direction of the sepulchre, carrying each a palm and a candle indicating victory regained over the enemy…The mistress abbess, the prioress and the whole convent following them, as if they were the patriarchs." See also *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:108.

31 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:97–100, 108–9. On Good Friday, the priests carrying the cross brought it very close to the choir, before putting it down *ubi debet adorari* (where it should be worshipped). We also know from the *Ordinal* that the cross was worshipped close to an altar next to the sepulchre. This seems to indicate the high altar on which the cross is later laid.

32 Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama*, 54.

33 The altar used in the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* is not named but it seems likely to have been the high altar. This altar was fronted by steps and its position was ideal for the ceremonies. Its proximity to the sepulchre would have made the movement between the two easier.

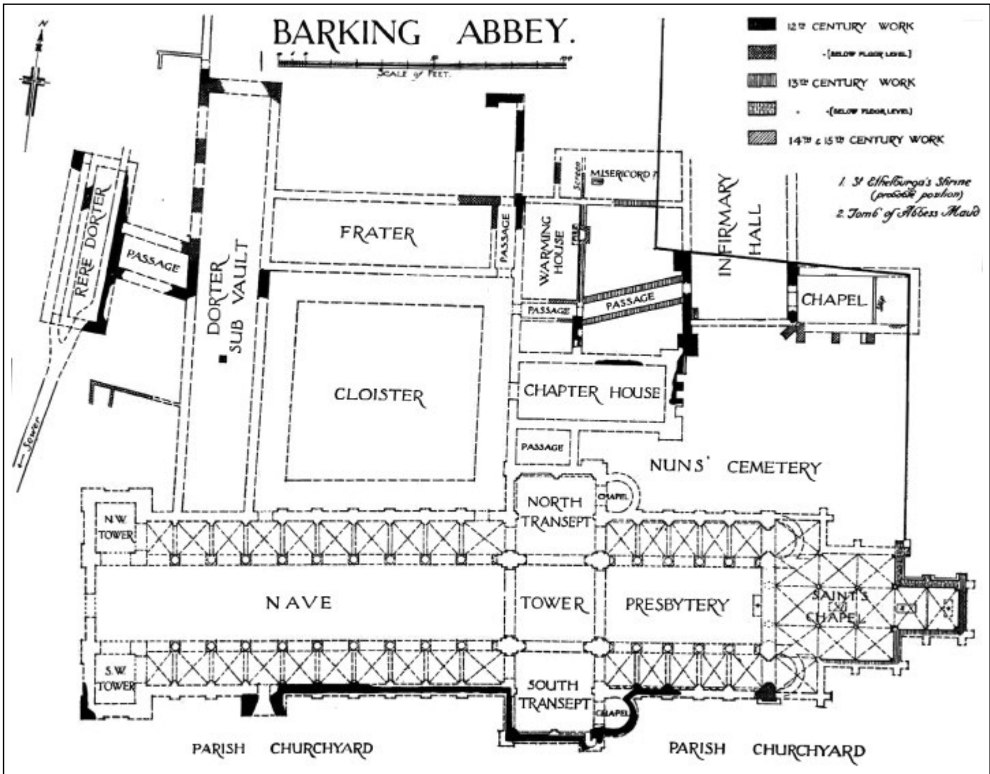


Figure 2.4. Ground plan of Barking Abbey. From Alfred W. Clapham, "The Benedictine Abbey of Barking: A Sketch of its Architectural History and an Account of Recent Excavations on its Site." *Essex Archaeological Transactions* 12 (1911): 69–87. Public domain.

the side chapels appear to be too small to contain the thirty nuns and ten members of the clergy who enclosed themselves in the Mary Magdalen chapel during the *Elevatio*. We nevertheless chose to adopt this solution: not only did it seem to be the most likely, it was also the most practical one for us to apply in a church with no chapel behind its main altar.

We then had to situate our sepulchre. Pamela Sheingorn's extensive work on Easter sepulchres in England argues that most were located on the north side of the church's chancel.[34] While we were aware of this information, we placed the sepulchre on the south side of the chancel. We chose this option because of the opportunity we were given to use the sepulchre belonging

34 See Sheingorn, *Easter Sepulchre*, 3–25.

to the Abbey of La Maigrauge.[35] It had been positioned on the south side of the church by the nuns for their own liturgy during Paschal time, had been opened, and draped with white cloth. We adapted to their practice, which also worked best spatially since a stone lectern made it difficult for the sepulchre to fit on the north side of the chancel.

A final question regarding space was raised by the transition from the *Elevatio* to the *Visitatio*. The Ordinal indicates neither breaks nor movements between the two ceremonies. Yet the *Elevatio* ends at the altar of the Holy Trinity and the *Visitatio* starts with mentions of three nuns in the Mary Magdalen chapel. The Ordinal fails to record either their entrance into the chapel or the movements of the clergy, but, before the second ceremony, the three nuns must have reached the Mary Magdalen chapel and the clergy may have adjusted their "props" and vestments. The palms and candles carried by the *priores*, for instance, had to be set down after the *Elevatio*. Although Ogden and Findlay argue that the altar of the Holy Trinity could have stood at the western end of the church, continuity led us to place it inside the Mary Magdalen chapel. This had the benefit of shortening the time between the two ceremonies and of leaving no costumes and props visibly unattended. Our solution might not have worked at Barking Abbey where, if we believe that the Mary Magdalen chapel was one of the transept chapels, the priests, clerics, and three Marys changing in this small space would have proved difficult.[36] Moreover, considering the fact that altars were commonly dedicated to the saints of the chapel in which they were placed, it is unlikely that the altar of the Holy Trinity was located inside the Mary Magdalen chapel.[37] It is more probable that the Barking Abbey priests left their "props" by the altar of the Holy Trinity or took them to the vestry, while most of the convent returned to their choir stalls and the three Marys prepared in the Mary Magdalen chapel. Our decision was thus largely motivated by our choice to open these performances to the public and by our modern notion of what an audience would expect from a performance.

While we wished to be faithful to the Ordinal, performing for an audience changed our perspective on staging. We were aware of their presence and wanted to fulfil some of the expectations we imagined they had. We were especially attentive to the pace of the performance and to sight-

35 From 1329. Schaller and Aballéa, "Le st sépulcre."

36 These chapels were 3 metres (12 feet) in diameter, with walls 1 metre (3 feet) thick. Clapham, "The Benedictine Abbey of Barking," 81.

37 See *The Altar and its Environment*, ed. Kroesen and Schmidt.

lines. I repeatedly instructed our actors—the lamenting Marys in particular—to look at the audience as well as at the actors they were addressing in order to convey their character's feelings. I also asked them to kiss Jesus' feet in turns rather than at the same time and to confess outside the chapel rather than inside. We felt that these options would be more visually appealing than their alternative, either because of symmetry or because of visibility.[38] It was in this same spirit of consideration for our audience that we reflected on the question of the candle bearers. The Ordinal alludes to these schoolgirls who stood with the Marys at the beginning and end of the *Visitatio*. Their movements throughout the ceremony remain ambiguous and it is unclear whether they were meant to follow the Marys constantly or to accompany them in these moments only. We chose the latter solution: had the candle bearers followed the three Marys, they would have overcrowded the first venue and have made it difficult for our audience to see. The electrical lighting in the La Maigrauge church also made the light provided by the candle bearer—which may have been a welcome source of illumination in the Middle Ages—redundant. The medieval nuns and clergy of Barking presumably did not encounter this issue. Their church was much larger than the one we used and less prone to feel overcrowded. The use of light, which we approached in terms of its impact on the staging, may moreover have been considered instead or as well in terms of its symbolic importance. The Ordinal emphasized the devotional purpose of the ceremonies and did not seem to consider perfect sightlines a requirement to that end. No mention was made in the manuscript of the need for the laity to *see* the ceremonies, and their view of the performance may have been hindered by a *pulpitum* and perhaps by a choir screen.

Although we were attentive to our modern audience, research conducted for this performance did add to our understanding of the medieval congregation witnessing the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri*. As part of this research, stage manager Dr. Tamara Haddad and I attended the Good Friday service in the Fribourg Basilica, which still uses the Tridentine Rite.[39]

In addition to the insight this service gave us into liturgical gestures and procession, it had the benefit of bringing us as close as possible to a medieval liturgy and therefore, of putting us in a position akin to that of the

38 The Ordinal does not mention how the Marys kiss Jesus' feet, nor does it describe the Marys leaving the chapel of Mary Magdalen. They might have been inside when confessing to the abbess.

39 "La messe en latin autorisée à Fribourg," *La Liberté*, February 21, 2022.

medieval lay congregation at Barking. As I was watching the clergy, I grew conscious of how confident they appeared and of how clueless I was. In spite of a booklet listing the words that would be sung during the service and providing a French translation, we often felt unsure of what exactly was happening: the clergy spoke at times softly and their words could not be heard. Our sense of confusion, accompanied by a lack of physical inclusion in the ceremony, led us to feel somewhat excluded from the events unfolding in the chancel. The clergy looked at us directly only once, when we were queuing to kiss a statue of Christ crucified laid on the steps in front of the high altar. Their gaze helped us feel included in the service, but it also magnified the importance of the moment, as well as our nervousness. We were frightened of making mistakes and intimidated by their knowledge. This experience was one of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, of curiosity about the ceremony yet inability to understand it fully. While a medieval congregation was presumably more familiar with such ceremonies than we were, the Good Friday service in the Basilica brought our attention to the tension one could have experienced when attending medieval liturgy: feeling a sense both of mystery and of communion with the clergy. The Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, with their mentions of turning towards the *populus* and of going inside the Magdalen chapel, exemplify such tension. Although the Basilica service did not alter our staging of the Barking ceremonies, it was instrumental in informing my research in Chapter 1, bringing to light the power of liturgy, and its potential for intimidation as well as inclusion.

All these elements, some taken from the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s medieval text and context, some the result of choices made by twenty-first-century director, stage manager, and actors, combined to create our production. The performances we presented swayed between the medieval and the modern, imitations of the past and fresh creativity, liturgical and lay impulses. With these decisions in mind, I will now explore the ways in which our performances of the Barking ceremonies affected their participants and spectators and discuss what was learned from their insights.[40]

40 In general, comments on our efforts were positive. However, all interviewees freely chose to speak to us and friendly audience members were unlikely to express truly negative opinions. The absence of this type of criticism does not imply its lack of existence.

Watching a Modern Performance of the Barking Abbey Liturgical Ceremonies

The people whose reflections we collected after the performances can be divided into two groups: the participants in the production and audience members. The participants did not write the ceremonies, but much like the medieval nuns, priests, and clerics of Barking Abbey, they both observed and created the performances of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. Participants whose views will be examined here include some of the actors who agreed to be interviewed and me, as an actor and director. Their comments will be supplemented by those made by lay audience members—written down after the two performances—as well as by interviews conducted with the nuns of La Maigrauge. Before exploring and comparing their testimonies, I would like to describe the two groups to understand some of the factors that influenced their impressions of the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio*.

Recording the Opinion of Actors and Spectators

As a director, I had been working on theses ceremonies for more than a year and therefore came to them with a certain knowledge of their text and context. While I had experience performing drama (including medieval drama), I had a more limited experience of singing and of performing liturgy—and only as a child choir singer and altar server. Aside from directing the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, I played the small part of a candle bearer, which entailed little movement, a few chants, and gave me time to observe the other actors.

The actors recruited for this production had diverse experiences of singing and acting. These shaped some of the difficulties they encountered when rehearsing and the elements on which they focused in their interviews. Sandy and Mathieu had sung liturgical chant before; Sylvia, Felicia, and Christoph were trained and experienced singers but did not know this repertoire. Sandy, Felicia, and Sylvia had acted before. Christoph had extensive acting experience. David was inexperienced in both singing and acting, and Guillaume and Dinah were experienced actors who enjoyed singing. Just as varied as their experience of performance were their religious beliefs. These included non-religious, mildly religious or at least spiritual, Christian but non-Catholic, moderate Catholic, and devout Catholic views. Faith was not discussed in rehearsals, but it was frequently mentioned in interviews, and it influenced the participants' responses to their performances.

Their responses were also probably shaped by their knowledge and understanding of the ceremonies. During their first rehearsal, on February 14, 2018, performers were given their script. I further gave actors handouts

introducing them to the lives of the nuns, priests, and clerics of Barking Abbey. Later in the rehearsal process, performers were provided with medieval images depicting the scriptural scenes told in the Barking ceremonies and with "stage directions" found in other *Elevatio* or *Visitatio* ceremonies. They thus had access to textual and visual tools helping them understand both some of the medieval context in which these ceremonies had been performed and the meaning of the words they sang. While the liturgical aspect of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* was explained to them, the script and my tendency to refer to our production as a "play" may have further influenced their approach to the performances.

Actors were encouraged to bring their own thoughts and ideas to the production. A few of them even became instrumental in developing its musical side. They helped with vocal warmups, led singing rehearsals, and two of them (Christoph and Sandy) recorded the chants to facilitate the others' learning process. Actors' physical, intellectual, and creative participation affected their view of the performances and separated it from that of audience members. While audience members were more passive, they also had more leisure to observe our performances. Their number amounted to about forty-five in La Maigrauge and to about twenty-five in front of the University. Most lay spectators seem to have been actors' friends or family members. In La Maigrauge, the nuns of the abbey were also present and watched the performance from their stalls. The abbess and the prioress were informed of the ceremonies' original insertion in the Divine Office. In consequence, we decided together to set the performance in the afternoon, before Vespers, and to invite the audience to stay in the church for that service. This solution allowed audience members interested only in the dramatic aspect of the performance to leave. It simultaneously honoured the original context and purpose of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* by permitting those who wished to reflect upon them in a more spiritual manner to continue this reflection during a real liturgical ceremony. I do not know how much the other sisters of La Maigrauge knew about the Barking ceremonies before witnessing our performance. I left a script with the abbess and prioress, which might have been transmitted to them, and I believe that the decision to welcome us inside their church was communal. Yet some expressed their surprise at the form of the ceremonies.[41] Our contact with La Maigrauge, as well as our use of its space and objects, therefore

41 We talked to five nuns, who are referred to here as A, B, C, D, and E for reasons of anonymity. This comment was made by A.

influenced the sisters' perception of our performance. Their vast knowledge of liturgy, of chant, and of the Scriptures, as well as their faith, further informed their responses.

We attempted to collect as many of these responses as possible in the days following the performances. In the case of the nuns and of the actors, this was done through interviews following the guidelines of the University of Fribourg's ethics committee and which had been agreed upon before the date of the performances (April 9, 2018). Five of the eleven La Maigrauge nuns—called in this document A, B, C, D, and E for reasons of anonymity—took part in the process. I conducted the interviews and recorded them with handwritten notes only. Five actors—Sandy, Guillaume, Sylvia, Christoph, and David—agreed to be interviewed by Dr. Olivia Robinson in April 2018.[42] They allowed us to film and name them. Neither nuns nor actors knew in advance the questions we would ask them.

The project's chosen interviewing technique was that of semi-structured interviews, which aimed to allow the subjects to express their feelings—even if those were going in a different direction than anticipated—without being interrupted. Since we were not interested in obtaining specific answers, we hoped that this process would feel like a conversation, and we tried to let the interviewees talk as much as possible. We had prepared a list of questions, but it merely served as a guideline (see Appendix 1). Comments made by other audience members, as well as my own thoughts on the production, were recorded through notes during the rehearsal process and shortly after the performances.

The reactions collected express a multiplicity of viewpoints: they show some of the director and actors' feelings and intentions, and some of the audience members' responses to these. In spite of this variety, three themes—The Importance of Music, Drama and Liturgy, and Connection to the Past—frequently reoccur. Their prevalence supports and informs some of the previous arguments concerning spectatorship and participation proposed by this book, but it also opens new paths of investigation.

42 The nuns were interviewed in French; the actors were interviewed in English or in French according to their preference. All translations into English are my own.

Impressions of Modern Actors and Spectators

The Importance of Music

Music played a significant role when preparing and performing the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. This was partly because of the difficulty of mastering its complexity.[43] Sylvia, Sandy, and Christoph, who all possessed considerable singing experience, as well as Guillaume, who sang frequently but did not have formal training, testified to this difficult learning process. Christoph and Sylvia had problems remembering the Latin texts, and all four felt that medieval chants sounded strange to modern ears and lacked recognizable, easily memorable tunes.[44] Singing these chants further required, as described by Sylvia, a different technique, a particular *souffle* (breath) previously unknown to her.[45] The staging continued to complicate their learning process, particularly when it came to group singing. Movements regularly prevented actors from seeing each other's mouths and faces, the change of venues and acoustics meant that they needed to make constant adjustments, and the caps, veils, and wimples worn by the women did not allow them to hear each other properly.[46] These difficulties were exacerbated by the diversity of the actors' musical training.[47]

It is unlikely that the medieval nuns and clergy of Barking, who were utterly familiar with this type of music, struggled as our actors had when learning the chants. What our rehearsals revealed about their experience, however, was the demands that music made on staging. We noticed that it had an influence on how and on how much performers could move (particularly in a group), on how they positioned themselves in relation to each other, and on how they acted. The demands of singing created a distortion of the actors' faces which obstructed any expression of subtle emotions and made facial expressions challenging to read. To counteract this, we encouraged actors to vary their way of singing—softly or loudly, slowly or quickly. The broader types of movements seen in pictorial depictions also worked well to solve this issue: while they could have appeared exaggerated, when paired with the singing and if well timed, they seemed to smoothly accompany the music—as perhaps a dance would. Too much movement was dif-

43 Sylvia, Aurélie, Christoph.

44 Sylvia, Christoph, Sandy, Guillaume.

45 Sylvia.

46 Christoph, Sandy, Sylvia, Guillaume.

47 Sylvia. David also acknowledged the differences in levels.

ficult to coordinate when performers simultaneously had to sing *unisono*. Choral moments worked better when they were static or processional and allowed performers to concentrate on their singing. These challenges may have led—as they did in our production—medieval nuns and clergy to privilege a focused and perhaps solemn type of staging. Yet such staging could also create a sense of intimacy between the members of the singing group. In rehearsals, I noticed that the Marys seemed closer to each other because of the movements originated by their singing: as they sang together, they looked intensely at each other. This kind of intimacy may have reinforced for spectators and participants, in the Middle Ages as today, the impression of a closeness existing between the scriptural figures in this group and between the performers taking on these roles.

Singing in general can strengthen community: it was the case in our production and may also have been the case during medieval performances of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. When singing in a group, I felt united to the other actors more than I did during shared but silent movements. I believe that this was caused by the anticipation present before the beginning of a chant, by the simultaneous breathing, by our awareness of one another, and by the collective creation of something beautiful. Other actors echoed my reaction: Sandy emphasized the feeling of a group working together, of a *communautaire* (communal) experience created by singing. Guillaume defined the way in which the actors supported each other when performing and when singing as "communal." Christoph talked about being in an "acoustic cloud" with the other singers in La Maigrauge, hearing all of their voices "reflect from the walls."[48] For David, singing created a *communion* (communion) not only based on a group feeling but also interlaced with spirituality. As a devout Catholic, singing in an abbey, in close proximity to others, and in Latin, felt the same to him as singing at Mass. The *communion* he experienced while performing the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* was like a prayer: it was *très très fort* (very very strong i.e., moving, intense) and was reminiscent of similar intense moments he had experienced during liturgical ceremonies.[49] Music therefore had the potential to affect spectators and participants in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* in various ways. It gave the performance of the ceremonies a certain static solemnity, imbued this performance with greater intimacy between certain figures, but it also seemed to enhance the devotional and emotional experience of the performers.

48 Sandy, Guillaume, Christoph.

49 David.

This emotional response was, to a certain extent, surprising. It is easy not to realize, when reading the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, how overwhelming the effect of their music would have been in performance at Barking. The manuscript page does not show any musical notation, but, when the ceremonies are performed, music is omnipresent. It turns them into what feels like one long chant rather than a series of lines. While on the page all chants are recorded as short, text-only, *incipits*, expanding the incipits to the full text and setting it to music significantly prolonged some of them—the *Cum rex gloriae* for instance, or the *Christus resurgens*—and thus altered the perception of the length of the ceremonies and of the length of specific moments within the ceremonies. The increased duration of these chants gave them more weight, emphasizing the scriptural moments that they depicted: the glorious exit from Hell and the announcement of the Resurrection.

Plainchant might not possess a "dramatic quality" and was felt at times and by some actors to be "monotonous."[50] Yet it brought to life the words on the page in unexpected ways and was able to create moving and beautiful moments. I found the Marys' laments, as well as Mary Magdalen's surprised and longing *Raboni* (Rabbi), particularly poignant. Sandy, who played the role of Mary Magdalen, did not always feel that the chants fitted tonally—at least to our modern ears—their textual content but, at times, their tune enhanced her emotions in a way that helped her act her character's feelings. She cited the exchange between Christ and Mary Magdalen, her *Congratulamini* (Rejoice) chant, and her interaction with the second angel as examples of music carrying her emotionally and setting the appropriate mood. In her dialogue with the angel, music matched the *supplication* (pleading) and increased the *intimité* (intimacy) conveyed by the chants' words. She also felt that the *Congratulamini*'s tonal change corresponded with the joy experienced by her character. In these moments, few movements and *mimiques* (facial expressions) were required to convey the message of the piece: "la mélodie parle d'elle-même" (the tune speaks for itself). The tune supported the actors who only had to follow its lead to create their *jeu* (acting).[51] The content of the lines did not seem to be quite as influential as music on their acting. While actors possessed a translation of their Latin lines and had read it in rehearsals, many of them did not remember exactly what they were saying when they were performing. At specific times, they understood

50 Christoph. On this topic, see Hiley, *Western Plainchant*, 263; Ogden, *The Staging of Drama*, 180; Hughes, "Liturgical Drama," 52–54.

51 Sandy.

the meaning of their words—Christoph during the *Noli me tangere* and Guillaume for his angel chants—but they often only knew the essence of the meaning of the chants.[52] The presence of music in performance thus appears to have shaped the spectators' impression of the ceremonies and the actors' performance more directly than the Latin words could: it took them—at times at least—on an emotional journey.[53]

For the medieval spectators and performers of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, music also probably played a significant part in their reception of the ceremonies, as has been raised in the previous chapter. Some of the ideas evoked in that chapter, particularly in terms of the emotional effect of music, were supported by the findings made during modern rehearsals and performances. But what the 2018 production strongly and perhaps unexpectedly emphasized, was the ubiquity of music and, therefore, its prevalence in the perception of the ceremonies. Such music may not have been as striking to the Barking nuns, clergy, and laity, who were familiar with it, but it would have been just as omnipresent in performance then as it was in our modern production.

Drama and Liturgy

The second theme emerging from comments on these performances is also one that has been discussed at length in this book: the importance of liturgy in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* and the distinction between drama and liturgy. Singing and hearing the chants rather than only reading their words encouraged reflections on the liturgical aspects of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. In a region as traditionally Catholic as Fribourg, it is likely that most spectators recognized this music as sacred. Our actors certainly did. As David noted, its sound connoted a church service.[54] Gregorian chant remains, according to him, the "official" chant of the Catholic Church. Sylvia mentioned the relation between such music and the Catholic Church as well. She believed that Sandy's impressive motivation to learn the Barking chants might have come from her faith.

In addition to the music, the set, props, and costumes also brought the actors' (and the backstage crew's) attention to the liturgical characteristics of the ceremonies. These characteristics were much more prominent

---

52 Guillaume, Christoph, Sylvia, David.

53 Sylvia, Christoph, David, Sandy, Guillaume.

54 David. Although Mass is now in the vernacular in most churches in Fribourg, it can still feature some Latin chants.

than anticipated when reading the script. When preparing the performance, stage manager Tamara Haddad and I realized that an extensive knowledge of liturgical vestments was necessary. After conducting our own research, we met with Dominican brother Conor McDonough who was kind enough to show us vestments and explain their use. We borrowed some from priests and sewed the rest ourselves.[55] This work brought to light for us the specificity of liturgical vestments, of their appearance, size, decorations, and significance. We understood that the clergy's clothes in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* carried with them a symbolic value, which might have been known to them and some of their spectators, particularly the religious ones.

We, as director and stage manager, thus began to be aware early on in the rehearsal process of just how liturgical the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were, but it was the move from our rehearsal room into the first ecclesiastical venue—accompanied by a move from our everyday clothes into vestments and conventual habits—that was especially instrumental in this realization for the actors. Sylvia noticed the resemblance between her costume and the habit still worn by nuns today, while Sandy declared her respect for the habit and for the women who have worn and wear it still. Christoph admitted that he had felt pressure to handle liturgical vessels in a respectful way in front of the nuns of La Maigrauge. Even Guillaume, who claimed in his interview that he was "practically a heretic," believed that the first venue possessed a "real" religious or liturgical atmosphere. Many actors reacted to their recognition of the liturgical nature of the ceremonies with a sense of respect and responsibility towards the faith of the medieval nuns and clerics of Barking, as well as the faith of the La Maigrauge nuns in the audience.[56] Just as I had modified my introduction to the performances after my own uncomfortable realization of the ceremonies' nature, they adapted their performance.

In a post-performance discussion, Dr. Olivia Robinson—a member of the Medieval Convent Drama project who had also acted as a candle bearer in our production—remarked that the actors had performed the sadder moments of the ceremonies with more ease than the happier ones, especially at La Maigrauge. The *Christus resugens*, for instance, had sounded sad to her even though it should be a celebratory chant. We asked ourselves whether the modern perception of what constitutes an appropriate attitude in a Catholic

55 We borrowed two copes, four albs, and two dalmatics from priests, as well as four cassocks from Oxford choir singers. We made most of the nuns' habits, as well as the stoles, amices, and the cinctures of the clergy. I extend my thanks to Bernard Brocard, Sylvain Gex-Fabry, Conor McDonough, and Tamara Haddad for their generous help.

56 Guillaume, Christoph, and Sandy all spoke of "respect."

church and during a Catholic service might have affected her impression, my direction, and/or the actors' work.[57] In the case of the *Christus resurgens*, the tune apparently failed to carry the actors towards the emotions experienced by their characters. This might have been due to its musical features. It could alternatively have been caused by the modern listeners' perception of liturgical plainchant as generally solemn rather than jubilant, or by the actors' seriousness when singing sacred music, especially in a church space. Sylvia was certainly affected by the liturgical environment in which she sang. She declared that she had not sung as loudly inside the church as she had outside, partly because of the acoustics but partly because she did not dare raise her voice in this space. The acoustics, as well as the liturgical "props," such as incense, gave *un côté très solennel* (a very solemn side) to the first performance.[58] Christoph stated that he knew he was not "supposed to shout" or to "run around" in a Catholic church and acted accordingly in La Maigrauge.[59] I, too, felt acutely aware in that environment that I was a lay woman and not a nun. This made the performance of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* uncomfortable for me; I thus tried to be as respectful as possible, which meant, in my case, remaining quiet and serious.

Our second performance did not affect the actors in the same way. David said that his performance displayed more *légèreté* (lightness) and less seriousness than it had in La Maigrauge. I also experienced this change and felt more at ease in my nun costume: presenting the ceremonies in a non-sacred space expressed more plainly our purpose: we, as lay actors, were not attempting to perform a liturgy but to reconstitute a medieval performance for academic reasons.[60] The lack of religious landmarks and the high steps in front of the University aula reminded Sylvia more of a stage than of a church. The large space, as well as the acoustic quality created both for her and for Guillaume a "more dramatic" performance: "c'était plus théâtral en fait, c'était plus une performance théâtrale" (actually, it was more theatrical, it was more of a theatrical performance).[61] Some spectators commented on the disjointed impression this second performance produced on them:

---

57 Although Mary Magdalen's *Raboni* and *Congratulamini* did, for me and for Olivia Robinson, convey joy (as discussed on April 10, 2018).

58 Sylvia.

59 Christoph.

60 People walking past the University might not have understood them as non-liturgical. None stopped to watch even if many watched from windows.

61 Sylvia, Guillaume.

while the ceremonies looked and sounded liturgical, they were not adapted to the space in which they were performed. Some of the actors echoed these thoughts: Sylvia reflected on the difficulty of the distance between the actors and on how it affected singing together. Christoph mentioned the passers-by who distracted him and who, along with the modern space of the university, made him feel like he was in "a today world" rather than in the past. David, on the other hand, felt that the spectators had been distracted. These observations made me realize how essential space was to the effect of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. The ceremonies were designed to be performed in the church of Barking Abbey, a liturgical space large enough to accommodate both the length of the chants and a high number of nuns and priests.

Rehearsing and performing the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* thus provoked an awareness of their liturgical context, which elicited a sense of respect from our company. It raised questions about acting while singing such music in such a space dressed in such clothes. How much should one "act" to remain respectful? Medieval performers would probably have had this same respect for their liturgical surroundings. Their familiarity with such surroundings, however, may have made their approach to performance less rigid than that of modern actors.[62] All our modern actors expressed this respect, but some also felt that the performance of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* had engaged them in a different and more profound way: it had engaged their faith. The way modern actors perceived their performance varied in large part depending on their religious beliefs.

Music, Space, Costumes, and Props: Theatrical Tools

In the case of the non-Catholic or the less religious actors, such as Christoph, Sylvia, and Guillaume, performing the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* seems to have been a theatrical rather than a devotional experience.[63] Music, space, props, and costumes helped them get into character. By creating an atmosphere close to that of the original ceremonies, they provoked a kind of time-travel experience, which allowed performers to feel they could portray medieval

---

62 Such familiarity seems to bring a more flexible approach: the abbess of La Maigrauge, for instance, spoke aloud in the abbey church when I only dared whisper.

63 Christoph, while he described himself in his interview as religious and admitted a certain knowledge of Catholic rites and customs which he had acquired in his childhood, added: "it is not what I believe in. So there was no connection." He did not consider his performance a devotional experience. Neither did Sylvia, who had described herself as connected to Christianity in a previous interview without affirming a strong faith.

religious people more faithfully. For Christoph, the church of La Maigrauge, apart from producing an awareness of its importance for some of the spectators, did not affect his performance differently than a well-crafted set would have. He felt there as one does "on stage" or on a film set. This set, as well as props and costumes, made the situation look "real," and helped him get into "the atmosphere" and perform the role of a medieval priest.[64] Sylvia—although more attuned to the spirituality evoked by the space, music, and costumes—expressed similar thoughts. As they had with Christoph, costumes made her move differently and *entrer* (get into) her character. In the case of Guillaume, the age of the clothes he wore and the fact that they were actual liturgical vestments rather than theatre costumes brought him "back in time." Space and props further put him in the right "mind-set" to perform: they transported him into this medieval, liturgical "atmosphere" and enabled him to act with the right decorum and mood.[65]

Costume also helped actors get into character both by creating visual connections between them—Sylvia's costume united her to the other two Marys during the *Visitatio*, Guillaume felt that he and the other men were part of a group, while Sandy and Christoph thought all actors visually belonged to "another world"—and by changing the actors' perceptions of each other.[66] Sylvia, for instance, was surprised when she saw Sandy, dressed as Mary Magdalen, come towards her with the *sudarium*. In that moment, the shape given by the costume to Sandy's body made her look unfamiliar. Sylvia did not see her as Sandy but *avec la forme de Marie Ma[deleine]* (in the shape of Mary Ma[gdalen]).[67] Guillaume similarly believed that costumes had allowed him to see "only the role" instead of familiar fellow actors. For Christoph, costumes did not change his view of his colleagues, but they modified the context of their interactions. These interactions became something new and different from those of everyday life. Costume therefore facilitated actors' performances by helping them realize or establish relationships between their characters and forget their own relationships with the actors portraying these characters. Medieval participants in the Barking Abbey ceremonies presumably would not have experienced "costume" in the same way: they were used to seeing and to wearing liturgical vestments and religious habits. However, the nuns portraying the three Marys did wear unfamiliar

64 Christoph.

65 Sylvia, Guillaume.

66 Christoph.

67 Sylvia.

white veils and surplices. In their case, like in our modern production, "costume," may have led those watching to associate these three women with the figures that they were portraying. Moreover, as evoked in the previous chapter, "costume" could have created for medieval performers and spectators—as it did for Guillaume, Sylvia, and Christoph—the feeling of belonging to a group: to a group of performers but also a group of characters.

Guillaume, Sylvia, and Christoph thus seem to have adopted a theatrical approach to their work. They felt that the various elements of the performance—space, music and text, objects, clothes, movements—were useful because they brought them closer to the atmosphere that had existed during the medieval performances of the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* and to the medieval people who had performed them. Yet, for actors who identified as Catholic or as close to Catholicism in their spirituality, these elements led, unsurprisingly, to a different and much more devotional experience—probably closer to that of the nuns, clergy, and laity of Barking Abbey.

Music, Space, Costumes, and Props: Liturgy and Devotion

In their interview, these actors did not describe music and text, space, clothes, or objects as tools to help their theatrical performance. For them, these were reminders both of liturgical services and of the history and traditions of the Church. They did relate them to the medieval past: Sandy, for instance, approached her performance with an eye to history. She claimed that we all were *d'abord des chercheurs* (researchers first).[68] As for David, he spoke of costumes as useful to help our production be as close as possible to the medieval performances of the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. David and Sandy's discourses, however, differed from those of Sylvia, Guillaume, and Christoph because space or costume neither seem to have been atmosphere, nor character-building for them. Instead of insisting on these elements' ability to bring them back to the Middle Ages, Sandy and David emphasized the connection they created between past and present. The music, text, space, clothes, and objects used in our production were either close to those of modern Catholic liturgy or were still used in this liturgy today. They carried multiple layers of sacred meanings for Sandy and David, who thus tended to connect them to their own present faith and to respond to them in a devotional way.

David associated costume, for instance, with his desire to enter a religious life: being dressed as a deacon felt more like receiving an encouraging sign from God than like wearing a theatre costume. As for singing, *c'était une*

68 Sandy.

prière (it was a prayer) and it *ouvre vraiment à quelque chose aussi de mystérieux* (opened him to something mysterious). He associated it with singing in church, he repeated the saying *chanter c'est prier deux fois* (singing is praying twice)—which had already been reported to us by a Carmelite nun in December 2017—and defined it three times as moving.[69] Sandy similarly deemed singing more devotionally *engageant* (engaging) than speaking. In her case, music, costume, and space connected her to a long tradition of women in the Church, which she felt had started with Mary Magdalen and was now on the brink of extinction. She described her costume as *plus qu'un costume en fait* (more than a costume, really) and proceeded to mention its tradition, the values it conveyed, and the women who wore it, as well as their faith. The church of La Maigrauge further drew her attention to the nuns who use this space every day and who were present in the audience. As for music, she described it as a point of connection between her performance and the sisters of La Maigrauge's daily participation in sung services. Sandy expressed her respect and admiration for the history and the traditions of women in the Church.[70] Her admiration for these women had an emotional impact on her performance of these conventual ceremonies: she felt *beaucoup touchée* (very moved) to perform them in front of modern nuns.

Sandy further included herself in this female Christian tradition by connecting her own faith to that of the Barking and La Maigrauge's sisters and of Mary Magdalen. She claimed an affinity to the Benedictine *courant* (ideas) and, when performing these Benedictine liturgical ceremonies, felt herself suddenly carried by her faith. This feeling, which she had not experienced during rehearsals, came when she was in the conventual church—a space she immediately connected with her own devotion—and in front of an audience (some of whom were nuns). She recounted being especially moved when she sang Mary Magdalen's joy at having seen the Lord and simultaneously saw light coming through the window at the back of the church.[71] The juxtaposition of this joyful moment for Mary Magdalen with an element commonly associated with Christ and his Resurrection seems to have created a connection between past and present, between Sandy's and Mary Magdalen's experiences. In that moment, Sandy was telling the story of Mary Magdalen and of the Resurrection through her words and movements, but

69 David.

70 She spoke of the sisters' brave lifestyle: "je pense que ces gens, ils sont courageux" (I think that these people are brave). Sandy.

71 Sandy.

she was also seeing the light, a reminder of Christ's presence and of the continuing importance of his Resurrection for Christians today.

Sandy and David's reactions may suggest some of the responses of the medieval nuns and clerics of Barking Abbey to the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. Like David, they would have associated liturgical music and vestments with prayer. They may have reflected, like Sandy, on the similarity between their faith and that of past scriptural figures or may have been moved by the symbolism of light and the Resurrection. The experience of these two actors, while specific to them, supports some of the arguments made in Chapter 1 and gives examples of possible devotional reactions from medieval spectators and participants.

Acting in this Context: Prayer and Impersonation

Knowledge of, but also belief in, the Catholic faith therefore played a significant role in determining the effect the chants, space, props, and costumes of the 2018 production had on actors and on their performances. Those possessing such faith seem to have connected these elements to their own experience of prayer and of the liturgy while those who did not considered them as useful tools to stage a play. Catholic piety further influenced the actors' approach to acting. If one is used to attending liturgy and believes in the Resurrection, performing these liturgical ceremonies can be, as it was for David and Sandy (and presumably for the nuns and clergy of Barking Abbey), a devotional experience. For them, acting in the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* did not merely consist in playing religious people from the past, but in praying themselves. The actors who did not share their beliefs but who nonetheless recognized the liturgical nature of the ceremonies oscillated between attempting to impersonate medieval nuns and members of the clergy and avoiding impersonation out of respect.

Christoph decided to remain in character, as a medieval priest, for the entirety of the two ceremonies. He wondered how a medieval priest would have moved and how he would have portrayed Christ. He believed that such a man, although he could have been at times "dramatic" in his gestures, might not have handled his portrayal of Jesus in a theatrical way.[72] Sylvia had a similar approach to Christoph's. Realizing the liturgical nature of the ceremonies, she decided to interest herself in medieval nuns in order to understand how they would have performed the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*.[73] She

72 Christoph.

73 Sylvia: "c'est pas dans le sens du théâtre totalement à fond" (it is not, in a way,

adapted her acting style accordingly: she believed that what had mattered to these nuns were *positions* (positions) rather than *jeu pur* (pure acting) and the creation of tableaux rather than the expression of deep feelings. Sylvia thought nuns would have performed symbolic and—a view reinforced by wearing a habit and a surplice—calm movements. These clothes, which were not a realistic costume for her character of Mary mother of James, further supported her opinion that the characters would not have been *caractérisés* (represented as characters) but represented more symbolically.[74] As already acknowledged, it is impossible to know how medieval religious people acted: they may well have expressed deep feelings. However, based on existing pictorial representations, on the movements common in contemporary liturgy, as well as on the costumes worn by the performers, Sylvia's views seem to a certain extent well founded. Like Christoph and Sylvia, Guillaume perceived "medieval church people" as calm and did not believe that they would have performed the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* very theatrically. Because of the liturgical nature of the ceremonies, he did not feel that it would be fitting for him to be "acting," particularly in moments when he was only "taking the place" of the deacon: while the gestures and movements of medieval deacons inspired him, he did not want to impersonate one. He acted a little more as the angel, but he mostly remained himself. He let himself be taken over by the atmosphere and by the practical tasks he had to accomplish.[75] All three actors realized the liturgical importance of the ceremonies and took it into account in different ways when performing. They either attempted to play people who felt at home in such a liturgy or tried to understand these people while resisting a clear impersonation.

When discussing the question of acting, Sandy and David added the dimension of their faith. This dimension, coupled with their knowledge of the liturgy and of the traditions of the Catholic Church, seems to have prevented them from playing medieval characters only. Rather than consciously portraying just a medieval nun or just Mary Magdalen, Sandy navigated different *couches* (layers) of being during her performance. She specifically used the verb "to be" in her interview, insisting that she was at once a Benedictine nun, Mary Magdalen, and a *cantrix*.[76] At times, she became one of them more than the others:

---

fully theatre).

74 Sylvia.

75 Guillaume.

76 *Mais, vraiment* (But really). Sandy.

> De temps en temps j'étais qu'une seule des trois, de temps en temps, deux, enfin, il y avait vraiment quelque chose de…voilà, comme un va et vient en fait, un constant aller et retour.
>
> From time to time, I was one of the three, from time to time two. There was something…a coming and going actually, a constant coming and going.

She described herself as a kind of *mystique* who, for a few hours, could both understand these characters and *be* them.[77] Sandy's account of her acting experience fits in with her awareness of women in the Church. Yet, when considered along her description of seeing the light, it also seems close to the juxtaposition of layers of meaning and of being experienced in the liturgy. During the liturgy, the past is brought into the present and the present into the past. One does not just witness the re-telling of scriptural events, one lives them. This is echoed in the interview of sister B of La Maigrauge, who said that liturgy *actualise les textes des Ecritures* (makes present the scriptural texts). For sister C, its purpose is to make us contemporaneous with Christ. Sandy did not go as far as to compare her performance with liturgy. She even explained that staying at La Maigrauge for Vespers—an actual liturgical ceremony—made her feel uncomfortable because she was still wearing her costume and had the feeling that she was *blasphemer* (blaspheming). However, her *démarche de foi* (process of faith) during the performance ultimately convinced her that it was acceptable for her to remain dressed as a nun.[78] While Sandy differentiated our production from real liturgy, she appears to have experienced it in some of the ways one does liturgy. She also perceived her devotion during the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio* as legitimizing her performance by bringing it closer to the ceremonies' liturgical nature and purpose and by distancing it from its theatrical context of production.

David's approach went further than Sandy's and he seems to have considered his experience of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* as extremely close to the experience of liturgy. He first associated the Barking ceremonies with church services by comparing his emotions during their performances to what he had felt during the Holy Week ceremonies—some of the most dramatic ceremonies of the liturgical year—which recount Christ's Passion and Resurrection. When attending the Holy Week services, David "commence à ressentir un peu ce que les disciples ont ressenti" (had begun to feel a bit what the disciples had felt): these emotions went from grief, to anticipation,

77 Sandy.

78 Sandy.

and then to joy. Performing the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* was a similar kind of emotional and spiritual journey for him; the past was lived again in the present and the present in the past. He spoke, as other actors had, of a *voyage dans le temps* (time travel), but not of one which brought him to the Middle Ages. Instead, he was brought back to scriptural times where he was able to *vivre la situation* (live the situation) he performed. David did not act: "j'ai pas l'impression d'avoir joué un role en fait, j'ai l'impression d'être moi-même" (I do not have the feeling that I played a role actually, I have the feeling that I was myself). He was present, observing or listening, focused on himself, often with his eyes closed, in his *bulle* (bubble). For him, witnessing Vespers after his performance was a *prolongation* of his experience, of his *état de grâce* (state of grace) rather than something other. He did not substantially differentiate this liturgical service from the performance: the environment, the singing, and the place were all similar.[79]

The comments made by David and Sandy indicate their perception of our production as close to, and even, in David's case, almost identical to liturgy. David's words also evoke compassionate meditation: he was emotionally imagining the events of the life and death of Christ. The perception of these two actors made them perform the ceremonies in a different way than they would have another type of play. They were not always acting but instead were praying, were re-living scriptural events, and remembering the Catholic Church's tradition. They were living their faith. Even when produced in a largely lay environment, the Barking Abbey *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were thus still understood as liturgical, and their devotional aspect remained prominent. Sandy and David's experience may indicate the way in which medieval nuns and clergy perceived their performance of the ceremonies: they most likely saw it as a devotional and liturgical moment. This is also how the nuns of La Maigrauge described the production we presented.

Impressions of Modern Women Religious

To better understand some of the nuns of La Maigrauge's responses, I would like to examine first their opinion of theatre and of dramatic liturgical ceremonies. As I was interviewing them, I rapidly realized that theatre did not feature prominently in the lives of Cistercian nuns. While the sisters had witnessed concerts performed in their church before, they had not seen plays in that space and reported no internal practice of theatre.[80]

---

79 David.

80 A, B.

When theatre was performed, it served an educational purpose. E and D, for instance, described its importance in the noviciate. They remembered performing *scénettes* (short scenes) depicting the stories of Jonah, Simon, Mary Magdalen, and Bartimaeus on feast days. These scenes were apparently read from the Bible; novices were attributed a role and performed it when their turn came in the scriptural text.[81]

The interviewees' view of theatre was not always a positive one. E described her experience of acting at school with a professional who taught the pupils *à entrer dans le personage* (to enter into the character). She did not entirely dislike this idea but feared it could lead actors to imitate characters superficially. The word "theatre" itself seemed for her to be associated with the idea of hollow pretence: she wondered whether our performance would be *juste du théâtre* (only theatre) or would be "lived."[82] Her own, positive view of what entering into a character meant was intimately connected with the idea of "living" the performance. One should not attempt to be the character portrayed: no actor can "be," for instance, Mary Magdalen. What one ought to do is try to be in the spirit of the character, to express their truth while living it along with them. She thought that it was only when actors succeeded at performing in such a way that the audience was able to connect to the reality of the characters and to be moved.[83]

While E was not particularly favourable to theatre, most nuns approved of the use of dramatic features in liturgical ceremonies. They found processions in their abbey, in particular those of Ascension Day, of Palm Sunday, and of the Assumption to resemble the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*.[84] In La Maigrauge, the procession on Ascension Day generally precedes Mass: the nuns and the faithful walk around the cloisters before entering the church, as the apostles did when they escorted Jesus. The procession is accompanied by singing—as was the case at Barking Abbey—and nuns carry nearly identical objects, such as candles and a processional cross. The Assumption procession follows a similar pattern. On Palm Sunday, there is another procession

---

81 E, D.

82 "Est-ce qu'on le vit?" (Do we live it?). E.

83 E. E's reservation about theatre seems to match some views expressed by medieval Cistercians who rejected Latin liturgical dramatic ceremonies, as well as some of the opinions on theatre expressed during the late medieval period. They saw an accumulation of artifice and disguise in theatre, which created a gap between what one saw and what was real. Beckwith, *Signifying God*, 143–56; Davidson, "Improvisation in Medieval Drama," 198, 203; Briscoe, "Some Clerical Notions."

84 B, D.

around the cloisters during which the antiphon *Hosanna* is sung, as it was at the time of Christ's entry into Jerusalem according to the Bible. After a hymn, the nuns and the faithful return to the church where the Passion is read by two nuns and a priest who divide the "roles" between themselves.[85] A similar reading is conducted on Good Friday. Both A and B reported the faithful's positive reaction to this year's readings of the Passion: a man even claimed that he had never been *ému aux entrailles* (deeply moved) by this text before.[86] The final ceremony the nuns of La Maigrauge described to me was their Paschal Vigil, which involved the lighting of the paschal candle in the dark church and, from it, the lighting of the other candles.[87] E saw this ceremony as an example of *tangible* liturgy.[88] The opinions of the Fribourg sisters on these kinds of ceremonies and on their benefits may echo those held by the nuns of Barking Abbey and may explain some of their reasons for performing liturgical dramatic ceremonies. The nuns of La Maigrauge felt that dramatic features in the liturgy could help deepen faith and increase devotion. B qualified the processions of *vivification* of the liturgy: they bring life into it or bring it back to life. Even without dramatic features, liturgy is meant to be a re-living of the past, it is meant to be "alive." Yet—as discussed in Chapter 1—these features make the nature and purpose of the liturgy perceptible in a clearer and more emotional way. Dramatic liturgical ceremonies thus have an increased number of chances to reach people, in particular the laity, and to encourage devotion. The processions at La Maigrauge, for instance, seem to be used to renew, physically remember, and accompany the journey of scriptural figures from one place to another or from one state to another. The Palm Sunday procession involves the laity by having them walk with the nuns on a day full of emotional changes—from jubilant joy to sorrow, from the entrance into Jerusalem to the reading of the Passion.[89] Its performance thereby encourages spectators to understand, and possibly to feel these emotions along with the figures they are accompanying. The tan-

---

85 B.

86 A, B. The word *entrailles* designates the belly area. It is often used to speak of the guts but can describe the womb, as in the *Ave Maria*. It can also, as I believe is the case here, refer to the place containing one's deepest feelings. *Larousse: Dictionnaire de français*, s.v. "entrailles," accessed June 22, 2024, www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/entrailles/29979.

87 B explained that the service has involved the presence of the laity since the liturgical reforms of the 1950s.

88 E.

89 B.

gible quality of the Maigrauge Paschal Vigil and the roles given in the Passion readings may bring a similar result: visual, sensory means draw the attention of the faithful to the Scriptures in a striking way and stir their feelings. For A, the layman's comments on the Passion showed that such ceremonies could transmit a message, that they could convey something deep and emotional about the events recounted.[90] The sisters of La Maigrauge thus perceived these ceremonies as encouraging affective devotional responses. As was explored in Chapter 1, this may also have been the case for the sisters of Barking Abbey. Their *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* resemble the ceremonies of the Abbey of La Maigrauge both in their structure and, according to the Ordinal, in their purpose as means to increase devotion. The sisters of La Maigrauge recognized these similarities; they saw the Barking ceremonies as liturgical rather than theatrical and believed that their effects were akin to those of their own dramatic liturgical ceremonies.

The liturgical features of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* initially surprised some of them. C thought that the show would be a *mystère* (mystery play) or a *mime*, and B had not expected us to represent the conventual context of the ceremonies. C felt that the performance had opened the Maigrauge nuns to a beautiful liturgical truth of which they had previously been unaware. She qualified the whole production as *pas du théâtre, même si c'est du théâtre* (it is not theatre even if it is theatre). She described it instead of *une réalité qui devient présente* (a truth that becomes present), a truth that one could experience in the atmosphere of prayer existing at the time of the performance.[91] I do not want to imply, nor do I believe, that the sisters of La Maigrauge perceived our performance to be liturgy; rather, they recognized the Barking ceremonies as liturgy and understood their performance by lay actors to have been a profound spiritual experience for some spectators and participants. C, for instance, approved of our decision to avoid using a Host since this clearly distanced our work from real liturgy, but she also seems to have reacted to the performance partly as she would have to a liturgical ceremony: she was struck and moved when the monstrance was lifted from the sepulchre.[92] During our performance of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* in the La Maigrauge church, the texts came alive according to B, allowing spectators to "live these texts" and experience their content in an emotional way.

90 A.

91 C.

92 C.

C further felt that the ceremonies renewed in a deep and strong manner, laden with truth, the experience the nuns live every day through liturgy.[93]

The nuns of La Maigrauge therefore believed that the performance of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* affected spectators and participants in some of the ways liturgy did. They more specifically compared it to a particular kind of liturgy: dramatic liturgical ceremonies. As in their own ceremonies, it was the singularity of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*—the singing according to B and their striking aspects according to E—which helped them take people on a liturgical journey and encouraged devotion.[94] E supposed that such an unusual performance might have surprised many audience members and stimulated their curiosity concerning these unknown liturgical traditions. They may have realized the continuing relevance of the themes present in the ceremonies. E did not state that the performance had converted the audience. However, she thought that this unusual work, done in a conventual context, was favourable to reflection and could bring a change for some spectators. While describing the effects of the performance, E repeatedly used the term *entrer en soi* (enter into oneself), indicating introspection, meditation, and personal devotion. She observed that the lay audience members had been quiet, meditative, and *saisis* (struck) during the performance. Helping lay people find their path towards God is, according to E, an essential part of her role as a nun. Although she had disliked the idea of performing theatre in the abbatial church, her reasons for welcoming our project were intimately related to this understanding of her role. Nuns are the *messagères et collaboratrices du Seigneur* (messengers and collaborators of the Lord) whose service to him is to provide welcome in the hope it will bring people closer to him.[95] The sisters of La Maigrauge's perception of their vocation echoes the self-presentation of the Barking Abbey nuns as messengers discussed in Chapter 1. The medieval nuns wanted to reach the laity and they presented to them ceremonies in which they also acted as messenger figures. There is thus, both in the discourse of the nuns of La Maigrauge and in the Barking Ordinal, a perception of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* as tools to develop the devotion of the laity.

Another group of lay people discussed by the nuns of La Maigrauge were the actors. Although our actors had not been *imbibés de liturgie* (imbibed in

---

93 B, C.

94 B, E. The nuns' understanding of the ceremonies made them deem a liturgical setting appropriate for our performance (A, C, E).

95 E.

liturgy) as much as nuns had and made some mistakes, they performed the ceremonies as recommended by E: it was not *juste du théâtre*, it was *vécu* (just theatre, it was lived).[96] While the nuns did not believe that a real liturgy was happening in front of them, they described the actors' experience of performance as close to what happens during liturgy, in particular during a more dramatic kind of liturgy. A, C, and E all believed that something profoundly emotional and/or spiritual had happened to some of the actors during the performance. C described the chants as full of emotions.[97] Another moment noticed by C was the raising of the Host by the actor playing Christ. The *recueillement* (contemplation) she felt he had expressed had shown her that this moment had been real for him.[98] E similarly believed that had there been no *présence* behind what was presented, the performance would not have had the power to move hearts. She believed actors had all *pris cela à coeur* (taken it [acting] to heart), had approached it with respect and seriousness, and had even experienced the reality of the ceremonies while acting. She added that the conventual, liturgical setting had helped them enter and transmit this reality.[99] The "reality" she spoke of seems to have referred to the recognition of the liturgical nature and purpose of the ceremonies but also to an understanding of the lives and emotions of the scriptural characters represented and, possibly, to an experience of devotion.

The sisters thus appear to have separated our performance from what they named "theatre" and, while recognizing that it was not liturgy, to have considered it as close to liturgy in its effects on lay spectators and actors. Some of their observations were supported by these spectators and actors. Guillaume, Sandy, and David were moved, to varying degrees, in the way observed by the sisters. The experience helped Guillaume feel more in touch with his "spiritual side" and make peace with some of his negative impressions of the Catholic Church. Both Sandy and David said that the performance engaged their faith. However, others, such as Christoph, did not describe this performance as an emotional or spiritual experience. Lay audience members were not interviewed and could therefore not attest to whether their devotion had been encouraged. Yet their reaction at the end of the first per-

96 E, C.

97 She felt that the chants had been the opposite of the sometimes stiff, note-by-note singing found in certain monasteries.

98 C. These observations led C to ask me whether our actors were Christians or believed in God. I answered that I had not enquired but that some had expressed their faith.

99 E.

formance showed their understanding of the liturgical nature of the ceremonies and their uncertainty as to how to respond to it. As the actors bowed and left the choir, we expected audience members to clap but they did not. A long silence followed, until the nuns started clapping and were then followed by the rest of the audience. We were first surprised but suspected—a fact confirmed later by several spectators—that they felt uneasy applauding what had looked like liturgy, particularly in the presence of the nuns. While faith, language barriers, or lack of interest prevented some of the lay actors and spectators from being moved or devotionally engaged by the performances, most of them seem to have recognized the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s liturgical nature.

Although not always exact or historically informed, the nuns of La Maigrauge's opinion presents us with the valuable views of women religious on the performance of such ceremonies. It is therefore particularly intriguing to see them attribute to the ceremonies the same effects as the Barking Ordinal had. Despite the differences between our performance and those given in Barking Abbey church, the nuns of La Maigrauge perceived some of the ceremonies' probable intentions and believed in the efficiency of dramatic liturgical ceremonies in fulfilling these intents.

Apart from their mentions of the laity, the sisters of La Maigrauge also spoke of the effect our performance had had on them. When they did, they described their experience as devotional but in a way different from the one they had discussed in relation to the laity. Watching the *Elevatio* and the *Visitatio* was a moment of recognition or involvement for them. The first cause of this involvement was music. B reminded me that she had been *à la maison dans le grégorien* (at home in gregorian chant) since her childhood and acknowledged, along with D, A, and C, that she knew some of the texts and melodies we had sung.[100] Knowledge of the chants, and/or of the scriptural passages on which many of them are based, led C and A to *se retrouver* (to find oneself) in those chants, to feel a personal connection to them. D even stated that she could almost have sung along with us.[101] Our performance reminded them of various known liturgical services and, by creating a sense of involvement, it allowed the nuns to live some of these services once more. Such a feeling was expressed by C, whom the performance had brought back to her abbey's Easter ceremonies. Seeing the *Confiteor* similarly recalled for

100 B, D, A, C.

101 C, A, D. During our performance of the Huy *Nativity* plays (December 2017) in the Carmelite convent of Le Pâquier, the sisters did join the actors in singing the liturgical chant *Nunc Dimittis* at the end of the play.

A the *Confiteor* said on Maundy Thursday in the La Maigrauge church and moved her deeply.[102]

Yet the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* also differed from the nuns of La Maigrauge's usual Divine Office. Their dramatic quality, in particular, provided the sisters with new, different, and, it seems, more emotional perspectives on familiar texts and ceremonies. Such a perspective recalls the compassionate devotion evoked in Chapter 1. The sisters of La Maigrauge observed that our production of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* contained, for instance, more movement than was usual in their liturgy. D believed movement could increase the effect of certain texts: "certaines choses peuvent plus parler en bougeant" (some things can speak (move) more with movement). She then mentioned the dialogue between Christ and Mary Magdalen, which she found striking. She had sung it twice on the day before the performance, but it took a new dimension when performed by two moving figures. As for B, both the musical and visual aspects of these ceremonies made the scriptural texts *vivants* (brought them to life) and helped her *vivre mieux les textes* (live them better). The result was an intense emotional experience, which, while differing from that of the laity, was equally conducive to devotion.[103]

The comments of the nuns of La Maigrauge thus emphasize the devotional aspects of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. Modern nuns saw the ceremonies' striking but also engaging mixture of the familiar and the unusual as efficient in encouraging piety. As explored in Chapter 1, this same opinion may have been held by the sisters of Barking Abbey. The Fribourg nuns' comments on the 2018 production further highlight the multiplicity of the ceremonies' devotional effects. They evoke these effects on the laity, who seem to have been the target audience for the ceremonies in the Middle Ages: the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* can inspire compassionate devotion, help lay people live the liturgy better, and make them begin a reflection on faith. But they also evoke their effects on religious women: the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* can remind them of other liturgical ceremonies, help them experience these in a different way, and they encourage their affective devotion.

Another way in which the nuns discussed the 2018 production related to their view of and connection with their abbey's history. Watching the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* created, for many of the sisters of La Maigrauge, a link between the Barking ceremonies and their abbey's traditions. The interviewees never mentioned the original English context of the ceremonies,

102 C, A.

103 D, B.

but instead associated the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* with their own community's medieval past. C, for instance, spoke of the connection she felt between the current nuns of La Maigrauge and past sisters when she sang chant she imagined her predecessors had also sung. Because of her knowledge of the chants we sang, she felt that this connection continued in our performance. This performance made the nuns of La Maigrauge reflect on their communal history, on their predecessors, and led them to feel a sense of continuity between previous and current conventual traditions.[104]

Connecting to the Past

Performing the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* therefore had the ability to connect past and present. For actors such as Christoph, Guillaume, and Sylvia, it evoked the past and forced them to try to understand the people who had been involved in the Barking ceremonies in the Middle Ages. In the case of Sandy, it made her remember the nuns of the past and place herself, as well as the nuns of the present, in this tradition of women religious. For David, it had the same effect as liturgy and allowed him to live scriptural moments. The sisters of La Maigrauge also experienced these connections between past and present. They felt a certain belonging to the performance, which led them to reconsider some of their current liturgical ceremonies. This sense of belonging moreover drew their attention towards their own conventual history.

In addition to our performance containing familiar chant, it made use of the Cistercian abbey's medieval church and sepulchre, which further encouraged the sisters of La Maigrauge to associate the Barking ceremonies with the history of their house. Some nuns remarked that their interest in our project had arisen due to the medieval foundation of their abbey and to the artifacts found in their church: sister A felt *concernée* (involved) in our project for this very reason and A, B, and D spoke at length of the sepulchre of La Maigrauge. This sepulchre dates from the fourteenth century; it is made of wood, painted, and contains a wooden sculpture of Christ (Figure 2.5).[105]

It is one of the rare extant medieval mobile sepulchres in Europe and is the oldest complete one to have survived. It used to be kept in the abbey church where it was one of the house's most precious artifacts but, more than that, it was deeply connected to the sense of identity and history of

104 The recognition of this continuity deeply moved B, D, and A.

105 Its dimensions are 188 cm (width) × 101 cm (height) × 51 cm (depth). See Aballéa, "Le saint sépulcre de la Maigrauge," 60–61.

Figure 2.5. Sepulchre of La Maigrauge, 1345–1360. Spruce and willow, 188 cm (width) × 101 cm (height) × 51 cm (depth). Reproduced by permission of the Musée d'art et d'histoire Fribourg / Primula Bosshard.

its nuns.[106] According to sister D, the sepulchre was part of the community: every previous sister had venerated it. This object was thus perceived to store the devotions and even the presence of past sisters. In 1902, the sepulchre was sold to the State of Fribourg due, as remembered by the sisters of La Maigrauge, to pressure from the State. In 1997, the nuns had to agree to its removal from their church and preservation in the Fribourg Museum of Art and History. According to sister B, this was painful for them. Sister D also remembered the nuns' efforts to keep the sepulchre within their community and their subsequent struggle to obtain a copy (which they obtained in 2009).[107] This copy seems to now function as a stand-in for the sisters of La Maigrauge, who—while still upset about the loss of the original—treat it like a devotional object and have to a certain extent transferred onto it the

106 B remembered how the nuns were unable to use or even touch the sepulchre from the seventeenth century until 1984 (in 1984, the church was renovated and the nuns' stalls placed on the floor of the nave again). The sepulchre had been enclosed in a protective glass container since 1902 and was situated in the space dedicated to the laity, far from the nuns whose stalls were located on a platform.

107 D. See Aballéa, "Sépulcre pascal," 194.

meaning of its predecessor. They have also created ways to incorporate it into their own worship, integrating it into their celebrations of Good Friday. We used this copy when performing the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*.[108]

While the sepulchre is meaningful to the nuns of La Maigrauge, its exact use by medieval sisters remains a mystery because a fire destroyed most of the abbey's documents in the seventeenth century. When watching our performance, which incorporated this object specific to their house into medieval ceremonies performed in their medieval church, the sisters thus had the possibility of visualizing a way in which their sepulchre may have been used in the Middle Ages. This potential version of their past was at once different from their modern practices and familiar. Different because the sisters do not have any kind of performative ceremony comparable to the *Visitatio* or *Elevatio* today, but familiar because the sepulchre is well known to them and because some of the chants used in the *Visitatio* and the *Elevatio* alongside their sepulchre were recognizable to the sisters.[109] The use of the sepulchre in this climate therefore involved both present and past La Maigrauge nuns, as well as their devotions, in our performance. It connected current sisters with a possible version of their past, former sisters with modern uses of the sepulchre, and it united them through their similar traditions. It moreover led the modern sisters of La Maigrauge to feel an association with and, possibly, a sense of ownership of the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. Finally, the sepulchre had the benefit of bringing us lay actors into closer connection to the conventual community: D thought that our use of this object created a joyful bond between past and future, between the La Maigrauge late and living nuns and us, younger people. According to D and C, we both connected with the community's history through our performance and continued its practices surrounding both the sepulchre and liturgical chants.

Such ties with the past are also attested at Barking Abbey. Nuns and abbesses were buried in the house's church; past sisters and benefactors were celebrated in the *vitae* sponsored by the house and in the feasts specific to the abbey.[110] As a Benedictine nunnery, Barking would also have per-

108 Sisters A, B, and D spoke at length of the sepulchre. B said that the copy they own is used after the liturgy on the evening of Good Friday. The body of Christ is put inside the sepulchre. They do this after the liturgy since the liturgy celebrates the *mise en croix* (crucifixion) and taking Jesus down from the cross chronologically happens afterwards. For more on the sepulchre, see Steinauer, "Saint sépulcre de la Maigrauge."

109 C, B, D, and A.

110 The principal feasts of St Ethelburga (October 11) and St Erkenwald (April 30),

formed the necrology daily. The Ordinal and Customary itself shows a certain aspiration to remember past nuns and past practices: it refers, for instance, to the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s modifications under former abbess Katherine of Sutton. For the sisters of Barking, performing the *Visitatio* and *Elevatio*—two ceremonies created in their house at least more than thirty years earlier—in a twelfth and thirteenth-century abbey church, with furnishings that were not all brand new, might have reminded them of and connected them with the many sisters who had taken part in the ceremonies before in that same space: it was a moment of remembrance. The performance of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri* can therefore be understood as another commemorative practice, continuing to strengthen the sense of the house's community, and informing the nuns' sense of identity.

Learning from Modern Performance

As different as our modern performances were from those given in the abbey church of Barking, they supported some of the ideas suggested by the text, its historical context, and the house's literary and liturgical culture as to the ways in which medieval spectators and performers might have perceived the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. The discoveries made and questions raised through these performances significantly informed the previous sections of this book.

First, this experience illuminated for me the question of the terminology to use when discussing the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. The two ceremonies were perceived by the nuns of La Maigrauge, by actors, the crew, and many spectators as liturgy. Even when performed by lay actors as part of an academic project, their liturgical nature seemed obvious. The 2018 performances thus foregrounded the importance of liturgical "costumes" and "props," of liturgical music, and of the liturgical space in influencing the effect of the ceremonies on their spectators and performers.

These modern performances showed in practice that the Barking liturgical ceremonies could affect various kinds of people—lay or religious. The comments of actors and spectators were instrumental in making me realize how influential the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* may have been not just for their

---

for example, celebrate, respectively, the first abbess and the founder of Barking abbey. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:10, 4 and 2:221, 319. For burial practices, see *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:361–62. See also Blanc and Robinson, "The Huy Nativity," 92–96; Brazil, "Performing Female Sanctity," 86; Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama*, 149–51.

spectators—their target audience according to the Ordinal—but also for their performers. According to modern performers and spectators, the ceremonies' devotional aspect was especially overwhelming: their statements both support the Ordinal's claim that the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were undertaken to improve the devotion of the local laity and also show how impactful they could be for their participants. The nuns of La Maigrauge, as well as David, spoke of the ceremonies' affective effect on them, and many of the actors interviewed commented on their own emotional response to them. The sisters and David also evoked the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s ability to help people both understand the way in which liturgy works and live liturgy better. When the performers were spiritually engaged, their performance was a moment of prayer, but also a time when they thought about their place in the Church. Finally, both David and the nuns of La Maigrauge felt that the ceremonies could change the lives of performers and spectators, encouraging them to re-evaluate their behaviour as Christians. The work undertaken in the spring of 2018 further began a reflection on the question of memory: while the chants were difficult to learn at the time, they now seem unforgettable. To this day, the ceremonies—at least part of them—are stuck in the memory of some of the performers because of how unfamiliar they were. The scriptural story that they tell thus remains with them. The comments collected after the performance and the notes made during rehearsals therefore prompted some of the reflections in Chapter 1 on the diversity of the ceremonies' devotional effect: interviewees felt that the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* had the ability to contribute to the compassionate devotion of performers and spectators, to bring them a better understanding of the liturgy, to help them know and remember Scriptures, and to guide them towards a more Christian way of life.

The significance of women, the second major theme discussed in Chapter 1, was also on display during our performances of the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. Women's voices dominated, especially during the *Visitatio*, where they were much more visible as well. Sandy's comments on the history of women religious and women in the Church showed the association that seems to have taken place between her, previous nuns who performed liturgy in the church of La Maigrauge, and Mary Magdalen herself. The question of identification and of going back into the past, evoked in different ways by all actors, drove some of the reflections on acting explored in Chapter 1: some medieval religious performers may have felt this sense of association, which may also have extended to their religious community. Community itself seems to have been encouraged by the performance of the two liturgical ceremonies: this was discussed by various actors, and the con-

nections between the ceremonies, the scriptural story, and the local abbey were mentioned both by Sandy and by the sisters of La Maigrauge.

Finally, while these two modern performances dealt with their lay audience in a way much different from that of medieval Barking, the research undertaken to prepare them led me to question their potential for intimidation and for displaying the authority of the religious house.

Many of the effects on modern spectators and participants were achieved—and seen to be achieved by the interviewees—because of the dramatic features of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. What seems to emerge from the 2018 performances is therefore a strong impression of their liturgical nature, but also a feeling that they were able to affect those watching and performing them because they were dramatic. Drama and liturgy do not clash here, but "drama" instead supports liturgy. Through it, liturgy is able to have a more "tangible" effect—as discussed by the nuns of La Maigrauge; it reaches spectators in a more immediate, understandable, and emotional way. The Medieval Convent Drama production thus seems to suggest, as do recent studies, that drama and liturgy do not need to be at odds but can coexist within one performance.

Our production also made clear that much was and would remain unknown about the medieval performances of these ceremonies. While I have not explored all of these unknown elements in the previous chapter, due to a lack of textual or historical evidence, the unknown should be kept in mind when researching the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, and especially the effects of their performance. Staging the Barking ceremonies forced us to include these elements unseen on the page. Experimenting with various options led us to reflect on the ways in which these would have affected spectators and participants. Such an inclusion also generated new leads about the potential effects of the medieval ceremonies: the wearing of the habit, for instance, informed performers as to how they ought to move; the costumes they wore made them see each other differently; the presence of light led to reflections on the Resurrection; music had a strong impact on both spectators and performers. Rehearsing and performing the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* therefore raised the awareness of the numerous possibilities available when staging the ceremonies and encouraged the exploration of the multiplicity of potential reactions to them; it helped direct my research in Chapter 1 by providing leads to investigate using textual, archeological, and historical evidence.

CONCLUSION

AS I WAS interviewing the nuns of La Maigrauge in April 2018, sister C told me that she would enjoy incorporating ceremonies like the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* in her house's own Easter liturgy. Sisters B, A, and D further reflected on their sepulchre and on the long-lost knowledge as to its use: perhaps the abbey of La Maigrauge, too, had performed *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* ceremonies in the Middle Ages? With their comments, the sisters highlighted the adaptability of the Barking dramatic liturgical ceremonies. Indeed, as mentioned in the introduction to this book, *Elevationes* and *Visitationes* were performed in numerous men's and women's religious houses throughout Europe. They would have been familiar to a multitude of nuns, to their clergy, and parishioners.

None of the many recorded medieval conventual versions of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* are precisely the same as the Barking one. The *Ludus paschalis* from the Benedictine Abbey of Origny, for instance, contains rubrics and some chants in the vernacular.[1] The Marys buy ointment from the merchant and Mary Magdalen and the Angel communicate in French. The Troyes and Origny *Visitationes*' rubrics are also in the vernacular instead of Latin. The Wilton Abbey *Visitatio* includes a mention of Christ who *percutiat capud eius spiculo* (should strike her [Mary Magdalen] head with a weapon), and it seems to imply that the priest representing the angel at the tomb also represented Christ: "Angelus. Si tu scire vis quisnam ego sum ihesus vocitor" (Angel: If you want to know who I am: I am called Jesus).[2] Furthermore, these houses used their abbey church in their own way during the two ceremonies. In Poitiers, for example, the angel and abbess went *in medio choro* (to the middle of the choir) at the beginning of the *Visitatio* and the sepulchre had a *fenestram* (window) that seems to have given on to the outside of the church. These nunneries all had a specific relationship with their clergy and enjoyed a unique status.[3] They may also have had ties

1 This play was staged by the Medieval Convent Drama Project in April 2019 (directed by Elisabeth Dutton). It will be part of the project's forthcoming edition, Robinson, Dutton, Blanc, and Salisbury, eds., *Theatre in the Convent*.

2 Yardley, *Performing Piety*, 253.

3 On Origny's history and the house's relationship with the canons of Saint-Vaast, see Gardill, *Sancta Benedicta*. On Poitiers, see Edwards, *Superior Women*. On Wilton, see *Writing the Wilton Women*, ed. Hollis with Barnes et al.

to each other, shared letters, books, and perhaps even their *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* ceremonies.[4]

Each would thus deserve an in-depth analysis, as they all have something unique to add to the research on women and performance and on conventual performance. As described in this book's introduction, performances by women religious were extremely varied in the Middle Ages. In addition to dramatic liturgical ceremonies, they included performative activities generally conducted on feast days (performances around the feast of St Nicholas especially) and events which more unambiguously resemble "plays" (the Huy plays, Hildegard von Bingen's *Ordo virtutum*, or Hrotsvit's plays). Within this diversity, numerous questions about the culture and literacy of medieval women religious, their ties to the outside world, their creativity, their opinion of drama and performance, the connections between performance and religion, the composition of drama in such a context, and the circumstances of its performance remain to be explored. These texts would further benefit from being analysed not only as sources on the life of women religious but as literary artifacts. The recent work of Sarah Brazil on the Barking and Wilton *Visitatio* as embodied practices will hopefully inspire scholars to follow in that direction.[5]

While much research is still to be conducted on known conventual performative activities, there is also likely a wealth of these activities that have not yet been brought to light. Projects such as REED have enabled the compilation of evidence for these events in England and Great Britain. Yet a considerable amount of work must be done before this kind of compilation can be completed on a European level. German-speaking regions in particular, where most of the extant conventual *Visitatio sepulchri* ceremonies come from, may reveal new data in the study of convent drama. Moreover, although classifying convent drama as a genre proves difficult, there seems to be a tendency in conventual performance-related activities towards a greater emphasis on female figures and towards reflections on the virtues or experiences of virgins, women religious, and women in general. This raises the question as to whether some play-texts that present character-

4 Barking Abbey, for instance, possessed a life of St Edith of Wilton and her feast was celebrated there. The manuscript containing the Barking lives of St Catherine and St Edward belonged to the nunnery of Campsey Ash, which suggests that these lives travelled between religious houses. See also Matthews, "Textual Spaces / Playing Spaces," 82–85; Rankin, "A New English Source," 1–2; de Boor, *Die Textgeschichte der lateinischen Osterfeiern*, 255–57, 288; Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession*, 139–40.

5 Brazil, "Performing Female Sanctity."

istics associated with cloistered women—for instance the fourteenth-century Thuringian *Ludus de decem virginibus* (Play of the Ten Virgins), which cannot yet be tied to a religious house—are convent drama. An important amount of evidence thus remains to be analysed for the understanding of convent drama in Europe to become more comprehensive.

It is my hope that this book participates in enriching the knowledge of convent drama through its focus on the performative culture of Barking Abbey. I was especially interested in the house's *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* ceremonies. I wished to know, from the point of view of a drama and literature scholar, what could be learned about their intentional and potential effects on their spectators and participants. Chapter 1 based itself on the house's literary and liturgical culture, as well as on its ties with its parishioners, to chart some of the potential reactions of the abbey's nuns, clergy, and laity to the ceremonies. Chapter 2 considered modern spectators and participants and used performance research as its approach.

What has emerged from this research is that, while the note preceding the two Barking ceremonies shows that they were intended primarily to affect lay spectators, they would also have significantly affected their religious participants. Drama and dramatic liturgical ceremonies can be targeted towards a specific audience—as was the case at Barking—yet when they are performed, those who have spent time preparing them, who have worked together to create the performance, who are embodying "characters" in front of spectators, are also affected. The effective and affective potential of the Barking Abbey ceremonies is therefore considerably greater than the Ordinal note expresses. It is also more complex. According to the note, the ceremonies were meant to affect devotion. There is a myriad of ways in which they could have done so. But they could also have been a show of power for the nunnery, could have participated in community building and identity defining, and could have been educational. The ceremonies are a mirror of the expectations, knowledge, opinion, creativity, faith, and self-image of the house of Barking in the early fifteenth century. They were influenced by numerous factors and were performed and witnessed by individuals who were themselves the recipients of varied influences. The reactions of spectators and participants to them were thus multiple, at once collective and deeply personal.

Such reactions cannot be clearly determined for each spectator and participant. However, what transpires from my research is that the effects—intended and potential—of the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* were often enhanced by the ceremonies' dramatic features. For example, the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s focus on compassionate devotion—noticeable especially in

the laments of the Marys—was reinforced by their synesthetic representation of the events of the life of Christ in front of nuns, clergy, and laity. Such a representation helped spectators and participants imagine themselves as witnesses to these scriptural events—as recommended by meditations on the life of Christ. A second example is the association in the *Visitatio* between the Marys and the nuns of the abbey. Such an association could have been made based on the women's similar devotion and on the common perception of Mary Magdalen as a model for the Brides of Christ. However, it became much less ambiguous with these nuns embodying the three Marys. A strong sense of association would have influenced the nuns' view of their identity and community, their relationships with the clergy and the laity, and their perception of their own power and status. The ceremonies' dramatic features further helped clarify the story depicted in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*. This made them a more efficient teaching tool since it allowed them to present this story in an understandable and memorable way. Understanding the story told and made present in these two liturgical ceremonies also cued spectators and participants to understand the scriptural story made present in other, less representational, liturgical ceremonies that shared the same space, chants, gestures, movements, and objects. The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*'s dramatic features even made the nature of liturgy—this making present of scriptural events—more comprehensible by presenting a recognizable scriptural story with present-day means. They thus benefitted the devotional participation of spectators and performers in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* and in liturgy in general.

I therefore return to the crucial question of drama and liturgy. While the two Barking ceremonies are liturgical, their dramatic features do not seem to contradict their liturgical nature. On the contrary, used within this specific liturgical context, these features enable an experience of liturgy resembling more closely what liturgy actually is: a moment when the past is brought into the present and the present into the past. The dichotomy sometimes established between drama and worship should therefore be reconsidered: worship can motivate the creation and performance of drama, drama can lead to worship, but drama can also *be* worship. This was experienced by David in the 2018 production of the Barking *Visitatio* and *Elevatio*. For him, performing was a moment of prayer. Yet he acknowledged that the dramatic features of the ceremonies were contributing to his prayer. He found that seeing people he knew portray the three Marys *m'a beaucoup touché* (was especially moving) and that their movement and singing made him think about and appreciate this story anew: "c'est une belle histoire. C'est une belle histoire" (It's a beautiful story. It's a beautiful story). Guillaume, who

did not share David's faith, approached his performance as he would any play. However, the ceremonies reconnected him with his Catholic heritage and "helped [him] get more in touch…with [his] spiritual side." Even for him, acting in the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* recalled worship and transported him "not only into that time but that mindset, that spiritual place." As for the nuns of La Maigrauge, they found the dramatic features of the ceremonies performed at Barking Abbey and in their house to be effective in inspiring the faith of spectators and participants. Sister B felt that the movements in the space and the costumes helped *vivre mieux les textes* (to live the texts more fully). Sister D also praised the Barking ceremonies' use of movement and dialogue and believed that these might make the texts more striking. Sister E found the unusual nature of the ceremonies favourable to initiating prayer and contemplation.[6]

How about the nuns of Barking Abbey? What did they think of their *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*? Did they find them as effective as the nuns of La Maigrauge did? Their inclusion in the Ordinal and Customary is evidence of the sisters' perception of their usefulness. The nuns wanted these ceremonies to be recorded and, as suggested in a note at the beginning of the Ordinal, they intended them to be performed again in the future. This note declares that the Ordinal was written for the use of future abbesses who should continue to follow its indications—*Elevatio* and *Visitatio* included:

> Memorandum quod Anno domini Millesimo quadringentesimo quarto domina Sibilla permissione diuina Abbatissa de Berkyng hunc librum ad usum Abbatissarum in dicta domo in futurum existencium concessit. et in librario eiusdem loci post mortem cuiuscumque in perpetuum commemoraturum ordinauit. donec eleccio inter moniales fiat. tunc predictus liber eidem electe in Abbatissam per superiores domus post stallactionem deliberator.
>
> It will be recorded that in the year of the Lord 1404, Dame Sibilla, by divine permission abbess of Barking, gave and ordered this book for the use of the future abbesses living in the said house and as a perpetual reminder for them, [stipulating] that after the death of any abbess the book [should be kept] in the library of the same place until an election takes place among the nuns. At that point the aforesaid book is given over by senior nuns of the house to the nun who has been elected abbess, after her installation.[7]

6 A, B, D, E.

7 *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 1:13; translation by Yardley, "Liturgy as the Site of Creative Engagement," 271.

While there exists no further evidence of the performance of the ceremonies at Barking, the Ordinal remained in use until at least 1507 and possibly until the Dissolution of the Monasteries (in 1539 for Barking Abbey). The *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* may therefore have been performed until then by the nuns and clergy of the abbey in front of generations of spectators, each time offering a different performance and producing different effects.[8] Although the Dissolution marked the unquestionable end of the performances of the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* at Barking Abbey, it did not entirely sever the ties between performance and the nunnery.

About four hundred years after the Dissolution of the Monasteries, in 1931, the Barking Town Urban District Council decided to organize festivities to celebrate the acquisition of its "charter (an official document of incorporation) to become an Essex Borough."[9] These festivities started on October 1 and ended on October 11. They comprised an industrial exhibition, an amusement park, a civic procession, and a pageant performed twelve times over the course of the celebrations. This pageant was a large and impressive spectacle. Pageant-master Frank Lascelles was brought in to direct its eleven scenes, most of which were written by the Headmaster of Barking Abbey School E. A. Loftus. About two thousand inhabitants of the borough performed either as actors or as singers. Other inhabitants made costumes or were active behind the scenes. Over the ten days of celebrations, about two hundred thousand people attended the festivities, including prestigious guests such as HRH Prince George, the Lord Mayor of London, and the Countess of Warwick.[10]

The eleven scenes of the Barking Pageant were performed on the site of the ancient abbey. They told the history of the borough of Barking from Roman times until the eighteenth century and finished with an epilogue during which men and women of the past and the present came together to praise the borough. In seven of these scenes, the abbey played a central role. These were titled, in order:

Scene 2 – the foundation of Barking Abbey, 666 AD

Scene 3 – the obsequies of Bishop Erkenwald, 693 AD

8 There is an entry made in the Ordinal and Customary in a later hand, referencing abbess Elizabeth Grene (abbess 1500–1528) and the date 1507. *Ordinale and Customary*, ed. Tolhurst, 2:363.

9 "The Barking Pageant, 1931."

10 "The Barking Pageant, 1931"; Bartie, Fleming, Freeman, Hulme, Hutton, and Readman, "The Barking Historical Pageant."

Scene 4 – the destruction of the Abbey by the Danes in 870 AD

Scene 5 – King Edgar founding the second abbey ca. 960 AD

Scene 6 – William the Conqueror at the Abbey, 1066 AD

Scene 7 – the Abbey at the height of its glory, ca. 1136 AD

Scene 8 – the dissolution of the Abbey, 1539 AD.[11]

Barking Abbey, whose sisters and clergy had been so intertwined with performance and who had used such performance to reach the laity, found itself represented by the laity in these modern performances. Men and women of the borough of Barking put on medieval habits and liturgical vestments, spoke lines they imagined the nuns and clergy of the nunnery would have spoken, and represented their lives and faith through movements and gestures.

While this event tied Barking Abbey once more with performance, it was in many ways unlike the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri*. It contained music but it was mostly spoken in the vernacular and was performed by the laity. It therefore resembles more closely medieval plays in the vernacular or festive performative activities than it does the two liturgical ceremonies. Its aims were also different. In the strenuous economic context of the early thirties, the pageant and the festivities in general had an "economic boosterist aim."[12] They attempted to show Barking as an attractive space for newcomers. The souvenir programme, for instance, explained how ideal a place it was for the establishment of industries. The pageant itself depicted the modern Barking, which had been expanding rapidly in recent years, and tied it to an ancient prestigious history, elevating and legitimizing in this process the status of the new borough. This valorization of Barking through the performance of the pageant also had a second aim: that of fostering community and "carving a sense of municipal pride" at what Barking had been and continued to be. In the pageant's epilogue, all performers joined together and sang the "Song of Barking" before crying out: "Long live Barking!" Although it is complicated to assess whether the pageant achieved its first aim, it seems to have achieved—at least partly—its second aim. In addition to the production's spectacular quality, reporters repeatedly noted the enthusiasm of the Barking inhabitants for the performance of these scenes. The pageant was further believed to have affected its spectators and participants in other ways.

11 "The Barking Pageant, 1931."

12 Bartie, Fleming, Freeman, Hulme, Hutton, and Readman, "The Barking Historical Pageant."

The vicar of Barking, H. C. Robins, told the press that the performances had "spiritual significance." He felt that they could inspire the townspeople by "showing the role that religion had played in Barking's past." He tied religion to community, believing that it would help citizens follow virtuous values and work for the future of their community. The educational and communal value of the pageant was further noted by the bishop of Chelmsford.[13]

The Barking Pageant therefore differed from the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* in various ways, but its composers and performers undertook work similar to that done by the abbey of Barking. Like the nuns and clergy of the nunnery, they adapted stories of the past in a way that aligned with their interests and their values. And while the pageant's aims and effects were specific to its context, they resemble at times those of the medieval ceremonies. The Barking Pageant was intended to be community-building and identity-defining; it was seen as a teaching tool; it was an impressive, awe-inducing spectacle; and it could be spiritual. Both the medieval and modern inhabitants of Barking therefore perceived drama and performance as a useful and effective way of transmitting a message and of affecting spectators and participants. No reference to the *Elevatio* and *Visitatio* is included in the Barking Pageant, no nod made to the culture of performance existing in the abbey, no lineage attempted to be traced between medieval and modern performance. Yet nearly five hundred years later, the abbey of Barking found itself once more at the centre of a vivid nexus of liturgy, devotion, power, pedagogy, community, and identity, all tied together and all expressed through the medium of performance.

13 Bartie, Fleming, Freeman, Hulme, Hutton, and Readman, "The Barking Historical Pageant."

Appendix 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For Actors

How was the learning process for you—the words, music, etc.?

Did you think about the meaning of the words while you were performing?

Who did you play?

How was it for you to perform while wearing a habit / liturgical vestments? How did it feel to see the other actors in these clothes?

How was it to perform in the two different venues?

For Nuns

Do you remember how you reacted when we approached you with the idea of performing in your church and when Aurélie told you about the project? Could you tell me about it?

How would you describe the emotions you felt when watching the ceremonies? Could you tell me what you liked / disliked?

Do you think that, because of your experience and knowledge, your reactions to the ceremonies are different from those of the lay people in the audience?

As a community, have you performed plays or participated in dramatic religious ceremonies?

If you had to perform these ceremonies, how would you do it? What would you do differently?

Is it important for you to think about the experience of previous sisters? Could you tell me more about this?

Appendix 2

SCRIPT OF THE 2018 PRODUCTION OF THE BARKING *ELEVATIO* AND *VISITATIO SEPULCHRI*

I HAVE ADDED here footnotes with the provenance of the chants used in this performance. These footnotes were not included in the actors' original script.

Le Descensus / *Elevatio* à Barking Abbey

Personnages

CHRIST (le PRÊTRE OFFICIANT)

LES ÂMES DES PERES DE L'EGLISE
(le COUVENT et les PRÊTRES ET CLERCS (1))

LES DISCIPLES (le COUVENT)

Participants

ABBESSE

COUVENT (environ trente sœurs, représentant les âmes des PERES DE L'EGLISE avec les PRÊTRES et les CLERCS 1; et plus tard les DISCIPLES), comprenant:

- la PRIEURE
- la CANTRIX

PRÊTRES et CLERCS 1 (représentant les âmes des PERES DE L'EGLISE avec le COUVENT), comprenant:

- le PRÊTRE DE LA CHAPELLE

PRÊTRES ET CLERCS 2, comprenant:

- DEUX DIACRES
- DEUX GARCONS
- le PRÊTRE OFFICIANT (représentant le CHRIST)

Les scènes sont divisées par personnage afin de faciliter les répétitions. Cependant, tous les acteurs sont généralement présents durant toutes les scènes. Nous mettrons tout d'abord en place les mouvements avec tous les acteurs, avant de travailler scène par scène sur le chant, le texte et les émotions.

- 1.1. ABBESSE, COUVENT (TROIS MARIES), PRÊTRE DE LA CHAPELLE
- 1.2. PRÊTRE OFFICIANT, DIACRES 1 ET 2
- 1.3. PRÊTRE DE LA CHAPELLE, CANTRIX, COUVENT (PERSOS DE SCENE 1.2. SONT LA MAIS SILENCIEUX)
- 1.4. PRÊTRES ET DIACRES (TOUS POUR LA PROCESSION)
- 1.5. PRÊTRE OFFICIANT, CANTRIX (TOUS IMMOBILES)
- 1.6. COUVENT (TOUS POUR LA PROCESSION)
- 2.1. ABBESSE ET TROIS MARIES (TOUS REJOIGNENT LEUR PLACE)
- 2.2. TROIS MARIES (ET PORTEUSES DE BOUGIES)
- 2.3. TROIS MARIES, ANGE 1
- 2.4. TROIS MARIES, ANGES 1 ET 2
- 2.5. MARIE MADELEINE, CHRIST
- 2.6. TROIS MARIES, CHRIST
- 2.7. TROIS MARIES, COUVENT (ABBESSE ET PORTEUSES DE BOUGIES), DISCIPLES
- 2.8. TOUS

1.1 ABBESSE, COUVENT (TROIS MARIES), PRÊTRE DE LA CHAPELLE

En premier, la maîtresse ABESSE avance avec tout le CONVENT et avec certains PRÊTRES ET CLERCS (1) vêtus de chapes, les PRÊTRES et les CLERCS portant chacun dans la main des palmes et des chandelles éteintes. Ils entrent dans la chapelle de sainte Marie Madeleine, représentant les âmes des saints pères descendant aux enfers avant la venue du Christ, et ferment sur eux-mêmes l'entrée de la chapelle mentionnée précédemment.

1.2. PRÊTRE OFFICIANT, DIACRES 1 ET 2

Puis LE PRÊTRE OFFICIANT arrivant, vêtu d'une aube et une chape, s'approche de la chapelle mentionnée auparavant avec DEUX DIACRES: l'un portant la croix avec l'étendard du Seigneur suspendu au-dessus, l'autre portant un encensoir dans sa main, et avec d'autres PRÊTRES ET CLERCS (2) avec DEUX GARÇONS portant des cierges. Il commence, vers l'entrée de la chapelle mentionnée plus tôt, cette antienne trois fois: Tollite portas. *Le PRÊTRE représente la personne du CHRIST sur le point de descendre aux enfers et de renverser les portes de l'enfer. Et l'antienne mentionnée précédemment est commencée chaque fois d'une plus haute voix, que les CLERCS doivent répéter le même nombre de fois. Et à chaque commencement [de l'antienne], il frappe avec la croix l'entrée mentionnée auparavant, formant la destruction des portes de l'enfer:*

PRÊTRE OFFICIANT / CHRIST: Tollite portas <principes vestras et elevamini porte eternales et introibit rex glorie>.[1]

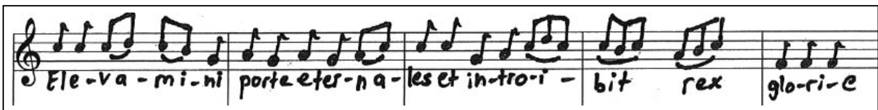
PRÊTRES et CLERCS 2: Tollite portas <principes vestras et elevamini porte eternales et introibit rex glorie>.

PRÊTRE OFFICIANT / CHRIST: Tollite portas <principes vestras et elevamini porte eternales et introibit rex glorie>.

PRÊTRES et CLERCS 2: Tollite portas <principes vestras et elevamini porte eternales et introibit rex glorie>.

PRÊTRE OFFICIANT / CHRIST: Tollite portas <principes vestras et elevamini porte eternales et introibit rex glorie>.

PRÊTRES et CLERCS 2: Tollite portas <principes vestras et elevamini porte eternales et introibit rex glorie>.[2]



Et au troisième coup, l'entrée s'ouvre.

1 Détruisez vos portes, <O princes, soyez élevées O portes éternelles, et le roi de la gloire entrera>.

2 Chant taken from the Dublin manuscript. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl., d.4, fols. 130r–132r (early fifteenth century). The music of the *Elevatio* section has not to my knowledge been edited before.

1.3. PRÊTRE DE LA CHAPELLE, CANTRIX, COUVENT, ABBESSE (PERSOS DE SCENE 1.2. SONT LA MAIS SILENCIEUX)

Puis, il entre avec ses ministres. Pendant ce temps-là un CERTAIN PRÊTRE à l'intérieur de la chapelle commence l'antienne:

PRÊTRE DE LA CHAPELLE: A porta inferi …[3]

A por- ta in- fe- ri e- ru- e do- mi- ne a- ni- mam me- am | ~Ego dixi

| e- u- o- u- a- e

Auquel la CANTRIX ajoute avec tout le COUVENT:

CANTRIX et COUVENT: Erue domine <animam meam>.[4]

Ensuite, le PRÊTRE OFFICIANT entraîne TOUS ceux étant dans la chapelle mentionnée précédemment vers l'extérieur et pendant ce temps, le PRÊTRE [DE LA CHAPELLE] commence l'antienne:

PRÊTRE DE LA CHAPELLE: Domine abtsraxisti…[5]

Et la CANTRIX suit:

CANTRIX: Ab inferis <animam meam>.[6]

Do-mi-ne ab-stra-xi-sti ab in-fer-is an-im-am me-am

3 De la porte de l'enfer. Because we could not find notated music for this chant, we used local music from the Couvent des Cordeliers, Fribourg. This is a Holy Saturday antiphon from a fourteenth-century manuscript. Fribourg/Freiburg, Couvent des Cordeliers/Franziskanerkloster, MS 2, fol. 108r.

4 Extirpe, O Seigneur, <mon âme>.

5 Seigneur, tu as arraché.

6 <Mon âme> des enfers. Chant taken from the Dublin *Elevatio*. Bodleian Library, MS Rawl., d.4, fols. 130r–132r.

Cum rex glorie (p. 1): Prêtres et Diacres (Mathieu, Christoph, David, Guillaume) (p. 36 Solg?)

Cum rex glo- ri- e chri- stus

in- fer- num de- bel- la- tu- rus in- trat - sat et

cho- rus an- ge- li- cus por- tas prin- ci- pum

to- lli pre- ce- pe- rat san- cto- rum a- ni-

me que te- ne- ban- tur in mo- rte cap- ti- ve

vo- ce la- cri- ma- bi- li cla- ma- ve- runt ad-

ve- ni- sti de- si- de- ra- bi- lis quem ex- pe- cta- ba-

mus in te- ne- bris ut e- du- ce- res hac no- cte

vin- cu- la- tos de clau- stris Te no- stra vo- ca- bant

su- spi- ri- a te lar- ga re- qui- re-

bant la- men- ta tu fa- ctus es

spes de- so- la- tus ma- gna con- so- la- ti- o

in tor- men-

-tis

1.4. PRÊTRES ET DIACRES (TOUS POUR LA PROCESSION)

Alors TOUS sortent de la chapelle, c'est à dire des Limbes des Pères, et les PRÊTRES et les CLERCS chantent l'antienne Cum rex glorie *de manière processionnelle, à travers le milieu du chœur en direction du sépulcre, portant chacun une palme et une chandelle désignant la victoire regagnée sur l'ennemi:* PRÊTRES et CLERCS (1 et 2): Cum rex glorie < christus, infernum debellaturus intrasset et chorus angelicus portas principum tolli preceperat, sanctorum anime que tenebantur in morte captive, voce lacrimabili clamaverunt. Advenisti desiderabilis quem exspectabamus in tenebris, ut educeres hac nocte vinculatos de claustris. Te nostra vocabant suspiria te larga requirebant lamenta. Tu factus es spes desolatis, magna consolacio in tormentis.>[7]

La maîtresse ABBESSE, la PRIEURE et tout le COUVENT les suivant comme s'ils étaient les patriarches.

1.5. PRÊTRE OFFICIANT, CANTRIX (TOUS IMMOBILES)

Et lorsqu'ils sont arrivés vers le sépulcre, le PRÊTRE OFFICIANT encense le sépulcre et y entre en commençant le vers:

PRÊTRE OFFICIANT: Consurgit...[8]

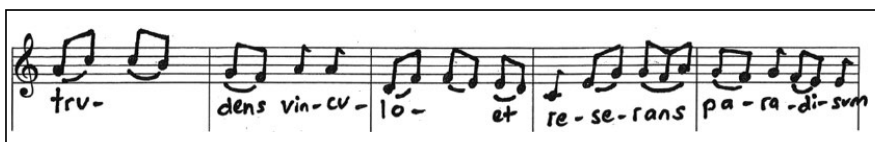
Puis la CANTRIX suit:

CANTRIX: christus tumulo <victor redit de baratro, tyrannum trudens vinculo et reserans paradisum>.[9]

7 Lorsque le roi de gloire, <Christ, entra l'enfer pour le vaincre et que le chœur angélique commanda que les portes des princes soient détruites, les âmes des saints, qui étaient tenues captives dans la mort, crièrent d'une voix triste: tu es arrivé O désirable, que nous attendions dans les ténèbres, pour que tu fasses sortir cette nuit les prisonniers de leur prison. Nos soupirs t'appelaient, nos abondantes lamentations te cherchaient. Tu es devenu l'espoir des condamnés, la grande consolation dans les tourments. Alleluia>. Chant taken from the Dublin *Elevatio*. Bodleian Library, MS Rawl., d.4, fols. 130r–132r.

8 Se lève…

9 Christ de la tombe, <le vainqueur retourne des abysses [l'enfer], faisant sortir le tyran enchaîné et ouvrant les cieux.> Chant taken from the Dublin *Elevatio*. Bodleian Library, MS Rawl., d.4, fols. 130r–132r.



Le vers:

CANTRIX: Quesumus auctor <omnium, in hoc paschali gaudio ab omni mortis impetu tuum defende populum>.[10]

Le vers:

CANTRIX: Gloria tibi domine <qui surrexisti a mortuis, cum patre et sancto spiritu in sempiterna secula>.[11]

10 Nous te prions, <O source de tout, que, dans cette joie pascale, tu défendes ton peuple de toute attaque de la mort>. Chant taken from the Dublin *Elevatio*. Bodleian Library, MS Rawl., d.4, fols. 130r–132r.

11 Gloire à toi seigneur, <qui est ressuscité d'entre les morts, avec le Père et l'Esprit Saint dans les siècles des siècles>. Chant taken from the Dublin *Elevatio*. Bodleian Library, MS Rawl., d.4, fols. 130r–132r

et pendant ce temps-là, il [le PRÊTRE OFFICIANT] emportera le corps du Seigneur du sépulcre en commençant l'antienne:

PRÊTRE OFFICIANT: Christus resurgens...[12]

devant l'autel, le visage tourné vers le peuple, en tenant le corps du Seigneur dans ses mains enfermé dans du cristal. Puis, la CANTRIX ajoute:

CANTRIX: ex mortuis <iam non moritur; mors illi ultra non dominabitur. Quod enim vivit, vivit deo>.[13]

Et avec cette antienne, ils font une procession vers l'autel de la Sainte Trinité avec un faste solennel, c'est à dire avec des encensoirs et des chandelles; le couvent suit en chantant l'antienne mentionnée auparavant avec le vers:

12 Le Christ ressuscitant…

13 D'entre les morts, <désormais il n'est pas mort. La mort ne dominera plus sur lui. En effet, parce qu'il vit, il vit en dieu>. Chant taken from the Dublin *Elevatio*. Bodleian Library, MS Rawl., d.4, fols. 130r–132r

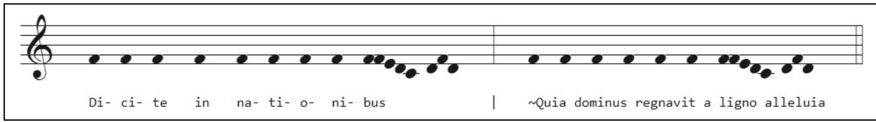
1.6. COUVENT (TOUS POUR LA PROCESSION)

COUVENT: Dicant nunc <Iudei quomodo milites custodientes sepulcrum perdiderunt regem ad lapidis posissionem. Quare non servabant petram justitie? Aut sepultum reddant aut resurgentem adorent nobiscum dicentes alluia, alleluia>.[14]

14 Que les Juifs disent maintenant <de quelle manière les soldats gardant le sépulcre ont perdu le Roi, au vu de la position de la pierre. Pourquoi n'ont-ils pas veillé sur le rocher de la justice? Qu'ils rendent celui qui est enterré ou qu'ils adorent avec nous en disant alléluia, alléluia>.

et le verset:

COUVENT: Dicite in nacionibus <Quia dominus regnavit aligno. Alleluia>.[15]



L'oraison:

COUVENT: Deus qui pro nobis Filium tuum <crucis patibulum subire voluisti ut inimici a nobis expellere potestatem, concede nobis, famulis tuis, ut in ressureccionis eius gaudiis semper vivamus. Per eundem Christum dominum nostrum. Amen.>[16]

Et par ces moyens, cette procession représente comment le Christ procéda après sa résurrection en Galilée, les disciples le suivant.

La *Visitatio Sepulchri* à Barking Abbey

Personnages

MARY MADELEINE (une sœur)

MARY MERE DE JACQUES (une sœur)

MARY SALOME (une sœur)

PREMIER ANGE (un clerc)

DEUXIEME ANGE (un clerc)

CHRIST (non spécifié, peut-être un prêtre)

PREMIER DISCIPLE (un clerc)

AUTRES DISCIPLES (entre 1 et 9 clercs et prêtres)

---

15 Dites dans les nations <que le Seigneur a régné depuis le bois [de la croix]. Alleluia> I have not found notated music for this part and I have therefore used music from a thirteenth-century Cistercian manuscript. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Handschriftensammlung, 1799**.

16 Dieu qui pour nous a voulu soumettre ton fils <à la traverse de la croix, pour chasser la puissance de l'ennemi hors de nous. Accorde-nous, tes serviteurs, que nous vivions toujours dans les joies de sa résurrection. Par ce même Christ, notre Seigneur, Amen>. The Dublin *Elevatio*. Bodleian Library, MS Rawl., d.4, fols. 130r–132r.

Autres participants

CHŒUR (peut être doublé avec les DISCIPLES si nécessaire, environ trente sœurs)

PREMIERE PORTEUSE DE BOUGIE (une novice)

SECONDE PORTEUSE DE BOUGIE (une novice)

PRÊTRE OFFICIANT (peut doubler avec le CHRIST si nécessaire)

ABBESSE

2.1. ABBESSE ET TROIS MARIES (TOUS REJOIGNENT LEUR PLACE)

Ces choses ayant été faites, TROIS SŒURS ayant été choisies d'avance par la MAÎTRESSE ABBESSE s'avancent et, s'étant dépouillées de leurs vêtements noirs dans la chapelle de la bienheureuse Marie Madeleine, elles sont revêtues de très beaux surplis, des voiles d'un blanc de neige ayant été placés sur leurs têtes par la MAÎTRESSE ABBESSE. Ayant été ainsi préparées et tenant des vases d'argent dans les mains elles disent:

LES TROIS MARIES: Confiteor <Deo omnipotenti, beatæ Mariæ semper Virgini, beato Michaeli Archangelo, beato Ioanni Baptistæ, sanctis Apostolis Petro et Paulo, omnibus Sanctis, et vobis, fratres: quia peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo et opere: mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. Ideo precor beatam Mariam semper Virginem, beatum Michaelem Archangelum, beatum Ioannem Baptistam, sanctos Apostolos Petrum et Paulum, omnes Sanctos, et vos, fratres, orare pro me ad Dominum Deum nostrum>.[17]

17 Je confesse < à Dieu Tout-Puissant,
à la Bienheureuse Marie toujours vierge,
à Saint Michel Archange,
à Saint Jean-Baptiste,
aux Saints Apôtres Pierre et Paul,
à tous les Saints,
et à vous, mes frères,
que j'ai beaucoup péché, par pensées,
par paroles et par actions.
C'est ma faute, c'est ma faute, c'est ma très grande faute.
C'est pourquoi je supplie la Bienheureuse Marie toujours vierge,
Saint Michel Archange,
Saint Jean-Baptiste,
les Saints Apôtres Pierre et Paul,
tous les Saints et vous mes frères,
de prier pour moi le Seigneur notre Dieu>.

À l'ABBESSE.

ABBESSE: [Misereatur vestri omnipotens Deus et, dimissis peccatis vestris, perducat vos ad vitam aeternam].[18]

LES TROIS MARIES: [Amen].

ABESSE: [Indulgentiam, absolutionem, et remissionem peccatorum nostrorum tribuat nobis omnipotens et misericors Dominus].[19]

LES TROIS MARIES: [Amen.]

2.2. TROIS MARIES (ET PORTEUSES DE BOUGIES)

Une fois absoutes par elle, elles se placent avec les CANDÉLABRES, dans le lieu établi auparavant. Alors, celle qui présente l'apparence de Marie Madeleine chante ce vers:

MARIE MADELEINE: [Heu! Pius pastor occiditur, quem nulla culpa infecit. O mors lugenda!][20]

Une fois cela fini, la seconde qui représente MARIE MERE DE JACQUES répond le second vers:

MARIE MERE DE JACQUES: [Heu! nequam gens Iudaica, quam dira frendet vesania. Plebs execranda!][21]

18 [Que Dieu tout-puissant vous fasse miséricorde, qu'il vous pardonne vos péchés, et vous conduise à la vie éternelle.]

19 [Que le Dieu tout-puissant de miséricorde nous accorde le pardon, l'absolution, et la rémission de nos péchés.]

20 [Hélas! le saint berger est tué, qu'aucune faute n'a corrompu. O mort qui doit être lamentée!]. Chant taken from the Dublin *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

21 [Hélas! L'infâme peuple juif, que la folie terrible broiera. Peuple qui doit être maudit!]. Chant taken from The Dublin *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

La troisième MARIE, remplissant le rôle de Salomé, chante le troisième vers:

MARY SALOME: [Heu! verus doctor obiit, qui vitam functis contulit. O res plangenda!][22]

Après ces choses-là, s'avançant dans le chœur, elles chantent ensemble ces vers d'une voix affligée et soumise:

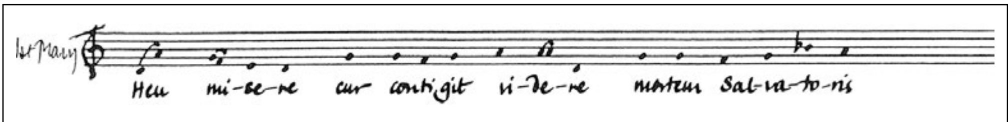
LES TROIS MARIES: Heu nobis internas mentes <quantus pulsat gemitus pro nostro consolatore, quo privamur misere, quem crudelis Iudeorum morti dedit populus>.[23]

22 [Hélas! Le vrai maître est mort, qui a consacré sa vie pour les défunts. O chose qui doit être lamentée!]. Chant taken from the Dublin *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

23 Hélas, quel grand gémissement <agite nos pensées intérieures pour notre consolateur, duquel nous sommes privées misérablement, que le peuple des Juifs livra à une mort cruelle>. Chant taken from the Wilton *Visitatio*. Yardley, *Performing Piety*.

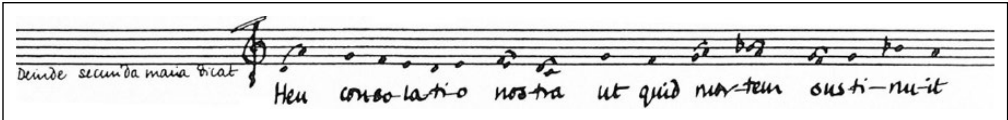
Ces vers finis, MADELEINE dit ce vers seule:

MARIE MADELEINE: Heu misere <cur contigit videre mortem salvatoris?>.[24]



(*MARIE MERE DE) JACQUES répond:*

MARIE MERE DE JACQUES: Heu consolacio nostra <ut quid mortem sustinuit>.[25]



SALOMÉ:

MARY SALOME: Heu redempcio israel <ut quid taliter agere voluit>.[26]

24 Hélas, misérablement! <Pourquoi est-il arrivé que nous ayons vu la mort du sauveur?>. Chant taken from the Dublin *Visitatio. The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

25 Hélas, notre consolation, <qu'il ait fait face à une telle mort.> Chant taken from the Dublin *Visitatio. The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

26 Hélas, la rédemption d'Israël, <qu'il ait voulu accomplir une telle chose.> Chant taken from the Dublin *Visitatio. The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

Mais toutes chantent ensemble le quatrième vers, à savoir:

LES TROIS MARIES: Jam iam ecce <iam properemus ad tumulum, unguentes dilecti corpus sanctissimum>.[27]

Alors, les MARIES sortant du chœur, elles disent ensemble:

LES TROIS MARIES: Eya quis revolvet <nobis lapidem ab ostio monumenti?>.[28]

2.3. TROIS MARIE, ANGE I

Or, lorsqu'elles sont arrivées vers le sépulcre, un clerc vêtu d'une étole blanche est assis devant le sépulcre, assumant les traits de cet ange qui roula la pierre de l'entrée du monument et s'assit sur elle, qui leur dit:

PREMIER ANGE: Quem queritis in sepulcro, O cristicole?[29]

27 Maintenant, maintenant voici <maintenant, il faut que nous nous hâtions vers le tombeau, enduisant le corps très sacré de l'aimé.> Chant taken from the Dublin *Visitatio. The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

28 Oh, qui a roulé <pour nous la pierre de l'entrée du monument?> Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio. The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

29 Qui cherchez-vous dans le sépulcre, O adoratrices du Christ? Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio. The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

Les FEMMES répondent:

LES TROIS MARIES: Ihesum nazarenum querimus[30].

Mais l'ANGE ajoute:

PREMIER ANGE: Non est hic surrexit <enim sicut dixit. Venite et videte locum ubi positus fuerat, et euntes dicite discipulis eius et Petro quia surrexit>.[31]

Angel
Non est hic sur-re-xit e-nim si-cut di-xit
Ve-ni-te et vi-de-te lo-cum u-bi po-si-tus fu-e-rat
et e-un-tes di-ci-te dis-ci-pu-lis ei-us et pe-tro qui-a surre-xit

Et lorsqu'il a dit venite et videte, *elles vont dans le sépulcre et embrassent avec effusion le lieu où le crucifié était placé.*

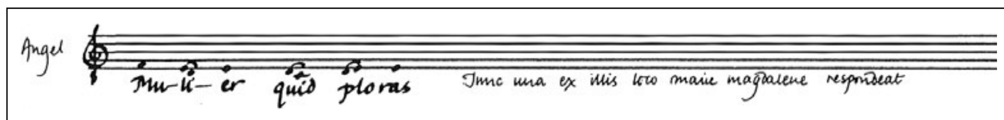
30 Nous cherchons Jésus le nazaréen. Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

31 Il n'est pas ici, il est ressuscité <comme il l'avait dit en effet. Venez et voyez le lieu où il fut posé, et en allant, dites à ses disciples et à Pierre qu'il est ressuscité.> Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

2.4. TROIS MARIES, ANGES 1 ET 2

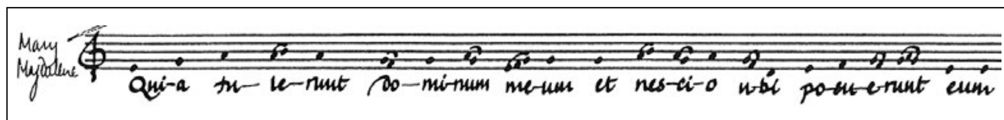
Pendant ce temps-là, MARIE MADELEINE prends le suaire qui fut sur la tête [du crucifié] et l'emporte avec elle. Alors, un autre clerc, sous l'apparence du SECOND ANGE, s'asseyant dans le sépulcre, dit à MADELEINE:

DEUXIEME ANGE: Mulier, quid ploras.[32]



Or, elle ajoute:

MARIE MADELEINE: Quia tulerunt dominum meum <et nescio ubi posuerunt eum>.[33]



Ensuite, les DEUX ANGES, chantant ensemble, disent aux FEMMES:

LES DEUX ANGES: Quid queritis viventem cum mortuis? <Non est hic, sed resurrexit. Recordamini qualiter locutus est vobis, dum adhuc in Galilea esset, vobis dicens quia oportet filium hominis pati et crucifigi, et die tercia resurgere?>[34]

---

32 Femme, pourquoi pleures-tu? Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

33 Parce qu'ils ont emporté mon seigneur et <je ne sais pas où ils l'ont placé.> Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

34 Pourquoi cherchez-vous le vivant parmi les morts? <Il n'est pas ici, mais il est ressuscité. Rappelez-vous de quelle manière il vous a dit, pendant qu'il était encore présent en Galilée, vous disant qu'il faut que le fils de l'homme souffre et soit crucifié et le troisième jour, ressuscite.> Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

Alors celles-là, doutant encore de la résurrection du seigneur, disent l'une à l'autre, en se lamentant:

LES TROIS MARIES: Heu dolor. <Heu, quam dira doloris angustia quod dilecti sum orbata magistri presencia! Heu, quis corpus tam dilectum sustulit e tumulo?>[35]

35 Hélas, la douleur! <Hélas, quel terrible resserrement de douleur parce que je suis privée de la présence du maître aimé. Hélas, qui a emporté le corps tellement aimé hors du tombeau?> Chant take from the Fleury *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

Ensuite, MARIE MADELEINE soupirant, elles chantent:

LES TROIS MARIES: [Ardens est cor meum, desidero videre Dominum meum; quero et non invenio, ubi posuerunt eum, alleluia].[36]

2.5. MARIE MADELEINE, CHRIST

Alors une PERSONNE apparait de la partie gauche de l'autel, lui [MARIE MADELEINE] disant:

CHRIST: Mulier quid ploras? Quem queris.[37]

Mais elle, pensant que c'était un jardinier, répond:

MARIE MADELEINE: Domine si tu sustulisti eum <dicito mihi et ego eum tollam>.[38]

36 [Mon cœur est ardent, je désire voir mon Seigneur; je cherche et je ne trouve pas où ils l'ont posé, alléluia.] Chant take from the Fleury *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

37 Femme, pourquoi pleures-tu? Qui cherches-tu? Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio. The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

38 Seigneur, si tu l'as enlevé, <dis-moi et moi, je le prendrai.> Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

La PERSONNE ajoute:

CHRIST: Maria.[39]

Alors elle, le reconnaissant, est prosternée à ses pieds, disant:

MARIE MADELEINE: Raboni.[40]

Or la PERSONNE se retirant, elle dit:

CHRIST: Noli me tangere <nondum enim ascendi ad patrem meum. Vade autem fratres meos et dic eis: ascendo ad patrem meum et patrem vestrum, deum meum et deum vestrum>.[41]

39 Marie. Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

40 Rabbi.

41 Ne me touche pas, <car je ne suis pas encore monté vers mon père. Mais va vers mes frères et dis-leur: je monte vers mon père et votre père, mon dieu et votre dieu.> Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

2.6. TROIS MARIES, CHRIST

Lorsque la PERSONNE a disparu, MARIE communique sa joie à ses compagnes d'une voix toute joyeuse en chantant ces vers:

MARIE MADELEINE: [Congratulamini michi omnes, qui diligitis Dominum, quia quem querebam, apparuit mihi, et dum flerem ad monumentum, vidi Dominum meum, alleluia].[42]

Une fois ces vers finis, la PERSONNE, de la partie droite de l'autel, va au-devant des TROIS FEMMES ensemble, disant:

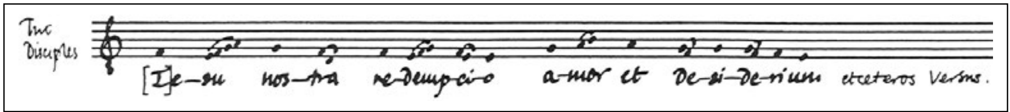
CHRIST: Avete nolite timere <ite, nunciate fratribus meis ut eant in Galileam. Ibi me videbunt>.[43]

42 [Réjouissez-vous avec moi, vous tous qui aimez le Seigneur, car celui que je cherchais m'est apparu et pendant que je pleurais vers le tombeau, j'ai vu mon Seigneur, alléluia.] Chant taken from the Fleury *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

43 Je vous salue, ne craignez pas. <Allez, annoncez à mes frères qu'ils aillent en Galilée. Là, ils me verront.> Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

Alors celles-ci, s'étant prosternées sur le sol, tiennent ses pieds et les embrassent. Une fois cela fait, elles chantent ces vers l'une après l'autre de façon rythmée, MARIE MADELEINE commençant:

MARIE MADELEINE: [Ihesu, nostra redemptio, amor et desiderium]. [44]



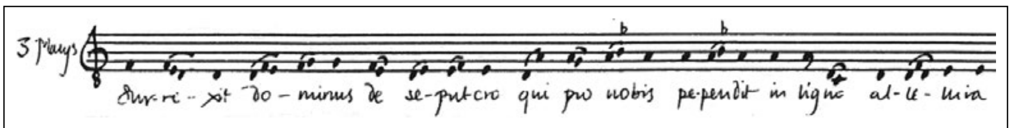
MARIE MERE DE JACQUES: [Ihesu, nostra redemptio, amor et desiderium].

MARIE SALOME: [Ihesu, nostra redemptio, amor et desiderium].

2.7. TROIS MARIE, COUVENT (ABBESSE ET PORTEUSES DE BOUGIES), DISCIPLES

Un fois ces vers terminés, les MARIES, se tenant alors debout sur les marches devant l'autel, se tournant vers le PEUPLE, chantent ce répons:

LES TROIS MARIES: Alleluia surrexit dominus de sepulcro <qui pro nobis pependit in ligno alleluia>.[45]



Le CHŒUR leur répondant:

CHOEUR: Alleluia surrexit dominus de sepulcro <qui pro nobis pependit in ligno alleluia>.

Une fois ces choses finies, les prêtres et les clercs, sous les traits des DISCIPLES DU CHRIST, s'avancent, disant:

LES DISCIPLES: [Victime Paschali Laudes immolant Christiani. Agnus redemit oves, Christus innocens Patri reconciliavit peccatores. Mors vita duello conflixere mirando; dux vite mortuus, regnat vivus.][46]

---

44 [Jésus, notre rédemption, amour et désir.] Chant taken from the Rouen *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

45 Alléluia, le Seigneur est ressuscité hors du sépulcre, <qui pour nous a souffert sur la croix, alléluia>. Chant taken from the Fleury *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

46 [À la Victime pascale, les chrétiens offrent un sacrifice de louanges. L'Agneau a racheté les brebis; le Christ innocent a réconcilié les pécheurs avec le Père. La mort et

Alors l'UN d'entre eux s'approche et dit à MARIE MADELEINE:

PREMIER DISCIPLE: Dic nobis maria <quid vidisti in via>.[47]

Or, elle répond:

MARIE MADELEINE: Sepulcrum christi <viuentis, et gloriam vidi resurgentis>. Angelicos testes <sudarium et vestes>.[48]

---

la vie se sont affrontées en un duel admirable; le guide de la vie, bien que mort, règne vivant.] Chant taken from the Dublin *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

47 Dis-nous Marie <ce que tu as vu sur le chemin.> Chant taken from the Wilton *Visitatio*. Yardley, *Performing Piety*.

48 J'ai vu le sépulcre du Christ <vivant et la gloire du ressuscité; les témoins angéliques, le suaire et les vêtements.> Chant taken from the Wilton *Visitatio*. Yardley, *Performing Piety*.

An - ge - li - cos tes - tes su - da - ri - um et ves - tes.

Elle indique du doigt le lieu où l'ANGE était assis et elle leur présente le suaire pour qu'ils l'embrassent en ajoutant ce vers:

LES DISCIPLES: Surrexit christus spes nostra. <precedet suos in Galileam>.[49]

An - ge - li - cos tes - tes su - da - ri - um et ves - tes. Sur - rex -
it Chris - tus spes me - a pre - ce - det vos in ga - li - le - a.

Alors sont ajoutés par les DISCIPLES et par le CHŒUR ces derniers vers:

LES DISCIPLES ET LE CHOEUR: Credendum est <magis soli Marie veraci quam Iudeorum turbe fallaci>.[50]

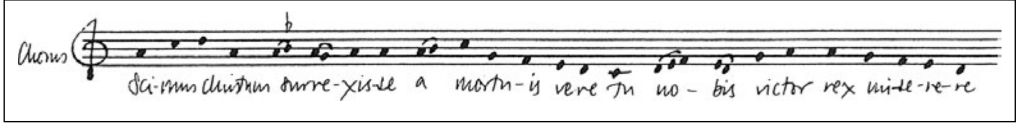
Cre - den - dum est ma - gis so - li ma - ri - e ve - ra -
ci quam iu - - - de - o - rum tur - be fal - la - ci.

49 Christ, notre espoir, est ressuscité. <Il précède les siens en Galilée.> Chant taken from the Wilton *Visitatio*. Yardley, *Performing Piety*.

50 Il faut plus se fier <à la seule sincère Marie qu'à la multitude trompeuse des Juifs.> Chant taken from the Wilton *Visitatio*. Yardley, *Performing Piety*.

et

LES DISCIPLES ET LE CHŒUR: Scimus christum <surrexisse a mortuis vere; tu nobis, victor rex, miserere>.[51]



2.8. TOUS

Ensuite MADELEINE commence le Christus resurgens, *le CLERGÉ et le CHŒUR lui répondant ensemble:*

MARIE MADELEINE: Christus resurgens…

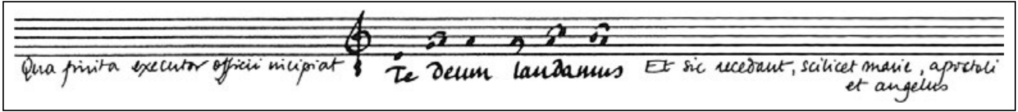
LE CHŒUR, LES DISCIPLES ET MEMBRES DU CLERGE: <ex mortuis iam non moritur; mors illi ultra non dominabitur. Quod enim vivit, vivit deo, alleluia>.[52]

51 Nous savons que le Christ <est vraiment ressuscité d'entre les morts; toi, roi vainqueur, aie pitié de nous.> Chant taken from the Wilton *Visitatio*. *The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

52 Christ ressuscitant <d'entre les morts n'est plus mort; la mort ne le dominera plus. En effet, parce qu'il vit, il vit en Dieu.> Chant taken from the Dublin *Elevatio*. Bodleian Library, MS Rawl., d.4, fols. 130r–132r.

Ces choses accomplies, l'hymne Te Deum laudamus *est chanté solennellement, par un PRÊTRE commençant:*

PRÊTRE OFFICIANT (suivi du CHŒUR ET DU CLERGE):
Te deum laudamus.[53]



Et pendant ce temps, les [MARIES] nommées auparavant, revêtissant de nouveau leurs propres vêtements dans la chapelle, traversant avec les CANDELABRES à travers le chœur, vont vers le sépulcre pour prier. Et là, elles font une courte prière. Ensuite, elles reviennent à leur place jusqu'à ce que l'ABBESSE leur ordonne de partir pour se reposer.

Scènes par personnages

MARIE MERE DE JACQUES, MARIE SALOME / NONNES DU COUVENT: 1.1., 1.3., 1.6., 2.1., 2.2., 2.3., 2.4., 2.6., 2.7., 2.8.

MARIE MADELEINE / CANTRIX: 1.1., 1.3., 1.5., 1.6., 2.1., 2.2., 2.3., 2.4., 2.5., 2.6., 2.7., 2.8.

ABBESSE: 1.1., 1.3., 1.6., 2.1., 2.7., 2.8.

ANGE 1 / DIACRE 1: 1.2., 1.4., 2.3., 2.4., 2.8.

ANGE 2 / DIACRE 2: 1.2., 1.4., 2.4., 2.8.

JESUS / PRÊTRE OFFICIANT: 1.2., 1.4., 1.5., 2.5., 2.6., 2.8.

PRÊTRE DE LA CHAPELLE / DISCIPLE: 1.1., 1.3., 1.4., 2.7., 2.8.

PORTEUSES BOUGIES / NONNES DU COUVENT: 1.1., 1.3., 1.6., 2.2., 2.7., 2.8.

---

53 Nous te louons, Dieu. Chant taken from the Dublin *Visitatio. The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama*, ed. Rankin.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Manuscripts

Fribourg/Freiburg, Couvent des Cordeliers/Franziskanerkloster, MS 2 (Antiphonarium).

Kew, The National Archives, SC 8/335/15842 (Petition of Sybil de Felton). https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C9736226, accessed June 22, 2024.

London, British Library, MS Arundel 83 II (De Lisle Psalter).

——, British Library, MS Arundel 233.

——, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian, A.XVII (Psalter of Henry VI).

——, British Library, MS Egerton 945.

——, British Library, MS Harley 2449.

——, British Library, MS Harley 2930.

——, British Library, MS Harley 2975.

——, British Library, MS Royal, 2 B VII (Queen Mary Psalter).

——, British Library, MS Sloane 2468 (The Hours of the Umfray Family).

——, British Library, MS Yates Thompson 11.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Poet. a. 1 (The Vernon Manuscript). https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_4817, accessed June 27, 2024.

——, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl., d.4.

——, Bodleian Library, University College, MS 169 (Ordinal and Customary of the Nuns of Barking Abbey).

Saint-Quentin, Médiathèque municipale, MS 86 (Livre de la Trésorerie d'Origny-Sainte-Benoîte).

Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Handschriftensammlung, 1799**.

Printed and Online Editions

The Ancrene Riwle. Edited and translated by Barry Sharples. www.bsswebsite.me.uk/History/AncreneRiwle/AncreneRiwle2.html#deadlysins, accessed June 22, 2024.

Ancrene Wisse. Edited by Robert Hasenfratz. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2000. https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/hasenfratz-ancrene-wisse, accessed June 22, 2024.

Benoit, Jean-Louis. *Le Gracial d'Adgar: Miracles de la Vierge*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.

Charters of Barking Abbey and Waltham Holy Cross. Edited by S. E. Kelly. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.

The Chester Mystery Cycle. Edited by R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Cohen, Gustave. *Mystères et moralités du Ms. Chantilly 617*. Paris: Champion, 1920.

Croxton Play of the Sacrament. Edited by John T. Sebastian. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2012.

Dolan, Diane. *Le drame liturgique de Pâques en Normandie et en Angleterre au Moyen-Age*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1975.

The Drama of the Medieval Church. Edited by Karl Young. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1933.

Drames liturgiques du Moyen Âge, texte et musique. Edited by Edmond de Coussemaker. Rennes: Vatard, 1860.

Dugdale, William. *Monasticon anglicanum*. Vol. 3. Edited and translated by John Caley, Sir Henry Ellis, and Rev. Bulkeley Bandinel. London: Bohn, 1846.

Durand, Guillaume. *Rational ou manuel des divins offices*. Edited and translated by Charles Barthélemy. 5 vols. Paris: Vivès, 1854.

Everett, Walter Kennedy. "A Critical Edition of the Confession Section of 'The Clensyng of Mannes Soule.'" PhD diss., University of North Carolina, 1974.

Fletcher Collins, J. R. *Medieval Church Music-Dramas: A Repertory of Complete Plays*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976.

Holy See Press Office. "Bulletin: Mary Magdalene, Apostle of the Apostles." https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2016/06/10/160610c.html, accessed June 22, 2024.

Lamothe, Jessica Michelle. "An Edition of the Latin and Four Middle English Versions of William Flete's 'De remediis contra temptaciones' (Remedies against Temptations)." PhD diss., University of York, 2017.

Lange, Carl. *Die lateinischen Osterfeiern*. Munich: Stahl, 1887.

Langland, William. *The Vision of Piers Plowman*. Edited by A. V. C. Schmidt. London: Dent and Dutton, 1978.

The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and E Museo 160. Edited by Donald C. Baker, John L. Murphy, and Louis B. Hall Jr. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

The Life of St. Catherine by Clemence of Barking. Edited by William MacBain. Oxford: Blackwell, 1964.

"The Liturgical Dramas for Holy Week at Barking Abbey." Edited and translated by Anne Bagnall Yardley and Jesse D. Mann. *Medieval Feminist Forum* 3 (2014): 1–39.

Liturgische Osterspiele und Osterfeiern. Edited by Walther Lipphardt. 9 vols. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975–1990.

Love, Nicholas. *The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ*. Edited by James Hogg and Lawrence F. Powell. 2 vols. Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1989.

"La messe en latin autorisée à Fribourg." *La Liberté,* February 21, 2022. www.laliberte.ch/info-regionale/religion/la-messe-en-latin-autorisee-a-fribourg-636821, accessed June 24, 2024.

Mirk, John. *Instructions for Parish Priests*. Edited by Edward Peacock. London: Trübner, 1868.

———. *Mirk's Festial: A Collection of Homilies*. Edited by Theodor Erbe. London: Trübner, 1905.

The Music of the Medieval Liturgical Drama in France and England. Edited by Susan Rankin. 2 vols. New York: Garland, 1989.

The N-Town Play: Cotton MS Vespasian D.8. Edited by Stephen Spector. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments. Edited by Norman Davis with an Appendix on the Shrewsbury Music by F. LL. Harrison. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.

The Ordinale and Customary of the Benedictine Nuns of Barking Abbey. Edited by J. L. B. Tolhurst. 2 vols. London: Harrison, 1927–1928.

Rankin, Susan. "A New English Source of the *Visitatio sepulchri*." *Journal of the Plainsong and Mediaeval Music Society* 4 (1981): 1–11.

REED: Berkshire. Edited by Alexandra F. Johnston. 2018. https://ereed.library.utoronto.ca/collections/berks/, accessed June 22, 2024.

REED: Bristol. Edited by Mark C. Pilkinton. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.
REED: Cheshire (including Chester). Edited by Elizabeth Baldwin, Lawrence M. Clopper, and David Mills. 2 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.
REED: Cumberland/Westmorland/Gloucestershire. Edited by Audrey Douglas and Peter Greenfield. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986.
REED: Devon. Edited by John Wasson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986.
REED: Dorset/Cornwall. Edited by Rosalind Conklin Hays and C. E. McGee / Sally L. Joyce and Evelyn S. Newlyn. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
REED: Ecclesiastical London. Edited by Mary Erler. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.
REED: Herefordshire/Worcestershire. Edited by David N. Klausner. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.
REED: Kent: Diocese of Canterbury. Edited by James M. Gibson. 3 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.
REED: Lancashire. Edited by David George. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.
REED: Lincolnshire. Edited by James Stokes. 2 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.
REED: Oxford. Edited by John R. Elliott, Jr., and Alan H. Nelson (University); Alexandra F. Johnston and Diana Wyatt (City). 2 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
REED: Shropshire. Edited by J. Alan B. Somerset. 2 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.
REED: Somerset, including Bath. Edited by James Stokes with Robert J. Alexander. 2 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.
REED: Staffordshire. Edited by J. Alan B. Somerset. 2017. https://ereed.library.utoronto.ca/collections/staff/, accessed June 22, 2024.
REED: Sussex. Edited by Cameron Louis. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.
REED: York. Edited by Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson. 2 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979.
Registrum epistolarum fratris Johannis Peckham, archiepiscopi Cantuariensis. Edited by Charles Trice Martin. 3 vols. London: Longman, 1882.
Règle de Saint-Benoît. Edited and Translated by Philibert Schmitz. Turnhout: Brepols, 1987.
Roche, Arthur. "Apostle of the Apostles." www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/articolo-roche-maddalena_en.pdf, accessed June 22, 2024.
The Towneley Plays. Edited by Martin Stevens and A. C. Cawley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
La traduction champenoise de La vie des pères. Edited by Marie-Geneviève Grossel. Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 2017.
La vie d'Edouard le Confesseur by a Nun of Barking Abbey. Edited and Translated by Jane Bliss. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014.
Vickers, Ian. "Barking Abbey Rental, 1456—for the North (Abridged)." www.barkingdagenhamlocalhistory.co.uk/product-page/barking-abbey-rental-north-1456, accessed June 22, 2024.
Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln. Vol. 3, *Records of Visitations Held by William Alnwick, Bishop of Lincoln*. Edited by A. H. Thompson. London: Canterbury and York Society, 1927.
The York Plays: A Critical Edition of the York Corpus Christi Play as Recorded in the British Library Additional MS 35290. Edited by Richard Beadle. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Secondary Sources

Aballéa, Sylvie. "Le saint sépulcre de la Maigrauge." *Kunst+Architektur in der Schweiz* 52 (2001): 60–63. www.e-periodica.ch/digbib/view?pid=kas-002:2001:52::344#64, accessed June 22, 2024.

——. "Sépulcre pascal." In *Le siècle oublié: Fribourg, les années 1300*, edited by Stephan Gasser and Adeline Favre, 194–97. Fribourg: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 2019.

Accarie, Maurice. *Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Âge*. Geneva: Droz, 1979.

Aers, David. "The Humanity of Christ: Reflections on Orthodox Late Medieval Representations." In *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture*, edited by David Aers and Lynn Staley, 15–42. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.

Aers, David and Lynn Staley. "Introduction." In *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture*, edited by David Aers and Lynn Staley, 1–15. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996.

Alstatt, Alison. "The *Ordo virtutum* and Benedictine Monasticism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hildegard of Bingen*, edited by Jennifer Bain, 235–56. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

——. "Re-membering the Wilton Processional." *Notes: The Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association* 72 (2016): 690–732.

"The Ancient Parish of Barking: Abbeys and Churches Founded before 1830." In *A History of the County of Essex*. Vol. 5, edited by W. R. Powell, 222–311. London: Victoria County History, 1966. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol5/pp222-231, accessed June 22, 2024.

"The Ancient Parish of Barking: Agrarian History, Markets, and Fairs." In *A History of the County of Essex*. Vol. 5, edited by W. R. Powell, 214–19. London: Victoria County History, 1966. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol5/pp214-219, accessed June 22, 2024.

"The Ancient Parish of Barking: Introduction." In *A History of the County of Essex*. Vol. 5, edited by W. R. Powell, 184–90. London: Victoria County History, 1966. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol5/pp184-190, accessed June 22, 2024.

"The Ancient Parish of Barking: Manors." In *A History of the County of Essex*. Vol. 5, edited by W. R. Powell, 190–214. London: Victoria County History, 1966. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol5/pp190-214, accessed June 22, 2024.

Arenal, Electa, Stacey Schlau, and Amanda Powell. *Untold Sisters: Hispanic Nuns in their Own Works.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989.

Ashdowne, Richard, David Howlett, and R.E. Latham, eds. *The Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*. Oxford: Oxford University Press and Turnhout: Brepols, 1967–2014.

Auslander, Diane. "Clemence and Catherine: The Life of St. Catherine in its Norman and Anglo-Norman Context." In *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture*, edited by Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell, 164–82. York: York Medieval, 2012.

Baert, Barbara. "'An Odour, A Taste, a Touch. Impossible to Describe': *Noli me tangere* and the Senses." In *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Wietse de Boer and Christine Göttler, 111–51. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

——. "The Pact between Space and Gaze: The Narrative and the Iconic *Noli me tangere*." In *Noli me tangere in Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Reimund Bieringer, Barbara Baert, and Karlijn Demasure, 191–216. Leuven: Peeters, 2016.

Bamford, A. Bennett. "Bequests relating to Essex, with Additional Notes." *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, n.s. 13 (1913): 253–66.

"The Barking Pageant, 1931." *London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Local Studies Information Sheet 8*, https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fvalencehousecollections.co.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2FInfosheet8BarkingPageant.doc&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK, accessed June 22, 2024.

Barratt, Alexandra. "Keeping Body and Soul Together: The Charge of the Cellaress." In *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture*, edited by Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell, 235–44. York: York Medieval, 2012.

——. "Small Latin? The Post-Conquest Learning of English Religious Women." In *Anglo-Latin and its Heritage*, edited by Siân Echard and Gernot R. Wieland, 51–66. Turnhout: Brepols, 2001.

Barron, Caroline M., and Clive Burgess, eds. *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval England, Proceedings of the 2008 Harlaxton Symposium*. Donington: Tyas, 2010.

Bartie, Angela, Linda Fleming, Mark Freeman, Tom Hulme, Alex Hutton, and Paul Readman. "The Barking Historical Pageant." *The Redress of the Past*, www.historicalpageants.ac.uk/pageants/981/, accessed June 22, 2024.

Bassnett, Susan. "Still Trapped in the Labyrinth: Further Reflections on Translation and Theatre." In *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, edited by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, 90–108. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998.

Beadle, Richard. "Plays and Playing at Thetford Priory." *Theatre Notebook* 32 (1978): 4–11.

Beckwith, Sarah. "Ritual, Church, and Theatre: Medieval Dramas and the Sacramental Body." In *Culture and History, 1350–1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities, and Writing*, edited by David Aers, 65–80. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992.

——. *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in the York Corpus Christi Plays*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Bell, David N. *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 2016.

——. "What Nuns Read: The State of the Question." In *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism*, edited by James G. Clark, 113–33. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007.

Bennett, Susan. "Making Up the Audience: Spectatorship in Historical Context." *Theatre Symposium* 20 (2012): 8–22.

Bérat, Emma. "The Authority of Diversity: Communal Patronage in Le Gracial." In *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture*, edited by Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell, 210–34. York: York Medieval, 2012.

Bevington, David. "Staging Liturgy in the Croxton Play of the Sacrament." In *Staging Scripture: Biblical Drama 1350–1600*, edited by Peter Happé and Wim Hüsken, 235–52. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

——. "The Staging of Twelfth-Century Liturgical Drama in the Fleury 'Playbook.'" *Comparative Drama* 18 (1984): 97–117.

Black, Jonathan. "The Divine Office and Private Devotion in the Latin West." In *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, edited by Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, 41–65. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2005.

Blanc, Aurélie. "Performing Female Authority: Convent Plays and Lay Spectatorship in the Barking Abbey *Elevatio* and *Visitatio sepulchri* Dramatic Ceremonies." *Medieval English Theatre* 42 (2020): 50–89.

Blanc, Aurélie, and Olivia Robinson. "The Huy Nativity from the Seventeenth to the Twenty-First Century: Translation, Play-Back, and Pray-Back." *Medieval English Theatre* 40 (2018): 66–97.

Blanton, Virginia. "The Devotional Reading of Nuns: Three Legendaries of Native Saints in Late Medieval England." In *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue*, edited by Virginia Blanton, Veronica O'Mara, and Patricia Stoop, 185–206. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013.

Blanton, Virginia, Veronica O'Mara, and Patricia Stoop. "Introduction." In *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue*, edited by Virginia Blanton, Veronica O'Mara, and Patricia Stoop, xiii–xxxiii. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013.

Boffey, Julia. "Women Authors and Women's Literacy in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century England." In *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150–1500*, edited by Carol M. Meale, 159–82. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Bond, Francis. *Screens and Galleries in English Churches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1908.

Borgehammar, Stephan. "A Monastic Conception of the Liturgical Year." In *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, edited by Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, 13–41. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2005.

"The Borough of Barking." In *A History of the County of Essex*. Vol. 5, edited by W. R. Powell, 235–48. London: Victoria County History, 1966. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol5/pp235-248, accessed June 22, 2024.

Bourgeault, Cynthia. "Liturgical Dramaturgy." *Comparative Drama* 17 (1983): 124–40.

Boynton, Susan. "Religious Soundscapes: Liturgy and Music." In *The Cambridge History of Christianity*. Vol. 4, *Christianity in Western Europe ca.1100–ca.1500*, edited by Miri Rubin and Walter Simons, 238–53. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Braun, Joseph. *Die liturgische Gewandung*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964.

Brazil, Sarah. "Performing Female Sanctity—and Reading It: The *Visitatio sepulchri* of Wilton and Barking Abbey." *Medieval Feminist Forum* 57 (2021): 78–97.

Briscoe, Marianne G. "Some Clerical Notions of Dramatic Decorum in Late Medieval England." *Comparative Drama* 19 (1985): 1–13.

Brown, Pamela Allen and Peter Parolin. "Introduction." In *Women Players in England, 1500–1660: Beyond the All-Male Stage*, edited by Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin, 1–21. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

Bugyis, Katie Ann-Marie. *The Care of Nuns: The Ministries of Benedictine Women in England during the Central Middle Ages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

——. "Female Monastic Cantors and Sacristans in Central Medieval England: Four Sketches." In *Medieval Cantors and their Craft: Music, Liturgy, and the Shaping of History, 800–1500*, edited by Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis, A. B. Kraebel, and Margot E. Fassler, 151–71. York: York Medieval, 2017.

——. "Women Priests at Barking Abbey in the Late Middle Ages." In *Women Intellectuals and Leaders in the Middle Ages*, edited by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis, and John Van Engen, 319–34. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020.

Bührer-Thierry, Geneviève. "Lumière et pouvoir dans le haut Moyen Âge occidental: Célébration du pouvoir et métaphores lumineuses." *Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome* 116 (2004): 521–56.

Butterworth, Philip. *Staging Conventions in Medieval English Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*. New York: Zone, 1994.

Campbell, Thomas P. "Liturgical Drama and Community Discourse." In *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, edited by Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, 565–88. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2005.

——. "Liturgy and Drama: Recent Approaches to Medieval Theatre." *Theatre Journal* 13 (1981): 289–301.

Carillo-Rangel, David, Delfi I. Nieto-Isabel, and Pablo Acosta-Gracia, eds. *Touching, Devotional Practices, and Visionary Experiences in the Late Middle Ages*. Cham: Springer, 2019.

Caroll-Clark, Susan M. "Bad Habits: Clothing and Textile References in the Register of Eudes Rigaud, Archbishop of Rouen." In *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, edited by Robin Netherton and Gale R. Owen-Crocker, 81–103. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005.

Carpenter, Sarah. "New Evidence: Vives and Audience Response to Biblical Drama." *Medieval English Theatre* 31 (2009): 3–12.

Carruthers, Mary J. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Caseau, Béatrice. "The Senses in Religion: Liturgy, Devotion, and Deprivation." In *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*, edited by Richard G. Newhauser, 89–110. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

Cawley, Charles, and FMG. "Lords Montagu." https://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/ENGLISHNOBILITYMEDIEVAL3L-O.htm#_Toc21431091, accessed June 22, 2024.

Chambers, E. K. *The Mediaeval Stage*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903.

Chettle, H. F., and E. A. Loftus. *A History of Barking Abbey*. Barking: Wilson and Wentworth, 1954.

Clapham, Alfred W. "The Benedictine Abbey of Barking: A Sketch of its Architectural History and an Account of Recent Excavations on its Site." *Essex Archaeological Transactions* 12 (1911): 69–87.

Clark, James G. "Introduction." In *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism*, edited by James G. Clark, 1–20. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007.

Clark, Robert L. A. "Community versus Subject in Late Medieval French Confraternity Drama and Ritual." In *Drama and Community: People and Plays in Medieval Europe*, edited by Alan Hindley, 34–56. Turnhout: Brepols, 1994.

Coakley, John. "Women's Textual Authority and the Collaboration of Clerics." In *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition, c. 1100–c. 1500*, edited by Alastair J. Minnis, 83–104. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.

Cohen, Gustave. *Le théâtre en France au Moyen Âge*. Vol. 1, *Le théâtre religieux*. Paris: Rieder, 1928.

Colker, Marvin L. "Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury which Relate to the History of Barking Abbey." *Studia Monastica* 7 (1965): 383–460.

Cousins, Ewert. "The Humanity and the Passion of Christ." In *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, edited by Jill Raitt, 375–91. New York: Crossroad, 1988.

Craig, Hardin. *English Religious Drama in the Middle Ages*. London: Penguin, 1988.

"Dagenham: Introduction and Manors." In *A History of the County of Essex*. Vol. 5, edited by W. R. Powell, 267–81. London: Victoria County History, 1966. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol5/pp267-281, accessed June 22, 2024.

Davidson, Clifford. *Drama and Art: An Introduction to the Use of Evidence from the Visual Arts for the Study of Early Drama*. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 1977.

——. *Illustrations of the Stage and Acting in England to 1580*. Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University Press, 1991.

——. "Improvisation in Medieval Drama." In *Improvisation in the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, edited by Timothy J. McGee, 193–221. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2003.

——. "On the Use of Iconographic Study: The Example of the *Sponsus* from Saint-Martial of Limoges." In *The Drama in the Middle Ages: Comparative and Critical Essays*, edited by Clifford Davidson, C. J. Gianakaris, and John H. Stroupe, 43–62. New York: AMS, 1982.

——. "Women and the Medieval Stage." *Women's Studies* 11 (1984): 99–113.

de Boor, Helmut. *Die Textgeschichte der lateinischen Osterfeiern*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967.

de Hemptinne, Thérèse, and Maria Eugenia Gongora. "Introduction." In *The Voice of Silence: Women's Literacy in a Men's Church*, edited by Thérèse de Hemptinne and Maria Eugenia Gongora, vii–xiv. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004.

de Pril, Ward and Anthony Dupont. "The Four Latin Church Fathers on Mary Magdalene: The Presence of John 20: 17 in Patristic Literature." In *Noli me tangere in Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Reimund Bieringer, Barbara Baert, and Karlijn Demasure, 111–22. Leuven: Peeters, 2016.

Dillon, Janette. *Cambridge Introduction to Early English Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

——. *Language and Stage in Medieval and Renaissance England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Dinkova-Bruun, Greti. "The *Noli me tangere* Motif in Latin Biblical Versification of the Later Middle Ages: Presence and Absence." In *Noli me tangere in Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Reimund Bieringer, Barbara Baert, and Karlijn Demasure, 137–52. Leuven: Peeters, 2016.

Doig, Allan. *Liturgy and Architecture: From the Early Church to the Middle Ages*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

Dolan, Diane. *Le drame liturgique de Pâques en Normandie et en Angleterre au Moyen-Age*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1975.

Dronke, Peter. *Women Writers of the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Du Cange, Charles du Fresne, The Benedictine monks of St. Maur, Pierre Carpentier, and Louis Henschel. *Glossarium mediae et infimae latiniatis.* Edited by Léopold Favre. Niort: Favre, 1883–1887.

Dudley, Martin R. "Sacramental Liturgies in the Middle Ages." In *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, edited by Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, 215–43. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2005.

Duffy, Eamon. *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

Dümpelmann, Britta. "Visual – Textile – Tactile: Touching the Untouchable in the Easter Liturgy and Works of Art." In *Noli me tangere in Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Reimund Bieringer, Barbara Baert, and Karlijn Demasure, 233–51. Leuven: Peeters, 2016.

Dunn, E. Catherine. "Voice Structure in the Liturgical Drama: Sepet Reconsidered." In *Medieval English Drama*, edited by Jerome Taylor and Alan H. Nelson, 44–63. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.

Dutton, Elisabeth. "The Croxton Play of the Sacrament." In *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, edited by Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker, 55–71. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

——. "A Manifesto for Performance Research." In *The Methuen Drama Handbook to Theatre History and Historiography*, edited by Claire Cochrane and Joanna Robinson, 249–60. London: Bloomsbury, 2019.

Dyer, Christopher. "The Social and Economic Background to the Rural Revolt of 1381." In *The English Rising of 1381*, edited by R. H. Hilton and T. H. Aston, 9–42. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Edwards, Jennifer C. *Superior Women: Medieval Female Authority in Poitier's Abbey of Sainte-Croix*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Eggert, Barbara M. "Edification with Thread and Needle: On the Uses and Functions of Architectonic Elements in Medieval Liturgical Vestments and their Representation in Contemporary Paintings of the Mass of St Gregory (Thirteenth to Sixteenth Century)." In *Clothing the Sacred: Medieval Textiles as Fabric, Form, and Metaphor*, edited by Mateusz Kapustka and Warren T. Woodfin, 53–70. Emsdetten: Imorde, 2015.

——. "Textile Perspectives: The *Noli me tangere* Motif on Medieval Liturgical Vestments." In *Noli me tangere in Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Reimund Bieringer, Barbara Baert, and Karlijn Demasure, 253–69. Leuven: Peeters, 2016.

Elliott, Dyan. "Dressing and Undressing the Clergy: Rites of Ordination and Degradation." In *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles, Cloth Work, and Other Cultural Imaginings*, edited by E. Jane Burns, 55–69. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

——. "Flesh and Spirit: The Female Body." In *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition, c. 1100–c. 1500*, edited by Alastair J. Minnis, 13–46. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.

Erler, Mary C. "Private Reading in the Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century English Nunnery." In *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism*, edited by James G. Clark, 134–46. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007.

——. *Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Erler, Mary C. and Maryanne Kowaleski. "Introduction." In *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, edited by Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski, 1–17. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988.

Everett, Walter. "*The Clensyng Of Mannes Soule*: An Introductory Study." *Southern Quarterly* 13 (1975): 265–79.

"An Exploration of Barking Abbey: Exhibition." Valence House. https://valencehousecollections.co.uk/exhibitions/barking-abbey-online-exhibition/, accessed June 22, 2024.

Fassler, Margot E. *Cosmos, Liturgy, and the Arts in the Twelfth Century: Hildegard's Illuminated Scivias*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023.

Faulkner, Ann. "The Harrowing of Hell at Barking Abbey and in Modern Production." In *The Iconography of Hell*, edited by Clifford Davidson and Thomas H. Seiler, 141–57. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 1992.

Fenster, Thelma. "'Ce qu'ens li trovat, eut en sei': On the Equal Chastity of Queen Edith and King Edgar in the Nun of Barking's *La vie d'Edward le Confesseur*." In *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture*, edited by Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell, 135–45. York: York Medieval, 2012.

Ferrante, Joan M. *To the Glory of Her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

Findlay, Alison. *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Flanigan, C. Clifford. "The Fleury Playbook and the Traditions of Medieval Drama." *Comparative Drama* 18 (1984): 348–72.

———. "Medieval Latin Music-Dramas." In *The Theatre of Medieval Europe: New Research in Early Drama*, edited by Eckehard Simon, 21–41. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

———. "*Visitatio sepulchri* as Paradigm." In *Medieval Liturgy and the Arts*, edited by Eva Louise Lillie and Nils Holger Petersen, 9–35. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 1996.

Flanigan, C. Clifford, Kathleen Ashley, and Pamela Sheingorn. "Liturgy as Social Performance: Expanding the Definitions." In *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, edited by Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, 635–52. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2005.

Fletcher Collins, J. R. *The Production of Medieval Church Music-Drama*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1972.

Flynn, William T. "Approaches to Early Medieval Music and Rites." In *Understanding Medieval Liturgy*, edited by Helen Gittos and Sarah Hamilton, 57–71. London: Routledge, 2016.

Foster, Tara. "Clemence of Barking: Reshaping the Legend of Saint Catherine of Alexandria." *Women's Writing* 12 (2005): 13–28.

Fowler, R. C. "Some Essex Monastic Seals." *Transactions of the Essex Archeological Society*, n.s., 17 (1926): 165–71.

Gaffiot, Félix. *Dictionnaire latin français*. Edited by Gérard Gréco. 2016, http://gerardgreco.free.fr/IMG/pdf/Gaffiot_2016_-_komarov.pdf.

Gardill, Ingrid. *Sancta Benedicta: Missionarin, Märtyerin, Patronin*. Petersberg: Imhof, 2005.

Gibson, Gail McMurray. *Theater of Devotion: East Anglican Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Gilchrist, Roberta. *Contemplation in Action: The Other Monasticism*. London: Leicester University Press, 1995.

Gilchrist, Roberta, and Marilyn Oliva. *Religious Women in Medieval East Anglia: History and Archaeology c.1100–1540*. Norwich: Centre of East Anglian Studies, 1993.

Gittos, Helen. "Researching the History of Rites." In *Understanding Medieval Liturgy*, edited by Helen Gittos and Sarah Hamilton, 13–38. London: Routledge, 2016.

Gittos, Helen and Sarah Hamilton. "Introduction." In *Understanding Medieval Liturgy*, edited by Helen Gittos and Sarah Hamilton, 1–10. London: Routledge, 2016.

Gongora, Maria Eugenia. "*Feminea forma* and *virga*: Two Images of Incarnation in Hildegard of Bingen's *Symphonia*." In *The Voice of Silence: Women's Literacy in a Men's Church*, edited by Thérèse de Hemptinne and Maria Eugenia Gongora, 23–36. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004.

Granger, Penny. *The N-Town Play: Drama and Liturgy in Medieval East Anglia*. Cambridge: Brewer, 2009.

Green, D. H. *Women Readers in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Hamburger, Jeffrey F. "Art, Enclosure and the *Cura monialum*: Prolegomena in the Guise of a Postscript." *Gesta* 31 (1992): 108–34.

Hamburger, Jeffrey F. and Robert Suckale. "Between this World and the Next: The Art of Religious Women in the Middle Ages." In *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, edited by Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Susan Marti, 76–108. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Happé, Peter. "A Guide to Criticism of Medieval English Theatre." In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, edited by Richard Beadle, 312–42. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

——. "A Guide to Criticism of Medieval English Theatre." In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 2nd ed., edited by Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher, 326–60. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Hardison Jr., O. B. *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965.

Harper, John. *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1995.

Harris, John Wesley. *Medieval Theatre in Context: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Heffernan, Thomas J. "The Liturgy and the Literature of Saints' Lives." In *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, edited by Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, 65–94. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2005.

Heffernan, Thomas J., and E. Ann. Matter. "Introduction to the Liturgy of the Medieval Church." In *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, edited by Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, 1–9. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2005.

Hiley, David. *Western Plainchant: A Handbook.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Hilton, R. H. "Introduction." In *The English Rising of 1381*, edited by R. H. Hilton and T. H. Aston, 1–8. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Hollis, Stephanie. "Barking's Monastic School, Late Seventh to Twelfth Century: History, Saint-Making and Literary Culture." In *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture*, edited by Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell, 33–55. York: York Medieval, 2012.

——. "The Literary Culture of the Anglo-Saxon Royal Nunneries: Romsey and London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 436." In *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue*, edited by Virginia Blanton, Veronica O'Mara, and Patricia Stoop, 169–83. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013.

"Houses of Austin Canons: Abbey of Waltham Holy Cross." In *A History of the County of Essex*. Vol. 2, edited by William Page and J. Horace Round, 166–72. London: Victoria County History, 1907. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol2/pp166-172, accessed June 22, 2024.

"Houses of Benedictine Monks: Priory of Hatfield Regis or Broadoak." In *A History of the County of Essex*. Vol. 2, edited by William Page and J. Horace Round, 107–10. London: Victoria County History, 1907. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol2/pp107-110, accessed June 22, 2024.

"Houses of Benedictine Nuns: Abbey of Barking." In *A History of the County of Essex*. Vol. 2, edited by William Page and J. Horace Round, 115–22. London: Victoria County History, 1907. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol2/pp115-122, accessed June 22, 2024.

"Houses of Benedictine Nuns: The Abbey of Wilton." In *A History of the County of Wiltshire*. Vol. 3, edited R. B. Pugh and Elizabeth Crittall, 231–42. London: Victoria County History, 1956. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/wilts/vol3/pp231-242, accessed June 22, 2024.

"Houses of Benedictine Nuns: Priory of Wix." In *A History of the County of Essex*. Vol. 2, edited by William Page and J. Horace Round, 123–25. London: Victoria County History, 1907. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol2/pp123-125, accessed June 22, 2024.

"Houses of Cistercian Monks: The Abbey of Stratford Langthorne." In *A History of the County of Essex*. Vol. 2, edited by William Page and J. Horace Round, 129–33. London: Victoria County History, 1907. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol2/pp129-133, accessed June 22, 2024.

Hughes, Andrew. "Liturgical Drama: Falling between the Disciplines." In *The Theatre of Medieval Europe: New Research in Early Drama*, edited by Eckehard Simon, 42–62. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

——. *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.

"The Hundred of Becontree." In *A History of the County of Essex*, Vol. 5, edited by W. R. Powell, 181–83. London: Victoria County History, 1966. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol5/pp181-183, accessed June 22, 2024.

Hutchison, Ann M. "Devotional Reading in the Monastery and in the Late Medieval Household." In *De cella in seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, edited by Michael Sargent, 215–27. Cambridge: Brewer, 1989.

Jansen, Katherine Ludwig. *The Making of the Magdalen*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Johnson, Elizabeth A. "Marian Devotion." In *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, edited by Jill Raitt, 392–414. London: SCM, 1989.

Johnson, Penelope D. *Equal in Monastic Profession*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Johnston, Alexandra F. "'Amys and Amylon' at Bicester Priory." *Records of Early English Drama* 18 (1993): 15–18.

——. "Bicester Priory Revisited." *Records of Early English Drama* 20 (1995): 16–17.

Jones, E. A. "*A Mirror for Recluses*: A New Manuscript, New Information, and Some New Hypotheses." *The Library* 15 (2014): 424–31.

Kieckhefer, Richard. "Major Currents in Late Medieval Devotion." In *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, edited by Jill Raitt, 75–108. London: SCM, 1989.

King, Pamela. *The York Mystery Cycle and the Worship of the City*. Cambridge: Brewer, 2006.

Kirchberger, Clare. "The Cleansing of Man's Soul." *Life of the Spirit* 4 (1950): 290–95.

Knight, Alan E. *Aspects of Genre in Late Medieval French Drama*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983.

Knowles, David. *The Religious Orders in England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948.

Koslin, Désirée. "The Robe of Simplicity: Initiation, Robing, and Veiling of Nuns in the Middle Ages." In *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, edited by Stewart Gordon, 255–74. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Kroesen, Justin E. A., and Victor M. Schmidt, eds. *The Altar and its Environment 1150–1400*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2009.

Kroesen, Justin E. A. and Victor M. Schmidt. "Introduction." In *The Altar and its Environment 1150–1400*, edited by Justin E. A. Kroesen and Victor M. Schmidt, 1–10. Turnhout: Brepols, 2009.

Kuhns, Elizabeth. *The Habit: A History of the Clothing of Catholic Nuns*. New York: Doubleday, 2003.

Lindenbaum, Sheila. "Drama as Textual Practice." In *Middle English*, edited by Paul Strohm, 386–400. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Lipton, Emma. "Witnessing and Legal Affect in the York Trial Plays." In *Medieval Affect, Feeling, and Emotion*, edited by Glenn. D. Burger and Holly A. Crocker, 158–80. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Lipton, Sara. "Images and their Uses." In *The Cambridge History of Christianity*. Vol. 4, *Christianity in Western Europe ca.1100–ca.1500*, edited by Miri Rubin and Walter Simons, 254–82. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

"The Liturgical Dramas for Holy Week at Barking Abbey." Edited and translated by Anne Bagnall Yardley and Jesse D. Mann. *Medieval Feminist Forum* 3 (2014): 1–39.

Marichal, Robert. "Les drames liturgiques du livre de la trésorerie d'Origny-Sainte-Benoite." In *Mélanges d'histoire du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance*, 37–45. Paris: Nizet, 1950.

Matthews, Kate. "The Bride of Christ: An Exploration of Convent Drama, *c*. 1100–1500." PhD diss., University of London, 2002.

——. "Textual Spaces / Playing Spaces: An Exploration of Convent Drama in the Abbey of Origny-Sainte-Benoîte." *European Medieval Drama* 7 (2003): 69–86.

McConachie, Bruce. *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

——. "Falsifiable Theories for Theatre and Performance Studies." *Theatre Journal* 59 (2007): 553–78.

McCue, James F. "Liturgy and the Eucharist." In *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, edited by Jill Raitt, 415–26. London: SCM, 1989.

McGavin, John J. "Medieval Theatricality and Spectatorship." In *European Theatre Performance Practice, 1400–1580*, edited by Philip Butterworth and Katie Normington, 477–93. Burlington: Ashgate, 2014.

McGavin, John J. and Greg Walker. *Imagining Spectatorship: From the Mysteries to the Shakespearean Stage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

McKinnell: John. "Modern Productions of Medieval English Drama." In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, 2nd ed., edited by Richard Beadle and Alan J. Fletcher, 287–325. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

——. "A Twelfth-Century Durham Play." In *Treasures of Durham University Library*, edited by Richard Gameson, 38–39. London: Third Millenium, 2007.

McLachlan, Elizabeth Parker. "Liturgical Vessels and Implements." In *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, edited by Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, 333–87. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2005.

McLaughlin, Eleanor Commo. "Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Women in Medieval Theology." In *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, edited by Rosemary Radford Ruether, 213–61. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974.

McLaughlin, Megan. "Women and Men." In *The Cambridge History of Christianity*. Vol. 4, *Christianity in Western Europe ca.1100–ca.1500*, edited by Miri Rubin and Walter Simons, 187–99. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

McNamara, Jo Ann Kay. *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns through Two Millenia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

McNamer, Sarah. *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020.

Meale, Carol M. "'Alle the bokes that I have of latyn, englisch, and frensch': Laywomen and their Books in Late Medieval England." In *Women and Literature in Britain 1150–1500*, edited by Carol M. Meale, 128–58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Mecham, June L. "A Northern Jerusalem: Transforming the Spatial Geography of the Convent of Wienhausen." In *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, edited by Andrew Spice and Sarah Hamilton, 139–60. London: Routledge, 2006.

Meier, Esther. "Turning Toward God and Outward Actions: The Priest in the *Te igitur* Initials of the Middle Ages." In *Iconography of Liturgical Textiles in the Middle Ages*, edited by Evelin Wetter, 79–88. Riggisberg: Abbegg-Stiftung, 2010.

Meredith, Peter. "Latin Liturgical Drama." In *The Medieval European Stage, 500–1550*, edited by William Tydeman, 60–97. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Mills, David. "Approaches to Medieval Drama." In *Medieval English Drama, A Casebook*, edited by Peter Happé, 35–51. London: Macmillan, 1984.

Minnis, Alastair J. "Religious Roles: Public and Private." In *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition, c. 1100–c. 1500*, edited by Alastair J. Minnis, 47–81. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.

Minnis, Alastair J., and Rosalyn Voaden. "Introduction." In *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition, c. 1100–c. 1500*, edited by Alastair J. Minnis, 1–12. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.

Muir, Lynette R. *The Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

——. "Women on the Medieval Stage: The Evidence from France." *Medieval English Theatre* 7 (1985): 107–19.

Newman, Barbara. *From Virile Women to WomanChrist*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995.

Normington, Katie. *Gender and Medieval Drama*. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2004.

——. *Medieval English Drama: Performance and Spectatorship*. Cambridge: Polity, 2009.

Norton, Michael. *Liturgical Drama and the Reimagining of Medieval Theater*. Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University Press, 2017.

O'Donnell, Thomas. "'The Ladies Have Me Quite Fat': Authors and Patrons of Barking Abbey." In *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture*, edited by Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell, 94–116. York: York Medieval, 2012.
Ogden, Dunbar H. "Costumes and Vestments in the Medieval Music Drama." In *Material Culture and Medieval Drama*, edited by Clifford Davidson, 1–57. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 1999.
——. *The Staging of Drama in the Medieval Church*. Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2002.
Oliva, Marilyn. "The Convent and the Community in the Diocese of Norwich from 1350 to 1540." PhD diss., Fordham University, 1991.
——. "The French of England in Female Convents: The French Kitchener's accounts of Campsey Ash Priory." In *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c. 1100–c. 1500*, edited by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al., 90–102. Woodbridge: York Medieval, 2009.
——. "Rendering Accounts: The Pragmatic Literacy of Nuns in Late Medieval England." In *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue*, edited by Virginia Blanton, Veronica O'Mara, and Patricia Stoop, 51–68. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013.
O'Mara, Veronica. "Female Scribal Ability and Scribal Activity in Late Medieval England: The Evidence?" *Leeds Studies in English* 27 (1996): 87–110.
——. "The Late Medieval English Nun and her Scribal Activity: A Complicated Quest." In *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue*, edited by Virginia Blanton, Veronica O'Mara, and Patricia Stoop, 69–93. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013.
Osberg, R. "The Goldsmiths' 'Chastell' of 1377." *Theatre Survey* 27 (1986): 1–15.
Palazzo, Eric. *Liturgie et société au Moyen-Âge*. Paris: Aubier, 2000.
——. "Performing the Liturgy." In *The Cambridge History of Christianity*. Vol. 3, *Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600–c. 1100*, edited by Thomas F. X. Noble and Julia M. H. Smith, 472–88. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
Pappano, Margaret Aziza. "Sister Acts: Conventual Performance and the *Visitatio sepulchri* in England and France." In *Medieval Constructions in Gender and Identity: Essays in Honor of Joan M. Ferrante*, edited by Teodolinda Barolini, 43–67. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005.
Parker, Elizabeth C. "Architecture as Liturgical Setting." In *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, edited by Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, 245–93. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2005.
Pavis, Patrice. *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*. Translated by Christine Shantz. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.
Petersen, Nils Holger. "Liturgical Drama: New Approaches." In *Bilan et perspective des études médiévales (1993–1998): Euroconférence (Barcelone, 8–12 juin 1999)*, edited by Jacqueline Hamesse. 625–44. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004.
Pevsner, Nikolaus and Enid Radcliffe. *Essex: The Buildings of England*. 2nd ed. London: Penguin, 1974.
Pfaff, Richard W. *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
Plesch, Véronique. "Words and Images in Late Medieval Drama and Art." *Mediaevalia* 28 (2007): 25–55.
Poos, L. R. *A Rural Society after the Black Death: Essex 1350–1525*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Power, Eileen. *Medieval English Nunneries ca. 1275 to 1535*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922.

Purcell, Stephen. *Shakespeare and Audience in Practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Rankin, Susan. "A New English Source of the *Visitatio sepulchri*." *Journal of the Plainsong and Mediaeval Music Society* 4 (1981): 1–11.

Ravelhofer, Barbara. "Regional Performance as Intangible Cultural Heritage." In *Early Performers and Performance in the Northeast of England*, edited by Diana Wyatt and John McKinnell, 161–82. Leeds: ARC Humanities, 2021.

"Religious Houses: Introduction." In *A History of the County of Essex*, Vol. 2, edited by William Page and J. Horace Round, 84–92. London: Victoria County History, 1907. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol2/pp84-92, accessed June 22, 2024.

Rice, Nicole R. "'Temples to Christ's Indwelling': Forms of Chastity in a Barking Abbey Manuscript." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 19 (2010): 115–32.

Robertson, Duncan. "Writing in the Textual Community: Clemence of Barking's Life of St. Catherine." *French Forum* 21 (1996): 5–28.

Robinson, Olivia. "Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 617: Mystères as Convent Drama." In *Les Mystères: Studies in Genre, Text, and Theatricality*, edited by Peter Happé and Wim Husken, 93–118. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012.

——. "Feminizing the Liturgy in the N-Town Mary Play and Fifteenth-Century Convent Drama." *Swiss Papers in English Language and Literature* 31 (2015): 71–88.

Robinson, Olivia, Elisabeth Dutton, Aurélie Blanc, and Matthew Cheung Salisbury, eds. *Theatre in the Convent: Medieval Women Religious and their Plays*. Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University Press, forthcoming.

Robinson, P. R. "A Twelfth Century *Scriptrix* from Nunnaminster." In *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, their Scribes and Readers*, edited by Pamela R. Robinson and Malcolm Beckwith Parkes, 73–93. Aldershot: Scolar, 1997.

Rogerson, Margaret. "Devotional Acting: Sydney 2008 and Medieval York." In *The York Mystery Plays: Performance in the City*, edited by Margaret Rogerson, 205–25. York: York Medieval, 2011.

——. *The York Mystery Plays: Performance in the City*. York: York Medieval, 2011.

Rousseau, Marie-Hélène. *Saving the Souls of Medieval London: Perpetual Chantries at St Paul's Cathedral, c. 1200–1548*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.

Rubin, Miri. *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

——. "The Eucharist and the Construction of Medieval Identities." In *Culture and History 1350–1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities, and Writing*, edited by David Aers, 43–63. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992.

——. "Sacramental Life." In *The Cambridge History of Christianity*. Vol. 4, *Christianity in Western Europe c. 1100–c. 1500*, edited by Miri Rubin and Walter Simons, 219–37. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Rudy, Kathryn M. *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent: Imagining Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011.

Russell, Delbert W. "The Cultural Context of the French Prose Remaniement of the Life of Edward the Confessor by a Nun of Barking Abbey." In *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England ca. 1100–ca.1500*, edited by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al., 290–303. Woodbridge: York Medieval, 2009.

Salisbury, Matthew Cheung. "Rethinking the Use of Sarum and York: A Historiographical Essay." In *Understanding Medieval Liturgy*, edited by Helen Gittos and Sarah Hamilton, 103–22. London: Routledge, 2016.

——. *Worship in Medieval England*. Leeds: ARC Humanities, 2018.
Sanok, Catherine. "Performing Feminine Sanctity in Late Medieval England." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32 (2002): 269–303.
Sautter, Cia. "Women, Dance, Death, and Lament in Medieval Spain and the Mediterranean: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Examples." In *Death in Medieval Europe: Death Scripted and Death Choreographed*, edited by Joëlle Rollo-Koster, 93–113. London: Routledge, 2017.
Schaller, Mère Abbesse Gertrude, and Sylvie Aballéa. "Le st sépulcre." www.maigrauge.ch/fr/notre-abbaye/histoire/saint-sepulcre, accessed June 22, 2024.
Scherb, Victor. "Liturgy and Community in the N-Town Passion Play 1." *Comparative Drama* 29 (1995): 478–92.
——. *Staging Faith: East Anglian Drama in the Later Middle Ages*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2001.
"Series Methodology." REED Online. https://ereed.library.utoronto.ca/about/series/, accessed June 28, 2024.
Shanks, Lillian Thomas. "Introduction." In *Medieval Religious Women 2: Peace Weavers*, edited by Lillian Thomas Shanks and John A. Nichols, 1–17. Kalamazoo: Cistercian, 1987.
Sheingorn, Pamela. *The Easter Sepulchre in England*. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 1987.
Simon, Eckehard. "Preface." In *The Theatre of Medieval Europe: New Research in Early Drama*, edited by Eckehard Simon, xi–xx. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Slim, Colin. "Music and Dancing with Mary Magdalen in a Laura Vestalis." In *The Crannied Wall: Women, Religion, and the Arts in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Craig A. Monson, 139–60. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.
Slocum, Kay. "Goscelin de Saint-Bertin and the Translation Ceremony for Saints Ethelburg, Hildelith, and Wulfhild." In *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture*, edited by Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell, 73–93. York: York Medieval, 2012.
Smith, Lesley. "*Scriba*, *Femina*: Medieval Depictions of Women Writing." In *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, edited by L. Smith and J. H. M Taylor, 21–44. London: British Library, 1997.
Spice, Andrew and Sarah Hamilton. "Defining the Holy: The Delineation of Sacred Space." In *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, edited by Andrew Spice and Sarah Hamilton, 1–23. London: Routledge, 2006.
Sponsler, Claire. *Drama and Resistance: Bodies, Goods, and Theatricality in Late Medieval England*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
Steinauer, Verena Villiger. "Saint sépulcre de la Maigrauge." *Objets historiques: Musée d'art et d'histoire Fribourg*. https://emp-web-73.zetcom.ch/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=WebAsset&url=custom/pdf/1029_fr.pdf&contentType=application/pdf, accessed June 22, 2024.
Stevenson, Jill. *Performance, Cognitive Theory, and Devotional Culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
——. "Rhythmic Liturgy, Embodiment, and Female Authority in Barking's Easter Plays." In *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture*, edited by Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussel, 245–66. York: York Medieval, 2012.

Sticca, Sandro. "The Literary Genesis of the Latin Passion Play and the *Planctus Mariae*." In *The Medieval Drama*, edited by Sandro Sticca, 39–68. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972.

Stokes, James. "Women and Mimesis in Medieval and Renaissance Somerset (and Beyond)." *Comparative Drama* 27 (1993): 176–96.

——. "Women and Performance: Evidence of Universal Cultural Suffrage in Medieval and Early Modern Lincolnshire." In *Women Players in England, 1500–1660: Beyond the All-Male Stage*, edited by Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin, 25–43. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

Sturman, Winifrid. "Barking Abbey: A Study in its External and Internal Administration from the Conquest to the Dissolution." PhD diss., Queen Mary, 1961.

Symes, Carol. "The Appearance of Early Vernacular Plays: Forms, Functions, and the Future of Medieval Theater." *Speculum* 77 (2002): 778–831.

——. "Liturgical Texts and Performance Practices." In *Understanding Medieval Liturgy*, edited by Helen Gittos and Sarah Hamilton, 239–67. London: Routledge, 2016.

——. "The Medieval Archive and the History of Theatre." *Theatre Survey* 52 (2011): 29–58.

Taschl-Erber, Andrea. "Between Recognition and Testimony: Johannine *relecture* of the First Easter Witness and Patristic Readings." In *Noli me tangere in Interdisciplinary Perspective*, edited by Reimund Bieringer, Barbara Baert, and Karlijn Demasure, 77–110. Leuven: Peeters, 2016.

Taylor, Gary. *Moment by Moment Shakespeare*. London: Macmillan, 1985.

Taylor, Jerome and Alan H. Nelson. "Introduction." In *Medieval English Drama*, edited by Jerome Taylor and Alan H. Nelson, 1–27. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.

Theisen, Jerome. "Community and the Shape of Christian Salvation." In *The Continuing Quest for God: Monastic Spirituality in Tradition and Transition*, edited by William Skudlarek. Collegeville: Liturgical, 1982.

Twycross, Meg. "Beyond the Picture Theory: Image and Activity in Medieval Drama." *Word & Image* 4 (1988): 589–617.

——. "Medieval English Theatre: Codes and Genres." In *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture c. 1350–c. 1500*, edited by Peter Brown, 454–72. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007.

——. "Playing 'The Resurrection.'" In *Medieval Studies for J. A. W. Bennett*, edited by P. L. Heyworth, 273–96. Oxford: Clarendon, 1981.

——. "Some Approaches to Dramatic Festivity." In *Festive Drama: Papers from the Sixth Triennial Colloquium of the International Society for the Study of Medieval Theatre, Lancaster, 13–19 July 1989*, edited by Meg Twycross, 1–33. Cambridge: Brewer, 1996.

——. "The Theatricality of Medieval English Plays." In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, edited by Richard Beadle, 37–84. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Twycross, Meg and Sarah Carpenter. *Masks and Masking in Medieval and Early Tudor England*. London: Routledge, 2016.

Tydeman, William. "General Introduction." In *The Medieval European Stage, 500–1550*, edited by William Tydeman, 1–17. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

——. "Introduction." In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, edited by Richard Beadle, 1–36. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
——. *The Theatre in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
Vincent, Catherine. *Fiat lux: Lumières et luminaires dans la vie religieuse en Occident du XIIIe siècle au début du XVIe siècle*. Paris: Cerf, 2004.
Warren, Nancy Bradley. *Spiritual Economies: Female Monasticism in Later Medieval England*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2001.
Watt, Diane. *Medieval Women's Writing: Works by and for Women in England, 1100–1500*. Cambridge: Polity, 2007.
Weaver, Elissa B. *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy: Spiritual Fun and Learning for Women*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
Wenzel, Siegfried. "Sloth in Middle English Devotional Literature." *Anglia* 79 (1961): 287–318.
Weston, Lisa M. C. "Conceiving the Word(s): Habits of Literacy among Earlier Anglo-Saxon Monastic Women." In *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue*, edited by Virginia Blanton, Veronica O'Mara, and Patricia Stoop, 149–67. Turnhout: Brepols, 2013.
——. "The Saintly Female Body and the Landscape of Foundation in Anglo-Saxon Barking." *Medieval Feminist Forum: A Journal of Gender and Sexuality* 43 (2007): 12–25.
——. "The Saint-Maker and the Saint: Hildelith Creates Ethelburg." In *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture*, edited by Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell, 56–72. York: York Medieval, 2012.
Wiles, David. *A Short History of Western Performance Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
Williams, Gweno, Alison Findlay, and Stephanie Hodgson-Wright. "Payments, Permits, and Punishments: Women Performers and the Politics of Place." In *Women Players in England, 1500–1660: Beyond the All-Male Stage*, edited by Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin, 45–67. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.
Williamson, Beth. "Sensory Experience in Medieval Devotion: Sound and Vision, Invisibility and Silence." *Speculum* 88 (2013): 1–43.
"Wivenhoe: Manors and Other Estates." In *A History of the County of Essex*. Vol. 10, *Lexden Hundred (Part) Including Dedham, Earls Colne, and Wivenhoe*, edited by Janet Cooper, 281–82. London: Victoria County History, 2001. www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol10/pp281-282, accessed June 22, 2024.
Wogan-Browne, Jocelyn. "Barking and the Historiography of Female Community." In *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture*, edited by Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell, 283–96. York: York Medieval, 2012.
——. "'Clerc u lai, muïne u dame': Women and Anglo-Norman Hagiography in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries." In *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150–1500*, edited by Carol M. Meale, 61–74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
——. *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture, c. 1150–1300: Virginity and its Authorizations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
——. "Women's Formal and Informal Traditions of Biblical Knowledge in Anglo-Norman England." In *Saints, Scholars, and Politicians: Gender as a Tool in Medieval Studies*, edited by M. Von Dijk and R. Nip, 85–109. Turnhout: Brepols, 2005.
Woolf, Rosemary. *The English Mystery Plays*. London: Routledge, 1972.

Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and the Liber confortatorius, edited by Stephanie Hollis with W. R. Barnes et al. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004.

Yardley, Anne Bagnall. "Chants for the Holy Trinity of Barking Abbey: Ethelburg, Hildelith, and Wulfhild." In *Female-Voice Song and Women's Musical Agency in the Middle Ages*, edited by Anna Kathryn Grau and Lisa Colton, 177–202. Leiden: Brill, 2022.

——. "Liturgy as the Site of Creative Engagement: Contributions of the Nuns of Barking." In *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture*, edited by Jennifer N. Brown and Donna Alfano Bussell, 267–82. York: York Medieval, 2012.

——. "The Musical Education of Young Girls in Medieval English Nunneries." In *Young Choristers, 650–1750*, edited by Susan Boynton and Eric Rice, 49–67. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008.

——. *Performing Piety: Musical Culture in Medieval English Nunneries*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Young, Abigail A. "Theatre-Going Nuns in Rural Devon?" *Records of Early English Drama* 22 (1997): 25–29.

Young, Karl, ed. *The Drama of the Medieval Church*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1933.

Young, Karl. *The Dramatic Associations of the Easter Sepulchre*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1920.

Zyk, Jay. *Shadow and Substance: Eucharistic Controversy and English Drama across the Reformation Divide*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017.

INDEX

Note: Places are in England unless otherwise stated and churches and religious houses are listed under the name of the settlement. References to Essex include locations now within Greater London.

abbesses, 1, 2, 6, 22, 39–41, 44–49, 52–53, 56, 66, 82, 94–96, 102, 107–9, 113, 115, 123, 125–28, 130, 132, 143, 146–48, 157, 182–83, 187, 191

Adgar, 47, 56, 66, 94

altars, 2, 36–37, 39, 61, 72, 74–75, 85–86, 89, 94, 97, 100, 104, 114–15, 117, 124, 143, 151–53, 155–56

ampullae, 2, 60, 90, 116, 121–22, 149. *See also* vessels

Amalarius of Metz, 14, 17

Ancrene Wisse, 55. *See also* Sloth *and Torpor*

Andernach, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*

angels, 2, 12, 36–37, 61–63, 70, 82, 88, 90, 101, 108, 110, 117, 119, 137, 144, 146, 161–62, 170, 187

Anne, saint and feastday, 25n122, 67, 94, 97n216

Annunciation, feastday, 97, 116

apostles, 88, 91, 102–3, 112, 144, 173. *See also* disciples

armaria, 50

"As if," 15, 17–18, 22, 27

Asbeck, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*

Ascension, feastday, 89n182, 95, 116, 173

Assumption, feastday, 94, 173

Aula Magna, University of Fribourg. *See* Fribourg

authority, 41, 104, 109, 121–30, 132, 185. *See also* power

Bagnall Yardley, Anne, 11, 107, 117, 148

Barking Abbey, Essex. *See Depositio*; *Elevatio*; literary culture; liturgy; Mary Magdalen; ordinals and customaries; pageants; priests; schools; seals; sepulchres; *Visitatio sepulchri*

Becket
- Mary, abbess of Barking, 47
- Thomas, 47, 93

Becontree hundred, Essex, 42, 129n328

Bede, Venerable, 46n30, 47

Beleth, John, *Summa de ecclesasticis officiis*, 51, 58, 85, 121

Benedict of Nursia, 49–51, 57–58, 118

bequest, 44–45, 74, 81–84, 128, 131

Bible (Vulgate), 25n124, 71

bishops
- and nuns' literacy, 49
- and nuns' performative activities, 4–7

body of Christ, 2, 60, 70, 72, 75, 79, 92, 98, 111, 116–17. *See also* eucharistic host

boy bishops, 6, 14

Brescia, Italy. *See Visitatio sepulchri*

Bride of Christ (*sponsa Christi*), 65, 107, 110, 120, 190

candelabras, 61, 90, 102, 104, 116, 120–22

candles, 61, 74, 81–82, 96, 102, 120–21, 143, 150, 152, 173–74
- bearers, 137, 154, 156, 163. *See also iuuencule*

Canonsleigh Augustinian nunnery, Devon, 4

Canterbury, Kent. *See Depositio*; *Elevatio*; *Visitatio sepulchri*

cantrix, 35–36, 49, 53, 80, 95–96, 109, 115, 147, 170
Carrow, Benedictine nunnery, Norfolk, 6, 52n52
Catesby, Cistercian nunnery, Northamptonshire, 7
Catherine. *See* Clemence of Barking
cellaresses, 51–52
changes of clothes, 79, 90, 110, 113n275, 115, 120, 122
chants, liturgical, 1n1, 7, 19, 23–24, 26, 39, 43, 49, 51–54, 57, 59–60, 62, 68–69, 70n121, 78, 84, 88–89, 91, 96–98, 100, 103, 106–7, 109–10, 112, 117–18, 136–37, 140, 145–48, 156–65, 168–69, 177–78, 180–82, 184, 187, 190. *See also* music
chantries, 124n312
chapels, 6, 124, 152–53
  Mary Magdalen, Barking Abbey, 1, 2, 35–36, 39, 62, 79–80, 94, 97, 150–55
  Saints, Barking Abbey, 95, 151
  Salve (Lady Chapel), Barking Abbey, 94
charters, 129–30, 192
Cheshunt, Hertfordshire
  St. Mary's Benedictine nunnery, 6
Chester, Cheshire
  Chester Plays, 3, 23–24. *See also* pageants
choirs
  church spaces, 48–49, 63, 94, 102, 106, 125, 151, 153, 178, 187
  screens, 46, 67, 85n172, 154
  singers, 15, 45, 78, 94, 104–6, 109, 110, 137, 156
Christ
  humanity, 64–67, 72, 97
  Passion of Christ, 25, 65–68, 72, 76, 84–86, 145, 171, 174–75
  See also Body of Christ
Christmas, feastday, 3, 5, 7, 95n206
churches, 5–8, 10, 12–13, 17–20, 23–24, 26–27, 29n138, 45, 54–55, 63, 67, 73–74, 81–83, 85n172, 102, 112, 114, 116, 119, 124, 126, 131–32, 140, 145, 151, 162, 164, 167–68, 170–72, 176, 184, 187
  Barking Abbey, 1, 2, 7, 40–41, 42–47, 54, 56, 59–60, 63, 67, 73–75, 80–81, 87–89, 91, 94, 97, 107, 111–12, 120, 123–27, 130,140, 142, 147, 151, 153–54, 165, 178, 182–83
  La Maigrauge, 133, 139–40, 142, 152–54, 157, 164, 166, 168, 172–76, 179–82, 184
Clemence of Barking, 47, 56, 57, 93, 96, 100, 101, 106, 188n4
Clensyng of Mannes Soule, 55, 76–79, 84, 85, 131
clerics, 1–2, 11, 22–23, 33–36, 39–41, 43, 46, 54–55, 59, 60, 62–63, 67, 69, 70, 74, 77, 80–81, 84–86, 90–91, 93, 95–96, 105, 110–17, 119, 122–23, 125, 132, 136, 139, 142–44, 147–48, 150, 152–57, 159–60, 162–63, 167, 169, 172, 187, 189–90, 192–94
cognitive theory, 33, 68
Cohen, Gustave, 13, 17
colours, 144–45
  red, 91n191, 145, 148
  white, 2, 12, 61, 79, 90–91, 96, 99, 101–2, 113, 120–21, 144–45, 147, 153, 167
community, 2, 3n4, 16, 26, 32–33, 45–46, 49, 53, 56, 74, 77, 80, 83, 106–8, 112, 114, 118–22, 123, 126–27, 135, 137, 147, 150, 160, 180–84, 189–90, 193–94
compassionate devotion, 57, 64–76, 79, 81, 84, 90, 93, 98, 145, 172, 179, 184, 189
composers, 29, 46, 52, 56, 143, 194
confession, 36, 45n24, 77, 79–80, 83–84, 86, 95n208, 96, 101–2, 113, 115, 144, 146, 154, 178–79. *See also* penance
consecration ceremony (Consecration of a Virgin), 107n251, 109n262, 110, 115, 120–22
convent drama, 2n4, 7–11, 30, 52n52, 133, 188–89
copes, 61n86, 90, 96, 111, 144–45, 163n55
Corpus Christi, feastday, 3, 76n138, 126

costumes, 3n5, 6, 12n48, 26–27, 33, 60–61, 64, 79, 90, 134, 139, 144, 147, 153, 162–71, 183, 185, 191–92
Coventry, Warwickshire. *See* pageants

dalmatics, liturgical garment, 23n111, 111, 145n17
dancing, 4–7, 10–11
deacons, 2, 17, 23n111, 41, 111, 144, 148n26, 150n29, 167, 170
Dedication of the Church, 42, 45, 91, 112, 125–26
De informacione simplicium, 55, 77
De remediis contra temptationes. *See* Flete
Depositio, liturgical moment
  definition, 7–9
  Barking, 7, 11, 87, 92
  Canterbury, 8
  Dublin, 8n35
  Durham, 8
  Edinburgh, 8n35
  Exeter, 8
  Hereford, 8
  Norwich, 8
  Oxford, 8
  Salisbury, 8
  York, 8
devotion. *See* compassionate devotion
Digby plays, 4, 25
disciples, 2, 17, 24, 27, 60, 71, 78, 87–88, 102–7, 109–10, 113–17, 120–21, 137, 144, 171. *See also* apostles
Dissolution of the Monasteries, 6, 40, 49, 192–93
Divine Office, liturgy, 13, 41, 95n206, 157, 179
  Matins, 1, 19, 39, 45n24, 56, 63, 87, 90, 132, 137, 139, 144
  Vespers, 157, 171–72
Dublin, Ireland
  church of St. John the Evangelist, 145
  See also Depositio; *Elevatio*; *Visitatio sepulchri*
Durandus (Guillaume Durand), 58, 71, 85–88, 90, 111, 116, 121
Durham, Co. Durham. *See Depositio*

Easter, feastday, 1, 6, 11, 13, 19, 24, 26–27, 39, 42, 46, 59–60, 66, 77, 81–82, 87–90, 114, 124, 130, 133–34, 137, 144–45, 152, 178, 187
  Monday, 26. *See also* Good Friday; Holy Saturday; Holy Week; Maundy Thursday; Palm Sunday
Edgar, king of England, 45, 193
Edinburgh, Scotland. *See Depositio*
Elevatio, liturgical moment
  definition, 1, 7
  Barking, 39–185
  Canterbury, 8
  Dublin, 8n35, 40n2, 145
  Exeter, 8
  Hereford, 8
  Norwich, 8
  Salisbury, 8
  York, 8
Elstow Abbey, Bedfordshire, 49
emotions, 11–12, 33, 49, 62, 64, 66, 68, 72, 86, 90, 99, 109, 117, 121, 150, 159–62, 164, 168, 171–72, 174–75, 177, 179, 184–85. *See also* compassionate devotion
Erkenwald, saint, 19, 182n110, 192
Essen, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
Essex, 42, 51, 124, 127, 129–30, 192
Ethelburga, saint, 5, 19, 44–45, 47, 94, 107–9, 125
Eucharist, 83, 85, 88, 91–92, 98, 114, 126
  eucharistic host, 2, 24, 26, 72, 75–76, 82–84, 91–93, 98, 113, 122, 139, 175, 177. *See also* mass
Exeter, Devon. *See Depositio*; *Elevatio*
Eynsham Abbey, Oxfordshire, 8
Felton
  Joan of, 44n21, 124n312
  Mary, 44n21
  Sybil of, abbess of Barking, 1, 40, 44n21, 53, 66, 127, 130, 132
  Thomas, Knight of the Garter, 40
Findlay, Alison, 3, 10, 151, 153
Flanigan, C. Clifford, 10, 16, 28, 30
Flete, William, 50n43, 76, 78, 84
Fleury, France
  playbook, 29
  Visitatio, 105, 145n17
Fourth Lateran Council. *See* Lateran IV
Fribourg, Switzerland: Aula Magna, University of Fribourg, 133, 140, 142

Gandersheim, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
Gernrode, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
girl abbesses, 6, 11
Gittos, Helen, 19–20, 31
Godstow Benedictine nunnery, Oxfordshire, 6, 56
Goldsmiths guild. *See* pageants
Good Friday, feastday, 7, 45, 77, 81– 82, 87, 92, 145, 151n31, 154–55, 175, 182
Goscelin de Saint-Bertin, 47–48, 51, 93, 107–8
gospels, 7, 50–51, 54, 57, 61, 63, 89, 95n206, 95n208, 117
  John, 60, 71, 89
  Luke, 60, 78n148, 89, 102
  Mark, 89, 102
  Matthew, 60, 72, 89, 99, 102, 121
  Nicodemus, 62
Le Gracial. *See* Adgar
Guernes (Garnier) de Pont-Sainte-Maxence, 47, 93
Guillaume Durand. *See* Durandus

habits, liturgical vestments, 2, 5, 90, 91n191, 110, 113, 120, 147, 163, 166, 170, 185, 193
Hardison, O. B., Jr., 14–17
Hatfield Regis, Essex, 129
Havelberg, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
Hell, 1, 62–63, 150, 161
  doors of, 80, 142, 144
  Harrrowing of, 61, 80, 112, 117
Hereford, Herefordshire. *See Depositio*; *Elevatio*
Hildegard von Bingen, 9, 59n81, 188
Hildelith, saint, 44, 46–47, 53, 94, 107
Holy Saturday, feastday, 89, 120n300
Holy Trinity Augustinian nunnery, 6
Holy Week, 7, 10, 14, 66, 77, 81, 87, 171
Honorius of Autun, 14, 17
host. *See under* Eucharist
Hrostvit of Gandersheim, 9, 188
humanity of Christ, 64–67, 72, 97
Huy Carmelite convent, Belgium, 8–9, 114n278, 133, 178n101, 188

Ilford lepers' hospital, Essex, 45, 128
images, 17, 46, 58–59, 64, 67, 71, 73–75, 86–87, 91–92, 96, 98, 102–3, 111, 143, 146–47, 150, 157, 189
impersonation, 13–17, 21–23, 169–70
incipits, 1n1, 89, 109, 161
inclusion of spectators in drama and liturgy, 3, 54, 74–75, 83–84, 90, 123, 155
Ingatestone manor, Essex, 127, 129
Innocents (Holy), feastday, 6
instruction, 23, 33, 49, 55, 57, 77, 92–93, 122, 131, 147, 173, 189, 194
interviews, 9n38, 156–58, 163, 167, 170–73, 177, 179, 184–85, 187, appendix 1
iuuuencule. See schools—schoolgirls

Judith/Vulfruna, nun of Barking, 47, 51

kissing, 2, 62, 70–71, 78, 81, 88, 98–99, 116–17, 126, 143–44, 154–55

laity. *See populus*
Lambeth Council (1281), 55, 77
Lateran IV Council (1215), 55, 91
Lay Folk's Mass Book, 87, 122
lectio divina, 49–50, 57–58, 60, 105
lectrix, 49
Legenda aurea, 57n72, 79, 104
Lent, liturgical season, 50, 57n73, 59
Lichfield cathedral, Staffordshire, 8, 27
Lichtenthal bei Baden-Baden, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
Life of St. Catherine. *See* Clemence of Barking
Life of St. Edward, 47, 56– 57, 93
light, 20–21, 32–33, 59–61, 74, 82, 99, 101–4, 106, 109, 120–22, 143, 154–55, 163, 168–69, 171, 174, 185, 188
Limebrook/Lymbrook Augustinian nunnery, Herefordshire, 5
linen cloths. *See sudaria*
Lipphardt, Walther, 8n35, 11, 16, 148
literacy, 30, 43n17, 48, 57, 188
literary cultures, 40–41, 47, 56, 93, 98, 100–1, 105–6, 114, 117, 132, 183, 189
liturgical dramas, 11–30

liturgical year, 87, 171
liturgy
  at Barking Abbey, 43–45, 53–54, 84–96
  liturgy and drama, 11–30, 84–96, 162–80, 183–85, 190–91
  nature of liturgy, 28, 90–91, 171, 174
London
  All Hallows (church), 6
  church of St. Dunstan in the West, 26
  St. Helen's Bishopsgate Benedictine nunnery, 7
  See also Goldsmiths guild
love, 49, 55, 64–65, 67–68, 70–72, 76, 88, 98–100, 105–8
Love, Nicholas, 56, 65–66, 68, 72, 74, 76, 78, 84, 94, 96–101, 103, 108, 110, 113, 115
ludi, 21
  Ludus de decem virginibus, 189
  Ludus Paschalis, 20n94, 133, 187

La Maigrauge, Cistercian abbey, Switzerland, 133, 137, 139–40, 151, 153–54, 156–58, 160, 163–66, 168, 171–76, 178–85, 187, 191. *See also* churches; sepulchres
mass, liturgy, 13–15, 17, 22, 41, 43, 45n24, 49, 60, 71, 75–76, 83, 85–86, 88, 90–91, 115–17, 126, 160, 173. *See also* Eucharist
Margaret, saint and feastday, 5, 45n24
Mark, evangelist and feastday, 45, 85n172
Marienberg bei Helmstedt, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
Mary Magdalen, saint, 23–24, 71–72, 78–79, 88, 97, 103–4, 108–9, 168, 170, 173, 184, 187, 190
  Apostola apostolorum, 103–4
  Barking, 2, 12, 35–37, 62, 68, 70–72, 74, 78–80, 82, 86, 88–89, 94, 96–100, 103–4, 106–9, 113, 116, 118, 150, 161, 166, 168, 170, 179, 190
Mary, mother of Christ, 47, 65–67, 89n182, 94, 96–101, 105–10, 115
Mary, mother of James, 2, 36, 67, 72, 97, 109, 118, 170
Mary Salome, 2, 12, 36, 67, 72, 97, 110, 118
Maundy Thursday, feastday, 45, 59n78, 76–77, 87, 89, 179
mediators, 100, 102, 120, 123
Medinberg bei Lüneburg, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
Medieval Convent Drama Project, 133, 163, 185, 187n1
memory, 23, 25n124, 32, 44, 58–60, 64, 74, 84, 93, 107, 112, 124n312, 159, 183–84, 190
messengers, 101–2, 104, 108, 176
Mirk, John
  Instructions for Parish Priests, 55, 131
  Festial, 131
Mirror for Recluses, 50n43, 52
Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ. *See* Love, Nicholas
monstrances, liturgical object, 90, 92, 138, 143–44, 175
movement, 1n1, 11, 14, 20, 59–60, 62, 86–87, 118, 134, 137, 144, 146, 150, 153–54, 156, 159–61, 167–68, 170, 179, 190–91, 193
Münster, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
music, 9, 11–12, 26, 31–33, 69–70, 91, 110–11, 122, 135–36, 145–46, 148, 157–62, 164–69, 178–79, 183, 185, 193. *See also* chant

naves, 46, 85, 94, 109, 123n309, 124
Nicholas, saint and feastday, 6, 29n138, 188
Noli me tangere, 37, 71–72, 79–80, 89, 99, 111, 145, 162
Norwich, Norfolk. *See Depositio*; *Elevatio*; pageants; *Visitatio sepulchri*
notes
  before the Barking *Elevatio* and *Visitatio*, 39, 53, 55, 127, 130, 132, 189
  beginning of the Ordinal, 191
Nottuln, Germany. See *Visitatio sepulchri*
novices, 102n234, 121, 147, 173
N-Town Plays, 23, 25n116. *See also* pageants
Nun Cotham Cistercian nunnery, Lincolnshire, 5

Obermünster abbey. *See* Regensburg
obits, 43–44
Offices of the Dead, liturgy, 44
Officium pastorum, 27
Officium stellae, 28, 29n138
Ogden, Dunbar, 16, 79, 153
ointments, 60, 187
ordinals and customaries, liturgical books, 1, 4, 7, 11, 31, 39, 40–42, 44n21, 46, 48, 50–55, 62, 68, 75, 89, 94–95, 99–100, 102, 109, 111, 113–14, 116, 125, 130, 132, 134, 137, 142–54, 175–76, 178, 183–84, 189, 191–92
ordination, 110, 116
Ordo Virtutum. *See* Hildegard von Bingen
Origny Sainte-Benoîte, France. *See Visitatio sepulchri* and *ludi*
Oxford, Oxfordshire. *See Depositio*
Osbert of Clare, 47

pageants, 3, 24
  All Hallows, 6
  Barking, 192–94
  Chester, 3, 24
  Coventry, 3–4
  London Goldsmiths, 3
  Norwich, 4
  N-Town, 23
  Towneley, 23–24
  York, 23–24, 26, 69
palms, 26, 35–36, 60, 85n172, 90, 96, 150–51, 153
Palm Sunday, feastday, 26, 45, 97, 90, 173–74
Le Pâquier Carmelite convent, Switzerland, 8n38, 178n101
parables, 121–22
parishioners. *See populus*
Passion of Christ. *See* Christ
patriarchs. *See priores*
patronage, 10, 45, 47, 82, 94, 124–26
Peasants' Rising of 1381, 129–30
Peckham, John, archbishop of Canterbury, 41, 51, 77, 128
penance, 44, 55, 57, 64, 76–84, 93, 100n224, 113. *See also* confession
Pentecost, feastday, 23, 103, 109
Peregrinus, 27–28, 29n138
performance research, 31, 133–35, 189
performers, 12, 25, 31–34, 54, 59, 62–64, 69–70, 74, 80, 84, 90–91, 93, 96, 106, 110–13, 119, 122, 124, 134–35, 137, 139–40, 143–44, 147–49, 151, 156–57, 159–60, 162, 165, 167, 170, 183–85, 190, 193–94
playbook. *See* Fleury
Poitiers, France. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
populus, 1, 10, 33, 39–40, 42–46, 54–56, 61, 67–68, 70, 74–75, 77, 80–86, 93, 104, 109, 112, 122–33, 148, 154–55, 162, 167, 174, 176–79, 184, 187, 189, 190, 193
power, 41, 45, 56, 80, 117, 119, 122–27, 130, 132, 155, 177, 189–90, 194. *See also* authority
Powsnett, William, 51, 57n72, 79, 85, 105
Prague, Czechia. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
preaching, 7, 54, 85n172, 95n208, 103–6, 108, 116, 118
priests, 17, 19, 27, 55, 71, 77, 83, 86, 88, 92, 98, 111, 115–17, 122, 125, 163, 166, 169, 174, 187
  of Barking Abbey, 1–2, 11, 22, 39–41, 43, 45, 53–54, 62, 75, 80, 82–83, 86–87, 90, 92, 95–96, 107, 109–11, 113, 116–17, 142, 144, 148, 150, 153, 156–57, 165
priores, 1, 22–23, 36, 60, 78, 82, 110, 113–14, 117, 120, 150, 153
prioresses, 5, 22, 45n26, 56, 95, 109n256, 125n316, 157
programmes, 139, 148, 193
props, 3n5, 27, 30, 32–33, 60, 64, 90–91, 122, 134, 143, 149–50, 153, 162, 165–67, 183
prostration, 62, 79, 88
pulpita, 46, 109, 154
purification, 79–80, 101, 113, 115–17

Rankin, Susan, 11, 16
Rationale. *See* Durandus
reading, 46, 48–51, 56–59, 65–66, 72–73, 76, 84, 89, 105, 149, 159, 161–63, 173–75
Regensburg, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*

Regularis Concordia, 8, 15, 17–18
resurrection, 2, 7, 8, 23–24, 27, 29, 39, 56, 60–64, 66–67, 69–73, 75, 77–79, 81–83, 86–88, 92, 94, 96–97, 99, 100–1, 103–5, 107, 109–12, 114, 117, 121–23, 144, 161, 168–69, 171, 185
Rising of 1381. See Peasants' Rising
Rogation Days, 18, 45, 54, 126
Rouen, France. *See Visitatio sepulchri*

St. Albans, Hertfordshire
  St. Mary de Pré Benedictine nunnery, 5–6, 49n39
St. Edward. See *Life of St. Edward*
Salisbury, Wiltshire. *See Depositio*; *Elevatio*
Salzburg, Austria. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
schools, 174
  monastic, Barking Abbey, 46
  Barking Abbey, 192
  schoolgirls, 102, 120–22, 154. *See also* candle bearers
scribes, 51–52, 143
scripts, 20, 22, 32, 72, 140, 142, 148–49, 156–57, 163, 196–221
scriptrix, 54n55
Scriptures, 1, 11–12, 23–25, 39, 49, 51, 54, 57–64, 70, 74–75, 78, 81, 84, 86, 88, 90–91, 93–94, 99, 101–2, 105–6, 109–14, 117–18, 121–23, 137, 149–50, 157–58, 160–61, 169, 171–75, 177–80,184–85, 190
seals, 48, 94, 101n227, 108, 187
sepulchres, 1, 7, 8n35, 13, 27, 59n78, 67, 73, 76n138, 77, 81–82, 89, 137, 152
  Barking, 1–2, 39, 60, 62–63, 73–75, 81–82, 87–88, 90, 92, 98, 102, 104, 117, 140, 144, 147, 151
  La Maigrauge, 140, 144, 147, 152–53, 175, 180–81, 182, 187
Sheingorn, Pamela, 11, 152
Sheppey, Kent
  Sts. Mary and Sexburga Benedictine nunnery, 6
Shrewsbury Fragments, 26
shrines, 44, 59n78, 107, 131
sloth, 55, 78n146, 83n165, 131. *See also torpor*
space, 3n5, 20, 29n138, 31–32, 63–64, 87, 89, 91–92, 111–12, 114, 122–25, 134–35, 137, 140, 147, 151, 153, 157, 164–69, 172, 183, 190–91, 193
spectatorship, 16, 21, 30, 32–33, 68, 73, 158
  medieval, 39–132
  modern, 133–85. *See also* inclusion of spectators
Stamford, Lincolnshire
  St. Michael's Priory, 5
Stephen, king of England, 42, 127n323
stoles, liturgical vestment, 12, 61, 90, 144, 163n55
Stratford Langthorne abbey, Essex, 129
sudaria, 36–37, 60, 71, 82, 88, 90, 116, 166
surplices, 2, 61, 90–91, 96, 113, 116, 167, 170
Summa de ecclesasticis officiis. *See* Beleth
Sutton
  Hugh, 40n2
  Isabella, prioress of Barking, 44n21
  John, 40n2
  Katherine, abbess of Barking, 35, 39–40, 53, 55, 127–28, 132, 183
synesthesia, neurological condition, 59, 60n81, 74–75, 89, 190

thuribles, liturgical objects, 59, 90, 144, 150n29
Tolhurst, J. B. L., 11, 148
torpor, 35, 39, 55. *See also* sloth
touch, 59, 70–72, 98–99, 115–17, 168, 177, 180n106, 190–91
Towneley plays, 23–24. *See also* pageants
translations, 23, 47, 56, 65, 148–49, 155, 161
transmission, 32, 46, 97, 101, 103–5, 108–9, 116, 121, 123, 134, 157, 175, 177, 194
Troyes, France. *See Visitatio sepulchri*

veils, 2, 59, 61, 90, 91n191, 96, 113, 120, 159, 167
vessels, 2, 32, 59–60, 71, 124, 149, 163. *See also ampullae*

vestments, 15, 23, 32, 59, 74, 90–91, 110–11, 116, 124, 144–45, 147, 153, 163, 166, 169, 193
La Vie des pères, 93, 105
Visitatio sepulchri, liturgical moment
  definition, 1, 7
  Andernach, 9
  Asbeck, 9
  Barking, 39–185
  Brescia, 9
  Canterbury, 8
  Dublin, 8n35, 40n2, 145
  Essen, 8
  Fleury, 105, 145n17
  Gandersheim, 9
  Gernrode, 9, 91n191
  Havelberg, 9
  Lichtenthal bei Baden-Baden, 9
  Marienberg bei Helmstedt, 9
  Medinberg bei Lüneburg, 9
  Münster, 9
  Norwich, 8
  Nottuln, 9
  Origny Sainte-Benoîte, 8, 91n191, 115n281, 187
  Poitiers, 8, 187
  Prague, 9, 145n17
  Regensburg-Obermünster, 9, 91n191
  Rouen, 23, 145
  Salzburg, 9
  Troyes, 8, 91n191, 115n281, 187
  Wienhausen, 9
  Wilton, 1n1, 7–8, 10–11, 91n191, 115n281, 145, 187–88
  Winchester, 8
  Wöltingerrode, 9
Voragine, Jacobus. *See Legenda aurea*
Vulfruna. *See* Judith
Vulgate. *See* Bible
Waltham Abbey, Essex, 129
washing, 45, 78–79, 87, 113, 115
watching, 33, 46, 59–60, 68–70, 72–74, 80, 84, 91, 93, 115, 118, 122, 124, 139, 150, 154, 156–57, 167, 178–79, 182, 185
Wells, Somerset, 4, 27
Wherwell nunnery, Hampshire, 56
Wienhausen, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
Wilton, Wiltshire. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
Winchester, Hampshire
  St. Mary's Abbey, 6
  St. Swithun Priory, 5. *See also Visitatio sepulchri*
wise virgins, parable, 121–22
witnesses, 10, 21, 23, 25, 28, 30–31, 33, 39, 42, 46, 48, 56, 65, 67, 72–73, 75–76, 81–82, 88, 90, 97–98, 100, 103, 108–9, 117, 122, 124, 154, 157, 171–72, 189–90
Wix Benedictine nunnery, Essex, 7
Wöltingerrode, Germany. *See Visitatio sepulchri*
Wulfhilde, 44, 47, 53, 95, 108

York, Yorkshire
  York plays, 23–24, 26, 69. *See also Depositio*; *Elevatio*; pageants
Young, Karl, 11, 13–16, 22, 148