Acknowledgments

This project began as my doctoral dissertation and grew from there into the present book. Along the way it was nurtured by numerous institutions and people. 1

This work is based on extensive research in European archives, libraries, and museums. I would particularly like to thank the staffs of the following institutions for their assistance. In Germany: the Badische Landesbibliothek, Karlsruhe (manuscript and microfilm collections); the General Landesarchiv, Karlsruhe; the Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart (manuscript collection and permission to take photographs); the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg (for their well-lit library and their permission to photograph as well); the Universitätsbibliothek, Freiburg (manuscript collection); and the Stadtarchiv, Freiburg (for their archives and library). In Switzerland: the Zentralbibliothek, Zurich (manuscript collection); and the Historisches Museum, Basel. In France: the Bibliothèque de la Ville, Colmar (for their manuscripts, permission to photograph, and their tolerance of my torturous French). I would also like to thank the staff at the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, where I spent a very cold January in 1999. Their Heckman Research Stipend allowed me to use that collection. 2

My research has fortunately been funded by several grants and fellowships. Early on there was a Frances Mary Hazen Fellowship (1995–1996) and a Joseph F. Skinner Fellowship in History (1996–1997), both from my alma mater Mount Holyoke College. A DAAD Fellowship to Freiburg, Germany (1996–1998) and a T. Anne Cleary International Research Fellowship from the University of Iowa (1997–1998) allowed me to pursue research in Europe. A Seashore Dissertation Year Fellowship from the Graduate College of the University of Iowa allowed me to complete the writing of the dissertation. The Lisa Lee / Marc Ewing Postdoctoral Fellowship in Women's Studies and German Studies (unfortunately now defunct) at Duke University in 2001/2002 allowed me to begin making the changes required to transform this work into a monograph. And finally this project entered its final stages in 2004 when I was awarded the Gutenberg-e Dissertation Prize for 2003 from the American Historical Association and Columbia University Press, supported by an Andrew W. Mellon Grant. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity that the Prize gave me to publish my work. 3

The early career of many historians is often itinerant before finding a permanent position—my case is no different. For their support of my teaching career and interest in my research, I would like to thank the History Departments of Kutztown University, Wabash College, Wright State University, and the University of Arizona. Having finally settled into a position, I would like to thank my colleagues at Wartburg College for their support and encouragement, and my 4

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students for their tolerance as sometimes the book took precedence over my reading of their own writing. And then there is the wonderful staff of the Wartburg College Information Technology Services who scanned all of the images for this book.

Many individual people deserve thanks for their help, comments, suggestions, and questions about my work, and their willingness to listen to me talk about "my nuns." At the University of Iowa, I owe a great debt of gratitude to my advisor, Constance Berman, for encouragement, the imposition of deadlines, letters of support, bibliography, advice on photographing manuscripts and architecture, good discussions and ideas, and editing. Glenn Ehrstine checked my Middle High German translations and William Duba helped with the Latin (in all cases any mistakes are most certainly my own). Katherine Tachau taught me Latin paleography, wrote letters of support, and gave general encouragement. Ann Roberts made sure I had a good background in art history. Ellen Millender and Claire Sponsler, along with Constance Berman, Katherine Tachau, Ann Roberts, and Glenn Ehrstine served as my dissertation committee. Their comments and suggestions greatly improved the revision of this text. 5

I want to thank the attendees of my conference presentations at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, England, and at Kalamazoo for their insightful questions, as well as those who attended the Liegè conference on Holy Women in December 1996. In Germany, I would like to thank the following: the members of the Landesgeschichte Colloquium at Albert-Lüdwig-Universität (1997 and 1998) for their inclusion of an American scholar into their group; Thomas Zotz for serving as my advisor while I was a DAAD-Stipendiatin in Freiburg; Helmut and Frauke Raabe for their hospitality; Eva-Marie Butz for being a wonderful guide into the intricacies of German universities, and for going to the movies with me; and Claudia Agne née Raabe for being the perfect roommate, letting me use her medieval books, giving me tours of medieval cities, introducing me to Germany and encouraging me to stay, and being a wonderful friend and Katzenmutti to Leonardo, Bianca, and Xenia (Maus), who provided stress-relief. 6

In addition to those named above, the following people provided feedback on this project in its various stages: Michelle Armstrong-Partida, Nancy Bishop, Virginia Blanton-Whetsell, Rachel Bohlman, Kurt Boughan (who also helped with some Latin), Karen Christianson, Patrick Conyers, Janice Faris, Sarah Farmer, Andrea Gayoso, James Giblin, Kate Greenspan, Sarah Hanley, Lisa Harkey, Henry Horwitz, Erin Jordan, Kathleen Kamerick, Susan Karant-Nunn, Linda Kerber, Sara Kimble, Mary Kovel (who helped me come up with the title), Heather Martin, Linda Mitchell, Christine Owens, Michelle Rhoades, Sharon Rorbakken, Malcolm Rohrbough, Helene Scheck, Jane Schulenberg, and Nancy Turner. Robert Townsend 7

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and Elisabeth Fairhead of the American Historical Association and Kate Wittenberg, Nathaniel Herz, copy editor Julia Haslett, and the staff at EPIC were extremely helpful as this project reached its close.

I am indebted to my family for their support. My sister Kirsten patiently listened to me talk about medieval history, while my aunt Susan read some of my conference papers. I am especially grateful to my father. He accompanied me to obscure monastic ruins in the German countryside, drove me to see and photograph St. Katharinenthal in Switzerland and Unterlinden in France, was generally a good sport about being dragged into every pre-Reformation church we came across, and waited patiently outside the history museums into which I would disappear for long periods of time to photograph all sorts of things. Thank you. **8**

I dedicate this work to the memory of my mother who saw the beginning of my love for all things medieval, but never had a chance to see that interest bear fruit. **9**

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List of Abbreviations

Acta	Acta capitulorum generalium ordinis Praedicatorum. B. M. Reichert, ed., MOPH 3, Rome, 1898.
AFP	Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum
AMF	Augustinermuseum, Freiburg, Germany.
ASB	"Die Chronik der Anna von Munzingen. Nach der ältesten Abschrift mit Einleitung und Beilagen." J. König, ed., *Freiburger Diözesan Archiv 13* (1880): 129-236. [Adelhausen Sister-Book]
ASB, Meyer	Extracts from the works of Johannes Meyer contained in the appendices of "Die Chronik der Anna von Munzingen. Nach der ältesten Abschrift mit Einleitung und Beilagen." J. König, ed., *Freiburger Diözesan Archiv 13* (1880): 129-236. [Adelhausen Sister-Book]
BLB	Badische Landesbibliothek, Karlsruhe, Germany.
B.m.	Breisacher munze, coins from the city of Breisach.
BVC	Bibliotheque de la Ville, Colmar, France
Const.	"Constitutions of the Sisters of the Order of Friars Preachers by Blessed Humbert of the Romans," in *Early Documents of the Dominican Sisters*. Volume 2. Summit, NJ: Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary, 1969.
d.	denarius, pfenning, penny-monetary measure.
Denne	Denne, Ulrike. *Die Frauenklöster im spätmittelalterlichen Freiburg im Breisgau*. Forschungen zur Oberrheinischen Landesgeschichte 39. Freiburg: Karl Alber, 1997.
EBA	Erzbischöfliches Archiv, Freiburg, Germany.
ESB	"Der Nonne von Engeltal Büchlein von der Gnaden Uberlast." Karl Schröder, ed., *Litterarischer Verein in Stuttgart*, 1871, 1-44. [Engeltal Sister-Book].
FDA	*Freiburger Diözesan Archiv*. Freiburg, 1868 ff.
Finke	Finke, H. "Zur Geschichte der deutschen Dominikaner im XIII. und XIV. Jahrhundert." *Römische Quartalschrift für Christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte* 8 (1894): 374-92.
F.m.	Freiburger munze, coins from the city of Freiburg.

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FUB	*Freiburger Urkundenbuch*. Friedrich Hefele, ed., Freiburg. Band 1, 1940; Band 2, 1951; Band 3, 1957.
Geschichte	*Geschichte der Stadt Freiburg*. Haumann, Hans and Hans Schadek, eds. Band 1: *Von den Anfängen bis zum "Neuen Stadtrecht" von 1520*. Stuttgart: Theiss, 1996.
GNM	Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Germany.
Grundmann	Grundmann, Herbert. *Religious Movements of the Middle Ages*. Steven Rowan, trans., Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995.
GSB	"Aufzeichnungen über das mystische Leben der Nonnen von Kirchberg bei Sulz Predigerordens während des XIV. und XV. Jahrhunderts." F. W. E. Roth, ed., *Alemannia* 21 (1893): 123-48. [Gotteszell Sister-Book]
Hinnebusch	Hinnebusch, William. *History of the Dominican Order: Origins and Growth to 1500*. New York: Alba House, 1966.
Ingold	Ingold, A.M.P. *Le Monastère des Unterlinden de Colmar au treiziéme siécle*, vol. 1. Strasbourg, 1896.
KSB	*Das 'St. Katharinentaler Schwesternbuch': Untersuchung, Edition, Kommentar*. Ruth Meyer, ed., Tubingen: Max Niemeyer, 1995. [St. Katharinenthal Sister-Book]
l.	libra, pfund, a pound-monetary measure.
Lat. Const.	*Liber Constitutionum Sororum Ordinis Praedicatorum,* in *Analecta Sacris Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum 3* (1897): 337-48.
Lewis	Lewis, Gertrud Jaron. *By Women, for Women, about Women. The Sister-Books of Fourteenth-Century Germany*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1996.
maiores	Annales Colmarienses maiores, MGH Scriptores 17, 202-31.
MGH	Monumenta Germania Historica
minores	Annales Colmarienses minores, MGH Scriptores 17, 189-93.
MOPH	*Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica*. Rome, 1897 ff.
M.s.	Marks silver.

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OSB	"Die Stiftung des Klosters Oetenbach und das Leben der seligen Schwestern daselbst, aus der Nürnberger Handschrift." H. Zeller-Werdmüller and Jakob Bächtold, eds., *Zürcher Taschenbuch* n.s. 12 (1889): 213-76. [Oetenbach Sister-Book]
QF	*Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens in Deutschland*. Leipzig, 1907 ff.
RDK	*Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, Stuttgart: Alfred Druckenmüller, 1937 ff.
s.	solidus, schilling-monetary measure
SAF	Stadtarchiv, Freiburg, Germany.
SNM	Swiss National Museum, Zurich, Switzerland.
SSB	"Aufzeichnungen über das mystische Leben der Nonnen von Kirchberg bei Sulz Predigerordens während des XIV. und XV. Jahrhunderts." F. W. E. Roth, ed., *Alemannia* 21 (1893): 103-23. [Kirchberg bei Sulz Sister-Book]
TSB	*Das Leben der Schwestern zu Töss beschrieben von Elsbet Stagel, samt der Vorrede des Johannes Meyer und dem Leben der Prinzessin Elisabet von Ungarn*. Ferdinand Vetter, ed., *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters 6*. Berlin: Weidmann, 1906. [Töss Sister-Book]
TUB	*Thurgauisches Urkundenbuch.* Thurgauischer Historischer Verein, ed., Frauenfeld, Switzerland, 1917 ff.
Tugwell	*Early Dominicans: Selected Writings*. Simon Tugwell, ed. and trans., New York: Paulist Press, 1982.
UBB	*Urkundenbuch der Stadt Basel*. Rudolf Wackernagel and Rudolf Thommen, eds., Basel: Reich Vormals Detloffs, 1890-1899.
UBF	Universitätsbibliothek, Freiburg, Germany.
Urbare	*Die Adelhauser Urbare von 1327 und 1423*. Norbert Ohler, ed., Freiburg: Stadtarchiv, 1988.
USB	"Les 'Vitae Sororum' d'Unterlinden. Édition critique du ms. 508 de la bibliothèque de Colmar." Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, ed., in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge 5* (1930): 317-519. [Unterlinden Sister-Book]
WLB	Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart, Germany.

WSB	"Mystisches Leben in dem Dominikanerinnenkloster Weiler bei Eßlingen im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert." Karl Bihlmeyer, ed., in *Württembergische Vierteljahreshefte für Landesgeschichte*, n.s. 25 (1916): 61-93. [Weiler Sister-Book]
ZBZ	Zentralbibliothek, Zurich, Switzerland.

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Preface

The following stylistic forms have been adopted for this work. Sister-Book(s) is used instead of *Schwesternbuch*(*ër*). Life/lives and *vita/vitae* are used interchangeably throughout the work. **1**

Where possible, place names have been anglicized, including those that are part of Dominican women's names. However, I have kept the medieval spelling and forms of the women's personal names, as well as those of their male counterparts, except in those cases where an anglicized version is already in common usage among scholars. Hence Heinrich Seuse becomes Henry Suso, but Johannes Tauler remains Johannes Tauler. I have translated *von* and *de* into the English *of*. Many of the women have the German feminine ending *-in* added to the end of their family names. I have chosen to retain this ending as this is the form in which the women appear in other documentation, and because it is not always clear if the ending is in fact an ending or perhaps part of the masculine version of the name as well. **2**

I have attempted to regularize all transcriptions from manuscripts and editions in the following manner. *ß* is rendered *ss*, unless it is within a direct quotation from a secondary source or it is transcribed from a primary source. All diphthongs are rendered as separate letters. I have normalized the diverse forms of umlauts found in the manuscripts and editions to reflect modern usage. **3**

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Introduction

The Sensual Environment

1

Kathrin Brümsin was a novice in the Dominican monastery of St. Katharinenthal on the southern banks of the Rhine River near Diessenhofen, Switzerland. In the seemingly eternal dilemma of many students, she had trouble with her studies. In this particular case, she was trying to learn the Latin liturgy that would be her life's work once she successfully became a nun. She struggled, and in a last ditch attempt to conquer the complexities of the liturgy, she offered up prayers to John the Evangelist, imploring him for assistance. That night Kathrin had a dream:

> She was in the choir of the church in her choirstall and an archbishop came and wanted to sing Mass. And it was asked who the bishop was. It was said that he was Saint John the Evangelist. And then the convent was happy beyond measure and received him with great joy. The bishop came in with great authority and went over to the altar and began *In medio ecclesie*. And the convent sang wonderfully. And when it came to the sacrifice, the entire convent went up to receive it. And when it was the novice's [Kathrin's] turn, she took the novice-mistress with her. And when she came to the altar, Saint John said to her, "My child, why do you not pray to me?" She said, "Lord, I can not. I would like it to be otherwise with all my heart." Then he took her by the hand and placed her next to him and opened a book in which was written in golden letters his sequence *Verbum dei deo natum* and said to her, "This you should pray to me." And so she read the sequence completely in his presence, all twenty-four verses. And then she awoke and quickly arose and went to her sister and said, "Sister, I know Saint John's sequence in its entirety." The sister replied, "You can not learn anything at all. How can you say that you know it by heart?" [Kathrin answered,] "Saint John taught it to me." And she recited it all, so that not one word was lacking.[1]

In the elements of Kathrin's dream we can find much that tells us about her spirituality and the connection between that and her environment. The place in which her dream transpired, the sequence she learned, the dream book she learned it from, and the saint who taught it to her, all these come together in her vita to illustrate the complex web of relationships between belief and religious practice on the one hand, and environment on the other. For medieval Christians, spirituality was culturally constructed, influenced by their understanding of their surroundings and the items around them, expressed physically within the spaces they inhabited, coached in the language of their everyday experiences, and tied to their senses, especially those of sight and sound.

The Sensual Environment and Spirituality

This study explores the connections between the spirituality of medieval religious women and the environment in which they lived. A traditional environmental history that examined monastic women would look for the intersections between the women and nature. Such a traditional environmental history might consider the geography of women's monasteries, their influence upon the local landscape through agriculture and building projects, and how their lives were influenced by their place in that landscape. The impact of their sanitation systems, or lack thereof, upon the regional plant growth or water purity might be explored. I, however, propose a different kind of environmental history. It is a history of the sensual environment. The term environment is used here in its broadest sense to denote the entire surrounding in which these women were immersed, incorporating the architecture in which they dwelt, the objects that decorated those spaces, the books they read, and the sounds and silences which they created, heard, and observed. I label this the sensual environment because it was through their senses that these medieval religious women accessed and utilized their environment. I am concerned in many ways with the perception of environment by religious women. How did they experience their environment? How did they affect their environment? Did they manipulate it, promote it, interpret it? How did their environment influence and regulate them? The remnants of their environment can be found in the material culture that survives in word, image, and structure. This project is interdisciplinary in nature. In addition to history, it draws upon art history, manuscript studies, literature, theology, and occasionally archeology and musicology to convey the complex and holistic spiritual culture of medieval religious women. **2**

A history of the sensual environment of monasteries allows one to study, for the times, well-documented, and fairly self-contained communities. Monasteries did not exist in a vacuum, but had distinguishable perimeters and boundaries which set them apart in a way that was more recognizable than most in a period that saw the growth of transient populations moving from the countryside to new, expanding urban settlements. As such, monasteries are environmental units that provide an ideal example for exploring the elements that went into composing such an environment. Since I am concerned with the ways in which religious women encountered their environment in relation to their spirituality, a division of the environment according to the senses sheds the most light on this interaction. To better understand the reciprocal and complex links between the spiritual and material environment, I have approached the issue through interrelated areas associated with the sense-experience of the women: the spatial environment, in which the women moved and which held all of the other environments; the visual environment, which encompassed what the women saw; the acoustic environment, which held all the various sounds and silences of the monastery; and **3**

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the textual environment, which combined aspects of the visual and acoustic environment. The women experienced the environment through their senses, and their spirituality was heavily reliant upon their senses as well, so such a division is the most practical.

4

The medieval understanding of the senses was based on classical science and philosophy, as well as medieval theology. It synthesized Aristotle's ancient Greek natural philosophy with the Roman medical work of the physician Galen and the writings of the early church fathers such as Tertullian, Jerome, and most importantly Augustine. By the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteen centuries it was added to by monastic and scholastic authors who were concerned with issues of perception and knowledge acquisition as well as different ways of knowing, of which the human senses were seen as the first stage of such activity.

5

Augustine's almost monolithic influence on medieval intellectual development cannot be overstated. His theological legacy pervades the early Middle Ages to the exception of almost everyone else. After the introduction of Aristotelian works in the twelfth century, Augustine's influence can still be found among medieval intellectuals.[2] But I am not concerned with how medieval scholastics understood the senses; rather I want to use the senses as a way to get at the holistic experiences of medieval religious women, because it is at the intersection of the senses (particularly seeing, hearing, and touching) and spirituality that the extent and variety of female monastic religious beliefs and practices is revealed.

6

"As a style of response, spirituality is individually patterned yet culturally shaped."[3] Each woman may have had a unique expression of her spirituality, but women living closely together in a community like a monastery would eventually have come to share some behaviors in common. Moreover, some forms of religious practice were imposed upon them. And as religious women, whose function in society was to carry out ritualized and individualized prayer for themselves and other Christians, spirituality was a common denominator among them all.

7

The study of spirituality is "the study of how basic religious attitudes and values are conditioned by the society within which they occur."[4] This cultural construction of spirituality can be vividly seen in the monasteries of medieval Europe, where one of the shaping elements of spirituality was the environment. Spirituality infused all aspects of the monastic environment. At its core, spirituality was an inner, interior phenomenon, one that took place or found fulfillment in the environment of the soul. But this interior environment was influenced by the outer environment in which the body it inhabited dwelt and interacted. Exterior acts and rituals were looked upon as a sign of interior religiosity and devotion. How a religious woman may have interacted with her visual environment, perhaps her prostration beneath a crucifix, was viewed as a reflection of her spiritual devotions and interior meditations. Acoustic aspects of the environment, such as prayers and the liturgy, informed the language with which the women comprehended and communicated their interior

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experiences. While this study is not the first to investigate these ideas, it may be the first to examine the monastic environment in its totality, instead of focusing on only one area of it. Most work on the connection between spirituality and the environment has explored the visual elements in the lives of religious women. And even when scholars have explored multiple connections, they rarely analyze them at any length.[5]

Dominican Women and Religious Movements in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

Of all the religious women in the Middle Ages, Dominican women in particular offer an excellent opportunity to explore relationships between the environment and spirituality. In the thirteenth century, there was a wide-ranging and diverse transformation in European spirituality. Three trends fed into this change. The first was the growing popularity of, and anxiety about, heresy—non-orthodox religious belief not sanctioned by the Christian church. This contributed to the creation of the mendicant orders, especially the Dominicans, who formed to combat the spread of such ideas through their manner of life and the preaching of orthodox beliefs. Mendicancy was a form of religious, itinerant begging that allowed its adherents to interact with the populace, placing them at the centers of medieval life in the newly burgeoning cities. The second trend was a popularization of the concept of apostolic poverty, both among orthodox and heretical Christians, and found at the root of the Dominicans. This concept was based on the idea that the apostles in the New Testament had renounced all their worldly possessions to follow Christ. A large part of the impetus for this reaction to and renunciation of wealth at this time can be found in the growing urban and mercantile centers of Europe, where money and a profit economy had only recently supplanted earlier forms of economic transactions. The growth of the middle class, flourishing in the cities and handling money, provoked some anxiety even among that developing class itself.[6] **8**

The third trend feeding into the transformation of European spirituality was the growth of what is commonly referred to as the women's religious movement. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a growing number of women embraced a religious way of life, joining already established monastic houses, creating their own quasi-monastic communities, or living by themselves or with a small group of like-minded women as recluses. From these women arose a new type of religious woman, the beguine.[7] These women took temporary vows of chastity, while embracing apostolic poverty and a life of prayer combined with service. The beguines were most prevalent in the Low Countries and along the Rhine River in Germany, but women with similar lifestyles could be found throughout Europe by the thirteenth century. Connected to this movement was a marked increase in the amount of literature directed at religious women by male supervisors, and, most importantly, a sharp **9**

increase in the number of texts written by women themselves describing their own spirituality and religious experiences.[8] Among this literature were texts composed by Dominican women. These changes in European spirituality allowed Dominican women to flourish.

Of all the new forms of religious life that developed in response to the popular desire for apostolic emulation and reform during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the mendicant orders had perhaps the most lasting impact, although in the beginning there was little that essentially differentiated these groups from other contemporary movements. Their interest in preaching, embracing apostolic poverty, living among the urban poor, and combating heresy were not new. The idea of living a mixed religious life, one which combined the active and contemplative forms and devoted one's energy to the service of others, had been first articulated by regular canons in the early twelfth century, and then given various experimental forms by the quasi-heterodox Humiliati and Waldensians, and also by the *mulieres sanctae* of the Low Countries.[9] However, what distinguished the mendicant orders from these earlier groups was that they were approved by the papacy.[10] **10**

Like many previous religious movements that were started by men, the Dominicans quickly gained a following among women, who saw the ideal of apostolic poverty as a means of salvation for themselves and fellow Christians. The men of the Order did not see women as mendicants, but felt that the nature of religious women was to be enclosed in a stable environment—to be monastic. The first community founded by Dominic in 1207 had been a house of women in Prouille.[11] While men could preach and celebrate Mass, women were not allowed to do so by the Church. This meant that Dominican women could not partake in one of the primary missions of the Dominican Order—preaching. Additionally, in medieval society unaccompanied and unsupervised women were seen as dangerous, to both themselves and others; so Dominican women were also denied the mendicancy that the men of the Order practiced.[12] To have espoused any other attitude would have been viewed as unnatural. However, what religious women could offer were prayers, for themselves, other Christians, and especially for the male Dominicans who by virtue of their active lives had no time to pray for themselves. **11**

Cross Reference:
Table 1: Statistics for Houses of the Dominican Order in 13th/ 14th Century.

The Dominican Order was especially popular with women in the German-speaking countries. There are few official numbers for the first half of the thirteenth century when the Order was still organizing itself. But some statistics survive from the latter part of the thirteenth century. In 1277, the Order claimed 404 houses scattered throughout Europe, 14 percent of which were female. In the Order's German province 43 percent of the communities were female. Ten years later, in 1287, the number of women's houses in that province had almost doubled. In 1303, the province was divided into two parts, Germany and Saxony. In the now smaller Germany, **12**

women's houses in 1303 outnumbered men's, representing 57 percent of the total number of houses there.[13] In the whole of Europe in that year (1303) there were a total of 149 female houses. The German female communities constituted nearly half (44%) of the Order's female foundations at the beginning of the fourteenth century, attesting to the popularity of the Order among religious women and their supporters in that region.[14] Half a century later no new German women's houses had been founded or incorporated, although sixteen monasteries had been established elsewhere in Europe.[15]

13

Many of the German Dominican houses began as beguinages or beguine-like communities, created under the influence of the women's religious movement of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.[16] The female Dominicans were the offspring of this women's religious movement and the new male mendicants, cultivated in the rich diversity of thirteenth-century religious life. As Grundmann points out:

> The women's movement shared with the religious movement in general the goal of a Christian way of life in the sense of the Gospels, which they believed could be achieved through voluntary poverty and chastity. This women's piety distinguished itself from the heretical piety movement primarily through its renunciation of apostolic activity as well as its dropping of the demand that the clergy and Church fulfill apostolic norms in order to administer their ecclesiastical offices legitimately. . . . The frequently expressed opinion that the religious women's movement of the thirteenth century can be explained entirely in terms of the economic and social distress of women in lower, poorer social levels, that it originated with women who could not marry due to a shortage of men and hence had to seek other "means of support," not only contradicts all the sources, but utterly misunderstands them and their sense of religiosity.[17]

It is in this religiosity, this spirituality, that we can find the essence of female Dominican life and monastic identity. The monastery was not a last resort for many of these women. It was a voluntary association actually sought by women who chose religious life sometimes in direct contradiction of familial wishes.[18] In other cases, familial membership in one of Germany's Dominican convents was wholeheartedly supported by other family members.

14

This study of Dominican women begins with the first Dominican women in Germany, around 1230, and closes in the 1370s, before the first wave of reform starts to build in Colmar and Freiburg. This was the beginning of the Observant movement that attempted to return Dominicans to a purer form of religious observance, but which in the end clamped down on the individual piety of religious women that had so marked the thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth century. 1370 is an arbitrary date, although it does hold significance in the Dominican liturgy as the year in which the feast of the translation of Thomas Aquinas was incorporated into the Order's calendars. The last of the Sister-Books, one of my chief sources

concerning the religious behavior of Dominican women, was composed sometime around 1360, so after this date we begin to lose sight of the ideals and beliefs of Dominican women as captured in their own words.

15

Because of their unmistakable presence on the religious scene of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Germany, Dominican women make an excellent choice for the exploration of the connections between environment and spirituality among religious women. Moreover, the evidence concerning the spiritual beliefs, religious behavior, and material culture of these women is particularly rich, especially in comparison to that of other medieval religious women.

Dominican Women and Mysticism

16

One aspect of female Dominican life that lends itself particularly well to a study of spirituality is the asceticism and mysticism documented in the writings of these women. There are certain characteristics or patterns that differentiate medieval women's spirituality and mysticism from that of men's.

> Mysticism was more central in female religiosity and in female claims to sanctity than in men's, and paramystical phenomena (trances, levitation, stigmata, miraculous *inedia*, etc.) were far more common in women's mysticism. Women's reputations for holiness were more often based on supernatural, charismatic authority, especially visions and supernatural signs. Women's devotion was more marked by penitential asceticism, particularly self-inflicted suffering, extreme fasting and illness borne with patience. Women's writing was, in general, more affective, although male writing too brims over with tears and sensibility; erotic, nuptial themes, which were first articulated by men, were most fully elaborated in women's poetry. And certain devotional emphases, particularly devotion to Christ's suffering humanity and to the Eucharist (although not, as is often said, to the Virgin) were characteristics of women's practices and women's words.[19]

In the study of German mysticism, disproportionate emphasis has been given to the influence of three male Dominican mystics / preachers upon the spirituality of Dominican nuns. All three German men—Meister Eckhart, Henry Suso, and Johannes Tauler—had contact with cloistered Dominican women, often as preachers, spiritual advisors, or in an official capacity as visitors.[20] Certainly they disseminated some of their ideas to the women, but the exchange did not go merely in one direction. Scholars, however, tend to hold these men up as the epitome of the medieval German mystical experience. As Bernard McGinn has noted,

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"[d]espite Eckhart's preaching and teaching in many Dominican convents, 'Rhineland mysticism,' as it has been called, did not have a major impact on the mysticism of most later Dominican women, even in Germany."[21]

Meister Eckhart (c. 1260–1327) was known for his speculative theology and apophatic mysticism.[22] These ideas brought him into conflict with the Church and some of his teachings were condemned by papal bull in 1329. Of Eckhart's two famous followers, the mystical experiences of Henry Suso (c. 1300–1366) are more similar to those of Dominican women and other female mystics.[23] His mysticism is marked by affective piety and images that can be found in the visions of many female mystics.[24] Of the three, his writings found the greatest circulation among Dominican women, especially excerpts from his *Exemplar*. The sermons of Johannes Tauler (c. 1300–1361) enjoyed some interest in female Dominican houses.[25] At least one community of nuns copied them for its own use. Like Eckhart, Tauler was a proponent of apophatic spirituality, but he paired this with an interest in the active life.[26] Usually, the mysticism of these three men is seen by scholars as the proper way, the only way, to practice mysticism in Germany during the thirteenth and fourteenth century. It takes its place in the scholastic canon of learned and literate religiosity, heavily imbued with the philosophical ideas of neoplatonism, Augustine, and Aristotle, wrapped up in the scholastic Latin of the schools and universities. In contrast, mysticism as practiced by Dominican nuns is seen as a debasement of the ideas of the great male mystics; women's mysticism is seen as a degeneration, a distortion, or more generously, as a misunderstanding. In the eyes of the historians of spirituality and theology, women's deviation from the learned philosophical tradition of mysticism makes their mysticism an aberration. **17**

Alongside this interpretation of female Dominican mysticism stands another parallel type of analysis of its religious practices. These women's "penitential asceticism, particularly self-inflicted suffering, extreme fasting and illness borne with patience" along with their "devotion to Christ's suffering humanity" has been regarded by some scholars as signs of pathological behavior, indications that the women suffered from psychological traumas, and as such, were not wholly rational but "hysterical." While this attitude was most marked in the early part of the twentieth century when historians and theologians embraced the ideas of Freud, it can still be found in recent scholarship.[27] **18**

What lies at the core of such evaluations of the female mystical experience is a misreading of the mystical literature documenting women's experiences, as well as the privileging of male mystical experience as the norm. Much of the evidence cited for the pathological label attached to the ascetic behavior of these women comes from a too literal reading of the women's writings, which are then compared to the standard of male writings. In most cases one is comparing apples and oranges, for the "[nuns'] mode of literary expression is naturally not in the form of sermons and treatises, which were the specific means of the care of souls **19**

and thereby continued to be the reserve of the males of the order. The nuns were strictly cloistered and therefore used literary forms that were more biographical or, indeed, autobiographical in character."[28] Women did not have the opportunity for education in the provincial *studia* of the Order, and were denied university education. Their audience and their purpose for writing differed vastly from that of their male counterparts:

> The form and purpose of these writings—that is, they are edifying accounts to be read aloud during meals—show that the writings must be interpreted as legendary literature. When the literary type and its original context are not taken into consideration, the texts will be completely misinterpreted as psychologically "interesting material" concerning individuals. A "saintly life story" (*hailger wandel*) is defined precisely by its extraordinariness and so cannot be judged by standards of "normal" behavior.[29]

The events that these works record are not meant to be true biography or autobiography; rather, they portray spiritual endeavors, feats of holy athleticism, and situations and behaviors intended to be extraordinary—all characteristics of legendary literature. The writings have almost nothing to do with daily existence and just about everything to do with sanctity. Their purpose and context is often ignored by those scholars who see the activities described in these texts as the nadir of uncontrolled female emotionalism.[30]

20

The second failing of many scholars of medieval mysticism is their blind acceptance of the male mystical experience as normative. If the norm represents the majority, then during the High and Late Middle Ages, it is women's experience that should be held up as the measure of all other mystical experience, for many more women were mystics than men. It has been noted that, "[t]he work of traditional medievalists, . . . has tended in fact to use male religiosity as a model. When studying women, it has tended to look simply for women's answers to the questions we have always asked about men—questions that were generated in the first place by observing male religiosity."[31] Such approaches assume that medieval religious women and men had the same attitudes, wants, needs, and desires in their religious experiences. We need new and different questions for women, and different approaches to the sources. While the ever-present goal of the medieval monastic person, female or male, was to strive toward a union with God, the journey may have been different for those of different sexes, especially in a culture that saw the two sexes as inherently different, in fact opposing.[32] The differences in the routes traveled does not make one set of experiences less valid than any other. Many religious women adapted this journey to fit the vocabulary of their everyday religious existence. Enclosed within the cloister walls, the material environment surrounding the women became the language in which to practice and articulate their spiritual activities.

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Dominican Women and Modern Scholarship

21

The scholarly literature on Dominican women is minimal when compared to that devoted to Benedictine or even Franciscan religious women. Herbert Grundmann was one of the first to forefront religious women, especially Beguines and mendicant nuns, in the narrative of the transformation of European spirituality in the High Middle Ages. However, until recently his work was only accessible to those who read German.[33] Only in the last few decades have English-speaking scholars turned to Dominican women. Among the more recent works have been a number of microstudies of individual communities in various countries.[34] Other new scholarship has concentrated on one particular theme such as literacy and manuscripts or the use of images in devotional practice.[35] Histories of the Dominican Order written by members of the Order focus almost exclusively on the men. When the role of Dominican women is mentioned at all, it is relegated to a digressionary chapter, afterword, appendix, or footnote.[36] Except in Germany, little scholarship within the Order has directly addressed its female branch.[37]

22

The one place to find innovative and complete discussions of Dominican women is in the literature on mysticism. Among English-speaking scholars of mysticism, the focus has tended to be on the great women: Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, or Margery Kempe, none of whom were affiliated with the Dominican Order. Gertrude Jaron Lewis and Rosemary Hale are the only North American scholars to concern themselves extensively with the women who are the focus of this study.[38] However, if we turn to German scholarship, we find a much different story.

23

German historiography has always been very nationalistic, directed at the sources of the nation's past.[39] Hence the rich sources on German female mysticism attracted the attention of scholars, first for their German-ness, particularly because they were often written in the vernacular, and later for their uniqueness. German scholarship on medieval mysticism has been quite extensive. The lead here has been taken by literary scholars, like Walter Blank, Siegfried Ringler, and Ursula Peters, as well as other types of scholars like Peter Dinzelbacher.[40]

Dominican Women and Their Sources

24

The core of this study consists of six female Dominican monasteries founded between the 1230s and the 1290s, located in three different areas of the Upper Rhine. These houses are as follows: Unterlinden in Colmar, France; Adelhausen, St. Agnes, St. Katharina and the Penitents of St. Maria Magdalena in Freiburg, Germany; and St. Katharinenthal near

Diessenhofen, Switzerland. The majority of evidence presented comes from the extant materials from these houses. However, it is supplemented by evidence from other German female Dominican monasteries and other monastic institutions in the region.

Among the most interesting and unique sources for German Dominican women are the Sister-Books of the fourteenth century.[41] There are nine surviving texts of this genre, all from Dominican monasteries in the Order's province of Germany. All were composed in the first half of the fourteenth century, between 1310 and 1360, by female members of these religious communities. These texts, which survive today in Latin and dialects of Middle High German, constitute collective biographies with many hagiographic elements. The Sister-Books record the spiritual, mystical, and devotional lives of individual women within Dominican communities in passages of varying lengths which were collected into texts that contain between six and sixty such lives (vitae). The collective nature of the texts provides a broader view of the female religious experience than most other mystical works because they do not focus exclusively on the experiences of a single mystic. McGinn has noted, these books "can be described as a form of 'community biography,' legends whose intent is to demonstrate God's approval of the monastery through the recording of virtues, asceticism, and especially the mystical graces granted to the convents' members."[42] Moreover, unlike most other examples of visionary or mystical literature authored by women in the High and Late Middle Ages, the Sister-Books do not appear to have been edited by men.[43] Thus these sources describe the behavior and beliefs of female monastics in their own words, unfiltered by the reworkings of male advisors. Combining monastic historiography, hagiography and mysticism, these texts chronicle the religious behavior of Dominican women, from their practice of virtues, silence, and observance of the Rule of their Order to the miraculous events and visions which they witnessed or experienced. As such, they: **25**

> may be understood as a body of literature whose language is deliberately simple, whose structure follows the *Vitae fratrum,* and whose narrative, by using legendary patterns, conveys spiritual teaching, and, above all, whose every page celebrates the saintliness of sisters and of women's communities. These features combined with the exclusive feminine perspective make the Sister-Books unique.[44]

Three of the monasteries included in this study, Adelhausen, Unterlinden, and St. Katharinenthal, produced Sister-Books.[45]

Each Sister-Book may have originally contained a chronicle of the monastery's foundation and history in addition to the collection of individual vitae.[46] However, few of the texts exist in their original fourteenth-century format. Some Sister-Books survive in only one copy, while others are extant in several versions, some complete, others fragmentary, often originating from different centuries. As a result, it is difficult to exactly date the composition of the texts. **26**

The history of the transmission of the Sister-Books is quite complicated. Manuscripts circulated among Dominican houses and other religious communities, where they were copied by interested readers. Lives were occasionally excerpted from one manuscript and combined with lives from other Sister-Books, creating new collections for pious audiences.[47] The original creation of each monastery's Sister-Book also differed. All of the lives in a community's texts may not have been authored by a single woman. Some texts have identifiable authors, while some appear to be the result of a more communal effort. Some authors wrote their own material, others, functioning as compilers and editors, recycled what appear to be already composed lives written by others.

27 The Adelhausen Sister-Book is perhaps the oldest of the nine texts, written in Latin sometime in the second decade of the fourteenth century. The author of the text names herself as Anna of Munzingen in an *explicit* (closing statement) at the end of the vitae.[48] The scribe at the end of the earliest surviving copy (a Middle High German version from 1345 to 1350) dates the text to 1318 and also identifies Anna of Munzingen as the author. The text, often called the *Chronik*, is extant in four different manuscripts, all Middle High German translations of the lost Latin original. Two of the four manuscripts preserve the text almost in its entirety, while the remaining copies are only fragmentary.[49] The Chronik contains a short chronicle of Adelhausen and about thirty lives of its members.

28 The Unterlinden Sister-Book was probably the second to be written, sometime around 1320. At the end of the text the author states, "I, sister Catherine, who as a young girl was reared in this monastery, have written this work."[50] The exact identity of Catherine is unknown, other than that she was a member of the Unterlinden community since a young age. Catherine discusses her composition of the text frequently in her prologue. She begins the entire work with the declaration, "[t]his little book . . . which I have written out with much diligence and labor . . . composed indeed with a crude and unskilled pen, but completed in most firm truth, I freely offer with greatest affection to all the sisters beloved by God of this monastery. . . . The first text of this work I wrote in wax and put together as I was growing old, with my own hands and blearing eyes, fearful indeed and blushing a great deal that my lack of skill must ever reach your ears."[51] Catherine was both the writer and compiler of the lives in her community's Sister-Book. She claims that in the interest of brevity she has only sketched out the lives of the sisters, not given them in fullest detail.[52] Despite her claims, the text is not short; in fact, it is the longest of the Sister-Books. It is speculated that some of the material may have come from an earlier source. Three major vitae in the Unterlinden Sister-Book form the core of the text to which Catherine added new lives for the remaining women. In her prologue, she claims that her information comes from the stories that come down to her from the older sisters.[53] The original sisters had revealed their revelations to these women and Catherine found their testimonies to be "most believable."[54] She needed no greater authority to confirm the truth of these testimonies and revelations than the fact that they are related to

her by trustworthy sisters, for "the truth of the deeds furnishes authority without which authority has no validity."[55] The Unterlinden text survives in three forms: a complete Latin copy from the fifteenth century (made in the monastery); a later summary version in Latin; and a late fifteenth-century Middle High German translation by the Unterlinden prioress, Elisabeth Kempfin. The text consists of a prologue, an introduction in eight chapters, the lives of forty-one women in thirty-nine chapters, and finally a chapter addressed to all the sisters. After this is the author's explicit, which is followed by several lives that were added at a later date, including one of Elisabeth Kempfin.

Very little is known of the Sister-Book of Gotteszell, which is the next text chronologically.[56] There is no identifiable author and until the 1970s the text was thought to be a continuation of the Sister-Book of Kirchberg, because they were preserved in the same manuscripts with no break between the texts.[57] The text survives in two fifteenth-century manuscript copies of the original Middle High German. The text contains about twelve lives and one long vita of a single woman, which appears to have been separately authored. **29**

The Engelthal Sister-Book was written between 1328 and 1340 by Christine Ebner.[58] Only two later manuscripts of the text survive, both in the original Middle High German. Both manuscripts identify the author, one in a very brief self-reference, the other in the post script: "Kristein Ebnerin made a little book about the divine graces granted by our Lord to the sisters in her monastery," a line written several decades after the manuscript copy was finished.[59] This latter manuscript is the oldest surviving manuscript of a Sister-Book, dating to the mid-fourteenth century. It was copied at Engelthal.[60] The text is commonly referred to as *Der Nonne von Engeltal Büchlein von der Gnaden Überlast* (The Nun of Engelthal's Little Book of the Overwhelming Burden of Graces). It consists of a chronicle of the monastery's history and the brief lives of some forty women, in addition to long vitae of Alheit of Trochau and Diemut Ebnerin, both of which may have different authorships. **30**

The community of Kirchberg in Sulz on the Neckar in Württemberg produced its Sister-Book sometime between 1320 and 1340.[61] The author has been identified as Elisabeth of Kirchberg and she has been linked to another manuscript that contains the single vita of a Kirchberg nun. That second manuscript contains the identification, "I ask all those who read or hear it read that they, for the love of God, remember me. I am called Sister Elisabeth by God's grace, whom God has taken from the Jews."[62] The Kirchberg text survives in five manuscripts, only one entirely complete. **31**

The Sister-Book of Töss has usually been attributed to Elsbet Stagel, correspondent and spiritual follower of Henry Suso.[63] It was composed sometime before 1340 and Elsbet Stagel was certainly one of the text's authors for she is identified as such in a passage in one of the vita, "[t]he blessed sister Elsbet Staglin who wrote all this."[64] But Elsbet was probably not the **32**

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only author of the Töss text.[65] There are four complete manuscripts as well as at least three fragments or incomplete copies of the Sister-Book (one of which may have been copied at St. Katharinenthal).[66] The full Sister-Book contains a chronicle and about forty lives, six of which are extensive and may have existed previous to the composition of the main body of the text and been integrated into it.

33 The Oetenbach Sister-Book is the shortest of the Sister-Books and is extant in only one fifteenth-century copy.[67] The original text, written in a Zurich dialect of Middle High German, was finished after 1340. It contains a lengthy and detailed monastic chronicle along with a total of six lives, three quite long and three rather short. The author remains unknown.

34 The majority of St. Katharinenthal Sister-Book was written between 1318 and 1343. None of the authors are identifiable. The text includes three long vitae written by one person, certain passages written by a second person, and additional lives written by at least one other person. All of these were combined into a text of Middle High German lives. The text survives in four manuscripts with an additional eight fragmentary copies or partial texts. Of all the Sister-Books it may have been the most widely circulated. The text consists of a chronicle and about sixty lives, with additional vitae added after its fourteenth-century composition.

35 The last Sister-Book to be composed was most likely that of Weiler, a monastery that was probably founded before many of those mentioned above.[68] The year 1350 is referred to at the end of the text. The Sister-Book has at least two authors, both unknown. The Weiler text has no chronicle, but contains twenty-seven vitae, with the Middle High German text surviving in three manuscripts from the fifteenth century.

36 The insights that the Sister-Books can give into the spirituality of Dominican women are extremely valuable; however, the hagiographic nature of these lives means that they must be approached with some care.[69] The lives of these women were intended to be didactic, instructing nuns about proper female Dominican behavior and belief, as well as celebrating the feats of the early sisters of the monastery. The literary aspect of their composition means that they are not always true records of actual events. Rather, they are reworkings of women's lives that can tell us much about the ideals and aspirations of cloistered Dominican women. The women's piety and sanctity is stressed by the authors of the lives as they present their audience with the often miraculous and always worthy events and visions of the houses' members. Many of the lives address the women as saintly sisters, blessed sisters, or holy sisters, stressing that these are the lives of holy women, who just happen to be members of Dominican communities. Such attitudes can prove useful in exploring what was considered proper and holy in the realm of female Dominican spiritual expression.

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The other way in which the Sister-Books are useful, although not as much as in their descriptions of religious behavior and spirituality, is in the area of "unintentional evidence."[70] In their intense focus on the holy lives of Dominican women, the authors' include information that they might have considered tangential to their story, but which is relevant to the modern historian. For instance, the fact that a nun had a vision might be the emphasis of one woman's life. The fact that the vision occurred in the dormitory is only mentioned in passing and is not of particular interest to the author. But to us it reveals a connection between the place and the vision, a connection about which the nuns themselves may have been unaware. **37**

In addition to the Sister-Books, other sources contribute to our understanding of German female Dominican life in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Dominican friars and nuns followed—and still follow today—the Rule of St. Augustine. Since the Rule did not give much practical advice on how to live a monastic life, it was supplemented by various orders with customaries, statutes, institutions, and constitutions which set forth in detail the various arrangements for living daily life in a religious community. Among the Dominicans their constitutions provided such guidance. The male and female branch of the Dominican Order each had its own constitutions that developed over the course of the thirteenth century.[71] The earliest Dominican women's house at Prouille had its own constitution, which does not survive. However, women from that house founded the community of St. Sixtus in Rome. From that house we have a version of the constitutions dated to 1221.[72] It served as the basis for the Constitutions of St. Mark (Markus or Marx) in Strasbourg, founded in 1225. The Constitutions of St. Mark were the ones given to all German houses as they adopted Dominican practices. However, there were other versions of the constitutions in circulation. These included at least one that was popular in French-speaking areas: the Constitutions of the Sisters of the Monastery of St. Dominic of Montargis in the west of France, composed in 1250.[73] In the 1250s, the Dominican Master General, Humbert of Romans, recognized that if the Order was going to accept the incorporation of all the female houses that were knocking on its doors, he had to create a common constitution for them, and he believed it appropriate that it be one that enforced uniform practices throughout Europe. Earlier the women had been using various forms of these early constitutions or none at all. So Humbert promulgated the official constitutions for Dominican nuns at the 1259 Dominican General Chapter at Valenciennes.[74] All women's houses were to follow these new constitutions, based on those of Montargis, or risk losing their affiliation with the Order.[75] **38**

Additional legislation [Acta] regulating life within the Dominican Order was issued by the Order's General and Provincial Chapters. In these acts, the constitutions were modified and disputes among the Order's houses were settled. Local chronicles and letters from confessors and ecclesiastical officials also provide information about Dominican women.[76] Whereas the primary purpose of Dominican nuns was to pray, that of the Dominican friars was to preach to all Christians (and non-Christians), including Dominican women. Many of the sermons **39**

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preached by male members of the Order have survived, and when it is possible to identify nuns as the audience of particular sermons, they serve as a rich source of information on the spiritual direction received by the Dominican sisters.

From the houses' economic documents—charters, wills, anniversary books, and cadastral registers—we can gain insight into the women's economic situation as well as the networks of patronage and support that linked them to the larger community outside the cloister walls. A wealthy house could generate a lavish material culture, while a poor house might only be survived by a few poorly made artifacts or none at all. Thus economics plays a role in our study of the monastic environment and has to be carefully considered, for the wealth of the material environment affected the spirituality practiced within it. **40**

Most of the surviving manuscripts from the monasteries are liturgical in nature. These texts were used for the performance of Mass and the Divine Office, including the celebration of saints' feast days. They include graduals, antiphonals, diurnals, collectars, and psalters.[77] Some of these texts are decorated with elaborate pictorial elements and others are purely utilitarian. Although not as abundant as the liturgical manuscripts, extant are also non-liturgical texts, probably from monastic libraries. Many contained devotional subject matter, making them edifying reading for the members of a monastic community. **41**

The physical remains of the monasteries themselves give us information about the cloistered environment. In some cases, as at Unterlinden, portions of the original architecture survive. In other cases, archaeology provides insight into the physical and spatial environment of the monasteries. Also available or surviving from many of these houses are the artwork and artifacts that decorated the buildings. Objects that fall into this category include sculptures, wall hangings, paintings, liturgical furnishings, reliquaries, and stained glass. Some pieces remain *in situ*, while others have since found their way into museums. Although now out of physical context, such art allows us to assess some of the visual elements of monastic life, and in certain cases, builds our understanding of the place of art and images in the women's spiritual activities. **42**

This study begins with an analysis of the female Dominican spatial environment, describing the architecture of the houses to determine how the physical and spatial environment influenced its inhabitants and their spirituality, and how the nuns themselves influenced this aspect of their environment. The second chapter explores the sense of sight, detailing the visual environment to which the women had access. This includes a survey of the artwork from the nuns' houses while considering how images may have been employed in devotional activities. Chapter Three examines the sense of hearing, what I call the acoustical environment. It looks first at the monastic virtue of silence and then continues with the songs, words, and sounds that infused the monastic environment, focusing on how Dominican women made meaning of sound and silence. Chapter Four brings the two senses (sight and **43**

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sound) together to explore the idea of a textual environment, examining the manuscripts that existed in the monasteries and how these tied into the women's spiritual beliefs and practices. In the end we will return to the story of Kathrin Brümsin, the novice from St. Katharinenthal, and reassess the connections between sensual environment and spirituality that her life illumines.

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Notes

Note 1: "si in dem kor wëre in ir stül. Vnd seit man das ein ertzbyschoff kem vnd wölt mess singen. Also ward gefraget, wer der bischoff were. Do ward geseit, es were sant Johannes ewangelist. Do ward der couent an mass fro, vnd empfiengent in mit grosser fröd. Also kam der byschoff ingend mit grosser herschafft vnd gieng vber alter vnd vieng an >Jn medio ecclesie<.Vnd sang der couent gar wol. Vnd do es an das opffer kam, do hiess man den couent allen ze opffer gän. Vnd do es an die novicien kam, do nam si ir meistrin mit ir. Vnd do si zü dem alter kam, do sprach sant Johannes zü ir: >Kint mins, wa von bettost dvmir nit? <Do sprach si: >Herre, da enkan ich. Jch tët es anders von allem hertzen gern.< Do nam er si bi der hant vnd stalt si nebent sich vnd tett ein büch vff, dar an stünd geschriben mit guldinen büchstaben sin sequencie >Verbum dei deo natum<, vnd sprach zü ir: >Dis solt du mir betten.< Also las si die sequenci vor im vs, der sind vier vnd zweintzig vers. Vnd do erwachet si vnd stünd bald vff vnd gieng zü ir swester vnd sprach: >Swester, jch kan sant Johannes sequencie alle vssnan.< Do sprach si: >Dv kanst doch nút jnnan gelernen, sprichest du denn, das du si vssnan kunnest?< Do sprach si: >Sant Johannes het mich si gelert<, vnd las ir si alle vssnen, das ir eins wortes nit gebrast." Ruth Meyer, ed., *Das "St. Katharinentaler Schwesterbuch:" Untersuchung, Edition, Kommentar* (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer, 1995), 124 (hereafter cited in text as *KSB*).

Note 2: Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis: Books 7-12*, trans. J. H. Taylor, in vol. 42 of *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, ed. J. Quasten, W. J. Burghardt, and C. X. T. Lawler (New York: Newman Press, 1982). For a discussion of Augustine in relation to medieval visionaries, see Rosalynn Voaden and Stephanie Wolf, "Visions of My Youth: Representations of the Childhood of Medieval Visionaries," in *Gendering the Middle Ages*, ed. Pauline Stafford and Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 135-54.

Note 3: Anne Carr, "On feminist spirituality," in *Women's Spirituality*, ed. Joann Wolski Conn (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 50.

Note 4: Caroline Walker Bynun, *Jesus as Mother: The Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 3.

Note 5: Most scholarly work dealing explicitly with women, environment, and spirituality has been in the form of short articles. Only Jeffrey Hamburger has dealt in depth with the topic, and most of his work has continued to focus on the visual environment. See bibliography for a list of his work.

Note 6: Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

Note 7: Walter Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200–1565* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

Note 8: For literature written by men for women, see Ann Clark Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Catherine M. Mooney, ed., *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and their Interpreters* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999) hereafter cited in the text as Mooney; and E. Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990). For the increase in religious women's writing, see Elizabeth A. Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Elizabeth A. Petroff, ed., *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Katharina M. Wilson, ed., *Medieval Women Writers* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1984); Emile zum Brunn and Georgette Epiney-Burgard, *Women Mystics in Medieval Europe*, trans. Sheila Hughes (New York: Paragon House, 1989); and Laurie A. Finke, *Women's Writing in English: Medieval England* (New York: Longman, 1999) hereafter cited in the text as Finke.

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Note 9: For the regular canons, see Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Spirituality of Regular Canons in the Twelfth Century," in *Jesus as Mother: The Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 22–58. For the Humiliati and Waldensians, see Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements of the Middle Ages*, trans. Steven Rowan (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 32–52, 69–74 (hereafter cited in text as Grundmann). On the *mulieres sanctae*, the early beguines, and the beginnings of the women's religious movement, see Grundmann, 75–88, 139–52; and Ernest W. McDonnell, *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture, with Special Emphasis on the Belgian Scene* (New Brunswick, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954).

Note 10: See Hinnebusch, *History of the Dominican Order: Origins and Growth to 1500*, (New York: Alba House, 1966), hereafter cited in text as Hinnebusch; Malcolm D. Lambert, *Franciscan Poverty: The Doctrine of the Absolute Poverty of Christ and the Apostles in the Franciscan Order, 1210–1323* (London: SPCK, 1961); and John Moorman*, A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

Note 11: A total of four female Dominican monasteries were founded during Dominic's lifetime: Prouille, Madrid, S. Sixtus in Rome, and S. Agnes in Bologne. These four often claimed special rights during the dissent that split the Order and the papacy over the *cura monialium*. They accorded that they could not be refused the supervision of the Order as they had been established by Dominic himself. See Grundmann, 94–96, 105–9, 119–28.

Note 12: On the enclosure of medieval religious women, see Elizabeth M. Makowski, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women: Periculoso and its Commentators, 1298–1545* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1997).

Note 13: Grundmann, 135. To this sixty-five should most likely be added a further seven convents which seem to have existed, but which were not yet incorporated into the Order. This would bring the total of female communities in Germany up to seventy-two. An additional eight houses had been part of the Order, but left before the 1303-survey. Hence they were not counted in it. Grundmann, 343.

Note 14: Grundmann, 135.

Note 15: Hinnebusch, 377.

Note 16: Grundmann, 83. "The phenomenal growth of monasteries in Germany, compared with other provinces, can be explained partly by the way foundations originated. Elsewhere nuns' convents were established as new enterprises, usually by rich benefactors." Hinnebusch, 377.

Note 17: Grundmann, 82. Among those who continue to use the social and economic interpretations is Benedict M. Ashley, who espouses the "surplus-women-looking-for-escape" paradigm: "This rapid proliferation of communities of women can be partially explained by the condition of medieval women. Because of many wars there was a marked surplus of women over men. Women were expected to marry very early, with little or no formal education, and to husbands chosen by their parents largely for economic and political reasons. The one way to escape from oppressive domestic situations or loneliness and perhaps to obtain a little education and freedom of spirit was through religious life" from Benedict M. Ashley, *The Dominicans* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 45. Although Grundmann sought to dismiss these theories in 1935, many of them still unfortunately persist in current scholarship. Although the ratio of men to women in society, along with general population numbers, could affect attitudes about the removal of people from the "marriage market" (see Jane Cartwright, "The Desire to Corrupt: Convent and Community in Medieval Wales," in *Medieval Women in their Communities*, ed. Diane Watt (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), the surplus of women in this period has never been adequately documented. In addition, studies that claim a surplus of unmarried women being social and economic in nature rarely consider how strong religious motivation could have been.

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Note 18: An extreme and literary illustration of this attitude can be seen in the life of Countess Yolanda of Vianden. The modern English translation *Brother Hermann's Life of the Countess Yolanda of Vianden,* trans. Richard H. Lawson (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1995) is problematic.

Note 19: Caroline Walker Bynum, "Religious Women in the Later Middle Ages," in *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation,* ed. Jill Raitt (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 131.

Note 20: For an introduction to the three men, see Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, *Meister Eckhart and the Rhineland Mystics* (New York: Harper, 1957), and James M. Clark, *The Great German Mystics: Eckhart, Tauler, and Suso* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1949).

Note 21: Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism, 1200–1350* (New York: Crossroad Herder, 1998), 297 (hereafter cited in the text as McGinn).

Note 22: Apophatic theology is "the belief that human categories are not capable of conceptualizing God, and is based on a theological inquiry into the knowledge of God that proceeds by negations or saying what God is not." Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 15. Editions of Eckhart's work can be found in *Meister Eckhart: Die deutschen und lateinischen Werke* (Stuttgart and Berlin: W. Kohlhammer, 1936-). English translations include those in the *Classics of Western Spirituality series:* Meister Eckhart, *The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises and Defense*, trans. Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), and Meister Eckhart, *Teacher and Preacher*, trans. Bernard McGinn (New York: Paulist Press, 1986). See also Meister Eckhart, *German Sermons and Treatises*, trans. and ed. M. O. C. Walshe, 2 vols (London: Watkins, 1979, 1981), and Meister Eckhart, *Parisian Questions and Prologues*, trans. Armand A. Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974). Important studies include Kurt Ruh, *Meister Eckhart: Theologe, Prediger, Mystiker* (Munich: Beck, 1985); Frank Tobin, *Meister Eckhart: Thought and Language* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986); and Otto Langer, *Mystische Erfahrung und spirituelle Theologie: Zu Meister Eckharts Auseinandersetzung mit der Frauenfrömmigkeit seiner Zeit* (Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1987).

Note 23: For editions of Suso's work, see Heinrich Seuse, *Deutsche Schriften*, ed. Karl Bihlmeyer (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1907) for the Middle High German writings and Heinrich Seuse, *Horologium sapientiae*, ed. Künzle, *Spicilegium Friburgense*, vol. 23 (Freiburg, Switz.: Universitätsverlag, 1977) for the Latin works. English translations include Henry Suso, *The Exemplar, with two German Sermons*, trans. and ed. Frank Tobin (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), and Henry Suso, *Little Book of Eternal Wisdom and Little Book of Truth,* trans. James M. Clark (London: Faber and Faber, 1953).

Note 24: See in particular two articles by Jeffery Hamburger: "The Use of Images in the Pastoral Care of Nuns: The Case of Henry Suso and the Dominicans," and "Medieval Self-Fashioning: Authorship, Authority, and Autobiography in Suso's *Exemplar*," in *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone, 1998), 197–232 and 233–78, respectively.

Note 25: For the edition of Tauler's Middle High German sermons, see *Die Predigten Taulers*, ed. Ferdinand Vetter, *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters* XI (Berlin, 1910). For English translations, see Johannes Tauler, *Sermons*, trans. Maria Shrady (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), and Johannes Tauler, *Spiritual Conferences by John Tauler, O.P.,* trans. and ed. Edmund Colledge and M. Jane (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1978).

Note 26: "While Eckhart undoubtedly holds the central position in terms of innovative fundamental theology and comprehensive formulation of mystical concepts, Tauler and Seuse were responsible for propagating, and expanding on, a collection of religious insights that, because they has been adversely touched by the odor of heresy, were in danger of becoming obliterated and systematically expurgated,

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or pushed into the sectarian underground by the persistent suspicions of the institutional Church. Seuse and Tauler were not simply testators of their master's legacy; they developed from the disciples into masters in their own right. Tauler's main merit lies in elucidating and transforming mystical concepts of the *vita contemplativa* into the domain of the *vita activa* and *publica*. Seuse, on the other hand, translated Eckhart's mysticism into devotional piety and practice" Tauler, *Sermons*, Introduction by Shrady, 1–2.

Note 27: See for example, Ute Stargardt, "The Beguines of Belgium, the Dominican Nuns of Germany, and Margery Kempe," in *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*, ed. Thomas Hefferman (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1985), 277–313. Others cannot deny that many of the women were religious, but "today this style of spirituality seems to us somewhat too fanciful, too colored by unresolved neuroses, and lacking proper physical and mental hygiene." Ashley, 78.

Note 28: Alois Maria Haas, "Schools of Late Medieval Mysticism," in *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation,* ed. Jill Raitt (New York: Crossroads, 1987), 155–56.

Note 29: Haas, 156–58.

Note 30: Gertrud Jaron Lewis, *By Women, for Women, about Women. The Sister-Books of Fourteenth Century Germany* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1996), 69–75 (hereafter cited in the text as Lewis). On attitudes of scholars, see Caroline Walker Bynum, "Women Mystics in the Thirteenth Century: The Case of the Nuns of Helfta," in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 171.

Note 31: Bynum, *Christian Spirituality,* 137.

Note 32: On the goal of union with God see Bynum, "Introduction," in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 16–17. On medieval perceptions of physical sex difference see, Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). See Chapter 3 below for a short overview of concepts of gender in medieval culture and the association of medieval women with the physical and corporeal, an assumption which was commonplace in medieval theology and science. I can only begin to scratch the surface of the literature concerning the cultural construction of gender in the Middle Ages. An article which provides a nice overview of the medieval tradition dealing with gender, with special attention to the diversity of attitudes and the relationship of men and women within the marriage bond, is Jacqueline Murray, "Thinking about Gender: The Diversity of Medieval Perspectives," in *Power of the Weak*, ed. Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 1–26.

Note 33: Published originally in 1935, the English translation of Grundmann appeared in 1995.

Note 34: Peter Linehan, *The Ladies of Zamora* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); Paul Lee, *Nunneries, Learning and Spirituality in Late Medieval English Society* (York: York Medieval Press, 2001). There have been several German and Swiss dissertations as well as commemorative studies of individual female Dominican houses written, most in the last fifty years. Annelise Müller, "Studien zur Besitz- und Sozialgeschichte des Dominikanerinnenklosters St. Katharinental bei Dießenhofen" (PhD diss., University of Tubingen, 1971); Annemarie Halter, *Geschichte des Dominikanerinnen-klosters Oetenbach in Zürich, 1234–1555* (Winterthur: P.G.Keller, 1956); Susanne Uhrle, *Das Dominikanerinnenkloster Weiler bei Esslingen (1230–1571/92)* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1968); Marie-Claire Däniker-Gysin, "Geschichte des Dominikanerinnenklosters Töß, 1233–1525," Neujahrsblatt der Stadtbibliothek Winterthur 289 (1958); Alois Mitterwieser, *Das Dominikanerinnenkloster Altenhohenau am Inn (1235 bis heute)* (Augsburg: Benno Filser, 1926); Canisia Jedelhauser, *Geschichte des Klosters und der Hofmark Maria Medingen von den Anfängen im 13. Jahrhundert bis 1606*, QF 34 (1936); Marianne Popp, "Die Dominikanerinnen im Bistum Regensburg," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Bistum Regensburg*,

vol. 12 (Regensburg: Vereins für Regensburger Bistumsgeschichte, 1967), 259–308; *750 Jahre Dominikanerinnenkloster Heilig Kreuz Regensburg*, exhibition cat., Diözesanmuseum, Regensburg (Munich: Schnell & Steiner, 1983).

Note 35: On literacy and books see Luise-Marie Ehrenschwendter, "'Puellae litteratae': The Use of the Vernacular in the Domincan Convents of Southern Germany," in *Medieval Women and their Communities,* ed. Diane Watt (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1997), 49–71; Luise-Marie Ehrenschwendter, "A Library Collected by and for the Use of Nuns: St. Catherine's Convent, Nuremberg," in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H.M. Taylor (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1997), 123–32; Joan Naughton, "Books for a Dominican Nuns' Choir: Illustrated manuscripts at Saint-Louis de Poissy, c. 1330–1350," in *The Art of the Book: Its Place in Medieval Worship*, ed. Margaret M. Manion and Bernard J. Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 67–110; John Stinson, "The Dominican Liturgy of the Assumption: Texts and Music for the Divine Office," in *The Art of the Book: Its Place in Medieval Worship*, ed. Margaret M. Manion and Bernard J. Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 163–93. On the use of images and manuscript illuminations among Dominican women (and other medieval religious women), see the articles of Jeffrey F. Hamburger collected in *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone, 1998), as well as my chapter on the visual environment.

Note 36: Hinnebusch devotes the final chapter of his book to the Second and Third Orders of Dominicans. The same is true of the Latin history of the Order in P. Angelus Walz, *Compendium Historiae Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Rome, 1948). Out of almost 700 pages, the women receive only 20 pages in a section devoted to them at the end of the book.

Note 37: Among early studies on Dominican women in Germany by Dominican scholars is Hieronymus Wilms, *Das älteste Verzeichnis der deutschen Dominikanerinnenklöster*, QF 24 (1928); Otmar Decker, *Die Stellung des Predigerordens zu den Dominikanerinnen (1207–1267)*, QF 31 (1935); Angelus Walz, *Dominikaner und Dominikanerinnen in Süddeutschland (1225–1966)* (Freising: Kyrios, 1967). *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens in Deutschland*. Leipzig, 1907 ff.

Note 38: See Lewis; Rosemary Hale, "Imitatio Mariae: Motherhood Motifs in Devotional Memoirs," *Mystics Quarterly* 16 (1990): 193–203. Debra Stoudt has worked on another Dominican nun, Margaret Ebner, and Hindsley has studied the women of Engelthal in Leonard P. Hindsley, *The Mystics of Engelthal: Writings from a Medieval Monastery* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

Note 39: "Women's history has never been a central concern of the academic historians who have long dominated history-writing in Germany. Nevertheless, the traditions of historical scholarship established there in the nineteenth century have been indirectly responsible for some of the earliest and still among the best investigations into the lives of medieval women. . . . The renewed interest in women's history during the last twenty years in much of Europe and in the United States has not, however, been as widely shared in the German academy. Until very recently medievalists in Germany by and large pursued the same questions and methodologies that engaged their predecessors several generations ago. . . . They have tended to concentrate on painstaking analysis of primary sources, casting hardly a glance at the larger questions of gender, sexuality, socio-economic structure, ideology, and historical change that inform feminist historical scholarship elsewhere." Martha Howell, Suzanne Wemple, and Denise Kaiser, "A Documented Presence: Medieval Women in Germanic Historiography," in *Women in Medieval History and Historiography*, ed. Susan Mosher Stuard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 101. Even though this article is over two decades old, many of its criticisms are still valid.

Note 40: Walter Blank, "Die Nonnenviten des 14. Jahrhunderts. Eine Studie zur hagiographischen Literatur des Mittelalters unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Visionen und ihrer Lichtphänomene" (PhD diss., Freiburg University, 1962); Peter Dinzelbacher, *Vision- und Visionsliteratur im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Hiersemnn, 1981); Siegfreid Ringler, *Viten- und Offenbarungsliteratur in Frauenklöstern des Mittelalter: Quellen und Studien*, Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, 72 (Munich: Artemis, 1980); Ursula Peters, *Religiöse Erfahrung als literarisches Faktum: Zur Vorgeschichte und Genese frauenmystischer Texte des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts* (Tubingen: Niemeyer, 1988).

Note 41: German literary historians use the terms *Schwesternbücher* or *Nonnenbücher*. Some English-speaking authors refer to them as the Convent Chronicles or Lives of the Sisters. I follow Gertrud Jaron Lewis' lead in calling the texts "Sister-Books."

Note 42: McGinn, 298.

Note 43: The one exception to this is Johannes Meyer, who in the fifteenth century edited versions of the St. Katharinenthal and Töss texts. But there were no fourteenth- century male editors of whom I am aware. The only other thirteenth- and fourteenth-century female mystics who did not have male editors were some of the women of Helfta, namely Gertrude the Great and Mechtild of Hackeborn. On male editing of female texts in the later Middle Ages in general, see Finke, 132, 139; and Mooney, 6–15.

Note 44: Lewis, 56–57. The *Vitae Fratrum* was written in 1260 by Gerard of Frachet at the behest of the General Master Humbert of Romans and chronicles the lives of the early Dominicans, focusing especially on Dominic and Jordan of Saxony, but including also the miracles witnessed by many other friars. See Gerard of Frachet: *Lives of the Brethern of the Order of Preachers*, trans. Palcid Conway (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1924); and *Vitae fratrum ordinis Praedicatorum*, ed. B. M. Reichert, MOPH 1 (1896).

Note 45: The other six Dominican monasteries which produced Sister-Books were Engelthal, Gotteszell, Kirchberg, Oetenbach, Töss, and Weiler.

Note 46: Lewis, 10. The following section on the Sister-Books is based on Lewis, 10–31 and 286–89, as well as the critical and diplomatic editions of the texts.

Note 47: This was what Johannes Meyer did with the St. Katharinenthal, Oetenbach, and Töss Sister-Books, compiling Nuremburg Stadtbibliothek, Cent. V 10a in 1454.

Note 48: Ed. J. König, "Die Chronik der Anna von Munzingen. Nach der ältesten Abschrift mit Einleitung und Beilagen," in *Freiburger Diözesan Archiv 13* (1880): 192. Hereafter cited in text as ASB (Adelhausen Sister-Book).

Note 49: Lewis, 11 and 286 for list of manuscripts.

Note 50: "Ego soror Katherina in eodem monasterio a puericia enutrita hoc opus exegi." Ed. Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, "Les 'Vitae Sororum' d'Unterlinden. Édition critique du ms. 508 de la bibliothèque de Colmar," in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge 5* (1930): 480. Hereafter cited in text as USB (Unterlinden Sister-Book).

Note 51: "Libellum . . . quem diligentia multa edidi et labore . . . rudi quidem stilo et imperito compositum, sed ueritate firmissima completum, uniuersis Deo dilectis sororibus istius monasterii gratis offero plurimo cum affectu. . . . Textum huius operis primum in cera iam senescens conscripsi, propriis manibus oculisque caligantibus et compegi, expauens quidem et multum erubescens, quod inpericia mea ad aures uestras unquam pertingere debet." USB, 335.

Note 52: USB, 336.

Note 53: USB, 335–36.

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Note 54: "credibilia nimis." USB, 336.

Note 55: "cui auctoritatem prestat gestorum ueritas, sine qua nec ualet auctoritas." USB, 336.

Note 56: Gotteszell was located near Schwäbisch-Gmünd in Württemberg. It was founded by 1240 (and possibly as early as 1227) by two widows. Like many female Dominican houses in Germany it was incorporated into the Dominican Order in 1246.

Note 57: On the identification of the Gotteszell text, see Hans Peter Müller, "Das Schwesternbuch von Kloster Kirchberg (1237–1305)," *Der Sülchgau* 21/22 (1977/78): 42–56; Siegfried Ringler, *Viten und Offenbarungsliteratur*, esp, pp. 52 and 96; and Klaus Graf, "Nonnenviten aus Kloster Gotteszell bei Schwäbisch-Gmünd. Zum Entstehungsort des sogenannten 'Ulmer Schwesternbuchs,'" *Rottenburger Jahrbuch für Kirchengeschichte* 3 (1984): 191–95.

Note 58: Engelthal began as a community of beguines and was incorporated into the Dominican Order in 1248. It was located in Franconia.

Note 59: Lewis, 19.

Note 60: Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Germany, Hs. 1338. Hereafter cited in text as GNM (Germanisches Nationalmuseum).

Note 61: Kirchberg is first documented by a land sale in 1237. Like many other communities, it was incorporated into the Order in 1245. In 1247 it had thirty members, and by 1268, eighty women.

Note 62: As quoted in Lewis, 21. See also Ringler, *Viten und Offenbarungsliteratur* and Müller (see n. 35).

Note 63: Töss began as a beguinage in Winterthur, Switzerland. It was incorporated into the Order in 1245.

Note 64: Ed. Ferdinand Vetter, "Das Leben der Schwestern zu Töss beschrieben von Elsbet Stagel, samt der Vorrede des Johannes Meyer und dem Leben der Prinzessin Elisabet von Ungarn," in *Deutsche Texte des Mittelalters* 6 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1906), 93. Hereafter cited in text as TSB (Töss Sister-Book).

Note 65: Lewis, 24–25.

Note 66: Lewis, 288–89.

Note 67: Oetenbach began as a beguine-like community in 1231 in Zurich. At some point the women merged their community with a house of already established beguines. They were confirmed as Dominicans in 1239 by Pope Gregory IX and incorporated into the Order in 1245.

Note 68: Weiler was near Esslingen, Neckar, and was founded by beguines in 1230. In 1236, Pope Gregory IX confirmed them as Dominicans, and they were incorporated in 1245. In the early fourteenth century, the community supported over 130 women, until they were restricted to 70 members. Lewis, 30.

Note 69: On the use of hagiography as a historical source, see Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives as a Source for the History of Women, 500–1100," in *Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History*, ed. Joel T. Rosenthal (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 285–320.

Note 70: Schulenburg, 302-4.

Note 71: On the male constitutions see Heinrich Denifle, "Die Constitutionen des Prediger-Ordens vom Jahre 1228," *Archiv für Literatur- und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters* I (1955): 165–227; and Raymond Creytens, "Les constitutions des frères Prêcheirs dans la rédaction de s. Raymond de Peñafort," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 18 (1948): 5–68. Hereafter cited in text as AFP (Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum).

Note 72: "The Primitive Constitutions of the Monastery of San Sisto," in *Early Documents of the Dominican Sisters*, vol. 1 (Summit, NJ: Monastery of Our Lady of the Rosary, 1969), 7–22. This early constitution may have been related to the Constitutions of Gilbertine nuns. Hinnebusch, 380.

Note 73: Raymond Creytens, "Les Constitutions Primitives des soeurs dominicaines de Montargis (1250)," AFP 17 (1947): 41–84. Houses in various provinces also had Statutes that they followed. These as well varied from place to place. Hinnebusch, 380–81.

Note 74: The edition of this is found in Lat. Const. The English translation is found in Const. The Constitutions were used until 1930.

Note 75: Hinnebusch, 381.

Note 76: Several chronicles (*Annales Basileenses, Annales Colmarienses maiores, Annales Colmarienses minores* and *De rebus alsaticis ineuntis saeculi XIII*, all in Monumenta Germania Historica Scriptore 17) all mention Dominican women. Monumenta Germania Historica hereafter cited in text as MGH. Letters can be found in Heinrich Finke, ed., *Ungedruckte Dominikanerbriefe des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Paderbom: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1891); and Wilhelm Oehl, ed., *Deutsche Mystikerbriefe des Mittelalters, 1100–1550* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1931).

Note 77: Graduals are the principle choir or singing book for the mass. Antiphonals contain the sung parts of the Divine Office. Diurnals contain the daytime offices for the Divine Office. Collectars contain the prayers for the canonical hours of the Divine Office. Psalters contain the 150 psalms, and when used for the Divine Office, often contained other relevant texts, like the Hours of the Virgin.

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Chapter 1

Space: A Garden of Virtues in Which to Delight: The Spatial Environment

Female Dominican Monasteries

1

This investigation of spirituality and the female Dominican sensual environment begins with the most obvious part of that environment, the actual physical or spatial area in which Dominican women lived.[1] Recent work by scholars of archaeology and art history has pointed to the importance of space and physical environment in the structuring of religious women's lives. These scholars have sought to understand the ways in which monastic women might have given their environment spiritual significance or understood physical structures that were imposed upon them. Such scholars have observed that the ways in which space was gendered influenced the spiritual activities within it. What was male space, what was female space, and how these spaces were created through sacred activities and spiritual expectations have become important questions when talking about the female monastic environment. Caroline Bruzelius has pointed to the ways in which Franciscan women's piety may have been influenced by the development of their choir space and the visual and aural accessibility or inaccessibility of the host and altar.[2] Roberta Gilchrist has shown how women's understanding of their place within the history of western monasticism, and their spiritual role within a larger society, may have shaped and been shaped by the architectural placement of various monastic buildings, such as the refectory.[3] As Gilchrist says, "[T]he architecture of the nunnery was active in constructing images of female spirituality. Observers would have been drawn into a process of interpretation, in which a building's form or spatial orientation was given meaning. . . The perceived meaning of an architectural form may have altered over time, and certainly differed according to the social identity of the observer."[4] And these observers included the women who lived within the monastery. How they interpreted and perceived the spaces around them, and hence how they used them, will be issues addressed in this chapter.

2

The architecture of Dominican women has received little attention from scholars. Most of the information concerning the Order's architecture comes from studying male houses and the legislation concerning structures enacted by the Dominican General Chapter.[5] As far as men's houses are concerned, it has been observed that mendicant communities during the thirteenth and into the fourteenth century were most often built just outside city walls in the proximity of city gates. This is also the case for the nuns of Unterlinden, St. Maria Magdalena,

and St. Agnes. By the end of the fourteenth century, houses for men were constructed inside the city fortifications, usually along one of the walls or rivers that bordered many medieval cities.[6]

"Dominican thinking, at least initially and for most of the thirteenth century, was conditioned by the concept of architectural poverty."[7] The original Dominican constitutions called for "modest and humble" buildings. Between 1228 and 1235, this vague statement was qualified by specific guidelines.[8] The walls of the buildings were to measure no more than 12 feet (*pedum*) high and with balcony, garret, or second story, no more than 20. The church's height was not to exceed 30 feet, and vaulting was to be used only over the choir and the sacristy.[9] In 1263 these restrictions were supplemented with the directive that "in our buildings nothing notably enticing or superfluous in sculpture, paintings, pavements, or other such similar things should be made that would defile our poverty."[10] Building materials were to be from local sources and inexpensive, reflecting the Order's commitment to poverty. In 1300 the Order's General Chapter deleted the specific size restrictions from its constitutions, but maintained the 1263 ban on excessive decoration. But as Sundt has pointed out, the General Chapter did not try to enforce this ban after 1276.[11] The actual form of the monastery and its church, as well as the style in which it was built usually reflected the architectural practice of a local area. Hence the Dominican churches of Italy and Southern France were for the most part hall churches, while those in German-speaking countries tended to favor a Germanic elongated choir.[12] Most thirteenth-century Dominican churches had more in common architecturally with local parish churches than with the great cathedrals or abbey churches.[13] Both the scale of the churches and the decoration program were less elaborate. The Dominicans, especially those in Germany, embraced the ribbed vaulting of the French gothic style and used it aggressively in their churches, helping to spread what had begun as a local French style.[14] **3**

The Dominicans did not construct houses that always resembled traditional monastic communities or those of regular canons, although in theory those communities served as the model for cenobitic living for the Dominicans. Like most medieval churches, those of the Dominicans faced east. However, since the houses were built in urban areas, often on land acquired piecemeal by gift and purchase, the claustral buildings had no standard form, but were built to fit the space available.[15] Moreover, from their inception, the male Dominican houses did not have open dormitories, but rather individual cells for each friar, emphasizing the somewhat individual nature of the Dominican lifestyle, in which community and communal activity were not the driving force of the Order's religious experience.[16] Individual cells also allowed the friars to read, study, and pray without disturbing their neighbors. **4**

Much of the architectural research and documentation from the thirteenth and fourteenth century deals only with the men of the Dominican Order and remains woefully silent about the structures and requirements of the Order's women. However, the Order did make some provisions for the communities of women affiliated with it. The Dominican constitutions for women of 1259 prescribed the following: **5**

> [B]uildings of the Sisters will be humble, not remarkable for their elegance of style or superfluity. Great care must be taken to have them arranged throughout so as to further religious observance as much as possible.[17]

The constitutions take a practical approach, seeing structures as a function of the women's religious activities, in which the ideal of poverty espoused by the Order was to be reflected in the buildings themselves. The very vagueness of the passage allowed for many possible configurations.

Important to the arrangement of monastic buildings was that they establish the enclosure of the religious women. But the extent to which Dominican women were enclosed is a difficult question, and one still debated by scholars. How permeable were the walls surrounding the monastery, and how easily could the women move out of their space? These are questions to which we may never know the exact answers. But in terms of actual physical remains and ideology, I come down on the strictly enclosed side of the argument, though I do not believe it was a total enclosure. In addition to the number of locks, gates, grates with nails in them, keys and bars that Humbert of Romans' constitutions call for, the impression given by the Sister-Books themselves is one of strict enclosure. The Weiler Sister-Book describes the community as enclosed, as opposed to a hospital.[18] In other texts, the incursion of outsiders into the narrative is negligible and the women show no signs of actively moving between the monastery and the outside world, except in the case of a few visions. In fact, the texts proudly point to sisters who display their strict following of the monastic Rule by never glancing out the window at the secular world surrounding them, not once in their entire lives.[19] For example, at Töss, Margaret Willin is described as paying no attention to the parlor windows; in fact, she practiced a studied avoidance of them. Some of the younger nuns used to tease her and pretend that they saw some kind of miracle at the window, but Margaret never turned her eyes in that direction.[20] **6**

At places such as windows, the border between the enclosed space and the greater world thinned. These places—windows, grilles, and turns—allowed non-members of the community limited access to the religious environment while granting monastic inhabitants limited and usually supervised access to the outside world. The constitutions specified and regulated these access points. There was to be a parlor window where one could speak with outsiders, but always accompanied by one or more of the other nuns. There were also to be two confessional windows, to be used only for that purpose. Thirdly there was to be a turn, through which **7**

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things were given into and sent out of the monastery. Only those sisters who had access to the turn through their duties and offices could speak there, and then only about that which pertained to those duties and offices. Lastly there was to be in the church a sermon window, through which the women could hear the sermons preached in the church. The constitutions demanded,"[A]ll these windows, large or small, are to have a double grating, or else one grating having sharp nails, so that there can be no possible contact with those outside or in."[21]

An early document for St. Agnes, written by the German Provincial Prior, Herman of Minden, in 1284, elaborates upon the windows to be found in a female Dominican house. He specifies their size and configuration: **8**

> The Constitutions diligently establish regarding walls, precincts, turns, and likewise enclosed areas, who may enter temporarily into these openings and control them. However, as the Constitutions do not define the size of the windows and appurtenances, I establish that the larger double window should have a length of six feet, a space or a bench between the two grilles of one foot and a palm, and that the double iron grilles and the squared bars should be so narrow that a chicken egg can not be passed between [the grating]. The family window,[22] which is called the friars' and lay brothers' window, should be three feet in dimension and be similar to the larger window and also be barred. The little confession windows shall have a length of one foot and the grilles should not be nevertheless too distant because of the deaf; the openings in the grilles may be narrower. The windows should be built above stone or oak foundations and lock from the inside. The windows on the outside should be shuttered at night, lest the laity be able to carry on conversations at inopportune times.[23]

The careful attention given to the security and seclusion of nuns in the constitutions is reiterated by Herman. The size of the grating to be used, the space between the two sides of the windows, and the shutters on both the inside and outside of the openings, all maintained the distance between the secular and religious worlds, limiting the possible contact that the windows and other openings implied and allowed.

No female Dominican monastery survives intact with all of its medieval fabric, not even the six of the monasteries under consideration in this study. The houses of Adelhausen, Maria Magdelena, St. Agnes, and St. Katharina were all torn down to make way for the construction of the seventeenth-century city fortification in Freiburg. Of the two surviving examples in this study, most of the remaining buildings at Unterlinden were gutted after the French Revolution when the structure was used as a barracks for soldiers and St. Katharinenthal has undergone **9**

extensive rebuilding. However, from drawings, textual references, and archeology, we can reconstruct some aspects of the claustral buildings from the two houses of Unterlinden and St. Katharinenthal.

A nineteenth-century reconstruction of eighteenth-century Unterlinden shows an extensive set of buildings. The nuns had resettled at the site in 1252. Their new choir was consecrated in 1269, a precinct wall was completed in 1278, as was the cemetery, and about a third of the monastic buildings, which, according to the Colmar chronicler, were completed at great expense, were standing by 1289.[24] The compound walls rose roughly 20 feet and were bordered on the north and east by a canal called the Mühlbach or Mill Brook. The cloister lay to the northeast of the church and formed a square with structures jutting out from the east and west of the north range. Garden plots lay on the east side of the precinct while at least four outbuildings occupied the western and northern area (although there is no indication that these are remnants of medieval buildings). The monastery's cemetery was to the south and east of the church's choir. Across the Mühlbach to the north was the Ackerhof, which was first mentioned in 1299. This annex served as domestic space, housed *conversi* (lay-brothers) and *conversae* (lay-sisters), and was the center of the monastery's economic network of rural land.[25] **10**

At St. Katharinenthal, the medieval cloister arcade and other buildings fell victim to the rebuilding and remodeling efforts of the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Knoepfli has reconstructed the layout of the early community. He estimates that the precinct measured 38 meters from north to south and 49 meters from east to west.[26] Just south of the precinct walls the land ascends steeply up a hill. **11**

Gilchrist has suggested a symbolic meaning for the placement of cloisters on the north side of women's monastic churches in northern Europe where it was not an issue of providing shade from the Mediterranean sun. Traditional monastic plans usually situated the cloister arcade to the south of the church, allowing the inhabitants to then use the cloister range adjacent to the church as a *scriptorium* or *lectorium* which took advantage of the southern sun. In her study of English communities, Gilchrist found that approximately one third of women's houses voluntarily placed, or had placed, their cloister to the north. She posited three reasons for this architectural arrangement. The first concerns medieval cultural ideas of gender and space. In medieval churches the left or north side was associated with women. This was the side of the church in which women most usually sat. It was through the north transept door that women came to be churched after the birth of their children. By extension this leads to Gilchrist's second reason. The north side was associated with the Virgin Mary, the divine woman. The north transept door of churches often had a portal dedicated to her, as at Chartres. Depictions of Mary always show her on the right-hand side of Christ, which as Gilchrist notes, places her on the left hand side of the church when viewed by the observer. **12**

Gilchrist also found that north-cloistered monasteries were more often dedicated to female saints.[28] The third influence that she finds concerns remnants from a pre-Norman tradition of double, often royal, monasteries that placed the women's cloister on the north side.[29] While the last suggestion does not concern south German monasteries, the first two could conceivably have influenced the building at Unterlinden and St. Katharinenthal. For "it is clear that the northern parts of churches were associated not only with female saints and female worship in general, but more specifically with the Virgin Mary at Christ's right hand."[30]

Both Unterlinden and St. Katharinenthal had north-facing cloisters, but we may never know if this iconography influenced the construction at these two houses, for the sites themselves logically call for north-facing cloisters. In both cases, the monastery's water source was located to the north of their precinct. At Unterlinden the Mühlbach ran on the north side and at St. Katharinenthal the Rhine River formed the northern boundary of the monastic enclosure. This water source was of most use to the north range of the cloister, which housed the kitchen, the washroom, a fountain, and the latrines. However, a symbolic meaning is not necessarily ruled out by pointing to the practical reasons for the placement of the cloister on the north side of the church. The women may have interpreted the architectural necessity as fortuitous for their spiritual understanding of themselves as women and devotees of the Virgin Mary. **13**

Within a monastery it is somewhat difficult to define what was sacred space and what was not. By definition the entire monastery was sacred consecrated space, but some parts were more sacred than others. When talking about spaces within the monastery, there is sacred space, that which had direct connection to the divine, such as the choir through its altar or altars, and there is semi-sacred space, that which was sacred as part of the monastery, but which had a more tenuous association with the divine. The semi-sacred spaces were the spaces around the cloister, excepting the church and any chapels. These spaces could also be considered more female, because they were rarely entered by anyone other than females.[31] **14**

By following the cloister arcade around the monastery, we can stop at each of the spaces and examine the spirituality that Dominican nuns practiced in each area. We begin with the most significant of these spaces, the church, and then examine the other places within the monastic precinct: the cloister walk, the chapterhouse, the infirmary, the refectory, the kitchen, the dormitory, the workrooms, and the gardens. **15**

The Church and Choir

The churches of female Dominican monasteries in Germany tended toward one of two types. Although there was a wide variety—and no architectural plan was imposed upon them as it was among the Cistercians—the women's churches were either aisleless hall churches in the **16**

shape of a rectangle as at Töss, Au bei Stein, and St. Katharinenthal, or a usually aisleless nave with a Germanic *Langchor*, as at Klingenthal, Oetenbach, and Unterlinden. The Langchor was an elongated, narrow choir, usually aisleless, that extended about five bays, although in some case it could be up to seven bays. It was either as long as or longer than the nave of the church. The traditional explanation is that the Langchor churches and the rectangular churches of Dominican women lacked transepts because there were no priests among the community's residents. Hence there was no call for extra chapels with attendant altars where Mass had to be said. But as nuns' churches did celebrate Masses for patrons, such explanations must eventually be re-examined. In this part of Germany, the churches of male religious often were chapelless as well, conforming to the Langchor ground plan. The women's' churches then reflect a regional development in architecture that tells us little about liturgical practice.

17 The monastic church is the most prominent space described in the Sister-Books, being the site of much of the women's spiritual and visionary activity. In the texts it is the space most often indicated by name. But the Sister-Books rarely concern themselves with the entire church, rather they focus on the part of the church that was accessible to the nuns, the nuns' choir, or gallery. Carola Jäggi has argued for the flexibility of liturgical space in female mendicant churches. Her examination of German-speaking houses of Poor Clares and female Dominicans found that the nuns' choir had no consistent placement, and often moved within the monastery church over time. In addition, nuns might follow Mass in one place and celebrate Divine Office in another.[32] For example, the monastic church of Kirchberg had "an upper choir" for the nuns where they heard sermons.[33] This may represent a western nuns' gallery or another sort of raised gallery. But because they heard sermons there does not necessarily mean that was where they also observed the Mass or even sang the Office.

18 Of the monasteries under consideration, only the church at Unterlinden retains any of its medieval structure. The entire structure is 65 meters long and 12 meters wide.[34] The church was built in the gothic style, beginning in 1252 with the four-bay nave. Only one side-aisle was ever constructed, on the south side of the nave. The remains of its arcade have been incorporated into the current south wall. The vaults appear to be early Gothic because the elongated arches are not very pronounced. The capitals topping the pillars are of a simple foliate style. There was probably a choir screen between the nave and the choir. In 1269 the choir may have been completed, for in that year the altar was consecrated by Albert the Great.[35] The elongated choir, a common feature of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century German monastic churches particularly among the mendicant orders, had seven bays, making it one of the longest in the region. It is 38 meters long and oriented to the southeast.[36] The choir bays are supported by four-part ribbed groin vaults with central bosses and are delineated by ribbed arches descending into half capitals. The apse consists of a five-part ribbed groin vault, with the ribbing descending to half capitals and then continuing to the

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floor as half piers. The windows on the south side of the choir and in the apse are narrow double lancets topped by a small rose all within a rather small lancet. The windows, especially the three windows in the apse, are very similar in form to the arches in the cloister arcade. The windows do not even reach the tops of the wall buttresses on the outside of the choir. The interior walls were probably painted, but today only a fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century wall painting survives.[37] On the roof, a spire over the rood screen once marked the division between the nave and the choir, a change of space also marked by a change in the roof level.

In the westernmost two bays of the nave a gallery was constructed, creating a second floor above the nave. This nuns' choir was in existence by the beginning of the fourteenth century, but may have been built along with the rest of the nave and may have been accessible by stairs near the chapterhouse in the west range of the cloister. Such a gallery often served as the choir space for nuns in Cistercian and Dominican monasteries. From a position elevated above the nave, the nuns could view the high altar in the apse clearly during Mass and Divine Office. At Unterlinden the gallery appears to have been much too small to have contained the sisters' performance of the daily prayers. Art historian Jeffrey Hamburger has noted that the gallery appears to have been used for private devotion and not for congregating the entire community.[38] The gallery space there served as a chapel and from the mid-fourteenth century housed the "icon" of the Virgin Mary, to which were attributed miraculous occurrences.[39] The image stood on an altar which was dedicated in January 1348 to the Virgin, the Archangel Michael, other angels, Bishop Erhard, Saint Dominic, and Saint Thomas Aquinas.[40] The nuns, it seems, celebrated Office in the choir. The church itself was dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, and had additional altars in honor of Saint Catherine, Saint James the Major, the 11,000 Virgins, and Saint Margaret.[41] **19**

Unterlinden was, however, in an urban area populated with many other religious institutions, and its architecture reflects this fact. Its church was intended chiefly for use by its members, choir nuns, lay-sisters, lay-brothers, and male clergy. The local parish church was St. Martin's in the center of town. But there is no indication that the laity were forbidden entrance into the nave at Unterlinden. In fact, according to the vita of the Unterlinden prioress Hedewig of Gundolzhein, indulgences were granted to all who visited the monastery's church on the feast of the Beheading of John the Baptist. The male Dominicans of Colmar had written the pope on behalf of the nuns, asking for the indulgences, but the women did not need to wait for their brethren to bring them a reply. John the Baptist appeared in the nuns' choir to assure the sisters that the indulgence had been secured.[42] **20**

On the other hand, St. Katharinental near Diessenhofen, Switzerland, was both a monastery and the local parish church. As such, a different arrangement was called for because the church structure was shared by the enclosed women, their male and female helpers, and the local population. While there is still a church on the monastery's original site, which is now a **21**

nursing home, the structure is a Baroque building constructed on the site of the medieval church. But visual and anecdotal evidence provides information on the monastery's earlier church. On March 3, 1242, the monastery's early patrons, the counts Hartmann of Kiburg along with the Constance bishop Heinrich of Tanne, granted the women the right to construct a church, cloister, and work buildings on their site outside Diessenhofen.[43] An initial church was begun around 1250. It seems to have been small and simple. The altar in the nuns' choir and possibly in the outer choir was consecrated by Albert the Great in 1269. As the convent and its finances grew, the women were able to build a new church whose altars were consecrated in 1305. The old church seems to have been in great disrepair. A large part of the new building campaign came from donations made by Eberhart of Cruzelingen, a citizen of Constance.[44]

Although separated by half a century, the two medieval versions of the church had a similar plan, although the second was more elaborate and contained more altars. The Sister-Book from the monastery of St. Katharinenthal makes reference to a nuns' choir, and Albert Knoepfli suggests that the church had three sections or distinct areas: a nuns' choir divided by some type of wall, an outer choir with chancel, and a nave for the laity sectioning off from the outer choir by a rood screen.[45] The structure followed a simple hall church design plan with no aisles. The nuns' choir faced east and originally contained an altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Evangelist. After the rebuilding, the dedication of this altar was reconfirmed. **22**

The outer choir, first consecrated by Albert the Great in 1269, contained two altars on the north and south sides of the east end. The northern altar was dedicated to Saint Dominic and Saint Peter Martyr, the south altar to Saint Catherine and Saint Nicholas. In 1305, the donations of Eberhart of Cruzlingen paid for four additional altars in the outer choir. Three were located in the chancel, of which the middle or main altar was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint Dominic. This altar was flanked by two side altars. The one on the south side was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, Saint Catherine, Saint Nicholas, Saint Agatha, and Saint Thomas (Martyr) of Canterbury. The north-side altar was dedicated to Saint John the Evangelist, Saint James the Major, Saint Peter Martyr, and Mary Magdalen. The fourth altar seems to have been placed atop the chancel, or perhaps as part of the rood screen between the nave and the outer choir.[46] It honored the Virgin Mary, the angels, and all the saints. **23**

This three-part church, with nuns' choir, outer choir, and nave, was fairly common among women's monastic churches. The exact layout differed from house to house, but the division of sacred space between the nuns and the public was often an essential element in the **24**

church's construction and use. The women's constitutions provided for church configurations such as those at St. Katharinenthal, so sharing liturgical space in a partitioned manner was accepted, and perhaps even expected by the members of the Order:

> In the church, between the Sisters and the persons in the outer chapel, there is to be an iron window of appropriate dimensions provided with gratings where sermons may be given. In a suitable place there must also be two small windows with iron gratings for the hearing of confessions.[47]

This passage from the constitutions calls for an inner sanctum for the women and an outer space for male clergy.

The actual fabric of the medieval St. Katharinenthal church and monastery does not survive and its vestiges provide no clear evidence of the original buildings. But the Sister-Book gives a verbal description of the choir space. In the west end of the nuns' choir, a metal grill allowed visual access to the outer choir and altars, a space physically denied to the women. As mentioned above, the nuns' constitutions provided for such grills, or windows as they were called. But the grill in place at St. Katharinenthal was to allow the women to see the elevated Host during the Mass in the outer choir. This was in fact one of the other reasons for the early fourteenth-century building campaign. In the original plan, the placement of the altars in the outer choir hindered the viewing of the event. The new configuration rectified this problem. The Sister-Book's author attributed the new window to the generosity of their patron Eberhart.[48] **25**

Eberhart also provided the church with cut and finished Rorschacher sandstone for its windows and tuff for the rest of the building.[49] On the south side of the church were five single-pointed tracery windows with one similar window on the east end and the easterly north-side of the nuns' choir. On the north side of the church most of the wall space was occupied by the cloister arcade. However, a small row of highly placed late Romanesque double windows provided some light on that side. The roof was topped with a ridge turret that most likely marked the division between the nave and the two choirs, and possibly the placement of one of the altars. **26**

We know little about the churches of the four remaining monasteries in this study. All of the Freiburg houses were torn down in the construction of urban fortifications in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At Adelhausen the building of the choir was under the supervision of the *kusterin* or sacristan, Gertrut of Nufera, and the Sister-Book says the structure cost one hundred marks. Because the *kusterin* had only thirty pounds to begin the building, she prayed to the Virgin Mary for help, saying that the choir was to be built in her honor. When the building was half-complete, Gertrut suffered a crisis of faith, decided to stop building and sent all the workmen home. Then she prayed to the Virgin, asking why she had been abandoned, **27**

since she had begun the work in her name. When she finished praying, she found money on the altar and was able to commence building again.[50] Adelhausen's Sister-Book indicates that the choir walls were painted.[51] In addition to the church with its choir, the cloister had a bell-tower, a dormitory, cells, corn buildings, cellars, and other buildings, all of which were damaged in the fire of 1410. The damage to the entire monastery was estimated by the city council to be at least sixty thousand florins; the damage to the choir, the church, and their contents was assessed at sixteen hundred florins.[52] The Penitents of Maria Magdalena had patrons buried in their church, some with elaborate monuments.[53]

Although Gilchrist suggests that the church and sacristy architecture "signaled the liturgical passivity of the nuns,"[54] among German Dominican women this was certainly not the case. While this claim might be true of the sacristy, a space rarely mentioned in the Sister-Books, such a statement certainly does not apply to the churches utilized by these women. Here the women were anything but liturgically or paraliturgically passive. **28**

Called to the choir eight times between midnight of one day and sundown of the next, the nuns spent a good part of their life there. The Sister-Books inform us about the performance of Divine Office and attendance at Mass, feast days, and communion. The nuns also spent time outside these required rituals in the choir. They used the space to pray and meditate, and they often kept vigil there in the hours between Matins and sunrise. The majority of visions that occur in the Sister-Books happen in the nuns' choir. In the choir-narratives of the women's visionary experiences there are two focal points between which an almost constant connection is maintained. The first focal point is the altar. The second is the nuns' choir. Let us turn first to the women's use of the choir space during liturgical rituals and look at their interactions with the altar and the area around it. **29**

The nuns used the altar or altars as a landmark in their devotional activities. Their lives describe their approach to it or how they prostrated themselves before it. The altar could be a reference point that indicated the exact location of a woman during her mystical experience. For example, some women sat behind the altar, an unusual place to be as it was distant from the nuns' choirstalls. This sometimes happened when the choir was overcrowded.[55] The women also saw persons or things at or on the altar. Not surprisingly, they saw Christ with the most regularity. And this was not only during communion, although Eucharist visions did occur with some frequency.[56] In most of these visions, Christ, Mary, or the saints are seen first at the altar. The people in these visions did not remain in a fixed location, however. For example, Saint John the Evangelist escorted the St. Katharinenthal nun Ite of Kloten from her choirstall to the altar for communion and then back again, while the Adelhausen nun Metzi of Walthershoven saw Christ leave the altar and wander through the choir.[57] Sometimes in these examples, the priest is mentioned, often when he raised the Eucharist or when he intoned a liturgical text that was meaningful to the nuns. At other times the priest is not mentioned, but **30**

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rather implied. Some choir-narratives either take his presence for granted or they erase him. The elevated Host is described, but not the one who elevates it.[58] More than half the times the altar is mentioned, the priest is absent from the narrative.

The other focal point in the choir-narratives is the choir nuns themselves. The narratives about the nuns' choir space often elicited comments from the authors about proper behavior within that space. They also detailed how the sisters, through their prayers there, achieved a greater spirituality, visionary gift, or mystical union with God. The nuns are often described as being in their choirstalls, although like their visions they too move around. In fact, one might call the spirituality of the choir *active*, for the women are not portrayed as passive observers in liturgical and paraliturgical activities, but rather as enthusiastic participants in all that occurs around them. Nuns are forever standing up, sitting down, approaching the altar, retreating from the altar, or walking around the altar.[59] In one instance, a group of nuns wander through the choir trying to decide whose choirstall smells like roses.[60] At other times they watch those who appeared in their visions walking around the choir and conversing with them,[61] or they observe their sisters receiving special graces signifying their holiness.[62] And of course eight times a day the nuns processed in and out of the choir in an orderly fashion as called for by the Rule and constitutions. **31**

Without a doubt, choirs and chapels were the most sacred spaces within a monastery. If we think of them only as housing the altars, which served as the focal points of the Mass, they can too easily be thought of as the most male-dominated spaces. It was at altars that men, not women, said Masses. It was at altars that men, not women, elevated the Host. But while their male supervisors may have expected the women to be passive in the liturgical space of the choir, the women used that space to actively signify their religiosity in ways that were understood by the other female inhabitants of the community. The women enthusiastically participated in these liturgical events, especially through their visions which conferred on them tacit permission to do more than they were officially allowed to by the Church. Their spirituality within the choir can be seen as an attempt to feminize the space, to imprint it with their own actions or interpretation of proper religious behavior. **32**

The choir, however, was not merely visited for the celebration of the liturgy. Dominican women used the space for their individual devotions. They would prostrate themselves before the altar in a prayer position made popular by Dominic known as a *venia*.[63] In the quiet hours between Matins and sunrise, many nuns and lay-sisters used the choir for personal prayer and meditation. The time indicator "after Matins" opens the descriptions of some visionary or mystical experiences, many which took place in the choir.[64] **33**

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The Cloister and Chapterhouse

Beside the church was the cloister arcade, which connected the semi-sacred spaces for working, eating, and resting. Modeled on the ideal Jerusalem or Paradise, it joined together all the rooms that surrounded it, providing a covered walkway for ritualized processions and general monastic traffic as well as serving as monastic living space. **34**

The cloister arcade at Unterlinden consists of four ranges, each composed of thirteen gothic arches, and totaling fifty-four in all.[65] Each pointed arch is divided by tracery into two lancet openings, flanked by columns topped with trefoil arches. At the top of these lancets is a small quatrefoil oculus or rose. This is the form of the arches on all four ranges, but near the middle of the west arcade there is a larger arch composed of four short lancets. Each pair lies beneath a trefoil oculus. The arch is topped by a large tracery rose and backed by a trough on the interior side (within the cloister walk) that probably once marked the entrance to the chapterhouse. This trough may have been used at Easter for ritual foot washing. The St. Katharinenthal cloister arcades were not vaulted until the sixteenth century.[66] Earlier they were covered by a wooden roof supported by posts. **35**

While its physical configuration suggests that the primary function of the cloister was to serve as a hallway—a place one walked through to get someplace else—the Sister-Books show that it was often the desired destination for many Dominican women. It was a site of contemplation and prayer, as well as mystical experiences. At Adelhausen, Luggi Löscherin was in the cloister arcade shortly before Prime when a shining ball appeared before her and explained to her the pain and suffering she would endure as a sign of her holiness and piety before her death.[67] The women often knelt before the statues and crucifixes that decorated the arcades and inner walls.[68] The nuns at Engelthal had a tradition of praying together in the cloister after Matins on Easter day, reciting the Psalter, as a vigil for the Resurrection. When the lay-sister Elizabeth joined them, kneeling before one of the church windows that depicted the Last Judgment, she fell into a trance in which she saw Christ in majesty upon his throne flanked by the Apostles, his face shining. When she came to herself again, she reported that she had seen the cloister arcade full of little children who ran around clapping their hands together in joy at the Resurrection. They said to her, "Give it to us as well." Elizabeth understood that these were the souls who wanted her to pray for them by reciting the Psalter.[69] **36**

Opening from the cloister, the chapterhouse usually held a privileged position next to the choir of the church in the east range. Here the entire community would gather for readings, announcements, monastic business, and the chapter of faults.[70] The chapterhouse of St. Katharinenthal had a chapel incorporated into it with a crucifix before which many of the women did their devotions.[71] There the Christ Child was observed teaching the St. Katharinenthal prioress Williburg of Hünikon what to say during Chapter.[72] At Unterlinden the chapterhouse seems to have been in the west range. At Adelhausen the chapterhouse may **37**

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have been in the church itself, for the Sister-Book refers twice to "the chapter in the right choir."[73] However, a more logical explanation is that the chapterhouse was on the outside of the church and shared a wall with the right side of the choir. Dominican friars visited this space in the course of their visitation of the monastery. It was there that they accused Adelheit of Breisach of heresy.[74] The nuns of Töss sometimes flagellated themselves in front of the monastery's chapterhouse.[75]

The Infirmary, Refectory, and Kitchen

Central to many vitae in the Sister-Books are the illnesses the women suffered. These events tell us about the infirmary or sick house where they went during periods of ill health. Illness, both chronic and short-term, was an important element of female spirituality in the later Middle Ages. As Weinstein and Bell have shown, fortitude in illness was a specifically female characteristic among medieval saints.[76] Illness played a pivotal role in the lives of many sisters, as shown in the Sister-Books. While some women seemed to have remained in the dormitory during illnesses, the elderly and the chronically ill were housed apart from the rest of the community. One of the most difficult spaces to reconstruct from archeological remains, the infirmary had no prescribed placement in the main cloister buildings, but was in principle located in a separate structure with its own chapel and kitchen.[77] Among English houses, the infirmary was usually located to the east or southeast of the other buildings, accessible through a passage in the east range of the cloister.[78] At St. Katharinenthal the infirmary may have been located north of the cloister along the Rhine wall, near the kitchen and latrines. However, there is no firm evidence for this.[79] **38**

According to the Order's constitutions, the infirmary was the only place in the monastery that was allowed mattresses, and the only place where meat could be served. Except for the choir and the sacristy, it was the only place that allowed some frequency of male entry.[80] The constitutions deal at some length with the possible necessity of male entrance into the female environment of the claustral buildings. Visits by Dominican officials, local ecclesiastics, members of the papal court, royalty, patrons, and even workmen are all provided for with the advice that such events should not occur too frequently. The prioress, her officials, and a small group of mature sisters who accompany her dealt with visitors, and the remaining members of the community hide from sight.[81] In a similar vein: **39**

> [I]f a Sister becomes so ill that she is not able to come to the accustomed place of Communion, and she wishes to receive Communion, the priest . . . reverently bearing the Body of Christ, with two Sisters preceding him with candles, and one with holy water and the other with a little bell, goes to the infirmary, being

> joined by some of the more mature Sisters, and he will give Communion to the sick one, observing the customary ceremonies.[82]

Having left the male space of the outer choir with its accompanying altars, the priest enters into the feminine space of the cloister buildings. Illness did not prevent an infirm woman from receiving communion, if she wished it. But the presence of men, even in the form of the priest in the infirmary area, was an issue of some concern. And so he was chaperoned by older women, who perform, witness, and assist with the ritual. Moreover, his presence was marked by the ringing of a bell, which warned all those within hearing range not only of impending death, but more importantly of the presence of a man in the inner area of the monastery. The small group of women stood in for the entire community who would have been present had the infirm sister received communion in the choir. However, this may not have occurred with any frequency at all, for many of the Sister-Books tell of women lying in the infirmary unable to receive communion. The Constitution goes on to say:

> [I]f a Sister is sick enough to be anointed, then the priest . . . will bring the holy oil for the anointing. One Sister, carrying a cross and preceded by two with candles, goes to the Infirmary and all the community precedes him in procession. The priest entering into the infirmary says, *Pax huic domui*, and carries out the customary ceremonies as stated in the Ordinario. Likewise, the Prioress, or some other Sister designated by her, will wipe the places where she has been anointed with balls of tow. Great care should be taken not to multiply these entrances too easily, whether for Communion or for anointing, without serious reason. Both should be done at the same time. When it is necessary to give Communion or to anoint anyone, one Sister carries the cross and a priest and his companion will carry the holy oils. Communion will be given first and anointing afterwards, and in this case the community remains in the infirmary until the end of the ceremonies.[83]

In face of death, the entire community is brought in to participate in the rituals, and the infirmary becomes infused with the sacred power of the priest, transforming it into a sanctuary.

40

Despite the arrangements drawn up in the constitution, priests are rarely mentioned as being in the sickroom. Whether this reflects a very strict enclosure or a lack of *cura monialium* is unclear. The authors of the Sister-Books do not say that the priests could not or would not come to the infirmary, only that the women could not come to communion or that on a non-communicating day they longed for the Eucharist. The former was the case in the life of Adelheit Ludwigin, whose desire for the body of the Lord was very great. But it was not the priest who gave her the Eucharist, but rather a visionary bishop who turned out to be Saint Martin.[84] Some sisters were visited in the sick house by other saints and angels, and the Virgin Mary often put in an appearance. In the St. Katharinenthal infirmary, for example,

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Kathrin of Überlingen was observed being nursed by Saint Catherine, the monastery's and Order's patroness.[85] Some women, like Gute Tuschelin of Adelhausen, used the infirmary to fulfill their idea of the mixed or active life, which was embodied by their devotion to caring for the sick.[86]

For some sisters, the infirmary was a permanent home, one they rarely left, and then usually only to join the other sisters in the choir. The visionary visits that many of the nuns received allowed the authority of the male priest to be supplanted, as in the case of Adelheit Ludwigin. Although in that instance it was another man, the bishop Saint Martin, who fulfilled her wishes for communion with Christ. Other sisters received verification of their religiosity from their visions, or promises of reward in the next life for their suffering in this one.

41

The participation of the community in the rituals accompanying communion in the infirmary or the anointing of a dying sister gave the women of these Dominican houses an active role in the events of their lives and especially deaths. This was a metaphorical space in their lives—at the moment of their death—where medieval Christianity called for male guidance in the form of the priest. Through their visions in the infirmary, and their joining in the last rites, the women reclaimed the space as their own, not subverting the priest's power, but reestablishing the space as a female space. Only at life-threatening moments was the priest, and the rituals that brought him, admitted.

42

Another of the semi-sacred spaces that receive attention in the Sister-Books is the refectory. This eating hall was housed usually in the north or south cloister arcade, parallel to the church. At St. Katharinenthal, the refectory is in the north range, but juts out to the east. This reflects the geography of the site, because a refectory extending to the north would have been threatened by high waters from the Rhine. The east end was capped by a stepped gable.[87] The Engelthal Sister-Book notes that its community's refectory was built of stone.[88] The site of communal meals, common readings, and food asceticism, the refectory's spirituality can sometimes be seen as place-specific. Many of the visions have to do with food. For example, the Virgin Mary gave milk to the Adelhausen nun Metze die Kramerin while she sat in the dining room.[89] When the Töss sister Ita Sulzerin had no appetite, Christ appeared to her one night in the dormitory, from there he brought her into the refectory, sang grace, placed food in front of her, and asked her to eat. After protesting that she had no hunger, Christ thanked her for the food she had earlier left uneaten. Ita was then able to eat.[90] This woman's vision, although it took place in the dormitory, focuses on the important role food played in the spirituality of the refectory.[91] Other vitae describe the meager fare consumed by the sisters, especially during the early years of the houses. In the early years at Adelhausen the women supposedly prayed for their food. When the cellaress told the women there was nothing to eat, the nuns sang in the choir, praying for food. When they returned to the refectory and after the table blessing, a mysterious youth appeared with beautiful bread, more than enough for the

43

women to eat.[92] Even when the houses had moved beyond the reputed poverty of their earliest beginnings, many women continued to practice food asceticism on a daily or at least ferial basis.[93]

But not every association with the refectory has to do with food. The lay-sister Belli of Schalken loved to cook for the sisters, and seems to have looked upon the refectory and the kitchen as her choir. When she was free from duty during mealtime she would go into the refectory and eagerly listen to what was said to the sisters. If she was not free, she would pray fiercely and cry as copiously "as if she were standing in the choir."[94] **44**

The kitchen was usually in proximity to the refectory, most often adjacent to it, as indicated in the vita of Belli of Schalken. At St. Katharinenthal it was in the north range, near the fountain and washroom. Such sites allowed the kitchen to have some kind of running water or access to drainage. Many sisters did service in the kitchen, either on a rotating basis or in the case of some lay-sisters for their entire lives. Especially for the lay-sisters, the kitchen was a space with spiritual context, as can be seen in the life of Ite of Hallau. She saw the infant Christ in the Christmas crèche, and when she went to work in the kitchen, she found that he had followed her there.[95] A similar occurrence is recorded as happening to Adelheit die Huterin, who served as cellaress at St. Katharinenthal. One day after Nones she went into the choir to pray and had a vision of Christ as a child. After a while the portress came through the choir looking for her and told her she was needed in the kitchen. Adelheit bade farewell to the Christ Child and went about her duties. But when she arrived in the kitchen, there in front of her was the holy child as he had been in the choir.[96] For Adelheit, the sanctity of the choir was extended into the semi-sacred space of the kitchen by the presence of the Christ Child. Work was thus something that was rewarded in the lives of the lay-sisters, much as obedience was in the lives of the choir nuns. Ite of Hallau's Christmas vision of the Christ Child was augmented by another experience that she had while chopping herbs for dinner. Again the Christ Child appeared to her, this time as a small child rather then an infant. Ite made a ball of the herbs and proceeded to play with the child until mealtime. Then she realized that she had neglected her work and the meal would not be prepared in time, but the Christ Child told her not to worry. The food was miraculously ready when the other sisters sat down in the refectory.[97] In such examples, especially for the lay-sisters, investing their primary work area with spiritual meaning, either by seeing the infant Christ or by acting as if they were in the choir, gave their mundane work spiritual overtones and rewarded their service. **45**

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The Dormitories, Workrooms, and Gardens

The dormitory was traditionally a large room where all members of the community slept. Located in the east range of the cloister arcade, the dormitory was often in its upper story. This hall was usually connected to the nuns' choir by night stairs, a configuration that is hard to establish with so little physical evidence. The monastery of Töss does seem to have had such an arrangement.[98] **46**

The Cistercians had introduced a separate sleeping room for *conversi* and one for *conversae*. However, the Dominicans, male and female, never embraced an architectural hierarchy for sleeping rooms that placed the lay-brothers or sisters in a specific place within the monastery. The friars always had separate cells because of the Order's emphasis on study. That the women did not have separate rooms shows how much Dominican women owed to traditional monasticism (Benedictine) for their form of life. The use of communal sleeping rooms seems to have passed its heyday among female monastics of many orders by the early fourteenth century when many houses began to provide individual rooms or cells for the nuns. This trend can be seen in many English houses over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Although prominent, it was not universal. Some communities maintained a common sleeping room, whereas other monasteries were broken up into smaller units based on the upper class *familia*—small households which mimicked the secular clustering of women's quarters in manor houses and castles.[99] Still others provided individual cells for the nuns. In most communities the house's leader—the abbess or the prioress—had separate sleeping quarters as well as her own workroom. **47**

At St. Katharinenthal there was originally a large dormitory on the upper floor of the east wing—over the chapterhouse, warming room, and bathhouse. The prioress's quarters were located in the west range, possibly over the workroom and parlor, while the southern end of the west range housed female boarders. The community's rising population in the late thirteenth century necessitated the building of an additional dormitory. The nuns referred to the earlier one as the large dormitory, and the smaller one as the red dormitory.[100] By the early fifteenth century the larger dormitory had been broken up into individual cells.[101] The Dominican monastery of Kirchberg appears to have had cells from its inception in the mid-thirteenth century and Engelthal had a *schlafhaus* with divided cells.[102] **48**

The dormitory was a site of varied and active spirituality. The Sister-Books record some of the dreams and visions nuns had when sleeping there, like Kathrin Brümsin's mastery of the liturgy for Saint John the Evangelist. In another case, St. Dominic appeared to Guta of Hohenheim in a dream and offered her a golden robe.[103] Other women experienced visions or practiced their piety while awake. Anna of Klingenau worked and prayed in her bed, while Mechtilt die Huserin recited prayers by her bed for the souls in purgatory.[104] The Christ Child appeared to Wilburgis of Weiler and cuddled on her lap.[105] The vitae make frequent **49**

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references to the infant Christ in the dormitory. This may indicate the use of holy dolls by the women of these houses. For instance, Cecili of Winterthur observed Anne of Ramschwag in a state of grace in her bed. Cecili saw a little child cradled in Anne's arms, pressed against her heart. According to the vita, what Cecili could not see was the Virgin Mary sitting at the end of the bed, supervising Anne's care of her child.[106] Other women's visions were eucharistic in nature, showing the prevalence of this strain in their spirituality. As Adelheit of St. Gallen lay sick in her dormitory bed, Christ appeared to her and fed her a little piece of meat, saying the words that accompanied the transubstantiation of the Eucharist.[107] These instances show the types of spirituality practiced in the dormitories of Dominican women. It was a place of prayer, work, sickness, communion, holy play, dreams, and visions.

50

In these monasteries there were also workrooms. Dominican nuns often did textile work, and sometimes produced manuscripts. Neither at St. Katharinenthal nor at Unterlinden do we know the exact location of such a room, but generally these activities took place in the west range of the cloister, furthest from the choir and chapterhouse.[108] The Sister-Books make reference to the *werkhaus*, *werkhuss*, or *werkgaden*. Work was given spiritual significance in these rooms. Sometimes the women practiced ascetic behavior as they worked. Mechtilt Büglin seldom sat while she was in the workhouse, a practice that was a continuation of her comportment in the choir.[109] The vita of Margaret Willin records, "when they were called to work by the bell, then she went quickly into the workhouse and spun diligently, and no matter what occurred around her, she did not turn her eyes to it, and tears of great devotion ran frequently over her cheeks."[110] At other times the women experienced mystical phenomena or visions while they worked in the room. In the St. Katharinenthal workroom, Elsbeth Hainburgin participated in a mystical union with God. "As she sat with work one day in the workhouse, God accomplished great miracles in her which she could not fully describe, but she said this, 'God gave to me such perception and such great grace, that I thought I had certainly enough to give to the whole world.'"[111] At the same house, Anne Hettin "had at one time much suffering in her heart. And one day as she sat with her work in the workhouse, Our Lady appeared to her and wore a wonderful cloak on which stood written with golden letter *Ave Maria*. And Our Lady took her under her cloak and comforted her and promised her eternal life."[112] In the Töss workroom, the women often spun while praying or singing religious songs. Such manual labor was linked to the work of God that the nuns performed in the choir. Mezzi Sidwibrin became so entranced as she spun that she spoke to Christ as if they were the only two people in the room. She asked Christ to enlighten one soul for each thread she spun.[113] Her threads became prayers, so that her labor was a source of salvation for others. Mezzi also sang about God while she worked, as did her fellow nun Sophia of Klingnau.[114] Both kinds of work—prayer with singing praise and manual labor—saved souls.

The importance and sanctity of work was understood by the women in other ways too. While Mezzi's work aided unknown souls, other Dominican women found that work also blessed those closer to home. When the old widow but rather new nun Edelkint die Kugelerin entered the Adelhausen workroom one day, the room itself was dark, but she saw all the sisters who sat inside in a wonderful light that was more beautiful than the sun. She recognized that light to be a divine radiance.[115] At Kirchberg the dying nun Heilweige of Rothenburg spoke of a vision she had received while in the infirmary. She was passing the workroom when she looked in and saw the other sisters working with pious devotion. Then she saw a great number of angels inside as well. They were very joyful about the work and devotion of the sisters. Then Christ appeared and gave each sister a rose and a sweet kiss. Heilweige asked for the same for herself, but she was refused. Christ told her that only those who were in the room could receive his gifts. Because of this vision, the nuns of Kirchberg set up beds and pillows in the workroom so that the entire community, healthy and sick, could be together to share the grace that Heilweige had seen.[116] At Töss, Beli of Liebenberg sat one Friday in the workhouse praying together with the other sisters. She wished to know how many souls had been saved by the community's prayers that morning: "Then she saw four beautiful lights which went out the window. And it was said to her, 'Those are four of your sisters who were redeemed by your prayers today. But the souls that are redeemed by your prayers everyday, that is an uncountable many.'"[117] In these three examples, the communal aspect of work together in a designated place makes the work and the space worthy of miraculous occurrences. **51**

Monastic compounds also had gardens, but what space is meant by the word is ambiguous. It could refer to the green space framed by the four ranges of the cloister arcade or the larger gardens and orchards within the monastic precinct where the women grew their own herbs, vegetables, and fruit. But the cloister garden also served to grow produce. That the practical space of the monastic garden also had an aesthetic appeal for the women can be seen in the vita of Beli of Winterthur: "She had also a practice of never going into the orchard, and when the trees bloomed so beautifully, no one could ever notice that she turned her eyes in that direction."[118] Thus, the nun denied herself the sensual pleasure that the orchard with its flowering trees could give. This was part of Beli's ascetic discipline, a practice that went along with her fasting, bodily mortification, and other forms of renunciation. **52**

More often, miraculous occurrences were attributed to the cloister gardens. When Adelheit of Ossingen, as required by her office of cellaress, reluctantly but obediently, left the choir to provide food for the convent's guests, she halted in the cloister's garden to kneel in the snow when the bell signifying the elevation of the Host rang. That spot became green with summer grass although it was the middle of winter.[119] Adelheit's obedience imbued the garden with miraculous qualities. **53**

At Adelhausen, the lay-sister Metze had several mystical experiences in the gardens. Once she was meditating under a tree when a divine voice spoke to her.[120] Another time she went to the garden to gather herbs when she experienced a mystical union with God, which lasted from Nones to Vespers. As she returned to herself, God said to her, "What I have now told you is tiny in comparison to that which is in me, and that which God did to me; so tiny as if the Bromberg [the local mountain Quellenberg] were a heap of wheat, and a dove carried off a little kernel from it. Just as this is of little effect, so is everything that I have told you small compared to that which is in me."[121] One time as Alheit of Trochau and some other sisters were walking in the Engelthal cloister garden after the evening meal, one of them spoke a sweet (*suzez*) word about Christ which caused Alheit to go into an ecstasy. She ran through the garden, embracing the trees and pressing them against her heart. When the others asked her what she was doing, she replied, "It seems to me that each tree is our Lord Jesus Christ."[122] Alheit's ecstasy, brought on by conversation about Christ, allowed her to sense divinity in all that surrounded her. If the simple trees within the community's garden could be imbued with the presence of Christ at the speaking of a sweet word, then the entirety of the monastic precinct could justifiably be seen as sanctified, not in the sense of having been blessed by an ecclesiastical official, but by the actions of holy Dominican women. **54**

Female Space / Sacred Space / Sensual Space

No female German Dominican monastery was exactly the same as any other, but there were similarities because of the expectations of the Order's legislation and the architectural traditions of the Upper Rhine. The women's churches tended to be aisleless but divided in some manner. Balconies, walls, grills, and windows partitioned the spaces within the sanctuary and separated the religious women from the male priests and the lay public. There are occasional hints that there were chapels in the monasteries, but their locations remain uncertain. Some may have been located in the outer church or off the main body of the church to which the nuns had access, while others were possibly in balconies near the nuns' choir, in the chapterhouse, or in the nuns' cemetery. The site of the monastery usually determined the layout of the monastic buildings, whereas the requirements of plumbing and outer walls as well as gardens molded the finished claustral precinct. North-facing cloisters appear to have been used when necessity dictated it, despite the monastic tradition of south-facing ones. The nuns built and rebuilt their churches and monastic compounds as funds allowed, adding new dormitories as their membership increased or the fashion in monastic sleeping arrangements shifted from common rooms to individual cells. Architectural elements—altars, sculptures, and stained glass windows—were incorporated when their patrons or the house's income provided for them. And in this setting, which varied from house to house, the women lived their lives, spiritually and physically, in ways that they considered holy, but that were occasionally at odds with the behavior expected of them. **55**

The spirituality of Dominican women went beyond the confines of the choir, the liturgy, and the presence of the altar or altars, and was found in all corners of their monastic community. Cloisterspaces were given a spiritual context by the women who used them. Through the use of visions, ascetic behavior, and devotional activities, the women created strong spiritual significances for the semi-sacred spaces of their cloister, thereby extending sanctity beyond the male-dominated main altar of the choir. They perceived—or at least the authors of the Sister-Books perceived—their spirituality as without boundaries, not confined to specific spaces or events, but rather permeating their entire existence, going hand and hand with their constant contemplation of the divine. The women's spiritual activities infused their entire lives, redefining male space with female spirituality and creating communal spaces that carried sacred meaning for the women. The architecture in which the women lived their lives was not merely a shell to house them or confine them, but rather an essential part of their daily spiritual activities and devotions, always a part of their sensual perceptions. **56**

In the attempts of male advisors and Dominican officials to regulate the female space of the monastery is a desire to impose order and a male / clerical interpretation of the proper use of space on the nuns and lay-sisters. The legislative documents of the constitutions, as along with the introduction of population limits, sought to contain, control, and direct the women, as well as bribe or co-opt them with comfort and security into abandoning begging and poverty. Appropriate religious behavior, as understood by these men, called for the utilization of space as set forth in the directives of the Order. The choir was for praying and singing the praises of God. The cloister and the dormitory were places of silence. The refectory was for eating and listening to the daily readings in silence. The infirmary was to house the sick. The workroom was where manual labor was done. Each space had a designated function and an expected conduct within it. But Dominican women blurred these lines, using their actions to give the spaces importance or functions never intended by the authors of the constitutions and other documents. **57**

There are many examples of female Dominicans subverting the specific officially designated functions of monastic spaces: the visions of Episcopal saints who gave nuns communion in various rooms, virgin martyrs who nursed the ill in the infirmary or the dormitory, and an infant Christ who cuddled and played with women in the choir and refectory. As the women's visions were brought on by prayers or other devotions, the boundaries and requirements of the spaces were transgressed, and the functions expected in a particular place were reassigned or rewritten. The sacred nature of the choir was sometimes reinforced by the visions and actions of the women, as when signs of grace such as golden ropes or red roses were observed attaching themselves to devout sisters as they performed the Divine Office. At other times, however, the women's visions stole the attentions of the nuns away from the focus intended by the Order. Priests were erased from the Mass, leaving only Christ or the saints. **58**

Workspaces, whether the kitchen or the actual workroom, became places of sanctity and divine revelation, and were treated with a reverence not prescribed by the legislative documents.

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Notes

Note 1: The title for this chapter comes from the Unterlinden Sister-Book, in which the author describes the monastery as a garden under the watchful, diligent, and loving eye of the Virgin Mary. "Unde et nos pie credimus, confidimus et speramus, quod Theothocos, sancta polorum terreque potentissima imperatrix, inter alia loca dominacionis sue ortum sibi deliciarum preuiderit, elegerit et constituerit istud sanctum monasterium ex antiquo, in quod libenter perambulauit et frequenter, clausum Dei custodia circumdedit et protexit diligenter, ex quo orationum feruencium et uirtutum omnium spirauit odor suauissimus habundanter. In hunc ergo ortum uirtutum floribus decoratum, pia Dei genitrix ad deliciandum libenter progressa, exstirpauit uiciorum germina, plantans uirtutum semina, rigando fecundauit interiora cordium, perfundendo ea profusiori ymbre graciarum, stillante indesinenter Dei munere super terram." USB, 346.

Note 2: Caroline A. Bruzelius, "Hearing is Believing: Clarissan Architecture, ca. 1213–1340," *Gesta* 31/2 (1992): 83–91.

Note 3: Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 116–17.

Note 4: Gilchrist, 191.

Note 5: For a list of mostly German works dealing with male mendicant architecture see Georges Descoeudres, "Mittelalterliche Dominikanerinnenkirchen in der Zentral- und Nordostschweiz," *Historischer Verein des Kantons Schwyz* 81 (1989): 39–77. Some of these works do occasionally address the female branch of the Order. Recently the architecture of medieval and early modern Poor Clares has also received attention, focused chiefly on Italian communities. In addition to the work by Bruzelius, see also Jeryldene Wood, *Women, Art, and Spirituality: The Poor Clares of Early Modern Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Note 6: Günther Binding and Matthias Untermann, *Kleine Kunstgeschichte der mittelalterlichen Ordensbaukunst in Deutschland* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgeschellschaft, 1985), 330–31.

Note 7: Richard Sundt, "*Mediocres domos et humiles habeant fratres nostri*: Dominican Legislation on Architecture and Architectural Decoration in the 13th Century," *Journal for the Society of Architectural Historians* 46 (December 1987): 395.

Note 8: Sundt proposes a 1232–1235 date for the change in legislation. Sundt, "Legislation," 399.

Note 9: Sundt, "Legislation," 398.

Note 10: Sundt, "Legislation," 401. "nec fiant in domibus nostris curiositates et superfluitates notabiles in sculpturis et picturis et pavimentis et aliis similibus que paupertatem nostram deformant." Sundt, "Legislation," 405.

Note 11: Sundt, "Legislation," 403 for lifting of size restriction. Sundt, "Legislation," 404 for non-enforcement of decoration ban.

Note 12: See Andrzej Grzybkowski, "Das Problem der Langchöre in Bettelordens-Kirchen im östlichen Mitteleuropa des 13. Jahrhunderts," *Architectura* 13 (1983): 152–68.

Note 13: Binding, 343.

Note 14: The Order's use of this style can be juxtaposed with that of the Franciscans who favored the flatroofed basilica and hall church. Some male Dominican examples of gothic architecture are Colmar (1278), Esslingen (1268), and Brandenburg (1311–1340).

Note 15: The Jacobin church of Toulouse is the best studied example of this practice. Richard A. Sundt, "The Jacobin Church of Toulouse and the Origin of Its Double-Nave Plan," *Art Bulletin* 71 (1989): 185–207.

Note 16: Binding, 356.

Note 17: Const., 33. "Edificia sororum sint humilia. curiositate uel superfluitate non notanda: et apponatur cura diligens. quod ordinentur officine. prout melius fieri poterit pro religione seruanda." Lat. Const., 346.

Note 18: "besloßen closter." WSB, 80.

Note 19: Given the hagiographic nature of these texts, such praise may silence the presence of those sisters who did not maintain such lofty behavior. But even if such non-exemplary women did exist, and I feel there must have been some, looking out the window or even talking at it, did not break enclosure.

Note 20: TSB, 26, 27.

Note 21: Const., 34.

Note 22: Most likely the sermon or preaching window.

Note 23: "Constituciones diligenter attendant in muris, septis, rotis et cla[u]suris necnon et custodia eorum, qui pro tempore ingrediuntur. Verum quia non est expressum de quantitate fenestrarum, ordino, quod maior fenestra duplicata in longitudine sex pedes habeat, spacium sive banca inter cancellos unius pedis et palmi, cancelli duplices ferrei et quadratis virgis ita stricti, ut ne ovum galline possit transmitti. Fenestra familie, que fratrum dicitur et conversorum, tres pedes habeat in distancia maiori similis et eciam ferrata. Fenestrule confessionum unum pedem habent non distantibus cancellis plurimum propter surdas; verumtamen foramina possunt esse ceteris strictiora. Fundentur autem undique super bases lapideas vel quercinas et serentur intrinsecus studiose. Extra quoque diversoria fenestrarum claudantur de nocte, ne in locis huiusmodi possint seculares ad intempestiva colloquia convenire." *Freiburger Urkundenbuch*, ed. Friedrich Hefele (Freiburg: 1951), Band 2: #4, 7–9. Hereafter cited in text as FUB.

Note 24: "Sorores sub-tilia tertiam domum claustri sui perfecerunt magnis expensis." *Annales maiores*, 217.

Note 25: Auguste Scherlen, *Topographie du vieux Colmar* (Colmar: Association pour la Restauration des Edifices Historiques de Colmar, 1996), 400.

Note 26: Knoepfli, 121.

Note 27: Knoepfli, 121.

Note 28: Gilchrist, 139.

Note 29: Gilchrist, 138.

Note 30: Gilchrist, 140.

Note 31: For the ranking or zones of spaces within female monasteries and the ease of accessibility to these spaces by various gendered groups, see Gilchrist, 160 ff. "In nunneries, emphasis was on the construction of gender identity through the strict enclosure of nuns, and in demarcating male and female liturgical roles." She found that the dormitory was the most secluded space in female houses, while in men's houses, the sacristy held that position. Gilchrist, 166.

Note 32: Carola Jäggi, "The Nuns' Choir in Early Mendicant Nunneries: Königsfelden (Switzerland) and Other Cases with 'Langchor' and Western Gallery" (paper presented at the International Medieval Studies Congress, Kalamazoo, MI, May 1999).

Note 33: "Aufzeichnungen über das mystische Leben der Nonnen von Kirchberg bei Sulz Predigerordens während des XIV. und XV. Jahrhunderts," ed. F. W. E. Roth, *Alemannia* 21 (1893), 126. Hereafter cited in text as SSB (Kirchberg bei Sulz Sister-Book).

Note 34: Scherlen, 398–400.

Note 35: Obituaire, 4.

Note 36: Scherlen, 400. Of all the churches in Colmar, only the male Dominicans were oriented to true east. However, the alignment of medieval churches was not an exact science and had much to do with the size and condition of the land being used. Greene, 6.

Note 37: Louis Kubler, "Les Fresques d'Unterlinden," *Annuarie de Colmar* 6 (1956): 124–26.

Note 38: Jeffrey Hamburger, "The *Liber miraculorum* of Unterlinden: An Icon in Its Convent Setting," in *The Sacred Image East and West*, ed. Robert Ousterhout and Leslie Brubaker (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 150–51.

Note 39: Hamburger, 151 ff.

Note 40: Médard Barth, *Handbuch der elsässichen Kirchen im Mittelalter* (Strasbourg: Société d'Histoire de l'Église d'Alsace, 1960), 254.

Note 41: Barth, 254.

Note 42: USB, 478. This may be a garbled reference to an indulgence granted in November 1284 by Bishop Theodore of Verona. It is a 40-day indulgence for those who visit Unterlinden on the anniversary of the church's dedication. Bibliotheque de la Ville, Colmar, France, I.Ch. 75-1. Hereafter cited in text as BVC.

Note 43: Thurgauischer Historischer Verein, ed., *Thurgauisches Urkundenbuch*, Frauenfeld, Switzerland, 1917 ff. TUB 2, #153.

Note 44: KSB, 145.

Note 45: For the nuns' choir, KSB, 122. And the arrangement of the church, Knoepfli, 25–27.

Note 46: The text of KSB is unclear.

Note 47: Const., 34. "In ipsa uero ecclesia. in aliqquo loco intermedio inter sorores et exteriores aptetur aliqua fenestra ferrea competentis magnitudinis. in qua fiant sermones: et in aliquo loco apto due fenestre paruule ferrate ad confessiones audiendas." Lat. Const., 347.

Note 48: "Vnd der mittel alter, da er das venster hat gemachet, da wir vnsern herren sehen. . . " KSB, 145.

Note 49: "Vnd alle die grawen stein, die an den venstern sint, die sante er her ab gehowen vnd bereit . . . " KSB, 145. Knoepfli notes that use of these two building materials was common in the Lake Constance area during this time. Knoepfli, 25.

Note 50: ASB, 163–64.

Note 51: ASB, 175-76.

Note 52: Stadtarchiv, Freiburg, Germany, B1 107, f.228r-228v. Hereafter cited in text as SAF.

Note 53: SAF, B2 20, f. 8v–9r and 11r–11v.

Note 54: Gilchrist, 125.

Note 55: For overcrowding TSB, 20–21. The Sister-Books are full of passages that describe the women's action within the choir space. A few of these are ASB, 175; and KSB, 103, 127, 136.

Note 56: Once again the examples are numerous: USB, 356–357; and KSB 100, 101, 104–5, 118.

Note 57: KSB, 103; ASB, 177; and TSB, 21.

Note 58: I cannot find any indication in the texts that might indicate which houses had altars that were visible to the women and which did not.

Note 59: KSB, 125, 138.

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Note 60: "und do sy ainest in dem advent in den kor kam, do was der kor als fol guttes schmakes als in dem summer die rosen schmekent, so ir fil ist an ainer stat. Also gieng sy in dem kor hin und her, und wundret sy was es möchti sin, und do sy für schwester Elsbeten stül kam, do was der schmak da als stark das sy sicher was das er von ir kam . . ." TSB, 92.

Note 61: KSB, 103, 105, 106; ASB, 170–71.

Note 62: KSB, 101, 126; TSB, 45; USB, 360.

Note 63: "Der Nonne von Engelthal Büchlein von der Gnaden Uberlast," ed. Karl Schröder, *Litterarischer Verein in Stuttgart*, 1871, 10, 18, 26, 36. Hereafter cited in text as ESB (Engelthal Sister-Book); and ASB, 156, 160.

Note 64: See, for instance, TSB, 26; and KSB, 98, 101. The quiet time after compline receives a similar treatment. KSB, 105.

Note 65: Scherlen, 398.

Note 66: Knoepfli, 118–19.

Note 67: ASB, 168–69.

Note 68: TSB, 46–47; and KSB, 98.

Note 69: ESB, 39–40.

Note 70: ASB, 188.

Note 71: KSB, 102, 140.

Note 72: "Do die ze einem male dem couent capitel hielt, do sah ein swester, dú hiess swester Himlin, das vnser herr in das capitel gieng als ein kindli vnd sass zü der priorinnen vnd lert si alles, das si reden solt in dem capitel." KSB, 97.

Note 73: "vant sich selber ligende in dem cappittel in dem rechten chore in eime winckel." ASB, 157. "Do lag si in dem cappittel in dem rechten core an ir andacht." ASB, 185. It is possible that the word "cappittel" was substituted for "cappel."

Note 74:ASB, 154.

Note 75: TSB, 14.

Note 76: Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell, *Saints and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982), 234–35.

Note 77: See, for example, the ideal and never realized plan for St. Gall: Walter Horn and E. Born, *The Plan of St. Gall: A Study of the Architecture and Economy of and Life in a Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

Note 78: J. Patrick Greene, *Medieval Monasteries* (New York: Leicester University Press, 1992), 9, 158; and Gilchrist, 120.

Note 79: Knoepfli, 117–18.

Note 80: A doctor in the infirmary is mentioned in TSB, 42.

Note 81: Const., 35–36.

Note 82: Const., 36. "Item si aliquam itta infirmari contigerit quod ad locum consuetum communioni uenire non possit. si oporteat eam communicari: sacerdos . . . corpus chrisi deferens. reuerenter precedentibus eum duabus sororibus cum cereis, et una cum aqua benedicta. et alia campanellam deferente: associantibus nihilominus aliqubus de maturioribus sororibus ad infirmariam uadat. et infirmam communicet. prout in ordinario continetur." Lat. Const., 347.

Note 83: Const., 36–37. "Si autem aliqua soror infirmatur in tantum. quod eam inungi oporteat. tunc sacerdos . . . oleum sacre unccionis deferat; et una sorore crucem portante. precedentibus duabus cum cereis. ad infirmariam uadat. et totus conuenteus eum processionaliter antecedat. Intrans autem sacerdos infirmariam dicat pax huix domui. et cetera fiant sicut notatum est in ordinario: ita tamen quod abstersiones cum stupis fiant vel a priorissa. uel ab aliqua sorore. cui iniunxerit. *Leccio.* Cauendum est autem ne de facili multiplicentur ingressus. modo causa communionis. modo causa unccionis. sine magna causa. sed simul fiat utrumque. Cum autem simul communicari et inungi aliquam oportuerit. soror aliqua crucem portet. et frater socius sacram deferat unccionem: et primo fiat communio. deinde inunccio. et in isto casu semper remaneat conuentus in infirmaria usque ad complectionem officii." Lat. Const., 347–48.

Note 84: ". . .die lag öch ze einem mal in dem siechenhus vnd was als krank, das si nit moht ze mess komen. Vnd do eins tages war, do hatt si grosse begird únsern herren ze empfahen. Vnd do si in dirr andaht was, do sah si einen byschoff vor ir stan, vnd hatt der einen guldin kelch in siner hant vnd sprach zü ir: 'Enpfiengist du gern vnsern herren?' Do sprach si: 'Ja, von allem minen hertzen gern.' Do gab ir der byschoff vnsern herren. Vnd also hett si gern gewisset, wer der byschoff wer gesin. Do sprach er: 'Jch bin sant Marti.' Vnd do sah si sin nit me." KSB, 100. St. Martin also appears frequently in the visions of the nuns of Engelthal.

Note 85: "Ein swester dú hiess swester Kathrin von Vberlingen, der was sant Kathrin besunder lieb. Die lag vnd was gar siech vnd was als krank, das man ir alweg etwas satzt, ob ir in der nacht als we wurd, daz man ir denn ze essen gäb. Vnd do in einer naht ward, do wachet ir ein schwester, die hiesz swester Adelhait dú alt siechen maistrin. Die sach, das ein schöne lútseligú junkfrow in gieng, die was bekleidet mit luterm gold vnd hat ein guldin rad vor ir ze einem fúrspan. Da bi verstünd si, das es sant Kathrin was, vnd gieng fúr die swester sitzen vnd gab ir milch ze essenn vss einer schússel vnd dienet ir als ein junkfrow ir frowen." KSB, 103.

Note 86:ASB, 169.

Note 87: Knoepfli, 116.

Note 88: ESB, 6.

Note 89: ASB, 171.

Note 90: TSB, 81.

Note 91: On the role of food in women's religious life during the Middle Ages, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food for Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

Note 92:ASB, 162–63.

Note 93: Other instances of food asceticism and visions in the refectory can be found in TSB, 34, 18, 24, 48, 60.

Note 94: "Etwenn so sy die müs hat, so gieng sy in den refentar, so man zü tisch las, und loset begirlich. Wie fil sy unmüss hat, so bettet sy doch recht emssklich und wainet och als genuchtsamklich als ob sy in dem kor wer gestanden." TSB, 83.

Note 95: "Do müsst si in die kuchi gan. Vnd do si dar kam, do sah si aber das kindli, vnd wa hin si gieng, dar gieng es mit ir." KSB, 108. The Töss Sister-Book offers an explanation for such mobility of visions; Christ tells a wonderous nun that "one may find me in all places and in all things" ("man vindet mich an allen steten und in allen dingen."). TSB, 21.

Note 96: "Vnd do si in die kuchi kam, do sach si aber das kindli als vor jn dem kor." KSB, 104. This motif also occurs in the life of Adelheit von Spiegelberg. In her case, the Christ Child followed her from the choir (hiding under her robe) and then sat in front of her at the refectory table. KSB, 97–98.

Note 97: KSB, 107–8.

Note 98: TSB, 26. See Descoeudres, 57-61 for a description of the church.

Note 99: Gilchrist, 123.

Note 100: A crucifix hung in the large dormitory. KSB, 122.

Note 101: Knoepfli, 116.

Note 102: ESB, 32, 28.

Note 103: Karl Bihlmeyer, ed., "Mystisches Leben in dem Dominikanerinnenkloster Weiler bei Eßlingen im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert." in *Württembergische Vierteljahreshefte für Landesgeschichte*, n.s. 25 (1916): 80. Hereafter cited in text as WSB (Weiler Sister-Book).

Note 104: TSB, 37; and KSB, 135.

Note 105: WSB, 72.

Note 106: KSB, 130-31.

Note 107: "Dis ist min fleisch und min blüt." KSB, 105. Women suffering from illness were allowed to consume meat according to the Rule and constitutions.

Note 108: Knoepfli suggests that the workroom was in the north range, but there is no evidence to support that or any other placement. Knoepfli, 117-18.

Note 109: "man sie nymmer sahe gesitzen in dem chor und selten sitzen in dem werkhawß." WSB, 77.

Note 110: "Wenn man ze werk lut, so gieng sy bald in das werk hus und span denn flisklich, und was denn iemer da wer beschen, sy hett ir ogen nit dar kertt, und runnend ir die trächen von grosser andacht recht emschicklich úber ir wangen." TSB, 26-27.

Note 111: "do si eines tages in dem werchhus sass mit werch, das got gross wunder in ir wurkte, da von si nit volsagen kundi, won das si sprach: >Got der gab mir sölich empfinden vnd als gross gnád, das mich dunkt, jch hett wol aller der welt gnüg geben.<" KSB, 126.

Note 112: "Die hatt ze ainer zit vil lidens an dem hertzen. Vnd do si eins tages jn dem werchhus sass mit ir werch, do erschein ir vnser frów vnd trüg einen gar schönen mantel an, an dem stünd mit guldinen büchstaben geschriben: >Ave Maria<. Vnd nam si vnser frów vnder ir mantel vnd trost si vnd sichert si des ewigen lebens." KSB, 137.

Note 113: "Herr, ich will dir sin getrúwen ds du mir umb ieklichen faden den ich spinn, ain sel gist." TSB, 29. The Töss workroom is also mentioned in the vita of Beli of Wintertur. TSB, 40.

Note 114: For Mezzi, TSB, 29; for Sophia, TSB, 59-60.

Note 115: "Also kam si einest in das werchgaden, do was vinster inne, aber si sach alle die swesteren, die do inne warent in einem schönen liechte. Das wz schöner denne die sunne. Vnd si lügete, wanne die sunne käme. Da margkte si ze jungst, das es von Gotte was." ASB, 160.

Note 116: SSB, 112.

Note 117: "Also sach sy iiii schöne liechter, und fürend die ze dem fenstter uss. Und do ward zü ir gesprochen: 'Dis sind iiii úwer schwestren die hút von úwrem gebett erlöst sind. Aber die selen die alle tag von úwrem gebett erlost werdent, der ist ain unzalichy menge.'" TSB, 31.

Note 118: "Sy hat och ain gewonhait, das sy niemer in den bomgarten kam, und so die bom als schön blügtent, so kund man nit gemerken das sy ir ogen yemer dar gekerte." TSB, 40.

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Note 119: "Vnd do si in die kuchi gieng (das was in dem winter vnd was ein grosse schne geuallen) vnd do si vff dem weg was, dört hort si das glöggli luten, das man vnsern herren hüb. Do knuwet si nider in den schne, vnd an der selben statt da ward als schön gras, als ob es in dem svmer wer gesin, so das gras aller schönest ist." KSB, 99.

Note 120: ASB, 165.

Note 121: "'Das ich dir nun geseit han, das ist also kleine wider dem, das in mir ist, vnd das mir Gott getan hett, als ob der Brunberg were ein huffe weissen, vnd eine tube je ein körnlin danna trüge, als lútzel das erschusse, als klein ist es, alles das ich dir geseit han wider dem, das in mir ist.'" ASB, 165.

Note 122: "Da ist mir reht sam ieder baum unser herre Jesus Christus sei." ESB, 14.

Chapter 2

Sight: "And She Prayed One Time Before the Large Image...": The Visual Environment

One area of the sensual environment that has received much scholarly treatment is the visual environment; the items and artifacts that were seen by cloistered women. One reason for this is that the extant art and images that constituted the visual culture and environment of medieval religious women are rich in variety and tradition.[1] Images in later medieval monastic settings were often "intended to function as instruments of visionary experience, in other words, to induce, channel, and focus that experience,"[2] and to serve "as instruments of affective piety."[3] As such they were intermediary objects, stepping-stones to be used to achieve a higher goal, whether that was the inducement of visions or mystical union with God. This mediatory function of images in the lives of later medieval monastic women, however, was not the images' sole *raison d'être*. Like the lyrics of the Song of Songs, these images could be read or used in more than one way. Hand in hand with the utilization of visual images as a link to a higher spiritual state, they served their audience by means of their very material and physical form. They provided those who used them with an opportunity to interact with the object / subject of their devotions and prayers, as well as experience the immediacy of the persons or ideas that the images represented. 1

The specific role of images in devotional activity has generated copious scholarship. In Germany this work has usually focused on the use of *Andachtsbilder* (devotional images or prayer pictures).[4] The consideration of Andachtsbilder came to the forefront of art historical discussions when the connections between material culture and the writings of German female mystics were first noticed.[5] Scholars have since developed disparate ideas about the use of images.[6] In general, scholars think images were acceptable for private devotional use among women and the laity, and even encouraged in the thirteenth and most of the fourteenth century. But that attitude changed at the end of the fourteenth century, especially among the Dominicans, who attempted to manipulate and control the images to which women of the Order had access.[7] By the fifteenth century the use of images by nuns was considered dangerous by Dominican authorities.[8] In earlier centuries such individual use of images, as we will see, had been a hallmark of Dominican spirituality. 2

A nun may have used images to contemplate the relationship between herself and Christ, a relationship which is made visually clear in an illuminated letter in an early-fourteenth-century gradual [BVC, ms. 136] from Unterlinden.[9] In this initial, Christ is enthroned above a Dominican nun in prayer. The emphasis on her rather large hands in prayer position may indicate the artist's assumption that this was the work of a nun—to pray—while the fact that Christ looks not at the nun or the viewer, but rather toward the text for the first Sunday in 3

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Advent, reemphasizes the other occupation of the nun—the formalized prayer of the Office or *Opus Dei.* Through these two activities, the nun could hope to reach Christ, or at least receive his blessing, as signified by his raised hand. Using devotional artwork a Dominican nun might achieve this goal. Other objects may have been used by the women to focus their prayers or meditations on the saints to whom they had a special devotion. The women used such images to organize their spiritual activities and behaviors. Prayer before such objects focused the women's attention on the spiritual elements that were portrayed before them, and often inspired mystical phenomena such as levitation, translucency, ecstatic trances, visions, and the ultimate goal: mystical union with God.

4 As they are described in the Sister-Books, the scenes portrayed in the artwork that surrounded these religious women gave them a visual vocabulary, a language of religious expression steeped in Christian iconography. They then adopted and adapted these images in both their mundane and their spiritual lives. Other images reinforced the status of the women as members of specific religious communities. This chapter will explore the diverse possibilities that visual images gave Dominican women for spiritual expression as they interacted with this part of their sensual environment.

5 The major elements of the monastic visual environment were sculptures and paintings. These were items that unlike manuscript illuminations were almost always visible. They usually remained in fixed locations, although they were in theory moveable objects that could be manipulated or even broken. Sculpture especially could be used in processions, dressed, and decorated. As explored in the previous chapter, several of the Sister-Books detail the architectural setting of the women's spiritual activities. In addition, they describe objects that were in situ within the communities' spaces. The Sister-Book of St. Katharinenthal is the most explicit of all in mentioning the location of devotional art objects and how they were used by the nuns and lay-sisters. St. Katharinenthal is also unique because of the number of surviving artifacts associated with the house.[10] We even occasionally know who commissioned or provided the community of St. Katharinenthal with its art objects (information sorely lacking for many monasteries in this period). For example, one of St. Katharinenthal's chief patrons in its building efforts around 1300 was Martin of Stein, who also gave the house a crucifix, an image of the Virgin, and an image of Saint John.[11]

6 Except in cases where imagery and iconography call for a cross-media comparison, this chapter focuses primarily on non-manuscript artwork from Dominican monasteries, especially from St. Katharinenthal. Extant manuscript illuminations from these houses will be considered in the chapter on the textual environment.

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The Choir

While we are aware of the architectural form that many female Dominican monastic churches took, we are less well informed about their decoration. From other thirteenth- and fourteenth-century churches used by religious men and women, we know that walls and ceilings, especially in the choir, were often covered with frescoes or other forms of paintings. At the Cistercian female house of Weinhausen in Saxony a very elaborate decoration program survives.[12] The church of the male Dominican convent in Constance, located closer to the female Dominican houses of the Upper Rhine, contained friezes and medallions.[13] Most choir spaces seem to have been decorated, but unfortunately few survive in their thirteenth- and fourteenth-century state. Hence we have little evidence of the iconographic schemes and picture cycles to which the women would have been exposed each day. A study of the walls of the Unterlinden church has revealed that the church had elaborate interior decoration, the dating of which is unclear. One small area survives but appears to have been repainted in the fifteenth or sixteenth century.[14] The vita of Metzi of Adelhausen informs us that even though such decorative schemes existed, and excited the interest of the monastic inhabitants, they were sometimes viewed with trepidation by certain members of their intended audience. Her vita explains: **7**

> [O]ne time they had made new paintings in the choir, and she had such an overwhelming desire to see them. But then she firmly restrained herself, wanting never to see them. And God made her worthy concerning this wish, so that on the days when she went for communion, she saw the realm of heaven above her, the entire time that she walked through the choir to the high altar where she received God. And in this way Our Lord exchanged a little fleeting sight for an immensely worthy sight.[15]

Metzi renounced the sensual pleasure she would have received from viewing the new paintings, not because images were inherently evil, but because they were something she desired. In the author's opinion, they were worthless attempts at achieving a beauty that only God was capable of creating. They would have been pale imitations of God's handiwork. By denying herself the pleasure of viewing them, Metzi was rewarded with a view that brought even greater pleasure because it was in accordance with and obedient to God's wishes.

Within these painted choirs were the altars enumerated in the previous chapter as well as the tombs of the community's patrons and sometimes the graves of deceased sisters. These structures were also part of the nuns' visual culture. At most nuns' churches there appears to have been more than one altar, most with more than one dedicatee. At St. Katharinenthal, the front altar and the one in the choir of the nuns' church are supposed to have been consecrated by Albertus Magnus in honor of the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Evangelist. Later, the church contained a middle altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary, Saint John the Baptist, and **8**

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Saint Dominic. Another altar, located against the wall of the cloister, was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, Saint John the Evangelist, Saint James, Saint Peter Martyr, and Mary Magdalen.[16] At Engelthal an altar was dedicated to Saint John the Evangelist, while an additional altar was consecrated in the honor of the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Baptist.

9

None of the medieval stained glass from Unterlinden or St. Katharinenthal remains intact. From the Sister-Book of St. Katharinenthal we know that there was a window, depicting Christ in some manner, over the middle altar in the church. Their chief patron, Martin of Stein, donated another window for the church showing the Virgin Mary with twelve stars and Saint John, in addition to an image from the Apocalypse.[17] Today just a few fragments of glass remain from this church.

10

A surviving window from the choir of the male Dominican church in Freiburg gives us an idea of what the windows at the Freiburg female houses of Adelhausen, Maria Magdelena, St. Katharina, or even St. Agnes may have looked like.[18] Installed around 1280, the predominately red glass window portrays a standing Virgin and Child within a white architectonic frame of airy pillars and pinnacles. The crowned Virgin, wearing a yellow-orange gown and a green cloak lined with white fur, holds an apple in her right hand and supports the Christ Child with her left while casting her eyes and turning her face to the right in the direction of her son. Her golden crown, studded with colored jewels, tops her white headscarf. The blue-robed Christ looks up towards his mother as his hands clasp a dove with outstretched wings. In the pointed arch above their heads is a golden eight-pointed star on a red field.

Christocentric Images

11

Other objects from female Dominican houses cannot be placed with certainty within the choirs of these monastic churches or in any other location. Their exact context will forever remain a mystery to us, but the Sister-Books at least suggest how Dominican women may have used them in their spiritual practices. Many nuns had special devotion to specific events from Christ's Passion. It has been observed that "[c]hristocentric piety was an integral part of the fabric of thirteenth-century spirituality."[19] This piety and devotion was often directed toward or guided by a material object.[20] While there often exists no known sculptures or paintings of these scenes from the monasteries in question, similar depictions often occur in Psalter illuminations with miniature cycles of the Life of Christ. When elaborate, these cycles contain all the standard depictions of the events of Christ's Passion. Hence they convey the components of the specific scenes for which only verbal descriptions remain in the Sister-Books. There were many different aspects and scenes from Christ's Passion to choose from. One nun from the monastery of Töss was devoted to a depiction of Christ in Judgment before

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Pilate.[21] She would pray before the image, asking that she be judged favorably at the Last Judgment. Once, she heard an answer from God that said, "You are now judged as you should be judged."[22]

12 Hilti Brümsin of St. Katharinenthal prayed before a picture of the flagellation of Christ, and in the manner of *Imitatio Christi* she desired to experience the pain and the bitterness that He felt at that time.[23] Her vita reports that Christ let her experience as much of the pain and bitterness as she could tolerate. This event left her in a state of grace for fourteen days, until she passed another nun who had been at the parlor window. This proximity to someone who had spoken to an outsider caused Hilti to fall out of this state of grace, and she was unable to achieve it again for a long time.[24]

13 Mechthilt the Rittrin prayed in an interactive manner before a sculpture of the Holy Sepulcher. She took the sculpted hands and feet of the statue in her hands, perceiving them as flesh and blood, "as if a person's body were lying there."[25] In her devotions she became one of the spectators at the grave, a witness to the death of Christ. But through her actions, she transformed this seemingly passive role into one that celebrated the human incarnation of Christ. In these examples, the corporeal and physical aspects of Christ's life, death, and suffering were made real and immediate for the women.

14 The crucifix was the visual object on which the women most often focused their paraliturgical activities. This central image of Christ's suffering and sacrifice served a pivotal function in the spirituality of Dominican nuns as evidenced by the numerous Passion prayers that survive in their manuscripts. Henry Suso began his treatise, "The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom," which was found frequently in the libraries of female Dominican houses, with these words: "[a] Dominican friar was once standing before a crucifix after matins and was complaining keenly that he was not able to meditate on his (Christ's) torment and suffering (as it deserved) . . . ."[26] Many Dominican women could have identified with this. The vitae record many women staying in the choir after Matins to pray. They may even have followed Suso's spiritual exercises in which he laid out one hundred meditations on the Passion of Christ to be contemplated in front of the cross daily, each meditation accompanied by a full prostration of the body.[27]

15 Suso's instructions follow on an already established tradition of mendicant Crucifixion-centered spirituality. The most well known of these is Francis of Assisi's stigmata and representation as *alter Christi*.[28] More important for Dominican women, however, was the role that the Cross and Crucifixion played in the life and prayers of Saint Dominic. Dominic's nine ways of praying—all of which involved the Cross—were fundamental to the Order's attitude toward images of the Crucifixion.[29]

Crucifixes were available to Dominican women in various forms and they were found throughout the monastery, although chiefly in the choir. A crucifix from Adelhausen survives today at the female Dominican house of Marienberg in Bregenz.[30] It is probably a monumental altar cross as it measures 200 x 150 cm. It was made of linden wood in the Upper Rhine region sometime around 1300. A slender Christ figure hangs from the cross, his arms creating a slight Y-form. His torso, however, remains static. **16**

The St. Katharinenthal Sister-Book identifies three specific crucifixes in the monastery, as well as several unspecified ones. One was in the cloister arcade near the passageway to the monastery's outside door and the parlor,[31] the second in the chapterhouse,[32] and a third in the larger of the monastery's dormitories.[33] There would also have been at least one in the nuns' choir. Elsbeth of Stoffeln of St. Katharinenthal had a painted tablet that depicted the crucifixion of Christ with Mary standing under the cross.[34] It was probably not very large; her vita reports that she "placed the tablet in front of her."[35] She addressed her spiritual concerns to the image and received a verbal response. While this painted crucifixion scene does not survive, we do have three St. Katharinenthal crucifixes from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The first is a painted crucifix from between 1250 and 1270.[36] It is in an Italian style and is one of the few such crucifixes found north of the Alps.[37] This almost life-sized crucifix (roughly 99 x 67 cm) most likely served as a monumental altar cross. It is made of wood and covered with parchment that was painted, appliquéd, and studded with glass, crystal, and stones to resemble a work of gold and precious jewels. Christ's upper body sags and his lower limbs seem to stand. His eyes are closed and his head falls to one side. His five wounds—the focus of the devotion of many fourteenth-century nuns—spurt with blood. These elements made real for the monastic viewer the torment that Christ's body experienced on the cross. Interestingly, the paint on Christ's body is somewhat worn, perhaps from the touch of worshipping nuns. Other communities possessed painted crucifixes like St. Katharinenthal. In the monastery of Gotteszell, they had a crucifix that depicted the pain and suffering of Christ.[38] **17**

The second St. Katharinenthal crucifix dates from 1300 and still hangs in the church. It is sculptural rather than painted, but has a very similar composition. The presentation of the crucified body is almost the same. The torso droops somewhat, while the legs still support the body's weight.[39] Both even have the same hairstyle of wavy locks fanned out on the shoulders. This changes with the third crucifix from the monastery, which is also in the former community's church and dated to 1330. The entire body of Christ hangs on the Cross, pulled by the force of gravity. His ribs are visible, and it is clear that death has touched him. The head of Christ is adorned with the Crown of Thorns and drops of blood. Such depictions may have reminded the viewer of a fourteenth-century Passion prayer such as that found in a female Dominican manuscript that later found its way into the possession of Adelhausen: **18**

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"Lord, I beg you for the sake of the thorny crown, and by the wounds upon your brow, and by the holy blood that ran over your human face, that you turn your godly face with grace toward me."[40]

The vitae refer often to the use of the Crucifix in the devotional practices of the nuns. The crosses could serve as the focus for Passion prayers, like the one above, offered up with tears or prostrations of the body, or both. The lives frequently mention the women lying prostrate before the Crucifix or the altar during their devotions. **19**

A crucifix could also serve as an object of consolation and solace, as in the case of Adelheit of Stein. She was overwhelmed by a great period of despair, and, according to the St. Katharinenthal Sister-Book's author, the devil convinced her to do something against God (the exact nefarious deed or thought goes unmentioned). But when she prayed before a crucifix, she clearly saw Christ with his five bleeding wounds and her despair dissipated, never to return.[41] A nun in Oetenbach was also tormented by the devil, and like Adelheit, the image of the Crucified Christ, albeit a visionary image, delivered her from temptation.[42] Other women conversed with crucifixes in the dormitories, chapels, choirs, cloister arcades, and chapterhouses of their monasteries, often receiving responses from the cross itself, or from a disembodied voice. In these exchanges, they were forgiven their sins or reminded verbally of the torture and suffering that was visually portrayed before them with an explanation as to why it had happened. **20**

Crosses and crucifixes were not merely items to which one prayed, held visionary conversations, or offered up tears. The women also handled these objects. In her "Revelations," the Dominican mystic Margaret Ebner describes her personal relationship with the image of Christ's suffering and sacrifice. It is an interaction that could be described as "hands-on:" **21**

> Every cross I came upon I kissed ardently and frequently as possible. I pressed it forcefully against my heart constantly, so that I often thought I could not separate myself from it and remain alive. Such great desire and such sweet power so penetrated my heart and all my members that I could not withdraw myself from the cross. In addition, I possessed a little book in which there was a picture of the Lord on the cross. I shoved it secretly against my bosom, open to that place, and wherever I went I pressed it to my heart with great joy and with measureless grace. When I wanted to sleep, I took the picture of the Crucified Lord in the little book and laid it under my face. Also around my neck I wore a cross that hung down to my heart. In addition, I took a large cross whenever possible and laid it over my heart. I clung to it while lying down until I fell asleep in great grace. We had a large crucifix in the choir. I had the greatest desire to

> kiss it and to press it close to my heart like the others. But it was too high up for me and was too large in size.[43]

Since Margaret could not reach this large crucifix, and the only other person who knew of her wish refused to help her, her wish was granted by Christ while she slept: "It seemed as if I were standing before the cross filled with the desire that I usually had within me. As I stood before the image, my Lord Jesus Christ bent down from the cross and let me kiss His open heart and gave me to drink of the blood flowing from his heart."[44] For Margaret, awake or asleep, the Crucifix was more than just an object for contemplation, it was the object of her desire, a desire that she expressed corporeally.

22

Other women also interacted with the object of their desire, the Crucifix, although rarely with the intensity that Margaret did. Behte Vinchin of Adelhausen possessed a small crucifix, which she spoke to "as one friend speaks to another."[45] One day as she was speaking to the object, Christ moved his head from the cross and laid it against her cheek and spoke to her. In St. Katharinenthal, Gerdrut of Horblingen was praying before a crucifix when Christ stretched out his right hand and placed it on her head.[46] In the choir of Weiler, Adelheid of Weiblingen "saw our Lord hovering high above the altar. Immediately she was pulled up to the cross and sweetly embraced by God in body and soul. And he said to her: 'I will always be with you and you with me, and I will never be separated from you.'"[47] Like Margaret Ebner who could not bear to withdraw from bodily contact with the Crucifix, Adelheit was also bodily embraced by Christ from the Crucifix and promised eternal union with Christ. Perhaps the most corporeal instance of a woman's devotion to the Cross appears in the vita of the Unterlinden nun Hedewig of Löfenberg. In remembrance of Christ's Passion, she engraved crosses on her chest with a piece of wood.[48] The object of her desire was no longer a separate object, but rather a part of her, fused into her body just as she longed for her soul to be fused into Christ.

23

Another Passion image found in Dominican houses is the *Vesperbild* or *Pietà*.[49] This usually sculpted image isolates a scene from the Deposition or Descent from the Cross in which the Virgin Mary holds Christ's dead body in her lap. The imagery has no scriptural basis, but found authority in the apocryphal legends surrounding the Crucifixion.[50] The image is called Vesperbild in German because the Deposition was celebrated at the Office of Vespers. Although the image can occasionally be found in thirteenth-century manuscript illumination, the *topos* did not gain widespread popularity until the fourteenth century. Especially in Germany and Italy, sculptural Vesperbilder became prominent during the fourteenth century and afterwards. These sculptures ranged in size, with the earliest tending to be monumental, and may have originated as a genre in the Middle Rhine and Swabian regions of Germany.[51] The early examples are distinguished by the upright posture of the Virgin and the rather rigid step-like position of Christ on her lap. Pieces from the end of the fourteenth century and later

progressively soften the arrangement of the two bodies, with Mary's posture becoming more and more slouched and her Son's position loosening and eventually draping, sliding, and spilling his body across the Virgin's legs.[52]

Although some early-fourteenth-century Vesperbilder survive, those associated with female Dominican houses come from the middle to latter half of the century. One Upper Rhine example was located at Adelhausen and is now at the Augustinermuseum in Freiburg.[53] Dating between 1360 and 1370, only the figure of Mary is original; a Christ figure from another Vesperbild has been substituted for the one that originally lay in the Virgin's lap. The carved and painted wood provides the Virgin with her draping garments, richly decorated with patterns on her mantel, bodice, and edges of her skirts. Her head bows slightly, almost as significantly as an earlier example from Radolfzell near Lake Constance, also housed at the Augustinermuseum.[54] This Vesperbild from about the fourth decade of the fourteenth century has also lost its original body of Christ, but does retain much of its original paint. Like the Adelhausen Vesperbild it is sumptuously decorated. The border of the Virgin's mantel is carved to resemble brocade and painted gold, while the inside has been painted red. The mantel itself is white with a green and red foliage motif. She wears a blue gown with golden stars that is also trimmed and belted in gold brocade. Red tears run down the cheeks of the Mary in this earlier Vesperbild. The example is roughly half life-size (94 x 44 x 29.5 cm) and apart from the turn of the Virgin's head, very upright in position. In their intact state, both pieces may have resembled another Vesperbild created in the Upper Rhine region now at the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe (Figure 3.4).[55] Although Christ's limbs are missing, as well as Mary's hands, this example from the third quarter of the fourteenth century provides a sense of the proportions between the two figures that probably reflect the original state of the two Vesperbilder in Freiburg. The cant of the Virgin's head and the positioning of Christ's body are consistent with the remains of the other examples. **24**

Vesperbilder also can be found in the manuscripts of German Dominican women. In one of the illustrated Processionals from a Strasbourg female house, [BLB, St. Peter perg. 22] a Vesperbild marks the opening of the Procession for Easter Sunday. The manuscript dates to the first half of the fourteenth century and was most likely created at an in-house scriptorium, where it was decorated and illustrated by the nuns. Of the eight small miniatures, six are Christocentric and portray the following scenes: Christ's Presentation in the Temple (sometimes also known as the Purification); the entry into Jerusalem; Christ's washing of the apostles' feet (with a Dominican nun observing the scene); the Vesperbild; the Resurrection; and the Ascension. The final two miniatures depict Mary's death and the death of a Dominican nun. In the miniature of the Vesperbild, Mary sits below a thin brown cross holding the bloody body of Christ in her arms. On the right Saint John watches in prayerful devotion, while the left-hand space is occupied by a haloed woman, perhaps Mary Magdalen, who likewise joins her hands in prayer. Like the sculptural representations of the Vesperbild, **25**

Mary's head is bowed down. And here we have Christ's body still intact. The five wounds are clearly visible on his blood-flecked body. A long white loincloth wraps most of his lower body, which is arranged in a step-like form much like the sculptural depictions. The fact that the Vesperbild gained popularity only later in the fourteenth century may explain why the Sister-Books do not mention this image in the nuns' devotional activities, for these images may have entered the houses only after the recording of the women's vitae. This is not to say that the women had no spiritual attachment to the events surrounding the Crucifixion. As seen above, there is ample evidence of Christocentric Passion piety, as well as, we will see, Passion piety directed towards Saint John and the Virgin Mary.[56]

The Beloved and the Baptist

As Ruth Meyer in her edition of the St. Katharinenthal Sister-Book has noted, some pieces of devotional artwork mentioned in the Sister-Books can be identified with pieces that still survive today.[57] Once such example found in the vita of Anne of Ramschwag records a mystical phenomena that occurred in connection with a devotional image. "She prayed once before the large image of Saint John resting on Our Lord's heart, and Saint Mie of Retherhoven stood behind her likewise praying. And Mie saw that Anne was as clear as crystal and that she shone with a light that came from within her. And Mie saw this the entire time that Anne prayed before the image."[58] At the same house Adelheid Pfefferhartin prayed before the same or a similar image, which her vita locates with certainty in the choir. She too was observed by another nun at her devotions, but, instead of becoming translucent, Adelheid levitated.[59] In the case of Anne of Ramschwag and Adelheid Pfefferhartin, the image they prayed before was one of the several *Christus-Johannes-Gruppen* figures known to have been possessed by St Katharinenthal in the fourteenth century.[60] **26**

Christus-Johannes-Gruppen are a genre of images strongly associated with fourteenth-century female Dominican houses in the Upper Rhine. They are referred to several times within the various Sister-Books, even in monasteries where no such known image survives. These images isolate a scene from the Last Supper where the Apostle John sleeps or rests on the shoulder, chest, heart, or lap of Christ. This depiction, often sculptural as the Vesperbilder usually were but sometimes painted or illuminated, is based on the biblical passages describing the Last Supper. The Last Supper was a recurrent theme in miniature cycles of the *Vita Christi* and was often painted on the refectory walls in medieval monasteries.[61] As such, it was a scene with which the women were well versed. The Gospel of John, assumed in the Middle Ages to have been written by the disciple John, describes Christ's revelation that one of the twelve apostles will betray him. "One of them, the disciple he loved, was reclining close beside Jesus. So Simon Peter nodded to him and said, 'Ask who it is he means.' That disciple, as he reclined, leaned back close to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, who is it?'"[62] John is not named as the beloved **27**

disciple, but was understood as such. In depictions of the Last Supper, most of the apostles and Judas sit behind or around a table, but Christ and John are the central figures in the depiction.

Of the roughly twenty-five sculptural exemplars of the Christus-Johannes-Gruppen that have been identified many can be attributed with certainty to female Dominican houses, including some of the six at the core of this study. A fifteenth-century sculpture housed currently in Strasbourg once belonged to Unterlinden. Another example now in Frankfurt, dating to about 1350, comes from Adelhausen.[63] The Adelhausen example is rather small (about 33 cm) and could have been used for personal devotions, perhaps in a nun's cell, although use as a communal image cannot be ruled out. Most of its original predominantly red and blue paint survives. In the sculpture, Saint John the Evangelist rests against the heart of Christ, taking the position not only of the favored apostle but also of the Beloved who is nurtured on the heart of His Lover—the disciple He loved the most and with whom He shared friendship and special knowledge. The closeness between the two is interpreted as giving John a special understanding of Christ's love. Christ offers John protection by placing his hand on his shoulder and taking his hand in his. Nuns regarding this image could contemplate the relationship between the two, as well as to attempt an *Imitatio Johannis*—an imitation of John in his trusting, obedient, and boundless love for Christ and as the virginal recipient of Christ's love. **28**

A further example, now in Antwerp, belonged to the community of St. Katharinenthal. It is almost life-sized, measuring 141 cm high.[64] It was created shortly after 1300 and could have adorned the altar dedicated to John the Evangelist in that monastery. This may have been the figure before which Anne of Ramschwag and Adelheid Pfefferhartin prayed. The composition is similar to that of the Adelhausen piece, although the size allows for more refinement in the features. Christ holds John's hand and rests his other hand on his shoulder. John's head is not so dramatically poised over Christ's heart, but rather falls more naturally into a sleeping position on Christ's chest, although still in the vicinity of the heart. This sculpture is most likely the one attributed to Master Heinrich of Constance.[65] A later example belonging to the community of St. Katharinenthal was much smaller. Dating to the last half of the fourteenth century, it stands 31 cm high, even smaller than the sculpture from Adelhausen.[66] It is gilded and depicts a small praying nun at the feet of Christ. St. Katharinenthal had yet another such image made of silver, but that one has disappeared. One of the house's manuscripts also contains an image of the Christus-Johannes-Gruppen.[67] **29**

The Christus-Johannes-Gruppe image was often used for devotional meditation and served as the locus of mystical phenomena as in the vitae of the two St. Katharinenthal nuns. For the author of these vitae, it was important that the women's signs of grace, translucency, and levitation occur in conjunction with their contemplation of the Christ and John image. The **30**

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holiness of the two women is made clear through their devotion to the statue or more correctly what the statue represented: Christ's gentle love for one who puts herself in his hands in all matters. Christus-Johannes-Gruppe provided Dominican women with a model for their love and pious devotion to Christ, expressing a relationship or bond that they hoped to achieve by linking themselves to both Christ and John the Evangelist.

31

The women did not focus only on Christ's depiction in these sculptural groups. As their vitae make clear, John also had a place in their spirituality. Perhaps most tellingly, Elsbeth of Villingen at St. Katharinenthal elaborated on the relationship of love between Christ and John, pointing out how John's place at Christ's side held special meaning for her and for all Christians (especially Dominican women) who venerated the saint for his link to Christ. Elsbeth retold the events surrounding the Passion to her sisters at St. Katharinenthal, but focused on John's role in them and his empathy for Christ's suffering.[68] Beginning with a retelling of the Last Supper, she dwelt on the sweetness and love that John received more than all the other apostles because of both his proximity to Christ's heart and the special knowledge he had received directly from Christ.

32

The sharing of love and knowledge between Christ and John at the Last Supper presaged their shared suffering at the foot of the cross.[69] The Gospel passage, in which Christ commends the care of his Mother to his beloved discipline announcing that John should now be her son as Mary should now be John's mother, struck a cord in the Johannian spirituality of the nuns. While the Virgin's suffering at the foot of the cross was a well known medieval topos, Elsbeth describes John too as taking part in that suffering. This *compassio* is evident in many late medieval images and texts. When Elsbeth retold the story of the Crucifixion to her sisters, she had John embrace and support the grieving Mother of God, as depicted in many late medieval scenes of the event. But Elsbeth elaborated on the relationship and connected the suffering of the two. The Sword of Sorrows, which pierced Mary's breast, also pierced John's; what she felt, he felt.[70] And as they embraced beneath the cross, run through by the Sword of Sorrows, the blood of Christ's wounds fell on them, and the water and blood from his heart flowed out onto them. The familial relationship extended by Christ to John brought with it a share of the suffering and compassio that Mary experienced.[71] But not only did John share Mary's pain, he also experienced Christ's pain and death. Elsbeth says that God imprinted the seal of Christ's agony on the heart and soul of John, so that John also received the wounds of Christ.[72] For Elsbeth, John is the perfect practitioner of the Imitatio Christi because he becomes an extension of both Christ's suffering and his love.

One of Elsbeth's fellow nuns, Luggi of Stein, experienced a vision with a similar emphasis. As she was praying to the martyrs, a voice told her that the Virgin Mary greatly loved the martyrs. Luggi then asked why John the Evangelist was the most dear to her, for he was not a martyr. The voice replied: **33**

> St. John is the greatest martyr, who was ever martyred. When he stood under the cross, he was so martyred with the endless compassion for our Lord's torment, that he is the greatest martyr in heaven. And because of that he could not thereafter endure a painful death.[73]

John the Evangelist was the perfect model of spirituality for Dominican women to emulate. An *Imitatio Johannis* allowed the women in an age that no longer had virgin martyrs to feel the embrace of Christ, share in the sorrow of the Virgin, and suffer Christ's agony on the cross. John was the Beloved of Christ, the virgin saint dedicated to Him, a witness to and participant in Christ's Passion, and one who suffered for Christ's love. Through images of John the Evangelist, the pious Dominican woman could approach Christ and see herself embraced as the Beloved.

The other Saint John also captured the spiritual imagination of Dominican women. Saint John the Baptist occurred often in the altar dedications of their churches because he was the patron saint of the Dominican Order.[74] He was usually portrayed in images as the essential wild man, the hermit in the wilderness. According to Luke's Gospel, "As the child [John] grew up he became strong in spirit; he lived in the wilds until the day when he appeared publicly before Israel."[75] In Matthew the saint's appearance is described, "John's clothing was a rough coat of camel's hair, with a leather belt round his waist, and he lived on locusts and wild honey."[76] The Baptist appears on the late-thirteenth-century seal of Unterlinden, an apt representation for the community since the monastery was named after the saint. A fourteenth-century statue of the saint from St. Katharinenthal conveys a typical depiction of him with a hairy cloak draped around a naked and barefoot body. It is attributed to Master Heinrich of Constance, the same craftsman who made the large Christus-Johannes-Gruppe for the community. Some of the original paint survives, showing the detail used in rendering the pattern of the animal hair on his cloak. John holds his attribute the *Agnus Dei* or Lamb of God on his arm. The life-size piece, now in Karlsruhe, may have graced the altar dedicated to the saint in the nun's choir. **34**

Or perhaps the sculpture stood in the cloister, and served as the catalyst for devotional factions in the fifteenth century.[77] During the fifteenth century, the nuns of St. Katharinenthal fiercely debated which of their two beloved saints was the more worthy, which had done a greater service to God and hence was more important and deserving of their veneration. The saints in question were the two Johns, John the Baptist and John the Evangelist and Apostle. This debate raged until one day two members of the opposing factions met in the cloister **35**

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arcade in front of a depiction of John the Baptist. When a nun who favored the other John made fun of the image, God struck her to the ground, unable to cry out or understand what was said to her. When she came to herself, she understood that God held each of the saints in equal favor and valued to the same degree the contributions made by both. Therefore, all the sisters of St. Katharinenthal should honor and venerate equally both of the Johns.[78]

36

Other images of John the Baptist occur in female Dominican manuscripts. The saint is the only one to receive his own miniature in the two fourteenth-century illuminated graduals from Unterlinden. And the number of depictions of him in the manuscripts of St. Katharinenthal is only surpassed by those of John the Evangelist and Christ.[79] Of course, Dominican nuns were not alone in their frequent depictions of the saint. He also appears in manuscripts associated with male Dominican houses, like the antiphonal / hymnal combination found in the Badische Landesbibliothek. [St. Peter perg. 49] These images portray his birth, his preaching, his recognition of Christ, and the Agnus Dei.

Dominican Women, the Virgin Mary, and Other Images

37

Crucifixes and Christus-Johannes-Gruppen are not the sole devotional objects mentioned in the texts from these monasteries. Other images also had a place in the women's spirituality. The women prayed before images of the Virgin Mary, the Virgin and Child, and various saints. Sometimes we have no idea where within the monastery an object was situated, but occasionally a Sister-Book informs us of the location of a specific devotional image. At Töss, for instance, there seems to have been a statue or bust of Christ hanging over or near the door to the chapterhouse,[80] an image of the Virgin Mary in the chapel that also housed an image of the three kings,[81] and another Marian image in the choir.[82]

38

As we have seen in the vita of Elsbeth of Villingen, the women placed great worth on the contemplation and veneration of the Virgin Mary, based on her role as the Mother of Christ. Similarly, Catherine of Unterlinden considered her community to have a special devotion to the Virgin. One section of Catherine's introduction to the monastery's Sister-Book discusses the importance of the Virgin for the nuns.[83] Images of the Virgin could inspire mystical phenomena just as much as images of her son or the two Johns. In an event much like that recorded in the vita of Anne of Ramschwag, Elsbeth Schefflin of Töss "was also at one time at her prayers in the chapel, and there she saw that the holy sister Ellsy of Elgo knelt before the beautiful image of Our Lady. Ellsy's body above her belt was as clear as crystal."[84] In the vita of another nun, Margaret Willin, this same Marian image is also referred to. Margaret regularly prayed before it.[85] We do not know how Mary was depicted in this image, or even if it was a sculpture or a painting, but it was a popular site of contemplation in the monastery of Töss.

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While many women were passive recipients of visions and mystical phenomena other women interacted with what they saw. The first were mere spectators, observing a biblical scene played out before their interior or exterior eyes, levitating, or being made crystalline by divine grace. An example of the second can be found in the Unterlinden Sister-Book, which informs us that in the choir of Unterlinden there was a seated Madonna and Child statue from which Gerdrud of Brugge broke off the Christ Child's hand. Miraculously, the image would not allow itself to be repaired.[86] In this case, one could say that the monastery had self-generating holy images; the statue continued to be venerated, but the community now also had the tiny Christ's hand as an object of devotion. Similarly at St. Katharinenthal, Adelheit Othwins was praying before a seated Madonna and Child and took the Christ Child's foot in her hand.[87] Here the foot did not break off, but rather became flesh and blood, warm and alive in Adelheit's hand.[88] The object of devotion had become real, alive in the presence of the devotée. It was no longer merely a symbol of the Virgin and Child; it was the Virgin and Child. If only for a moment, a small part of the image became actual. It was physically present and immediate to the woman, a reward for her piety and devotion. **39**

Other holy personages were represented in images to which Dominican women had access. Among the earliest that we know of is a tall (140 cm) linden wood statue of Saint Mary Magdalen, which is currently in the Augustinermuseum, Freiburg, that may have been in the possession of the community of St. Maria Magdelena in Freiburg.[89] It was carved sometime around 1260, so after the foundation of the community of Penitents, but before their incorporation into the Dominican Order. The sculpture presents a fashionably attired Mary Magdalen wearing a long gown that is belted low around her hip over which she wears a cloak that is thrown back and a headscarf. Her right hand is at her breast, in her left hand she holds her ointment jar up for presentation. This jar is often used to identify her. It signified her participation in the entombment of Christ—where she was thought to have been one of the women who prepared his body for burial—and her presence at the empty tomb after the Resurrection when she and the other women attempted to minister to Christ's corpse. The jar appears in other female Dominican images of Mary Magdalen as well, chiefly in the two resurrection miniatures in the illuminated Unterlinden graduals of the fourteenth century. The statue of the saint may have been intended to stand-alone or to have been part of a larger decorative program depicting the Holy Sepulcher, in which Mary Magdalen would attend the grave of Christ with other figures.[90] Not surprisingly, this saint also appears several times in a fourteenth-century Psalter from St. Maria Magdelena.[91] **40**

There were other images too. We know from her vita that when a St. Katharinenthal nun died and her body was carried into the choir, her vita declares that one could hear the holy angels singing in two places.[92] This may appear to be an acoustic incident reported in the life, rather than a visual one, and a literary topos rather than a visual one is probably at work here, for the angels would certainly sing upon receiving the soul of a holy and devout woman. Nonetheless, **41**

St. Katharinenthal possessed a pair of monumental candlesticks in the form of angels that could have reinforced the image. These angels may have flanked other artwork in the cloister church, or perhaps they stood in separate places where the bodies of the deceased were laid out.[93] The two candlesticks, measuring between three and four feet, date to about 1330 and are similar but not mirror images of each other. And although the Sister-Book does not claim that anyone saw these singing angels, the visual, sculptural presence of these two figures may have been enough to suggest the proper acoustic event that could have taken place.

Connections with the Outside World

Not all the elements of the female Dominican visual environment had overtly religious overtones. Many pieces of artwork served to focus the women's attention on their own spiritual development, but others could function as a means of uniting monastic women with others in medieval society, extending the women's spirituality to encompass the spiritual welfare and well-being of the larger community. Certain objects emphasized the bonds between the monastic inhabitants and the outside world, such as the connections and relationships of family and patronage. One medium where we can see this linkage is in textile work, the manual labor favored in many female Dominican houses. **42**

Two wall hangings from the Freiburg monasteries of Adelhausen and St. Katharine illustrate this more secular element of the monastic environment.[94] Both are linen decorated with wool embroidery. The first of these tapestries from Adelhausen dates from between 1320 and 1330.[95] Known as the *Wappen-Teppich*, it survives in three pieces (about 51 x 180 cm) composed of three panels each, and portrays alternating panels of family shields and images from legendary stories.[96] The families represented on the dark green ground of the first piece of the tapestry are the Munzingens (red shield with silver diagonal band topped by a blue flower) with four shields, and the Falkensteins (a gold shield with two red arches, between which is a dark-colored falcon with outstretched wings perched on a rock), likewise with four shields. Between these two panels on a light greenish-blue ground is a depiction of Alexander the Great with the Indian queen Candace and another woman riding a white elephant. Their heads are visible as they ride in a yellow-roofed structure with three red arches placed on the elephant's back.[97] In the second piece of the tapestry, two scenes flank a red ground on which there are four shields from the Vorgassen family (a silver shield with a brown lance point facing up to the left). The scene to the left of the Vorgassen shields shows Samson wrestling a lion on a yellow field, while the scene on the right depicts Phyllis riding a bridled Aristotle through a garden on a yellow ground.[98] The last panel on the tapestry has two red fields with two shields each flanking a yellow panel. The shields represent the Snewlin family (a shield with the upper half gold and the lower half green). Between the panels is a scene, probably portraying Hercules, of a man in front of a tree slaying a boar with a lance.[99] Of the four **43**

families whose shields appear on the Wappen-Teppich, three (the Munzingens, Falkensteins, and Snewlins) can easily be found among the names of Adelhausen's patrons and member, but the Vorgassens do not appear in any of the surviving documents. There is a strong stylistic resemblance between the pictorial scenes of the Wappen-Teppich and the St. Gall Chronicle of 1320, suggesting that the tapestry was not designed in Adelhausen, but that the women produced it from a pattern created for them in the manuscript workshop for the St. Gall text.[100]

The second tapestry, the *Malterer-Teppich*, comes from the Freiburg monastery of St. Katharine.[101] It was created sometime between 1320 and 1330, in the same decade as the Adelhausen Wappen-Teppich. It consists of one long narrow panel (67.5 x 491 cm) with a total of eleven eight-sided blue medallions on a red ground scattered with white flowers. The entire panel is bordered in yellow, decorated with a chain of gold-centered white flowers with green leaves. Within each of the blue medallions is an embroidered scene. Nine of these depict episodes that are usually interpreted as *Minnesklaven* or *Frauensklaven*—anti-feminist stories "which catalog men who are humiliated by women."[102] At either end of the panel, the medallions depict the shields and heraldry of the Freiburg Malterer family. The one on the left end is enclosed by the name Anna while the shield on the opposite end divides the name Johannes. The Malterer family was an important one in Freiburg, although not highly prominent. Johannes der Malterer, the only son of Friedrich Malterer and his wife Katherina, was born about 1295. His father Friedrich, who died in 1320, had two sisters, Anna and Gertrut, and Anna appears to have entered St. Katharine.[103] If we hypothesize a date of 1325 for the work, Johannes would have been 30 years old when the embroidery was created and Anna was most likely a nun by that time. There is no way of knowing if both Johannes and Anna were the donors giving a gift together to the community, or if Johannes gave the embroidery to Anna in honor of their family connection, and then Anna presented the wall-hanging to St. Katharine (because as a nun she could not own such an item personally). **44**

In-between the names Johannes and Anna are the nine scenes of the supposed Minnesklaven. These "are not narrative but allusions, representations of well-known tales, the pictorial equivalent of literary allusions."[104] These consist of four pairs of medallions and a single medallion at the end of the sequence. The first image in each pair depicts a man of strength known from legend, history, or literature. The second image shows his weakening at the hands of a woman. In the first pair, Samson wrestles a lion, then Delilah cuts off his hair.[105] In the second pair, Aristotle sits in a room full of books, but reaches out a window to touch a woman under her chin. This is followed by a well-known depiction of Phyllis riding Aristotle like a beast of burden, with him wearing a bridle and the woman carrying a whip.[106] The third pair portrays the author Virgil outside a tower, holding hands with a woman through an open window. This leads to Virgil in a basket being hauled up the side of the tower, with the window now closed, by a woman atop the structure.[107] The last pair of medallions shows scenes from **45**

the Arthurian romance of Iwein. In the first, Iwein slays the knight Ascalon by the emerald fountain. In the next image a woman presents Iwein to Laudine, Ascalon's now widowed wife, a depiction which should be seen as Iwein's surrender to her.[108] The ninth and final medallion of the Maltererteppich shows a Virgin with a unicorn resting its head in her lap. This can also be seen as a portrayal of Minnesklave, for "[t]he unicorn too can be seen as one more victim of woman—a powerful animal that can only be killed when it is lured to the lap of a maiden."[109] However, given the existence of the wall hanging in the monastery, its original destination, it could also represent "the surrender of sexuality—embodied by the unicorn—to chastity—signified by the pure maiden."[110]

46 What kind of meanings would medieval Dominican women have found in the anti-feminist images of the tapestry and would they have found the images particularly anti-feminist? The wall hanging does portray women in all stages of life, unmarried (the woman with Virgil and the virgin with the unicorn), married (Delilah and Phyllis), and widowed (if the eighth medallion does depict Laudine). The nuns may have identified most with the unicorn-virgin, seeing in the other pairs of images the life choices that they did not make, or that they made but now as nuns renounced. It is unclear whether the women would have seen the depiction of anti-feminist stories as negative.[111] The stories may not have been viewed so much as fearful of the power of women as fearful of the secular world. Powerful women led themselves and others into sin unless they had the power of virginity—the ability to tame the unicorn.

47 These two wall hangings—the Wappen-Teppich and the Malterer-Teppich—also served two social functions. First of all, they would have served as reminders of the stories that they represented. As the images were fairly well-known in the period, viewing the scenes on the tapestries may have prompted the women to retell the tales and legends pictured before them. The images visually connected the women with the literature of medieval society. Even more importantly, the two embroideries would have served as reminders of the bonds between the women and the larger secular society. Even for those women who were not members of the families denoted by the shields in the embroideries, the representations of these families would have had meaning for the nuns. These families were patrons of the house and the nuns would be constantly reminded of this connection each time they passed the wall hangings.

48 In the St. Katharinenthal Zurich Gradual, one finds similar connections made between the nuns and their patrons. Small kneeling figures are depicted near the miniatures found throughout the manuscript.[112] Many but not all of these are Dominican nuns. Katharine of Rannegge's name appears below most of the miniatures. But the figures also include men of the Dominican and other religious orders, as well as secular men and women. They may represent patrons or people who had other connections to the monastery, perhaps religious men such as chaplains. And like the two wall hangings discussed above, family arms are

featured in the borders of the miniatures in the manuscript. In one case there is just a shield.[113] In another, there is a kneeling nobleman wearing the shield for the family of von Stoffeln.[114] While we cannot identify all the individuals portrayed, the nuns may have known who they were through stories and monastic traditions. But in the case of the families represented, it is not necessarily important to know the name of the individual. It is the family that is crucial, and after the death of the individual the family would remain in the memory and visual environment of the women. Prayers would be offered for them.

49 One other element of the visual environment made these connections between the inner monastic world and the larger secular community clear to the monastic inhabitants. This was the burial of patrons and members of the monastic *familia* in the church. These burial places where often marked with tombs or some form of gravestone. The Dominican General Chapter of 1245 had ruled that tombs adorned with sculptures were prohibited. This may explain the spare tombstone of Agnes of Hergenheim, one of the two foundresses of Unterlinden. The tomb of the nun survives although its original placement within the monastic church or cloister arcade is unknown. According to the constitutions, the dead of the community were to be buried in part of the cloister arcade on the range bordering the monastic church.[115]

50 Like the prohibitions against excessive decoration in the church, the General Chapter's statute against the burial of patrons in the church did not remain in effect, as can be seen in a charter from about a century after Agnes of Hergenheim's burial. In this document, dated November 21, 1349, the Freiburg citizen Johans Salzmann granted the community of Maria Magdelena money in return for his burial in the monastery's church.[116] Johans specified that he wanted to be buried under a tomb of well-cut stone, decorated with the painted images of those saints that he would decide on (but which are not listed in the document). Johans also requested that a flame be lit every night over his tomb.[117] The presence of these tombs in a space often frequented by the nuns would keep these people in the forefront of the women's attention. They would see the tombs or the family shields on the wall hangings and remember to include them in their prayers.

51 The visual environment served to connect the women to their patrons and to the objects of their spirituality. Artwork could connect them with those in their spiritual care, those who benefited from their prayers. Tombs and secular tapestries reminded the nuns of connections that transcended the cloister walls and the bonds of death, but the chief function of the visual environment remained: to connect Dominican women with the Divine. Contemplation of images like the Christus-Johannes-Gruppen allowed the women to consider their relationship with Christ. Crucifixes prodded them to meditate on Christ's suffering and Vesperbilder may

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have focused their attention on the sorrow of the Virgin Mary. All of these images, even those that were not Christocentric, allowed the women to position themselves within the wider Christian community, both on earth and in heaven.

52

The objects within the monastic environment were not simply to be looked at. They were meditated on, touched, broken, caressed, and loved. Whether embracing the crucified body of the Lord, clasping the carved hands of the entombed Christ, or prostrating one's own body before a Crucifix, the spirituality of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century German Dominican women was active, physical, and tactile. It was a spirituality that interacted closely with the material elements of the monastic environment, utilizing the predominately Christocentric images that surrounded the cloistered inhabitants. And while God's grace was often carried out in these women—in events requiring a passive recipient who ideally had submitted her will to God's—it was often the initial activity of a nun or lay-sister that brought on this gift. The outward signs of received grace—whether levitations or light—revealed to the other nuns the benefits of employing objects in their devotions that could be seen with the outward eye. For even as the images could serve as a means of inducing visions, providing a conduit for the women's spiritual longings, they could also serve as objects of the women's desires, physically and corporeally present. Here we see that at the intersection of the visual environment and Dominican spirituality stood the immediate desire for God.

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Notes

Note 1: Jeffrey Hamburger has been the most prolific examiner of the connections between religious women and their visual environment, although his work focuses almost exclusively on illuminated manuscripts. He has explored the visual elements, which were at work in one Benedictine convent, and how these elements may have been employed by the women who created them. Jeffrey Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent* (Berkeley: University of Californis, 1997). His earlier work on the Rothschild Canticles explored the possible links between an illuminated manuscripts and its female user. Jeffrey Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles: Art and Mysticism in Flanders and the Rhineland circa 1300* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Important articles by Hamburger include, Jeffrey Hamburger, "The Visual and the Visionary: The Image in Late Medieval Monastic Devotions," *Viator* 20 (1989): 161–82; Jeffrey Hamburger, "Art, Enclosure, and the Cura Monialium: Prolegomensa in the Guise of a Postscript," *Gesta* 31:2 (1992): 108–34; Jeffrey Hamburger, "A 'Liber precum' in Selestat and the Development of the Illustrated Prayer Book in Germany," *Art Bulletin* 73 (1991); and, especially concerning Dominican women, Jeffrey Hamburger, "The Use of Images in the Pastoral Care of Nuns: The Case of Heinrich Suso and the Dominicans," *Art Bulletin* 71:1 (1989): 20–46; and Jeffrey Hamburger, "The 'Liber miraculorum' of Unterlinden: An Icon in Its Convent Setting," in *The Sacred Image East and West,* ed. Robert Ousterhout and Leslie Brubaker (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1995), 147–90. Other scholars, such as Roberta Gilchrist, have scrutinized the relationship between women and the material culture of the monastery as represented by archeological remains, including architectural sculpture. Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women* (New York: Routledge, 1994). German scholars such as Walter Blank and Elizabeth Vavra have looked explicitly at some of the connections between German female mysticism and imagery. Walter Blank, "Dominikanische Frauenmystik und die Entstehung des Andachtsbildes um 1300," *Alemannisches Jahrbuch* (1964–65): 57–86; and Elizabeth Vavra, "Bildmotiv und Frauenmystik-Funktion und Rezeption," in *Frauenmystik im Mittelalter*, ed. Peter Dinzelbacher and Dieter R. Bauer (Ostfildern, 1985), 201–30.

Note 2: Hamburger, "Visionary," 174.

Note 3: Hamburger, *Nuns*, 177.

Note 4: On *Andachtsbilder*, see, F. O. Büttner, "Andachtsbuch und Andachtsbild: Flämische Beispiele einer nichtnarrativen Ikonographie in Psalter, Stundenbuch und Gebetbuch," in *Miscellanea Martin Wittek*, ed. by Anny Raman and Eugène Manning (Paris: Peeters, 1993), 27–63; Josef Sauer, "Mystik und Kunst unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Oberrheins," *Kunstwissenschäftliches Jahrbuch der Gœrres-Gesellschaft* 1 (1928): 3–28; and most importantly, Walter Blank, "Dominikanische Frauenmystik und die Entstehung des Andachtsbildes um 1300," *Alemannisches Jahrbuch* (1964–65): 57–86.

Note 5: Sixten Ringbom, "Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions: Notes on the Place of Art in Late Medieval Private Piety," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 73 (1969), 161.

Note 6: "Since the fourteenth-century artistic innovations known as *Andachtsbilder* are so intimately linked with late medieval mysticism, we should thus expect to find some kind of connexion between the theological and the artistic meanings of the term image. But here a difficulty arises at once. The *Andachtsbild* has not only been regarded as an outcome of mysticism, but indeed as a vehicle to *kontemplative Versenkung*. Yet the mental images accompanying prayer and devotion were, in theory at least, to be avoided by the true mystic; and the supreme ideal was imageless devotion. How, then, do the artificial images produced by art fit into this context?. . . scholars have tried to remove the apparent opposition between the devotional image and the imageless devotion by assuming that mysticism, when diffused outside the spiritual elite, tended to become more tangible. Other writers have suggested that, contrary to their professed rejection of "images", medieval

visionaries were indeed influenced by works of art, and that iconographical innovations once thought reducible to accounts of visionary experiences, should instead be regarded as the result of a continuous iconographical development, or as a result of an intersection between art and mysticism." Ringbom, 159.

Note 7: Hamburger, "Use of Images," 204 ff.

Note 8: Jeffrey Hamburger, "The Reformation of Vision: Art and the Dominican Observance in Late Medieval Germany," in *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone, 1998), 428 ff.

Note 9: This image occurs in both of the house's illuminated graduals. The other one is Colmar, BVC, ms. 317, f. 5v.

Note 10: Many of these surviving pieces were gathered together in Bonn, Germany, in 2005 for a two-part exhibition on art from medieval women's religious houses at the Kunst-und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [Bonn] and the Ruhrlandmuseum [Essen]. See *Krone und Schleier: Kunst aus Mittelalterlichen Frauenklőstern*, edited by Kunst-und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, and the Ruhrlandmuseum, Essen (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2005).

Note 11: KSB, 145.

Note 12: See Hamburger, "Art, Enclosure."

Note 13: Jürgen Michler, "Die Dominkanerkirche zu Konstanz und die Farbe in der Bettelordensarchitektur um 1300," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 53 (1990): 253–76.

Note 14: This is corroborated by the art historical remarks of the nineteenth-century organizers of the museum which became housed in the structure. Louis Kubler, "Les Fresques d'Unterlinden," *Annuarie de Colmar* 6 (1956): 124–26.

Note 15: "Und zü einem male hatte man nüwe gemelde in dem core gemacht, und daruff was ir begirde also sere gerichtet, das si es als gerne hatte gesechen, das es ane masse was. Aber si widerstünd ir selber also vaste, das si es nie wolte gesechen, vnd darumb machte si Gott wirdig, das si eines tages, do si Gott enpfieng, den himmel offen sach, alle die wile, do si gie durch den cor vntz ze fronaltar, da si Gott enpfieng. Also ergaste si vnser Herre die kleinen zergenlichen gesichte mit einren so grossen wirdigen gesichte." ASB, 175–76.

Note 16: KSB, 145. See also Chapter 1 on space.

Note 17: KSB, 146.

Note 18: AMF, Inv. Nr. 165/166 M.

Note 19: Anne Derbes, *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 18.

Note 20: In the following examples, the Sister-Books appear to indicate a sculptural or pictorial image and not a manuscript illumination or miniature.

Note 21: TSB, 27.

Note 22: "Du bist ietzt gericht als du gericht solt werden." TSB, 27.

Note 23: See for example the Psalter miniature of this scene in Hs. 56632 f. 56v, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Germany. This Psalter belonged to an unidentified Dominican house.

Note 24: KSB, 111. There are also sculptural examples of this image. A Swabian example from the mid-fourteenth century survives. Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Inv. Nr. E 508.

Note 25: ". . . als ob ein mentsch liplich da were gelegen." KSB, 133. A miniature of this scene can be found on f. 71r of Hs. 56632, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Germany.

Note 26: Henry Suso, *The Exemplar with Two German Sermons*, ed. and trans. Frank Tobin (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 207. For more on this text in German Dominican female houses, see Chapter 4.

Note 27: Suso, 294.

Note 28: See Joanna Cannon, "Dominic *alter Christi?* Representations of the Founder in and after the *Arca di San Domenico*," in *Christ Among the Medieval Dominicans*, ed. Kent Emery Jr. and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 26–48.

Note 29: See Jean-Claude Schmitt, "Between text and image: the prayer gestures of Saint Dominic," *History and Anthropology* 1:1 (1984), 127–62.

Note 30: *Mystik am Oberrhein und in benachbarten Gebieten*, exhibition cat. (Freiburg: Augustinermuseum, 1978), 68–69.

Note 31: "Die gieng nach einer metti vmb den crútzgand vnd do si für die port kam, do neig si einem crucifixus, das da ist. . . " KSB, 98.

Note 32: "Die bettet ze einem mal vor dem crútz, das in dem capittel ist." KSB, 102, and "Vnd do prim zit ward, do gieng si vss dem kor für das capitel vnd knüwet da nider für das crucifixus. . . . Do gieng si in das capitel für das crucifixus. . . " KSB, 140.

Note 33: "mit der redt das crucifixus, das in dem grossen dormiter ist, . . " KSB, 122.

Note 34: KSB, 119.

Note 35: "nam ein tauell für si, . . . " KSB, 119.

Note 36: Basel, Historisches Museum, Inv. Nr. 1950/70.

Note 37: Knoepfli, 205.

Note 38: "das was gar peinlich und jemerlich gemalet." GSB, 143.

Note 39: Stylistically, the body posture of Christ is very similar to the contemporary Adelhausen Crucifix described above.

Note 40: "Herre ich bitte dich durch der durninen cronen willen, und durch der wunden ere dines holetes und durch des heilgen blütes ere di uber din mensliches antluz ran, das du din gotliches antluz gnedekliche gegen mir kerest." Zentralbibliothek, Zurich, Switzerland, Hs. C 76, f. 182r–182v. Hereafter cited in text as ZBZ.

Note 41: KSB, 137.

Note 42: H. Zeller-Werdmüller and Jakob Bächtold, ed., "Die Stiftung des Klosters Oetenbach und das Leben der seligen Schwestern daselbst, aus der Nürnberger Handschrift," *Zürcher Taschenbuch* n.s. 12 (1889): 242. Hereafter cited in text as OSB.

Note 43: Margaret Ebner, *Major Works*, ed. and trans. Leonard P. Hindsley (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 96.

Note 44: Ebner, 96.

Note 45: "Also hatten si ein crucifix, für dz gie si gar dicke betten, vnd rette mit ime als ein frund mit dem andern. . . ." ASB, 174.

Note 46: KSB, 115.

Note 47: Lewis, 109; and WSB, 77.

Note 498 USB, 449–50.

Note 49: On the Vesperbild/Pieta in medieval Germany, see Walter Passarge, *Das Deutsche Vesperbild im Mittelalter* (Cologne: F. J. Marcan, 1924). An exhaustive study of these images in the context of later medieval Belgian Beguines can be found in Joanna E. Ziegler, *Sculpture of Compassion: The Pietà and the Beguines in the Southern Low Countries, c.1300– c.1600* (Brussels: Institut Historique Belge de Rome, 1992).

Note 50: Among contemporary literary examples of Vesperbild imagery is Suso's Meditations found in his *Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*. "O delightful Splendor of eternal light, as my soul in mourning and gratitude embraces you under the cross, dead on the lap of your sorrowful Mother . . . " Suso, 301.

Note 51: "Die frühesten noch erhaltenen Vesperbilder stammen, abgesehen von Mitteldeutschland, aus Schwaben und vom Mittelrhein. Die frühe Darstellung ist gekennzeichnet durch die aufrecht sitzende Muttergottes mit dem diagonal gelagerten, treppenartig abgewinkelten Leib Christi auf den Knien. Charakteristisch ist die naturalistisch krasse Darstellung des Leichnams im Kontrast zur liebevollen Hingabe der Mutter, die sich vor allem in ihrer geneigten Kopfhaltung und den kummervollen Gesichtszügen ausdrückt. Die schwäbischen Vesperbilder heben sich durch ihre eher milde und lyrische Darstellung. . . von denjenigen aus dem nordfränkisch-thüringischen Kreis ab, die in überlebensgrossem Format und mächtigem Pathos das Leiden betonen. . . . In der 2. Hälfte des 14. Jh. wird die monumentale Form reduziert. Christus wird kindhaft klein, die Mutter wieder jung und lieblich dargestellt." *Mystik am Oberrhein und in benachbarten Gebieten*, exhibition cat. (Freiburg: Augustinermuseum, 1978), 58–59.

Note 52: This change can be seen over the course of the period 1350 to 1430. A Vesperbild (1350) from the Münster at Mittelzell, Reichenau depicts an almost erect Christ within the embrace of his seated Mother who slightly dips her upper body sideways to balance the slight angle of his body. An example from the monastery of Seeon, produced in Salzburg (1400) and now in the Bavarian National Museum in Munich depicts Mary's body in a more prominent slouching S-form, while Christ's upper body falls backwards over the Virgin's outstretched arm, although his entire body retains some of the step-like form. A Swabian Vesperbild from Steinberg near Ulm (1420/30), now in the Liebieghaus in Frankfurt, continues the progression. Made of clay, it displays a large amount of flowing drapery. Mary's head and shoulders are bent, not merely tilted, and Christ lies fully outstretched on Mary's knees with only his legs bent. Frankfurt, Liebieghaus-Museum alter Plastik, Inv. No. 1450.

Note 53: AMF, Inv. Nr. 11437. Description in D. Zinke, "Kirchenraum (I): Skulpturen" [exhibit guide] (Freiburg: Augustinermuseum, 1994), item 4.

Note 54: AMF, Inv. Nr. S. 34/D. Description in *Mittelalterliche Kunst im Augustinermuseum Freiburg im Breisgau* (Freiburg, 1965), n.p.

Note 55: Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum, #56/2.

Note 56: The Vesperbild, although illustrating an event in Christ's life, is essentially a Marian, not Christocentric image. It is the Virgin's suffering that invokes the compassion of the viewer, her emotions and situation that the viewer is called upon to contemplate.

Note 57: KSB, 223.

Note 58: "Si bettet ze einem mal vor dem grossen bilde, da sant Johannes rüwet vff vnsers herren hertzen, vnd stünd sant Mie von Rethershouen hinder ir öch an ir gebett vnd sah, das si als luter ward als ein cristalle vnd das reht ein schin eins liechtes von in gie. Das sah si all die wil, do si bettet vor dem bild." KSB, 130.

Note 59: KSB, 152.

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Note 60: KSB, 261. On Christus-Johannes-Gruppen, see *Die Christus-Johannes-Gruppen des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Kunstbrief 41 (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1947); Hans Wentzel, "Christus-Johannes-Gruppe" in *Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte,* Stuttgart: Alfred Druckenmüller, 1937 ff, 658–669. Hereafter cited in text as RDK ; Hans Wentzel, "Unbekannte Christus-Johannes-Gruppen," *Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft* 13 (1958): 155–176; Hans Wentzel, "Zum Thema der schwäbischen Christus-Johannes-Gruppen an Hand nichtschwäbischer Beispiele," in *Beiträge zur Schwäbischen Kunstgeschichte: Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag von Werner Fleischhauer* (Stuttgart: Jan Thorbecke, 1964), 35–48; and Reiner Haussherr, "Über die Christus-Johannes-Gruppen. Zum Problem 'Andachtsbilder' und deutsche Mystik ," in *Beiträge zur Kunst des Mittelalters: Festschrift für Hans Wentzel zum 60. Geburtstag* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1975), 79–103.

Note 61: The Last Supper can be found in many iconographic programs of refectories, especially among later medieval mendicants. "In the case of Florence, we discover the 'Last Supper' no less than fifteen times in the refectories of various religious houses (sometimes in a wider iconographic context), from the earliest representation of about 1340 in Santa Croce, up to the middle of the sixteenth century. . . " Wolfgang Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe: The Architecture of the Orders* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), 145.

Note 62: John 13:23-26

Note 63: Frankfurt, Städtische Galerie Liebieghaus, Inv. Nr. 1447.

Note 64: Antwerp, Museum Mayer van der Bergh.

Note 65: Hans Wentzel suggests that this "St. Johannesbild uss einem nussbom von meister Heinrich zue Constantz" refers to a sculpture that is no longer extant and does not refer to the piece in the Museum Mayer van der Bergh, Antwerp. Hans Wentzel, "Christus-Johannes-Gruppe" in RDK, 664. I, however, agree with Kneopfli that the passage refers to the piece currently in Antwerp.

Note 66: Knoepfli dates the sculpture to 1400. The Historisches Museum in Basel, where the example is housed, dates it to 1350.

Note 67: This image is in the sequence of small illuminations for the Proper of St. John in the Zurich gradual, [SNM LM, 26117]. One of them depicts John in the embrace of Christ [161r]. For more on this sequence of illuminations, see Chapter 4.

Note 68: The entire passage reads, "Vnd rett do gar mineklich vnd gar süsseklich von sant Johannes, von der gnad, die er enpfieng vff gottes hertzen, vnd sprach: >Won sant Johannes ain rainy, luttry magt was vnd ain süsses hertz hat vnd me erfùllet was mit götlicher min denn die andren iunger alle, da von ward im die red als süss vnd als mineklich, die vnser her rett, das sin gaist also durchgossen ward von min vnd süssekait, das er sich legen mûst vff gottes hertzen, vnd mocht in jn der stund nichtes enthalten won der edel zart lib vnsers heren. Vnd trank er den hochen sin vnd den edlen ziper win der götlichen süssykait vnd der himelschlichen wunnsamykait, anders er möchty nit gestanden sin mornent vnder dem crútz, won da starb er mit got. Er starb mit got, won er stünd by vnser lieben frowen vnder dem hailgen crútz vnd hat sy vnder sinem armen. Vnd do vnser lieben frowen das schwert her Symyonis durch Jr hertz vnd sel gieng, do trukt er sy an sich. Vnd mit dem antruken do gieng das schwert durch sy baydy vnd durchschnaid och sant Johannes hertz vnd sin sel. Vnd wurdent also durchwundet vnd durchsert, vnd hety sy die göttlich kraft nit vff enthalten vnd gesterket, sy müsstind an der selben stund tod sin aines liplichen todes. Won das blüt, das von sinen wunden floss, vnd das wasser vnd das blüt, das von sinem hertzen floss, das goss nider vff sy. Vnd got drukt das jnsigel siner hailigen marter jn sy jn jr hertz vnd sel also, das sy ainer ietlichen wunden sunderlichen entpfundent. Vnd also starb sant Johannes mit got. Er starb och von got, won got der hat sich samenthaft gesenket jn sin sel vnd jn sin hertz, vnd das da geschach, das wurkt got jn jm. Er starb och in got, won got der zoch jn wider vff jn sich selb mit vollkomner gnad. Da von sond jr jn dik anrüffen jn vwren hertzen vnd sond ermanen, das er mit got vnd jn got starb vnder dem hailgen

crútz, won also gestarb nie kain hailig me. Vnd wolt och got nit, das er kaines andren todes sturb. Vnd wenn jr jn des ermanent, so ist vnmuglich, das er vch iemer kaines dinges verziche vnd sunderlich jn der stund vwers todes." KSB, 176–77.

Note 69: Most standard Crucifixion scenes from this period show John and Mary flanking the cross.

Note 70: Although not a common depiction, the Sword of Sorrows or Simeon's Sword is iconographically based on Luke 2:34–35, "Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'This child is destined to be a sign which men reject; and you too shall be pierced to the heart.'" In his study of religious art in thirteenth-century France, Emile Mâle's discussion of Marian iconography includes this observation, "their presentation of the Virgin, a woman old before her time, who weeps over the bleeding face of her Son, became even more purely human, but the figure of the 'Mater dolorosa" which inspired so many masterpieces in the fifteenth century does not belong to the period of our study. On this point art is a little behind literature, for the faithful had long sung the *StabatMater*, had commemorated the seven sorrows of Our Lady, and had repeated with the doctors that she was 'martyr of martyrs.' Art had not yet dared to express this poignant grief, though here and there some isolated window shows the symbolic sword piercing her heart as she stands at the foot of the Cross, or some carved ivory shows the lance reaching from the side of Christ to the heart of His mother." Emile Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 237. Occasionally, multiple or seven swords are shown, representing the individual seven sorrows that the Virgin experienced at the Crucifixion. The "isolated window" that Male refers to is in the Upper Rhine at the heart of this study. In the Freiburg Münster, the Maler window located on the northside of the nave shows Mary with a sword piercing her heart. The stained glass window, completed between 1320 and 1330, depicts a typical Crucifixion scene with a Crucified Christ flanked by Mary on the left and John on the right. Out of Mary's chest protrudes a sword. Konrad Kunze, *Himmel in Stein: Das Freiburger Münster* (Freiburg: Herder, 1995), 40–41. Although larger scale Crucifixion scenes sometimes place John on the left with Mary, where he can support and embrace her as she collapses in anguish, I know of no depictions of John embracing Mary with the Sword of Sorrows.

Note 71: Twenty-five of Suso's one hundred meditations in *The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom* focus on the suffering of Mary at the foot of the Cross. First describing Christ's perceptions of his mother's suffering before his death, Suso instructs the penitent to dwell on "6. How your [Christ's] gentle heart suffered when you alone recognized the depths of sorrow your Mother's heart was enduring! 7. You saw her gestures of longing. 8. You heard her words of grief. 9. And in this separation by death you entrusted her to your disciple to be his mother. 10. And you entrusted him to her as a son." Suso, 298. Suso then turns to the Virgin's experiences before Christ's death. "1. O pure, tender Mother, I recall to you today the profound suffering of your heart at that first sight of your dear Child hanging there in his death agony. 2. You could not come to his aid. 3. You had to look in anguish upon the murderers of your Child. 4. You grieved for him most sorrowfully. 5. And he consoled you with great kindness. 6. His kind words wounded your heart. 7. Your gestures of grief softened hard hearts. 8. Your motherly hands and arms were raised in vain. 9. Your weakened body sank helplessly. 10. Your tender mouth lovingly kissed his blood as it ran down." Suso, 298. In meditating on the Virgin's suffering after Christ's death, Suso provided a further ten points to be contemplated. "1. O exquisite Comfort for all sinners, sweet Queen, let me remind you today - when you stood beneath the cross and your Child had departed and was hanging dead in front of you - how often you looked up helplessly. 2. How his arms were taken by you, his Mother. 3. With what devotion he was pressed to your bloodstained face. 4. How his open wounds and his lifeless countenance were all kissed. 5. How often your heart was wounded. 6. How many times you deeply groaned. 7. How many bitter and desolate tears you shed. 8. Your words of grief were so very mournful. 9. Your attractive appearance was so very sad. 10. But your desolate heart could not be comforted by anyone." Suso, 300.

Note 72: KSB, 175.

Note 73: "Sant Johannes ist der gröst martrer, der ie gemartret ward, won do er vnder dem crútz stünd, do ward er also gemartrot mit dem grundlosen mitliden von vnsers herren marter, das er der gröst martrer ist in dem himelrich. Vnd da von maht er enkeines pinlichen todes me sterben." KSB, 125.

Note 74: John the Baptist was the Order's patron saint because of his preaching.

Note 75: Luke 1:80.

Note 76: Matthew 3:4.

Note 77: The piece is on loan from the Musée des Arts décoratifs in Paris. Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum, Inv. Nr. Pe 484. The fifteenth-century argument about venerating the two Johns can be found in KSB, 180, although the story seems to have originated with Johannes Meyer, and not the nuns of St. Katharinenthal. Just because this sculpture survives does not mean it must be one of those described in the Sister-Book. The fact that most of the original paint is visible and the piece is in good condition leads me to believe that the statue spent most of its existence in a place more sheltered than the cloister arcade.

Note 78: KSB, 180. This may be an addition made to the text by Johannes Meyer.

Note 79: See Chapter 4 for more on these examples.

Note 80: "Nun hat sy die gewonhait das sy gar dik bettet vor dem antlút das vor dem capitelhus hanget . . . " TSB, 46.

Note 81: "Sy bettet och gewonlich vor únser frowen bild in der capell da die dry kúng stant." TSB, 27.

Note 82: "Sy hatt sunderlich die gewonhait das sy sich in dem kor naigt fúr únser frowen bild, . . " TSB, 28.

Note 83: USB, 346.

Note 84: "Sy was och ze ainem zit uff der kapell an ir gebett, und do sach sy das die sälig S. Ellsy von Elgö vor dem schönen bild únser frowen knúwet und das ir lib oben dem gúrtel als lutter was als ain kristall . . . " TSB, 24.

Note 85: TSB, 27.

Note 86: USB, 414.

Note 87: KSB, 139.

Note 88: This is similar to the incident in the life of Mechthilt die Rittrin, which describes her interaction with a sculpture of the Holy Sepulcher mentioned earlier. KSB, 133.

Note 89: AMF, Inv. Nr. 11, 441. Two other Mary figures (100 cm x 18 cm) dating to the third quarter of the thirteenth century survive from the Freiburg. They are more columnar than the Maria Magdelena example. One carries an ointment jar. AMF, Inv. Nr. S 36a,b/D.

Note 90: Perhaps one similar to the focus of Mechthilt the Rittrin of St. Katharinenthal's devotion. KSB, 133.

Note 91: AM, Codex St. Katharina A.

Note 92: "Vnd do si verschied vnd man si in den kor trüg, do hort man in dem closter an zwein stetten die heiligen engel singen." KSB, 104. The angels singing in two places may also reflect the nuns' expectation for the angelic choirs to sing in a divided, double choir, much as the women did during Divine Office. A similar occurrence is described in KSB, 101. For more on singing angels, see Chapter 3.

Note 93: Frankfurt, Stätische Galerie Leibieghaus - Museum alten Plastik, Inv. Nr. 803 and 804.

Note 94: In a similar vein, the Cistercian female community of Wienhausen housed a series of Tristan tapestries. Marie Schuette and Sigrid Müller-Christensen, *Das Stickereiwerk*, (Tübingen, 1963), 38; and Norbert H. Ott, "Katalog der Tristan-Bildzeugnisse," in *Text und Illustration im Mittelalter: Aufsätze zu den Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Literatur und bildender Kunst*, ed. Hella Frühmorgen-Voss (Munich, 1975), 148–50.

Note 95: This and the following wall-hanging are described with historical and stylistic consideration in Jutta Eißengarthen, *Mittelalterliche Textilien aus Kloster Adelhausen im Augustinermuseum Freiburg* (Freiburg: Adelhausenstiftung, 1985), 11–30.

Note 96: AMF, Inv. Nr. 11507, 11506 and Basel, Historisches Museum, Inv. Nr.1901-134.

Note 97: See Eißengarthen, 19–21, for the Alexander legend.

Note 98: See below for Phyllis and Aristotle.

Note 99: Eißengarthen, 11, 21.

Note 100: Eißengarthen, 22.

Note 101: AMF, Inv. Nr. 11508.

Note 102: James A. Rushing, "Iwein as Slave of Woman: the *Maltererteppich* in Freiburg," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 55 (1992), 126.

Note 103: An Anna Malterer is listed under April in the 1354 Anniversary book of St. Katharine's. SAF B1 152, f. 10v.

Note 104: Rushing, 129.

Note 105: See Eißengarthen, 19.

Note 106: See Eißengarthen, 18–19, and Rushing, 129, n.24 for a bibliography on Aristotle and Phyllis.

Note 107: See Rushing, 128–29, n. 23 for a bibliography on Virgil in the basket.

Note 108: This is Rushing's interpretation of the sequence, which is more plausible and in keeping with the other medallions than earlier theories. Rushing, 130.

Note 109: Rushing, 132.

Note 110: Rushing, 132, n. 42.

Note 111: Rushing interprets the place of the wall-hanging in the monastery as follows: "establishing that the wall-hanging was probably made for the convent does not prove that it was intended as a visual sermon against cupidity or femininity, although the probability that the meaning was serious certainly increases with the probability that the context was religious. It thus may be impossible to say with certainty how the makers, patrons, and earliest users of the Malterer embroidery felt about the "slave of love" topos - whether they took it as a sort of joke, a lighthearted invocation of literary themes, or as a serious warning against the wiles of woman or against carnal love." Rushing, 134.

Note 112: SNM, MS LM 26117.

Note 113: SNM, MS LM 26117 f. 184v.

Note 114: SNM, MS LM 26117 f. 177v.

Note 115: Const., 16; Lat. Const., 341.

Note 116: SAF A1/XVI A q (Reuerinnen), 21. November 1349. The word *malen* is used for the medium of the saints, so they appear to have been painting instead of sculptures.

Note 117: "ein ewig naht lieht dar vber machen das alle naht brinne." SAF A1/XVI A q (Reuerinnen), 21. November 1349.

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Chapter 3

Sound: Make a Joyful Noise: The Acoustical Environment

Silence and Sound in the Monastic Tradition

> Later I went with the sisters to table for bread and water, which we usually have on that day. I understood the refectory reading completely. That I was not learned enough for this, I realized only after the reading was over.[1]

So Margaret Ebner described her experience in the Dominican monastery of Maria Medingen on Good Friday 1336. What she heard, she understood. She attributed her understanding to the great sweet joy and grace she received earlier that day from her perception of the presence of God. For Margaret, her hearing and comprehension stemmed from a mystical root. For most Dominican women this daily listening experience did not involve mystical understanding; rather it was one of the numerous acoustic events that occurred during their daily activities and was a part of their sensual environment. They ate in silence so they could hear the readings during the meal. It was something they did everyday. The silence remained the same, but the readings changed. **1**

The role of both sound and silence within the monastic environment was a significant one, encompassing all that was and was not heard from the refectory to the workroom, from the choir to the dormitory, and everywhere in-between. It is often the visual surroundings of the monastery that come to mind when we think of monastic sensual environment. However, the acoustic aspect of this environment—the aural and oral occurrences within the monastic house—is equally important to the reconstruction of the medieval monastic setting and essential to our understanding of the spirituality produced within it. Just as the spatial and visual environment was always before the eyes of the monastic inhabitants, the acoustic environment was constantly audible to their ears and issuing from their mouths. Because the acoustic environment also included the absence of sound, this was true even when there was silence. With the use of the term *acoustic environment,* I want to distinguish the various sounds and silences that permeated the lives of those who inhabited medieval monasteries. Whereas the spatial environment remained fairly static and the visual environment was not always accessible, the acoustic environment was constant and always changing. Some scholars have already begun to realize the significance that sound had for medieval spirituality. Caroline A. Bruzelius has shown how, through changes in the church structures that thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italian Clarisses used, the women's spirituality shifted from a focus that was visual to one that was acoustic. Hearing became the focus of the women's eucharistic piety when they could no longer see the elevation of the Host during Mass.[2] Also familiar are the acoustic or vocal manifestations of medieval mystics and **2**

visionaries. The seemingly endless crying and wailing of Margery Kempe or the "Speakings" of Margaret Ebner are just two examples.[3] This chapter will articulate the different components of the acoustic environment that filled the daily lives of Dominican women. These include silence, liturgical song, and other types of singing, prayers, preaching, talking and conversation, communal reading, crying, screams, and manufactured sounds such as those of bells.

The monastic acoustic environment has a long history in the records of traditional monasticism as well as in the records of Dominican women. Only through an understanding of the place of sound and silence within western medieval monasticism can we truly comprehend how Dominican women influenced and were influenced by their acoustic environment. The Dominican nuns' constitutions from 1259 tell us much about the regulation of the acoustic environment within the monasteries, while the Sister-Books show us the role that Dominican women expected the acoustic environment to play in their spiritual and everyday lives. It is important to note that these two sources are not always in agreement. In addition, manuscripts from these communities indicate the texts that the women sang, read, and heard. However, before I examine the acoustic environment, it is necessary to consider the connections between women and sound as understood in the Middle Ages. It these connections and the attitudes which sprang from them that influenced both Dominican women and the men who composed legislation affecting them. **3**

Medieval Christian thought described humans as divided into two groups based on gender: the more perfect male and the grossly imperfect female.[4] This dichotomy created a diametrically opposed set of characteristics for each gender. "*[M]ale* and *female* were contrasted and asymmetrically valued as intellect / body, active / passive, rational / irrational, reason / emotion, self-control / lust, judgment / mercy, and order / disorder."[5] The Biblical tradition ordered women to be silent in both public and private, the implication being they were not normally or naturally so.[6] In fact medieval Christian society considered women to be by nature loquacious, verbose, talkative, garrulous, gossipy chatters, scolds, talebearers, rumormongers, and busybodies. They prattled, babbled, jabbered, nagged, harangued, cackled, and in general expended a lot of hot air and very little reason. **4**

> [M]edieval men associated women with the power of speech in part because they associated both women and oral persuasion with seduction and magic. Men found women seductive because they projected their own sexual urges onto the objects of their desires. They found speech seductive, in a way that we do not, because they lived in an oral universe that knew the immediacy of the sensuous power of words as sounds . . .[7]

In addition, scientific thought held that women were more base, material creatures in comparison to men, and more often associated with the physical body and sensual pleasure. Moreover, they were thought to have less self-control and less rational capabilities, and hence were more fickle, easily deceived, and easily corrupted.[8] Medieval theological thinking linked women explicitly to sin in a way that men were not.[9] Science supported theology, and theology backed up science on this matter. Sometimes described as a polluting force, both through their menstrual cycles and their mouths, women were often depicted as perilous beings, bringers of disorder.[10] Much of this misogyny sprang from the pens of men who were clerics or monastics and had little or nothing to do with women on a daily basis. But this does not diminish the fact that their generalizations and phobias were circulated in biblical commentaries, treatises, instructional literature, pastoral manuals, and sermons, all of which in some form eventually reached the ears (if not the illiterate eyes) of the general public. Women, and especially "bad" women, talked too much. So it is not surprising that the inverse was also considered true; for medieval Christians, "good" women were silent women.

5 The proscription against women talking found fertile ground in cloistered life because silence was one essential element of the monastic environment.[11] The absence of sound was an important monastic practice and the presence of silence accentuated the sounds that did exist. "The preservation of silence in which prayer and reflection could flourish was one of the primary aims of all strict monastic observance."[12] Silence was advised for both male and female monastics. Instruction on the virtue of silence can be found in many monastic Rules as can the condemnation of the vice of speech and the types and manner of speech allowed to monastics.[13] Strictures against speech relied heavily on biblical authorities, citing the psalms, Proverbs, and other parts of the Old and New Testament, including the Pauline Epistles.[14] Others turned to the examples of the Desert Fathers who often lived in silent solitude in the wilderness for decades on end, listening to God and speaking to no one.[15]

6 There were several purposes for monastic silence. The first of these was to avoid sin. The second was to practice virtue, specifically humility and obedience. The third was because silence allowed one to listen, which leads implicitly to the fourth reason: silence allowed one to pray and meditate, to listen to God. Finally, silence was also practiced for the sake of itself, not as a stepping-stone.[16] All of these reasons for observing silence are linked together. And except for the last one, silence was not the ultimate goal of the practitioner. Rather silence was a means to achieve a desired end, such as humility or prayer. Silence was the journey or the preparation that the monastic made. Just as silence was regulated by monastic Rules, so too was sound. Sound in the form of singing was meant to praise God through the performance of

the Opus Dei. When not praising God, speech was to be limited. It was meant like silence to strive toward the virtues of humility and obedience. Restraint was the hallmark of monastic speech.

The Stopped-Up Oven: Silence

7

At the turn of the fourteenth century, the Dominican Inquisitor Bernard Gui visited the first house of female Dominicans in Prouille and recorded his observations in his *De Fundatione et Prioribus Conventuum ProvinciaeTolosanae et Provinciae*. He stated that the nuns "keep strict silence and perpetual enclosure; they work with their hands to avoid laziness and idleness."[17] Gui expressed the medieval male's constant fear and distrust of unsupervised women. His words sought to reassure his fellow Dominicans that the women who inhabited the Order's first community were safe from themselves, the outside world, and perhaps even the devil himself; their hands and tongues were constrained, the first made busy and the second made mute.

8

Dominican women followed the Rule of Saint Augustine, a text based on three documents composed at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century.[18] The early Rule existed in separate versions for men and women.[19] There were few differences between the male and female ways of life.[20] The Augustinian Rule had a flexibility that allowed it to adapt to contemporary monastic practice as it had evolved over the course of the Middle Ages. Although barely mentioned in the Rule, silence was held to be one of the necessary elements of monastic life, especially for women. The Augustinian Rule scarcely addresses silence in the monastic community, only mentioning it in two places. The first warns against imprudent speech: "Be cautious of harsh words. Should you utter them, then do not be afraid to speak the healing word with the same mouth that caused the wound."[21] The injunction is similar to that found in the Benedictine Rule and other rules for religious women.[22] The second mention of silence concerns conduct while in the refectory: "From the beginning of the meal to the end [you should] listen to the customary reading without noise or protest against the Scriptures, for you have not only to satisfy your physical hunger, 'but also to hunger for the word of God' (cf. Amos 8:11)."[23] Here silence prepares the way for spirituality. It allows the soul to feed on holy words and spiritual things. The silence in the Dominican nuns' refectory is similar to the requirements of other monastic rules, but the Rule focuses on the function that the room serves—a place to hear readings—giving a reason for the practice of silence often lacking in other Rules. Hence when Margaret Ebner experienced her miraculous understanding on Good Friday, 1336, this event took place in the implied silence of the refectory where her spiritual hunger was fed with knowledge of God according to the Rule.

Since the Rule did not give much practical advice on how to live a monastic life, the various orders that used it supplemented it with statutes, institutions, and constitutions that set forth details for the arrangement of daily life in a religious community. Dominican women in Germany had been following the constitutions of the nuns of St. Mark in Strasbourg since the middle of the 1220s. These were based on the constitutions of San Sixtus in Rome dated to 1221. The constitutions of St. Mark's were supplanted by an Order-wide women's constitution in 1259 issued by the General Master Humbert of Romans who wished to ensure that every female Dominican house was following the same practices.[24] **9**

Chapter eight of Humbert of Romans' constitutions describes where, when, and how silence was to be maintained within the Order's female houses. Heading the list are the oratory, the cloister arcade where the dead were buried, the dormitory, and the refectory. These were the places where most monastic rules called for silence. With permission, speaking was tolerated in other places provided it was in a low voice. The Rule stipulated that the women were to work in silence.[25] Total silence was the goal, but it was a lofty one and attaining it was difficult. Mezzi Sidwibrin of Töss appears to have broken silence often in the workroom, for the author of her vita says that she liked to sing non-liturgical songs while she spun. Of course, the author also takes pains to point out that Mezzi was a sweet and simple girl.[26] Infractions of silence were counted from one daily Chapter meeting to the next; up to three breaches with graduated punishments were permitted.[27] Thus it seems that at least occasional breaches of silence were expected as normal behavior by the constitutions. **10**

Novices were to be taught to pray in silence so that other members of the community were not disturbed by them. They were also to be instructed "not to speak at forbidden times or in forbidden places, nor elsewhere without permission."[28] These nuns-in-training were issued extra instructions concerning silence because the way of life was new to them and the observation of silence presumably harder for them. The constitutions also assumed that novices were young, and hence less disciplined, and thus required greater restrictions. While the constitutions tell us the where, when, and how of the practice of silence, they do not give much attention to the why. For that we can turn to the interpretations given in the women's own words. **11**

The Unterlinden Sister-Book's author devotes an entire chapter in the introduction to the "strict observance of silence." Silence was one of the integral practices of life at Unterlinden, along with the instruction of novices, the performance of the Divine Office, the nun's rigorous abstinence, their mutual love for one another, and their devotion to the Virgin Mary. It is moreover the first custom the author describes after describing the foundation of the monastery: **12**

> Therefore, there was among them a great peace, concord, and "love, which is the chain of perfection," by which the talkative tongue is restrained. For just as the

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> heat of an oven is warmed with its opening obstructed, so with the observation of silence is the grace of the Holy Spirit retained in the heart. Knowing this, they placed a guard on their voice so that they might not sin in their tongue; for this reason their hearts grew hot within them and "in their meditation the fire burns" that is the Lord our God, consuming all the blight of sin.[29]

For these nuns, there were strong benefits to be had from observing silence. Silence brought one closer to God and the Holy Spirit, and allowed God to set one's heart on fire. Silence let one meditate clearly without the distraction of speech. If speaking could lead to sin, not speaking could prevent it. Avoiding sin was one of the reasons for the practice of monastic silence. According to the text's author, silence in fact destroyed sin, burning up the evil lodged within the nuns.

Other Sister-Books also saw silence as an integral part of monastic life, one that could for the spiritual benefit of the women be practiced more often than was stipulated in the constitutions. In her introduction to the Töss text, the author describes the silence observed by the early sisters of her house: "They were also so soft and quiet with words and with work that during the day it was as quiet in the cloister as if it were after compline."[30] This silence was communal in nature. **13**

Within the individual vitae of the Sister-Books, silence, for all its prescribed importance, does not receive extensive attention. The Sister-Book of Adelhausen mentions silence in only three or four passages.[31] In other Sister-Books, the nuns' lives make passing mention to silence as a noble monastic virtue; those living a good and holy life practice silence. Observing silence is associated with proper or excessive fasting, obedience to the prioress or other monastic officials, and diligent execution of the Divine Office.[32] The practice is mentioned in passing in lives such as Ita of Tungen's who kept silence so well that few ever heard her voice.[33] It was common for many of the women to maintain silence on the day of communion. This is stressed in the life of the St. Katharinenthal nun Adelheit of Ossingen.[34] The silence on such days was meant to be reflective and contemplative. Both words and food were minimized to emphasize the importance of the ritual. In another case, Elsbeth Heinburgin is reported to have kept silent for weeks on end and was particularly diligent at Advent and on fast days. [35] At Kirchberg Elsbeth of Oettingen did the same during Advent.[36] Silence in these instances reaffirmed the sanctity of already holy days. Anna of Winegge at Unterlinden kept a silence that was so intense that it was "as if she had no mouth to speak and no ears to hear."[37] Willbrich of Offeningen at Kirchberg is said to have practiced many long silences.[38] At the monastery of Gotteszell, Leugart kept the silence so strictly that when a fire broke out at night and the other sisters were frantically calling out for the key to unlock the door that would lead them to safety, she said nothing, even though the key was in her possession.[39] Although this **14**

story is one of the old chestnuts used to describe the virtues of religious women, the fact that it is included in the Gotteszell Sister-Book, shows what the women, and especially the text's author, thought about the place of silence in their lives.

15

Silence served other functions. Margaret Willin's silence was a part of her asceticism. "She had no attention for the parlor window, or for any one outside the monastery. She preferred to hold herself even from her own brother whom she had in our Order. She was always so silent that she never spoke a word."[40] Her practice of this stringent silence is paired with a description of the bodily mortifications that she inflicted upon herself. However, silence was not always considered the highest virtue by all nuns. Like Leutgart, Adelheit of Holderberg maintained silence at all the prescribed times. But unlike the prioress of Gotteszell, this St. Katharinenthal nun, when confronted with a distraught novice in need of consolation, asked God whether it was better to maintain her silence or to comfort the girl. God gave her to understand that she should speak to the novice. For her words and for breaking her silence, God rewarded Adelheit with a eucharistic vision.[41]

16

In these cases, silence was not the focal point of the women's spiritual activities, but rather was part of a spiritual process. Their observance of silence was evidence that they led holy lives in two senses. First they followed the letter of the law, the Dominican constitution. Silence was required of them and so they were silent. Hence the life of Leugart of Gotteszell says, "[S]he never spoke in forbidden places or at forbidden times."[42] Second, and more importantly, silence added meaning to their spiritual devotions. And as the Unterlinden author suggests, it set their hearts on fire for the love of God.

17

It is what is visible and audible, most often in the guise of verbal expression, that captures the attention of the Sister-Books' authors. The prayers the women say, their conversations with Christ, their bodily mortifications, and their visions (the last two often done in secret but eventually revealed to the community) fill the pages of the Sister-Books. For all the emphasis placed on silence within the monastic tradition and for medieval women in general, Dominican women did not practice silence for its own sake, and rarely do they turn to the biblical, theological, or physiological explanations that others pointed to in commanding women to be silent. Their gender had little to do with their silence; their silence had everything to do with their quest for the Divine and with obedience to the Rule and constitution under which they lived. Silence allowed one to meditate, to turn inward and burn for God privately, away from the eyes of others. By writing vitae the authors of the Sister-Books wished to provide templates for extraordinary Dominican spirituality, but they could only report the outward manifestations of such spirituality within them. One can observe that someone is silent, but one cannot see or hear what occurs inside that silence. It is only when someone describes her own experiences that we can see the inward manifestations of her

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devotions. That is what the authors of the Sister-Books wanted to relate.[43] Words must be used to describe what happened within silence. And because of this, the impact of silence on these women's spirituality can only be heard when the silence is broken.

Sound Regulated by Ritual

Sound often intruded upon the silence practiced by Dominican women. The most important of these sounds was the bell rung in the Mass to signify the elevation of the Host.[44] When Adelheit of Ossingen, who seems to have been the guest mistress at St. Katharinenthal, was called to the kitchen during Mass to oversee the food for the monastery's guests, she cut through a snow-covered area (whether this was the inner cloister or somewhere in the outer precinct is unclear). On her way she heard the bell marking the raising of the Host. She knelt down where she was in the deep snow that suddenly became a cleared spot of green summer grass.[45] The bell was not the only sound that could mark this event. One Christmas Day at the monastery of Weiler, Lutgart of Husen was praying behind the altar when someone knocked on the wall to indicate the elevation of the Host. Lutgart stood up and was able to see the Host in the hands of the priest. It was as large as a bowl and inside was a small white baby who waved his hands and feet and wiggled his whole body.[46] **18**

Bells also served to call the women to meals, as well as to wake them in the middle of the night for Matins and early morning for Lauds. Such occurrences mark time in monastic life and find their way into the vitae. Hence it is recorded that a sister at St. Katharinenthal was awakened by the first bell-ringing Prime and a Kirchberg-nun was so devout that she hurried to Matins when the bell was rung.[47] At St. Katharinenthal the bell that summoned the nuns to the refectory for a meal after communion interrupted the vision that Adelheit of Spiegelberg had of the Christ Child. Obediently she left the choir and entered the dining area. But the Christ Child appeared in front of her at the table as a reward for her prompt obedience to the bell.[48] Bells summoned women to the other offices as well as to communal work.[49] The daily life of the nuns and lay-sisters was punctuated by the bells that summoned them from room to room, and activity to activity, ordering their lives through this sound. **19**

Another sound that held meaning for Dominican women was the banging of the board. This event marked the death of a member of the community. A board (*tafel / tavel*) was hit with some type of stick to summon the congregation of nuns to the infirmary. It was a sound that was meant to be more solemn than the ringing of a bell. As Adelheit the Zirgerin lay dying in the St. Katharinenthal sickhouse, she spoke with the prioress about her last rites. She asked her superior when the best time would be to die. The prioress confided that the other nuns were scared that the board would be beaten in the night, so Adelheit decided that after Mass the next morning would be the ideal time for her death. And after communion that morning she died.[50] When Adelheit of Breisach lay near death, Anna of Munzingen says that this **20**

meant that "she lay on the straw mattress and the boards were beaten."[51] This sound signaled the end of a nun's life in the community, although she would live on in memory, prayers, and entries in necrology or Sister-Book. The sound also signaled to the community that the dying sister was also hopefully going to begin a new journey, one celebrated in the monasteries manuscripts with processions and offices. One processional from Strasbourg even depicts an angel gathering up the soul of a dead nun while a Dominican friar sprinkles holy water over her body. These sounds of bells and boards marked the lives of Dominican women, just as the words and songs of the liturgy that they performed filled their lives and sparked mystical experiences.

21

Like silence, much of monastic sound was formalized by ritual and regulation. The primary practice of ritualized sound was located in the nuns' choir in the monastery church. There the nuns performed the canonical offices eight times a day and participated in the Mass. These two liturgical practices were regulated by custom following prescribed patterns according to the time of day or night, the day of the week, the season, and the year. The liturgy of the Dominicans was marked in the years after the 1250s by uniformity; so as far as we can tell liturgical performance varied little from house to house.[52] Even the manner of chanting the offices was prescribed by the constitutions:

> All the canonical hours must be recited in the church, distinctly and without precipitation . . . . For this purpose a pause will be made in the middle of the verse, without prolonging the sound of the voice at this pause or at the end of the verse.[53]

Such requirements prevented the women from hurrying through the text, and made them concentrate on the words they recited. The penalties for improper singing range from mild to moderate. Inattentive singing and bad singing that offended others were seen as mild faults, punished simply with a mandatory recitation of psalms. Moderate or medium faults occurred in the following ways:

> [I]f anyone does not attend to the Divine Office, but shows levity of mind by looking around or acting in an unbecoming manner; if anyone does not at the appointed time prepare what she has to read, or if she presumes to read or sing anything other than that prescribed; if anyone laughs or causes others to laugh in choir.[54]

Penance for such actions was usually recitation of a psalm, a *venia*, and other disciplinary actions to be imposed at the discretion of the Chapter.[55]

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Of course, the constitutions concerned themselves with proper behavior in the choir, behavior that demanded full attention be given to the words the women sang. The Sister-Books concur with this attitude toward the performance of the Office: **22**

> [Gertrude of Colmar, the chantress at Unterlinden] made sure that she was the first to come into the choir, and devoted a great deal of care to ensuring that all the sisters sang their psalms to God harmoniously, loudly and solemnly, in whatever way was fitting to each solemnity and season. She herself would never abandon the singing, never sparing her voice; she considered it no small stain on her conscience if ever she was prevented by any hoarseness or sickness from giving of her best to the solemn singing of the psalms.[56]

Putting effort into singing in choir was seen as a sign of religiosity and holiness. And for those who did not give their all, punishment could be eternal. The same chantress was in the choir one day when she "heard with her bodily ears and saw" a vision.[57] It was of a recently deceased nun, who had been chantress in her own day. Gertrude saw the woman "being tormented by God's just judgment and beaten for a long time so fiercely and cruelly that she looked as if she was going to pass out and expire forthwith at every single blow."[58] The voice of God then informed the current chantress of her predecessor's sins. According to God, the former chantress had not always sung the Office, even though she had a pleasant voice. Further, she had taken pride in her voice, rather than just using it to praise God. Moreover, she was not always diligent and respectful in her conduct in the choir. The Augustinian Rule advised the nuns, "[w]hen you pray to God in psalms and songs, the words spoken by your lips should also be alive in your hearts."[59] The former chantress had not heeded this advice. It is clear from the Rule and the vitae in the Sister-Books that full participation in and enthusiasm for liturgical ritual were expected of the nuns. As Gertrude's predecessor had discovered, any dodging of this responsibility carried with it divine retribution.

Nuns sang even after death. A nun at Weiler was at her prayers one day when she heard beautiful singing. She saw a nun before her who said, "Do you hear the singing? It is the singing of the sisters who have departed from this convent and who are in special worthiness and great honor before God."[60] At other times the angels themselves sang. An unnamed nun of Weiler heard the angels singing *Sanctus* with the nuns in the choir, while the entire community heard them singing in the choir in the pause before Mass on the day when the child Agnes of Felberg was received into the monastery.[61] Angels were also heard singing at Kirchberg, Gotteszell, and St. Katharinenthal.[62] These examples stress the link between the nuns' choir and the sound produced within it, showing the importance of monastic song in female Dominican life. It was appropriate for the angels to sing within the most sacred place **23**

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of the community, the place where the nuns sang together as a community. To the nuns, the choir (as a choral group) in which they sang and the choir of angels were not too distant. Both praised God in song.

24

Some women, however, sang or read too much and were perhaps too enthusiastic in their performance of the office. At Engelthal, Alheit of Trochau once recited the verses for both sides of the choir, rather than the verses merely assigned to her side.[63] The prioress reprimanded her, telling her she was acting like a goose, and she should only sing with her part of the choir. Alheit then flapped her arms and insisted that she was indeed a goose. However, the prioress put her foot down and denied Alheit her zoomorphic fantasy. After that the nun sang only at the appropriate times.[64] Alheit's fault lay not in the singing itself, but rather in not observing the proper order and requirements of the singing; the nuns were meant to sing, even if their voices were not suited for the activity. At Töss, Ita of Wezzikon followed the prescribed order of monastic life as completely as any sister the monastery had ever known. She was usually the first to come to office, conducted herself there with great attention to proper kneeling and standing, and sang with all her might, although she did not sing well.[65]

25

The choir played a pivotal role in many of the women's spiritual lives, understandably since they spent a large portion of their time there and it was the focus of much of their spirituality. The vitae often refer to the nuns attending Mass and offices, sitting in their choirstalls and singing the liturgy, or like Irmgart of Kirchberg, reciting the litany of saints.[66] The many mystical and visionary experiences that occurred within that monastic space were often marked by noting the psalm, antiphon, or sequence that the women were singing at the exact moment of experience or revelation. For example, the chantress Hailrat of Engelthal was at Matins on the fourth Sunday of Advent when she and the other nuns sang the fifth response *Virgo Israel.* However, when she came to the verse *In caritate perpetua*, she sang in German rather than Latin, but she sang it so beautifully that all swore that she sang with an angelic voice. The choir's enthusiasm was so great that they all collapsed senseless, as if they were dead. When they came to themselves, they continued Matins with even greater devotion.[67] The connection this incident makes between the individual nun, Hailrat, and the community of nuns in the choir can be found in many of the vitae in the Sister-Books. Mystical experiences during the Divine Office, especially Matins, often emphasized the communality of monastic life. One nun may have had a vision or experienced something wondrous, but many times her sisters shared in the rewards. This can be seen in another instance when the St. Katharinenthal sister Luggi of Stein sat in her choirstall and sang the Mass for Saint John the Evangelist and the choir began the sequence *Verbum dei.* She heard "a voice like a thunderbolt, that spoke, 'Why do you not pray my sequence to me?"[68] Luggi went around to the back of the altar to pray and sing fervently to John the Evangelist.[69] As she did so, she saw heaven open above her, revealing an enthroned Christ. The Virgin Mary and Saint John

approached the throne, knelt before it, and interceded for all those in the convent who sang this particular sequence.[70] Although it is unclear why Luggi had to go behind the altar to sing her heart out—if proper behavior in the choir called for just such conduct—her vision was linked to the words the women sang, words that were Saint John's words and which brought Saint John's assistance to those who repeated them.

26 The sequence also played a role in the life of Luggi's fellow nun Kathrin Brümsin, as related in the introduction to this study. As a novice she had trouble learning the liturgy. She prayed to Saint John for help which was granted in the form of a dream. In the dream John the Evangelist celebrated Mass for the monastery, beginning with the introit *In medio ecclesie*. He then taught Kathrin the twenty-four verses of his sequence *Verbum dei deo natum*, the same one that Luggi of Stein had sung in praise of the saint.[71] Kathrin's dream shows just how crucial knowledge of the appropriate liturgy was for the nuns. They needed to know, often by heart, the Latin words that celebrated the different offices and the Mass. The nuns sometimes became strongly attached to the liturgy and resisted changes that were made to it. At one point, the Office for the Feast of the 11,000 Virgins was changed by officials of the Order. When the nuns of Töss began the new Office, the virgins were seen entering the choir, but they turned around and left. The community interpreted this to mean that the saints were unhappy with the change in the liturgy, and therefore the community sang the old Office.[72] It may have been the virgins who lived in the monastery who were actually unhappy with the change.

27 The communality of monastic song, with the choir sharing in the ritualized performance of the liturgy, appears in different forms throughout the lives in the Sister-Books. At Töss, Adelheit of Lindau taught another lay-sister the antiphon *Ave stella matutina,* which had been taught to Adelheit by the Virgin Mary herself.[73] In other instances the nuns have a more passive engagement with each other, and only one woman received the knowledge of the community's state of grace. When the Weiler choir nuns sang the antiphon *Salve regina* one night at the end of compline, a nun saw the Virgin Mary enter the choir with the Christ Child on her arm.[74] At Adelhausen, the Virgin Mary was also seen in the choir during the singing of Salve regina.[75] And at Töss when the choir nuns sang the antiphon, Mezzi Sidwibrin would shout, "Sing, sing, God's Mother is here!"[76]

28 The Chantress Gertrude of Colmar received a vision on the day of Pentecost. As the choir nuns sang the hymn *Veni creator spiritus*, she saw:

> [A] divine fire coming down visibly, with a terrible noise, from heaven upon the holy community of sisters while they were praising God in their psalmody. It filled the whole choir where the sisters were gathered together to praise God, making them so radiant with divine light that they all appeared to be on fire. A

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> ray of heavenly light shone visibly round each of them, remaining visible until the whole of that divine hymn was finished.[77]

The vision was reinforced by the biblical stories of the Gift of the Holy Spirit, and certainly by manuscript illuminations of Pentecost, several of which survive from Gertrude's monastery. And as the vision lasted only for the duration of the hymn, the words served as the conduit for Gertrude's vision. Similarly during the choir reading for the Matins of the feast of the Epiphany, a nun of Weiler saw the Holy Ghost come in the form of a white dove and rest on the head of each sister in the choir.[78] The liturgy did more than inspire visions of religious history, it served as a conduit for contact with the dead. The Adelhausen nun Gute of Winzela had a vision of her deceased brother, a member of the Teutonic Knights, as the choir nuns sang the verse *Te martyrum candidatus* from the *Te Deum laudamus*.[79]

29 In addition to visions prompted by the liturgy, women experienced other mystical phenomena that were linked to the Mass and the Divine Office. At Weiler, Mechtild of Hundersingen had been very sick and weak, but wished to participate in the Office on the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25). So the community carried her into the choir, arranging pillows in her choirstall so she could sit up. When the choir nuns reached the words *hodie Deus homo factus* of the antiphon *haec est dies, quam fecit dominus*, Mechtild was filled with such grace that she felt her strength return and she rose to sing with the other standing women.[80]

30 Sometimes the liturgy miraculously changed to suit the nuns. An anonymous nun of St. Katharinenthal awoke for Prime to a voice telling her to:

> "Rise up and go to the choir, they will sing of St. John." She thought, "Today one does not sing of St. John." But she heard the words again, "Rise up and go to the choir because they will sing of St. John." Then she went to the choir and thought, "Let's hear what he is going to sing." Then the Mass for another saint began with *In medio* and the old chaplain Brother Burkhart of Wangen sang the Mass. And when he came to the collect, he then unknowingly read the collect *Ecclesiam* for St. John the Evangelist. And then everyone sang the entire Mass for St. John quite beautifully.[81]

What may have been a mix-up on the part of an absent-minded or perhaps even senile chaplain was seen as supernatural by the women. Foresight of the event was given to the nun to mark the miraculous nature of the event. Both John the Evangelist and John the Baptist were especially beloved by the nuns of St. Katharinenthal, so extra celebrations of these saints were warmly welcomed.

31 One essential part of the liturgy was very important to Dominican women, and this was the recitation of the Psalms that formed the basis of the Office.[82] The Psalms of the Office were ritualized prayers that the women recited daily as a community. "One time on silent Friday

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when she read the Psalter with the convent," Gertrud of Winterthur had a vision of Christ who stood before the reciting nuns and said, "With this prayer my wounds are healed." But he did not stand in front of the nuns who were not reciting the Psalms.[83] Those who did not give their attention to the Office received no reward. Outside of the Office, nuns incorporated the Psalter and the Psalms into their extraliturgical practices. Belli of Winterthur recited the entire Psalter every night after Matins.[84] Her life says that every year she recited a Psalter in honor of David that she might come to a sweet end.[85] Also at Töss, Anna Wansaseller quoted verses from the Psalter, often combining them with words about God.[86] The Psalms were also read over dying nuns. The Adelhausen nuns read Psalm 24 while Adelheit of Breisach died. After her death, one nun told the others, "Surely I saw her soul depart from her mouth as a rose on the verse, 'Lift up your heads, your gates' (Ps. 24:9)."[87]

The Psalms were such a part of the nuns' daily environment that they could even be used as a unit of measurement. Mechthilt die Huserin prayed so much day and night that she estimated that in a day she said as many prayers as four Psalters.[88] The Psalms and the Psalter were omnipresent in the women's lives. It was the one text that each nun had most likely memorized, giving them a basic set of scriptural passages from which they could quote freely. **32**

The Words of God: Praying, Talking, and Preaching

One constant in the spiritual life of Dominican women was oral prayer. While the nuns performed the Psalms together as a group, there were other prayers that the nuns or lay-sisters favored as individuals. At Töss, Adelheit of Lindau's favorite was, "Oh dear Lord, you are my father and my mother/ and my sister and my brother;/ oh Lord, you are all that I want, and your mother is my companion."[89] Anna Wansaseller often prayed *Salve summe deitatis* before an image of Christ near the Töss chapterhouse. This prayer, which contained the verse *Te saluto miles* and which the vita's author implies was scripturally based, is unidentifiable.[90] One time the image spoke to Anna, instructing her: **33**

> You should beseech me that I forgive your sins for you, as I recognize them in you, and that I give to you my martyrdom as a sign of honor, as I suffered it, and that I commend you to my mother and Saint John, as I commended them to each other, and that I myself come to your death.[91]

This was what Anna was to think about as she prayed. One day Kathrin Brümsin was in the St. Katharinenthal choir and wondered what she should pray. A voice told her to go to the prioress Adelheit die Huterin and ask her what she prayed, for "she is united all day with me in her prayers, nothing comes between me and her."[92] If Kathrin prayed as Adelheit prayed, she too would presumably be united with God.

Adelheid of Gotteszell's vita describes the role of prayer in her life: **34**

> [T]here was also a most worthy sister in the same monastery, whose life was so holy that she was never silent, she never ceased to have God's praises on her lips unless sleep kept her from it. And she brought forth innumerable prayers.[93]

However, we do not know what she prayed. Maybe she created her own prayers or recited those she had heard from others or read in book. Several text collections associated with Dominican women that contain prayers survive, the most famous of which is Henry Suso's *Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*. Although the book is not composed of prayers, the third and final part consists of one hundred meditations meant to be used as prayers. In the section "[t]he Hundred Meditations and Petitions [or Prayers] Briefly Stated As One Should Recite Them Devoutly Every Day," Suso instructs his reader:

> [W]hoever wants to learn briefly, genuinely and ardently to meditate with the aid of the loving sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our complete salvation, and whoever wants to show gratitude for his manifold suffering, should learn the hundred meditations that follow by heart, at least according to their briefly delineated senses. Such a person should go over them every day with devotion accompanied by a hundred *venia*, or however it works out best for him. With each *venia* he should recite an Our Father, or when the meditation has to do with our Lady, a Hail Holy Queen or Hail Mary.[94]

Adelheid could not have used Suso's instructions, as she predates its 1328-30 composition, but other Dominican women probably did. Two early copies of the work, one containing the entire *Little Book of Eternal Wisdom*, and the other just the hundred meditations, belonged to female Dominican houses.[95]

Other prayers can be found inscribed at the end of manuscripts, like an early-fourteenth-century Office book now in Stuttgart, or on pieces of ephemera.[96] One such artifact is associated with the Freiburg house of Maria Magdelena. It is a small (10.5 x 8 cm) woodcut of Saint Anthony the Hermit, on the reverse of which someone has written in German the *Pater Noster (Vater Unser)* and *Ave Maria*.[97] Ita of Wezzikon supposedly said a thousand Ave Marias every day, even when she was sick, while Adelheit of Frauenburg always prayed fifty Our Fathers before a meal.[98] **35**

Prayers were seen as powerful; they saved souls. Mechthilt die Huserin, who prayed as many prayers in a day as it took to recite the Psalter four times, spent her days saying vigils for all believing souls (*allen globigen selen*). She even did this when she was bedridden with illness. One time she was observed praying thus and her bed was seen to be full of little people and others floated above her. When she said, "*Requiescant in pace*," all of the figures disappeared. After another nun told her what had happened, Mechthilt vowed to repeat that vigil often, **36**

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since it seemed to have the greatest benefit.[99] Gertrut of Herblingen had a similar experience when she read a vigil.[100] One time the brother of Luggi Löscherin asked another religious woman, "the most perfect of people that one could find in all the land," to pray for him.[101] She replied:

> Why do you ask me, you have a sister in Adelhausen, go to her and ask her to pray to God for you, because you should know that in truth she may win for you before God everything that I can.[102]

Certain places in the monastery, choir, and church had specific functions assigned to them and the use of sound and words within these spaces was regulated accordingly. One example is the chapterhouse. The constitutions describe in detail how the chapter meetings were to be run. A designated reader read from the Martyrology, the constitutions, or the Gospels, depending on the day and season.[103] Blessings were given, communal prayers offered for the benefactors and others who had asked for the community's prayers. Psalms, versicles, and collects were then sung. Finally the presider spoke. Apart from these regulated verbal activities, the women could speak only to accuse themselves of faults against the constitutions or to proclaim the faults of others.[104] Likewise, silence was to be maintained in the refectory, thus accentuating the readings that took place there. In spaces such as the choir, chapterhouse, or refectory, the constitutions' aim was to control and guide the experience of sound in that environment. Just as the constitutions regulated when the women should not speak, so too was speech a cause for concern. Emphasizing the negative aspects of words and speaking, the constitutions considered the following to be grave faults punishable in Chapter: **37**

> [I]f in proclamation she uses improper language to the one by whom she is proclaimed, or if she even so much as uses abusive language or an inordinate word, or maliciously attacks another in an irreligious manner. It is a similar fault if anyone sows discord among the sisters, or detracts them or is found to be a whisperer; if anyone speaks evil of the Sisters or the house, or maliciously defends her fault or that of another; if anyone knowingly tells a falsehood; if anyone habitually breaks silence.[105]

The constitutions were concerned about improper speech even in areas where speaking was allowed. The women did not always embrace the formal structure or regulation of acoustic uses in specific spaces in the monastery. In the literature written by Dominican women a more flexible interpretation of permissible speech comes to light.

For Dominican women, words were seen as proof of a woman's religiosity. In the daily life of the nun Anna of Klingnau, words and speaking formed a bond between her, her sisters, and God. Her vita reports that she seldom spoke unnecessary words: **38**

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> [B]ut God gave her the grace that she practically flowed with sweet words, and it was so good to hear from her that their hearts were moved, for her words flowed out from a full heart, as is written: 'out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks' (Matt. 12:34; Luke 6:45).[106]

The power or authority to speak came through God's grace, a motif common among medieval women writers such as Hildegard of Bingen. But Anna was not a writer justifying her act of writing. Her words stemmed from an abundant heart, a heart that was supposed to catch fire with desire for God through the observation of silence; instead, it ran over with words, breaking the silence. In the same monastery the lay-sister Mezzi Sidwibrin was praised because "her mouth overflowed with sweet words."[107] Words, speaking, and sound could be positive elements of the female Dominican life, even when they caused discomfort. Anna of Klingnau's vita further tells us that "she was in her youth so fired up with godly love that she was so desirous to speak about God that she sometimes went into the orchard in winter and sat there so long and spoke with the sisters there [about God] that, when she attempted to stand up her habit was frozen to the ground."[108] This was a small price to pay in the eyes of her fellow nuns. Anna's eloquence about God allowed her to endure—in fact to become oblivious to—the suffering of her body. When Beli of Sure spoke about God, her face burned like a rose.[109] Willi of Constance also liked to speak about God and to listen to others speak about him.[110] Else of Nuenstatt spoke very loving words about God when she was in a state of grace:

> God is in me and I in him, he is mine and I am his, he is for me and I am for him; my soul it is pretty and proud and joyous, because God has opened to me his grace and I am loved by him. This he has announced to me in his magnificence.[111]

These examples stand in sharp contrast to the constitutions where speaking and sound are not associated with spirituality or leading a good religious life. This also shows that while Dominican women did not preach outside their cloisters as the friars did, they certainly preached to one another within the community.

39

Sounds and silence were not merely contained within the walls of the religious institution. The acoustic environment of the monastery extended through its walls at certain designated places. These places—windows, grilles, and turns—allowed non-members of the community to listen to or speak in the religious environment and allowed the monastic inhabitants similar acoustic access to the outside world. The constitutions specified and regulated these points of access for speech. First was a parlor window (*redfenster*) or speaking window in German, indicating the purpose of the window where nuns could speak with outsiders, provided they were accompanied by one or more other nuns. The speech here was to be loud enough so that the accompanying nun or nuns could easily overhear. There were also to be two confessional

windows. Thirdly there was to be a turn through which things were passed to and from the monastery. Only those sisters who had access to the turn through their duties and offices could speak there, and then only speech pertaining to those duties and offices. Lastly there was to be a sermon window in the nuns' choir through which the women could hear the sermons preached in the outer choir. The constitutions demanded:

> [A]ll these windows, large or small, are to have a double grating, or else one grating having sharp nails, so that there can be no possible contact with those outside or in.[112]

The only contact allowed was through speech. The outside world could not be seen or touched, but it could be heard, just as the monastic woman remained unseen and untouched, but definitely heard.

40 One day Sophia of Klingnau was passing near the parlor window when she overheard a conversation between a nun and a secular person. Sophia's eavesdropping confirmed a mystical experience that she had experienced but of which she was unsure.[113] The Unterlinden nun Agnes of Ochsenstein often spoke at the parlor window. The Unterlinden author justifies the woman's actions by emphasizing the religiosity and good intentions behind them.

> Her heart was fired with an incredible yearning to win all men for Christ, so she never rested from holy and persistent exhortations, speaking most warmly about God to her sisters and also to outsiders at the window, for she held for many years the job of attending to the window, and she did it in such a spirit of holiness and religion that all who came there, religious and secular alike, went away greatly edified.[114]

While the constitutions frowned upon frequent visits to the parlor window, this does not seem to have restricted women such as Agnes from speaking to all who came within range of her voice.

41 Another component of the acoustic environment of Dominican women was the preaching they listened to. Heard in the church, usually through the sermon window, sermons were a communal acoustic experience, unlike the conversations that took place at the parlor window. Herman of Minden, the German Dominican Provincial from 1286 to 1290, recommended that the pastoral care of the German Dominican nuns, which included preaching, should be administered by educated friars, preferably *fratres docti*. But surprisingly the Sister-Books rarely mention the many preachers otherwise documented as having been in contact with these monasteries.[115] The women seem to focus more on the informal preaching that they practiced upon each other, as described above. Nevertheless, preaching friars do find their way into the vitae. Meister Eckhart, one of best-known German Dominican preachers, is known to

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have visited several Dominican female monasteries, where he preached, heard confession, and served as spiritual advisor. He was the official Visitor for the Order at the monastery of Unterlinden in 1322, but his visit occurred several years after the monastery's Sister-Book was composed. He does, however, appear in the Sister-Books of Oetenbach and St. Katharinenthal, in the latter giving Anne of Ramschwag assistance in interpreting her spiritual exercises.[116] Other friars served as confessors. Conversations between religious women and preachers at the various windows, as well as sermons that they delivered, are mentioned in the Sister-Books of Töss, Adelhausen, Oetenbach, Weiler, and Engelthal.[117]

That the women appreciated the sermons that are mentioned comes across clearly in the Sister-Books. The vitae of some women record their reactions to the preaching they heard. Mezzi Sidwibrin of Töss is said to have loved to listen to sermons, and she would loudly exclaim how wonderful they were, often while they were still being preached, much it seems to the dismay of her sisters who were still trying to listen.[118] One Christmas, Mezzi saw the Christ Child sitting in the lap of the preacher, who apparently was delivering his sermon sitting down. Another time during Advent, the Provincial Prior preached a sermon based on the word *Ecce* to the Töss women. Mezzi was so moved by this that she repeated the word at least a thousand times.[119] Once at Gotteszell, the nuns were in the upper choir listening to a sermon; however, they did not like it, so Christ came and preached to them instead.[120] From the Sister-Books we know the topics of a few of the sermons preached to the women. For example, while listening to a sermon on the Blood of Christ, Mechtild of Hundersingen worried about her worthiness to receive it.[121] **42**

Sermons that Dominican women heard survive as more than passing references in the Sister-Books. At the end of the Adelhausen Sister-Book, after the last of the vitae and the author's *explicit*, three sermons that were preached to the monastery by three different preachers are summarized. They must have been recorded because the women—or at least the author—found their content spiritually instructive. Although they survive as written notes, they were originally delivered orally and were part of the acoustic environment of Adelhausen. They could be so again whenever the text was read aloud. This writing down or copying of sermons was common, for "the Dominicans in charge of the *cura monialium* produced an enormous number of sermons which were often copied in the nunneries where they were preached and were used in their written form as spiritual edification in the absence of the confessor."[122] This written form was therefore part of the more permanent textual environment as well as the fleeting acoustic environment. However, reading from such sermons at table, in chapter, or at other times, brought these sermons to a wider audience, allowing any illiterate or not fully literate member of the community access to the page-bound text. **43**

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The first of the three sermons recorded in the Adelhausen text was delivered by Brother Conrad of Esslingen.[123] It was based on three Biblical passages—Matt. 20:22, Mark 10:38, and Ps. 115:13—and drew on a text by a bishop Albrecht concerning Christ's body and the five benefits one received from it. The second sermon summary was one that the Provincial Brother Wolfart had preached on Saint Mathias day.[124] It was based on Ps. 138:17. The last sermon is an allegory on the Golden Mountain by Nicholas of Strasbourg, a *lesemeister* or lector from Cologne.[125] He is recorded as having preached in German at three of the four female Dominican institutions in the Freiburg area: Adelhausen, the Penitents of Mary Magdalena, and, on at least three separate occasions, St. Agnes.[126] Also there survives from Adelhausen a collection of the sermons of Johannes Tauler, copied down in the monastery sometime between 1350 and 1360.[127] The well-worn text contains twenty-five sermons, some barely legible today. The majority of the sermons seem to be for specific days such as Corpus Christi [101r] or the third Sunday after the octave of Easter [80v]. A few are slightly more general, such as a sermon for the week of Pentecost [18r], or more general still, as the one addressed for the feast day of Saint Lawrence or any other martyr [25v]. The well-worn condition of the manuscript indicates that the nuns used it. **44**

Another manuscript of sermons and mystical writings now in Zurich is associated with Adelhausen, but not necessarily during the period under consideration. Two notices, one on the front flyleaf, the other on the last page, link the manuscript to the monastery but both notices are post-fourteenth century.[128] The manuscript may have entered Adelhausen with an Observant nun in the fifteenth century or it may have been a gift from the monastery's fifteenth-century confessor, the author and Order historian Johannes Meyer.[129] Since the manuscript is in actuality three manuscripts bound together, there is another possibility. The majority of the codex, 165 folios of a 194-folio volume, consists of fifty-four sermons from a fourteenth-century collection known as the St. Georgen sermons. The second section, twenty-two folios in length, contains prayers and other devotional readings from the fourteenth century. The final portion is seven folios long and consists of fifteenth-century prayers. There is no indication where or when the three parts were bound together into a single codex. Thus it is possible that the St. Georgen sermons existed in Adelhausen's library as a separate manuscript prior to being bound with the two other manuscripts, especially in light of the house's passion for sermons. **45**

The Sounds of Spirituality

Beside the regulated and organized vocal aspects of the monastic environment, spontaneity also had its place. Unintended vocalization was seen as evidence of a special divine grace. While many of us are aware of this manifestation in the life of a woman like Margery Kempe, Dominican women also exhibited similar behavior, which often took the form of tears, shouting, or breaking into song. **46**

For example, when one Engelthal sister sought solace before a crucifix, she cried so hard that the feet of the crucified Christ became wet. For her gift of tears, Christ reached out his hand from the cross and spoke to her.[130] In the same community, Mehthilt of Neitstein cried daily while at prayer.[131] None of this weeping seems to have been done silently, but rather it was accompanied by sobs and wailings. Such behavior was common, for almost all of the nuns of Adelhausen are said to have wept in the choir and the dormitory after compline, loudly enough to be heard at quite a distance.[132] Anna Turner was not among them. She was unable to weep, but when she saw the immeasurable crying of her fellow nuns, she had a great desire to cry too. Once as she prayed, a single tear came to her eye. And then it seemed to her as if two angels came from heaven and captured the tear in a golden vessel, and brought it up to God as an offering.[133] **47**

When the author of the Adelhausen Sister-Book describes the community, she writes: **48**

> When they were at their devotions, it was then throughout the cloister silent and serious, as if it were silent Friday, and always after compline the crying was so great in the choir, and also in the dormitory when they were before their beds, that one could hear it from afar. And sometimes several of them were in ecstasy and several fainted, and several shouted with loud voices from the overflowing grace that God gave them.[134]

Silence is linked to the serious devotions that the women perform. The implication is that the silent devotions were above and beyond the mere silence required on communion Fridays. But the emphasis in the passage is on what transpired after compline. Then the monastery is infused with the sounds of the women's spirituality. The crying and weeping that took place in the choir and the dormitory extended throughout the entire community and probably beyond the monastery walls. This acoustic expression of the women's religiosity, along with the loud shouting that overcame some of them, was seen by the author as evidence of the women's holiness. Silence was important, but sound was the medium of showing their love for God.

Other women shouted or cried out without weeping, responding to visual, acoustic, or interior / divine stimuli. Margaret Ebner, the mystic from Maria Medingen, was afflicted with alternating periods of silence and what she called "Speakings." She would repeat the words *Jesus Christus* over and over again.[135] She also found that there were certain words that she **49**

could not bear to hear, and her fellow sisters often had to change the readings if they wanted Margaret to be able to remain in the choir for the Divine Office.[136] Margaret's "Speakings" were stimulated by a wide range of incidents. Sometimes it was the hearing of a specific liturgical text, other times it was the day or event of the liturgical year.

Much like Margaret Ebner, Metzi of Walthershoven constantly repeated a devotional phrase praising the Christ Child: **50**

> Many years before her death she had come by virtue of grace to the point that she began to cry at all times, day and night, and said, "little Son, little Son, loving little Son, beloved little Son, happy little Son, magnificent little Son." And she did this so constantly and with such a loud voice, that none had peace from her. And her face was then so enflamed and her eyes so happy that one could see that God had shown her something wondrous. And her joy was sometime so immeasurably great and likewise the whimpering words and lamentation that she had for this child was also so great that it can barely be written, and sometimes it happened that she threw her body more than half an arm's length up from her bed.[137]

At Kirchberg, Werendraut of Düren spoke in tongues.[138] Other women recited words in a more subdued manner. Leugart of Gotteszell recited a thousand Ave Marias and the entire Psalter everyday over her work.[139] Mystical experiences and the reception of God's grace illicited words, while conversely words could cause mystical experiences. Whenever the Weiler-nun Elizabeth of Esslingen heard words being spoken about God, she was stunned into a mystical trance.[140] Similarly, whenever the Adelhausen lay-sister Metzi heard a sermon or any words spoken about God's love, she entered a trance that made it appear as if she was dead.[141]

While women like Margaret, Metzi, or Leugart focused their spiritual energy on constantly repeated words that had liturgical or devotional significance to them, other nuns articulated wordless noises in response to their visionary experience. The Engelthal-nun Christin of Kornburg's life reports that upon receiving a visionary visitation by John the Baptist on All Saints' Eve, she cried out with a loud voice, not wanting to lose the joy she felt. Whether or not she succeeded is unclear, but she did manage to wake everyone else who had been asleep in the infirmary.[142] The Weiler-nun Guta Jungin also cried out when she recovered from a trance, but a voice reassured her that all would be well.[143] At Kirchberg, Elsbeth of Oettingen often cried out. After having a vision of Christ, she cried out so loudly that the entire convent came running. Another time, Elsbeth saw Mary under the Cross, an image that she contemplated for a while until she was overcome with compassion and had to cry out.[144] In a slightly different context, when the Adelhausen-nun Richi of Stocken lay dying in the infirmary, Saint Dominic appeared to her and comforted her, saying that it was his job to lead **51**

the sisters from this world. With her dying breath, Richi laughed so loud that she could be heard outside the infirmary.[145] Occasionally these cries and screams were not inspired by the Divine, but rather were diabolical. When Adelheid of Gotteszell wrestled with the devil during her prayers in the dormitory, she was tortured and thrown from side-to-side, her outbursts were heard by the entire monastery from the dormitory to the refectory.[146]

52 In addition to tears and outcries, the women were occasionally so overcome with emotion and piety that they started singing. When Alheit of Trochau went in search of another nun in the Engelthal choir, her gaze fell upon the Pyx containing the Eucharist. She felt such an overwhelming joy at the sight that she jumped and sang.[147] In the same community, Gedraut of Hapsburg woke the entire dormitory one night when she sang loudly in her sleep. Her singing was in joyous response to the knowledge that her death was imminent.[148] Others sang constantly. Bercht of Oberriet was said to have never stopped saying the most beautiful collations.[149]

53 When the Adelhausen nun Adelheid of Breisach was denounced for not attending Friday masses and accused of being a heretic by the local friars, she responded by leaving the chapterhouse merrily singing a psalm and dancing, inciting the children of the monastery to join her.[150] The author of the Sister-Book does not take the accusation seriously, for the woman had always spent Thursday nights in vigil, and usually made herself so sick in doing so that she could not attend the Mass the next day. That Adelheid sang and danced proves to the author that she was innocent of any wrong-doing, as does her choice of song. The fact that she sang the psalms, the songs of praise that the nuns knew so intimately and which often expressed joy, does not escape the author. Adelheid sang holy words.

54 Other nuns sang while they worked. While she spun in the Töss workroom, Mezzi Sidwibrin often sang. One of her songs is recorded in her vita, the text of which is in German, "Wise heart, flee worldly love that with pain must end, and let yourself find the best love, that one which will remain eternally with joy. May God make false love despicable to you. Renounce it if you know it now."[151] Elsewhere her vita states, "her mouth overflowed with sweet words."[152] Her fellow nun Sophia of Klingnau also sang in the workroom. "When she sat in the workhouse with the convent, she sang such sweet little words of our Lord and the sisters passionately liked to listen to her."[153] Song seems to have been very important at Töss, whether it was liturgical or not.

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In these preceding examples, there is one recurring element: volume. Louder seems to have been better in the lives of these holy women. Whether singing or crying, the sounds resounded throughout the monastery rooms, perhaps beyond the cloister walls, and directly to the ear of God. This is how the Unterlinden Sister-Book describes the communal sound of the monastery. It is elemental to the women's expression of their love for God. **55**

> At Advent and all through the time of Lent, all the sisters together after Matins turned aside into the Chapterhouse or to another opportune place, and lacerated themselves most cruelly to the point of bleeding with different sorts of whips and threw themselves to the ground, so that the sound of lashings resounded everywhere through the whole monastery, ascending sweeter than any melody to the ears of the Lord, to whom such works of humility and devotion are very pleasing . . . [154]

This description of the sounds produced by a communal flagellation, sounds which the nuns believed were even more sanctified than the liturgy because they showed the women's excessive devotion to God, makes clear just how integrated sound was into the spirituality of female Dominicans.

Despite the prescriptions of the Dominican constitutions, Dominican women were vocal and often loud. They incorporated sound and silence into their spiritual activities with enthusiasm. They created a rich and varied acoustic environment around themselves, one that was found in all parts of the monastery, and, through the existence of the windows, one that could extend beyond the confines of the community. The constitutions of the Dominican order tried to regulate sound within the religious houses, emphasizing the need for silence and the negative impact that words could have, especially words that might be exchanged with the outside world. But the women themselves saw words and sounds—whether they were sounds produced or sounds received or sounds restricted—as essential to the expression of their spirituality. **56**

Sound filled the lives of Dominican women. They sang antiphons and recited the psalms in the choir, and for their diligence they received visions and mystical experiences that reaffirmed their membership in the monastic community. Their individual prayers gave them an active role in their own spirituality, as did their conversations on spiritual matters with their sisters or even outsiders who visited at the community's window. They sang, talked, laughed, and cried because they could not contain their perceptions and contemplations of supernatural joy and suffering. And just as silence served a purpose, so did sound. For Dominican women, sound served God. Their hearts and souls flowed over with sound and they poured out these acoustic offerings as gifts to God. **57**

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Notes

Note 1: Margaret Ebner, *Margaret Ebner: Major Works*, ed. and trans. Leonard P. Hindsley (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 109.

Note 2: Caroline A. Bruzelius, "Hearing is Believing: Clarissan Architecture, ca. 1213–1340," *Gesta* 31:2 (1992): 83–91. Hearing the bell that marked the elevation of the Host was also important for Dominican nuns, even in houses where the nuns' choir had a view of the altar.

Note 3: On Margery Kempe, see Sanford Brown Meech, ed., *The Book of Margery Kempe*, EETS 212 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940). For Margaret Ebner, see n. 1.

Note 4: From the medieval medical standpoint there was in actuality only one sex: the male. The female was a defective, imperfect, incomplete, or inside-out male. Scientifically this idea persisted until the eighteenth century. Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: The Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990). Aristotle was the first to record such a theory. See Vern Bullough "Medieval Medical and Scientific Views of Women," *Viator* 4 (1973), 486–87. Thomas Aquinas gave it a theological spin: "It is appropriate to the dignity of the first man to be the totality of the species, as God is principle to the totality of the universe." Eleanor McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Women in Medieval Theology," in *Religion and Sexism*, ed. Rosemary Ruether (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 217.

Note 5: Caroline Walker Bynum, "'. . . And Women His Humanity': Female Imagery in the Religious Writing of the Later Middle Ages," in *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 151. The italics are in the text.

Note 6: Two passages in the Pauline Epistles are at the core of the Biblical statement about women and speech as perceived in the Middle Ages. "A woman must be a learner, listening quietly and with due submission. I do not permit a woman to be a teacher, nor must woman domineer over man; she should be quiet. For Adam was created first, and Eve afterwards; and it was not Adam who was deceived, it was the woman who, yielding to deception, fell into sin" (1 Tim. 2:11–14). "As in all congregations of God's people, women should not address the meeting. They have no license to speak, but should keep their place as the law directs. If there is something they want to know, they can ask their own husbands at home. It is a shocking thing that a woman should address the congregation" (1 Cor. 14:34–35).

Note 7: Sharon A. Farmer, "Softening the Hearts of Men: Women, Embodiment, and Persuasion in the Thirteenth Century," in *Embodied Love: Sensuality and Relationship as Feminist Values*, ed. Paula M. Cooey, Sharon A. Farmer, and Mary Ellen Ross (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 116.

Note 8: These scientific / medical views of women are based on the ancient works of Aristotle and Galen, as adopted by medieval scholars. See Vern Bullough "Medieval Medical and Scientific Views of Women," *Viator* 4 (1973), 486–87; and Vern Bullough, "On Being a Male in the Middle Ages," in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1994), 31–46.

Note 9: Rosemary Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church," in *Religion and Sexism*, ed. by Rosemary Ruether (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 156ff. One example of this linkage can be found in Tertullian and his allusion to Eve and sin. "You are the Devil's gateway. You are the unsealer of that forbidden tree. You are the first deserter of the divine Law. You are she who persuaded him whom the Devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man. On account of your desert, that is death, even the Son of God had to die." Ruether, 157.

Note 10: On the dangers of menstrual blood, McLaughlin, 229–30.

Note 11: In the twelfth century the Parisian scholar Peter Abelard composed a rambling Rule for the nuns of the Paraclete, which incorporated both theological and physiological reasoning for the necessary silence of religious women. "The tongue, as James says, is an intractable evil, and being smaller and more sensitive than all the other parts of the body it is the more mobile, so that whereas the others are wearied by movement, it does not tire when moving and finds inactivity a burden. The more sensitive it is in you, and the more flexible from the softness of your body, the more mobile and given to words it is, and can be seen to be the seedbed of all evil. The Apostle marks this vice especially in you when he absolutely forbids women to speak in church, and even on matters which concern God he permits them only to question their husbands at home. In learning such things, or whatever things are to be done, he particularly subjects them to silence. . . . If he has made these provisions for silence in the case of lay and married women, what ought you to do? Again, in showing Timothy why he has ordered this, he explains that women are gossips and speak when they should not. So to provide a remedy for so great a plague, let us subdue the tongue by perpetual silence, at least in these places or times: at prayer, in the cloister, the dormitory, refectory, and during all eating and cooking, and from Compline onwards let this be specially observed by all. If necessary in these places or times let us use signs instead of words. . . . Any excess of words or signs must be firmly corrected, words especially, in which lies the greater danger. . . ." Betty Radice, ed. and trans., *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, (New York: Penguin, 1974), 188–89. Across the Channel in England, at roughly the same time, Aelred, the Cistercian abbot of Rievaulx, composed a Rule for recluses intended for his sister and the small group of companions who had joined her in the anchoritic life. Words were seen as even more dangerous for women in this text; the mere act of listening could irreparably damage the body and soul of a religious woman. "How seldom nowadays will you find a recluse alone. At her window will be seated some garrulous old gossip pouring idle tales into her ears, feeding her with scandal and gossip; describing in detail the face appearance and mannerisms of now this priest, now that monk or clerk; describing too the frivolous behavior of a young girl; the free and easy ways of a widow who thinks what she likes is right; the cunning ways of a wife who cuckolds her husband while she gratifies her passions. The recluse all the while is dissolved in laughter, loud peals of laughter, and the poison she drinks with such delight spreads throughout her body. When the hour grows later and they must part both are heavily burdened, the old woman with provisions, the recluse with sensual pleasures.

Quiet returns, but the poor wretch turns over and over in her heart the fantasies born of her idle listening; her reflections only fan more fiercely the flame enkindled by her chatter. Like a drunkard she staggers through the psalms, gropes through her reading, wavers while at prayer. When darkness falls she welcomes women of even less repute; they add fresh fuel to the flames and only desist when they have exposed her, now wholly ensnared by her own sensuality, to the mockery of demons. Now they speak without reserve, their purpose no longer being to arouse desire but to gratify it; together they discuss place and time, and the man who will acquiesce in her designs. The opening of the cell must somehow be enlarged to allow her to pass through or her paramour to enter; what was a cell has now become a brothel." Aelred of Rievaulx, "Rule of Life for a Recluse," in *Aelred of Rievaulx: Treatises and Pastoral Prayer*, trans. Mary Paul Macpherson (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1971), 46–47. Neither Rule, however, seems to have circulated in German Dominican circles, so their portrayals of women and the dangers of talking were probably not familiar to either Dominican nuns or their male superiors.

Note 12: C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1989), 118.

Note 13: See Peter Abelard's instructions for the nuns of the Paraclete above as well as the "instruments of good works" found in the Benedictine Rule which advises, "To speak the truth with heart and lips . . . . Not to murmur. Not to slander. . . . Not to speak evil or wicked speech. Not to

speak much. Not to speak idly nor so as to cause mirth. Not to love boisterous laughter." Anthony C. Meisel and M.L. del Mastro, trans., *The Rule of St. Benedict*, (New York: Doubleday Image, 1975), 52–53.

Note 14: See for example the passage cited above from Peter Abelard's Rule.

Note 15: The texts of major monastic rules can be found in, "La Règle de Saint Benoît," ed. Jean Neufville, 3 vols., *Series des Textes Monastiques d'Occident 34* (Paris: du Cerf, 1972); *La Règle de Saint Augustin*, ed. Luc Verheijen, 2 vols. (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1967); and, Maria Caritas McCarthy, ed. and trans., *The Rule for Nuns of St. Caesarius of Arles: A Translation with a Critical Introduction*, (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1960). Many of the other monastic rules and statutes can be found in Lucas Holstenius, ed., *Codex Regularum Monasticarum et Canonicarum*, vols. 1–3 (Augsburg, 1759; rpt. Graz: Akademischedruck und Verlagsanstalt, 1957).

Note 16: Ambrose Wathen, *Silence: The Meaning of Silence in the Rule of St. Benedict* (Washington, DC: Cistercian Publications, 1973), 161 ff. Wathen divides the above reasons for silence into three instead of five, pairing the first with the second and the third with the fourth. His point is that one purpose is often the flip side of the other, i.e. one avoids sin by practicing virtue. But since all five reasons are so closely related, I have broken them down to their individual elements. It should be noted that Wathen shows that few Rules concerned themselves with the final reason for silence, silence for the sake of silence. Wathen, 169.

Note 17: Simon Tugwell, ed. and trans., *Early Dominicans: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 389. Hereafter cited in text as Tugwell.

Note 18: These texts are the *Ordo Monasterii* (c.395), the *Praeceptum* (397-400), and the *Obiurgatio* (423). Wathen, 137. The authorship of the *Ordo* is uncertain.

Note 19: The male version combined the *Ordo Monasterii* and the *Praeceptum*, whereas the female version combined the *Obiurgatio*, which Augustine had originally addressed to his sister's monastery, and the feminine version of the *Praeceptum*. Wathen, 137–38. However, the form used by all monastics since the High Middle Ages has been the male version. Adolar Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 283.

Note 20: Zumkeller, 296.

Note 21: Augustinian Rule, 6.2.

Note 22: See n. 15.

Note 23: Augustinian Rule, 3.2.

Note 24: See the Introduction for a detailed discussion of these sources.

Note 25: Const., 33.

Note 26: TSB, 28–29.

Note 27: Const., 18.

Note 28: Const., 21. "nec loquantur locis et temporibus interdictus, nec alias sine licencia." Lat. Const., 343.

Note 29: "Fuit igitur inter eas pax magna, concordia et 'caritas, que est uinculum perfectionis (Ad Colossenses, III, 14.), qua refrenabatur lingua loquax. Nam sicut obstructo ore clibani calor intus fouetur, sic seruato silencio gracia Sancti Spiritus in corde retinetur. Hoc cognoscentes, ponebant custodiam ori suo, ut non delinquerent in lingua sua; ideoque concaluit cor earum intra eas, et 'in meditacione earum exarsit ignis (Ps. XXXVIII, 4) ille Dominus Deus noster, consumens omnem rubiginem uiciorum." USB, 338–39.

Note 30: "Sy warend och als gar senft und still an worten und an werken das in dem tag als still in dem kloster was als ob es nach complet wer gewessen." TSB, 14.

Note 31: ASB, 157, 186.

Note 32: ASB, 187.

Note 33: TSB, 35.

Note 34: "Die hatt die gewonheit, das si allweg des tages, so si vnsern herren empfing, niemer wort gesprach, als noch vil swestran ein gewonheit hand ze swigenn des tages, so si vnsern herren empfahend." KSB, 99.

Note 35: "Si was dick lang zit und vil wochen, das si niemer wort gesprach, und sunderlich den aduent und die vasten, die sweig si allweg." KSB, 125.

Note 36: SSB, 111.

Note 37: "Siquidem quamuis beata illa soror in silencii observacione sollicita fuerit nimis, nunquam transgrediens et infringend legem silencii in vita sua, tamen cum graciam illuminantem se minus solito se habere conspexit, strictissimum sibi ipsi silencium indixit, tanquam os ad loquendum ey aures ad audiendum non haberet; . . ." USB, 427–28.

Note 38: SSB, 113.

Note 39: GSB, 137–38. Leugart was for thirty years either the subprioress or the prioress.

Note 40: "Des redvensters und aller ussrer menschen hat sy kain acht, und joch gen iren aignen brüder, den sy in unsrem orden hat, gen dem hielt sy sich usserlich. Sy schwaig vil nach alwegen, das sy nimer wort geret." TSB, 26.

Note 41: KSB, 104–5.

Note 42: "nymer wort gesprach sie an verpoten steten und zeiten." GSB, 137.

Note 43: For instance the life of Mehtilt of Buglin says, "One could write miraculous things about her, however, she kept them hidden within herself" ("Man möht wunder von ir schreyben, sie hilt ez aber gar verporgen in ir selber"). WSB, 77. At Adelhausen, Adelheit Geishörnl wished to remain silent as to the reason behind her whirling around the altar in the church, but was forced to speak by her conscience. ASB, 167.

Note 44: See Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp. 49–82.

Note 45: KSB, 99.

Note 46: WSB, 81.

Note 47: KSB, 110; and SSB, 107. Matins also was rung in TSB, 30.

Note 48: KSB, 97–98.

Note 49: Vespers was rung in ASB, 165; an unspecified office in TSB, 26 and 27. The bell calling the women to work is mentioned in TSB, 26 and 34.

Note 50: KSB, 115.

Note 51: "si sich legen vff die matten vnd die tafelen schlachen." ASB, 155.

Note 52: On Dominican liturgy in general, see William R. Bonniwell, *A History of the Dominican Liturgy* (New York: Joseph Wagner, 1944). The 1256 General Chapter called for the creation of a manuscript prototype for the Order's liturgical texts and the General Chapters of 1258 and 1265 ordered that this text be the one copied for all Dominican usage and also be used to correct already existing texts. Papal approval of the text was given in 1267. John Stinson, "The Dominican Liturgy of

the Assumption: Texts and Music for the Divine Office," in *The Art of the Book: Its Place in Medieval Worship*, ed. Margaret M. Manion and Bernard J. Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 171.

Note 53: Const., 7. "Hore canonice omnes in ecclesia tractim et distincte taliter dicantur . . . . Quod ita dicimus esse faciendum ut in medio uersus metrum cum pausa serveture: non protrahendo uocem in pausa uel fine uersus." Lat. Const., 339.

Note 54: Const., 25. "si qua in choro non inyenta diuino officio:uagis oculis et motu irreligioso leuitatem mentis ostenderit. Si qua leccionem tempore statuto non preuiderit: uel aliud legere, uel cantare presumpserit quam quod ordinatum est. Si qua in choro riserit, uel alais ridere fecerit." Lat. Const., 344.

Note 55: Const., 26; and Lat. Const., 344.

Note 56: Tugwell, 422. "Omnes quidem ad chorum preuenire satagens, summaque diligencia intendens, ut sorores omnes concorditer alte ac sollempniter Deo psallerent, sicut unicuique sollempnitati et tempori congruebat. Unde et ipsa uocibus minime parcens assidue cantabat, nec leuem consciencie sue iacturam reputabat, si quando raucitatis uel alicuius infirmitatis incommodo interueniente, sollempnem psalmodie cantum minus alacriter persoluisset." USB, 360.

Note 57: Tugwell, 423. "Hanc siquidem audiuit corporeis auribus. . . " USB, 361.

Note 58: Tugwell, 423. "iusto quidem Dei iudicio dirissime torqueri ac diutissime uerberari tam grauiter tamque crudeliter, quod ex singulis flagellorum plagis deficere uidebatur ac pariter interire." USB, 361.

Note 59: Augustinian Rule, 2.3.

Note 60: "'hörestu daz gesanck? az sing wir den swestern, die von disem convent gescheyden sein, und sein in sunderlicher wirdikait und großer er vor got.'" WSB, 78.

Note 61: WSB, 82, 79.

Note 62: SSB, 111; GSB, 139; and KSB, 101, 104.

Note 63: Choral performances of the psalms alternated verses between a divided choir, one side called *decani* and the other *cantoris*. Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to their Organization and Terminology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 30–31.

Note 64: While this incident is chiefly about obedience to the prioress, Alheit's actions may have reflected some of the women's attitude toward singing; a case of more is better.

Note 65: "Sy hielt iren orden an allen dingen als volkumenlich als wir ie dekain schwester sachent tün; sy was vil die erst in dem kor und hielt sich da mit grossem fliss an naigen, an ston, und das sy gar endlich sang alles das sy kund, wie sy doch nit wol sang." TSB, 17–18.

Note 66: SSB, 106. Irmgart was probably reciting the litany of saints found in the Psalters of her monastery. See Chapter 4 on textual environment about these litanies. For other examples of choir activity, see KSB, 101, 105–6, 110, 125.

Note 67: ESB, 6–7.

Note 68: "ein stimm als ein donrslag, dú sprach: >Warumb bettest du mir nit min sequenci?< " KSB, 125. On this sequence, see below.

Note 69: This may indicate the altar in the nuns' choir. The priest may have been in the outer choir. The text is unclear and the priest is never mentioned. See Chapter 1 on space for the altars at St. Katharinenthal.

Note 70: KSB, 125.

Note 71: KSB, 124. See Introduction for text of Kathrin's dream. This vision may be connected with the graduals from St. Katharinenthal now in the Swiss National Museum in Zurich and the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg. Both contain illuminations of St. John dressed as a bishop celebrating Mass. See Chapter 4 on textual environment for a discussion of the significance of this image for Dominican women. A second description of Kathrin's vision occurs later in the Sister-Book, providing the text of the 24 verses of the sequences and a German translation of them. See Appendix.

Note 72: TSB, 21. How they were able to do this without special permission from the Order is unclear.

Note 73: TSB, 86.

Note 74: WSB, 84. *Salve regina* is one of the four important medieval Marian antiphons. The other three are *Alma redemptoris mater*, *Regina celi*, and *Ave regina*. Hughes, 33.

Note 75: ASB, 177.

Note 76: "Singent, singent: Gottes mütter ist hie!" TSB, 28.

Note 77: Tugwell, 422. "Uidit enim repente uisibiliter ignem diuinum de celo magno cum sonitu aduenientem super sanctum conuentum sororum Deo psallencium. Et repleuit totum chorum ubi erant sorores in Dei laudibus congregate, illuminans eas adeo diuinis splendoribus, quod omnes pariter ignee apparebant. Radius insuper celestis luminis singulas earum uisibiliter circumfulsit, tamdiu quousque ille diuinus ymnus totus finiretur." USB, 360. *Veni creator spiritus* was usually sung at the Office of Terce during the first half of Pentecost week. Hughes, 75.

Note 78: WSB, 84.

Note 79: ASB, 171.

Note 80: WSB, 71. The antiphon is for the *Magnificat* of Vespers on the Feast of the Annunciation.

Note 81: ">Stand vff vnd gang in den kor, man wil von sant Johannes singen.< Do gedacht sy: >Man singet hútt nit von sant Johannes.< Do hort sy aber das sprechen: >Stand vff vnd gang in den kor, won man wil von sand Johannes singen.< Do gieng si in den kor vnd gedáht: >Nv lose, was man singen welle.< Do vieng man die mess an von einem andern heiligen: >In medio<. Vnd sang der alt caplan brüder Burkart von Wangen mess. Vnd do er an die collecte kam, do las er vnwissent die collecte >Ecclesiam< von sant Johannes ewangelist. Also sang man die mess gar schon vs von sant Johannes." KSB, 110.

Note 82: On Psalters and their role in Dominican female spirituality, see Chapter 4.

Note 83: "sunderlich ze ainem mal an dem stillen fritag do las sy den salter mit dem cofent, ... 'Mit disem gebet werdent mir min wunden gehailet.'" TSB, 49.

Note 84: TSB, 40.

Note 85: TSB, 41.

Note 86: TSB, 46. Her favorite verses seem to have been Ps. 85:5 and Ps. 89:4.

Note 87: "'Gewerlich ich sach ir sele von irem munde scheiden als einen rosen vnder dem verse *Attolite portas principes vestras*.'" ASB, 156.

Note 88: KSB, 135–36.

Note 89: "Ach lieber her, du bist min vatter und min mütter/ und min schwester und min bruder;/ ach her, du bist mir alles das ich wil, und din mütter ist min gespil." TSB, 86.

Note 90: See TSB, 46, notes for lines 27–28.

Note 91: "Du solt mich bitten das ich dir din sünd vergeb, als ich sy an dir erkenn, und das ich dir min marter geb ze eren, als ich sy erlitten han, und das ich dich miner mütter befelch und sant Johannesen, als ich sy ain andren befalch, und das ich selb zü dinem end kum." TSB, 47. On the Virgin Mary and John, see Chapter 2.

Note 92: "die vereinbert sich all tag mit mir in ir gebett, das zwúschent mir vnd ir nút ist." KSB, 135.

Note 93: "Es was auch aber gar ein selige swester in dem selben closter, die was so heiliges lebens, das sie allzeit nymmer gestillet, es wer gotes lob in irem munde, es beneme ir denn der slaf. Auch brachte sie unmessige gebete fur." GSB, 132.

Note 94: Henry Suso, *The Exemplar with Two German Sermons* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 294.

Note 95: UBF, Hs. 476 is a fourteenth-century Book of Hours that belonged to a Dominican monastery in the diocese of Constance. It contains additional Passion prayers and Suso's hundred meditations [436v-457v]. ZBZ, C 172, is a complete fourteenth-century copy of *The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom* which belonged to the Zurich Dominican monastery of Oetenbach.

Note 96: WLB Cod. brev. 152. The text contains the Office of the Virgin Mary and the Office of the Dead. The last folio [f. 25] is only half the size of the other folios. The recto side contains a German prayer for poor souls.

Note 97: AMF, Inv, Nr. 11736. The image and text are fourteenth-century, but were kept in a fifteenth-century Book of Hours.

Note 98: TSB, 18, 50.

Note 99: KSB, 135.

Note 100: KSB, 115–16.

Note 101: "dem allervolkomnesten menschen, das man konte vinden in allem lande." ASB, 169.

Note 102: "'Wes bittestu mich, du hest ouch eine swester ze Adelnhusen, zü der gang vnd bitte si, das si Gott für dich bitte, wann du solt wissen, das si in der warheit dir mag erwerben vor Gotte, alles das ich mag.'" ASB, 169.

Note 103: See Chapter 4 for these texts.

Note 104: Const., 37; and Lat. Const., 348.

Note 105: Const., 26.

Note 106: "gab ir aber Got die gnad das sy recht hin flos von übersüssen wortten, und was das als gütt von ir zehörend das die hertzen da von recht in ain bewegung komend; won ire wort flussent uss ainem follen hertzen, als geschriben stat: Von uberflussikait des hertzen redet der mund." TSB, 37.

Note 107: "ir mund überflos von süssen worten." TSB, 29.

Note 108: "Sy was och in ir jungen tagen als entzünt mit der götlichen lieby das ir als begirlich was von Got zeredent, das sy etwenn in dem winter in dem bomgarten gieng, und sass da als lang und rett mit etlicher schwester, so sy uff woltend ston, das in das gewand gefroren was." TSB, 37.

Note 109: "bran under irem anlut recht als ain ross." TSB, 42.

Note 110: TSB, 48.

Note 111: "'Gott ist in mir vnd ich in ime, er ist min vnd ich bin sin, er ist mir vnd bin ich ime, min sele die ist hübsche vnd stoltz vnd hochgemüt, wann Gott hett mir vffgetan sin gnade vnd bin geminnet von ime. Das hett er mir kunt getan in sinre herrlicheit.'" ASB, 180. This passage, like others in the Sister-Books, shows the influence of courtly love (*fineamours*) on mysticism in this

period. See Barbara Newman, "*La mystique courtoise*: Thirteenth-Century Beguines and the Art of Love," in *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 137–67.

Note 112: Const., 34. "Porro omnes supradicte fenestre uel fenestrelle ferrate sic disponi debent, uel per duplicacionem ferrature, uel per acutos clauos: quod inter exteriores et interiores nullus possit interuenire contactus." Lat. Const., 347. For more on windows, see Chapter 1.

Note 113: TSB, 59.

Note 114: Tugwell, 417. "Equidem desiderabat estu cordis incredibili omnes homines Christo lucrifacere, idcirco a sanctis sedulisque ammonicionibus non cessauit, affectuosissime de Deo loquens cum sororibus, pariterque cum extraneis ad fenestram. Tenuit enim multis annis officium audiendi ad fenestram tam sancte tamque religiose, ut omnes illuc uenientes religiosi pariterque seculares inde discederent non modicum edificati." USB, 355. Agnes' exhortations are very similar to the contemporary anchoresses and recluses in England who "preached" from the windows of their anchorholds, despite instructional literature which discouraged such practices. See Patricia J. F. Rosof, "The Anchoress in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *Peaceweavers: Medieval Religious Women*, ed. Lillian Shank and John Nichols (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1987), 123–44.

Note 115: Lewis, 187.

Note 116: OSB, 262; and KSB, 131.

Note 117: In the Sister-Book of Töss a Provincial Hugo who serves as a confessor is mentioned twice in the vita of Jützi Schulthasin. This is most likely Hugo von Staufen, the lesemeister of Constance who was also a Provincial Prior. TSB 71, 75. Also mentioned is Brother Wolfran, the Swabian Provincial Prior, also a confessor of Töss, and two unnamed preachers. TSB, 36, 67, 77. At Weiler, Elizabeth of Esslingen's vita notes that she discussed her beliefs with a lesemeister. WSB, 70. Nuns' confessions to friars are mentioned in ASB, 154 and 162. A Brother Eberhart, the lesemeister of Freiburg, is named in the text from Kirchberg. SSB, 107. In the Engelthal Sister-Book mention is made of a bishop and the friars of Regensburg. ESB, 8, 7. St. Katharinenthal had in its service the old chaplain Brother Burkart of Wangen who had trouble keeping his Masses straight (see above). KSB, 110.

Note 118: TSB, 28.

Note 119: TSB, 28.

Note 120: GSB, 126.

Note 121: WSB, 71.

Note 122: Regina D. Schiewer, "Sermons for Nuns of the Dominican Observance Movement," in *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, ed. by Carolyn Muessig (Boston: Brill, 1998), 75. Although this article focuses mainly on the fifteenth-century Observance Movement, Schiewer also discusses the situation in the fourteenth century when many sermons, especially those by Eckhart and Tauler were first written down. "The sermons were given in German and also written in German so that the sisters could use them for reading at table and private reading. This was very important considering the small number of men's religious houses, which had the spiritual responsibility for so many convents. To a certain extent, the nun's ability to read sermons was more important than her listening to them because the confessor could not come to the convent as frequently as would have been necessary to satisfy the nuns' hunger for the word of God. In contrast to the nuns, most lay-people were not educated enough to read sermons to teach themselves in the absence of the *pater confessarius*. That is why the vast number of Dominican sermons for lay-people are written in Latin. In this form they could be used as sample sermons with the male order. This observation leads to an interesting

conclusion with respect to monastic preaching: the "monastic" sermons of the Dominicans, that is sermons which were meant for cloistered nuns, were given and written in German, whereas sermons for lay-people were given in German but written in Latin." Schiewer, 76–77.

Note 123: ASB, 189–91.

Note 124: ASB, 191–92.

Note 125: ASB, 192–93.

Note 126: St. Gall, ms. 1066. Referred to in Franz Pfeiffer, *Hermann von Fritslar, Nicolaus von Strassburg, David von Augsburg* (Leipzig: Göschen, 1845), xxiv.

Note 127: UBF, Hs. 41.

Note 128: ZBZ, C 76.

Note 129: In regards to Observant nuns bringing books with them upon entry into the religious life, see Marie-Luise Ehrenschwendtner, "A Library Collected by and for the Use of Nuns: St. Catherine's Convent, Nuremberg," in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H. M. Taylor (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). The speculation that Johannes Meyer may have given the manuscript to Adelhausen can be found in *Katalog der Züricher Zentralbibliothek*, 358.

Note 130: ESB, 12.

Note 131: ESB, 25.

Note 132: ASB, 186.

Note 133: ASB, 186–87.

Note 134: "Wann si waren in der andacht, das es alle zite in dem closter was in der stille vnd in dem ernste, als an dem stillen fritage, vnd alwegen nach complete so was dz weinen also groß in dem core vnd vff dem tormenter, so si warent vor iren betten, das mans ettwie verre horte. Vnd vnder wilent warent ettliche verzucket vnd ettliche geswat, vnd ettliche schrei mit luter styme von der übrigen gnade, die in God tett." ASB, 186.

Note 135: There are frequent mentions of this phenomenon in her Revelations. See for example Ebner, 100.

Note 136: Ebner, 120.

Note 137: "was von gnaden darzü komen vil jare vor irem tode, das si alle zite schrei tag vnd nacht, vnd sprach: 'Sünli, sünli, liebes sünli, truttes sünli, fröliches sünli, wunekliches sünli.' Vnd tet das als emßklich vnd mit als luter styme, das nieman kein rüwe vor ihr moht han. Vnd wart denne ir antlit also entzündet, vnd ire ougen also frölich, das man wol sach, das ir Gott was wunders erzeiget hatte. Vnd ir fröide was vnderwilent als vnmesseklich groß, vnd ouch das weffere vnd das jamern, das si nach disem kinde hatte, wz ouch so groß, das es kume ze schriben were, vnd vnderwilet wart gesechen, das sich ir lip vfferhüp von dem bette me denne eines halben klafters hoche." ASB, 176.

Note 138: SSB, 105.

Note 139: GSB, 138.

Note 140: WSB, 69.

Note 141:ASB, 165.

Note 142: ESB, 31.

Note 143: WSB, 75.

Note 144: SSB, 110.

Note 145: ASB, 158.

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Note 146: GSB, 136.

Note 147: ESB, 13.

Note 148: ESB, 21.

Note 149: ASB, 159.

Note 150: ASB, 154.

Note 151: "Wises hertz, flúch die minne/ die mit laid müs zergan,/ und las dich in dem besten finden,/ das mit fröden mag bestan./ ob du falscher min bist: der/ tü dich ab; Got laide sy dir." TSB, 29.

Note 152: "ir mund uberflos von süssen worten." TSB, 29.

Note 153: "So sy in dem werkhuss sass by dem cofent, so sang sy dik gar süssi wörtli von unserm heren, und das hortent die schwestren denn gar begirlich und gern." TSB, 59–60.

Note 154: "In aduentu et per omne tempus quadragessime universe sorores post matutinas in capitulum diuertentes, siue ad loca alia oportuna diuersis flagellorum generibus corpus suum usque ad sanguinis effusionem lacerantes crudelissime et hostiliter ceciderunt, ita quod sonitus uerberancium se ubique per omne monasterium resonaret, ascendens in aures Domini Sabaoth suauior omni melodia, cui talia humilitatis et deuocionis opera multum placent. . . " USB, 340.

Chapter 4

Seeing and Hearing: A Book With Golden Letters: The Textual Environment

The Language of Spirituality: Reading, Writing, and Reciting Latin and the Vernacular

In the monastery of Töss, the nun Anna of Klingnau often spun wool in her bed at night because of her devotion to manual labor and common work. On the distaff she used, the following German words were written in the form of a prayer that she said God had spoken to someone (the author of the vita remarks that that someone was Anna herself): 1

> The sicker you are, the dearer you are to me.
> The more despised you are, the closer you are to me.
> The poorer you are, the more similar you are to me.[1]

When Elsbeth Hainburgin read the lesson *Primo tempore* in the St. Katharinenthal choir at Christmas, she saw the Christ Child wrapped in a little diaper on the pages of the book from which she piously read.[2] And when the Adelhausen prioress Luggi of Snabelburg prayed, she sometimes used a book and "as she prayed holding her little book, it seemed to her as if it was golden in her hands, the letters and everything, and it was so all the time that she prayed."[3] All three of these examples, taken from three different female Dominican monasteries, show how important words, texts, and books were for the spirituality of Dominican women. It is here, in the textual environment, that the senses of sight and sound come together, interacting with each other to varying degrees, and pushing out the boundaries of the women's spirituality.

We have already seen how much of Dominican women's spirituality was enacted in choir, often in connection with the office celebrated there. The Divine Office composed of words and actions was textually based. So we must look to the books that these cloistered women utilized to discover more of the basis for their spirituality. The words that the women learned, read, and recited from manuscripts provided them with the vocabulary that they used to express their religious experiences. The images found within their books influenced the nuns' understanding of the saints to which they prayed. The texts they themselves wrote or copied were at the same time integral to constructing their own spiritual expectations and behaviors. 2

There are no exact figures for literacy rates in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Europe. We have at best educated guesses. European society was in the process of transforming itself from an oral culture to one in which written documents were given precedence over memory.[4] And what one means by literacy has to be clearly defined. In medieval Europe, to be literate meant 3

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to be literate in Latin, the language of the Church.[5] Even if you could read and write your native tongue, you were considered unlettered without knowledge of Latin. The knowledge of Latin was limited among the lay population and depended greatly on one's social class and gender.[6] Most people knew a few prayers in Latin such as the *Pater noster* (Our Father), but that was all.

In thirteenth-century Germany, along with a transformation from oral to written culture, there was a general shift from Latin to German dialects as the language of writing. The end of the century and the beginning of the fourteenth were an especially dynamic period. Within the documents of practice associated with female Dominican houses in the region one sees this change clearly. At the foundation of the early houses like Unterlinden and Adelhausen, all documents were written in Latin. As the century progressed, those documents not issued by the Church, Order, or royal officials were increasingly written in the local German dialect. Latin remained the language of religious men, whereas religious women and the laity of both sexes embraced the vernacular although not exclusively.[7] Letters and other documents from officials of the Order to its nuns continued to be written in Latin.[8] Latin, often described as a gendered language, became even more gendered.[9] When the nuns of St. Katharine compiled their cadastral register in 1309, the document and the colophon identifying its female nun / scribe were in the vernacular.[10] In their anniversary book from 1354, the colophon by the scribes is also in the vernacular, but it is followed by a Latin notice by Johann of Constance, *sacerdotus*.[11] However, there is a difference between documents of practice that recorded the economic aspect of Dominican life, and documents of spirituality that inform us about their religious and devotional practices and behaviors. **4**

The two documents that legislated female Dominican life, the Rule and the constitutions, remained in Latin. Even copies of these documents from the fifteenth century (the period after this study and one supposedly rife with the use of the vernacular) remain in Latin.[12] The only exception comes from the end of the thirteenth century where a manuscript from St. Katharinenthal contains some parts of the constitutions in Latin, but has German versions of other parts.[13] It also included an incomplete German translation of Hugo of St. Victor's explanation of the Augustinian Rule, a fragment of the Rule in Latin, as well as part of a Latin Visitation report. The manuscript has been rebound, so parts may have been lost or added. **5**

We must distinguish, where possible, between reading, reciting, and writing—all different uses of the two languages—if we are to understand the relationship between Dominican women and their language of spirituality.[14] The written word was important for Dominican women. When connected with the Divine, it held a value in its own right, serving not as a representation or substitute for what the letters spelled out, but as the thing itself.[15] And **6**

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these words could be in Latin or German. Marie-Luis Ehrenschwendtner has considered the relationship between the two languages in female Dominican houses at the very end of the fourteenth and into the fifteenth centuries. She found that

> Latin as the language of the divine service was imposed on the sisters by ecclesiastical legislation, and as the language of the table readings it had been inherited as a time-honored custom, but the evidence suggests that in other areas of religious life, the nuns often chose the vernacular. The Dominican nuns preferred their mother tongue when they said their private prayers, as is shown by a great number of extant texts which were used by Dominican sisters. Exceptions were, of course, the most important liturgical prayers, not only the *Pater noster*, but also the *Ave Maria*, the *Te deum* or the Psalms . . . [16]

However, the majority of vernacular texts that Ehrenschwendtner cites were not written until the close of the fourteenth century, the period after the one examined here. Few vernacular texts survive from this earlier period. The evidence suggests that the relationship of Dominican women to the two languages was different in the thirteenth and at least the first two-thirds of the fourteenth century from what it came to be later. The Latin of the Divine Office (and the liturgy in general) was not imposed on the women, but heartily embraced by them. Throughout most of the Sister-Books there is a combination of the two languages. Some vitae indicate the language of the materials that the women read, as when the foundress of Engelthal, a beguine in Nuremberg named Alheid, read in German to her young community over meals.[17] Other vitae indicate the language that the women (and those associated with them) sang or spoke. This can be seen in another example from Engelthal, chronologically later than the previous instance, but while the community was still one of beguines. The incident occurred when the women of Engelthal were invited by their patron Ulrich of Königstein, the Schenk of Reicheneck, to Reicheneck to sing their newly learned Latin liturgy. As they gathered in a chapel and recited Mass for Pentecost, Ulrich sang along with the women, even though he had never learned to read.[18] This recitation of Latin by an unlearned layman was seen as miraculous and fortuitous for the new community.

7

The constitutions required that the choir nuns be able to read and recite Latin. Lay-sisters were not required to possess these skills, in fact they may have been discouraged from learning the language. They were only required to know the basic prayers of Pater noster and Ave Maria. Since the Sister-Books employ Latin, the nuns (and possibly the lay-sisters) must have been familiar with the language. Indeed, the Sister-Books mention the nuns learning Latin. Along with devotional prayers, Margaret Finkin's life says that "teaching Latin and writing" were also her primary activities.[19] Her fellow nun, Anna of Klingnau, may have been her student, for Anna's vita notes that she "read and learned Latin."[20] The Adelhausen nun Reinlint of Villingen was often told to read Latin by the biblical figures in her visions. John

the Evangelist made her recite a passage from his Revelations (Apoc. III, 4:5) from a book he held up before her, while Isaiah made her read aloud from the Old Testament.[21] Both texts were recited by Reinlint in Latin.

In the early years of these first monasteries, many women joined the new communities with their children. Unterlinden had its origins in a group of widows and their children. In the fervor of the thirteenth-century religious movement with its emphasis on apostolic poverty, entire families entered the religious life. A husband took his sons to a male house (according to the Sister-Books either a Dominican house or a community of Teutonic Knights) and the wives brought their daughters with them into the Dominican monastery. There are many allusions to daughters, mothers, sisters, and nieces in the vitae of the women. And those children were joined by girls who appear to have entered the houses as child oblates. These girls, educated in the monastery, had the opportunity to be choir nuns, and they were taught the Latin liturgy using the monastery's choir-books to learn the proper words. When Anne of Ramschwag entered St. Katharinenthal as a child, she did not apply herself to her studies and did not even look at the book in front of her. But once when the mistress placed the open book before her, Anne looked down and saw a tiny child lying on the page. And the child took its tiny feet in its tiny hands and lay there totally naked before her eyes. Anne thought about this. And then the child spoke to her, saying, "I unite myself with my heavenly father and with you." After that Anne gladly applied herself to everything that was required of her.[22] Elsbeth, a child oblate at Weiler, was a diligent and devoted student who learned to read and recite so quickly that she eventually helped teach the other girls. On cold winter nights she would study by her bed so devotedly that she never noticed the bitter cold in the dormitory that cramped her fingers as they held the book she read.[23] 8

Cross Reference:
Table 2: Devotional and Instructional Texts from Female Dominican Monasteries. 9

Libraries of devotional literature, such as that well-documented at St. Catherine's in Nuremberg, do not come into existence in female Dominican houses until the fifteenth century. The reforms of the Dominican Order, and the increase in private book ownership, helped greatly to add to the monastic libraries of many female Dominican communities in that period.[24] Before that time in Dominican women's monasteries, the liturgical manuscripts far surpassed those of any other kind. What non-liturgical texts survive for these years include works by Henry Suso, John Tauler, and anonymous devotional texts, probably authored by Dominicans.

However, the texts that survive from female Dominican houses may not give a complete picture of the non-liturgical textual environment in which the women were immersed. Wars, fires, poverty, dissolutions, anti-clericalism, and secularization have all decreased the survival 10

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chances for their manuscripts. The Sister-Books and other sources provide a few references to texts with which the women were familiar, adding to the larger picture of the works found in the female Dominican sensual environment.

The author of the Töss Sister-Book was familiar with some of the works of Bernard of Clairvaux. At the opening of Margaret Finkin's vita she quotes Bernard in Latin and provides a German translation, whether her own or that of someone else is unclear.[25] Catherine of Unterlinden was familiar with unidentified works of Augustine, for twice she makes reference to the theologian. The first instance refers to Augustine's interpretation of a passage from the Gospel of Matthew (Matt. 13:43) concerning resurrection after the Last Judgment.[26] The second reference discusses Augustine's description of the Trinity and knowledge.[27] The Töss author also mentions Augustine.[28] Reference is made as well to reading the Old Testament book of Job.[29] **11**

Upon her deathbed, Diemut of Nuremberg shared with another Engelthal sister the "three graces that God had given her before her death." The third of these was a vision in which her soul left her body through her mouth and "traveled to heaven, and the entire way was hung with burning lamps as it is written in St. Benedict's legend."[30] The image of the burning lamps lighting the way to heaven is not found in the Martyrologies, although Saint Benedict is commemorated in the Usuard Martyrology on March 21, with his translation on July 11, the day of his feast.[31] However, such an event is described in Jacob of Voragine's *Golden Legend*. His vita of the saint records: "[t]he day Saint Benedict departed this life and went to Christ, the same revelation came to two monks, one of whom was in his cell, the other some distance away. They saw a shining road strewn with rugs and lighted by countless lamps, rising toward the East from the blessed Benedict's cell to heaven."[32] These meager references provide us with an idea of at least a few other texts to which Dominican women had access. **12**

What the nuns read was occasionally augmented by divine understanding. In the vita of Alheit of Trochau, the author remarks that "when in a state of grace, she could often explain difficult books as well as any learned priest, but when the state had passed, she could no longer do so, because she was not learned."[33] It is unclear here if Alheit could actually read in either language. Also at Engelthal, the nun Cristin of Kornburg is described as having "learned a small amount of learning and through it came to God's grace, so that she could explain the large and difficult books at meals."[34] In both cases, the women's understanding and learning is depicted as a small thing and attributed to God's grace; its ramifications were hidden under the cloak of the humility topos. **13**

For the discussion so far we have been looking at the lives of choir nuns, women supposedly educated in reading and reciting the Latin liturgy, if not their mother tongue. One cannot assume, however, that all of the lay-sisters were illiterate in both languages. When the lay- **14**

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sister Metze of Adelhausen was deep in her devotion, "she found stars and flowers in her little book."[35] The use of a book in private devotions implies some kind of reading. The stars and flowers in her book may indicate some kind of illustrated or even illuminated manuscript, most likely something with pen-and-ink decoration. The well-known Books of Hours with richly illuminated borders decorated with extravagant ornamentation were a product of the fourteenth and fifteenth century. The description of Metze's book certainly suggests something of that nature, but no such examples survive from any of the female Dominican monasteries.[36] The text is unnamed, but it could be a Psalter or a devotional treatise. But given the examples of Dominican manuscripts that survive, the decorations were probably simple, although not simplistic. According to the Sister-Books however, some women were illiterate. At Weiler, Adelheid of Weiblingen, who is not identified as either a nun or a lay-sister (although the author does note that she was married for one year before she entered the cloister), had a sickness of her eyes, which did not allow her to learn to read.[37]

Many nuns could do more than read and recite texts; some had also learned the skills of writing and copying. The 1410 fire at Adelhausen did more than just demolish the monastery's church; it also destroyed books to the value of 1500 guilders.[38] Among these lost texts may have been some from the monastery's own scriptorium or manuscript workshop. One surviving text from the community—a collection of vernacular sermons by the Dominican preacher Johannes Tauler—originated in the Adelhausen scriptorium in the 1350s.[39] The manuscript itself is worn and stained, indicating some usage and possible damage in the 1410 fire. The copying of sermons in Adelhausen is not surprising, for roughly four decades earlier, the prioress Anna of Münzingen had summarized three sermons at the end of her *Chronik*.[40] **15**

According to her vita, the Engelthal nun Reichgart, who was a former Benedictine and sister of the community's chief patron, could make great art.[41] Perhaps she was a skilled manuscript illuminator. At St. Katharinenthal, Mechthilt of Wangen supposedly had "never learned Latin or writing, and yet she wrote out in her own hand the four passions [Gospels] in German."[42] At Töss, the unnamed sister of Margaret of Klingenberg was an illuminator or painter and either a writer or copyist of German manuscripts, as her life praises her for her many "good pictures" and "many German books that she made".[43] At Unterlinden, Adelheid of Apiaco copied many elegant manuscripts for use in the Divine Office.[44] Her fellow nun, Gertrude of Rifelden, also devoted many years to copying texts for the choir.[45] **16**

The Nuremberg gradual of St. Katharinenthal was partially copied by the nuns there.[46] The first part of the manuscript, folios 1–245, seems to have been professionally copied, perhaps at the workshop where the Zurich gradual would later be produced. But the remaining folios (246r-277v) were added to the manuscript after it came to be at St. Katharinenthal. In some instances the nuns adopted various texts that were not originally intended for their use, for instance changing the gender of the Latin used in the rituals—usually the burial rite—from **17**

male to female. This can be seen in manuscripts from the Freiburg and Strasbourg houses where pronouns like *eo* are changed to *ea*.[47] This rewriting of the text extended beyond simple endings that indicated the gender of the readers. Often the word *servus* is changed to the appropriate *ancilla*.[48] Or sometimes *sorores* is inserted into the text. It was also common for the nuns to have annotated their choir-books, adding rubrics or marginal notes in German that instructed them when to sing or recite which texts.[49]

18

But the women did other types of writing as well. The Sister-Books and the various documents of practice—cadastral register, rentbooks, and anniversary books—prove this, going beyond the mere copying of texts into the realm of original composition. According to the life of the nun Willi of Constance, who had been in Töss since she was three years old, she wrote or compiled a wonderful book full of all the things that she had heard about God.[50] The Sister-Books themselves, which as texts were written, read, and read aloud, point to the bilingual nature of female Dominican life in the Upper Rhine. Two of the nine were originally composed in Latin, with the remaining texts written in dialects of Middle High German. The mid-fourteenth century translation of Anna of Münzingen's *Chronik* into German may indicate a wish to make the text more accessible to an audience whose Latin was based on knowledge of the liturgy, or perhaps it was felt that the lay-sisters or novices could not benefit from the vitae because of the language. How long the original Latin version remained in use is unknown since it does not survive. But, one did not need to be able to read in order to benefit from the exemplary vitae of the monastery's early members, for the Sister-Books were a collection of lives meant not merely to be read by subsequent generations but to be read aloud. So a listener just needed to understand the language in which the text was written. Some of the texts even begin or end with the comment "whoever hears this book read" or "who reads or hears this read."[51] It remains unclear just how much Latin the women comprehended and how much of their knowledge of Latin was just rote memorization. A German text allowed for the greatest possible audience. But even those Sister-Books that were written in German contain Latin.

19

In the Töss Sister-Book, the author shows off her Latin learning by beginning three of the vitae of the community's sisters with Latin quotes. In a manner similar to the delivery of vernacular sermons, she quotes a passage from scripture in Latin, provides a German translation, and then points to how the passage is exemplary of the life of the individual sister being described.[52] The Weiler Sister-Book is also sprinkled with scriptural Latin. Dying nuns in the vitae have a tendency to quote Saint Paul in Latin, which the author then translates.[53] Katherina, niece of Guta Jungin, had a vision in the Weiler choir in which she saw a blooming palm tree heavy with fruit. This she knew represented the crucified Christ. Katherina said that

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her heart trembled with the sweetness of the fruit, as it was written, "I will climb up into the palm to grasp its fronds" (Song 7:8).[54] The passage that she quotes from the Song of Songs is given in Latin, without translation.

The vitae often speak of specific parts of the Latin liturgy, but unlike quotation of scriptural passages these references in Latin are seldom translated. Mention of the liturgical text is used to mark either the time of the events described or the context in which a mystical experience occurs. The liturgy was Latin as the women learned it and hence was not in need of translation, unless the author wished to emphasize some aspect of the situation. This liturgical citation in Latin shows some fluency, or at least familiarity with Latin, but is meant to showcase the author's or the individual nun's knowledge of the Word of God, more than the particular language in which that Word existed. The Bible and the liturgy were in Latin and that is how Dominican women knew them and adopted their language into their lives and devotions. It was not so much the language of the words, but the origin of the words that mattered to the women. This can be seen in the Unterlinden Sister-Book, composed in Latin by Catherine of Unterlinden. There are twenty-one identifiable scriptural allusions in the text, almost all from either the Psalms or the New Testament.[55] But whether scripture is cited in Latin or the vernacular is not as important as the knowledge of scripture itself. **20**

Because Latin is often the language of their religiosity, Latin creeps into the visions and dreams of the nuns. The saints, the Virgin Mary, and Christ himself (all of whom usually speak in German except in the case of the Unterlinden Sister-Book) pepper their dialogues or revelations with the occasional Latin word or phrase, made familiar to the recipient of the vision or dream through the liturgy or communal readings. So when Christ appeared to Alheid Ortlib of Nuremberg, he identified himself to her in both Latin and German, saying in both languages, "I am called the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords."[56] At other times the authors of the Sister-Books do the translating. In the life of Adelheit Pfefferhartin, the vespers antiphon *Hodie deus homo factus* marked the beginning of a mystical experience for the nun. The author of the St. Katharinenthal text wanted to make sure her audience understood the importance of this song, so she supplied her readers (or listeners) with a translation, saying, "which means in German 'Today God has become man.'"[57] In the life of the Töss nun Anna of Klingnau, she has a vision of Christ in which he calls himself the *reparator*, which Anna herself translated into German as restorer.[58] **21**

Both Latin and German had a function in the spirituality of Dominican women. **22**

> Dominican sisters were not denied access to Latin culture because of their gender; after all, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the nuns in convents of the older monastic tradition continued the use of the Latin language. From the foundation of their order, the Dominican sisters actively chose to use the vernacular whenever possible. They did this not only because of the

> conditions in which they lived but because of the potential which the vernacular had as an expression of a transformed spirituality. The Dominican approach to the religious life was much more direct and individual, and therefore the vernacular served them well.[59]

The use of German dialects was very important for the rapid growth of German female mysticism in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and vice-versa, but the vernacular did not completely usurp Latin. The vernacular may have given individuality, but Latin conferred authority and the aura of divinity. And when it remained in the arena of familiar vocabulary, learned by novices within the monastic walls as it was with most paraliturgical devotions, it could easily be understood by the female monastic audience untrained in the complexities of scholastic Latin. While there was a shift in this period from a predominately Latin-based spirituality to one that was vernacular based, it was not a complete transformation. Among documents of practice this shift was almost complete (from the women's point of view), but within those sources that provide evidence of female Dominican spirituality, the vernacular never achieved full sway because Latin, as the language of the church, had a continued presence in their daily lives. Nowhere is this continued Latin presence more clear than in the surviving liturgical manuscripts.

The Manuscripts of German Dominican Women

23

Cross References:
Table 3: Liturgical Manuscripts from Unterlinden, St. Katharinenthal, Adelhausen, Maria Magdalena, St. Agnes, and St. Katharina.
Table 4: Liturgical Manuscripts from Southern German Female Dominican Monasteries.

A survey of manuscripts belonging to the six female Dominican houses in this study provides insight into the Latin textual environment in which the women were immersed and which informed their spirituality. The vast majority of surviving manuscripts are liturgical in nature. These texts were used to perform the daily monastic offices and to celebrate the Mass. Liturgical manuscripts shed light on the regularized, sanctioned spirituality of a monastery. They also provided the enclosed women with a vocabulary that is then seen in their paraliturgical devotions. A comparison between these manuscripts and a broader survey of manuscripts belonging to female Dominican houses in the region, including the core six, shows that most manuscripts from the core houses were those commonly surviving for all female communities of the Order within Germany.

24

The 1256 General Chapter of the Dominican Order, led by the Master General Humbert of Romans, called for the creation of a manuscript prototype for the Order's liturgical texts. The General Chapters of 1257, 1258, 1259 and 1265 ordered that this text be the one copied for all Dominican usage and also be used to correct already existing texts, although the manuscript

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itself was not completed until 1259-60.[60] This exemplar included fourteen books: an ordinary, antiphonal, lectionary, Psalter, collectar, Martyrology, processional, gradual, conventual missal, the book of Gospels, the book of Epistles, the small missal, pulpitary, and portable breviary.[61] Papal approval of the prototype was given in 1267.[62] A major revision to these texts was probably made between 1348 and 1355, although the Order's records for the General Chapter during that period do not survive in their entirety.[63]

25

In liturgical manuscripts the annual cycle of celebrations was divided in two ways.[64] The first and most important of these was the Temporale. Here all the prominent Christian holy days, periods (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost), as well as Sundays, were provided with the appropriate liturgy needed to celebrate the events they marked during the Divine Office or Mass throughout the year.[65] The second division of the liturgical year was the Sanctorale.[66] The Sanctorale organized the celebration of saint's days and commemorations throughout the year, beginning in January with Andrew and ending in December with Saint Silvester. The feasts of saints which took place between Christmas and Epiphany were usually included in the Temporale, except in Dominican and usually Cistercian usage. These two orders included the saints with feasts during this period in the Sanctorale.[67] The Dominicans kept the number of saints' days celebrated in the Sanctorale to a minimum during March and April in order to reflect the observance of Lent.[68]

26

Calendars at the beginning of many liturgical manuscripts provide information about the nuns who used the book. Calendars can be found incorporated into Psalters, graduals, processionals, books of rites, duirnals, and martyrologies.[69] Saints' feast days and fixed dates from the Temporale were included in these calendars, which indicated among other things, the rank of each saint's feast (from least to most celebrated: commemoration, three lessons, simplex, semiduplex, duplex, or totum duplex).[70] Many calendars were individualized to include obituary notices commemorating the deaths of community members, important patrons, or clergy associated with the house. Such calendars are useful from the historian's point of view because they include material that allows us to date and geographically locate the makers and users of individual manuscripts. Unfortunately the Dominican calendar was, like its other liturgical materials, fairly uniform across Europe, so the inclusion of particular saints within the calendars cannot be used very effectively to aid in identifying the manuscript's provenance. But since the Order added saints to their calendars or changed the rank of the saint's feast through legislation from the Dominican General Chapter, dating manuscripts by the saints' days commemorated in the calendar is effective. For instance, St. Martha was adopted in 1276, St. Wenceslaus in 1298, in 1300 the feasts for the Nativity of John the Baptist, Peter and Paul, and Mary Magdalene were raised to *totum duplex*. St. Louis

was added in 1301, the feast of Corpus Christi was introduced in 1306, St. Thomas Aquinas in 1323, while St. Vincent of Saragossa was raised to a totum duplex feast in 1328, St. Martial was added in 1336, and finally the translation of St. Thomas Aquinas in 1369.[71]

Like calendars, the litany of saints was included in different types of liturgical manuscripts. The litany commemorated those saints listed in the calendars. The litany was "a series of invocations for deliverance and intercession usually addressed to the Trinity, the Virgin, angels, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins, individually and as groups."[72] Also like calendars, litanies are used to identify the provenance and date of a manuscript. When the Order's legislation added saints' days to the calendar it also added them to the litany, producing a litany common to the entire Order. The doubling or embellishing of certain saints' names, such as St. Dominic or a monastery's patron, help establish where the text might have been used. The nuns were careful to keep the litanies in their manuscripts up to date by adding in new saints in the margins. In addition to being part of the liturgy, the litany of saints served another function as a form of powerful prayer for intercession, often at a deathbed. For instance, as Sophia of Rifelden lay on her deathbed, the nuns of Unterlinden continuously recited the litany of saints over her.[73] The nuns of Engelthal did the same for the sister Berht Makerin of Nuremberg.[74] Calendars and litanies appeared in many of the individual manuscripts discussed below. These manuscripts give us an idea of the extent of the female Dominican textual environment. **27**

In the Beginning: The Psalter

The Psalter was the essential monastic text. It was the vehicle of the primary work of monastics—to pray for themselves and others by performing the Opus Dei. Composed of the 150 Psalms contained in the Old Testament, the Psalter was a compilation of lyrical songs of praise directed at God. They received their name from the psaltery, the instrument for which the biblical King David was said to have composed the songs. Long before the thirteenth century, the Opus Dei (also known as the Divine Office) was divided into eight daily offices or services, based on the canonical hours.[75] In the sixth century, Benedict of Nursia created his Rule for Monks around the celebration of the Divine Office, and at the center he placed the Psalter. All 150 Psalms were to be recited over the course of a week, divided among the eight daily offices with the bulk of them being recited at Matins, Lauds, and Vespers.[76] This practice remained constant throughout the Middle Ages. **28**

Within each manuscript, the Psalter was traditionally divided into sections in one of four arrangements.[77] The first was the five-part or biblical division. The second was the eight-part or liturgical division, based on the eight canonical hours. Despite the impression given by the name of this division, Psalters of this nature were intended for secular, not monastic use. The third arrangement was tripartite, and based on early Irish manuscripts. The final arrangement **29**

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was the ten-part division, which merged the eight-part and three-part divisions. The Psalters used in female Dominican monasteries belonged to this last group.[78] The text was divided at Ps 1 (*Beatus vir*), Ps 26 (*Dominus illuminatio*), Ps 38 (*Dixi custodiam*), Ps 51 (*Quid gloriaris*), Ps 52 (*Dixit insipiens*), Ps 68 (*Salvum me fac*), Ps 80 (*Exultate Deo*), Ps 97 (*Cantate Domino*), Ps 101 (*Domine exaudi*) and Ps 109 (*Dixit Dominus Domino*). In manuscripts the divisions are denoted by the use of large initials and in more elaborate manuscripts by historiated initials or miniatures. Although a handful of Psalters were rather mundane and lacking in any kind of decorative scheme, the biblical origins of the text lent the manuscripts an aura that called for artistic embellishment in honor of the sanctity of the text. Thus many Psalters belonging to female Dominican women in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, even those that contain no miniatures, do show an effort at decoration, though few could be described as overly ornate or lavish. All Psalters begin with a large, often ornate initial B to herald the opening of the Psalms, Beatus vir. This initial was traditionally decorated with a depiction of David playing his psaltery.[79] That the psalms were associated with the biblical figure and his instrument was not lost on Dominican women. In her youth Berht Makerin of Nuremberg suffered a severe illness that caused the other nuns to fear for her death. She assured them that she would not die until King David came and "harped her soul out of her with his playing."[80] Years later she knew her death was approaching when she heard "the sweetest psaltery that a person had ever heard."[81]

30

The Psalter was a popular devotional text in the early and high Middle Ages, both in monastic communities and the secular world of the laity, as evidenced by the numerous famous examples of the genre, best known for their pictorial cycles.[82] Apart from the manner of dividing the 150 Psalms, the Psalter never changed. The essential text was never added to or deleted from, except to correct those errors made by a careless scribe. While readings, antiphons, or responses might be added to the margins of Psalters or incorporated into the text proper during the copying process, creating what was known as a ferial or choral Psalter, the Psalter itself remained the same, no matter who the user was. This explains the large number of relatively early Psalters in the hands of Dominican women in the thirteenth century. A Psalter would be the first liturgical text required in a newly established monastic foundation. And since the text never changed, older manuscripts could remain in use for

Cross References:
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Table 4: Liturgical Manuscripts from Southern German Female Dominican Monasteries.

centuries. It was not necessary for a new monastery to wait for manuscripts to be produced for their use, nor were there order-specific modifications that needed to be made to the essential text. Of the twenty Psalters or Psalter-Hymnals owned by south German Dominican women, constituting just over a quarter of the surviving manuscripts (26.3%), half were

created in the thirteenth century and the remaining half in the following century . The distribution of manuscripts among the six core houses is also fairly even. By 1300 there were five volumes, with six further examples being added in the fourteenth century. These manuscripts represent 25.6 percent of the surviving manuscripts from the six communities. All of these figures indicate a steady usage of the text.

The Psalter was easily memorized by monastic men and women. Repetition of the entire text fifty-two times a year, or more if one was particularly pious, made it a work that many women must have known by heart. The vita of Margaret Finkin remarks that from the day she learned the Psalter until her death she recited the entire work every day.[83] **31**

Since the Psalter was arranged with little distinction to monastic order, it is often difficult to ascertain the provenance of many of these texts. In some cases, the insertion of Dominican-related imagery indicates the original or intended owner of the manuscript as Dominican (either singularly or corporately). The most common indication is the addition of Saint Dominic to an illumination cycle.[84] Another is the doubling or embellishing of Dominic's name in the litany of saints when a litany is included in the manuscript. Other signs of ownership or affiliation, especially in connection with Psalters not originally commissioned for Dominican foundations or as collaboration for internal evidence, include ownership notices, shelf or catalogue numbers, and distinctive binding decorations. **32**

Psalters associated with southern German Dominican monasteries in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are varied. They range in size from 10 x 5 cm to 20 x 15 cm. Most contain some abbreviation, both in the text and rubrics. The prevalent color scheme is black, red, and blue ink, although some also use green, yellow, and orange. We can compare some of the Psalters belonging to Dominican women with Humbert of Roman's Psalter contained in the prototype manuscript for the Order, which was a ferial Psalter. It contained the responsories and versicles for the hours, the different tones of singing the psalms, and their "various 'mediations' and terminations," otherwise known as modes.[85] The Psalms are given with their antiphons, followed by the canticles—*Magnificat, Benedictus, Nunc Dimittis, Quicumque, Credo*— the litany of the saints, the *Te Deum*, and the Office of the Virgin.[86] A hymnal was appended to this. However, not all Dominican Psalters followed Humbert's template. An Unterlinden Psalter from the latter half of the thirteenth century is non-ferial.[87] It does contain the responsories and versicles at the beginning with tonary and modes, but also includes a calendar, and then a non-ferial Psalter, unadorned with antiphons or any other material. The Psalms are then followed by the materials stipulated by Humbert's manuscript, including the hymnal. **33**

34

A contemporary example from one of the Strasbourg women's communities is a ferial Psalter that follows the format of the prototype manuscript.[88] The opening of Psalm 68 in this example shows the invitatorium and the antiphons that the nuns and their choir leader should sing. Also from the close of the thirteenth century is a non-ferial Psalter from St. Katharine in Freiburg.[89] Its contents are the same as the manuscript from Unterlinden, except for the order of the materials that follow the canticles, which in this case run *Benedictus, Magnificat, Nunc Dimittis, Pater noster, Credo, Te Deum*, *Quicumque*, and then the litany of the saints. There is no Office for the Virgin or hymnal. The manuscript does, however, contain two full-page illuminated miniatures. They appear on folio 12. The recto side shows St. Catherine and a female saint who may be Mary Magdalene, while the verso side depicts the Adoration of the Magi.[90] Most female Dominican Psalters are not decorated with miniatures. Of the twenty examples, only four contain miniatures or historiated initials, but all the examples have decorated initials. A late thirteenth-century Dominican Psalter now at Nuremberg, probably from a Bavarian house, has the most elaborate illumination cycle of the group.[91] There is copious use of gold illumination and bright colors that highlight the nineteen full-page miniatures and ten historiated initials in the manuscript. The miniatures and initials work together to illustrate the life of Christ, with additional portraits of the apostles accompanying the calendar pages and a depiction of St. Dominic opening Psalm 97.

Graduals, Antiphonals, and Processionals

35

Among southern German female Dominican houses, the number of Psalters is surpassed by graduals and antiphonals from the beginning of the fourteenth century.[92] These texts represent 27.6 percent of the manuscripts in the larger survey (Table 4) and almost half, 48.8 percent of the surviving manuscripts from the six core houses (Table 3). As the monasteries and the Order itself became firmly established, their liturgical requirements grew. These types of manuscripts provided the texts for the expanding liturgy as developed for the Order in its prototype manuscripts. Graduals contained the choral parts of the Mass, arranged according to the Temporale, the Sanctorale, and then the Common of the Saints.[93] They included graduals (responses and versicles to the Epistle readings of the Mass), introits (the first sung elements of the Mass), tracts, alleluias, offertories, and communions.[94] Sometimes they also gave the sequences (extended melodies sung by a soloist or the choir). There were twenty-seven used throughout the year, many of them dedicated to the saints.[95] According to Humbert's prototype, the gradual should instruct the choir how to sing the choral elements of the Mass, including the *Asperges, Kyrie, Gloria in excelsis, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei,* and the *Gloria Patri* throughout the liturgical year.[96] The graduals used by Dominican women all follow Humbert's format and apart from stylistic and decorative differences vary little, although not all of them include the sequences.

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The graduals of Dominican nuns are certainly large, in some cases monumental, but none of those surveyed are composed of more than a single volume. Two of the graduals from St. Katharinenthal, one now in Nuremberg, the other in Zurich measure 44.5 cm x 32 cm and 48 cm x 35 cm respectively.[97] Two Unterlinden graduals are almost identical, measuring 48 cm x 33 cm and 48 cm x 32 cm.[98] **36**

Graduals could be decorative as well as functional. Like Psalters they often contained historiated initials or at least decorated initials that marked important liturgical events such as Christmas. The introit for the first Sunday in Advent, *Ad te levavi*, was usually one of the most elaborately decorated as this introit opened the Temporale and hence the gradual proper.[99] None of the graduals of German Dominican women were decorated with miniatures, only decorated or historiated initials. In the similar pair of Unterlinden graduals there are six historiated and illuminated initials each, all marking the same liturgical passages.[100] A third gradual from that house has no such initials, although it mirrors the other two manuscripts in all other respects.[101] Instead, more simplified decorated initials mark important passages in the text. The two graduals from St. Katharinenthal contain much more extensive decorative schemes, with many illuminated initials throughout the Temporale and Sanctorale.[102] **37**

Antiphonals contained everything sung for the Divine Office arranged by the Temporale, Sanctorale, and the Common of the Saints. In Humbert's manuscript, the text is divided in two parts. **38**

> The first contains the antiphons, responsories, and the various invitatories; also the *Salve Regina*, the *Ave Regina*, and the *Te Deum*. The second part is really a hymnal. It contains all the hymns with music of the entire Divine Office. In the Common of the Saints, Humbert gives the various ways of singing the hymns of the little hours, vespers, matins and lauds.[103]

The manuscripts examined here all adhere to the prototype, although not all of them include the hymns. None of the antiphonals include a calendar or the litany of saints.[104] "Like the gradual, antiphonaries are usually large manuscripts for easy visibility by the members of the choir, and are often in two to six volumes."[105] Antiphonals were sometimes divided by the season, although none of the women's manuscripts were divided in this manner. However, many of the antiphonals belonging to male Dominican houses were broken up into two volumes for winter and summer usage.[106] Occasionally, houses had diurnals, manuscripts containing antiphonal materials for the daytime offices but excluding compline and matins. Five such manuscripts survive. The material for compline and matins were recorded in nocturnals, none of which survive from the houses.

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Some antiphonals are even larger than the graduals mentioned above. Two antiphonals from Adelhausen are 53 cm x 37.5 cm and 49 cm x 16.5 cm.[107] We gain a sense of their weight and cumbersomeness in the life of Beli of Liebenberg. Beli, who had been bedridden for three weeks, heard a voice ordering her to rise up and go to Matins. This she did carrying the two large books from which she read the Office, two books that she normally could not carry.[108] Although the type of book is not specified, they were probably liturgical in nature. Usually these manuscripts remained in place in the choir mounted on lecterns, because their size and weight (they were bound in leather between thick wooden boards) made them awkward to move frequently. Diurnals tend to be on a smaller scale than antiphonals, suggesting that the two night offices involved a lot of singing by the choir. They range from a diminutive 11.5 cm x 7.5 cm to 15.6 cm x 11.3 cm. **39**

The antiphonals of German Dominican women are less decorated than their graduals. Whereas the graduals sometimes have fairly extensive illumination cycles in their initials, the initials in the antiphonals are merely decorated. As in the graduals, the opening initials of the Temporale are emphasized prominently. **40**

Cross Reference:
Table 3: Liturgical Manuscripts from Unterlinden, St. Katharinenthal, Adelhausen, Maria Magdalena, St. Agnes, and St. Katharina. **41**

The manuscript diversification of 1300 also saw the proliferation of special office books for processions and essential rituals.[109] Among the broader survey of manuscripts (Table 4), there are as many processionals as there are graduals, antiphons, and diurnals together, 21 out of 76 or 27.6 percent.[110] However, from the six core houses, these types of manuscripts represent only 14 percent of the total. The books tended to be small and easily portable by individual nuns or pairs of nuns. This also explains the large number of texts. A smaller number of graduals or antiphonals placed in fixed locations near the nuns' choirstalls could supply the entire community with accessible texts from which to recite during the Opus Dei or Mass (at least one volume for each side of the choir). But the activity of processing and actively participating in rites such as that of burial, would have required smaller, moveable texts presumably in greater numbers.

The processions included in the processional were usually for the Purification of the Virgin, Palm Sunday, and other Easter-related events. These included the washing of the apostles' feet (*ad mandatum*), Easter itself, the Feast of the Ascension of Christ, the Assumption of the Virgin, and sometimes the dedication of the Church and the receiving of officials and royalty. Like many of the other liturgical manuscripts, certain elements help identify those processionals belonging to Dominican women. Processionals sometimes detail the altars and **42**

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their patrons to be washed during the Paschal season.[111] If the altars listed can be matched to the known altar dedications of specific religious houses, then the manuscript's users can possibly be identified.

43

Occasionally these manuscripts have miniatures, as in the case of two processionals from communities in Strasbourg. Both date to the early fourteenth century. One has six full-page miniatures, whereas the other manuscript has eight smaller miniatures placed before the opening initial of the procession that they mark.[112] An early-fourteenth-century processional, now in Freiburg but not clearly linked to any of the four Dominican houses there, also contains miniatures.[113] They are four rather simple images on one face of the folio page. They show Christ's entry into Jerusalem [1v], Christ washing the feet of the apostles [9av], the Assumption of the Virgin [31r], and the Nativity [36v]. They seem to have been produced separately from the processional as only one of them has writing on the other side.[114] They may have been produced in the monastery and added to the appropriate processions in the manuscript. However, for the most part processionals were plain, serving a functional rather than decorative purpose. They had no calendars or litanies to be decorated.

Other Liturgical Manuscripts

44

The majority of extant female Dominican manuscripts contain those texts that were performed in community as choral efforts. In contrast, texts utilized by only one person during the Office or Mass survive in far fewer numbers, perhaps because there were fewer copies of these manuscripts to begin with. From the six houses under consideration, these manuscripts include Martyrologies and collectars.

45

Martyrologies contain the lives and martyrdoms of saints, selections of which were read daily during the Office of Prime on the appropriate day. The arrangement of the Martyrology followed the Sanctorale. Dominicans used the Usuard, attributed to the ninth-century French monk, Usuard.[115] The Martyrology along with the liturgy familiarized Dominican women with a multitude of saints to whom they could address their prayers. At Engelthal a sister heard sweet harp music accompanying the death of the nun Anne Vorhtlin of Nuremberg. The women understood that it was Saint Achacius and his fellow martyrs who had come to be with Anne as she departed the earthly life.[116] Another nun, Diemut Ebner of Nuremberg, said a prayer everyday to Saint Gervase. One time that saint's brother, Protase, appeared to her and said, "Why do you not also pray to me? I am as high in heaven as he is: you should also pray to me." And Diemut did so fervently.[117] These women may have known about these saints from hearing their lives read during the Office, at chapter, or even in the refectory.

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46

Neither of the two Martyrologies from the core houses exists as its own manuscript. The Unterlinden example is found in a manuscript that dates to the end of the thirteenth century with some additional fourteenth-century material, as well as continuous additions to the necrology in the calendar.[118] The collection begins with a computation table and a calendar (incorporating a necrology for the community). This is followed by instructions for assigning offices for the week to male clergy, a table of contents listing basically the rubrics of the Martyrology, and then the Martyrology itself. The manuscript also contains the litany of saints, incipits for the annual cycle of readings from the Gospels known as an Evangelary, a copy of the nuns' constitutions, and additional liturgical instructions not included in the constitutions.[119] The collection of material included with the Martyrology is similar to that found in Humbert of Romans' prototype of the 1250s.[120] His prototype manuscript begins with a calendar of the obituaries of the Master Generals of the Order, followed by the contents or rubrics of the Martyrology, instructions for assigning offices for the week, and then the Usuard Martyrology. Next were the Gospel readings used at *pretiosa* (text recited after the reading from the Martyrology in the chapterhouse after the Office of Prime).[121] At the close of the manuscript are the Augustinian Rule and Raymond of Peñafort's version of the Order's constitutions.[122] A comparison between the prototype and the Unterlinden manuscript shows that the necrology is specific to the codex's community, in the first case the men in charge of the Order and in the second the women of the Colmar house. The prototype does not contain a computation table nor the litany of the saints, while the Unterlinden example does not contain the Rule. The nuns made good use of the manuscript, adding rubrics and marginal notes to the text at later dates. For instance, the outer margin at the end of the constitutions is marked, "This is the end, stop here" in Latin and German.[123] The nuns kept the manuscript up to the Order's requirements by adding saints to the litany. We know that part of the text was written before 1323 because Thomas Aquinas is added in the margin with indications that he should be inserted after Dominic in the list of saints [140v], and the saint's two feasts (his death and his translation) are marked in the margins of the Martyrology [46r and 34r].

47

The Martyrology from Maria Magdalena in Freiburg [SAF, B1 162] is a later example from the second half of the fourteenth century. This example also has other materials bound in with it. The manuscript is composed of two halves, the latter part containing two early-sixteenth-century anniversary books. The first half begins with a necrology and calendar for the nuns, prioresses, and confessors of Maria Magdalena, as well as the General Masters of the Order based upon the Humbert prototype. The Martyrology begins with a computation table for the lunar cycles and calculating months. The manuscript continues with the incipits for the Gospel readings arranged by Temporale and Sanctorale, followed by the nuns' constitutions. After that is the material added to the constitutions, then the beginning of the litany of the saints that breaks off with the martyr Saint Vincent. Except for the placement of the litany of the saints, the text is the same as the one at Unterlinden. Neither contains the Rule of St. Augustine, which perhaps reflects a higher worth placed on the way of life established by the

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constitutions. The sixteenth-century binding of two rather disparate sections suggests they may have been connected in the women's eyes. On the one hand is a text celebrating the Church's martyrs to whom the women prayed, on the other are the anniversary books, texts containing the names of departed nuns and patrons for whom the living nuns should pray. Those who should be saved by prayer were remembered in the same volume with those who would hopefully intercede on their behalf, two halves brought together by the nuns of Maria Magdalena. And this applies to the earlier sections of both the Unterlinden and Magdalena manuscripts. The calendars with their necrological entries also served this purpose. When the saints were remembered, so too were those departed who benefited from prayers to the saints.

48 The final type of liturgical manuscript from these houses are collectars, which contained the collects or prayers for the different hours of the Divine Office.[124] According to Humbert's prototype, the collectar starts with a calendar and then describes "the manner of singing all the *capitula*, the blessings before the lessons in matins, the versicles before lauds, all the antiphons, all the prayers (or *orationes*)."[125] It was meant to be used by the hebdomadarian (the choir leader for the week), and hence was not a choral book like those manuscripts described above. That only three collectars survive is not surprising, because each monastery only required one copy of the text in order to organize for the Divine Office.

49 The manuscripts of German Dominican women were mainly choral liturgical manuscripts. They were the texts that the women themselves read, sang, recited, memorized, and heard others sing and recite. The words within them, and often their decorations and pictures, were not hidden away from the nuns. They were a constant, accessible source of inspiration to their piety, their prayers, and their visions.

Textual Spirituality and the Two Johns

50 Although all kinds of texts could support the spirituality of Dominican women, liturgical manuscripts are especially important because they were a constant presence in the daily lives of all Dominican nuns. They provided a vocabulary of words and images shared in common and made a significant contribution to the sensual environment of the women's spirituality. These liturgical manuscripts indicate the importance of specific saints to religious communities either through the saints' inclusion in the calendar at the beginning of a manuscript or the litany of saints. Large and / or elaborate initials at the beginning of the text for a saint's feast day also marked saints who had special significance. We have already seen the female Dominican devotion to John the Evangelist and John the Baptist as it played out at the intersection of the visual and spiritual environment of the women's monasteries,

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especially in the form of the Christus-Johannes-Gruppen.[126] Therefore it is not surprising that the two saints appear with some prominence in the textual environment of German Dominican women.

51

In texts, as in sculpture, John the Evangelist continues to be the Beloved of Christ, the one He loved the most and the one who suffered the most at the foot of the Cross. But where female Dominican spirituality comes into contact with the textual environment, other aspects of John's life are developed. One of these is the saint as a figure of authorship. Not only was he the author of the fourth Gospel, which proclaimed that "[i]n the beginning was the Word and the Word was God," but medieval scholars also attributed several biblical letters to him, as well as the Book of Revelations. A common medieval depiction of John the Evangelist was the author's portrait as seen at the bottom of an initial from the Nuremberg gradual of St. Katharinenthal.[127] The saint is shown composing his Gospel, seated at a lectern, pen or stylus in hand.[128] In other non-visual ways John was portrayed as an author and associated with the texts he wrote or contributed to. For example, a sister in the monastery of Engelthal saw John come to the deathbed of Elsbeth of Klingenburg in the company of the other apostles. Standing over the dying woman, John read from his Gospel, beginning *In principio*.[129] However, while such depictions can be found among images of the saint associated with German Dominican women, they do not constitute a majority.[130] Rather, images from the female Dominican textual environment tend to emphasize other aspects of John's life and passion.

52

When the St. Katharinenthal novice Kathrin Brümsin had troubling learning liturgical texts, she prayed to John for help. He appeared to her in a dream celebrating Mass for the community, which culminated in her being brought to the altar. The saint placed a book with golden letters before her and told her that she must recite the sequence for him that began, *Verbum dei deo natum*. Kathrin read out all twenty-four verses of the sequence as directed by John. When she awoke, she was able to recite from memory the entire text to an incredulous nun.[131] Similarly, although none of the community's extant manuscripts were written entirely in golden letters, there are certainly numerous examples of golden initials among the surviving texts. Of particular interest are the two graduals from St. Katharinenthal. Both of these contain illuminated initials in which Saint John is dressed as a bishop (as he appeared in Kathrin's dream) celebrating Mass. In the earlier Nuremberg gradual, the image is less elaborate, focusing on John himself, while the later Zurich gradual provides the saint with an audience, which anachronistically contains two Dominican nuns.[132] In the second and later example, the initial *E* in which the scene is placed begins the *Exiit sermo*, which closed the saints' section within the Proper of the Saints.

53

Cross Reference:

Sequence for John the Evangelist

However, in the earlier Nuremberg gradual, the initial depicting John is the *V* opening the sequence *Verbum dei*, the one that Kathrin Brümsin learned under the tutelage of the saint.[133] This sequence was seen as so important that the Sister-Book's author, in recapping Kathrin's life later in the text, provided a translation of all twenty-four verses in Middle High German along with the incipits of the Latin verses.[134] Although we know the date of the Nuremberg Gradual is 1300, we do not know the date of Kathrin's dream. Did the miniature perhaps suggest the imagery of her dream, providing her with a proper depiction of John the Evangelist? Or did her dream become a monastic legend, entering into the communal memory of the house and eventually finding its way into the manuscript illuminations of the community's graduals? Since neither of the two initials appear in sections of the manuscripts created in the monastery, their inclusion would have been specified when they were commissioned. Although the scene is meant to represent John's preaching of his final sermon before his martyrdom, one does wonder why, of the multitude of images associated with the saint, just this one was given prominence. It is a scene that is much less frequently depicted, although it does appear in an antiphonal / hymnal from about 1300 that once belonged to a male Dominican house and now resides in Karlsruhe. This particular depiction of John inhabits a marginal architectural frame, where he kneels before the altar upon which is placed a book bearing his name. John's face and praying hands are upturned toward three figures that peer out from the upper part of the frame. They are Peter and Jacob, conveniently labeled, and, in the center Christ.

54

John's name even receives special treatment within the pages of female Dominican manuscripts. In several instances his name is adorned and embellished with black or blue ink, surrounded by flourishes. Similar decorative schemes are also used in the Nuremberg gradual for the Virgin Mary and once for Saint Catherine (the monastery's patron).[135] In the Zurich gradual, much the same decoration scheme is used. The names of Mary, the two Johns (the Evangelist and the Baptist), and Saints Paul, Dominic, Nicholas, and Catherine, as well as the Crown of Thorns are all similarly adorned. But only Mary and both Johns repeat with any frequency. The others only occur once or twice. This scheme also extends to the incipits linked to the saint. Also decorated with filigree is the familiar introit, *In medio ecclesie*, in which the initial *I* is inhabited by ten scenes from the life of John the Evangelist.[136]

55

John's importance to the nuns of St. Katharinenthal is most evident in the Zurich gradual. Of the seventy-two miniatures and historiated initials in the manuscript, thirty-four contain John the Evangelist. Most of these initials are contained within the Proper for the Feast for the saint. In a departure from the format and decorative program found elsewhere in the manuscript, the Feast of Saint John is copiously illuminated. The beginning of each verse within the Feast is marked by a small miniature of the saint. These images show the various events of John's ministry, along with the occasional rendering of John with images from the

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Book of Revelations. Twenty-four of these mini-miniatures grace this section of the manuscript. The abundant attention given to the saint emphasizes his role as the Bringer of the Word. The nuns of St. Katharinenthal link words with John the Evangelist, reinforcing his authority as the author who proclaimed that the Word was God and God was the Word. The words that celebrate this saint were favored by the women, both in their written form on the pages of parchment and in their sung form as prayers honoring him.

While the Zurich gradual shows the importance of John the Evangelist for the nuns of St. Katharinenthal, the Nuremberg gradual celebrates John the Baptist. It contains eighteen surviving images, five of John the Baptist and two of the Evangelist. Unfortunately some of the historiated initials have been removed, cut out in the intervening centuries, but none of them appear to have contained John the Baptist.[137] **56**

Other female Dominican houses had a special devotion to the Saint John the Baptist who was also a patron of the Order. Unterlinden was dedicated to John the Baptist, its full name being Saint John the Baptist under the Linden Trees. At Unterlinden, John the Baptist's connection to the monastery is made visually clear by inclusion in the illumination cycles of two of the monastery's fourteenth-century graduals (the only two with illuminations). The saint is recognizable as John the Baptist from the hairy cloak and the Agnus Dei that he carries. In the first example, he is venerated by three Dominican nuns who are visible in the lower left corner.[138] The initial they inhabit marks the opening of the feast of the birth of John the Baptist. The other scenes in this gradual are from Christ's life. They show Christ with a praying Dominican nun, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and finally the granting of the Holy Spirit. The last image is the only one other than John's initial that depicts saintly figures, but the initial is meant to mark the beginning of Pentecost, not any particular saint's feast. John the Baptist is the only saint singled out for inclusion in this liturgical manuscript. The other illuminated gradual contains the same sequence of historiated initials, but with less detail.[139] John is no longer in the company of his venerators, but he remains the only saint depicted in the Sanctorale of the gradual. The similarity between the two graduals, with an identical program of illuminations, may indicate that they were intended to be a set, one used by each side of the choir. However, they were not illuminated by the same artist, which suggests one may have served as the exemplar for the other. **57**

John the Baptist's persona as understood by Dominican women was epitomized by his title the Baptist. Ite of Hallau had a vision in which she witnessed the baptism of Christ. "Then she saw our Lord in the holy hands of St. John, as he was baptized by him, and she heard the Father's voice: *hic est filius meus dilectus*[140] and she saw the holy ghost on his head in the form of a dove. And she was in this grace for eight days."[141] Unlike other passages in the St. Katharinenthal Sister-Book, the Latin in Ite's vision is not translated, perhaps because the women were so familiar with scriptural passages concerning one of their favorite saints. At **58**

Engelthal, Alheit of Trochau had a vision in which Christ revealed to her that she had not been properly baptized. This was remedied, at least as far as the heavenly authorities were concerned, when Christ allowed St. John to baptize Alheit. This vision took place in the choir where the other sisters saw the water fall on the nun.[142] Manuscript illuminations of John baptizing Christ would most certainly have supported the visions that the nuns had of the saint. Such images were included in the Nuremberg and Zurich graduals, as well as other Dominican manuscripts, like the Nuremberg Psalter.[143]

Not only did John baptize Christ, but the saint was also the first to recognize him, serving as a witness to the Divinity of Christ. It was he who exclaimed that Christ was the Lamb of God.[144] In the Nuremberg gradual, Saint John the Baptist witnesses the resurrection. John can be seen on the left, watching a typical Resurrection scene. His separation from the scene may represent his waiting in Limbo for the resurrected Christ to come lead the worthy souls to Paradise.[145] His role as a messenger and witness can be seen in the life of Alhaid Ortlibin of Nuremberg. Shortly before her death, John the Baptist appeared to her and said, "I bring you greetings from our Lord Jesus Christ, that he has surely granted to you eternal life; he does this as reward for all that you have done to serve him. . . "[146] **59**

Elsewhere, illuminations celebrate the birth of John the Baptist. The Nuremberg gradual has an illuminated initial for both the announcement to John's unbelieving father of John's conception by the angel, and John's birth.[147] Apart from the birth of Mary on folio 170v, this is the only other birth celebrated in the manuscript. At one time there probably was a Nativity initial, but it has since been removed. **60**

The martyrdom of John the Baptist receives little attention in the devotions of German Dominican nuns. Certainly they celebrated the feast of his martyrdom, and Unterlinden received an indulgence in association with that feast, but the visual images and the texts that record the nuns' spiritual life rarely bring up John the Baptist's death. Among images of the saint, more emphasis is given to the announcement of his conception, his early life, and his adult ministry, than to his martyrdom. An initial *I* in the Nuremberg gradual contains six scenes from the life of John the Baptist.[148] At the top is the Visitation of Mary and Elizabeth. Below that is the child John taking a bath (perhaps meant to echo his role as a baptizer), and then John appears as a hermit in the wilderness. The scenes continue with John preaching in the wilderness, followed by the Baptism of Christ, and at the very end we have the Beheading of John. **61**

A similar initial in the Zurich gradual also contains six scenes from John's life, but none of his martyrdom. That image is saved for the feast celebrating the event. Instead, the six scenes emphasize other aspects of the saint's life, some similar to the Nuremberg manuscript and others different. This initial also begins John's life with the Visitation. The sequence then **62**

skips ahead to the adult John in the wilderness, and then to the saint preaching, an appropriate image for the patron saint of the Order of Preachers. This is followed by John holding the Agnus Dei and recognizing Christ before the apostles. John's death is entirely skipped over and the sequence picks up John's life (or rather, life after death) with Christ leading John and other holy people out of Limbo. The sequence ends with the Last Judgment. Christ judges the resurrected, with Mary on his right and John the Baptist on his left. This placement of John, in the place occupied by the other John in Crucifixion scenes, links the two men.

The popularity of the cults of the two Johns, especially at St. Katharinenthal, may explain the linking of the two saints. One such connection can be seen in the Nuremberg gradual on folio 250r that opens the hymn *Gabrielis vox jucunda* for the birth of John the Baptist.[149] This section of the text was produced within the monastery, which accounts for the visual decoration of this folio. There are two images on the page, first the historiated initial *G* and then the marginal drawing on the upper right. In the pen and ink initial, one sees John the Baptist praying in the wilderness, surrounded by birds and animals. In the upper right hand margin is the evangelist symbol for John—the eagle. In its talons, it clutches a scroll upon which is written the incipit for a passage in John's Gospel reporting the activities of John the Baptist. The scroll reads, "*Fuit homo missus a deo cui nomen* . . ." The audience was expected to know that the verse concluded with, *erat Johannes*, the missing name made obvious by the verse's placement near the image of John in the wilderness.[150] On this page, John the Evangelist introduces the praying man to the viewer, indicating his privileged place in the Gospel of John. And the name of John receives special treatment, encased in pen flourishes. **63**

Elsewhere, the two saints appear together in the initial in the Zurich gradual, which begins the feast for the Nativity of John the Baptist.[151] The initial contains two scenes. In the upper one, the adult Baptist points to Christ in a mandala, acknowledging that Christ is the Lamb of God. Below, the other John can be seen writing his Gospel on a desk supported by an angel. The scene seems to suggest that John the Evangelist is recording John the Baptist's witnessing of Christ's divinity. Even though John the Baptist appears in all four of the Gospels, he is always associated visually with the Gospel of John. **64**

The interaction of Dominican women with their textual environment was acoustic, visual, and tactile. Books were read aloud and heard, they were viewed for both their text and images, and they were touched and manipulated, opened and closed. That Dominican women saw their spirituality closely tied to books is evident from the depictions of the Order's nuns that found their way into the manuscripts. Nuns can be seen observing biblical figures, like the nuns surrounding John the Baptist in one of the Unterlinden graduals. They serve as audiences for hagiographic events, like the nuns listening to John the Evangelist preach in the Zurich gradual. Nuns are also shown in the margins of initials, like in the birth of Mary in the **65**

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Nuremberg gradual, where a kneeling habited figure venerates the newborn child.[152] Another nun in a Strasbourg processional observes Christ washing the feet of an apostle. Throughout the Zurich gradual the small figure of a nun, labeled as Katharina of Rannegge can be found watching many scenes. And finally there are the Dominican nuns who open the illuminated Unterlinden graduals, devout praying nuns kneeling beneath the throne of Christ.

These images reinforce the idea that these are the women's books. And there is a close connection between sight, sound, and spirituality. Words and texts—written and spoken—were important for the spirituality of Dominican women. Because of this, they favored those saints who were associated with words, like John the Evangelist who wrote the words of the Gospel and proclaimed the Word of God. They went further and also connected this John with the other John—John the Baptist—the patron saint of their Order, an Order that preached the Word. The saints' words on the pages of liturgical manuscripts became cherished emblems of the saints. Words connected to them (their names, sequences in their honor, and the texts for their Feast days) all received special treatment. And because of the saints' special place in the women's spirituality, their images appear frequently in the texts from these communities. **66**

This honoring of the two Johns and the words associated with them leads us back to the role of language and image in female Dominican spirituality. The large number of liturgical manuscripts that survive, and the women's attitude toward Latin as the language of divinity and authority, show the prevalence of that language in their conception of their spirituality. Their individual devotions were often in the vernacular, but their communal devotions embraced the Latin words that constituted the rituals of their community. Together, Latin and German, written and spoken words, images and objects, all combined to create a sensual environment rich in the sanctity that these women desired. **67**

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Notes

Note 1: "Ie siecher du bist, ie lieber du mir bist.
Ie verschmächter du bist, ie necher du mir bist.
Ie ermer du bist, ie gelicher du mir bist." TSB, 37.

Note 2: KSB, 125–26. This appearance of the Christ Child is very similar to the experience of her fellow nun, Anna of Ramschwag, mentioned below. KSB, 128–29.

Note 3: "so si bettete an irem büchlin, so wart es ir ettwan guldin in iren henden, die büchstaben vnd alles samet, vnd werete das alle die wile so si bettete." ASB, 173.

Note 4: See Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993). While Clanchy's study focuses on England and on contractual records in particular, the proliferation of documentation that accompanied the change that he describes could be found in most parts of Europe.

Note 5: See Herbert Grundmann, "Litteratus-illitteratus," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 40 (1958): 1–65; and Clanchy, 224–52.

Note 6: See the lectures "Erziehungs- und Bildungsmöglichkeiten," "Bildung und Lesefähigkeit der Frauen," and "Zur Lesefähigkeit der mittelalterlichen Gesellschaft," in Manfred Günter Scholz, *Hören und Lesen: Studien zur primären Rezeption der Literatur im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert* (Wiebaden: Franz Steiner, 1980), 202–5, 205–11, 221–30, respectively. "During the Hohenstaufen period, as in the preceding age, the customary education for women of rank consisted chiefly in learning to read the Psalter. This sort of education was common, it is quite clear, but of course one infers that it meant only a very limited knowledge of Latin. A broad training in Latin letters was still considered an unusual and notable achievement for a woman . . . " James Thompson, *The Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages* (New York: Franklin, 1963), 100. Heloise in twelfth century Paris certainly falls under this last category. In Germany, the women with "a broad training in Latin letters" were to be found within the monastic walls, like Hildegard of Bingen and the nuns of Helfta. See Mary Jeremy Finnegan, *The Women of Helfta: Scholars and Mystics* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1991). However, not all cloistered women necessarily had a high degree of Latin literacy. See Alison I. Beach, *Women as Scribes: Book Production and Monastic Reform In Twelfth-Century Bavaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For more on the education of women in Europe, see Joan M. Ferrante, "The Education of Women in the Middle Ages in Theory, Fact, and Fantasy," in *Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past,* ed. Patricia H. Labalme (New York: New York University Press, 1980), 9–42.

Note 7: This can be seen by comparing documents in FUB, TUB, and UBB.

Note 8: See for example those letters edited in Heinrich Finke, *Ungedruckte Dominikanerbriefe des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1891). All of the letters are in Latin.

Note 9: See Barbara Newman, "Authority, Authenticity, and the Repression of Heloise," in *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1995), 46–75.

Note 10: SAF, B4 101.

Note 11: SAF, B1 152, 44rb.

Note 12: BVC, ms. 578; and SAF, B1 162.

Note 13: ZBZ, Rh. 99b.

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Note 14: One such study has looked at the actual language or words that the women used in their mysticism and how they may have contributed to the development of mystical vocabulary. Hester Reed Gehring, "The Language of Mysticism in South German Dominican Convent Chronicles of the Fourteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1957).

Note 15: See Judith Oliver, "Worship of the Word: Some Gothic *Nonnenbücher* in their Devotional Context," in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. Jane H.M. Taylor and Lesley Smith (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1997), 106–122. Oliver calls this a "focus on the spiritual power of individual words. . . . [which] remained far more faithful to the essential monastic traditional of *lection divina*, the worship of the Word." Oliver, 116.

Note 16: Marie-Luise Ehrenschwendtner, "*Puellae litteratae*: The Use of the Vernacular in the Dominican Convents of Southern Germany," in *Medieval Women in their Communities*, ed. Diane Watt (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), 53. See Chapter 3 for prayers used by Dominican nuns.

Note 17: ESB, 2. In the text this description occurs before the convent was admitted to the Order.

Note 18: "In den ziten da sie daz gesank heten gelernt, da bat der stifter der frawen maisterin, daz sie irre frawen hintz Reichnek breht. Daz sie nu messe sungen in einer capeln, an dem pfingstag daz geschach, da sank der stifter die messe alle mit den frawen, und het bustaben nie gelernt." ESB, 6.

Note 19: "Latin leren ald schriben." TSB, 34.

Note 20: "lesen und latin lernen." TSB, 37.

Note 21: ASB, 174.

Note 22: KSB, 128–29. The Psalter was often used to teach children their alphabet. Susan G. Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture," in *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages*, ed. Judith M. Bennett, et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 163.

Note 23: WSB, 141–42.

Note 24: Maria-Luise Ehrenschwendtner, "A Library Collected by and for the Use of Nuns: St. Catherine's Convent, Nuremberg," in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane Taylor (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 123–32. Ehrenschwendtner notes that the convent's book collecting started in 1428 and by the end of the century their library contained between 500 and 600 volumes. Ehrenschwendtner, 123–24. Also see Anne Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles: Women Writing About Women and Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

Note 25: "Es spricht der hailig Sant Bernhard: 'Got ist ungenem, was du wúrkest, ob du das versumest das du schuldig bist.'" TSB, 33. The author also begins Margret's life with another of the Latin/German translations that one finds sprinkled through the Sister-Books, especially those of Töss and Kirchberg. "Sy quis non vivet in justicia, ille non potest manere in sapiencia. Wer nit lebet in der gerechtikait, der mag nit wonen in der wishait." TSB, 33.

Note 26: USB, 432. In note 1 on that page Ancelet-Hustache lists nineteen possible works by Augustine that the reference could have come from. As none of these works survive from the community and I could not find them among manuscripts of the male Dominicans of Colmar (with the idea that Catherine may have borrowed a work from the neighboring community or heard it preached), the exact text to which she had access remains unknown.

Note 27: USB, 442.

Note 28: TSB, 65.

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Note 29: TSB, 22. Whether this refers to the biblical book or Gregory the Great's commentary is unknown.

Note 30: "in himel gevarn ist, und all mein weg waren behangen mit brinnenden lampen als in sand Benedicten legend geschriben stet." ESB, 23.

Note 31: For Martyrologies, see below.

Note 32: Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 193.

Note 33: "Ez kom oft die zit von genaden, daz sie die sweren buch als wol bedeuten kond als ein wol gelerter pfaff: als die zit denne vergink, so konde sie sin niht mer, wanne sie waz niht gelert." ESB, 13.

Note 34: "Sie het ein cleine kunst gelernt unde kom dar zu mit den gnaden gotes, daz sie grozze swerew buch ze tisch deutet." ESB, 30.

Note 35: "sternen und blümen vand si in ir büchlin." ASB, 165. The type of book and its language is not identified. However, a book used in individual prayer does indicate some level of literacy.

Note 36: On Books of Hours see R. Wieck et al., *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York: Walters Art Gallery, 1988). See also Jeffrey F. Hamburger, "Before the Book of Hours: The Development of the Illustrated Prayer Book in Germany," in *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone, 1998), 149–96.

Note 37: WSB, 77.

Note 38: SAF, B1 107, f. 228v.

Note 39: Freiburg, UBF, Hs. 41. See the catalogue description for attribution to Adelhausen in-house *scriptorium*.

Note 40: ASB, 189–93.

Note 41: ESB, 26.

Note 42: "Disu sälig swester gelernet nie latin noch schriben vnd schreib doch die vier passion in tútsch mit ir hant." KSB, 122.

Note 43: "Wir hand och fil nach alle únser gütten bild von ir; fil túscher bücher hat sy gefrúmet." TSB, 45.

Note 44: USB, 411.

Note 45: USB, 431

Note 46: GNM, Ms. 21897.

Note 47: SAF, B1 132, f. 110r; and BLB, St. Peter perg. 70, f. 34r.

Note 48: SAF, B1 132, f. 106 v, 110r.

Note 49: This can be seen in the collection of Tauler's sermons.

Note 50: TSB, 48.

Note 51: "Wer nun dis buchly hor lessen," TSB, 16; "Wer das liset oder höret lesen." ASB, 183.

Note 52: TSB, 33, 50, 60.

Note 53: WSB, 70, 78.

Note 54: WSB, 76.

Note 55: USB, 350, 353, 357, 361, 366, 370, 375, 386, 390, 409, 441, 451, 455, 459, 468, 493, 496, 498, 500, 502 (2). In general, USB can be characterized as the most "intellectual" of the Sister-Books, containing theological discussions of the Trinity and the Holy Spirit. At the same time, it also

contains the greatest number of examples of extreme religious discipline in the form of hairshirts, flagellation, and other types of bodily mortifications. It is the longest of the texts, but both of these elements (theological discussions and ascetic practices) are described with a marked frequency not found in the other Sister-Books.

Note 56: "'Ich haiz Rex regum et dominus dominancium: ich bin ein kunig der kunig und ein herre der herscher.'" ESB, 24.

Note 57: "das spricht ze tvtsch: >Hút ist got mentsch worden<" KSB, 152.

Note 58: "Do sprach er: 'Ich hais reparator', das sprichet in túsch: ain widerbringer." TSB, 38.

Note 59: Ehrenschwendtner, "Library," 60. In some ways, Ehrenschwendtner may be reading later sources back into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Just how active and conscious a choice the women made between the two languages is hard to prove from the evidence.

Note 60: Hinnebusch, 348–49; and Leonard Boyle, "Dominican Lectionaries and Leo of Ostia's *Translatio S. Clementis*," AFP 28 (1958), 368. This prototype is described in William R. Bonniwell, *A History of the Dominican Liturgy* (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, 1944), 85 ff.

Note 61: Bonniwell, 84. The Parisian-made exemplar is in the General Archives of the Order, identified as MS XIV L 1.

Note 62: John Stinson, "The Dominican Liturgy of the Assumption: Texts and Music for the Divine Office," in *The Art of the Book: Its Place in Medieval Worship*, ed. Margaret M. Manion and Bernard J. Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 171.

Note 63: This is Bonniwell's assertion based on the next set of revisions from the 1370s. Because these later revisions refer to earlier texts, which are different from those created in the 1250s, and the 1355-legislation mentions revisions recently made, there must have been a revision in the interval between those of the 1250s and the 1370s. Bonniwell, 232.

Note 64: For the terminology of medieval manuscripts, see Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to their Organization and Terminology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982); and Michelle P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms* (Malibu, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum and the British Library, 1994).

Note 65: Brown, 120.

Note 66: Brown, 113. This should not to be confused with the book called the Sanctoral, although a Sanctoral did follow the Sanctorale.

Note 67: Hughes, 9.

Note 68: Bonniwell, 115–16.

Note 69: F. P. Pickering, *The Calendar Pages of Medieval Service Books: An Introductory Note for Art Historians* (Reading: Reading Medieval Studies, 1980); Brown, 30–31; and Hughes, 275–80.

Note 70: Bonniwell, 132.

Note 71: Bonniwell, 199, 201–3, 222–23.

Note 72: Brown, 80.

Note 73: USB, 434.

Note 74: ESB, 24.

Note 75: These hours are Matins (midnight or 2:30 am), Lauds (3:00 or 5:00 am), Prime (6:00 am), Pierce (9:00 am), Sext (noon), Nones (3:00 pm), Vespers (4:30, 6:00 pm or sunset), and Compline (6:00 or 9:00 pm).

Note 76: Hughes, 229–31.

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Note 77: The following summary is based on Hughes, 225.

Note 78: The following twenty Psalters or combination Psalter-Hymnals form the basis of this section (in rough chronological order). An asterisk marks those manuscripts belonging to the six core houses in this study and included in Table 4. All of the following are included in Table 4:
Karlsruhe, BLB, St. Peter perg. 11a (after 1234)
Nuremberg, GNM, Hs. 4981 (after 1234)
*Colmar, BVC, ms. 404 (13th century)
*Colmar, BVC, ms. 301 (13th century)
Karlsruhe, BLB, St. Peter perg. 139 (1260)
Karlsruhe, BLB, St. Peter perg. 111 (second half 13th century)
Karlsruhe, BLB, St. Peter perg. 110 (second half 13th century)
Karlsruhe, BLB, St. Peter perg. 19 (second half 13th century)
Nuremberg, GNM, Hs. 56632 (second half 13th century)
*Freiburg, AMF, Codex St. Katharina A (late 13th century)
*Freiburg, EBA, Hs. 1 (1287–1303)
Karlsruhe, BLB, St. Peter perg. 8b (1300)
*Freiburg, AMF, Inv. Nr. 11735 (1300)
*Freiburg, SAF, B1 121 (1303-1326)
*Freiburg, EBA, Hs. 2 (before 1323)
*Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. lat. 10774 (1325–1350)
*Colmar, BVC, ms. 405 (14th century)
*Colmar, BVC, ms. 402 (14th century)
*Karlsruhe, BLB, St. Peter perg. 95 (14th century)
Karlsruhe, BLB, St. Peter perg. 104 (14th century)

Note 79: This authorship is often reflected in illuminated Psalters by depicting King David playing his harp / Psaltry on the opening folio of Psalm 1. See BLB, St. Peter perg. 11a, f.1r.

Note 80: "'herpf die sel auz mit sinen clengen.'" ESB, 23.

Note 81: "daz suzest saitenspil daz mensch ie gehoren solt." ESB, 24. In the Engelthal Sister-Book, the motif of the sweet psaltery playing upon the imminent death of a sister is used frequently.

Note 82: These examples include the Utrecht Psalter (c. 820, which integrates the text of the Psalms with its images), the Cotton Psalter (1050), the St. Albans Psalter (1119–1123, possibly created for a woman), the Psalter of St. Louis (1260), and the Windmill Psalter (late 13th century). The popularity of the Psalter was eclipsed by the Apocalypse during the thirteenth century in England, but until the advent of Books of Hours, the Psalter maintained its popularity throughout continental Europe.

Note 83: TSB, 34. See Chapter 3 for the place of the Psalms in the acoustic environment.

Note 84: GNM, Hs. 56.632, f. 101r, for a Dominic initial opening Psalm 97.

Note 85: Bonniwell, 90. On the tonary, see Hughes, 112-16; and on modes, Hughes, 111–12.

Note 86: Bonniwell, 90.

Note 87: BVC, ms. 404 .

Note 88: BLB, St. Peter perg. 19.

Note 89: AM, Codex St. Katharina A.

Note 90: See Heinrich Schneider, "Ein Psalter aus dem Freiburger Katharinenkloster," *Freiburger Diözesan-Archiv* 41 (1941), 254–68.

Note 91: GNM, Hs. 56,632.

Note 92: This section is based on the study of 8 graduals, 7 antiphonals, one manuscript, which bound together an antiphonal and a gradual, and 5 diurnals. All come from the six core houses and are included in Table 3. (G = gradual, A = antiphonal, A/G = combined manuscript, D = diurnal):
Karlsruhe, BLB, St. Peter perg. 55 (late 13th. century) D
Zurich, ZBZ, Rh. 123 (1290–1310) D
Freiburg, AMF, Inv. Nr. 11738 (1300) D
Nuremberg, GNM, 21897 (1300) G
Zurich, SNM, MS LM 26117 (1312) G
Freiburg, Priesterseminar St. Peter, Cod. ms. 16 (early 14th. century) D
Freiburg, AMF, Inv. Nr. 11722 (before 1326) A
Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. lat. 10773 (1300–1330) G
Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. lat. 10769 (1325–1350) G
Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. lat. 10770 (1325–1350) A
Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. lat. 10771 (1325–1350) A
Rome, Vatican Library, Vat. lat. 10772 (1325–1350) A
Freiburg, AMF, Inv. Nr. 11723 (first half 14th century) A
Freiburg, AMF, Inv. Nr. 11725 (1350) G
Colmar, BVC, ms. 136 (14th century) G
Colmar, BVC, ms. 312 (14th century) G
Colmar, BVC, ms. 317 (14th century) G
Colmar, BVC, ms. 303 (14th.century) A/G
Colmar, BVC, ms. 386 (14th century) D
Freiburg, AMF, Inv. Nr. 11729 (second half 14th century) A
Freiburg, AMF, Inv. Nr. 11726 (second half 14th century) A

Note 93: "The Common of the Saints provides those texts proper to classes of saints which, with a suitable name inserted, become proper to an individual within the class. Thus, there are prayers for martyred bishops used for all such saints not given a proper name of their own: rubrics within the Sanctorale will there specify *cetera* (or *oratio* or *responsoria*, etc) *de communi* (*unius confessoris et pontificus* or *unius virginis non martyris*, etc)." Hughes, 37–238.

Note 94: Brown, 62.

Note 95: Bonniwell, 92. See Appendix for the sequence of John the Evangelist.

Note 96: Bonniwell, 92.

Note 97: GNM, Hs. 21897 and SNM, MS LM 26117.

Note 98: BVC, ms. 136 and BVC, ms. 317.

Note 99: Brown, 62.

Note 100: BVC ms. 136 and BVC, ms. 317.

Note 101: BVC, ms. 312.

Note 102: See below for more detail.

Note 103: Bonniwell, 92.

Note 104: However, two of the diurnals have calendars. BVC, ms. 386; and BLB, St. Peter perg. 55.

Note 105: Robert Calkins, *Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 226.

Note 106: See for example BVC, ms. 135 (summer) and BVC, ms. 311 (winter).

Note 107: AM, Inv. Nr. 11722 and AM, Inv. Nr. 11723.

Note 108: TSB, 30.

Note 109: Dominican processionals included the burial service at the end of the book. Bonniwell, 90.

Note 110: The addition of the manuscript listed under Other (which contains Dominican Rituals) balances out these manuscripts. Psalters and Psalter-hymnals run a close second with 20 out of 76 (26.3%).

Note 111: "In cena Domini, ad ablutionem altarium."

Note 112: BLB, St. Peter perg. 21 and BLB, St. Peter perg. 22.

Note 113: SAF, B1 122.

Note 114: There is text on f. 36r.

Note 115: Bonniwell, 88–89. *Le Martyrologe d'Usuard: Texte et Commentaire*, ed. Jacques Dubois (Brussells: Société des Bollandistes, 1965).

Note 116: ESB, 37. Achacius [Achaicius or Acacius or Achatius] is found on March 30 (III KL. April) in the Usuard Martyrology.

Note 117: "'War umb betest du mir auch niht? Ich bin in dem himel als hoch als er: du solte mir auch beten.'" ESB, 33. Gervase and Protase were early Roman martyrs about which nothing was clearly known. St. Ambrose is said to have had a vision that revealed the location of their remains. They appear in the Usuard Martyrology on June 19.

Note 118: BVC, ms. 302.

Note 119: Evangelaries contained the Gospel readings for the Mass and were arranged according to the liturgical year. A fourteenth-century Evangelary also survives from Oetenbach. ZBZ, C170.

Note 120: Bonniwell, 89.

Note 121: "While the psalm *Laudate* was being said [at the close of the Office of Lauds], the friar appointed to read the martyrology approached the prior and inquired in a low voice: 'Chapter?' If he replied: 'No,' the martyrology was read in the choir; if he said, 'After prime,' it was deferred until this time; but if he answered, 'Yes,' then the reading was to take place in the chapter-room as soon as lauds ended. Accordingly the friars left the chapel and entered the chapter-room where the martyrology was read and the *pretiosa* were recited. The reading of the martyrology and the recitation of *pretiosa* in the chapter-room, especially after prime, was the common practice of the monastic Orders in the Middle Ages. On the feasts of nine lessons, Ash Wednesday and the vigil of Christmas, it was customary to have a sermon after *pretiosa*." Bonniwell, 140–42.

Note 122: See Introduction on this text.

Note 123: "hic est finis. Dz ist dz Ende hie hör uff'." BVC, ms. 302, f. 179v.

Note 124: Brown, 43.

Note 125: Bonniwell, 89.

Note 126: See Chapter 2. These observations and those that follow were initially made before the newest study on St. John the Evangelist was published. Jeffery Hamburger, *St. John the Divine: The Deified Evangelist In Medieval Art and Theology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

Note 127: GNM, 21897, f. 146r.

Note 128: This initial *I* opens *In medio ecclesia*, the introit often associated with the feast of St. John (although it is used on several occasions throughout the liturgical year). See the Introduction for the text of Kathrin Brümsin's dream where John begins Mass with this passage, as well the life of an anonymous St. Katharinenthal nun in Chapter 3, in which the priest begins Mass for another saint with this introit and then mistakenly switches to the Mass for St. John.

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Note 129: ESB, 38.

Note 130: Among the illuminated manuscripts surveyed, author portraits appear five times in manuscripts connected with St. Katharinenthal. The instances are GNM, 21.897, f.146r; SNM, Hs.26117, f.3v (two depictions in the same initial), f.159v, and f.178r.

Note 131: KSB, 124, 159. The text of the dream can be found in the Introduction. The acoustical aspect of this incident is discussed in Chapter 3. See Appendix for the text of the sequence in Latin and the Middle High German translation provided by the author of the St. Katharinenthal Sister-Book.

Note 132: GNM, 21897, f. 219v and SNM, MS LM 26117, f.161v.

Note 133: GNM, 21897, f.219v.

Note 134: KSB, 159 ff. The sequence also appears in the life of Luggi of Stein. See Chapter 3.

Note 135: GNM, 21897, f. 168v and f. 177r.

Note 136: SNM, MS LM 26117, f. 158v.

Note 137: The missing images are from the Temporale.

Note 138: BVC, 136 f.165v.

Note 139: BVC, 317, f. 122v.

Note 140: Matthew. 3:13.

Note 141: "do sah si vnsern herren in den heiligen handen Johannes, als er von im getovffet ward, vnd hort des vatters stimm: >Hic est filius meus dilectus<, vnd sah den heiligen geist vff sinem hovpt in einer tuben glichnúss. Vnd in dirre gnád was si die acht tag." KSB, 108.

Note 142: ESB, 11.

Note 143: See for example GNM, 56897, f. 9r.

Note 144: In one of the Colmar graduals, BVC, ms. 312, someone has drawn a small Agnus Dei in the upper margin of f. 79v, above the text for Easter.

Note 145: GNM, 21897, f. 96r.

Note 146: "'Ich tun dir kunt von unserm herren Jesu Christo, daz er dir sicherheit hat geben ewigez lebens: do wil er dir allez dez loenen dez du im ie gedient hast.'" ESB, 24.

Note 147: GNM, 21897, f. 160v and f. 161v.

Note 148: GNM, 21897, f. 249v.

Note 149: AH 8, Nr. 198.

Note 150:"And God sent a man whose name was John." John 1: 6.

Note 151: SNM, MS LM 26117, f. 178r.

Note 152: GNM, 21897, f.170v.

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Conclusion

Sensual Encounters

The sensual environment of the medieval monastery was a key element in the spirituality of German Dominican women. Seeing and hearing played pivotal roles in both the reception of material religious culture and the women's expression of their religiosity. Although less explicit, the sense of touch also played a part—the acute physicality of much of the women's piety shows how vital this part of the sensual environment was. Smell and taste are much harder to pin down and do not seem to hold the primacy that the other senses do for monastic women, perhaps in keeping with the ascetic lifestyle practiced by many of these nuns and lay-sisters. 1

The life of Kathrin Brümsin illustrates how interconnected the sensual environment of female Dominican spirituality was.[1] Kathrin was the St. Katharinenthal novice who had the dream-vision in which Saint. John the Evangelist celebrated Mass for the community and then taught her the twenty-four verses of his sequence *Verbum dei deo natum* out of a book with golden letters. In her dream-vision, the spatial, visual, textual, and acoustical environments became her spiritual environment. Her spirituality and her religious expression cannot be separated from the surroundings and items around her. And although the event occurred in a dream, it was a dream grounded in her monastic reality, one she perceived and interpreted through her senses. This environment created and constructed her spirituality, just as her spirituality relied on the various elements of her environment to express itself. It was a reciprocal exchange that had no clear beginning or end, marked by intertwined influences that ran in all directions. 2

The setting of her dream-vision in the nuns' choir—a space heavy with meaning for Dominican women—is crucial. The sacredness of this place served to draw Dominican women to it. It was the most frequented space for spiritual expression, whether liturgical or paraliturgical. Kathrin's choirstall, the altar, her movement between the two, the performance of the Mass, all these elements had significance not only in the context of her life, but also in the lives of her religious sisters. These environmental elements played a role in allowing Dominican women to define space in their own terms, giving it special significance that was different from that imagined by the Order's officials. However, the choir was not the only space in Kathrin's dream-vision. The entire event took place while she slept, implying that the St. Katharinenthal dormitory was also a factor. Her miraculous acquisition of the liturgy occurred in a space not normally seen as sacred, but which through Kathrin's dream became a place where the miraculous was possible. Although this is a passive example of how Dominican 3

women transformed the use and meaning of their living spaces (Kathrin was asleep during the event), other nuns experienced gifts of grace or practiced their piety in the various spaces of the monastery while they were awake.

The acoustical and textual elements of Kathrin's dream-vision can be seen in the convent's singing, the book with golden letters, and the sequence *Verbum dei deo natum* which Kathrin was required to memorize in order to properly perform the liturgy and in Saint John's words, pray to him. Such Latin words played an important role in the spirituality of Dominican women, casting an aura of divinity upon those who used them. As the language of communal, as opposed to individual, spirituality, Latin was a constant in the lives of all choir nuns, if not all women in the Order. Even if the women did not entirely understand every word of Latin, it could still carry meaning for them. The words could become symbols, even more sacred because of their mysteriousness, as can be seen in the case of Mezzi Sidwibrin who became obsessed with the word *Ecce* from a sermon she had heard. That Kathrin learned Saint John's sequence out of a book, albeit a visionary one, indicates one of the many roles that texts could perform in Dominican spirituality. In Kathrin's case, the book was the source of knowledge to which Saint John guided her. **4**

The appearance of John the Evangelist also tells us more specifically about Kathrin's spirituality. The strength of his cult at St. Katharinenthal and that fact that Kathrin was learning the liturgy for his Feast made him the logical saint to pray to for assistance. He was a figure of authority for the women, a fact established when he appears as an archbishop in the dream-vision and further when he served as a teacher to Kathrin, instructing her in proper liturgical behavior and speech. Thus in Kathrin's dream-vision the multiple connections, both explicit and implicit, between her spirituality and her environment become abundantly clear. **5**

The wealth of the individual monastery, its income in rents and goods, its patronage by local and not so local families of means and social prestige, all these factors could positively or adversely affect the texture of the material environment within the house. The relative wealth or poverty of a house may have affected how the women's spirituality was expressed, and how well the modern historian can reconstruct that house's material culture. But lack of wealth did not negate the spirituality of Dominican women. Spiritual meaning could be found in any kind of environment, rich or poor. **6**

The spaces within the monastic environment that helped support the wide variety of German female Dominican piety and spirituality were all within the cloister walls. Although the women found some spaces more conducive to devotional activities than others (the choir comes to mind here), all places within the monastery could become the *loci* of ascetic behavior and even mysticism. No place—the cloister arcade, chapterhouse, infirmary, dormitories, refectory, kitchen, workrooms, or even the gardens—escaped the notice of Dominican women and their many forms of religious expression. The women's very active spirituality often **7**

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redefined the use of spaces, so that a kitchen might become a place of prayer and the infirmary a choir. The nuns cuddled real or visionary figures of the Christ Child in the dormitory, were served by the saints and the Virgin Mary in the refectory, and conversed with Christ in the gardens. The women also ignored the gendering of spaces that could be considered male preserves, particularly the altars of their churches, often by simply ignoring the presence of the priest. But they did so particularly by having eucharistic visions elsewhere in the monastery.

8 It was most often when the lives of saints, such as John the Evangelist and John the Baptist, intersected with the life of Christ, that the devotion of German Dominican women was inspired. While John the Baptist was a martyr, his martyrdom garnered little attention in the women's spirituality. Of more significance were other aspects of the saint's life when John the Preacher, patron of their Order was the first to recognize Christ and then baptize him. These were important to Dominican women, who honored the saint because of his connections to Christ. At the same time, the compassion that John the Evangelist felt at the foot of the cross elevated him to the status of martyr in the eyes of the women. He was the saint who was not martyred, and yet he suffered all the agony of Christ's death. They focused on this John as the Beloved of Christ, the author of Christ's life, and a representative of authority in Christ's Church. The closeness with Christ that these saints possessed was something in which Dominican women wanted to participate and share.

9 As with the women's devotion to the two Johns, the visual environment was strongly Christocentric. Artwork let them tap into or create visual connections with Christ. Crucifixes which displayed Christ's own suffering humanity, Mary and her sorrow over the dead body of her Son in the *Vesperbild*, and Christ's love for a believer in the Christus-Johannes-Gruppen, all these images gave Dominican women a conduit for directing their piety toward Christ. When the visual environment and spirituality intersected, some kind of interaction was called for. This interaction could be mental, as when a woman contemplated the ideas or concept behind an image, or very physical and tactile, where the object was touched or manipulated as the woman expressed her devotion. Art could also be renounced, denied as a worldly sight that might bestow pleasure upon the viewer, and hence worthy of abstinence. Images from art and manuscript illuminations found their way into the women's visions as well as their forms of expression. The women used what was familiar to them to describe what was unfamiliar. They used their senses of sight, hearing, and touch to absorb as well as express their spiritual ambitions.

10 The acoustical environment was crucial to Dominican women's conceptions of their own spirituality. Silence was promoted for monastics of both sexes, but especially for women since medieval culture considered women to be fickle creatures whose tongues were, at best, prone to gossip, and at worst, the root of all sin. And silence did have its place. The observation of silence was usually a practice of renunciation or a discipline, like flagellation, or the wearing of

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a hair shirt or an iron girdle. Other times it allowed women to focus on their interior spiritual development. Silence, however, was not primary in the acoustical environment, rather sound was. Despite the attitudes of the Order and larger society, Dominican women embraced words and sound as fundamental to their spiritual expression. They preached to one another and to those who visited them, their words almost unstoppable. They consoled each other, offering words of encouragement and prophecy. They used sound to express their devotion to God, Christ, and the saints, whether in prayer, song, or in the cries they produced as they flagellated their bodies or contemplated the Passion of Christ.

Likewise the language and expressions that the women learned or memorized from their books, their Psalters, Graduals, and Processionals, became the language of their dreams. The words of these familiar texts were repeated in the women's prayers and visions, in their mouths and in the mouths of Christ and the saints. For the women, the Divine spoke with the Divine words found in the texts which the women read and recited in honor of the Divine. The languages of spirituality, Latin and the vernacular, provided the women with a larger scope of expression than one language could possibly give them. The formal rituals of the liturgy retained their sanctity through the use of Latin while the women's more personal piety was usually, although not always, carried out in German. **11**

The voices in the Sister-Books give us a unique view into medieval ideas and concepts about spiritual behavior and the role the senses played in them. While some women experienced mystical phenomena (levitation, visions, auditions, light phenomena, prophecy, states of grace, ecstasies, and mystical unions with God), others led more sedate lives, adhering strictly to the Rule and constitutions, observing silence at the appropriate times and places, fasting when required, caring for the sick, taking part in communal work (usually spinning), and diligently and faithfully performing the liturgy. These women too were seen as highly spiritual by their sisters. **12**

With the dense settlement of female Dominican houses in southwestern Germany in the thirteenth century and their flourishing as centers of religious devotion in that century and the next, we have a fairly well-documented collection of communities that contribute much to our understanding of the culture of medieval religious women. Integral to that religious culture was the place of spirituality, often difficult to codify and quantify, but unmistakably a constant presence in the lives of these women. This spirituality of German Dominican women was environmentally constructed through their senses. For them, the sensual environment and spirituality were tightly woven together, dependent upon each other. These religious women utilized their entire environment to create and carry out their expressions of piety and religious devotion. The architecture in which the women dwelt, the objects they viewed and touched, the silences they observed, the words they spoke, the sounds they made, the books they read, heard, memorized, and wrote, all nurtured that spirituality. Dominican women used the sounds, sights, and silences of their surroundings to create the language of their **13**

religious behavior. In turn, their religious behavior gave their environment meaning beyond mere books, words, or walls. In the lives of German Dominican women we can see the workings of the senses, gender, and culture in medieval monastic spirituality. Spirituality was a cultural and environmental construction of its practitioners with changing expectations and shifting criteria. As such, these Dominican women created their own spirituality. They were not passive practitioners or recipients of religious rituals imposed upon them by male superiors; rather they were the creators and molders of their own spiritual expression, in which they actively transformed required ritual and expected behavior into something they claimed as their own, indelibly marked by the environment in which they lived their lives. It was an environment that they actively used to achieve their goal: to encounter the holy.

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Notes

Note 1: KSB, 124, 159.

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Sequence for John the Evangelist

The St. Katharinenthal novice Kathrin Brümsin was taught the text to all twenty-four verses of the sequence *Verbum dei* by Saint John the Evangelist in a dream-vision. This sequence celebrated the saint and was popular at St. Katharinenthal. In Kathrin's dream, the saint carried a book with him in which the sequence was written in golden letters. This vision is referred to twice in the monastery's Sister-Book. The first vita gives the context of the vision, the second records what was written in the golden letters, providing the incipits for the twenty-four verses in Latin with a full German translation. Below is the full Latin text [AH 55, Nr. 188, with the incipit found in KSB underlined and variations given in parentheses] and the full German text as found in the edition of KSB, 159-62. [Verse numbers are my addition].

Latin

1. Verbum Dei, Deo natum, / Quod nec factum nec creatum / Venit de caelestibus,

2. Hoc vidit, hoc attrectavit, / Hoc de caelo reseravit / Iohannes hominibus.

3. Inter illos primitivos / Veros veri fontis rivos / Iohannes exsiliit

4. Toti mundo propinare / Nectar illud salutare. / Quod de throno prodiit.

5. Caelum transit, (Celum transiit) veri rotam / Solis videt ibi totam / Mentis figens aciem;

6. Speculator spiritalis / Quasi Seraphim sub alis / Dei videt faciem.

7. Audiit, in giro (Audit ingyre) sedis / Quid psallant cum citharoedis / Quater seni proceres:

8. De sigillo trinitatis / Nostrae nummo civitatis / Impressit characteres.

9. *Iste custos virginis / Arcanum originis / Divinae mysterium / Scribens evangelium / Mundo demonstravit,

10. *Caeli cui (Celum cui) sacrarium / Christus suum lilium / Filio tonitrui / Sub amoris mutui / Pace commendavit.

11. Haurit virus (Haurit virtus) hic letale, / Ubi corpus virginale / Virtus servat fidei;

12. Poena stupet, quod in poena / Sit Iohannes sine poena / Bullientis olei.

13. Hic naturis imperat, / Ut et saxa transferat / In decus gemmarum,

14. Quo iubente riguit, / Aurum fulvum induit / Virgula silvarum.

15. Hic infernum reserat, / Morti iubet, referat, / Quos venenum stravit.

16. Obstruit, quod Ebion, / Cerinthus et Marcion / Perfide latravit.

17. Volat avis sine meta, / Quo nec vates nec propheta / Evolavit altius;

18. Tam implenda quam impleta / Nunquam vidit tot secreta / Purus homo purius.

19. Sponsus rubra veste tectus / Visus, sed non intellectus, / Redit ad palatium,

20. Aquilam Ezechielis / Sponsae misit, quae de caelis, / Referre mysterium.

21. Dic, dilecte, de dilecto, / Qualis hic sit ex dilecto / Sponsus, sponsae nuntia;

22. Dic, quis cibus angelorum, (Dic quis cibic angelorum) / Quae sint festa supernorum / De sponsi praesentia.

23. Veri panem intellectus, / Cenam Christi supra pectus / Sumptam nobis resera,

24. Ut cantemus de patrono / Coram agno, coram throno / Laudes super aethera.

* Verses 9 and 10 are transposed in the Sister-Book.

German

1. Das wort gotz, von got geborn, das weder gemachet noch geschaffen ist worden, ist komen von den himelschen.

2. Das hat gesechen vnd berürt vnd geoffenbaret sant Johannes den menschen.

3. Der ist entsprungen vnder der erstten waren bächen des waren brunen.

4. Der sälig fluss, der von dem obresten thron komet, nachet der gantzen welt.

5. Der ist gegangen durch den himel vnd hat gesechen das gantz rad der waren sunnen. Darin er hat gesteket die spitz sines gemütz.

6. Der hat gesechen als ain gaistlicher kunner das angesicht gottes, glich als seraphin vnder den flügel.

7. Der hort vmb den stül, was man singt mit den harphen der fier vnd zwintzig alten.

8. Das zaichen des sigels der hailigen drifaltikait hat er trukt vff den pfenig vnser stat.

9. Iohannes ist der, dem Cristus sin hailge stat den rainen lylyen als ainem sun dem tonner vss liebly hat den frid enpfolchen.

10. Der junkfrowlich hütter hat geschriben den vrsprung der haimlichen gothait vnd hat der welt das erzaigt jn dem ewangily.

11. Er trank tötliches gift, der rain Johannes.

12. Er warad jn das südig öll gesetzt mitt sinem junkfröwlichen cörpel, aber die craft des globens behut jn.

13. Er büttet den naturen der schlechten stain, das sy wurden edel gestain.

14. Uss sinem haissen ist die rüt gekert jn hüpsch gold.

15. Der tet vff die hell vnd erkikt die zwen todten, die mit dem gift getöt wurdent.

16. Er verschopet oder vertilget, was die ketzer Elyon, Cherintus, Marcion bosslich befeltend.

17. Er ist ain vogel so hoch geflogen on weg, das kain wissag noch prophet höcher nie geflog.

18. Kain lutter mensch hat nie merer haimlicher ding gesechen den der rain Johannes.

19. Der himelschlich gespontz, geklaidet mit rottem klaid, ist worden gesechen, aber man hat das nit verstanden. Das hat er geoffenbart.

20. Er ist der adler Ezechielis, den der gespontz hat gesendet von himel. Der ist wider hin vff komen.

21. O sancte Johannes, sag vns von dem lieben, wie er sy vss den lieben. Der gespontz verkünd das der gespontz.

22. Sag, was die spis sy der engel vnd die fest der sälgen von gegenwirtikait des gespontz.

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23. Offenbar vns das brot der waren verstentlichait, das du vff der brust Cristi hast genossen am abent essen.

24. Das wir singent von dem hussheren vor dem lemly vnd dem thron lob über dem himel. Amen.

O du hochfliegender adler Johannes, bit für vns armen, die da sind im tiefen tall der trechen.

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Tables

Table 1: Statistics for Houses of the Dominican Order in 13th/14th Century.

	Europe			Germany			Saxony [after 1303]		
Date	total	female	%	total	female	%	total	female	%
1277	404	58	(14%)	93	40	(43%)	--	--	--
1287	?	?	?	?	70	?	--	--	--
1303	582	149	(25%)	113	65	(57%)	56	9	(16%)
1358	648	165	(25%)	117	65	(55%)	59	9	(15%)

Table 2: Devotional and Instructional Texts from Female Dominican Monasteries.

An asterisk indicates the manuscript is associated with one of the six core houses. This sample comes from the same collections as the survey for Table 4.

Title	Author [if known]	Copies	Date
* Sermons	Johannes Tauler	1	c.1360
* Sermons and mystical writings		1	14th c.
Büchlein der ewigen Weisheit	Henry Suso	2	both 14th c.
Von der Gnaden überlast	Christina Ebner	1	before 1346
Prayerbook	Hartwig von dem Hage	1	14th c.
*Chronik	Anna von Munzingen	1	1433 translation of 1318 text
*Vitae sororum	Catherine of Unterlinden	1	15th c. copy of 14th c. text

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Table 3: Liturgical Manuscripts from Unterlinden, St. Katharinenthal, Adelhausen, Maria Magdalena, St. Agnes, and St. Katharina.

It was common practice to bind together liturgical books that were needed for the same office or mass. Hence, some Psalters, graduals, and processionals survive today as separate manuscripts, whereas other examples are bound with hymnals, antiphonals, and books of rites, respectively.

Manuscript type	early 13th c.	c.1250	late 13th c.	c.1300	early 14th c	c.1350	late 14th c	TOTAL
Psalter-Hymnals	--	2	1	2	4	2	--	**11**
Gradual-Antiphonals	--	--	--	1	8	5	2	**16**
Diurnals	--	--	1	1	1	1	1	**5**
Processional-Rites	--	--	--	--	2	1	3	**6**
Martyrologies	--	--	--	--	1	--	1	**2**
Collectars	--	--	2	--	--	--	--	**2**
Sanctorals	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	**1**
Total	**0**	**2**	**4**	**4**	**17**	**9**	**7**	**43**

Table 4: Liturgical Manuscripts from Southern German Female Dominican Monasteries.

These numbers represent a survey of the collections held in the Augustinermuseum, the Erzbischöfliches Archiv, the Stadtarchiv, and the Universitätsbibliothek, all in Freiburg, Germany, as well as the Badische Landesbibliothek in Karlsruhe, Germany, the Germanische Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg, Germany, the Württembergische Landesbibliothek in Stuttgart, Germany, the Bibliothèque de la Ville in Colmar, France, the Zentralbibliothek and the Swiss National Museum in Zurich, Switzerland, and the Vatican Library in Rome.

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Manuscript type	**early 13th c.**	**c.1250**	**late 13th c.**	**c.1300**	**early 14th c**	**c.1350**	**late 14th c**	**TOTAL**
Psalters	2	--	6	3	2	3	--	**16**
Psalter-Hymnals	--	2	--	--	2	--	--	**4**
Graduals	--	--	--	1	3	4	--	**8**
Gradual-Antiphonals	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	**1**
Antiphonals	--	--	--	--	5	--	2	**7**
Diurnals	--	--	1	1	1	1	1	**5**
Processionals	--	--	--	--	3	1	2	**6**
Processional-Rites	--	--	--	1	6	2	4	**13**
Rites	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	**1**
Martyrologies	--	--	--	--	1	--	1	**2**
Collectars	--	--	3	--	--	--	--	**3**
Breviaries	--	--	1	--	--	--	1	**2**
Books of Hours	--	--	--	--	1	2	--	**3**
Evangelaries	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	**1**
Propers for Offices	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	**1**
Office Lectionaries	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	**1**
Sanctorals	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	**1**
Other [1]	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	**1**
Total	**2**	**3**	**12**	**7**	**25**	**15**	**12**	**76**

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Notes

Note 1: This manuscript is a compilation of Dominican Rites, *capitula* (Scripture read after the Psalms), the Office for Chapter, and *versiculi*.

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ms. 232 (317)

ms. 254 (303)

ms. 271 (301)

ms. 272 (404)

ms. 273 (405)

ms. 274 (402)

ms. 290 (386)

ms. 362 (302)

ms. 926 (508)

ms. 929 (576)

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TM 5441

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Codex St. Katharina A

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Inv. Nr. 11726 (Adelh.7)

Inv. Nr. 11729 (Adelh.1)

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Hs. 1 (Adelh.1)

Hs. 2 (Adelh.2)

Hs. 5

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S. Peter, Cod. ms. 14

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A1 XVI Am (St. Katharina); charters, 1297–1686

A1 XVI Aq (Reuerinnen); charters, 1247–1655

B1 98 (Adelh.1)

B1 107 (Adelh.9)

B1 112

B1 117

B1 118

B1 119

B1 120

B1 122

B1 132

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B2 20

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St. Peter perg. 25

St. Peter perg. 46a

St. Peter perg. 49

St. Peter perg. 55

St. Peter perg. 67

St. Peter perg. 70

St. Peter perg. 78

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