

UNIVERSITY OF READING

**ENCOUNTERING ST MARGARET OF ANTIOCH IN PAROCHIAL AND  
PERSONAL CONTEXTS IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND: DEVOTIONAL  
ARTEFACTS, MEMORIALIZATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF  
FAMILIAL AND COMMUNAL IDENTITY**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis comprises a series of six case studies that form an exploration of lay devotion to St Margaret of Antioch over the period c.1250-c.1530. In a departure from previous approaches, the thesis examines reasons for Margaret's enduring popularity through a discussion foregrounding the great range of surviving artefacts associated with her cult. The medieval perception of Margaret as protector of women in childbirth has been widely discussed and the saint's formidable dragon-slaying powers likewise. Whilst these aspects of Margaret's cult are relevant and examined again in this study, it is argued that the evidence of wall paintings, stained glass and manuscripts presented here establishes a clear connection between Margaret and the sacrament of baptism. Distinctively, this study further argues that such an association is reinforced by representations of St Nicholas alongside those of Margaret. Moreover, textual versions of Margaret's Life also support this sacramental association. Parts One and Two of this thesis examine visual narrative cycles of Margaret's passion in the communal context of parish churches to consider issues of their intended messages and patronage, as well as how devotees might have interacted with them. Part Three focuses on two books of hours that demonstrate a more intimate context for the veneration of Margaret by known individuals. The manuscripts offer opportunities to discuss what Margaret could have represented for these individuals and how they might have expressed their devotion. Finally, it is argued that far from being simply a Holy Helper, through her sacramental association Margaret occupied a fundamental position at the heart of orthodox Christian belief and practice. Although sought out in moments of personal significance, symbolically, and perhaps most significantly, Margaret also represented a bulwark against the influence of other faiths and heterodoxy.

## **Declaration of Original Authorship**

### **Declaration**

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Frances Mary Cook

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## Abbreviations

EETS, os, es, ss	Early English Text Society, original series, extra series, special series
<i>Bokenham</i>	Osbern Bokenham, <i>Legendys of hooly wummen</i> , Mary Serjeantson (ed.), EETS, os 206, (Oxford, 1938), pp. 1-38.
<i>CVMA</i>	Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi website
<i>LgA</i>	Iacopo da Varazze [Jacobus de Voragine], <i>Legenda Aurea</i> , Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (ed.), (Florence, 2 <sup>nd</sup> edn. 1998).
<i>Lydgate</i>	'The Lyfe of Seynt Margarete', in <i>Middle English Legends of Women Saints</i> , Sherry L. Reames (ed.), (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2003), pp. 147-68.
<i>Mb passio</i>	<i>Mombritius Passio S. Margaretae</i> in Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis, <i>The Old English Lives of St Margaret</i> , (Cambridge, 1994), Appendix 2, Chapters 1-24, pp. 194-223.
<i>Mirk</i>	'Sermon on St Margaret' in <i>Middle English Legends of Women Saints</i> , Sherry L. Reames (ed.), (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2003), pp. 139-45.
<i>SEL</i>	Charlotte D'Evelyn and Anna J. Mills (eds), <i>The South English Legendary</i> , Vol. I, (London, 1956), pp. 291-302.
<i>StzL</i>	Karl Reichl, <i>Religiöse Dichtung im Englischen Hochmittelalter: Untersuchung und Edition der Handschrift B. 14. 39 des Trinity College in Cambridge</i> , (München, 1973), siglum <i>Tr</i> , pp. 163-249.

## Introduction

St Margaret of Antioch, powerful dragon slayer and tenacious, outspoken virgin-martyr, was one of the most revered saints in medieval England. Such was the intensity of the devotion she inspired, from at least the late Anglo-Saxon period to the sixteenth century, that a vast number of textual versions of her Life survive – at least eleven in Greek and Latin, and more than twenty-five in the vernacular – as well as an abundance of artefacts in a variety of media.<sup>1</sup> Margaret's colourful legend would therefore have been familiar to most medieval people in some form – written, visual, aural or a combination of these. She can thus be considered as constituting part of the fabric of most people's everyday lives during the timeframe that concerns this study, that is to say c.1250-c.1530.

Before embarking on an exploration of what devotion to Margaret in late medieval England might have entailed, a brief overview of Margaret's legend and an outline of the principal versions are given here in order to facilitate the understanding of the discussions that follow.

### St Margaret's legend

#### i) The story

Margaret's legend states that she was born to pagan parents and that her father, Theodosius, was chief of the pagan priests. When still a baby, Margaret was given into the care of a fostermother. Her fostermother taught her about Christianity and she became a Christian. One day, when she was fifteen years old and out in the fields tending her fostermother's sheep, the Prefect of Antioch, Olibrius, caught sight of her and was captivated by her beauty. He had Margaret brought before him and asked for her name, details of her family and her religion. On discovering she was a Christian and realising she would not

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<sup>1</sup> Juliana Dresvina, *A Maid with a Dragon: The Cult of St Margaret of Antioch in Medieval England*, (Oxford, 2016), Appendix I, pp. 207-25: Greek and Latin versions, entries 1-11, pp. 207-08; vernacular texts in Old English, including the *Old English Martyrology*, entries 12-15, pp. 208-09; vernacular versions from the twelfth to the thirteenth centuries, entries 16-30, pp. 209-17; later vernacular versions, entries 31-41, pp. 217-25.

worship his gods, Olibrius condemned her to undergo an initial round of torture with iron hooks, nails, canes (or rods). Bystanders pleaded with her to relent and submit to Olibrius, but she dismissed them and remained steadfast in her faith. She was then sent to prison. In her prison cell, she encountered the devil in the form of a monstrous dragon. Although the dragon swallowed her, she made the sign of the cross and emerged unscathed. Later, she was confronted by a second demon in the form of a man. She pinned him down, beat him and made him explain where he came from, and how and why he tempted Christians into sin. He described the ways in which he caused people to transgress and how he and other demons escaped from a vase in which King Solomon had incarcerated them, so that they now flew around assailing people. Finally, Margaret ordered him to stop talking, made the sign of the cross and he promptly sank back into the earth. When Margaret was brought back before Olibrius and still refused to bend to his will, he subjected her to further tortures with fire (or boiling oil) and water. Many thousands of people were converted as they witnessed Margaret emerging unharmed from these trials, but Olibrius had them all beheaded. In the end, Olibrius commanded Margaret be taken out of the city to be executed. The executioner (usually called Malchus) was overawed by the fact that he saw Christ and angels surrounding her. She asked him for time to pray. In her prayer she offered herself as an intercessor for all those who remembered her passion and as a protector for women and infants during childbirth. Margaret then commanded Malchus to execute her, comforting him that he would join her in paradise. Once he had accomplished his task, Malchus fell down dead on her right side. All those who were unwell that touched her body were healed and Theotimus, who witnessed her passion, then took the body and had it enshrined. This was believed to have taken place in the early fourth century.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The summary is based on the most influential Latin version of Margaret's *passio*, the *Mombritius* version. For an edited and translated example of this version, see Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis, *The Old English Lives of St Margaret*, (Cambridge, 1994), Appendix 2, pp. 191-223. Another, later, manuscript of this Latin version, which originated in Germany, is provided in Frances Mack, *Seinte Marherete the Meiden ant Martyre*, EETS os 193, (London, 1958), pp. 127-42. For the reputed time of Margaret's death, see Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 13.

## ii) Overview of the textual versions of Margaret's legend

Although Margaret was supposed to have been martyred in the fourth century, the earliest known version of her Life can only be dated to the late eighth century at the earliest.<sup>3</sup> The *Passio a Theotimo* is the oldest known Greek version of the Life and the narrative appears to follow an earlier, probably Greek but possibly Latin, tradition. This *Passio* was apparently copied out by St Methodius in Rome in the early ninth century. It is named after the narrator, Theotimus, who presents the legend as his own eyewitness account.<sup>4</sup> Various Latin versions of Margaret's Life, recorded from the end of the eighth century onwards, probably reflect the earlier hagiographic tradition mentioned above and many are closely based on the *Passio a Theotimo*.<sup>5</sup> Of these Latin versions, the most widely disseminated and influential are found in a group of manuscripts classified in the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* as BHL no. 5303, and the most well-known of these versions is named *Mombritius* after its medieval editor. This *Mombritius* version forms the basis for the majority of the vernacular legends.<sup>6</sup>

Three Lives appear in Old English between the early eleventh and early twelfth centuries and Wace's *Vie de sainte Marguerite*, originally written in Anglo-Norman, was composed somewhere between 1130-1140.<sup>7</sup> In the early

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<sup>3</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> This Greek version was published in the nineteenth century by Hermann Usener and is usually referred to as the *Usener* version: Hermann Usener, (ed.), *Acta S. Marinae et S. Christophori, Festschrift zur fünften säcularfeier der ... Universität zu Heidelberg*, (Bonn, 1886). Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, pp. 5-6; Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, pp. 7, 9, 24; Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 16 and Appendix 1, entry 6, pp. 207-08. Mombritius printed the Life in his *Sanctuarium seu Vitae sanctorum*. in 1477. See also Boninus Mombritius, *Sanctuarium seu Vitae sanctorum. Novam hanc ed. curaverunt duo monachi Solesmenses*, Vol. 2, (Paris, 1910), pp. 190-96.

<sup>7</sup> For the earliest manuscripts in Old English (London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius A. iii.; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 303; London, British Library, Cotton MS Otho B. x), see Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, p. 41; Dresvina, *A Maid*, Appendix 1, entries 13-15, pp. 208-09. For Wace, see Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 35, 36.

thirteenth century, the earliest known Life in Middle English, the St Margaret of the Katherine Group, was written.<sup>8</sup>

The St Margaret of the Katherine Group is followed by two notable textual traditions of verse Lives of Margaret in Middle English. The first group of Lives, originating in the mid thirteenth century, is classified as that of the stanzaic *Meidan Maregrete*, or the *Stanzaic Life*, and the other is that of the *South English Legendary* versions, initially produced towards the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>9</sup> The summarized Life of Margaret in the *Legenda Aurea* also became established as an authoritative version of the Life in the later thirteenth century and influenced, for example, the *Vie Sein(te) Margaret(e)* of 1300-1320, composed by the Franciscan friar, Nicholas Bozon.<sup>10</sup> The translation of the *Legenda Aurea* into Middle English, known as the *Gilte Legende* only became available much later, from 1438, while Caxton's *Golden Legend*, a translation supplemented with details from the Latin *passiones*, was printed from 1483.<sup>11</sup> Also extremely influential was the sermon Life of John Mirk, found in the collection *Festial*, most probably composed in the late 1380s.<sup>12</sup> Finally, two further significant vernacular verse Lives were produced in East Anglia in the fifteenth century: John Lydgate's *Lyfe of Seynt Margarete* of

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<sup>8</sup> Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (eds), *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse*, (Oxford, 1990), pp. 44-85.

<sup>9</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 53-69, esp. p. 53 (for overview of the two traditions). For the version of the *Stanzaic Life* referred to in this study, see Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 14. 39, edited in Karl Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung im Englischen Hochmittelalter: Untersuchung und Edition der Handschrift B. 14. 39 des Trinity College in Cambridge*, (München, 1973), siglum *Tr*, pp. 163-249 and for the version of the *South English Legendary* referred to in this study, see Charlotte D'Evelyn and Anna J. Mills (eds), *The South English Legendary*, Vol. I, (London, 1956), pp. 291-302.

<sup>10</sup> Iacopo da Varazze [Jacobus de Voragine], *Legenda Aurea*, Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (ed.), (Florence, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 1998), pp. 616-19; Sister M. Amelia Klenke (ed.), *Three Saints' Lives by Nicholas Bozon*, (New York, 1947), pp. 29-42.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Hamer (ed.), assisted by Vida Russell, *Gilte Legende*, Vol. 1, EETS, os 327, (Oxford, 2006), pp. 461-64; William Caxton, *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints as Englished by William Caxton*, F. S. Ellis (ed.), Vol. IV, (London, 1900), pp. 66-72.

<sup>12</sup> John Mirk, 'Sermon on St Margaret', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, Sherry L. Reames (ed.), (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2003), pp. 139-45.

c.1429 and Osbern Bokenham's 'Legend of St Margaret', written in 1443.<sup>13</sup> The significance and dissemination of each of these Lives will be discussed briefly in the Background section below and examined further in Chapter 4.

### **The argument**

Over recent decades, the numerous textual versions of St Margaret's passion have deservedly received much scholarly attention, notably from literary critical, feminist and historical critical standpoints, which will be considered below. However, this study, uniquely, privileges artefacts associated with the saint and her cult, rather than the texts of her Life, in order to offer a fresh perspective on how medieval people, especially the laity, encountered Margaret. It is argued that examining artefacts – their physical and social contexts and how they might have functioned – can enable the recovery of hitherto lost or under-researched aspects of their significance and thus provide a greater insight into how devotion to the saints operated more broadly.

Studies dealing with medieval interpretations of the Lives of female saints in general usually include references to Margaret of Antioch. One such important study is that by Karen Winstead. In her book, Winstead emphasises the continuing appeal of virgin-martyr stories throughout the Middle Ages and proposes that this was largely due to the fact that people could interpret these stories in ways that suited their particular circumstances.<sup>14</sup> Such a view was put forward initially by Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn in their Introduction to a collection of essays on the cult of St Anne in late medieval society and is reiterated by Katherine Lewis in her later, authoritative study of the cult of St Katherine of Alexandria.<sup>15</sup> This argument rightly allows for

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<sup>13</sup> John Lydgate, 'The Lyfe of Seynt Margarete', in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, Sherry L. Reames (ed.), (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2003), pp. 147-68; Osbern Bokenham, *Legendys of hooly wummen*, Mary Serjeantson (ed.), EETS, os 206, (Oxford, 1938), pp. 1-38.

<sup>14</sup> Karen Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca, NY, 1997), pp. 4, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: St Anne in Late Medieval Society*, (Athens, Georgia, 1990), pp. 2, 5; Katherine J. Lewis, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2000), p. 6.

changing historical conditions and the fact that no two viewers will ever respond in an identical manner to something they hear, read or observe.<sup>16</sup> However, while the findings of the present study also support this argument, at the same time a careful analysis of artefacts pertaining to Margaret across the centuries allows a consistent and overriding strand of intended meaning to be discerned in both visual and textual versions of her legend. This intended meaning, which links Margaret to the sacrament of baptism, also connects her to concerns about religious cohesion and combatting heresy, which remained a persistent source of tension over the period in question. Yet, identifying a consistent meaning for Margaret's legend does not in any way attempt to deny other possible meanings, different audiences and responses, different motives for patronage, or different expressions of devotion to the saint over time.

Other themes which have been treated in studies of female saints' lives and medieval Christianity in general are those of exemplarity and the role of saints as intercessors. In a nuanced argument, which considers the vernacular legends of female saints, Catherine Sanok tackles the issue of how medieval women might have responded to expectations that they should model their behaviour on the lives of such saints.<sup>17</sup> Obviously, most women would have found it impossible to imitate saints and virgin martyrs who, for example, sought to preserve their sexual integrity by withstanding unspeakable tortures. Echoing Winstead, Sanok discusses how aspects of ancient female saints' lives could have been interpreted in ways apposite to the contemporary

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<sup>16</sup> Kate Giles, 'Seeing and Believing: Visuality and Space in Pre-Modern England', *World Archaeology*, Vol. 39, 1, Viewing Space, (March, 2007), pp. 105-21, esp. pp. 115, 117; Pamela Graves, 'Sensing and believing: exploring worlds of difference in pre-modern England: a contribution to the debate opened by Kate Giles', *World Archaeology*, Vol. 39, 4, (2007), pp. 515-31, esp. pp. 519-24; Ladislav Kesner and Jiří Horáček, 'Empathy-Related Responses to Depicted People in Art Works', *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 8, 228, (2017), pp. 1-16, esp. pp. 3, 6-7; Margrit Pernau, 'Space and Emotion: Building to Feel', *History Compass*, Vol. 12, 7, (2014), pp. 541-49, esp. p. 542; Claire Sponsler, 'The Culture of the Spectator: Conformity and Resistance to Medieval Performances', *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 44, 1, (March, 1992), pp. 15-29, esp. pp. 20-2 and 27-9.

<sup>17</sup> Catherine Sanok, *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England*, (Philadelphia, 2007).

circumstances of late medieval England, but also how the legends could have impacted women's devotional, literary and family lives.

Christine Peters also discusses the significance of saints to medieval women and to men as well, rightly observing that a saint's gender did not necessarily define their audience.<sup>18</sup> However, what is somewhat less convincing is the argument that as Christocentric piety increasingly came to dominate people's devotional practices, in many ways saints became obsolete as intercessors. If it is possible to quantify the strength of people's devotion to the saints by considering the number of objects commissioned to express such devotion, then although, as Peters notes, fifteenth-century wills may not record a large number of bequests to images and lights of saints, the rebuilding of churches in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries offers a different perspective. The decoration and furnishing of church interiors, even at a time of great religious turmoil, shows no lack of desire on the part of parishioners to celebrate a great variety of saints. Following the rebuilding of St Margaret's, Westminster (1485-1525), for example, not only was the relic of the saint's finger provided with a splendid new case, but a large wooden tabernacle to house her statue was commissioned at vast expense, and carved, painted and gilded with scenes from her legend.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, a lavish gift, for what was probably a statue of St Margaret – a 'Cote' made of 'damaske', 'veluett' and 'lyned with gren bokeram' – is recorded in an inventory of 1479-1486 for the church of St Margaret Pattens, London.<sup>20</sup> Certainly, the humanization of saints was a prevailing trend, but this was something that had been developing in regards to Christ himself since the eleventh and twelfth centuries with the growing emphasis on his passion, his suffering body and the veneration of the

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<sup>18</sup> Christine Peters, *Patterns of Piety: Women, Gender and Religion in Late Medieval and Reformation England*, (Cambridge, 2003), Chapter 4: The Saints, pp. 97-129.

<sup>19</sup> Gervase Rosser, *Medieval Westminster, 1200-1540*, (Oxford, 1989), pp. 263-74, esp. p. 272; Katherine French, 'Rebuilding St Margaret's: Parish Involvement and Community Action in Late Medieval Westminster', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 45, 1, (Fall, 2011), pp. 146-71, esp. pp. 157-58.

<sup>20</sup> W. H. St John Hope, 'Ancient Inventories of Goods Belonging to the Parish Church of St Margaret Pattens in the City of London', *The Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 42, (1885), pp. 312-30, esp. p. 325.

five wounds.<sup>21</sup> Humanization did not, therefore, necessarily mean people perceived saints as less efficacious intercessors. As the uncertainty of life and the perils of entering the afterlife unprepared were a source of anxiety for many, it would seem understandable that being able to call upon the help of saints might offer an additional source of comfort in times of need.

In the literature on Margaret in particular, three valuable overviews offer detailed appraisals of the textual versions of the saint's legend and trace the development of her cult in medieval England. The first of these, by Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis, concentrates on the Anglo-Saxon period. Frances Mack transcribes two manuscripts of a Middle English Life of the saint, while Juliana Dresvina's work spans a broader timeframe, encompassing the earliest texts and evidence for Margaret's cult through to the fifteenth century.<sup>22</sup> From a historical critical perspective, Dresvina also discusses a selection of important themes derived from the texts of the Life, such as the demonic episode and the treatment of virginity, torture and childbirth.

Discussions of Margaret's legend from mainly feminist perspectives focus on themes identified in the legend such as the desirability of virginity, the need for female saints to overcome sexual temptation, and the significance of the tortures the saint undergoes.<sup>23</sup> Much of the writing which examines the

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<sup>21</sup> Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*, (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 302-06.

<sup>22</sup> Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis, *The Old English Lives of St Margaret*, (Cambridge, 1994); Frances Mack, *Seinte Marherete the Meiden ant Martyre*, EETS os 193, (London, 1958); Juliana Dresvina, *A Maid with a Dragon: The Cult of St Margaret of Antioch in Medieval England*, (Oxford, 2016).

<sup>23</sup> Jennifer Borland 'Violence on Vellum: St Margaret's Transgressive Body and its Audience', in *Representing Medieval Genders and Sexualities in Europe: Construction, Transformation, and Subversion, 600-1530*, Elizabeth L'Estrange and Alison More (eds), (Ashgate, Surrey, 2011), pp. 67-87; Maud Burnett McInerney, 'Rhetoric, Power, and Integrity in the Passion of the Virgin Martyr', in *Menacing Virgins: Representing Virginity in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Marina Leslie (eds), (Cranbury, New Jersey, 1999), pp. 50-70; Julie E. Fromer, 'Spectators of Martyrdom: Corporeality and Sexuality in the *Liflade ant te Passiun of Seinte Margerete*', in *Intersections of Sexuality and the Divine in Medieval Culture: The Word Made Flesh*, Susannah M. Chewing (ed.), pp. 89-106; Carole Hill, "'Leave my Virginity Alone:" The Cult of St Margaret of Antioch in Norwich. In pursuit of a pragmatic piety,' in *Medieval East Anglia*, Christopher Harper-Bill (ed.), (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2005), pp. 225-45; Katherine J. Lewis "'Lete me suffre": Reading the Torture of St

apparent centrality of the preservation of Margaret's virginity focuses on one version of the legend in particular, that of the Katherine Group written 1200-1220. Although this version came to have a wider audience eventually, it was primarily aimed at anchoresses and female religious, as indicated by its focus on sexual continence and sexual temptation, as well as much of the action taking place in Margaret's prison cell.<sup>24</sup> Such emphasis is not found in the majority of the other surviving versions of Margaret's Life and thus focusing on one version of the legend in this way can lead to a distortion of the overall meaning. It is argued here that, as Eamon Duffy has stressed, in a tradition harking back to the Early Church, rather than a source of vulnerability, virginity can instead be considered a source of the saint's power.<sup>25</sup> What is clear in the majority of other versions of the saint's Life considered in this study, is that the attempts by Olibrius to force Margaret to submit to him are focused mainly on coercing her to worship his (pagan) gods rather than having sexual relations with him. Indeed, this concurs with Aquinas's view that although virgin martyrs died defending their chastity, it was their refusal to deny their Christian beliefs that lay at the heart of their martyrdom.<sup>26</sup> It is Margaret's steadfast rejection of other beliefs and commitment to Christianity, rather than the defence of her virginity, that is the focus of this study.

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Margaret of Antioch in Late Medieval England', in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain*, Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Rosalynn Voaden, Arlyn Diamond, Ann Hutchinson, Carol Meale, Lesley Johnson (eds), (Turnhout, Belgium, 2000), pp. 69-82; Robert Mills, 'Can the Virgin Martyr Speak?', in *Medieval Virginites*, Anke Bernau, Ruth Evans and Sarah Salih (eds), (Cardiff, 2003), pp. 187-213; Elizabeth Robertson, 'The Corporeality of Female Sanctity in *The Life of Saint Margaret*', in *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (eds), (Ithaca, NY, 1991), pp. 268-87; Larissa Tracy, *Women of the Gilte Legende: A Selection of Middle English Saints' Lives*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2012), Introduction, pp. 1-25, esp. pp. 8-12; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'Saints' Lives and the Female Reader', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, Vol. xxvii, 4, (1991), pp. 314-32.

<sup>24</sup> Wogan-Browne argues for a more general audience for the *passio* from the start in *Medieval English Prose*, pp. xii-xiii, but Dresvina is more circumspect in *A Maid*, pp. 47-8, 51.

<sup>25</sup> Eamon Duffy, 'Holy Maydens, Holy Wyfes: the Cult of Women Saints in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-century England', in *Women in the Church*, W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood (eds), (Oxford, 1990), pp. 175-96, esp. p. 189.

<sup>26</sup> As discussed in Peters, *Patterns of Piety*, pp. 112, 117.

Some scholars have discussed the torture episodes in Margaret's legend as representative of trials she had to endure in order to overcome her own sexual temptation.<sup>27</sup> However, such a view seems to be undermined by at least one significant and hugely influential version of the saint's Life, the Latin *Mombritius passio*, which describes how Margaret has dedicated herself to God 'who brought her salvation' and preserved her virginity.<sup>28</sup> Margaret's subjection to torture and suffering in public, it is proposed in this thesis, has a variety of resonances in the context of the legend as a whole. It should be remembered that both the textual and visual narratives make it clear that God, through the intervention of angels, for example, sustains her throughout her ordeals and that she is usually represented as impervious to the pain. Her final execution forms the paradoxical triumph of all virgin-martyr narratives and permits her entry into the heavenly realm. Therefore, undergoing torture can be viewed as just one aspect of the saint's *imitatio Christi* and was, in the main, employed by authors of her *passio* to show her immense strength of faith. In addition, this kind of suffering can also be viewed allegorically as the anguish the soul must undergo on its journey towards enlightenment.

Margaret's importance to medieval audiences as patron of parturient women and their infants has been widely discussed.<sup>29</sup> In her final prayer, Margaret promises to preserve infants from harm during childbirth and, in

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<sup>27</sup> Notably, in this respect, Robertson, 'The Corporeality', pp. 268-87 and Hill, "Leave my Virginity Alone", pp. 225-45.

<sup>28</sup> Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, Appendix 2, Ch 4, pp. 196-97 ('*totam se tradidit Deo qui eam saluam fecit et uirginitatem eius immaculatam custodiuit.*').

<sup>29</sup> Róisín Donohoe, "'Unbynde her anoone": the Lives of St Margaret of Antioch and the lying-in space in late medieval England', in *Gender in medieval places, spaces and thresholds*, Victoria Blud, Diane Heath, Einat Klafter (eds), (London, 2019), pp. 139-56; Wendy R. Larson, 'The role of patronage and audience in the cults of Sts Margaret and Marina of Antioch', in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, Samantha J. E. Riches and Sarah Salih (eds), (New York, 2002), pp. 23-33; Wendy R. Larson, 'Who is the master of this narrative? Maternal Patronage of the Cult of St Margaret', in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (eds), (Ithaca, NY, 2003), pp. 94-101; Allison Adair Alberts, 'Spiritual Suffering and Physical Protection in Childbirth in the *South English Legendary Lives of St Margaret*', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, Vol. 46, 2, (May, 2016), pp. 289-314.

later versions of her *passio*, to assist any woman in labour who asks for her help. As has already been touched upon in the literature pertaining to Margaret's legend, there seems to be a contradiction in the fact that a young virgin could have been considered a fitting source of help for women and infants during childbirth.<sup>30</sup> Mimetic representations of the saint having been swallowed by the devil-dragon and emerging unharmed from its belly, in the same way an infant might issue from the womb, may well have reinforced the association between the saint and childbirth. However, it was ultimately Margaret's power to overcome the devil that was responsible for such an association.<sup>31</sup> As the devil was held responsible for any physical impairment or injury caused to the child in the womb or during birth, a powerful woman who could vanquish the devil would indeed have been a most suitable companion for any woman in labour.<sup>32</sup>

Several authors have examined the demonology aspect of Margaret's legend discussing the development and relevance of the motifs of the dragon and second demon, notably for women in childbirth.<sup>33</sup> Although the dragon episode was considered '*apocryphum et friuolum*' by Jacobus de Voragine and some other authors of versions of Margaret's legend, it nevertheless persisted in the texts, except in some of the more condensed breviary versions, and became the defining episode of the story.<sup>34</sup>

This study, however, will foreground a significant but under-researched aspect of the demonic episode of the legend, and that is how Margaret's ability to vanquish demons and to protect infants extended to encompass baptism and

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<sup>30</sup> See, for example, the discussion in Peters, *Patterns of Piety*, pp. 117-21.

<sup>31</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 159.

<sup>32</sup> Larson, 'The role of patronage and audience', p. 26.

<sup>33</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 158-72; Lois Drewer, 'Margaret of Antioch the Demon Slayer, East and West: The Iconography of the Predella of the Boston Mystic Marriage of St Catherine', *Gesta*, Vol. 32, 1, (1993), pp. 11-20; Michael E. Heyes, *Margaret's Monsters: Women, Identity and the Life of St Margaret in Medieval England*, (Abingdon, 2020).

<sup>34</sup> *LgA*: p. 618. An example of a breviary version of Margaret's Life, discussed in Chapter 1, is the fifteenth- to sixteenth-century Battle Breviary: Cambridge, Trinity College 0.7.31, fols 161r-161v, The James Catalogue of Western Manuscripts, *Wren Digital Library*, [website], <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/viewpage.php?index=894&history=1&index=894&history=1> (accessed 7 May 2018).

inclusion within the Christian community. Baptism has now been referred to in the context of Margaret's legend in two articles, both of which were published when this study was well underway and both articles support the assertions made here about Margaret's relevance to the baptismal rite. Allison Adair Alberts discusses several *South English Legendary* versions of the legend and how, through affective identification, Margaret's experience of pain during torture could have been considered by parturient women as equating to the pain of childbirth. In this way, Alberts argues, Margaret, the virgin martyr, becomes relevant to a woman in labour. Although the baptismal rite is mentioned in the context of discussing the demonic episode, the focus of the article is on the experience of the woman in labour and the pain management surrounding birth.<sup>35</sup> The effect that an association with baptism might have had on people's perception of the saint and the importance this aspect of her legend invested in her is not considered. The other article, which focuses specifically on the baptismal theme as presented in the most influential Life of Margaret, the Latin *Mombritius passio*, is that by Marie Schilling Grogan.<sup>36</sup> Grogan's article offers a typological reading of the *passio* and discusses each allusion or reference to baptism identified in the text. Although this article serves to underline how fundamental the theme of baptism is for a more profound understanding of the significance of Margaret's legend, the discussion is confined to one version of the Life. It does not consider the rich corpus of vernacular versions such as those of the *South English Legendary* discussed by Alberts.

It is the argument of this thesis that the magnitude of Margaret's popularity cannot be explained solely by the fact that she was patron of women in childbirth, thus addressing an important but necessarily limited audience. As someone invested by God with the power to overcome the devil in many guises, however, she became relevant not only for the protection of infants at their birth, but also during their exorcism as part of the baptismal rite. Thus, Margaret's connection to baptism and the protection offered through the

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<sup>35</sup> Alberts, 'Spiritual Suffering', p. 295 (affective identification), pp. 302-04 (baptism).

<sup>36</sup> Marie Schilling Grogan, 'Baptisms by Blood, Fire, and Water: A Typological Rereading of the *Passio S. Margaretae*', *Traditio*, 72, (2017), pp. 377-409.

sacrament to the child's soul extends the reach of her significance outward from the lying-in chamber to encompass a broader audience of women and men, mothers, fathers and godparents. Three of the sources examined in this study indicate that the concept of protecting children through baptism was underpinned in parish churches by visual narratives of Margaret coupled with images of St Nicholas, something which has not been examined before. Nicholas was not only the kindly saint who looked after the well-being of children and young people more generally, but, this thesis will show, his cult also had strong associations with baptism. It appears, therefore, that a certain intended significance of Margaret's *passio* went even further than the protection of children through her devil-vanquishing powers. Baptism was a transformative sacrament which initiated the recipient into the Christian community and thus offered the possibility of salvation. Yet, the sacrament was used both to define the orthodox Christian community and, in so doing, to differentiate it from the Other, or all those of other beliefs including Jews, Muslims (the Saracens in versions of Margaret's legend), pagans or heretical Christians. Thus, Margaret's refusal to succumb to Olibrius – her vehement rejection of other gods, devotion to her faith and her own baptism in the vessel of water, meant as a torture – can be seen as asserting the importance of establishing a Christian community through baptism and in opposition to other belief systems.

The presence of the font in parish churches was a permanent reminder of the baptismal ritual and was thus symbolic of the construction of a Christian community. Collective memories of families across generations were embedded in the font and the sacred space surrounding it. It was in this space, as this study uniquely demonstrates, that depictions of Margaret were frequently found. Although such collective memories may not necessarily have fostered group cohesion, in that family and other social tensions might have interfered with such an ideal, they may well have conferred a sense of belonging through a shared set of beliefs that provided a strong sense of

common identity.<sup>37</sup> Margaret's significance is thereby firmly placed at the heart of the construction and preservation of the Christian faith.

Set alongside the sacramental aspect of Margaret's legend and complementary to it is the saint's role as an intercessor. In her final prayer, Margaret offers her protection to women and their infants in childbirth, but what is often overlooked is her declaration that she will intercede for all those who remember her passion. As Jacobus de Voragine makes clear, she is a particularly effective intercessor. He describes how Margaret was numbered amongst a select group of saints who received a special privilege at the time of their death. In Margaret's case, this privilege meant that if those who honoured her memory asked for her help, her prayers would be heard.<sup>38</sup> In one of the earliest and possibly most influential versions of her final prayer, Margaret offers to intercede for the remission of sins, whilst in other versions she affirms her help in seeking God's grace and benevolence more generally.<sup>39</sup> Once this feature of the saint's legend is properly acknowledged, it becomes clear that she could have attracted a far broader range of devotees than has been considered in many previous studies. Not only she was relevant to her

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<sup>37</sup> For references to family tensions during baptism, see William S. Deller, 'The First Rite of Passage: Baptism in Medieval Memory', *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 36, 1, (2011), pp. 3-14, esp. p. 4; Barbara A. Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England*, (New York, 1986), pp. 173-74.

<sup>38</sup> *LgA*: pp. 1214-1215 ('*Quinto in priuilegio dignitatis; quedam enim priuilegia specialia fuerunt in aliquibus sanctis dum decederent, ut Christi uisitatio quod fuit in Iohanne euangelista, olei emanatio, quod fuit in beato Nicholao, lactis effusio, quod fuit in beato Paulo, sepulcri preparatio, quod fuit in beato Clemente, petitionum exauditio, quod fuit in beata Margarita quando orauit pro agentibus sui memoriam. Hec autem omnia fuerunt simul in beata Katherina, sicut patet in legenda.*') Margaret is one of only six saints who received special privileges at the time of their deaths. Saints Nicholas, John the Evangelist, Paul, Clement and Katherine of Alexandria are the others. Each saint received a different privilege, except for Katherine who received them all.

<sup>39</sup> The *Mombritius passio* mentions the remission of sins, as does Bokenham's version, which follows the *Mombritius passio* closely: Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, Appendix 2, Ch 19, pp. 212-15 and Bokenham, *Legendys*, p. 23, lines 834-40. The prayer in the *Stanzaic Life* asks for mercy on the souls of those who remember Margaret: Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung, Tr*, p. 241, lines 279-80. The *South English Legendary* version mentions comfort in times of trouble: D'Evelyn and Mills (eds), *South English Legendary*, p. 301, lines 273-82 and John Lydgate's version mentions prosperity and comfort in times of need: Lydgate, *Middle English Legends*, Reames (ed.), p. 160, lines 454-62.

devotees at the beginning of life, but throughout their time on earth and even in preparation for the afterlife.

Although the wording of Margaret's final prayer varies slightly between versions of her Life, the protection of infants during childbirth and the activation of her intercession through remembrance of her passion remain constant features of the text. Different versions of the Life suggest the different forms this commemoration could take. For example, simply listening to the story of Margaret's life is mentioned in the *Mombritius passio* and the *Stanzaic Life*, while reading and writing her story are mentioned in the majority of texts.<sup>40</sup> More material expressions of devotion, including the commissioning a manuscript of her *passio* and building a church or chapel dedicated to her also appear frequently.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, the wall paintings, stained glass and manuscripts discussed in this study which narrate Margaret's passion can all be considered as deposits of social, as well as devotional, relationships. Memory becomes an integral theme of the chapters presented here: how people encountered and were thus reminded of Margaret's story through depictions of her life as well as through oral or written versions of her legend, and how they were guided to interact with or respond to these encounters.

### **Background: overview of St Margaret's cult and comparison with that of St Katherine of Alexandria**

The development of the cult of St Margaret in England has received detailed treatment elsewhere.<sup>42</sup> For the purposes of this study, however, it is useful to present a brief history and some of the most salient features of the saint's cult. Whilst this study does not examine the relationship between the traditionally

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<sup>40</sup> Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, Appendix 2, Ch 19, pp. 212-15 (*Mombritius*); Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, Tr, p. 240, line 272 (*Stanzaic Life*).

<sup>41</sup> Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, Ch 19, pp. 214-15 (*Mombritius*: manuscript and church); Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, Tr, p. 240, line 273 (*Stanzaic Life*: church); D'Evelyn and Mills (eds), *South English Legendary*, p. 301, line 279 (*South English Legendary*: chapel); Bokenham, *Legendys*, p. 23, lines 835-37 (Bokenham: manuscript and church).

<sup>42</sup> In particular, Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, pp. 3-4, 72-83; Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 13-14, 24-8, 40-6; Mack, *Seinte Marherete*, pp. ix-xii.

paired Margaret and St Katherine of Alexandria, some observations about Katherine's cult in medieval England will be made here as her legend has a number of elements in common with that of Margaret, and information about aspects of her cult in England can provide useful points of comparison. Significantly, however, Katherine was also counted amongst the most revered female saints in late medieval England.<sup>43</sup>

Margaret, known as Marina in the Eastern tradition, was believed to have been a virgin martyr who lived in Pisidian Antioch and died there during the persecution of Christians between AD 303 and 313.<sup>44</sup> Katherine, likewise, was reputedly martyred during this same spate of persecutions on the orders of the emperor Maxentius (d.312).<sup>45</sup>

Margaret was first known in England as far back as the early ninth century when she appears as Marina in the *Old English Martyrology*, and in calendars from the same period.<sup>46</sup> She is also recorded in litanies as Margareta (rather than Marina) from the first half of the eleventh century.<sup>47</sup> Evidence for knowledge of Katherine in England is recorded much later with the entry of her feast day (25 November) into a psalter from Winchester, written by c.1060.<sup>48</sup> Such an entry contradicts the idea that Katherine's cult was introduced into England post Conquest, but her cult may well have been promoted by the Norman religious and secular elite after the Conquest, especially as from c.1030 there was a burgeoning focus of veneration of the saint at the monastery of Holy Trinity, Rouen.<sup>49</sup>

In England, Margaret's hagiography was already flourishing in the vernacular by the early eleventh century, but extant vernacular lives of

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<sup>43</sup> For a summary of St Katherine's Life, see Appendix A.

<sup>44</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 13-14 (life and death), pp. 22-4 (Marina vs. Margaret).

<sup>45</sup> Katherine's death is usually given as 307 AD: see Lewis, *Cult of St Katherine*, p. 45. The feast days of both Margaret and Katherine were removed from the liturgical calendar in 1969 owing to lack of documented evidence for their lives. Katherine's feast was, however, restored to the calendar by Pope John Paul II in 2002.

<sup>46</sup> Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, pp. 73-6.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>48</sup> Christine Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe*, (Aldershot, Hants, 2007), p. 101.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

Katherine only survive from the mid thirteenth century. Further literary evidence for Margaret's cult in England follows from the twelfth century in the form of both prose and verse vernacular Lives and thus shows a remarkable continuity of devotion to the saint after 1066.

Wace's *Vie* of the early twelfth century marks an important new departure for the vernacular legends of Margaret in that it describes the saint's concern for women in labour, rather than just the safe delivery of the child.<sup>50</sup> Although the luxurious format of two of the three surviving manuscripts of this Life indicates wealthy lay owners, the dissemination of this version of Margaret's Life seems to have been fairly limited.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the Life of Margaret of the Katherine Group (1200-1220) also had a fairly limited dissemination in that no new manuscripts of this version of the Life appear to have been produced after the mid thirteenth century.<sup>52</sup>

From the mid thirteenth century, however, versions of the stanzaic *Meidan Maregrete*, or the *Stanzaic Life*, and the *South English Legendary* were not only widely disseminated, but also enduring. Indeed, copies of these Lives were produced well into the sixteenth century, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. Together with the Latin *Mombritius* version of Margaret's *passio*, versions of the *Stanzaic Life* and the *South English Legendary* form the basis of the discussion of the artefacts presented in this thesis and will therefore be discussed in more detail in Chapter 1.

Of the later Lives, Nicholas Bozon's poem of the early fourteenth century enjoyed only limited dissemination amongst communities of female religious.<sup>53</sup> However, the fifteenth-century vernacular verse Lives by John

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<sup>50</sup> Jean Blacker, Glyn S. Burgess, Amy V. Ogden, *Wace, the Hagiographical Works: The Conception Nostre Dame and the Lives of St Margaret and St Nicholas*, (Leiden, 2013), pp. 216-17, lines 643-50, available from: E-Book Library, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/reading/reader.action?docID=121427> (accessed 15 November 2020).

<sup>51</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 36, 39; Françoise H. M. Le Saux, *A Companion to Wace*, (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 13, 29.

<sup>52</sup> Lewis, *Cult of St Katherine*, p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> Only two manuscripts survive and they were probably both used by communities of female religious. See Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 94 and Appendix 1, entry 32, pp. 217-18.

Lydgate and Osbern Bokenham, which draw on breviary texts and the Latin *Mombritius passio*, are the most significant of the later medieval versions of Margaret's Life and are relevant to the discussion of the contemporary stained glass in Chapter 4. It will be argued that both versions of the Life would have enjoyed a sizeable lay readership, particularly amongst wealthier East Anglian families.

A version of the Latin *Mombritius passio* of Margaret can be traced back to the early ninth century in England (London, British Library, Cotton MS Otho B. x), while evidence for Katherine's Latin legend, known as the Vulgate, dates rather later from c.1090-c.1110.<sup>54</sup> The Vulgate also forms the basis of the vernacular legends of the saint's life and, although Margaret's legend is robustly represented in vernacular versions throughout the later Middle Ages, the many extant Middle English legends of Katherine bear witness to a gradual but significant intensification of devotion to her from the fourteenth century in England.<sup>55</sup>

Unlike Katherine, whose feast day was consistently recorded as 25 November in liturgical calendars from the late eleventh century, the date of Margaret's feast day fluctuated, possibly because of confusion between the names Margaret and Marina, although such variation was not unusual.<sup>56</sup> From the mid eleventh century, however, the date generally given for Margaret's feast day is 20 July, although 21 July is specified in both of the extant eleventh-century masses for Margaret, one from the Leofric Missal and one from the Wells sacramentary.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to the finger of Margaret venerated at Westminster in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, if not before, other relics of Margaret existed in Anglo-Saxon England and are mentioned in three lists of relics from

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<sup>54</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 24; the Vulgate manuscript is: London, British Library, Harley MS 12, fols 141-3. See Lewis, *Cult of St Katherine*, p. 53; Walsh, *Cult of St Katherine*, p. 106.

<sup>55</sup> Lewis, *Cult of St Katherine*, pp. 9, 14.

<sup>56</sup> Several dates in June and July are associated with Margaret's feast day. These include 18 June and especially 7 and 13 July. See Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, pp. 72-6; Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 40-1.

<sup>57</sup> Leofric Missal, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 579, fol. 341r and the Wells sacramentary is London, British Library, Cotton MS Vitellius A. xviii, fols 109r-109v. See Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, pp. 78-79.

monastic houses in Bath, Exeter and Winchester.<sup>58</sup> Although, in general, Margaret's relics are not described in these lists, and thus might have been primary or secondary relics, the Latin list from Exeter included in the Leofric Missal specifies '*De capite Sanctae Margarete uirginis*'.<sup>59</sup> Twelfth-century relic lists from the *Liber uitae* of New Minster, Winchester, record a relic of Margaret contained in a shrine with a piece of the true cross and another of the saint's relics placed, along with the relics of many other saints, inside the great cross given to the abbey by Cnut and Emma.<sup>60</sup> Other Benedictine monasteries, including important foundations such as St Augustine's, Canterbury, Reading and Shrewsbury, record possessing relics of Margaret by the early thirteenth century and this dissemination is testament to the fact that her cult was well established in England by this time.<sup>61</sup> Although secondary relics of Katherine emerged in England c.1100, only one documented body-part relic of the saint, that of a finger, is understood to have existed and is recorded in a much later inventory from Lincoln Cathedral dated 1536.<sup>62</sup>

However, no one specific shrine appears to have been associated with the cult of either Margaret or Katherine in medieval England, unlike more local, historical figures such as Saints Etheldreda at Ely or Werburgh at Chester, for example. Instead, smaller foci of devotion seem to have evolved across the country.<sup>63</sup> Such foci for Katherine comprised altars or chapels dedicated to the saint in both major churches and at parish level, whereas for Margaret, perhaps unsurprisingly, they appear most often to have originated in parish churches which bore her name.<sup>64</sup>

Firmly establishing church dedications in the medieval period is challenging because of lack of surviving documentation and the fact that

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<sup>58</sup> Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, pp. 80-1.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p.81.

<sup>60</sup> Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, p. 81. The authors state that there is no mention of these relics in older lists of the mid eleventh century.

<sup>61</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 45.

<sup>62</sup> Walsh, *Cult of St Katherine*, pp. 97, 134-35.

<sup>63</sup> For Katherine, see Walsh, *Cult of St Katherine*, p. 98.

<sup>64</sup> For example, Walsh discusses the altar at Canterbury Cathedral dedicated to Katherine and references two chapels dedicated to the saint, from the late twelfth century, that later became parish churches: see Walsh, *Cult of St Katherine*, pp. 114, 140-41.

dedications could change over time.<sup>65</sup> However, it can be said with relative certainty that around 200 churches were dedicated to Margaret in late medieval England, while for Katherine the number is considerably smaller at around 60, although these numbers are a rough estimate and need to be treated with caution.<sup>66</sup> By the fifteenth century, Margaret's cult appears to have been particularly well established in East Anglia, Kent, Lincolnshire, the West Midlands and along the Thames Estuary, and a much earlier assessment of the spread of Katherine's cult shows a similar pattern.<sup>67</sup> At least five churches were dedicated to the saint within the city of London and St Margaret's, Westminster, established to the north of the abbey church, is documented from about the second quarter of the twelfth century.<sup>68</sup>

Evidence in the form of the finds of pilgrim souvenirs strongly suggests that the now-destroyed church of St Margaret at Ketsby in Lincolnshire may once have formed a site of veneration of the saint, although this veneration was centred on an image of Margaret, rather than a body-part relic.<sup>69</sup> Documentary evidence exists for the veneration of and pilgrimage to another image of

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<sup>65</sup> Michael Hicks, 'Leavings or Legacies? The Role of Early Medieval Saints in English Church Dedications beyond the Conquest and the Reformation', in *The Land of the English Kin: Studies in Wessex and Anglo-Saxon England in Honour of Professor Barbara Yorke*, Alexander J. Langlands and Ryan Lavelle (eds), Early Middle Ages Series, Vol. 26, (Leiden, 2020), pp. 582-601, esp. pp. 584-86, available from: E-Book Library, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004421899\\_029](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004421899_029) (accessed 9 November 2020).

<sup>66</sup> For Margaret, see Frances Arnold-Forster, *Studies in Church Dedications*, Vol. III, (London, 1899), pp. 393-396 (does not differentiate between St Margaret of Antioch and St Margaret of Scotland); Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 42-3 (evidence for early dedications), pp. 140-43 (evidence for later dedications and distribution across England). For Katherine, see Lewis, *Cult of St Katherine*, p. 114 and especially Walsh, *Cult of St Katherine*, p. 140, fn. 253.

<sup>67</sup> For Margaret, see Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 141 (map), pp. 142-143 and for Katherine in the mid twelfth century, see Walsh, *Cult of St Katherine*, p. 140.

<sup>68</sup> The city churches were: St Margaret Pattens, St Margaret's Hill, St Margaret Lothbury, St Margaret Moses (or St Margaret in Friday Street), St Margaret Bridge Street (or St Margaret *juxta pontem* or St Margaret Fish Street). For St Margaret's, Westminster, see Rosser, *Medieval Westminster*, p. 251.

<sup>69</sup> For the information about Ketsby, see Brian Spencer, *Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum Medieval Catalogue: Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*, Part 2, (Salisbury, 1990), pp. 55-6; Tiziana Vitali, Tomás Ó Carragáin, Patrick Gleeson, 'Medieval Britain and Ireland in 2012', *Portable Antiquities Scheme, Medieval Archaeology*, 57, (2013), pp. 262-87, esp. pp. 280-83.

Margaret found in a church dedicated to St Nicholas near Canterbury in Kent.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, it has been suggested that the parish church of the mystic, Margery Kempe, at Lynn in Norfolk, also dedicated to Margaret, may have been a site of pilgrimage as well, although this assertion appears less certain.<sup>71</sup> However, given its role as a minster church and a priory in a busy port town, where a fair was held for Margaret's feast day on 20th July every year, it could certainly have provided an important regional focus for Margaret's cult. St Margaret, Horstead, Norfolk, is mentioned as a pilgrimage destination in the fifteenth-century will of Alice Cooke of Horstead, while two wells dedicated to the saint (at Binsey in Oxford and Broomfield in Kent) may also have offered a focus of veneration.<sup>72</sup>

No evidence exists in contemporary sources to indicate that knowledge of either Margaret or Katherine and their veneration in the West was a direct result of the crusades.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, as stated above, Margaret was not martyred in Greater Antioch, captured by the crusaders, but some way to the north in Pisidian Antioch. However, the many crusades to the Holy Land, that took place over the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, may well have helped to sustain and bolster interest in both saints, and this will be discussed in Chapter 2. Royal enthusiasm for Margaret may also have given impetus to her cult, at least in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. In 1240, Henry III and Queen Eleanor christened their daughter Margaret in honour of the queen's sister, Margaret, queen of France, and also, according to Matthew Paris, in honour of the saint herself, as Eleanor had called on St Margaret for help during labour.<sup>74</sup> Even if conferring the name Margaret on the baby may not have influenced

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<sup>70</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-c.1580*, (New Haven, 1992), p. 440.

<sup>71</sup> The original dedication was to St Margaret of Antioch, St Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Saints, but it has always been known as the church of St Margaret of Antioch. For the pilgrimage aspect, see Vitali, et al., 'Medieval Britain and Ireland in 2012', p. 282.

<sup>72</sup> Richard Hart, 'The Shrines and Pilgrimages of the County of Norfolk,' *Norfolk Archaeology*, Vol. VI, (1864), pp. 277-94, esp. p. 277.

<sup>73</sup> For Margaret, see Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 14; for Katherine, see Walsh, *Cult of St Katherine*, p. 100.

<sup>74</sup> Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation*, (Princeton, 2013), p. 460.

others unduly, it may well have strengthened the saint's standing. The name Margaret certainly became one of the most popular names for women in the thirteenth century. Shortly after the birth of their baby, in 1246, the royal couple had St Margaret's story painted in 'good and exquisite colours' on the walls of the king's upper chamber at Clarendon Palace.<sup>75</sup> Significantly, the scenes of Margaret's Life were painted in the king's upper chamber, suggesting once again that veneration of the saint was not limited by gender.

English pilgrims, such as Osbern Bokenham, are known to have visited the most notable European shrine to Margaret at Montefiascone, just north of Rome, by Lake Bolsena in Italy.<sup>76</sup> After having been brought to Italy from the East in 908, Margaret's relics – her whole body, if Bokenham is to be believed – were enshrined at Montefiascone in 1145.<sup>77</sup> It is possible, therefore, that, like Bokenham, English pilgrims to Rome passed the shrine on their journey and brought back their knowledge of Margaret and memories of her shrine with them, thereby fostering continued interest in the saint.<sup>78</sup> Katherine's body was believed to rest in the monastery on Mount Sinai from the late tenth century and a healing oil was said to issue from the bones.<sup>79</sup> Access to distant Sinai from England or Normandy was not possible for many, but the establishment of the shrine at Holy Trinity in Rouen c.1030, allowed Katherine's cult to become better known in the West from that time onwards.<sup>80</sup> Holy Trinity

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<sup>75</sup> Liberate Rolls of Henry III, 1245-51, p. 63 quoted in Ernest W. Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, Text, (Oxford, 1950), p. 528.

<sup>76</sup> Bokenham's account of how Margaret's relics came to be venerated there and his own visit to the shrine appear in Bokenham, *Legendys*, pp. 3-4, lines 97-122 (visit), pp. 26-38, lines 939-1400 (translation of relics).

<sup>77</sup> Bokenham, *Legendys*, p. 37, lines 1378-79; Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, p. 82; Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 14, 114-115. A full account of the translation of Margaret's relics to Italy is given in the *Acta Sanctorum*, July, Vol. 5, (Paris, 1868), pp. 40-4, available from: E-Book Library, <https://archive.org/details/actasanctorum32unse/page/n9/mode/2up> (accessed 9 November 2020).

<sup>78</sup> Veronica Ortenberg posits that this is how the cult of Margaret reached England: Veronica Ortenberg, *The English Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Cultural, Spiritual and Artistic Exchanges*, (Oxford, 1992), p. 119.

<sup>79</sup> Walsh, *Cult of St Katherine*, pp. 40, 42, 46.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

attracted many pilgrims and records of the many miracles performed at Katherine's shrine were kept there from at least the twelfth century.<sup>81</sup>

It is clear from this brief overview that Margaret's cult had much in common with that of Katherine and useful comparisons can therefore be made between the two. Both cults originated in the East and were introduced in England through liturgical texts initially. As a strong hagiographical tradition developed, so churches, chapels and other sites such as hospitals or wells, were then dedicated to the saints. Although neither Margaret nor Katherine had one specific shrine in England as a focus for their veneration, this does not appear to have diminished their appeal. Katherine's cult became extremely popular in the later Middle Ages, yet there appears to have been no noticeable decline in devotion to Margaret and thus the cults of both saints flourished alongside one another.

### **Method and research questions**

This study focuses on lay devotion to Margaret and examines the success and reach of her cult in relation to secular society in late medieval England. In order to explore lay devotion to the saint in particular, two specific contexts have been chosen. The first is the parish church, specifically the nave. Officially at least, the upkeep and decoration of the naves of parish churches became the responsibility of the laity from 1215, as will be discussed in Chapter 1.

Examining surviving visual cycles of Margaret's Life in the naves of their respective churches provides a focus for the discussion of lay encounters with Margaret in a public setting. Even if commissioned and paid for by wealthier patrons, such cycles would generally have been accessible to all parishioners, however humble.

In contrast to the setting of the nave, books of hours form the basis for a consideration of encounters with the saint in a more intimate devotional environment. Both fifteenth-century books of hours chosen for inclusion offer evidence of ownership. Although both manuscripts belonged to an elite section of late-medieval society, being able to trace their provenance permits a more

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

focused discussion of the significance of Margaret for the individual owners and their families. Each manuscript provides evidence for different aspects of Margaret's cult. One manuscript was owned by a woman and has a Life of Margaret inserted at the back of the volume nearly a hundred years after the book was first produced. The other manuscript was owned by a man and is entirely devoted to services for Margaret's feast day, with special emphasis on the Office of Matins for the feast of Margaret.

Following an interdisciplinary approach, informed by historical and art historical methods, that engages with recent work on material culture in particular, this project presents its findings through a series of case studies. Each case study revolves around a chosen artefact connected to the cult of St Margaret in medieval England. The intention is to offer an in-depth appraisal of what devotion to Margaret might have meant for her devotees in a particular time and place and, where appropriate, to consider the intersection between legend, liturgy and sacred space. Thus, each case study interrogates the artefacts chosen in a variety of ways, as follows:

a) The visual cycles in parish churches are subjected to a detailed examination of their narrative content, underpinned by a close reading of the most popular versions of Margaret's *passio* in circulation at the time the artefacts were produced. The study considers how the visual material is set out and what aspects of the content of the legend have been emphasised or suppressed. In addition, an analysis of the versions of the legend that have been used as sources for the visual material is undertaken to elicit, for example, whether the Latin or vernacular versions were preferred, or whether one or more versions have been used in the cycles. Such considerations can then be used to suggest what choices the artists and patrons made and therefore what message(s) the architects of the cycles were intending to convey. Thus, evidence can be found as to what was considered pertinent for a broad audience to know about Margaret when the schemes were conceived and executed. In addition, considerations of how successful the schemes might have been in conveying their messages – how the content is presented to best effect – are also discussed.

b) For the books of hours, the content of the material pertaining to Margaret is examined in conjunction with the most relevant versions of Margaret's legend in order to explore which, if any, aspects of the legend were highlighted and to offer suggestions as to why the material might have been presented in this way. Internal evidence of the production and use of each manuscript will be investigated to consider how the owner might have interacted with the book and what forms of devotion to Margaret the contents might have inspired.

c) Where the information is available, each case study examines the creation or production of the artefact. Important considerations such as the type of materials used, the execution of the artefact and the style of the depictions can provide some indications as to the financial investment made. Such considerations can thus inform our understanding of the type of patronage involved, how the artefact may have appeared to a medieval viewer and how this might have affected their response.

d) The association of Margaret's legend with liturgical and especially sacramental rites is discussed in relation to all the artefacts under scrutiny. Discussion of the sacraments is based on the Use of Sarum as this was the form most widely employed in parish churches in the south and east of England in the later Middle Ages, where the parish churches containing the visual cycles of Margaret's Life are found. Although variation in local practices cannot be excluded, the form of the baptismal rite, which is the main focus of interest here, was very carefully monitored as it was believed that using the incorrect verbal formula or gestures could negate the rite and therefore place a person's soul in jeopardy.<sup>82</sup> Thus, it seems likely that the standard instructions for the rite would have been followed faithfully and so discussions based on the

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<sup>82</sup> For the importance of acknowledging variations in local practice, see Matthew Cheung Salisbury, 'Rethinking the Uses of Sarum and York: a Historiographical Essay' in *Understanding Medieval Liturgy: Essays in Interpretation*, Helen Gittos and Sarah Hamilton (eds), (Abingdon, Oxfordshire, 2018), pp. 103-22.

standard printed text of the *Manuale ad Usum Percelebris Ecclesie Sarisburiensis* can proceed with reasonable confidence.<sup>83</sup>

e) As far as possible, artefacts – be they architectural, parochial, manorial and social, or a combination of the above – are considered in their historical contexts. In this way, questions about who might have commissioned the artefacts and more importantly, perhaps, the significance of Margaret’s cult for her devotees, are explored further. The function of the artefacts and how people might have behaved, or might have been guided to behave, in relation to them is also examined to make suggestions about devotional practices to the saint. In addition, contemporary social and cultural issues that arise from the examination of the artefacts are discussed, as appropriate.

## Sources

A wide variety of source material has been consulted for each case study. Visual representations of Margaret’s Life in a range of media – wall paintings, stained glass and embroidery, for example – form the primary sources for the first four case studies. Books of hours, treated as artefacts, constitute the primary source material for the final two case studies. Other artefacts used as primary evidence include fonts, embroidered vestments, lead tokens and jewellery, as well as the parish churches themselves. Literary sources include versions of the hagiographical texts of Margaret’s Life and those of other saints, devotional treatises, liturgical plays, liturgical texts (including sermons) and hunting manuals. Documentary evidence comprises antiquarian descriptions and drawings, as well as wills, charters, letters and inventories. Secondary source studies are used to critique or complement primary source material, as appropriate.<sup>84</sup> By bringing such a variety of sources to bear on each case study,

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<sup>83</sup> A. Jeffries Collins, *Manuale ad usum percelebris ecclesie Sarisburiensis*, Henry Bradshaw Society, XCI, (Chichester, Sussex, 1960). The English translation of the baptismal rite is found in John D. C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West. A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation*, Alcuin Club Collections, 47, (London, 1965), Appendix III, pp. 158-79.

<sup>84</sup> Such studies include: Clare Browne, Glyn Davies, M. A. Michael (eds), Exhibition Catalogue, *English Medieval Embroidery: Opus Anglicanum*, (New

the intention is to examine how the combination can offer a deeper understanding of the attraction of Margaret for the laity, how devotion to her might have been guided and how devotion might have been demonstrated by her devotees.

### ***Literary evidence***

#### i) Latin and vernacular versions of Margaret's Life

Four versions of Margaret's Life form the foundation for the discussion of the textual sources that could have influenced the content of the visual narratives presented in Chapters 1-4. The texts are:

\* the Latin prose Life, the *Mombritius* version of the *Passio S. Margaretae*. Originally composed in the late eighth or early ninth century, the text referred to here is found principally in a tenth-century manuscript written in Anglo-Saxon England, (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 5574, fols 18r-31v), edited and translated in Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis, *The Old English Lives of St Margaret*, (Cambridge, 1994), Appendix 2, Chapters 1-24, pp. 194-223.<sup>85</sup>

\* a version of the *Stanzaic Life*, a vernacular verse Life originally composed in the mid thirteenth century. The text referred to here is found in a thirteenth-century manuscript, Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 14. 39, edited by Karl Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung im Englischen Hochmittelalter: Untersuchung und Edition der Handschrift B. 14. 39 des Trinity College in Cambridge*, (München, 1973), siglum *Tr*, pp. 163-249.<sup>86</sup>

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Haven, 2016); Ann Eljenholm Nichols, *Seeable Signs: The Iconography of the Seven Sacraments, 1350-1544*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1994); Christopher Norton, David Park, Paul Binski, *Dominican Painting in East Anglia: The Thornham Parva Retable and the Musée de Cluny Frontal*, (Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, 1987).

<sup>85</sup> As Clayton and Magennis explain (*Old English Lives*, Appendix 2, pp. 191-92), the bulk of the transcription is from the manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 5574, fols 18r-31v. However, the authors state that the last 420 words of the Life, or thereabouts, is missing from the manuscript. They have therefore supplied the ending from a ninth-century manuscript, Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque municipale 202, known to have been in England in the eleventh century. This material equates to the end of Ch 20, pp. 214-15 (from the word 'inueniet') to the end of the Ch 24, pp. 218-19.

<sup>86</sup> Another fifteenth-century version of the *StzL*, found in Reichl as siglum *C*, is also edited in Reames (ed.), *Middle English Legends*, pp. 115-38.

\* a version of the *South English Legendary* Life of St Margaret, a vernacular verse Life originally composed in the late thirteenth century. The text referred to here is taken from Charlotte D'Evelyn and Anna J. Mills (eds), *The South English Legendary*, Vol. I, (London, 1956), pp. 291-302.

\* the Life of St Margaret by Jacobus de Voragine from the *Legenda Aurea* in the critical edition by Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (ed.), Iacopo da Varazze [Jacobus de Voragine], *Legenda Aurea*, (Florence, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 1998), pp. 616-19.

For the later fifteenth-century visual material, three other versions of Margaret's Life have also been consulted:

\* the Life of St Margaret by Osbern Bokenham from the manuscript, London, British Library, Arundel MS 327, dated 1447 and edited by Mary Serjeantson in *Legendys of hooly wummen*, EETS, os 206, (Oxford, 1938), pp. 1-38.

\* 'The Lyfe of Seynt Margarete' by John Lydgate from the mid fifteenth-century manuscript, Durham University Library, MS Cosin V.II.14, is edited by Sherry L. Reames in *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series, (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2003), pp. 147-68.

\* John Mirk's 'Sermon on St Margaret' in the manuscript, London, British Library, MS Cotton Claudius A. II, fols 90v-91v, is also edited by Sherry L. Reames in *Middle English Legends*, pp. 139-45.

ii) Liturgical plays have been examined as possible sources for the wall paintings of the miracles of St Nicholas discussed in Chapter 2.

iii) The devotional text *The Scale of Perfection* by Walter Hilton underpins a discussion of the interpretations of Margaret's legend in the fifteenth-century Tiptoft Hours (Chapter 5.2).<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> For the plays, see Otto E. Albrecht, *Four Latin Plays of St Nicholas from the Twelfth-Century Fleury Play-book*, (Philadelphia, 1935) and Karl Young, *Ordo Prophetarum*, (Madison, Wisconsin, 1922), available from: E-Book Library <https://archive.org/details/ordoprophetarum00youn/page/n3/mode/2up> (accessed 28 December 2020). For the devotional text, see Walter Hilton, *The*

iv) Hunting manuals such as William Twici's *The Art of Hunting* and Edward of Norwich's *The Master of the Game* serve to provide detailed information about the procedures followed for hunting different animals and the perceived qualities of each animal, which underpins the analysis of the wall paintings discussed in Chapter 3.<sup>88</sup>

### ***Main types of material evidence used in the case studies***

#### i) Wall paintings

A corpus of narrative wall paintings for Margaret's legend has been drawn on for Chapters 1–3 of this study.<sup>89</sup> For both the wall-painting cycles and the stained glass discussed in Chapter 4, visits were made to the relevant churches to see each cycle *in situ*, to make notes and sketches, and to take photographs and measurements.

Of the fourteen wall painting cycles of Margaret's Life known today, some are preserved in their entirety, but most only in part. The cycles with their dates and state of preservation are listed in the following table:<sup>90</sup>

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*Scale of Perfection*, John P.H. Clark and Rosemary Dorward (trans. and eds), (Mahwah, New Jersey, 1991).

<sup>88</sup> Dryden, Alice (ed.), *The Art of Hunting or Three Hunting MSS: A Revised Edition of The Art of Hunting by William Twici, Huntsman to King Edward II, by Henry Dryden, (1844), The Craft of Venery, A Translation of La Chasse du Cerf, (Northampton, 1908); Edward of Norwich, The Master of Game, William A. Baillie-Grohman and F. N. Baillie-Grohman (eds), (Pennsylvania, 2005).*

<sup>89</sup> The corpus was initially drawn up by me from the list for St Margaret provided in Charles E. Keyser, *A List of Buildings in Great Britain and Ireland Having Mural and Other Painted Decorations of Dates Prior to the Latter Part of the Sixteenth Century*, (London, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 1883), p. 368 (although Keyser makes no differentiation between Margaret of Antioch and Margaret of Scotland) and Roger Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2008), p. 336.

<sup>90</sup> The items listed in the tables below are exclusively narrative cycles of St Margaret. For a complete overview of all known wall paintings of Margaret see Keyser, *A List of Buildings*, p. 368 and Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings*, p. 336.

LOCATION	DATE	NUMBER OF SCENES AND STATE OF PRESERVATION
<b>Nave or aisle</b>		
Ashby St Ledgers, The Blessed Virgin Mary and St Leodegarius (Northants)	c.1325	Only the figure of Margaret hung up by the hair remains.
Battle, St Mary the Virgin (Sussex)	late 13th to early 14th century	24 scenes, fairly well preserved
Charlwood, St Nicholas (Surrey)	early to mid 14th century	8 scenes, well preserved
Claverley, All Saints (Shropshire/Salop)	early 13th century	4 scenes, very faded
East Wellow, St Margaret of Antioch (Hants)	14th century	Only the figure of Margaret remains of what was probably once a narrative cycle.
Limpenhoe, St Botolph (Norfolk)	late 14th century	The paintings were completely destroyed in 1881. Recorded in antiquarian drawings (see Sources section below).
Little Kimble, All Saints (Bucks)	early 14th century	5(?) scenes, fragments remain
Tarrant Crawford, St Mary the Virgin (Dorset)	late 13th to early 14th century	14 scenes, 12 fairly well preserved
Wissington (Wiston), St Mary (Suffolk)	c.1250-1275	originally 8 scenes, fragments of 5 scenes remain and were documented and sketched by Ernest Tristram in the 1930s <sup>91</sup>
Risby, St Giles (Suffolk)	c.1210-1220	two scenes (more likely a miracle of the Virgin) <sup>92</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, p. 627 and Plate 186.

<sup>92</sup> The two scenes were first identified by E. Clive Rouse as scenes from St Margaret of Antioch's life in 'Wall Paintings in Risby Church', *Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, Vol. XXVI, 1, (1952), pp. 27-34, esp. p. 32. Subsequently, David Park has argued that the scenes represent the Theophilus legend. See David Park, 'The Duxford Master: a Thirteenth-century Painter in East Anglia', in *New Offerings, Ancient Treasures: Studies in Medieval Art for George Henderson*, Paul Binski and William Noel (eds), (Stroud, Glos., 2001), pp. 312-24, esp. pp. 312-14.

<b>South Transept</b>		
Cliffe at Hoo, St Helen (Kent)	c.1260	6(?) scenes, set on five tiers
Stowell Park, Yanworth, St Leonard (Glos.)	c.1150-1200	3(?) scenes, very faded
<b>Chancel</b>		
Duxford, St John (Cambs)	c.1210-1220	2, possibly 3 scenes, very faded
Wendens Ambo, St Mary the Virgin (Essex)	14th century	4 scenes, fragmentary but two scenes recorded by Ernest Tristram <sup>93</sup>

The best preserved and most extensive examples of these wall-painting cycles from the naves or aisles of parish churches have been chosen as the focus of Chapters 1-3, as these images would have been most accessible to the laity.

These cycles are:

- \* Battle, St Mary the Virgin, (Sussex);
- \* Charlwood, St Nicholas, (Surrey);
- \* Tarrant Crawford, St Mary the Virgin, (Dorset);
- \* Wissington (Wiston), St Mary, (Suffolk).

Other cycles listed above will be referred to as a means of comparison with those under discussion. Conservation reports for the cycles, where available, have been used as sources of primary evidence, particularly with regards to the quality of the pigments employed and the manner in which the paintings were executed.<sup>94</sup> Conservators' sketches of the visual narratives, notably in the case

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<sup>93</sup> Ernest W. Tristram in collaboration with Monica Bardswell, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, (London, 1955), p. 261 and Plates 49 and 50(b).

<sup>94</sup> The reports are held at the Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London, and have been consulted for St Mary the Virgin, Tarrant Crawford, Dorset; St Nicholas, Charlwood, Surrey; St Mary the Virgin, Battle, Sussex. E. Clive Rouse's report on the conservation of the paintings at Battle 1976-1978 is published as 'Wall Paintings in St Mary's

of Battle, Sussex, have provided an invaluable point of reference, and they are discussed further as sources in Chapter 1.<sup>95</sup>

## ii) Stained glass

One notable fifteenth-century cycle of Margaret's Life in stained glass is preserved in the south aisle of the church of St Mary, Combs, Suffolk. The remains of other contemporary glass cycles from East Anglia and further afield, as well as wall paintings and font carvings, are used as points of comparison to discuss questions of subject matter, style and quality of craftsmanship.

## iii) Books of hours

\* Two manuscripts form the focus of the final two case studies: Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, MS Hart 21040, usually referred to as the Tanfield-Neville Hours, and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat. liturg. f. 31, referred to as the Tiptoft Hours in this study. The form and content of both manuscripts are examined in detail in order to discuss what they can reveal about devotion to Margaret in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. For the Tiptoft Hours, this study provides the transcription of the whole manuscript (Appendix G) as well as the first translation of the nine Lessons of Margaret's Life for the Office of Matins (Appendix H) in order to contribute to a better understanding of the liturgical veneration of Margaret.

\* Where relevant, images from contemporary books of hours – such as the tinted drawings of the *bas-de-page* scenes of Margaret's Life in the Queen Mary Psalter (London, British Library, Royal MS 2 B VII, fols 308v-314r) – are brought into discussions of the visual narratives in wall paintings and stained glass to compare and contrast choices of subject matter in particular, and to suggest how successfully they conveyed their intended messages.

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Church, Battle', in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, Vol. 117, (1979), pp. 151-59.

<sup>95</sup> These sketches by Madeleine Katkov are found in E. Clive Rouse, 'Wall Paintings in St Mary's Church, Battle', in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, Vol. 117, (1979), pp. 151-59 at pp. 154-55.

#### iv) Parish churches

The architecture of the parish churches containing the wall paintings and stained glass, especially the ground plans, building campaigns, windows and doors, are examined to discuss the siting of the paintings and how they might have functioned in relation to the viewers and the sacred space as a whole. Internal liturgical fittings and furnishings, such as fonts, screens, and *piscinae*, will also be investigated to this end.

### ***Documentary evidence***

#### i) Antiquarian drawings and descriptions

A range of antiquarian drawings and descriptions of the wall paintings and stained glass under scrutiny has been used to recover something of what the now faded, fragmentary or lost paintings in particular may have looked like when first uncovered or in better condition. For the wall paintings, such drawings and descriptions include, notably, those of the twentieth century by Ernest Tristram for Wissington (Wiston) and E. Clive Rouse for Tarrant Crawford, as well as William H. Brooke's nineteenth-century watercolour sketches for Battle.<sup>96</sup> For an understanding of the once extensive cycle of Margaret's Life from Limpenhoe, Norfolk, the drawings executed initially by C. J. W. Winter and copied by Monica Bardswell have been especially helpful.<sup>97</sup> The records of the Suffolk antiquarian David Elisha Davy (1769-1851) for the parish church of St Mary, Combs, Suffolk (discussed in Chapter 4), have been

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<sup>96</sup> For Wissington (Wiston), see Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, Plates 177-190; for Tarrant Crawford, see Clive Rouse's own notes and sketches in the Society of Antiquaries Library, London, shelved under B 164 h-j in portfolio S-W; for Battle, see the printed versions of W. H. Brooke's sketches in Keith D. Foord, *Battle Abbey and Battle Churches since 1066*, (Battle, Sussex, 2011), Figures B10-16 and B 18.

<sup>97</sup> C. J. W. Winter, (copied by Monica Bardswell), watercolour drawings of the Life of St Margaret of Antioch at St Botolph, Limpenhoe, Norfolk (now demolished): London, Victoria & Albert Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings and Department of Paintings, Accessions, 1932. London: HMSO, 1933. Museum number: E.119-1932. Available from: V&A, [website], [https://collections.vam.ac.uk/search/?listing\\_type=&offset=0&limit=15&narrow=&extrasearch=&q=limpenhoe&commit=Search&quality=0&objectnamesearch=&placesearch=&after=&before=&namesearch=&materialsearch=&mnsearch=&locationsearch=](https://collections.vam.ac.uk/search/?listing_type=&offset=0&limit=15&narrow=&extrasearch=&q=limpenhoe&commit=Search&quality=0&objectnamesearch=&placesearch=&after=&before=&namesearch=&materialsearch=&mnsearch=&locationsearch=) (accessed 4 January 2021).

immensely useful in reconstructing the layout of the church interior and checking the position of the glass in the window containing Margaret's Life.<sup>98</sup> In addition, the scrapbook containing notes and photographs of St Mary's, compiled by George Tidmarsh, churchwarden between 1885 and 1898, has also furnished a helpful record against which other information has been checked.<sup>99</sup>

## ii) Liturgical texts

One of the principal themes of this study is the sacrament of baptism. As discussed above, the standard printed text of the *Manuale ad usum percelebris ecclesie Sarisburiensis* has been consulted for the official procedure to be followed for the baptismal rite of the Sarum Use. In Chapter 5.2, the standard printed Sarum breviary text of the Lessons for Margaret has been used as a point of comparison for the text of the Lessons found in the Tiptoft Hours in order to highlight similarities or differences, which are then discussed.<sup>100</sup> Texts of sermons, that relate to baptism or Margaret in particular, have also been incorporated in order to shed light on the way these subjects were treated by ecclesiastics.<sup>101</sup>

## iii) archival and other sources

\* George Tidmarsh's scrapbook, mentioned in section i) above, is amongst a number of items found in the Suffolk Records Office at Ipswich which have been used to examine the fabric of St Mary, Combs, Suffolk (discussed in Chapter 4) and to consider the patronage of the Margaret cycle. Other items include a List of Rectors and Patrons of Combs, 1258-1948 and correspondence which mentions the restoration of the stained glass in 1952.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> David Elisha Davy, 'A Parochial History of Suffolk', London, British Library, Add. MS 19106, fols 32r-45r.

<sup>99</sup> Suffolk Records Office, Ipswich, FB 211/A/2/1.

<sup>100</sup> Francis Procter and Christopher Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium ad Usus Insignis Ecclesiae Sarum*, Vol. 3, (London, 1886), Cols. 501-510.

<sup>101</sup> For example, G. R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England: An Introduction to Sermon Manuscripts of the Period c. 1350-1450*, (Cambridge, 1926), p. 201.

<sup>102</sup> The items in the order they are mentioned in the text are: Suffolk Records Office, Ipswich, FB 211/C7/1 and FB 211/E5/1-7.

- \* Wills made by a number of parishioners over the course of the fifteenth century have been used mainly in the discussion of patronage for the cycle of Margaret's Life in stained glass from St Mary, Combs, Suffolk.<sup>103</sup>
- \* Letters are considered, as appropriate, to support or develop arguments. One example is a fifteenth-century letter sent by the pregnant Margaret Paston to her husband John asking him to wear a ring bearing the image of St Margaret while away from home.<sup>104</sup>
- \* The Chronicle of Battle Abbey was examined in order to better understand the relationship of the abbey with the parish church.<sup>105</sup>
- \* Charters have also been consulted, especially in relation to the church of Wissington (Wiston), Suffolk and the foundation of the Cluniac priory of Little Horkesley (Chapter 2).<sup>106</sup>
- \* Inventories of parish churches have been examined to consider the types of devotional objects they contained, particularly regarding Margaret or other saints.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> See especially, Peter Northeast (ed.), *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439-1474. Wills from the Register 'Baldwyne', Part I: 1439-1461*, Suffolk Records Society, Vol. XLIV, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2001) and Peter Northeast and Heather Falvey (eds), *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439-1474. Wills from the Register 'Baldwyne', Part II: 1461-1474*, Suffolk Records Society, Vol. LIII, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2010).

<sup>104</sup> Norman Davis (ed.), *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, Vol. I, (Oxford, 1971), p. 217.

<sup>105</sup> Eleanor Searle (ed. and trans.), *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, (Oxford, 1980).

<sup>106</sup> For example, printed sources found in Sir William Dugdale, John Caley, Henry Ellis, Rev. Bukeley Bandiel, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, New Edition, Vol. 5, (London, 1825), esp. Num. IV, p. 157.

<sup>107</sup> For example, W.H. St John Hope, 'Ancient Inventories of Goods Belonging to the Parish Church of St Margaret Pattens in the City of London', *The Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 42, (1885), pp. 312-30.

## **The structure of the thesis**

### ***Part One: St Margaret and baptism in a parochial context: constructing a communal Christian identity***

#### Chapter 1: The wall paintings of St Margaret's Life at Battle, Sussex and Tarrant Crawford, Dorset

Chapter 1 introduces the fundamental premise of this study: that an examination of artefacts in conjunction with the relevant texts – in this case, of the saint's Life – can reveal under-researched areas of meaning. The discussion centres on two late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century wall-painting cycles of St Margaret's Life in the churches of Battle, Sussex, and Tarrant Crawford, Dorset. These cycles form the basis of this initial chapter for several reasons. Firstly, they are the most extensive surviving visual narratives of the saint's Life and thus include a variety of scenes, which is useful as a touchstone when considering other smaller or less well-preserved wall-painting cycles. Secondly, their content and context – in the naves of their parish churches – form an apposite introduction to the themes which are explored across this study.

#### Chapter 2: The wall paintings of St Margaret's Life and the miracles of St Nicholas at Wiston (Wissington), Suffolk

The paintings discussed in Chapter 2 are found in the parish church of Wiston or Wissington, Suffolk. Both names are used in the documentary sources (and other variations in spelling such as Wystone).<sup>108</sup> However, the ecclesiastical parish is called Wiston and this is the most commonly used term to refer to the parish and the church in the literature. The church will therefore be referred to as Wiston throughout this study.

Chapter 2 builds on St Margaret's association with the sacrament of baptism. However, the wall paintings considered here date from the mid thirteenth century and were thus executed somewhat earlier than those

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<sup>108</sup> Rosemary Knox, *Is it Wiston or Wissington? An ancient rural Suffolk parish*, self-published, (Suffolk, 2012), p. 3.

discussed in Chapter 1. The decision to depart from a chronological order was taken to enable the introduction of key themes in Chapter 1, which could then be extended by discussing the pairing of visual representations of Margaret's legend with the miracles of St Nicholas, as seen at Wiston and in the later cycles of Chapters 3 and 4. Wiston's fragmentary Life of St Margaret is discussed in a similar manner to the cycles in Chapter 1. Thus, possible textual sources are considered, as is the architectural setting and function of the paintings. However, here the focus is on the relationship of Margaret's Life to the surrounding contemporaneous images, in particular the two miracles of St Nicholas and the Infancy Cycle of Christ.

## ***Part Two: St Margaret and baptism in a parochial context: patronage and local concerns***

### Chapter 3: The wall paintings of St Margaret's Life and the miracles of St Nicholas at Charlwood, Surrey

An early fourteenth-century wall-painting cycle of St Margaret at Charlwood, Surrey provides the focus for this chapter. The cycle at Charlwood is perhaps the best preserved of all the extant wall paintings of Margaret's Life and is thus important in that the discussions of content and style are on reasonably firm ground. However, the emphasis of this chapter lies in the framing of Margaret's narrative at Charlwood as a hunt, which will be discussed in relation to local concerns – how it makes the story more relevant and thus more significant to its audience – and also in relation to the way the theme ties Margaret more closely to Christian initiation rites. Finally, intriguing methods of representation appear to have been adopted by the artist working at Charlwood to enhance the meaning of the legend and impart new emphases to the story.

### Chapter 4: The stained-glass panels of St Margaret's Life at Combs, Suffolk

In this chapter, a fifteenth-century cycle of Margaret's Life in stained glass at Combs, Suffolk is discussed. This cycle is well preserved and significantly extends the discussion of the baptismal role of Sts Margaret and Nicholas

through an analysis of a previously misidentified scene at the end of the depiction of Margaret's Life. This scene, it is posited, represents both saints beside a font presiding over the baptism of a child. As in Chapter 3, evidence of local concerns in the Margaret cycle is examined, as is the issue of patronage. It is argued that a noble family with local connections were the most likely patrons for the Margaret cycle.

### ***Part Three: Margaret and baptism in a personal context: devotion and sacramental issues***

This section of the study breaks away from depictions of the saint's Life to consider two manuscripts owned by wealthy families or individuals. The lives of the owners, how they might have used these manuscripts and what this can reveal about devotion to Margaret are issues explored in this part of the thesis.

#### Chapter 5, Part One: St Margaret's Life as a baptismal gift

In this part of Chapter 5, the discussion centres around a fifteenth-century book of hours (Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, MS Hart 21040, otherwise known as the Tanfield-Neville Hours), given to an infant named Margaret in 1524 as a baptismal gift. At the end of the manuscript a special section has been added that is entirely devoted to a written version of the Life of St Margaret. This special manuscript, that abounds with family inscriptions commemorating the births, marriages and deaths of a family, underlines Margaret's association with baptism, an association that is emphasized in this version of the Life in the text of her final prayer. Through the baptismal ritual, the saint is also connected to secular issues of legitimacy, which were obviously pertinent to the family as a whole.

#### Chapter 5, Part Two: St Margaret's feast day and devotion to the saint

In a discussion of another fifteenth-century book of hours (Oxford, Bodleian, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31), commissioned by a lay man, this section of Chapter 5 continues the theme of the relevance of Margaret to a wider audience than has previously been associated with the saint. The manuscript is entirely devoted

to the liturgical services for the feast day of St Margaret including Matins, Lauds and the initial hymn and psalms of Prime, and thus allows a rare insight into the prayers and readings for Margaret's feast day. An examination of the previously untranslated texts of the Lessons for Matins is used to explore further devotional contexts for Margaret's *passio*.

## **Part One**

### **St Margaret and baptism in a parochial context: constructing a communal Christian identity**

## **Chapter 1**

### **The wall paintings of St Margaret's Life at Battle, Sussex, and Tarrant Crawford, Dorset**

#### **Introduction**

In late medieval England, parish churches provided the principal arena in which the laity – men, women and children from all social backgrounds – could learn about St Margaret. Information about Margaret was presented verbally, in the form of sermons, for example, and visually through both narrative cycles of her legend and single-figure representations. In a variety of parish churches today, medieval depictions of the virgin-martyr's passion can still be seen in wall paintings and stained glass, offering evidence for how lay people might have encountered her story. Two notable examples of such parish churches are St Mary the Virgin at Battle, Sussex, and St Mary the Virgin at Tarrant Crawford, Dorset (Figures 1.1-1.2). Both churches are relevant to a discussion of Margaret's cult, as they present the most extensive extant medieval wall-painting cycles of her Life in England. This chapter discusses issues relating to the interpretations of these narrative cycles, devotional practices and patronage.

#### **The setting for Margaret's story: the nave of the parish church**

By the mid-twelfth century, England had been divided up into parishes.<sup>1</sup> Over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the upkeep of the parish church became, in large part, the responsibility of the parishioners. Responsibility for the fabric and the ornament of different areas of the architectural space was shared between clergy and laity in accordance with the areas of relative sanctity: the chancel with the high altar as the holiest part of the church was to be the concern of the clergy, while maintenance of the nave

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<sup>1</sup> George W. Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church: Vitality and Vulnerability before the Break with Rome*, (New Haven, 2013), p. 89.

became the duty of the parishioners.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the upkeep of the nave, parishioners were expected to furnish all books, vestments and images necessary for daily services in the church. Amongst the books which parishioners were supposed to provide was a lesson book or legendary, which contained stories of saints' lives. For the diocese of Exeter, Bishop Quinel's synodal statutes of the 1280s required all parish churches to keep a legendary with 'passages from the lives of the better-known saints', to be read to the congregation.<sup>3</sup> An inventory of 1368, which describes the contents of 358 parish churches in Norfolk, indicates that 328 of those churches possessed a legendary. Similarly, 288 of the 358 churches possessed a martyrology, which would have provided a brief summary of each saint's story linked to their main feast(s).<sup>4</sup> This is not to suggest that every parish church across the country was so well-equipped, as much would have depended on the wealth and status of the majority of the parishioners, but this kind of evidence suggests the importance placed by the church authorities on the effective communication of the saints' lives to the laity and by the laity on fulfilling their obligations in this regard.

No record exists to indicate whether the churches at Battle and Tarrant Crawford (hereafter 'Tarrant') owned a legendary, but by the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century parishioners would have been familiar with Margaret's story as a consequence of viewing the paintings of her Life on the nave walls. Although the accepted standpoint is that by the thirteenth century parishioners had assumed sole care for the nave of their parish church, the paintings of Margaret's Life at Battle and at Tarrant suggest that other influences might have been brought to bear on the design and decoration of the schemes in these churches.

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<sup>2</sup> Carol Davidson Cragoe, 'The Custom of the English Church: Parish Church Maintenance in England before 1300', *Journal of Medieval History*, Vol. 36, 1, (2010), pp. 20-38: esp. pp. 27-28.

<sup>3</sup> Colin Platt, *The Parish Churches of Medieval England*, (London, 1995), p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Bernard, *Late Medieval English Church*, pp. 95-96.

## The foundation of the parish churches at Battle and Tarrant

St Mary the Virgin at Battle was constructed in the early twelfth century, under the auspices of Abbot Ralph (1107–1124) of the Benedictine foundation of Battle Abbey.<sup>5</sup> This was recorded in the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, written c.1180. It appears from the *Chronicle* that the provision of a church for the townspeople, which followed relatively swiftly after the establishment of the abbey itself by William the Conqueror, was thought necessary in order to avoid the laity disrupting the monks' services.<sup>6</sup> Although the *Chronicle* makes it clear that this new church was to 'serve the parishioners', the inclusion of the phrase 'in a manner laid down by the abbot or brothers' suggests that the monks wished to preserve a degree of control by appointing the incumbent themselves.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Battle church was officially recognised as a chapel of Battle Abbey and thus, like the Abbey, was designated a Royal Peculiar and exempt from episcopal control. John de Wygepirye was responsible for cure of souls at the time the paintings of Margaret's Life were executed (c.1277-1333) and enjoyed the titles of both Rector and Dean as a result of the church's status.<sup>8</sup>

As at Battle, the parish church at Tarrant came under the auspices of a monastic foundation. It was built in the twelfth century on land which lay to the south of the now demolished nunnery of Tarrant Abbey. Although the

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<sup>5</sup> Nicholas Antram and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Sussex: East, with Brighton and Hove*, (New Haven, 2013), p. 106.

<sup>6</sup> 'Battle – St Mary', *Sussex Parish Churches*, [website], <https://sussexparishchurches.org> (accessed 19 February 2017) gives the date of the erection of the church as c.1110, when a settlement outside the abbey gate is recorded. Antram and Pevsner state that the church was built during Abbot Ralph's time, that is to say c.1107–1124 (Antram and Pevsner, *Sussex: East*, p. 106).

<sup>7</sup> Eleanor Searle (ed. and trans.), *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, (Oxford, 1980), p. 125.

<sup>8</sup> For a general discussion of the status of peculiars, see Robert N. Swanson, *Church and Society in Late Medieval England*, (Oxford, 1993), pp. 18-24; for Battle, see Janet Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300*, (Cambridge, 1994), p. 184 and Francis Vere Hodge, *The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Battle*, (Battle, Sussex, 1953), pp. 63-66. Battle's status as a Royal Peculiar was constantly contested by the bishops of Chichester, as evidenced throughout the *Chronicle*. For a list of incumbents at Battle, see Hodge, *Parish Church*, pp. 10-11.

abbey itself was also established in the twelfth century, it was endowed as a Cistercian foundation by Bishop Richard Poore c.1228 and he was later buried in the abbey church in 1237.<sup>9</sup> Three charters record Henry III's interest in and gifts to the abbey where his sister, Joan was buried in 1238.<sup>10</sup>

Initially described as a 'chapel' ('*capellam*') in the *Chronicle*, the church at Battle was extended on the north and south sides c.1150, and later a monumental nave of two five-bay arcades measuring 23.2m (almost 76 feet) in length and 6.1m (25 feet) in width was added (Figures 1.3-1.4).<sup>11</sup> On the basis of stylistic analysis, Antram and Pevsner set the date of this enlargement as the end of the twelfth century, whereas the *Sussex Parish Churches* website states that building began about 1200 and was completed by 1230.<sup>12</sup> Although there is a minor discrepancy in the dating here, neither conflicts with the assertion that the wall paintings were executed on the walls of the nave at the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century.<sup>13</sup> While the rest of the structure of the church underwent significant alterations and additions over the course of the ensuing centuries, culminating in the Victorian restoration of 1867–9 by William Butterfield, the north nave wall and arcade have remained relatively intact. The only visible evidence of the Victorian restoration on the wall paintings is where the top of some of the upper tier has been damaged as a result of the nineteenth-century re-roofing.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Christopher Dalton, *Church of St Mary, Tarrant Crawford, Dorset*, The Churches Conservation Trust, (London, 2007), p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Sir William Dugdale, John Caley, Henry Ellis, Rev. Bukeley Bandiel, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, New Edition, Vol. 5, (London, 1825), pp. 620-21 (charters); David Carpenter, *Henry III: the Rise to Power and Personal Rule*, 1207-1258, (New Haven, 2020), p. 230.

<sup>11</sup> My own measurements; 'Battle – St Mary', *Sussex Parish Churches*, [website], <https://sussexparishchurches.org> (accessed 19 February 2017). For a plan of the church with measurements, see *The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Battle* (unpaginated and no publication date) and Figure 1.4 in this study.

<sup>12</sup> Antram and Pevsner, *Sussex: East*, p. 106; 'Battle – St Mary', *Sussex Parish Churches*, [website], <https://sussexparishchurches.org> (accessed 19 February 2017).

<sup>13</sup> E. Clive Rouse, 'Wall Paintings in St Mary's Church, Battle' in *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, Vol. 117, (1979), p. 158. Rouse notes that neither Ernest Tristram nor Alan Caiger-Smith mention the paintings at Battle (Rouse, 'Wall Paintings', p. 151, fn. 2).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

The paintings at Battle on the north wall of the nave are sited above the arcade, about six metres from the ground (Figures 1.5-1.6). The cycle consists of twenty-four individually framed scenes set out between three windows in four blocks, each comprising six scenes. In order to make sense of the narrative, the viewer has to begin with the upper tier of paintings (Scenes 1-12) and work from the east to the west end of the nave, or right to left, and then move down to the lower tier of paintings (Scenes 13-24), starting at the west end and moving back to the east end of the nave, or left to right (Figure 1.7). This layout will be discussed in greater detail below. At some point, probably around the time Battle Abbey was suppressed in 1539, the paintings were covered with limewash and were only rediscovered in 1845. According to E. Clive Rouse, who conserved the paintings between 1976 and 1978, they are 'of the highest quality'.<sup>15</sup> In his report, Rouse describes how he removed any Victorian overpainting, fully uncovered the whole cycle and cleaned the surfaces.<sup>16</sup> Although areas of plaster were renewed and repaired, there was no touching-up of the paintings.<sup>17</sup> This suggests that the paintings today are not entirely unlike how they would have appeared to parishioners eight centuries ago.

Tarrant church is much smaller in scale than St Mary's, Battle, which perhaps reflects the less substantial resources of the nuns or the need to provide for a smaller community, or both. The fabric of Tarrant church suffered from a long period of neglect before the early twentieth century. The chancel can be dated to the twelfth century, but the nave, which measures roughly 10m (33 feet) in length and 5m (16 feet) in width, was built in the late thirteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Apart from the addition of a window in the north wall of the nave in the fifteenth century and the renovation of the chancel in the 1890s, the structure has undergone very little significant change since the Middle Ages.<sup>19</sup> Although the nave, porch and tower were underpinned in the early twentieth

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>18</sup> Dalton, *Church of St Mary*, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Information taken from a Preliminary Survey Report carried out on 26 January 2011 by Tobit Curteis Associates LLP, p. 4 (consulted 30 November 2017); Dalton, *Church of St Mary*, p. 4.

century, there was no subsequent damage or disturbance to the nave walls.<sup>20</sup> It was during this phase of restoration (1910-1911) that the wall paintings came to light.<sup>21</sup> Margaret's story at Tarrant comprises twelve framed scenes which extend from the east end of the church to the west end (Figures 1.8 and 1.9a-b). A further two scenes were painted on the west wall, but although the outline survives, the detail is no longer visible.<sup>22</sup> The scheme dates to the early fourteenth century and each scene is approximately 120cm in height.<sup>23</sup> Other wall paintings, which include the morality tale of the Three Living and the Three Dead, form a lower tier of painting below St Margaret's passion (Figure 1.10) and all the paintings are very fine work, which provides another similarity with Battle.<sup>24</sup>

### **Evidence for the parish communities of Battle and Tarrant in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries**

Before discussing the paintings in detail, it is useful to consider the communities that lived around the churches at the time the paintings were executed, in order to shed light on their status and environment.

Something of the community that lived around the church at Battle in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries can be gleaned from the records kept by the abbey. From Sacristan's and Beadle's accounts books and rental books for this period, it can be estimated that between 2000 and 3000 people lived in the town in the early fourteenth century.<sup>25</sup> Rentals and charters from the eleventh to the sixteenth century attest to the fact that craftsmen, such as goldsmiths, who produced luxury goods, were consistently present,

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<sup>20</sup> Dalton, *Church of St Mary*, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Preliminary Survey Report, 26 January 2011, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> The number of scenes is given as 13 by Tristram (Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, p. 255), 14 by Alan Caiger-Smith (Alan Caiger-Smith, *English Medieval Mural Paintings*, (Oxford, 1963), p. 139) and 14 by Dalton, *Church of St Mary*, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Preliminary Survey Report, 26 January 2011, pp. 5-6. Tristram gives the measurements as approximately 3 feet x 2.5 feet for each scene (Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, p. 255).

<sup>24</sup> Preliminary Survey Report, 26 January 2011, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup> Eleanor Searle, *Lordship and Community: Battle Abbey and its Banlieu 1066-1538* (Toronto, 1974), p. 354.

working for the abbey.<sup>26</sup> There were a number of lawyers, clerks and burgesses living in Battle, and the monks encouraged trade in various ways, including twice-yearly fairs and a weekly market.<sup>27</sup> Interaction between the abbey and the townspeople can be traced, at least in the fourteenth century, when 'some fifteen to twenty burgesses had the right to dine in hall as esquires or valets of the house, and more served and were fed in the kitchens, infirmary and guesthouse.'<sup>28</sup> Thus, until 1331, when the population was decimated by disease, Battle appears to have been a prosperous market town – although this prosperity was completely dependent on the abbey.<sup>29</sup>

Ascertaining information about the parishioners of Tarrant in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is more difficult. Although the abbey benefitted from illustrious patronage throughout the thirteenth century, and thus some records relating to the abbey survive, the composition of the village or settlement at Tarrant, possibly because it comprised largely peasants or labourers at this time, appears to be unknown. However, a charter dated 1235 gives a flavour of the environment surrounding the parish church.<sup>30</sup> It describes land consisting of meadows, woodland, and 'pasture for a plough team'.<sup>31</sup> The charter also mentions the gift of several mills to the nuns, including two 'in Tarrant'.<sup>32</sup>

It appears, then, that the communities served by the churches at Battle and Tarrant in the thirteenth century were composed of parishioners from very different social backgrounds. What the churches did have in common, however, appears to be well-endowed religious communities which controlled them.

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<sup>26</sup> Searle, *Lordship and Community*, pp. 351-2 and p. 353.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 352.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 351.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 355.

<sup>30</sup> Dugdale et al., *Monasticon Anglicanum*, Vol. 5, p. 621.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 621 ('*pasturam ad unam carucatam bourn cum bobus*').

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 621 ('*duo molendina in Tarente*').

## Materials and techniques used in the wall paintings at Battle and Tarrant

It is worth considering briefly the evidence for the quality of the paintings in terms of materials and techniques, as this will help to elucidate the kind of patronage involved in the commissioning of the paintings.

Like the majority of medieval wall paintings in England, the scenes of Margaret's life at Battle, were painted in the *secco* technique, whereby pigments were applied to walls moistened with lime water.<sup>33</sup> The technique was less complex in preparation and execution than that of true *fresco*, but it also allowed for a wider range of pigments to be used. Similarly, at Tarrant, although the technique used to apply the pigments does not appear to be specified in the documentation, the paintings use a wide range of colours, which is indicative of the *secco* technique.<sup>34</sup>

No mention is made in conservators' reports of preparatory drawing at Battle, but some is still to be seen at Tarrant – although a few incisions and charcoal pencil lines are thought to be more recent (Figure 1.11).<sup>35</sup> Although preparatory or under-drawing does appear to have been used frequently in parish church schemes, its use at Tarrant is perhaps suggestive of care on the part of the artist.<sup>36</sup>

Although standard red and yellow ochres have been used extensively throughout the schemes at Battle and Tarrant, other pigments, more complex to make or source, are also in evidence. According to Eleanor Searle, there was a scriptorium at Battle Abbey, which, at least in the twelfth century and again in the fifteenth century, was producing manuscripts of a good standard.<sup>37</sup> The abbey was thus potentially a centre for the production and supply of pigments for the artist(s) working in St Mary's church.

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<sup>33</sup> Rouse, 'Wall Paintings', p. 159; Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings*, p. 129.

<sup>34</sup> Report by Tobit Curteis Associates LLP, 26 January 2011, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings*, pp. 131-32. Another example of preparatory under-drawing is found at St Nicholas, Charlwood, Surrey and discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>37</sup> Searle, *Lordship and Community*, p. 90 and p. 352. Searle also notes, however, that by the fourteenth century an abbot complained that the house was too poor for learning and no monk was capable of teaching the others (Searle, *Lordship and Community*, p. 90).

As it presented a wide range of surviving pigments, one of the dramatic male figures (thought to be St John the Evangelist) painted in the splays of the windows which punctuate St Margaret's cycle on the north nave wall, was used for the pigment analysis carried out at Battle in the 1970s.<sup>38</sup> Although now so faded the majority are unidentifiable, these window splay figures appear to date from the same time as the Margaret cycle, even if they may not have been intended to be associated conceptually with the Margaret paintings. Analysis of the pigments identified the interior of the figure's cloak as a 'copper blue' and showed that vermilion (now blackened) and red lead were used, along with a good quality red ochre, to achieve different effects.<sup>39</sup>

At Tarrant, as far as can be ascertained, pigment analysis has not been undertaken.<sup>40</sup> A preliminary survey report on the condition of the church – its fabric and the paintings – has identified apart from the red and yellow ochres, 'at least one synthetic copper green' and 'possibly vermilion'.<sup>41</sup> Although these comments are not specifically made in relation to the paintings of Margaret's life, but to the paintings in the church more generally, there is no reason to suggest that the paintings of Margaret, possibly the best and certainly most extensive scheme in the church, would not be included in these comments. Thus, as at Battle, the cycle of Margaret's Life at Tarrant exhibits a use of pigments that were more complex to obtain and process than the straightforward ochres of schemes in other parish churches and are therefore suggestive of more sophisticated patronage.

### **Iconography: the presentation of St Margaret's story at Battle and Tarrant**

In order to underpin the sections on framing, content and intended meaning of the paintings of Margaret's passion at Battle and Tarrant, there follows an

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<sup>38</sup> Information from a report by E. Clive Rouse on the paintings at Battle dated 30.05.1978.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> At the time of writing (June 2020), another conservation campaign has been undertaken on the paintings, but I have been unable to access the report. I visited the paintings a second time 21 January 2020 and the narrative is definitely clearer than it was and does not undermine any of the discussion set out above.

<sup>41</sup> Report by Tobit Curteis Associates LLP, 26 January 2011, p. 8.

introductory discussion of the possible textual sources as well as the conservators' and antiquarian drawings and descriptions referred to in the analysis of the paintings.

### ***Possible textual sources used in the analysis of the scenes at Battle and Tarrant***

It is possible that there may have been visual sources available to the artists working at Battle and Tarrant, but if so, they are unknown. However, the schemes differ at certain points in their choice of subject matter (for example, there is no torture with fire or burning brands at Battle as there is at Tarrant), and it is therefore unlikely the schemes would have shared the same visual source.

Feasibly, there may have been two independent textual sources, one for each set of paintings, that have since been lost. However, from an analysis of four significant texts that circulated in England at the time the paintings were made, it seems more likely that several versions of Margaret's legend were plundered simultaneously as sources for the schemes. If the paintings at both Battle and Tarrant date from late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries, as stated by Rouse, the paintings' first conservator, then the textual sources considered here can be confined to those Lives that were produced or circulated in England before or around 1250–1300.

The first of these possible textual sources, presented in the Introduction to this thesis, is the Latin *BHL* no. 5303 version of Margaret's *passio*, referred to as the *Mombritius* version (hereafter the *Mb passio*), the earliest manuscripts of which date from ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>42</sup> As this was probably the most widely disseminated of the Latin versions of the Life and it formed the basis for the majority of later vernacular renderings of the saint's legend, it is important to include it in discussions of possible textual sources for the paintings at Battle and Tarrant.

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<sup>42</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 16. The edited and translated text of a manuscript of the *Mombritius passio* is printed in Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, Appendix 2, pp. 191-223.

Of the later vernacular Lives of Margaret, the twelfth-century *Vie* by Wace and the early thirteenth-century *Seinte Margarete* of the Katherine Group are not referred to as sources because the extent of their dissemination is difficult to determine. However, the hugely popular versions of the *Stanzaic Life* (*StzL*) and the *South English Legendary* (*SEL*) in verse, which have their roots in the *Mb passio*, will be examined instead.<sup>43</sup>

The *StzL* was eminently suitable for recounting aloud to an audience of varying ages and social backgrounds with its colourful details of bright angels and the fire-breathing dragon, as well as its memorable rhyme scheme. Indeed, the prologue, which imparts a sense of theatricality from the start, addresses both ‘Olde ant yonge’.<sup>44</sup> It was also an enduringly popular version and as late as the early sixteenth century was deemed suitable by the Abbess of Malling Abbey to be copied into the back of a book of hours as a baptismal gift for her goddaughter, discussed in Chapter 5.<sup>45</sup>

Versions of the *SEL*, composed in either a monastic or mendicant environment, are more sober in tone than the *StzL*. The *SEL* versions are thought to have been based on a breviary text and were used notably as a source for homilies or preaching more generally.<sup>46</sup> They therefore form an interesting comparison with the *StzL*, which will be helpful when examining who might have planned the mural schemes at Battle and Tarrant.

The Life of St Margaret from the *Legenda Aurea* (*LgA*), which began to circulate in England in Latin from the late thirteenth century, will also be considered as a possible source for the wall paintings.<sup>47</sup> The *LgA* was an

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<sup>43</sup> The text of the *Stanzaic Life* referred to here, unless specified otherwise, is Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 14. 39, transcribed in Karl Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung im Englischen Hochmittelalter: Untersuchung und Edition der Handschrift B. 14. 39 des Trinity College in Cambridge*, (München, 1973), siglum *Tr*, pp. 163-249; the text of the *SEL* is found in Charlotte D’Evelyn and Anna J. Mill (eds), *The South English Legendary*, Vol. I, (London, 1956), pp. 291-302.

<sup>44</sup> *StzL*: p. 167, line 1.

<sup>45</sup> This is Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, Hart MS 41020 (known as the Tanfield-Neville Hours), which will be discussed in Chapter 5.1. The Life of Margaret is found on fols 167r-183r.

<sup>46</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 62-63; Manfred Goerlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary*, (Leeds, 1974), pp. 6, 12-14, 32.

<sup>47</sup> Goerlach states that cathedral libraries in England possessed copies of the *LgA* by the fourteenth century (see, Goerlach, *Textual Tradition*, p. 24). The

important influence on many hagiographical texts, including the *SEL* and also liturgical versions of Margaret's Life from the fourteenth century onwards.<sup>48</sup> In addition, it has previously been referred to as the source for the content of the paintings at Battle.<sup>49</sup> The following discussion, however, will show that whilst the *LgA* may have influenced the scheme in part, most likely because of its influence on the *SEL*, it is certainly not the only possible source for the paintings, and that although the *Mb passio* and the *StzL* appear to be the predominant sources for both mural schemes, all the texts mentioned above appear to have been consulted to some degree.

Surviving liturgical texts containing versions of Margaret's life from the thirteenth century onwards, such as those found in breviaries and lectionaries, may also have influenced the content of the paintings. However, these texts are generally much briefer than either the *Mb passio*, the *StzL* or the *SEL* and rely heavily on the *LgA* for their content. Most versions of the Life found in breviaries either omit Margaret's encounter with the dragon and the demon, or else reduce it considerably, probably in order to avoid mentioning the devil in a sacred context. For example, the fifteenth-century breviary which once belonged to Battle Abbey and which was probably used in the abbey church of St Martin, has only a brief version of Margaret's Life, derived largely from the *LgA*. It does not mention the saint vanquishing the devil in the form of either the dragon or the demon.<sup>50</sup>

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version of Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* referred to in this study is: Iacopo da Varazze [Jacobus de Voragine], *Legenda Aurea*, Giovanni Paolo Maggioni (ed.), (Florence, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 1998), pp. 616-19.

<sup>48</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 62, 77; Goerlach, *Textual Tradition*, esp. 22-24.

<sup>49</sup> Rouse, 'Wall Paintings', p. 153.

<sup>50</sup> Cambridge, Trinity College 0.7.31, fols 161r-161v (Battle Breviary), The James Catalogue of Western Manuscripts, *Wren Digital Library*, [website], <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/viewpage.php?index=894&history=1&index=894&history=1> (accessed 7 May 2018).

***Conservators' and antiquarian drawings and descriptions used in the analysis of the scenes at Battle and Tarrant***

As both sets of murals are now quite damaged and faded, discussions about the scenes are largely reliant on the copies and descriptions produced by nineteenth-, twentieth- and twenty-first century enthusiasts and conservators. It is therefore possible that in the translation from the original scenes to the copy, errors or oversights may have been inadvertently introduced.

Fortunately, various different types of documentation for each church's paintings exist (for example, conservators' reports) and thus comparisons between them can be made and an assessment of their relative accuracy deduced. As the technique of *secco* does not allow the paint to bind to the plaster in the same way as *fresco* would, the paintings have been damaged by paint peeling away from the plaster over time. In addition, the paintings would have suffered when the layer of plaster, that had covered them since the Reformation, was removed.

At Battle, Rouse and his team carried out an extensive conservation campaign on the murals of the north nave wall between 1976 and 1978. In the main the paintings are still clear and there is a fine set of sketches of the scenes executed by Madeleine Katkov, who assisted Rouse with the conservation of the paintings.<sup>51</sup> In addition, there are further sketches of the nave at Battle as it appeared in 1845, before the Victorian restoration destroyed the depictions of the Three Living and Three Dead and Last Judgement over the chancel arch. These sketches were carried out by the artist William H. Brooke.<sup>52</sup>

Tarrant's paintings have not fared quite so well as those at Battle. Ann Ballantyne and Andrea Kirkham undertook conservation work on the paintings in the late 1990s and a more recent campaign has made the paintings somewhat easier to decipher. Rouse sketched the last two scenes (Pictures 11

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<sup>51</sup> Rouse, 'Wall Paintings', p. 159.

<sup>52</sup> Some of William H. Brooke's sketches are printed alongside an article about the wall paintings at Battle by John G. Waller 'Observations on Recent Discoveries of Mural Paintings in Churches, particularly those of Battel, Sussex', *Journal of the Archaeological Association*, Vol. 2, (1847), pp. 141-155. Colour reproductions are printed in Foord, *Battle Abbey*, Figures B10-16 and B18 (unpaginated).

and 12) when he uncovered them in 1948 and a brief written description of all the scenes exists, based on conservators' reports.<sup>53</sup>

Thus, the sketches and descriptions of the paintings by conservators and antiquarians, as well as what is left of the paintings themselves, offer a sound basis for a discussion of the paintings.

### ***Framing devices for the scenes***

Each of the twenty-four scenes of Margaret's story at Battle is framed with a linear version of the barbed quatrefoil device (Figure 1.12). The traditional barbed quatrefoil is composed of a circular form, broken into four pieces with two sides of a triangular shape set between each one. At Battle, however, a square rather than a circular shape is used for the frame, the four lines of which are broken in the centre by a pointed triangular shape. While at Battle the four triangular shapes are contained within the outer lines of the square frames, the concept is strongly reminiscent of the shape of the medallions that flank the central panel on the Westminster Retable of the 1260s, although the Retable medallions have the four triangular shapes protruding from the square frames (Figure 1.13). An identical frame to that of the Westminster Retable medallions is employed in the design of the Vatican Cope of 1280-1300 to enclose the sacred figures (Figure 1.14).<sup>54</sup> Therefore, the adoption of this framing device at Battle suggests a desire to reflect contemporary trends and illustrious models on the part of the artist or patron who drew up the scheme.

Each frame at Battle is divided into four equal sections, with alternating red and white colours. The choice of colours was certainly significant and one interpretation could be that red denoted the blood of the martyrs and white denoted purity. However, it is also worth noting that red is the colour of the liturgical vestments worn at the feast of Pentecost and white the colour of the vestments worn during the celebration of Easter.

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<sup>53</sup> Society of Antiquaries Library, London, shelved under B 164 h-j in portfolio S-W. The Tarrant scenes are described in Dalton, *Church of St Mary*, p. 10.

<sup>54</sup> Browne et al. (eds), Exhibition Catalogue, *English Medieval Embroidery*, pp. 146-150.

At Tarrant, the frames for the paintings consist of a set of straightforward square borders. Each scene has an alternating background colour of red and white, which recalls the colours used in the frames at Battle (Figure 1.15).<sup>55</sup> The frames at Tarrant would have been further enhanced by a vine scroll on a red background curling above them, below the roof, which is now only visible on some parts of the wall (Figure 1.16). The vine scroll is significant here as it was used as a motif in Christian art to symbolise Christ, the 'true vine'. It was thus associated with Christ's death and resurrection, which led to the possibility of salvation for all who were baptized.<sup>56</sup>

What the framing of the scenes in both sets of mural paintings does appear to indicate, is that each element of the presentation of Margaret's narrative at Battle and at Tarrant was intended to be significant and to contribute to the meaning of the cycle overall. In addition, the frames had implications for the viewing of the cycle, discussed below.

### ***Overview of the paintings***

The two themes of mothering and childbirth, and salvation through baptism, will underpin the discussion of the wall paintings at Battle and Tarrant. These themes have been derived from a close examination of the possible textual sources and from the paintings themselves. In order to ensure clarity, the discussion will focus on the paintings at Battle first and then consider those at Tarrant. As mentioned above, the paintings at Battle are to be viewed from right to left (upper tier showing Pictures 1-12) and then from left to right (lower tier showing Pictures 13-24) (Figure 1.17).

### **A Battle**

Picture 1 (Figure 1.18a): The scheme at Battle begins with what is almost certainly Margaret's mother in labour attended by two other women. Of the four textual versions under consideration here, only two provide content for

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<sup>55</sup> The alternating colour backgrounds are seen in photos I have taken and are also mentioned in Miriam Gill's text (personal email, 16 June 2017).

<sup>56</sup> Gertrude Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, Janet Seligman (trans.), Vol. 2, (London, 1972), p. 135.

the scene in Picture 1: the *Mb passio* and the *StzL*. Of these two, the *Mb passio* mentions the saint's mother in passing to say that she gave birth to the child and died, but does not specify when she died.<sup>57</sup> The *StzL*, on the other hand, does not mention Margaret's mother's death – only that she is a 'hethene', like Margaret's father.<sup>58</sup> Given that Picture 2 shows Margaret's mother having survived childbirth and handing her daughter over to another woman, it seems likely that the *StzL* could be the principal textual source here.

Picture 2 (Figure 1.18b): A woman hands over what appears to be a swaddled baby to another woman. The baby has a halo, which is striking, as only the image of Margaret being taken to heaven in Picture 23 is similarly nimbed. This baby must therefore represent Margaret. It is the version in the *StzL*, in this instance, that is closest to the pictorial representation of the story: Margaret's mother herself sends the child away to a nurse when still a baby, as she fears Margaret's father will kill the child because he suspects, for some unspecified reason, that she will become a Christian.<sup>59</sup>

Pictures 3-4 (Figure 1.18c-d): All four textual versions of the legend referred to here conflate the content of Pictures 3 and 4 giving Margaret's age as fifteen when the events which culminate in her martyrdom begin to unfold. All versions describe her in the fields tending sheep when Olibrius finds her. In Picture 3, one of the figures on horseback, probably Olibrius himself, is pointing at something or someone. The object of their interest is revealed in Picture 4: a figure wearing a long robe and holding a distaff. No one specific textual source seems to have been used here.

Pictures 5-6 (Figure 1.18e-f): All four textual versions of Margaret's story describe a confrontation between Margaret and Olibrius during their initial face-to-face encounter. Olibrius asks her, with some minor variations in detail between the texts, to tell him her name, her parentage, and her religion.

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<sup>57</sup> *Mb*: Ch3, pp. 194-95.

<sup>58</sup> *StzL*: p. 170, line 13.

<sup>59</sup> *StzL*: pp. 169-170, lines 9-16.

Margaret's reply is a defiant declaration that she is a Christian and no form of temptation or threat will lead her to deny her faith. It is the first explicit avowal by Margaret of her Christian faith and is thus a key moment in the narrative.<sup>60</sup> Although all versions of the textual narrative agree, the *StzL* is the most dramatic and perhaps best reflects the animation of the figures in Picture 5: 'Cristine wiman ic am, iheuen of *the fonston*', Margaret thunders, 'I nule leten is loue for *other neuer on*.'<sup>61</sup>

Pictures 7-12 (Figures 1.18g-l): Pictures 7-12 consist of two groups of three scenes each: Pictures 7-9 form the first group (torture, confrontation, prison) and Pictures 10-12 the second group (confrontation, torture, prison). In the lead-up to the demonic episode, where Margaret encounters the devil in the form of a dragon and another demon (Pictures 13-15), the textual versions of the story differ between themselves and also differ from the visual narrative. The *SEL* and *LgA* describe a total of three torture scenes, one before and two after the demonic episode. On the other hand, the *Mb passio* and the *StzL* mention a total of four different tortures: two before the demonic encounter and two after. It is thus the *Mb passio* and the *StzL* which present the greatest similarity with the visual narrative in this instance.<sup>62</sup>

Picture 7 depicts the first torture, described in all versions as Margaret being hung up and beaten. The instruments of torture depicted suggest that the visual narrative could have followed any one of the textual sources. The *Mb passio* recounts that 'canes' were used to beat the saint, while the *StzL* and the *SEL* describe her being scourged and the *LgA* that she was beaten with iron rakes.<sup>63</sup> Although the depiction of the instrument of torture has been damaged, the torturer (on the left of the picture) has his hand raised as if to strike a blow

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<sup>60</sup> The Battle breviary text presents a very pared down version of the narrative, but this episode is included (Cambridge, Trinity College 0.7.31, f. 161v), which suggests its importance.

<sup>61</sup> *StzL*: p. 188, lines 86 and 88.

<sup>62</sup> Three tortures may even be counted before the demonic episode in the *Mb passio*, but two use the same instrument, rods (see *Mb*: Ch 9, pp. 200-01 and Ch 10, pp. 200-01).

<sup>63</sup> *Mb*: Ch 8, pp. 200-01; *StzL*: p. 196, line 118; *SEL*: p. 295, line 118; *LgA*: p. 617 ('*pectinibus ferreis*').

and could therefore be wielding either a cane, whip or rake. Margaret's stance in the picture, with her head on one side, suggests she is looking into the distance in a kind of passive acceptance of the attack. She appears oblivious to both the blows she is receiving and the words of the man in the extravagant hat (probably one of the bystanders), evoking the idea that she is praying. This accords with the way Margaret prays during her beating in all four texts of her passion considered here.

In Picture 8, the beating has finished, but Margaret and Olibrius appear to be locked in a heated verbal confrontation. This idea is expressed by the stance of the figures and their gestures. Margaret is straining away from her captors towards Olibrius, as if lunging at him in anger. While both the *Mb passio* and the *StzL* report Margaret as defying Olibrius between the first two episodes of torture, the visual depiction in Picture 8 appears to reflect the saint's aggression towards Olibrius, expressed most vehemently in the *Mb passio*.<sup>64</sup> Unlike the visual narrative (Picture 9), Margaret is not put in prison between the first two episodes of torture in either the *Mb passio* or the *StzL*.

Picture 10 shows another confrontation scene between Margaret and Olibrius, but one which does not have parallels in any of the four textual versions of the narrative.

In the second round of torture prior to the demonic episode, shown in Picture 11, it appears that the visual narrative has adopted the 'rods' of the *Mb passio* as the instrument of torture, rather than the 'scarpe nailes' mentioned in the *StzL*.<sup>65</sup> This could simply be because the shape of rods would be clearer for viewers, especially as the paintings were situated so high up on the nave wall.

Picture 12 concludes the second round of torture with Margaret being bundled into prison and sets the scene for the saint's encounters with the devil in her prison cell.

Pictures 13-15 (Figures 1.18m-o): The demonic episode of the story is depicted in Pictures 13-15. Most of Picture 13 has been lost, but three key elements are

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<sup>64</sup> *Mb*: Ch 10, pp. 200-01 ('You perform the works of Satan. O shameless and impudent one [...], O horrible, insatiable lion, detested by the Lord, confounded by Christ ...').

<sup>65</sup> *StzL*: p. 199, line 131.

still visible: the top of Margaret's head, a cross that probably surmounted a staff and an angel in the top right-hand corner. Two examples from other media suggest how the scene might originally have appeared. The first example is a *bas-de-page* scene from the Life of St Margaret in the Queen Mary Psalter (Figure 1.19).<sup>66</sup> The other is the Life of Margaret embroidered on the Pienza Cope (Figure 1.20).<sup>67</sup> In the scene from the Queen Mary Psalter, Margaret holds a staff surmounted by a cross as she rises up out of the dragon's belly, but the Pienza Cope presents the best comparison – an angel gives Margaret the cross. Therefore, Picture 13 at Battle corresponds most closely with the textual version of Margaret's story as set out in the *StzL*. The *LgA* and *SEL* do not mention a physical cross, but describe how Margaret escapes from the dragon by making the sign of the cross in its belly.<sup>68</sup> The *Mb passio* recounts how Margaret fashioned her own cross and an angel is not mentioned.<sup>69</sup> Only the *StzL* mentions a physical cross given to the saint by an angel and when Margaret issues forth from the dragon unharmed, the poem emphasizes the fact that it was by virtue of the cross that the saint was saved: "Sclawen was the dragun thoru the uertu of the rod."<sup>70</sup> This symbolism harks back to the theme of baptism in that Christ's death on the cross permitted the negation of original sin through baptism.

Pictures 14-15 together represent the episode in which Margaret overcomes the second demon. In contrast to Picture 13, the scenes are a faithful reflection of the texts of the *Mb passio*, *SEL* and *LgA*. All three texts describe the second demon as looking 'like a man'.<sup>71</sup> In Picture 14, the demon clearly has a man's torso, despite his goat-like head and clawed feet. In the *Mb passio* and *LgA*, the devil takes Margaret's hand, while in the *SEL* it is Margaret

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<sup>66</sup> Queen Mary Psalter, London, British Library, Royal MS 2 B VII, fol. 309v. England, 1310-1320.

<sup>67</sup> The Pienza Cope. England, c.1330-1340. See Browne et al. (eds), Exhibition Catalogue, *English Medieval Embroidery*, pp. 206-07.

<sup>68</sup> *LgA*: p. 618 (*'signum crucis edidit et ille euanuit'*) and *SEL*: p. 297, line 163.

<sup>69</sup> *Mb*: Ch 13, pp. 204-07.

<sup>70</sup> *StzL*: p. 213, line 179.

<sup>71</sup> *Mb*: Ch 14, pp. 206-07; *SEL*: p. 297, line 171; *LgA*: p. 618 (*'in speciem hominis'*).

who 'gripte him bi *the honde*' so that she can then throw him to the ground.<sup>72</sup> Although the devil's right arm is now lost, Margaret's left hand is stretched towards the demon in a gesture which suggests their hands might have met and she is now recoiling.

Picture 15 can be likened to only one textual source of the four discussed here, and that is the *SEL*. The *SEL* accurately describes the pose of the figures and the actions of Picture 15, recounting how Margaret casts the demon to the ground and 'scorgede him wel sore'.<sup>73</sup> The visual narrative departs from the *SEL* in one aspect only: Margaret is not shown putting her right foot on the demon's neck while she punishes him. Instead she is shown with her right foot on the demon's haunch. Perhaps this portrayal makes for a better composition: if the demon was lying on the ground, it would be unclear to the viewer whom Margaret was beating. As it is, the demon's crouching position allows his horns to be easily distinguished, whilst still suggesting an attitude of submission.

Pictures 16-21 (Figures 1.18p-u): As with the earlier torture episodes (Pictures 7-12), it seems expedient to discuss the later torture episodes together (Pictures 16-21).

Picture 16 represents the confrontation between Margaret and Olibrius which follows the demonic episode in all the textual narratives.

Picture 17 shows Margaret being hung up by the hair and tortured. Although it is unclear what kind of torment Margaret is subjected to, the person on the right is reaching up towards her head, which suggests that this is the torture with boiling oil, as recounted uniquely in the *StzL*: "Wellinde laumpes letet on hire renne / From *the* necke to *the* to".<sup>74</sup> All textual versions of the passion describe this first torture after the dragon episode as being some form of ordeal by fire – burned with torches in the *Mb passio* and the *LgA*, and

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<sup>72</sup> *Mb*: Ch 14, pp. 206-07; *LgA*: p. 618 ('*dyabolus ad eam accessit et manum tenens dixit ...*'); *SEL*: p. 297, line 174.

<sup>73</sup> *SEL*: p. 298, line 183.

<sup>74</sup> *StzL*: p. 229, lines 234-35.

'amid *the fur caste*' in the *SEL* – but only the *StzL* mentions the saint's head.<sup>75</sup> In addition, Picture 17 is framed by two scenes showing Margaret confronting Olibrius and, in the texts, this holds true only of the *StzL* and *Mb* versions: the *LgA* and *SEL* move directly from one torture (by fire) into the next (by water) without interruption.

Picture 19 has been completely obscured, but it may have corresponded to Margaret being bound hand and foot and thrown in a vessel of water. In both the *Mb passio* and later versions of the *StzL*, not previously referred to in this study, the saint compares this submersion directly to a form of baptism: 'so that it may wash all my sins away from me and then strengthen my soul and body and mind and baptize me in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'<sup>76</sup> However, in the version of the *StzL* which this study has followed so far, Margaret says she hopes to die in the water ('"Louerd, yef *thi* wille is, a water ic isee, / *thrin* ic chulle deien for the loue of *the*."'), which nevertheless alludes to baptism in that the soul is believed to die to sin during the transformative rite and can thus hope for salvation.<sup>77</sup>

In contrast to the other pictures in this group, the *StzL* does not appear to be the main textual reference for the artist in Picture 20, which instead follows the *Mb*, *LgA* and *SEL* versions. In the *Mb passio* and *SEL*, Margaret has her hands and feet bound before being thrown into the vessel of water and then emerges unharmed and unfettered.<sup>78</sup> The *LgA* concurs, but does not mention that her bonds have been undone – almost certainly because this is a summarized version of the legend.<sup>79</sup> It is possible that the surviving outlines of legs and feet in Picture 20 are those of Margaret, standing unscathed and no longer bound, outside the vessel of water. The *Mb*, *LgA* and *SEL* versions all describe how many people were converted to Christianity having witnessed this scene, but that Olibrius ordered them to be beheaded to prevent further

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<sup>75</sup> *Mb*: Ch 17, pp. 210-11; *LgA*, p. 619 (*'facibus ardentibus'*); *SEL*: p. 299, line 238.

<sup>76</sup> *Mb*: Ch 18, pp. 212-13. Only one of the five other versions of the *StzL* transcribed by Reichl does not mention baptism directly (siglum *Or*). See Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, p. 233.

<sup>77</sup> *StzL*: p. 233, lines 245-46.

<sup>78</sup> *Mb*: Ch 18, pp. 212-13; *SEL*: p. 300, lines 241-44.

<sup>79</sup> *LgA*: p. 619 (*'uirgo illesa egreditur'*).

conversions.<sup>80</sup> In the *StzL*, however, Margaret is not bound before her torture and angels come to take her out of the water. Although ‘a thousand and five’ onlookers are converted, Olibrius is not reported as having them executed.<sup>81</sup> Thus, what appear to be scattered heads visible around the feet of the saint in Picture 20 indicate that the artist looked to the *Mb*, *LgA* and *SEL* versions for guidance here, in contrast to the majority of the previous scenes, which correspond more closely to the *StzL*.

Picture 21 depicts yet another confrontation between the saint and Olibrius, mentioned in all the texts, but the outcome here is that Olibrius orders his men to take the saint outside the city walls to be executed.

Pictures 22-24 (Figures 1.18v-x): The *LgA*’s account of Margaret’s final prayer and beheading is so lacking in detail that it is almost certainly not the only source of inspiration for the artist for either of the final scenes. In addition, it does not discuss Margaret’s enshrinement and therefore provides no foundation for Picture 24. The other textual versions of Margaret’s Life reflect the details shown in the painted scenes with varying degrees of consistency, with the *Mb passio* the most complete. The figure on the right in Picture 22 must be the executioner, as he appears to be carrying a sword.<sup>82</sup> Margaret, in the middle, is praying with her arms raised in what was probably an *orant* pose. The figure to the left is possibly one of the crowd that has come to watch the execution, who indicates, with a gesture for the viewer, the heavenly presence above Margaret’s head. Uniquely in the *Mb passio*, Margaret then addresses the crowd, calling on them to venerate her, in return for which she promises to intercede for them with Christ.<sup>83</sup>

Picture 23 illustrates Margaret’s beheading. The *Mb passio* recounts how Margaret asks Malchus to strike her, but he refuses because, he says, God

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<sup>80</sup> *Mb*: Ch 18-19, pp. 212-13; *SEL*: p. 300, lines 252-58; *LgA*: p. 619 (*‘Tunc quinque milia uiorum crediderunt et pro nomine Christi capitalem sententiam acceperunt’*).

<sup>81</sup> *StzL*: p. 234, line 249.

<sup>82</sup> He is called Malchus in the *Mb passio*, Maltus in the *SEL* and Malcus in the *StzL*.

<sup>83</sup> *Mb*: Ch 21, pp. 214-15.

has spoken to her.<sup>84</sup> She explains that he must carry out this task in order to find salvation and for her to be released into heaven. The text then describes how he beheads Margaret, asks God for forgiveness and falls down – likely dead – on her right side, which is exactly the position in which his prostrate figure appears in Picture 23. The *Mb passio* specifies that angels then bear Margaret’s body to heaven, rather than her soul, which makes enshrinement problematic. In order to manage this difficulty, the *Mb passio* states that the saint’s relics, and thus not necessarily her body, are placed in a reliquary. Similarly, the *StzL* does not stipulate that Margaret’s body is borne up to heaven by angels, leaving open the possibility for her body to be enshrined.<sup>85</sup> The *SEL* does not mention Margaret’s body being taken to heaven, but instead records a ‘wight coluere’ (‘white dove’) – her soul – flying out of her body as she expires.<sup>86</sup> Turning back to the visual narrative, Picture 23 shows, above Margaret’s decapitated body, a tiny nimbed figure in a cloth that was probably at one time carried by angels, entering the heavens. This figure could represent either Margaret’s body, or her soul. As it is a figure, and not a dove, however, the artist or patron has drawn on the *Mb passio* or *StzL* for the content of this scene.

Neither the *LgA* nor the *SEL* discuss Margaret’s enshrinement, the subject of Picture 24. The *Mb passio* and the *StzL* recount that, once Margaret has been taken into heaven by angels, the supposed eyewitness author of the narrative, has her relics (or body in the case of the *StzL*) transported to Antioch.<sup>87</sup> The text of the *StzL* is therefore the closest to the visual narrative at Battle in this scene.

To sum up, elements of the *Mb passio* can be detected in the majority of scenes (17 out of 23, where Picture 10 does not derive from any source considered here) and is the only source which describes the death of the executioner after the beheading (Picture 22). The *StzL* underpins 15 out of 23 scenes with four scenes specific to the text: the infancy of Margaret (Picture 2),

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<sup>84</sup> *Mb*: Ch 22, pp. 216-17.

<sup>85</sup> *StzL*: p. 246, lines 297-300 and p. 247, line 304 (‘Ant makeden an chirche ant thrinne maden hire to lie.’).

<sup>86</sup> *SEL*: p. 302, line 314.

<sup>87</sup> *Mb*: Ch 24, pp. 216-17; *StzL*: p. 247, lines 301-04.

the battle with the dragon (Picture 13) and the torture with oil (Picture 17). Finally, the *SEL* could have been used as a source in 13 of 23 scenes, with one scene in which Margaret flogs the second demon (Picture 15) taken exclusively from this source. The implications of this summary are discussed in the section dealing with the intended meanings of the paintings below.

### **B Tarrant**

Compared to Battle, the scenes at Tarrant are more conventionally laid out under the roofline on the south wall of the nave, in one plane. Picture 1 is set at the east end and is followed by Pictures 2-12 in sequence moving west. Pictures 13-14 were set at a right angle to the rest of the scheme on the west wall of the nave.

Picture 1: Although it has been suggested that the first scene at Tarrant showed Margaret spinning and being taught by her fostermother, it is more likely that the scene represents what Tristram describes as Margaret 'seated with a kneeling figure before her'.<sup>88</sup> Wall painting expert Miriam Gill's description of the narrative in 2011, after various conservation campaigns, concurs with Tristram.<sup>89</sup> Only one wall-painting scheme, that found in the chancel of St Mary the Virgin, Wendens Ambo, Essex, begins the narrative with Margaret taught by her fostermother (Figures 1.21a-b). However, the majority of visual narratives (and indeed that at Wendens Ambo in the following scene) include a scene in which Margaret is seated, spinning and tending sheep when one of Olibrius's men or Olibrius himself approaches her.

Picture 2: Tristram describes the scene as Olibrius approaching Margaret with an attendant.<sup>90</sup> However, this would not follow the textual sources which all state that Olibrius saw Margaret first and then sent his men to talk to her or

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<sup>88</sup> Margaret being taught by her nurse is given in *St Mary's Church, Tarrant Crawford, Dorset*, (Blandford Forum, Dorset, 1965) unpaginated, p. 5; Dalton, *Church of St Mary*, p. 10. For Tristram's assessment, see Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, p. 255.

<sup>89</sup> Text kindly made available to me by Miriam Gill (email of 16 June 2017).

<sup>90</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Fourteenth Century*, p. 255.

fetch her. Gill states that Olibrius is set in the middle of the scene looking back towards Margaret in Picture 1 and that there are figures around him pointing and gesticulating. This indicates that the scene almost certainly refers to the episode recounted in the *Mb passio* and *StzL* in which Olibrius's men return and tell him he cannot have anything to do with Margaret because she is a Christian and will not marry him.<sup>91</sup> The episode does not appear in the *SEL* or *LgA*.

Picture 3: The first confrontation between Margaret and Olibrius. The subject matter is consistent with all textual sources.

Picture 4: Unidentified scene. It is probable that this was a prison scene, as Tristram suggests. This would agree with Picture 6 of the Battle cycle, where Margaret has refused to succumb to Olibrius's demands in Picture 5 and is then thrown in prison. The *SEL*, *StzL* and the *LgA* describe a prison episode before a second confrontation between Margaret and Olibrius, which is then followed by torture.<sup>92</sup> This would indicate that Picture 5 showed a second confrontation and Picture 6 a torture scene.

Picture 5: Unidentified scene. This may well have shown another confrontation. Although it has been suggested that it showed Margaret being thrown into prison, this does not concur with the texts. Gill points out that the angular building on the right-hand side is 'a survival from a later layer of painting' making the possibility of this being a prison scene less likely.<sup>93</sup>

Pictures 6-7: Margaret is tied to a pillar and scourged in Picture 6 and then brought back before Olibrius in Picture 7. All the texts describe Margaret being hung up for the first torture, but Picture 6 shows her tied to a pillar instead.

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<sup>91</sup> *Mb*: Ch 6, pp. 196-97; *StzL*: p. 184, lines 69-72.

<sup>92</sup> *SEL*: pp. 293-94, lines 61-89 (first confrontation), p. 294, line 90 (put in prison), pp. 294-95, lines 93-109 (second confrontation), pp. 295-96, lines 110-149 (first torture, hung up and scourged); *StzL*: pp. 186-191, lines 79-100 (first confrontation), p. 191, line 100 (put in prison), pp. 192-95, lines 102-114 (second confrontation), pp. 195-98, lines 115-128 (first torture, hung up by the hair and beaten).

<sup>93</sup> Miriam Gill, email of 16 June 2017.

The visual narrative therefore departs from the texts here, just as it does at Battle in Pictures 7 and 11.

Pictures 8-10: If the artist had followed the sequence of events set out in the textual narratives, then the demonic episode should be shown at this juncture, before the final rounds of torture, not after them. None of the four texts referred to here includes three consecutive torture episodes and fire (or boiling oil) is used first, then water. Instead, Picture 8 shows Margaret hung up by her hair and beaten. In Picture 9, the saint is tortured in a vessel of water, while in Picture 10, she is tortured with fire.

Pictures 11-12: In Picture 11, Margaret is swallowed by the devil in the form of a dragon and emerges unharmed. Rouse made sketches of this scene and Picture 12 when he uncovered and treated the paintings at Tarrant in 1948. The sketches thus provide a faithful representation of the subject matter of these scenes (Figure 1.22-1.23).<sup>94</sup> Rouse's sketch of Picture 11 shows Margaret bursting out of the belly of a horned monster. A male figure on the left of the scene reaches out towards her. In the background, a bearded male figure, possibly Christ, points to what is almost certainly heaven in the top right-hand corner, where an angel is hovering. To the right of the bearded figure, there appears to be a white dove, symbolic of the Holy Spirit. The male figure on the left is probably meant to represent a man called Theotimus, who, according to the *Mb passio*, wrote Margaret's Life, witnessed the demonic episode and enshrined her relics.<sup>95</sup> The *StzL*, also mentions him, but unlike the *Mb passio*, does not record him witnessing the demonic episode.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> The Tarrant paintings were discovered under plaster in 1910-11, but how many paintings were uncovered at this juncture is unclear (the church has many mural paintings of varying subject matter). In 1948, Rouse uncovered and treated all the paintings: Dalton, *Church of St Mary*, pp. 3, 11. For Rouse's notes and sketches, see the Society of Antiquaries Library, London, shelved under B 164 h-j in portfolio S-W.

<sup>95</sup> In the *Mb passio*, Theotimus also introduces the text. See *Mb*: Ch 2, pp. 194-95 (introduction), Ch 12, pp. 204-05 (witness to demonic episode), Ch 24, pp. 216-17 (enshrinement).

<sup>96</sup> *StzL*: p. 247, lines 301-04.

As at Battle, the only reference to Margaret flogging or birching the second demon, shown in Picture 12, is in the *SEL*.<sup>97</sup> For this scene, the *SEL* was the only source for the artist.

Pictures 13-14: These two scenes, on the west wall of the nave, survive only in outline. They may well have shown Margaret's execution and enshrinement, as in the final scenes at Battle.

To sum up, the texts predominantly used as sources for the artist(s) at Tarrant are the *Mb passio* and the *SEL* or *LgA*. The *Mb* version is used exclusively in Picture 11 (the dragon scene) and the *SEL* in Picture 12 (where the second demon is flogged).

### ***The style of the paintings at Battle and Tarrant***

The damage done to both sets of paintings over the centuries does not permit a comprehensive assessment of the style and techniques of the artists involved. However, using conservators' drawings and the remains of the paintings, some considerations can be made.

Both schemes show evidence of figures with slender, elongated bodies, as well as long fingers with elegant hand gestures (Figures 1.24a-b). At Battle, the figures appear largely in proportion and the swaying S-curve shape is discernible in the depiction of Margaret in particular (for example, Pictures 7 and 21 (Figures 1.18g and 1.18u). The animation of the figures is still clear, notably, for example, Pictures 8, 12 and 23 (Figures 1.18h, 1.18l, 1.18w). Although murals from the same period survive at Westminster, the solidity and calm of a figure like that of St Faith is not directly comparable to the animated figures in the paintings at Battle (Figure 1.25). The drapery at Battle is also given a more linear expression than the soft rounded folds of St Faith's outer mantle, shown, for example, in the depiction of Margaret's robe in Picture 8 (Figure 1.26). Another example of work which bears similarities in figure style, gesture and movement to the paintings at Battle and dates from the early

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<sup>97</sup> *SEL*: p. 298, line 183.

fourteenth century is that of the *bas-de-page* scenes of Margaret's Life in the Queen Mary Psalter.<sup>98</sup> Unlike the scenes at Battle, Margaret is not handled roughly by her tormentors in the psalter and the confrontation scenes in the psalter are calmer, with the figure of Margaret less animated (Figure 1.27). However, in both narratives the hand gestures are important, highlighted against a plain, empty background, and the fingers are extended, imparting a sense of refinement.

At Tarrant, what can be made out of the painted figures today suggests that the artist's sense of proportion was not always as successful as that shown in the figures at Battle (see, for example Figures 1.28a-b), but a definite sense of animation of the figures and careful composition of the scenes is indicated in the drawings by Rouse (Figures 1.22-1.23). In Picture 11 in particular, the dragon forces its way diagonally across the scene from right to left, which gives a sense of its strength and movement. The position and gestures of the other figures – Theotimus on the left, Christ in the centre and Margaret on the right – seem to hold the figure of the dragon in check and therefore emphasize the triumph of good over evil.

Therefore, the paintings at Battle and Tarrant appear to have been executed with a good deal of sophistication and are thus suggestive of whoever commissioned the schemes having access to skilled craftsmen.

### ***The possible intended meaning(s) of the paintings***

#### Introduction

How can the comparisons between the textual and the visual narratives enhance our understanding of the message(s) that the paintings were intended to convey and the patron(s) involved with the visual schemes? In the first place, it is noteworthy that, although it would have been more straightforward for the artist to work from one sole source, a variety of texts underpins the visual narratives at Battle and Tarrant, and that they are both Latin and vernacular versions. For example, the Battle paintings rely heavily on the *Mb passio* and the *StzL* for the sequencing of scenes and the content and yet the

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<sup>98</sup> Queen Mary Psalter, London, British Library, Royal MS 2 B VII, fols 307v-313v. England, 1310-1320.

*SEL* is the foundation for the treatment of the second demon. Perhaps this selection of sources was simply a matter of finding the best way to compose a series of episodes that made sense for the viewer, or perhaps it was somebody's subjective interpretation of the narrative. Perhaps there were theological considerations for setting out the scenes in this way.

This section argues that the paintings at Battle show a particular concern with mothers and mothering. In addition, the layout and content of both schemes, as well as the choice of the textual sources, strongly suggest that the patron and artist wished to emphasize the relevance of Margaret's story to the sacrament of baptism. Both successful childbearing and baptism are relevant to a lay audience, but the salvation of souls through baptism is also a clerical concern. Thus, even though Margaret's story was painted on a wall of the nave at Battle and Tarrant, and therefore ostensibly the responsibility of the parishioners, it is possible that the parishioners received guidance in their choice of subject matter from a professed religious or prelate.

### Baptism

In order to discuss Margaret's relevance to the sacrament of baptism satisfactorily, it is useful to consider the rite itself in detail first. The performance of the rituals surrounding the sacrament of baptism may well have varied between churches across England during the Middle Ages. However, by the twelfth century baptism was nearly always administered to babies rather than adults and all churches used a ceremony which reflected the Roman rite.<sup>99</sup> In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Sarum rite, derived from the Roman rite, was used for liturgical observance in the majority of churches across southern England. It is therefore appropriate to base discussions of baptismal ceremonies at Battle and Tarrant on the standard printed edition of the Sarum *Manuale*.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> John D. C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West: A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation*, Alcuin Club Collections, No. 47, (London, 1965), pp. xii, 86.

<sup>100</sup> 'Sarum Rite', *New Advent, Catholic Encyclopedia*, [website], <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13479a.htm> (accessed 3 June 2018); A. Jeffries Collins, *Manuale ad usum percelebris ecclesie Sarisburiensis*, Henry

Traditionally, baptism in the Western Church had been performed during the feasts of Easter and Pentecost, and infants were required to wait until these occasions in order to be received into the Church, unless they were in danger of dying. Here it is useful to digress a little in order to consider the significance of Easter and Pentecost and thus to understand the message(s) of the wall painting cycles more fully.

Easter is the most important feast of the Church. Homiliaries such as the twelfth-century Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 303 open with the preparation for Easter and then move through sermons for Easter itself before reaching materials for individual saints. Indeed, in the version of Margaret's *passio* from the same manuscript, the text begins with a reference to Easter, 'In the days after the Lord's passion and resurrection, when Christ the Saviour rose from death, his saints suffered because of their great, dear love of him.'<sup>101</sup>

Easter celebrates Christ's suffering, death on the cross and resurrection as the means by which humanity is saved from the taint of Adam's original sin and is permitted to regain the possibility of salvation. Thus, in death, it is claimed, lies the hope of a new and eternal life. Through baptism, which is a declaration of belief in this Christian story and thus offers a gateway to participation in the Christian community, the catechumen accesses a life which allows him or her to entertain the hope of joining the risen Christ in heaven. Like the feast of Easter, therefore, the sacrament of baptism signifies rebirth. This idea is expressed explicitly in the writings of St Paul:

Know you not that all we who are baptized in Christ Jesus are baptized in his death? For we are buried together with him by baptism into death: that, as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.<sup>102</sup>

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Bradshaw Society, XCI, (Chichester, Sussex, 1960); unless otherwise specified, the translations of the excerpts from A. J. Collins's *Manuale* are found in Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, Appendix III, pp. 158–79.

<sup>101</sup> The edited Life of Margaret from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 303, is found in Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, pp. 149–80.

<sup>102</sup> St Paul, Romans 6.3–10: unless otherwise specified, all Bible references are taken from the *Douay-Rheims and Latin Vulgate Bible*, [website], <http://www.drbo.org/drl/chapter/52006.htm> (accessed 16 July 2020).

Traditionally, therefore, baptism was linked in theological discourse with death (to sin) and rebirth (into the Christian community). This concept was made tangible in the architectural forms of baptisteries, mausolea and martyria. These were often octagonal constructions to recall the symbolism of the number eight – regeneration and resurrection.<sup>103</sup> ‘Regeneration’ is a term integral to the baptismal rite and is notably found in the prayers for the blessing of the water of the font. The concept of resurrection is present in the idea of baptism as a rebirth, as well as in the fact that Christ’s resurrection offers those who are baptized the possibility of everlasting life after physical death.<sup>104</sup>

Pentecost is of equal importance to Easter in the Church’s calendar. As with Easter, it has connotations of rebirth and is thus an appropriate time for the rite of baptism to be performed. Pentecost commemorates the occasion, fifty days after Christ’s resurrection, on which the apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of flame. Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, they were enabled to leave their previous lives and go out into the world to preach the gospel story. The feast of Pentecost is thus considered the birth of the mission of the Church to proselytize.<sup>105</sup>

Whether infants should be made to wait to be baptized until these feast days came around annually caused much debate within the Church over the centuries.<sup>106</sup> In 1279, the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Pecham, instructed all priests to baptize children within a week of their birth in order to avoid them dying without receiving the sacrament, deemed vital for their salvation.<sup>107</sup> However, he conceded that children born a week before Easter or

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<sup>103</sup> Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation*, (London, 1996), p. 159; Roger Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, (Oxford, 1999), pp. 59-61, esp. 61.

<sup>104</sup> For the prayers over the font, see Collins, *Manuale*, esp. p. 33 and Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, esp. p. 170.

<sup>105</sup> James L. Monks, *Great Catholic Festivals*, (London, 1958), pp. 67-68.

<sup>106</sup> Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, pp. 82, 86; John G. Davies, *The Architectural Setting of Baptism*, (London, 1962), p. 58.

<sup>107</sup> Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 111. See also Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children*, (London, 2001), p. 24.

Pentecost would be initiated into the Christian family on these feast days, in accordance with traditional practices.

Essentially, the baptismal rite was divided into two parts: the *Ordo ad cathecuminum faciendum*, which involved the prayers and rituals conducted as preparation on the threshold of the church, usually in the porch, and the *De baptismo*, or prayers and rituals performed for the baptism itself at the font inside the church.<sup>108</sup>

At the beginning of the *Ordo*, babies had salt placed in their mouths as 'a perfect medicine', before the prayers for the exorcism of the infant were spoken.<sup>109</sup> After the gospel reading, the priest spat in his left hand and, the thumb of his right hand having been dipped in the saliva, made the sign of the cross on the baby's ears and nose, saying, '*Effeta*' ('Be opened'). The ritual was intended to open the infant's nose to the sweetness of sanctity and to open the left ear so that the devil could leave the child. All those in attendance, including the midwife and the godparents, had then to say three fundamental prayers, which they would have been taught as children: the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Apostles' Creed. At various stages during this part of the ceremony, the sign of the cross was made on the child's forehead or on the palm of its right hand, so that 'thou mayest sign thyself and keep thyself from adversity and remain in the catholic faith and have eternal life for ever and ever.'<sup>110</sup> The child and the baptismal party were then permitted to enter the church, and were led by the priest to the font.

The second part of the ceremony focused on the font and the ritual of baptism itself. If the water in the font had been blessed already, baptism could proceed directly, but if not, certain rituals and prayers had to be said in order to cleanse and sanctify the water. The baby was taken out of its white robe and held by the godparents whilst they renounced the devil on the child's behalf in front of the assembled gathering. The priest then used holy oil to anoint the

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<sup>108</sup> For a more detailed overview of the ceremony, see Orme, *Medieval Children*, pp. 27-30.

<sup>109</sup> Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 160.

<sup>110</sup> Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 165 (Collins, *Manuale*, p. 30: '*vt te signes et te de aduersa parte repellas/et in fide catholica permanes/et habeas vitam eternam et viuas in secula seculorum*').

child, making the sign of the cross on its breast and on its back between the shoulder blades. When this was finished, the priest asked for the child's name. The godparents, again speaking on the child's behalf, stated the name and then answered, 'I believe' (*Credo*) to the priest's question based on lines from the Creed.<sup>111</sup> After this, the child was immersed in the water of the font three times whilst the words of the baptismal prayer were said by the priest. On the first immersion, the child was supposed to lie on the priest's arm on its right side, its head towards the east, but its face turned to the north of the church; on the second immersion the infant's face was turned to the south side of the building, and on the third, towards the water (Figure 1.29). The child was then raised from the water by a godparent and the priest anointed the child again in the form of a cross, this time with chrism (a consecrated oil), whilst further prayers were said. The child was then dressed in its baptismal robe or a piece of cloth called a 'chrism', in order to preserve the chrism on the child's skin for as long as possible. Finally, the child had a lighted candle placed in its hand and was exhorted to 'keep the commandments' so that 'thou mayest have eternal life, and live for ever and ever.'<sup>112</sup> The priest then tasked the godmother with teaching the child to say the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Creed, to bring the chrism back to the church and to ensure the child received confirmation. Readings from the gospels of Mark (9.17-20, in which Jesus exorcises a young man) and John (1.1-14, which speaks of the coming of Christ and its significance for man's salvation) completed ceremony.

Thus, by permitting entry into the Christian community, baptism completed the protection offered by Margaret to the child during birth. This feature was intrinsic to the cult of St Margaret and directly relevant to parents and children.

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<sup>111</sup> For the exact wording, see Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, pp. 172-74 (Collins, *Manuale*, pp. 35-36).

<sup>112</sup> Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 174 (Collins, *Manuale*, p. 37: '*custodi baptismum tuum: serua mandata: vt cum venerit dominus ad nuptias/possis ei occurrere vna cum sanctis in aula celesti: vt habeas vitam eternam: et viuas in secula seculorum.*').

### Mothering and baptism and the paintings at Battle and Tarrant

At Battle, the emphasis on childbirth and infancy is made clear from the outset. In Picture 1, Margaret's mother is shown in labour. None of the textual versions of Margaret's Life discuss the saint's birth, other than to consider the status and beliefs of her father. It is therefore noteworthy that the visual narrative devotes an entire scene to this episode. Good mothering and the protection of children is the theme of Picture 2, in which Margaret's mother, herself a 'hethene', refuses to let the child's father kill his daughter.<sup>113</sup> Instead, she gives Margaret into the care of a fostermother or nurse.

Themes of protection and nurturing are also present in the depiction of Margaret looking after her nurse's sheep. This scene, present in all the textual sources, may well be intended to allude to Christ as the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for his flock, and as the Paschal Lamb, who through his death and resurrection freed humankind from sin.<sup>114</sup> Christian belief maintains that Christ's resurrection allows those who receive baptism – the freeing from sin – to enjoy the possibility of life everlasting in heaven.

The visual narrative places greater emphasis on the fateful moment when Olibrius first spies Margaret in the fields. Thus, at Battle Olibrius's pointed finger in Picture 3 leads the viewer's eye on (across the window) to Picture 4, where Margaret sits spinning and tending sheep.<sup>115</sup> By dividing the scenes and using the frames for each scene as a form of punctuation, the visual schemes heighten the tension. When Olibrius catches sight of Margaret, the chain of events leading to her eventual martyrdom is unleashed. In this way, Picture 3, which is seemingly devoid of narrative content, becomes a pivotal moment in the drama. Similarly, in Picture 2 at Tarrant, Olibrius is shown looking back towards Margaret in Picture 1, thereby linking the two scenes and providing a moment of pause before the violent onslaught in which Margaret has to protect her physical body from defilement and her spiritual beliefs from corruption. The association made between Margaret tending sheep and Christ suggests how the saint, like Christ, was viewed as a protector of others and

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<sup>113</sup> *StzL*: p. 170, line 13.

<sup>114</sup> John 1.29 (*'Altera die videt Johannes Jesum venientem ad se, et ait : Ecce agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccatum mundi.'*).

<sup>115</sup> Further discussion of Margaret shown with a distaff is found in Chapter 2.

how she was ready to offer her physical body as a form of sacrifice to overcome sin. It is a connection which first becomes apparent when Olibrius initially encounters Margaret, signalling the start of the battle between good and evil.

The confrontation scenes between Olibrius and Margaret account for a roughly quarter of the total number of scenes at both Battle and Tarrant.<sup>116</sup> Artistically, it is difficult to introduce much in the way of variation into these scenes and they obviously cannot impart the verbal exchanges between Margaret and her tormentor. However, the artist at Battle deftly conveys the intensity of the scenes, as they are described in the textual versions, in the highly animated gestures of the figures and the use of empty space between Margaret and Olibrius, which not only expresses the tension, but also the spiritual gulf between them. A menacing atmosphere is conjured by the artist in Picture 5, depicting Olibrius carrying a sword and gesturing threateningly towards Margaret. In addition, his attendants handle Margaret roughly. The contrast between the burly armed men and the willowy figure of the unarmed woman contributes to this sense of danger. However, the attendants have trouble keeping hold of the saint: her head is flung back and her trunk pushed forward, as if she is resisting their grasp. Margaret's lively hand gestures increase this sense of defiance and indicate that she is engaged in a heated exchange with Olibrius. Other examples of how vividly the artist portrays these confrontations can be seen in Pictures 8 and 16.

Why depict so many confrontation scenes when they could not actually convey the words of the characters concerned and thus risked simply appearing repetitive? The fact that they are included suggests that their purpose transcended sketching out the story and had importance and interest for the viewer beyond what they actually portrayed.

In the four texts possibly used as sources for the paintings at Battle and Tarrant, Margaret's public assertion and defence of her faith in the confrontation scenes present some interesting parallels with the procedures and prayers of the baptismal rite. Firstly, the confrontations are conducted in a public arena, just as the sacrament of baptism has always been a communal

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<sup>116</sup> That is to say 6 out of 24 scenes at Battle (25%) and 3 out of 14 scenes at Tarrant (21%).

celebration of the faithful, with vows made aloud by the godparents on behalf of the infant in front of others. Part of the ritual, when the participants are gathered round the font, consists of the godparents, as representatives of the child, renouncing 'Satan', 'all his works' and 'all his pomps'.<sup>117</sup>

In the *StzL* in particular, the confrontation scenes can be construed as a complete travesty of the baptismal rite. Thus, Olibrius asks Margaret to believe in his gods and forsake Christ, and, in return, he offers her power and wealth:

Ho com biforn Olibrius on *that other dai*.  
'Meidan Maregrete lef upon my lai!  
Ant Jhesu *that* tou leuest on, *thou* do him al awei!  
Lef on me ant be my wif, ful wel *the* mai spede!  
Auntioge ant Asie scaltou han to mede,  
Ciclatoun ant purpelpal scaltou haue to wede,  
Wid alle *the* metes of my lond ful wel i scal *the* fede!<sup>118</sup>

In later confrontation scenes in the *StzL*, the same kind of scenario is consistently played out between the saint and her tormentor. Olibrius's ultimate aim is to force her to deny her faith and worship his gods. Not only does she vehemently refuse to do so, she makes it clear that she equates his gods with devils.<sup>119</sup>

The baptismal rite, in contrast, asks the catechumen to forsake the devil and all the temptations he offers. Margaret's answers to Olibrius, therefore, provide the kind of declaration of faith and renunciation of the devil required of a catechumen. Considered in the context of baptism, the importance of these confrontation scenes and their full significance become clear, revealing why so many were incorporated into the visual narrative.

Before turning to the torture episodes, which can also be construed as alluding to baptism, the demonic episode must be considered. Although the

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<sup>117</sup> Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, pp. 172-73 (Collins, *Manuale*, p. 36: '*Item sacerdos dicat. N. Abrenuncio. Item sacerdos. Et omnibus operibus eius? R. Abrenuncio. Item sacerdos. Et omnibus pompis eius? R. Abrenuncio.*').

<sup>118</sup> *StzL*: pp. 192-93, lines 102-08.

<sup>119</sup> *StzL*: p. 227, lines 225-27 ('Awaried worth *thine* godes *that* tou leuest inne! / Ho weren yare awaried ant al ful of sunne, / Ho beet al of helle, of Satanus cunne.').

demonic episode will be discussed further in relation to the fonts at Battle and Tarrant, the choice of textual sources for the representations of the scenes and their position in the narrative as a whole will be addressed in this section.

At Battle, the *StzL* has almost certainly been used as the source for the scene in which Margaret vanquishes the dragon. This is an interesting textual choice given the opprobrium which the dragon episode incurred in, for example, the *LgA*, because the description in the *StzL* is one of the most theatrical. An angel brings Margaret Christ's cross, which protects her during her ordeal with the dragon and forces the beast to release her unharmed.<sup>120</sup> However, the *StzL*, or a very similar source, was used for the depictions found in the Queen Mary Psalter and on the Pienza Cope, depictions also found in a sacred context. The same scene at Tarrant, which refers to the *Mb passio* as its source, is still striking, but in its inclusion of the figure of Christ and the gestures of Christ and Margaret towards the heavens, the dragon's power appears more contained.

The *SEL* is the only text which describes Margaret flogging the second demon and can thus be unequivocally identified as the source for the depictions of Picture 15 at Battle and Picture 12 at Tarrant. The choice of this *SEL* version may simply have been a matter of clarity. The action of flogging the demon, as opposed to binding him with a wimple and throwing him on the ground, was probably easier for the viewer to understand.

Thus, the way different sources have been chosen to express different incidents to best effect indicates the care afforded to both schemes by whoever devised them. Although the demonic episode was perceived as theologically problematic, the choice of sources used for the visual narratives does not seem to have been dependent on their sobriety. Rather than suppressing the incident as an embarrassment, it appears instead to be emphasized, with even the more flamboyant text of the *StzL* being used as a source for the dragon scene at Battle. This emphasis can be explained if Margaret's association with the baptismal rite is considered.

At Battle, the demonic episode falls in the middle of the visual narrative, as it does in the majority of the textual versions. In this instance, therefore, the

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<sup>120</sup> *LgA*: p. 618 ('*apocryphum et friuolum*').

demonic episode can be compared to the first part of the baptismal rite in which the exorcism of the child takes place. Once Margaret emerges triumphant from this ordeal, she maintains her faith while undergoing torture, including immersion in water, until her physical death releases her to enjoy everlasting life in heaven. Similarly, when the exorcism has taken place, the child's godparents renounce the devil on its behalf, it is anointed with holy oil and immersion in water completes the ceremony. The child, now freed from original sin through exorcism, anointing and immersion, has been reborn to the possibility of salvation and eternal life. At Tarrant, however, the demonic episode is set towards the end of the narrative, dramatically insisting on Margaret's triumph over the devil, which would have been further underlined by the final two scenes, which almost certainly showed Margaret's execution and enshrinement. In both visual narratives, therefore, the emphasis on Margaret's triumph over the devil in the form of a dragon and a man becomes the pivotal moment in the story. Victory over the devil is foregrounded as the main theme of the legend, just as it is the crux of the baptismal rite. The rite effects a change in spiritual state, offering the recipient a passage from the sin of Adam's Fall, to participation in Christian fellowship and thus the possibility of salvation.

An examination of the layout and content of the torture scenes in both cycles shows how these episodes in Margaret's story can also be related back to the ritual of baptism. Turning to the Battle narrative first, Margaret's reaction to the tortures that precede the demonic episode echo this renunciation of the world and a refusal to engage with its temptations, as required of an adult candidate for baptism. In both the *Mb passio* and the *StzL*, Olibrius is explicitly associated with the devil. The dialogue between Margaret and Olibrius, which accompanies the first two tortures, focuses on Olibrius's attempts to force her into abandoning her Christian faith and accepting his offer of marriage and riches, which she stoically refuses to do. Picture 7 of the Battle cycle depicts Margaret in the first of the torture scenes seemingly oblivious to what is happening to her, suggesting her complete lack of regard for her physical body. This idea is echoed in Picture 11, which again positions Margaret in the centre of the frame, facing the viewer, her arms tied in front of

her. Thus, in both Pictures 7 and 11, the saint's placement in the middle of the composition facing outwards makes her appear to be addressing the viewer. Those who look at these torture scenes find themselves in a similar position to the bystanders described in the textual narratives. This crowd begs Margaret to relent and submit to Olibrius in order to spare her physical body. These pleas are met with scorn by Margaret, who emphasizes that her physical suffering is necessary to bring her closer to Christ: 'Through these torments of bodies souls are found to attain salvation.'<sup>121</sup> Thus, she relinquishes care for her body and, by extension, this world, because her sights are set on a new life in heaven. Margaret therefore provides a role model for those seeking baptism.

The final two torture scenes appear in the visual narrative at Battle in the same sequence as they occur in the textual narratives – that is to say, after the demonic episode (Pictures 17 and probably 20). In terms of the baptismal ceremony, the final two tortures of the visual and textual narratives can be likened to the second part of the baptismal rite, and are indeed referred to as such by Margaret in the *Mb passio* and *StzL*.

When Margaret has banished the second demon, the *StzL* explains that Margaret was brought out of prison still holding the cross on which Christ died, given to her by the angel in order to defeat the dragon.<sup>122</sup> This reference to Christ's defeat of sin through his resurrection highlights the saint's life as an *imitatio Christi* and is a direct allusion to Easter Sunday, when baptism was traditionally administered. In addition, the confrontation with Olibrius which follows Margaret's release from prison after the dismissal of the second demon, as reported in the *StzL*, has the saint commanding Olibrius to seek baptism himself: 'Ant let *the* folewen in holi fontston'.<sup>123</sup>

Picture 17 shows the saint hung up by the hair with one of the torturers raising his hand to her head. It is likely that this scene is intended to show him pouring boiling oil on Margaret's head so that it runs down and scalds her, as described in the *StzL*.<sup>124</sup> This anointing with oil, especially as it begins with her head, recalls the way the baptismal candidate is anointed with holy oil and

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<sup>121</sup> *StzL*: p. 202, lines 138-40; *Mb*: Ch 9, p. 200-01.

<sup>122</sup> *StzL*: p. 225, line 220 ('Wid the rode on hire hond that Crist was on idon.').

<sup>123</sup> *StzL*: p. 228, line 231.

<sup>124</sup> *StzL*: p. 229, lines 234-35.

chrism by the priest on their forehead as part of the baptismal ritual.<sup>125</sup> Finally, in desperation, Olibrius orders Margaret be immersed in a vessel of water, which was almost certainly the subject of Picture 20 at Battle. In both the *StzL* and the *Mb passio*, Margaret refers to this water torture as a form of baptism, reflecting the immersion of the catechumen during the baptismal rite.<sup>126</sup>

The four torture scenes at Tarrant follow a different pattern to that at Battle, but although the sequence of the scenes does not appear to relate to the textual narratives, they can still be understood as alluding to baptism. In the first torture scene at Tarrant (Picture 6), Margaret is depicted tied to a pillar and scourged, recalling the second torture at Battle (Picture 11). A confrontation scene follows in Picture 7, and then the visual narrative moves straight into three further torture scenes (being hung up by the hair and beaten, immersed in a vessel of water, and tortured with fire) in Pictures 8-10. All four torture scenes thus precede the demonic episode and present a form of terrible baptism. The two beatings which result from Margaret refusing to submit to Olibrius can be considered a refusal of the devil and the temptations of this world, as signified by the prayers and rituals of the first part of the baptismal rite. The immersion of the saint in water recalls the second part of the baptismal rite. Picture 10 shows Margaret being tortured with fire – a departure from the textual narratives and from the paintings at Battle. Perhaps torture by fire at this point in the narrative alludes to the moment in the baptismal ceremony where the child is given a lighted candle and is charged with remembering its baptismal vows and keeping the ten commandments so that it can earn a place ‘with the saints in the heavenly hall’.<sup>127</sup>

However, the scenes with fire and water at both Battle and Tarrant also recall the idea of trial by ordeal, a process designed to establish the ‘purity’ of religious beliefs and widely used from the twelfth century in heresy trials.<sup>128</sup> Heresy was considered a disease, and it is important to note that baptism was

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<sup>125</sup> For anointing with holy oil, see Collins, *Manuale*, p. 36 and Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 173 and for anointing with chrism, see Collins, *Manuale*, p. 37 and Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 174.

<sup>126</sup> *Mb*: Ch 18, pp. 210-13; *StzL*: p. 233, lines 245-46.

<sup>127</sup> Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 174 (Collins, *Manuale*, p. 37: ‘*cum sanctis in aula celesti*’).

<sup>128</sup> Robert Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water*, (Oxford, 1988), pp. 20-22.

described as a 'medicine' (*medicina*) in the text of the rite itself.<sup>129</sup> Although the trial by ordeal was used long after the first Life of Margaret was written and it cannot therefore have been the intention of the original author or compiler to refer to such a trial directly, similar associations between the elements of fire and water and the concepts of cleansing or purity were already well established. A link between baptism and the trial by ordeal is made in the writing of Eadmer, which describes a church at Canterbury, dedicated to John the Baptist, being built specifically for the purpose of performing the baptismal rite and the trial.<sup>130</sup>

At Tarrant, the torture scenes are followed by Margaret vanquishing the devil in the form of a dragon and in the form of a man (Picture 11-12), while two further scenes possibly depicting her execution and enshrinement completed the scheme. The three final scenes at Battle show Margaret's last prayer (Picture 22), her execution (Picture 23) and her enshrinement (Picture 24), and they are distinguished by the use of the palm leaf border for the frames and by the omission of the diaper pattern.

Picture 22 at Battle returns to the theme of the saint as protector of parturient women. On its own, without a textual source or oral rendition to refer to, it may have been difficult to grasp the intended message of this scene. If Margaret's hands were indeed raised in an *orant* pose, that might have given a clearer indication that the painting showed the saint praying before her execution. Remnants of paint suggest a heavenly host may have been depicted above her head, which would have more effectively conveyed the meaning of the scene. In the context of the Battle paintings, the final two lines of the prayer, in which Margaret designates herself as protector of unborn children, are perhaps the most pertinent.<sup>131</sup> Baptism, the initial sacrament received after birth, offers the infant spiritual protection and continues the theme of the care of children.

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<sup>129</sup> Bartlett, *Trial*, p. 28; Collins, *Manuale*, p. 26 and Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 159.

<sup>130</sup> Bartlett, *Trial*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>131</sup> *Mb*: Ch 19, pp. 212-15 ('I also ask, Lord, whoever builds a basilica in my name or from his labour furnishes a manuscript of my passion, fill him with your Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth, and in his home let there not be born an infant lame or blind or dumb.')

An examination of the visual narratives at Battle and Tarrant shows that considerable thought has been given to their preparation and execution – suggestive of sophisticated patronage. The fact that the paintings are sited in the naves of the churches, coupled with the discriminating use of both Latin and vernacular texts as sources, indicates lay patronage, as well as possibly monastic or clerical influence on these schemes. This appears to be supported by the treatment of the various symbolic facets of Margaret’s story: Margaret as protector of women and children in childbirth, as courageous virgin martyr dying for her faith, and as exorcist of demons, notably at the critical time of baptism, when a child was believed to officially enter the Christian family.

### **The possible functions of the wall paintings at Battle and Tarrant**

In the absence of contemporary written records, which might reveal how the painting schemes at Battle and Tarrant were used, information will instead be gleaned from the architectural contexts of the schemes. Findings will then be allied to the subject matter of the paintings and any relevant information about sermons or liturgical practices, in order to suggest how people might have encountered, and interacted with, the Life of Margaret painted in these churches. What is clear from the quality and extent of the schemes is that the paintings were not intended simply as decorative features.

Crucially, Margaret’s association with the sacrament of baptism is substantiated in the visual narratives at Battle and Tarrant in the treatment of the demonic episode of the story. Thus, the scenes showing Margaret triumphing over the devil are clearly visible from the fonts (Figures 1.30a-b).

### ***The fonts at Battle and Tarrant Crawford: location, history and design***

The position of the font at Battle and Tarrant appears to have remained stable since the time the wall-painting schemes were executed in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries. However, at Battle, somewhere between the end of the twelfth century and 1230, just before Margaret’s Life was painted, the nave and the chancel were both extended. In addition, the font appears to have been re-sited from the west end of the old church structure to its current

location at the south-west end of the larger nave, towards the southernmost column of the new arcade (Figure 1.31a). Some evidence for the consistency of the location of the font after the thirteenth century is provided in Brooke's sketches, made in 1845, which show the font in its current position before the restoration of 1867-9 (Figure 1.32).

The nave at Tarrant was also rebuilt in the thirteenth century and was possibly extended at the same time.<sup>132</sup> Currently, the font stands in the middle of the nave at the westernmost end of the church, within a few metres of both the south and north doors (Figure 1.31b). As the space in the church is quite restricted, it seems unlikely that the location of the font would have been substantially different from where it stands today. In addition, although a tower was built at the west end of the church in the fifteenth century, a door was never added, indicating that the western end was not intended to provide ceremonial or processional access. Consequently, siting the font in the middle of a narrow nave would not have impeded movement.

Thus, whilst there is no firm evidence for the siting of the fonts at Battle or at Tarrant in the Middle Ages, their current location is entirely compatible with the fact that from the twelfth century onwards, fonts were increasingly placed within the body of the nave at the western end of churches, often near the south door through which the baptismal party would enter the space.<sup>133</sup>

The thirteenth-century extension of the nave westwards at Battle, and possibly also at Tarrant, conforms with a more general pattern of lengthening naves in parish churches from the late twelfth century. In his discussion of the location of baptism in Anglo-Saxon and Norman churches, Paul Barnwell argues that this trend may well have reflected the gradual acceptance of the concept of Christ as truly present in the consecrated host, which eventually became a Doctrine of the Church in 1215, and which also affected attitudes to the sacrament of baptism. Just as transubstantiation was perceived as

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<sup>132</sup> Dalton, *Church of St Mary*, p. 3.

<sup>133</sup> Platt, *Parish Churches*, p. 138; Paul S. Barnwell, *The Place of Baptism in Anglo-Saxon and Norman Churches*, (Stonehouse, Glos., 2014), p. 11; Carolyn Twomey, 'Romanesque Baptismal Fonts in East Yorkshire Parishes: Decoration and Devotion', in *Devotional Interaction in Medieval England and its Afterlives*, Elisa A. Foster, Julia Perratore and Steven Rozenski (eds), (Leiden, 2018), pp. 309-344, esp. p. 321.

transforming the consecrated bread and wine on the altar during the mass into the actual body and blood of Christ and thus into a 'locus of supernatural power', so baptism was no longer considered a symbolic representation of cleansing.<sup>134</sup> Instead, the prescribed prayers and ritual gestures of the baptismal rite were understood as effecting the cleansing of original sin in the recipient. As belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist became more widely accepted, so the fabric of parish churches was altered to provide what was considered a more dignified space in which to receive him. For example, chancels were introduced or extended so that the sacred nature of the host was appropriately distanced from the secular world, and wooden furnishings, such as altars and fonts, were substituted with equivalents in the more permanent and supposedly worthier material of stone.<sup>135</sup>

In addition, the place where baptism was administered also appears to have changed significantly from c.1100. In Anglo-Saxon England, the location for the performance of the rite of baptism remains uncertain, but the evidence strongly suggests that structures at the eastern end of churches, often built above a water source, may have been the locus of baptism before the twelfth century.<sup>136</sup> Thus, it appears that together with the lengthening of naves westwards, the locus of baptism moved from the eastern to the western end of churches, and fonts were sited at the western or south-western ends of the nave or by the south door.<sup>137</sup> A variety of explanations probably underpin such a significant development. Baptism was considered the doorway to salvation;

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<sup>134</sup> Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 37.

<sup>135</sup> For this paragraph, I am indebted to the discussion in Barnwell, *Place of Baptism*, in particular, pp. 11-12, 14-16. For more about the sacrament of the Eucharist and theological discussions surrounding it from c.1000, see Rubin, *Corpus Christi*, esp. pp. 12-63. For the sacrament of baptism (and sacraments generally) as signs, see commentary on the work of Peter Lombard in Bryan D. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From the New Testament to the Council of Trent*, (Abingdon, Oxon, 2016), pp. 141-143, esp. 142.

<sup>136</sup> Four possible instances of these structures, cited by Barnwell, are the now destroyed church of St John the Baptist, Canterbury, the crypt at Repton in Derbyshire, the Old Minster, Winchester and St Peter, Bywell, Northumberland (Barnwell, *Place of Baptism*, pp. 4-11).

<sup>137</sup> Barnwell, *Place of Baptism*, p. 11; Twomey, 'Romanesque Baptismal Fonts', p. 321; Davies, *Architectural Setting*, p. 61.

thus, channelling the focus of the rite towards the main entrance of the church for the laity was an important reason for siting the font by the south door.<sup>138</sup> However, this placement also created a direct visual link with the altar at the eastern end of the church, thereby establishing a powerful connection between the sacrament of baptism and the sacrament of the Eucharist.<sup>139</sup> Such a connection inextricably linked the two parts of the church – the nave and the chancel – and was emphasized through carvings on the bowls of fonts representing the Last Supper and Crucifixion.<sup>140</sup>

The late twelfth-century font at Battle may well have been installed once the nave had been extended (between 1200 and 1230).<sup>141</sup> Made of Purbeck marble, it is decorated with semi-circular blind arcading, a motif found on a variety of buildings and other fonts of a similar date and probably intended to recall heaven and the Heavenly Jerusalem (Figure 1.33a).<sup>142</sup> At Tarrant, however, the font is an undecorated sixteenth-century replacement, which possibly coincided with fifteenth- and sixteenth-century improvements to the fabric (Figure 1.33b).<sup>143</sup> Both fonts are raised from the ground – that at Battle by a set of steps and at Tarrant by an undecorated central column. This would have facilitated the handling of the child after its immersion in the water, but it also meant that the font became a conspicuous presence in the space of the church, echoing that of the high altar at the eastern end of the building. Such a connection between the eastern and western ends of churches is emphasized in the way the paintings are laid out on the walls at Battle and Tarrant, and this may well indicate an underlying significance in their function.

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<sup>138</sup> Davies, *Architectural Setting*, pp. 61-63.

<sup>139</sup> Barnwell, *Place of Baptism*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>140</sup> Francis Bond, *Fonts and Font Covers*, (London, 1985), p. 165: representations of the Last Supper can be found at Brighton, Sussex and North Grimston, Yorks, and the Crucifixion at Coleshill, Warwickshire and Cottesmore, Rutland.

<sup>141</sup> Bond, *Fonts*, pp. 206-07; 'Battle – St Mary', *Sussex Parish Churches*, [website], <https://sussexparishchurches.org> (accessed 19 February 2017).

<sup>142</sup> For fonts with similar patterns, see Bond, *Fonts*, p. 140 (Botley), p. 147 (Beverley Minster), p. 148 (Crambe and Walsgrove-on-Sowe) and p. 149; for the motif of blind arcading, see Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, p. 197.

<sup>143</sup> Dalton, *Church of St Mary*, p. 3 and p. 7.

### ***Viewing the paintings within the sacred space of the churches***

Margaret's association with the care of women and children is manifest in the emphasis of the narrative at Battle and, to a lesser degree, at Tarrant. However, the significance of baptism is integral to Margaret's story, but it is especially relevant to the good care of children, for without baptism they could not hope for the possibility of salvation. In the physical layout of the paintings and their position within the sacred space of their respective churches, the underlying themes ultimately gain coherence, and a powerful interplay between the narrative and the fabric of each church is triggered.

### **The scenes depicting the demonic episode**

The scenes at Battle show Margaret emerging from the dragon, rejecting the hand of the second demon and then flogging him (Pictures 13-15). At Tarrant, Margaret emerges from the dragon in the first scene and in the second, flogs the second demon in an almost identical version of the scene at Battle (Pictures 11-12).

At Battle, Pictures 13-15 are set at the far west end of the north nave wall on the lowest tier of paintings, roughly six metres from the ground and three-and-a-half metres from the font (Figure 1.30a).<sup>144</sup> In this scheme, all the human figures measure 72.6cm in height, thereby enhancing their visibility from the ground.<sup>145</sup> At Tarrant, Pictures 11-12 are also set at the far west end of the church, about two-and-a-half metres from the font (Figure 1.30b). Each scene is 120cm in height, so the figures are of a comparable size to those at Battle. What is of crucial importance, however, is that in both churches the font is set in the nave strategically opposite the scenes where Margaret overcomes the devil. Indeed, at Tarrant the scheme moves away from the textual sources, in order to align the demonic episode with the font. Therefore, the layout of the schemes at Battle and Tarrant strongly suggests a deliberate intention to create an association between the demonic episodes and the font.

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<sup>144</sup> All the measurements given are my own, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>145</sup> The measurements for the figures at Battle are given in the caption to Fig. 1 of the Diagrammatic key to the St Margaret series in Rouse, 'Wall Paintings', p. 154.

The dramatic juxtaposition of the fonts and the scenes showing Margaret vanquishing the devil in both guises articulates the saint's role as exorcist of demons. For those attending a baptism and gathered round the font, the scenes may have echoed the initial exorcism of the child on the threshold of the church through prayers and the administration of salt on its tongue.<sup>146</sup> However, when the baptismal vows were uttered by the godparents on behalf of the child – vows which begin with the rejection of Satan and all his works – the paintings of Margaret emerging from the dragon's belly and birching the second demon would have presided over the proceedings.<sup>147</sup> Later, when the priest plunged the child into the water, its face would have been turned towards the images of Margaret's triumph: at Battle after the first immersion (north side) and at Tarrant after the second immersion (south side).<sup>148</sup>

Testimonies gathered from proof-of-age inquests suggest that visual impressions, rather than the words of the rite, were the most memorable aspect of the baptismal ceremony for jurors. Such impressions included, notably, the raising of the infant from the font and the ritual elements of the rite, including the salt, water and chrism.<sup>149</sup> Perhaps, therefore, the imagery of Margaret triumphing over the devil would also have formed at least part of one of these enduring visual memories. Thus, the font and its attendant imagery was a focus for the local community, where the ritual practices of baptism – prayers intoned, gestures made – served as an accretion of memory: of an action which was unchanging over time, but which saw the arrival and passing of generations of the faithful, each individual unique but linked to the wider community.

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<sup>146</sup> Collins, *Manuale*, pp. 25-31; Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, pp. 158-65.

<sup>147</sup> Collins, *Manuale*, p. 36 (*'Item sacerdos dicat. N. Abrenuncias sathane? Respondeant compatrini e commatrine. Abrenuncio. Item sacerdos. Et omnibus operibus eius? R. Abrenuncio. Item sacerdos. Et omnibus pompis eius? R. Abrenuncio.'*); Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, pp. 172-73 (*'So let the priest say: N. dost thou renounce Satan? Let the godfathers and godmothers reply: I renounce. Again the priest asks: And all his works? R. I renounce. Again the priest: And all his pomps? R. I renounce.'*).

<sup>148</sup> Collins, *Manuale*, p. 36; Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 174.

<sup>149</sup> William S. Deller, 'The First Rite of Passage: Baptism in Medieval Memory', in *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 36, 1, (2011), pp. 3-14: pp. 8-9.

### The narrative wall-painting schemes as a whole

Superior quality execution, good materials and careful construction of the scenes and their content characterise the wall-painting schemes at both Battle and Tarrant. Although the motives for realising such schemes are impossible to pin down, it can be posited, to some extent, that whoever devised the schemes wished to express their devotion to Margaret. Such a motive appears to be underscored by the great spatial extent of the schemes.

It is argued here that the extent of the schemes had implications for how they were intended to be viewed and for the interpretation of the subject matter. At Battle and at Tarrant, the scenes depicting Margaret's Life extend so far along the nave wall that it is impossible to see the entire scheme clearly from any one place in the nave. The viewer is, therefore, forced to move within the architectural space. At the time the paintings were executed, there would have been no seating to impede movement in the nave; thus, it is likely that some kind of procession was meant to accompany the ritual viewing of these images. Before examining this aspect further, however, it will be useful to return to a discussion of the subject matter of the paintings and their relationship to the architecture of the churches.

Saints' lives can be understood on many levels, as has been discussed by various scholars.<sup>150</sup> The visual narratives of Margaret's Life at Battle and Tarrant are no exception. On one level, the paintings in both churches can be understood simply as the story of a young maiden who converted to Christianity and, when instructed to abandon her faith and worship other gods on pain of torture and execution, refused to do so. Her dramatic encounter with the devil in the form of a dragon and a man, however, sets her story apart from those of other Christian martyrs and probably accounts for her having been considered such a powerful protector and intercessor.

On another level, Margaret's story can be understood as a spiritual journey: the journey of the soul on its path to heaven, initiated by baptism. At

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<sup>150</sup> Cynthia Hahn, 'Picturing the Text: Narrative in the Life of Saints', *Art History*, Vol. 13, 1, (March 1990), pp. 1-33: p. 6; Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, p. 4; Lewis, *Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria*, p. 5; Ashley and Sheingorn, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, p. 5.

Battle in particular, the narrative recounting this journey links the eastern and western ends of the church, thus creating a potent association between the rood and high altar, and the font. Margaret's life begins and ends at the eastern end of the architectural space, her triumph over the devil recounted in the scenes which sit above the font at the western end of the nave. In some respects, the upper and lower registers of the paintings at Battle can be considered as two phases of the saint's spiritual journey. On the upper register, the twelve scenes recount Margaret's steadfast faith under torture and her rejection of the world, epitomised in her refusal to submit to Olibrius's demands. It appears almost as if this part of the narrative is a preparation for the main event, which is then taken up by the scenes on the lower register. From Picture 13 onwards, each of the four groups of scenes can be understood as having a single concern. To begin, the demonic episode can be compared to the infant's exorcism. The scenes in which Margaret has boiling oil poured over her head and in which she is bound and thrown into a vessel of water, can be understood as the anointing with oil and immersion in water that form the baptism proper. The final scenes, express the idea of death as the triumphant entry into eternal life, accompanied by the suggestion – in the depiction of Margaret making her final prayer – that she will remember those who honour her memory. As the viewer physically progresses along the nave from east to west and then west to east, the journey of the visual narrative unfolds.

At Battle, the culmination of Margaret's journey would have almost certainly been allied in meaning to another section of painting, of a similar date and quality, which once followed the saint's story eastwards along the north nave wall after the easternmost clerestory window.<sup>151</sup> This section comprised

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<sup>151</sup> It cannot be stated with absolute certainty when the other sections of painting were executed, as they were destroyed in the nineteenth century, long before Rouse carried out his conservation campaign on the Margaret cycle. However, it is likely that they were late thirteenth-, early fourteenth-century representations and thus probably painted at the same time as the Margaret cycle. Waller, writing in 1847, just after the chancel arch paintings were destroyed, indicates that they were probably late thirteenth or early fourteenth century in date, and Rouse does not suggest these paintings were of a different date to Waller (see Waller, 'Observations on Recent Discoveries', p. 155). Finally, the drawings by Brooke of c.1845 strongly suggest that the paintings were of the same date as the Margaret cycle in the way the figures are depicted

two tiers of painting: saints in canopied niches, including St Margaret and St Nicholas, on the upper tier and a procession of the Blessed – a king, a queen, clergy, monks and laymen at the rear – below. The procession progressed towards the chancel arch, on which a variation of the legend of the Three Living and Three Dead was depicted on an upper register and a Last Judgement (probably Christ in Majesty flanked by saints) was represented on a lower register (Figure 1.32).<sup>152</sup> The paintings on the chancel arch were destroyed in the nineteenth century.<sup>153</sup> In the depiction of the Three Living and Three Dead (Figure 1.34), the warning conveyed to the viewer – to mend their ways in this world and repent because death is never far away – was a thematically appropriate link to the Last Judgement. In addition, the rood would have stood in front of the chancel arch proclaiming Christ's sacrifice – suffering, death and resurrection – which offered the possibility of salvation. Although the Last Judgement, or Doom, was often depicted over chancel arches in parish churches and the Three Living and Dead was also a common conceit at this time, Margaret's Life, with its theme of death, salvation, and remembrance, would have been complemented by these paintings, which thus become the thematic culmination of Margaret's journey.

The viewer's physical progression within the space of the nave at Tarrant similarly reflects the theme of a spiritual journey. Here, the lesson in humility suggested by Margaret tending sheep prepares her for life as a Christian. This idea finds a parallel in the preparation for baptism older catechumens would have undergone. The confrontations with Olibrius and the various tortures Margaret suffers, notably with water and fire, can be equated to the rite of baptism and to a rejection of the material world, while the two final scenes represent the vanquishing of the devil and rebirth through baptism. Although other paintings surround the Margaret cycle at Tarrant, only the depiction of the Three Living and Three Dead, below Margaret's narrative, was almost certainly painted at the same time. However, the connection between the east and west ends of the church is established by a clear sightline

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(long and slender with elegant gestures), and the same kind of diaper background as in the majority of the Margaret cycle.

<sup>152</sup> Rouse, 'Wall Paintings', p. 152.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

from font to high altar and by the necessity for the viewer to move from one end of the nave to the other in order to view the scenes.

The layout of the schemes at Battle and Tarrant strongly suggests that a procession accompanied the ritual viewing of the images. This was most likely to have occurred on Margaret's feast day, 20 July, but it might also have been included in the celebrations for Easter and Pentecost, traditionally the time for baptism in the Church's calendar. Rogationtide might also have provided an occasion for a ceremony centred around the paintings of St Margaret, when a dragon formed part of the procession and the saints were petitioned to help punish and expel the devil.<sup>154</sup>

Although the images of Margaret overcoming the devil in the form of a dragon and a man at Battle and Tarrant are reasonably self-explanatory, in order to properly understand the narrative schemes in their entirety, an accompanying sermon of some kind would have been necessary. It is therefore likely that a reading of a version of Margaret's passion would have accompanied any ceremonial viewing in order to facilitate understanding and regulate, to some degree, how the audience interpreted the images.

The paintings at Battle and Tarrant draw on a combination of textual versions of the Life, so it would seem likely that a specially adapted text or oral rendition would have been used to accompany a ritual viewing of the paintings, although no such text survives.<sup>155</sup> Perhaps a specifically composed set of Lessons for Margaret's feast day combined with physical references to the paintings formed part of the liturgical celebrations on that occasion. At Battle, however, the scenes are set so far up the wall that it is likely a wooden scaffold was built to raise the cleric up high enough so he could more easily indicate the scenes as he referred to them (Figure 1.35a-b).<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Thomas R. Litzka, 'The Dragon in the *South English Legendary*: Judas, Pilate and the A(1) Redaction', *Modern Philology*, Vol. 100, 1, (August 2002), pp. 50-59, esp. pp. 55-56 and Owst, *Preaching*, pp. 201-2 (homily) .

<sup>155</sup> Miriam Gill points out, however, that unlike the specificity of wall paintings, 'many surviving sermons were composed for repeated use or general dissemination': Miriam Gill, 'Preaching and Image: Sermons and Wall Paintings in Later Medieval England' in *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*, Carolyn Muessig (ed.), (Leiden, 2002), pp. 155-80, esp. p. 157.

<sup>156</sup> Owst, *Preaching*, p. 199.

The framing of the scenes in both visual narratives suggests that the intention was to make the viewer pause in front of each episode, in a similar way perhaps to the ritual viewing of the stations of the cross. The frames in both schemes recall the kind of feature considered necessary for the location of images that one wished to keep in mind, that is to say ‘a pagelike shape, a “tablet” or a “seat”’.<sup>157</sup> The larger vine scroll borders surrounding both schemes can be seen as corresponding to this location, which then functions as the place in one’s memory in which individual scenes can be stored. Each framed scene is then the equivalent of the *conspectus*, the amount of information that a person can retain looking at an image only once.<sup>158</sup> This may also account for the way the artist has avoided depicting any extraneous detail in the scenes. Such a use of frames may, then, have been considered an aide-memoire for viewers wishing to call to mind the events of the saint’s life on other occasions, perhaps as part of a meditative process.

Miriam Gill comments that allegorical interpretations of images in sermons and preaching manuals became a ‘distinct category of sermon rhetoric’ by the early fourteenth century.<sup>159</sup> It is possible, then, that the themes of baptism and the journey of the soul, which offer an interpretation of Margaret’s story that goes beyond that of the bright young girl beheaded for her faith, may have been emphasized in the sermons that accompanied the visual narratives of Margaret’s Life at Battle and Tarrant.

### **Suggestions of patronage for the wall-painting schemes**

As mentioned, depictions of the legend of the Three Living and Three Dead were strategically sited near the contemporary Margaret cycles, at both Battle and Tarrant.<sup>160</sup> Textual versions of the legend became very popular in England during the thirteenth century, and evidence for pictorial representations of the

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<sup>157</sup> Mary Carruthers and Jan M. Ziolkowski, *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, (Philadelphia, 2002), p. 12.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

<sup>159</sup> Miriam Gill, ‘Preaching and Image’, pp. 163-164.

<sup>160</sup> The Three Living and Three Dead also accompany another, slightly later, Margaret cycle at Charlwood, Surrey, discussed in Chapter 3.

tale can be found from c.1300.<sup>161</sup> One particularly famous depiction of the legend appears in the Psalter of Robert de Lisle of c.1310-1340 (Figure 1.36).<sup>162</sup> Thematically, these depictions complement the narrative of Margaret in that they offer a clear instruction to viewers that no matter what your status in life may be, death comes to all – and thus it is crucial to keep your baptismal vows, or at least seek penance and absolution, before Death comes calling.

However, at Battle the treatment of the Three Living and Dead (no longer extant) differed from the standard depiction, namely three young men or kings out hunting confronted by three skeletons. Accompanied by the inscription *Mors sceptris ligonibus equat* (Death levels sceptres with mattocks), the Battle depiction is unusual because, from Brooke's sketch (of 1845) and the description by J. G. Waller (of 1847), only two living figures and two skeletons are represented, rather than the usual three (Figure 1.34). In the two corners of the allocated space, two further figures, suggestive of donor portraits, appear to be kneeling. Waller identifies the figures of the two living as a king and a queen, although it is difficult to tell from Brooke's sketch, but in the painting of the procession of the Blessed, found at the easternmost end of the north wall of the nave after the Margaret cycle, a king and a queen are represented.<sup>163</sup> The Latin inscription accompanying this version of the legend at Battle is not a prayer or a commemoration of an individual, but rather a caption and an admonition. Whilst many viewers would have been illiterate, this kind of inscription would have been intended 'not to inform but to confirm and add weight to the promise of the painting.'<sup>164</sup>

The representations of the king and queen at Battle might provide an indication as to why the thirteenth or early fourteenth century paintings, which

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<sup>161</sup> Binski, *Medieval Death*, p. 135. The subject is also treated in Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*, pp. 152-55.

<sup>162</sup> London, British Library, Arundel MS 83, fol. 127r.

<sup>163</sup> Rouse, 'Wall Paintings', p. 153.

<sup>164</sup> Madeleine Gray, 'Images of Words: Iconographies of Text and the Construction of Sacred Space in Medieval Church Wall Painting', in *Sacred Text – Sacred Space: Architectural, Spiritual and Literary Convergences in England and Wales*, Joseph Sterrett and Peter Thomas (eds), Vol. 4, (Leiden, 2011), pp. 15-34, esp. p. 18.

included the Margaret cycle, were realized. Battle Abbey, of course, was constructed by William the Conqueror as reparation for lives lost during the Conquest. Thus, it was associated with the crown from its instigation. St Mary's at Battle has always been a Royal Peculiar and thus under the direct jurisdiction of the monarch. Given the quality and extent of the paintings at Battle, their complex use of sources and carefully crafted web of meaning, it is highly likely that the schemes attracted at least some clerical or monastic involvement. Perhaps the scheme was drawn up by some of the more influential parishioners with the help of John de Wygepirye, the Dean, and the approval of the monks. The fact that the Margaret cycle is sited in the nave, that vernacular sources such as the *StzL* and *SEL* have been consulted and that there is an emphasis on good motherhood is suggestive of lay influence on the scheme. However, the predominant use of the *Mb passio* and the multi-layered meanings integral to the paintings points to the guidance of an individual or group with a grounding in theology. The scheme could then have been funded to a greater or lesser degree by contributions from the parishioners.

Edward I stayed in Battle in 1276 and 1302. In 1299, Edward had married his second wife, Margaret of France, and between 1300 and his death in 1307 he had fathered two healthy sons and a girl by her. Although it is unlikely the royal couple would ever have seen the scheme in the parish church, perhaps the commissioning of the paintings of St Margaret's Life were intended to honour the new queen and celebrate birth, motherhood and the saint's role in this context. In so doing, a strong sacramental emphasis was also created, anchored in a sacred framework.

No information surrounding the context of the commissioning of the paintings at Tarrant is available. The farmed landscape surrounding the church suggests some prosperity amongst parishioners, but not, perhaps, the kind of sophisticated education required for devising the Margaret cycle. However, the excellent quality of the Margaret cycle and the other paintings contemporary with it, the use of sources such as the *Mb passio* and *SEL* and a refined palette of pigments suggests that the proximity of the abbey might have influenced the content and execution of the paintings in some way.

## Conclusion

Although lay patronage may well have funded the wall paintings at both Battle and Tarrant, their related abbeys may have had some say in the choice of subject matter and execution of the schemes. The architects of the schemes appear to have been interested in exploiting the sacramental aspect of Margaret's *passio* to the full, visually linking the high altar and the demonic episode of the narrative with the font in both churches. This likely included a processional function associated with the paintings. Although there may have been an intention to honour royalty in the way the scheme at Battle was devised, the images would have been available to all thanks to their location on the nave walls of the churches and would have presided over even the humblest of baptisms. The association with Margaret and the legend of the Three Living and Three Dead will be explored further in Chapter 3, but the legend's focus on penance is significant in the baptismal context of Margaret's cycle in that without repentance salvation is not possible. It also reminds the viewer of Margaret's promise in her final prayer to intercede for the well-being of the souls of those who remember her passion. The strong association between the paintings of Margaret and the font presented here will be continued and expanded in Chapter 2.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The wall paintings of St Margaret's Life and the miracles of St Nicholas at Wiston (Wissington), Suffolk**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter continues the discussion of wall paintings depicting Margaret's Life in parish churches, in relation to their interpretation, patronage and devotional functions. Here, a slightly earlier scheme of Margaret's Life (c.1250-c.1275), found on the south nave wall of the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, Wiston (now called Wissington), Suffolk, will be discussed (Figure 2.1). The paintings at Wiston are not in themselves remarkable, but their specific location within the architectural space and the fact that they are surrounded by a number of surviving wall paintings executed in the same campaign makes them particularly interesting for a discussion of the intended significance of Margaret's legend.

A consideration of the extent of lay involvement in the choice of subject matter and content for wall-painting schemes of Margaret's Life in the naves of parish churches is also pursued in this chapter. In addition, the themes of motherhood and baptism, which arose in connection with the paintings in Chapter 1, will be developed further. The theme of motherhood is extended to encompass nurturing and parenthood more generally, while the theme of baptism is linked to discussions of the protection of Christian children, in particular from the perceived malign intentions of those of other faiths.

However, one of the most important features of this chapter is an examination of the conceptual relationship between St Margaret and St Nicholas, which has so far remained unexplored in the literature. As so many of the paintings from the same thirteenth-century campaign at Wiston are extant, a discussion of the potential intended significance of the scenes from Margaret's legend in relation to the surrounding paintings is made possible. Thus, the relationship between Margaret and Nicholas is introduced and explored through the discussion of the paintings at Wiston, and it is then supported by further evidence from other churches, such as those of Charlwood, Surrey and Combs, Suffolk, addressed in Chapters 3 and 4.

This chapter will begin by anchoring the wall paintings at Wiston in the context of the church itself – that is to say, the socio-economic environment at the time the paintings were executed and the architectural setting the church established for them. Then, the wall paintings of Margaret’s Life and the miracles of Nicholas will be analysed in the light of their possible textual sources. Finally, the Margaret cycle will be considered in the context of the other surrounding wall paintings and the architectural setting.

### **The wall paintings at Wiston: overview**

In 1853, during the restoration of the church at Wiston, wall paintings dating from the thirteenth century, including a Life of Margaret, were uncovered on every wall of the nave. The murals were then, once again, obliterated with whitewash.<sup>1</sup> In 1933, Ernest Tristram retrieved the paintings and made detailed notes and sketches of what he found.<sup>2</sup> This was followed in the 1960s by a conservation campaign carried out by Eve Baker.<sup>3</sup> Given the identification of stylistic differences by Tristram, it appears two artists worked on the church murals.<sup>4</sup> The majority of the subjects, with the exception of the later fifteenth-century dragon over the north door, were most likely part of a single campaign carried out in the third quarter of the thirteenth century. This dating is proposed by Tristram, who thoroughly documented the work at Wiston, and

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<sup>1</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, pp. 349, 626.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 349-53, 626-29, Plates 177-190.

<sup>3</sup> Tristram published his findings in *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1950); information about the later restoration campaign is found in the Survey of Historic Wall Paintings in the British Isles, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London (consulted 30 November 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, p. 353.

has not been contested.<sup>5</sup> The pigments used throughout are not costly or distinctive in any way, described by Tristram as ‘the usual ochres’.<sup>6</sup>

On the south wall of the nave at Wiston there are two tiers of paintings. An extensive Infancy cycle of Christ of fourteen scenes forms the upper tier, while on the lower tier two miracles of St Nicholas are depicted, as well as the surviving fragments of eight scenes from the Life of St Margaret (Figures 2.2.-2.4). On the west wall are the very faded remains of a Last Judgement, in three tiers. The uppermost tier showed Christ in Judgement, but this was destroyed by the insertion of a window. On the north wall, a doorway towards the west end divides the subjects into two sections: on the western side are two scenes from the Life of St John the Baptist, and represented in the tympanum of the doorway are two women, each with a devil looking over their shoulder.<sup>7</sup> To the eastern side of the door, there were three tiers of paintings: the upper tier still shows St Francis preaching to the birds, the middle tier contains a Passion cycle of Christ of nine scenes, and the lowest tier, damaged beyond recognition but described and drawn by Tristram, depicted histories of other, now unidentifiable, saints (Figure 2.5).<sup>8</sup> In addition, there is a large dragon over the north door, as mentioned above, which was probably executed in the fifteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

The style of the figures at Wiston seems less refined than those at Battle and Tarrant, though this cannot be said with certainty given the assessment is heavily dependent on Tristram’s sketches. While the bodies of the figures are generally in proportion, the supine Virgin in the Nativity scene and the Magi asleep appear stiff and wooden (Figures 2.6a-b). Facial features are rendered rather coarsely – as, for example, in the figure of Margaret’s torturer – and the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 629; James Bettley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Suffolk: West*, (New Haven, 2015), p. 563; C. M. Kaufmann, *Biblical Imagery in Medieval England, 700-1550*, (London, 2003), p. 189; Park, ‘The Duxford Master’, p. 319 (the Margaret cycle is mentioned as dating from the thirteenth century).

<sup>6</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1950), p. 629.

<sup>7</sup> The two paintings of St John the Baptist’s Life can no longer be seen as they are covered by a wooden staircase.

<sup>8</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, pp. 626-29.

<sup>9</sup> Bettley and Pevsner, *Suffolk: West*, p. 563.

depiction of hands and arm movements can be awkward, as in the depiction of the male figure closest to Nicholas in one of the miracles (Figures 2.7a-b). The hand gestures of the figures have been given prominence in the majority of the scenes as they contribute to an understanding of the action of the stories. These gestures sometimes appear clumsy, but they are not altogether inelegant, as shown in the fingers of the angel in the Dream of the Magi and in Margaret's hands in the torture scene (Figures 2.6b and 2.7a). As with the use of pigments, therefore, there is nothing exceptional about the paintings, but the clarity of the figures and their gestures do result in the effective communication of their intended meanings.

### **Early records of the church at Wiston: the association of the Godebold/de Horkesley family with the church and St Peter's Priory, Little Horkesley**

In order to understand the kind of influences brought to bear on the parish church of Wiston and the people who worshipped there at the time the paintings were executed, something of the social, religious and architectural context of the church should be considered before analysing the paintings.

Most likely built in the early twelfth century, during the reign of Henry I (1100–1135), and quite possibly on the same site as an earlier Saxon church, St Mary's, Wiston was originally held by the Godebold family (who later changed their name to de Horkesley).<sup>10</sup> In an undated charter bearing the seal of Henry I, but probably drawn up c.1130, Robert, son of Godebold, and his wife Beatrice are recorded as presenting the church at Wiston, with appurtenances, to the Cluniac monks of the Priory of St Mary and St Andrew, Thetford, Norfolk.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ron Baxter, 'St Mary, Wissington, Suffolk', *The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, [website], <https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/1389/> (accessed 30 August 2018): see esp. Comments/Opinions; Bettley and Pevsner state, 'Nave, chancel and apse all Norman' in *Suffolk: West*, p. 562; 'Little Horkesley: Manors', in *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 10, Lexden Hundred (Part) Including Dedham, Earls Colne and Wivenhoe*, ed. Janet Cooper (London, 2001), pp. 235-237. *British History Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol10/pp235-237> (accessed 10 January 2021).

<sup>11</sup> Charter of gift and three charters of confirmation are printed in Dugdale, et al., *Monasticon Anglicanum*, Vol. 5, p. 156 (Num. I), (gift: 'Et ad illum locum ad

Indeed, the gift of the church at Wiston may well have occasioned the rebuilding of the old Saxon church.<sup>12</sup> Robert and Beatrice's gift to the priory at Thetford came with the condition that the prior establish a cell, of as many Cluniac monks as he could spare, at the church of St Peter in Little Horkesley, close to the manor house where the Godebold family resided.<sup>13</sup> This cell then became known as the Priory of St Peter, Little Horkesley, and consisted of a prior and up to four monks until it was suppressed in 1525.<sup>14</sup> Although St Peter's was subject to the prior of Thetford, in practice this seems to have been little more than a token payment by the monks of half a mark of silver every year; conversely, St Peter's received revenues from Wiston and other parish churches in the surrounding area for its upkeep.<sup>15</sup>

By the time the priory at Little Horkesley was established, c.1130, Cluniac monks in England enjoyed a good reputation, thanks to the perception of their lives as 'the regular, tireless, all but ceaseless' performance of liturgical service.<sup>16</sup> The initial Cluniac foundation in England was that of the priory of St Pancras at Lewes in Sussex, c.1077. Various Cluniac houses were established in

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*sustentationem monachorum pertinebunt aliae ecclesiae nostrae omnes; viz. ecclesiae de Wisetonam cum omnibus pertinentiis suis*'), p. 157 (Num. II), p. 157 (Num. III), and p. 157 (Num. IV).

<sup>12</sup> Baxter, 'St Mary, Wissington, Suffolk', *The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, [website], <https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/1389/> (accessed 30 August 2018).

<sup>13</sup> Dugdale, et al., *Monasticon Anglicanum*, Vol. 5, p. 156 (Num. I), (*'ita videlicet, quod prior de Tefford, concedente toto conventu, in capitulo mittet monachos in ecclesiam S. Petri de Horchesleiam ad serviendum Deo et S. Petro finaliter, quantum poterit convenienter sustinere locus ille.'*); David Knowles and R. Neville Hadock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales*, (London, 1971), p. 100; 'Houses of Cluniac monks: Priory of Little Horkesley', in *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 2*, ed. William Page and J. Horace Round (London, 1907), pp. 137-138. *British History Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol2/pp137-138> (accessed 10 January 2021).

<sup>14</sup> Knowles and Hadock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, p. 100; Christopher P. Pearce, 'Monasticism without Frontiers: the Extended Monastic Community of the Abbot of Cluny in England and Wales', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, Trinity St David, Lampeter, 2017, p. 266.

<sup>15</sup> 'Houses of Cluniac monks: Priory of Little Horkesley', in *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 2*, ed. William Page and J. Horace Round (London, 1907), pp. 137-138. *British History Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/essex/vol2/pp137-138> (accessed 10 January 2021).

<sup>16</sup> Knowles and Hadock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, p. 149 (quote), p. 151 (reputation).

England in the early twelfth century, however, likely inspired by Henry I's foundation of Reading Abbey in 1121, which functioned as an independent religious community, observing the Benedictine rule and Cluniac liturgical practices.<sup>17</sup>

The establishment of the priory at Little Horkesley involved the adaptation of the parish church of St Peter's. The chancel was divided off from the nave for monastic use only, while an altar was placed at the east end of the nave to accommodate parish worship.<sup>18</sup> Conventual buildings were then constructed alongside the church. As Wiston is geographically close to Little Horkesley, it seems likely that the church at Wiston might have undergone rebuilding in the same period, perhaps by the same team of craftsmen, and this may account for the 'sumptuous' carving found in parts of the fabric of the church.<sup>19</sup>

St Mary's, Wiston is constructed of rendered flint and consists of an aisleless, rectangular nave (roughly 14m long and 6m wide) and apsidal chancel (Figure 2.8).<sup>20</sup> From the surviving sculptural evidence, such as the use of *opus reticulatum* on the tympanum of the south doorway, it appears that St Mary's was constructed somewhere between the last decades of the eleventh

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<sup>17</sup> Graham Mayhew, *The Monks of St Pancras: Lewes Priory, England's Premier Cluniac Monastery and its Dependencies 1076–1537*, (Lewes, 2014), p. 12 (foundation dates for Lewes); Knowles and Hadock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, pp. 96–98 (foundation dates of Cluniac priories); Brian Golding, 'The Coming of the Cluniacs' in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies*, R. Allen Brown (ed.), III, 1980 (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1981), p. 77; Pearce, 'Monasticism without Frontiers', p. 30 (Reading Abbey).

<sup>18</sup> Pearce, 'Monasticism without Frontiers', p. 266.

<sup>19</sup> Baxter, 'St Mary, Wissington, Suffolk', *The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, [website], <https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/1389/> (accessed 30 August 2018): see the section Comments/Opinions; Bettley and Pevsner, *The Suffolk: West*, p. 562 (quote).

<sup>20</sup> My own measurements. Alterations to the chancel, probably made in the fifteenth century, turned the original twelfth-century apse into a flat east end. During the mid nineteenth-century renovations, the east chancel wall was returned to its twelfth-century outline, see Baxter, 'St Mary, Wissington, Suffolk', *The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, [website], <https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/1389/> (accessed 30 August 2018): see section 'Description'.

century and, at the latest, 1140 (Figures 2.9a-b).<sup>21</sup> On this basis, it is possible to link the (re)construction of the church at Wiston more firmly to Robert and Beatrice's gift to the monks of Thetford in return for the establishment and upkeep of the cell at Little Horkesley.

It is likely that the Godebolds/de Horkesleys funded the rebuilding of St Mary's. However, although the manor of Wiston was still held by the family, they never lived in the manor house, which stood beside the church. Instead, they chose to reside in Little Horkesley, beside the priory, and were buried in St Peter's. In the church, three wooden effigies of members of the founding family, intended to inspire prayers for their souls, still bear witness to the family's interest in Little Horkesley: effigies of Sir Robert de Horkesley (d.1296), and of Sir William de Horkesley (d.1332) and his wife, Emma (d.1333).<sup>22</sup>

Even though Wiston was a parish church and not built for the monks or monastic celebration of the Mass, the monks may have had some say in the way the church was constructed. For various reasons, the monks could have had an interest in the construction of the church at Wiston: all the revenue from Wiston went to the priory, the church stood close to the monastic foundation and the monks might well have had cure of souls at St Mary's, at least until the mid thirteenth century. These issues are examined in the section dealing with the relationship between the priory, Wiston church and the paintings, below.

### **The parishioners of Wiston in the late thirteenth century**

Before considering the paintings in detail, it is worth briefly examining the socio-economic context of the area in which the parishioners were living

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<sup>21</sup> Baxter, 'St Mary, Wissington, Suffolk', *The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, [website], <https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/1389/> (accessed 30 August 2018).

<sup>22</sup> Information from text boards in the church of St Peter and St Paul, Little Horkesley; Rev. G. Montagu Benton, 'The Destruction of Little Horkesley Church, and the Discovery of a Palimpsest Brass', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, New (2nd) Series, Vol. 23, Part I, (1942), pp. 116-124, esp. pp. 116, 118.

around the time the paintings at St Mary's were executed, that is to say the third quarter of the thirteenth century.

The 1295 Inquisition Post Mortem of Robert de Horkesley reveals that the manor of Wiston was relatively large for Suffolk: a total extent of 236 acres compared to the less than 120 acres recorded for 45 per cent of Suffolk manors at the end of the eleventh century.<sup>23</sup> St Mary's and the settlement at Wiston was set far from any significant roads, close to the River Stour. A valuable water mill and a fishery are listed as part of the manor in the document of 1295, and these assets may have boosted the manor's relatively high valuation at £13. 15s. 10½d. per year.<sup>24</sup> Different types of farmed land at Wiston, including arable, meadow, pasture and woodland, are also mentioned in the document, with arable being by far the largest sector.<sup>25</sup> Although the manor was assessed for 17 acres of pasture in 1295, it is unlikely that this was used primarily for grazing sheep, as Wiston does not appear to have supplied the East Anglian wool trade.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, there is no mention of sheep shearing in the 1295 document, which appears to support this assertion.

As far as the size of the population of Wiston in the mid thirteenth century is concerned, there are no specific records. The pattern of dispersed settlement at Wiston, similar to much of Suffolk at this time, suggests that this was never a densely populated locality.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the Lay Subsidy of 1327, the

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<sup>23</sup> Rosemary Knox, *Is it Wiston or Wissington? An ancient rural Suffolk parish*, (Suffolk, 2012), p. 9; Mark Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk: An Economic and Social History, 1200-1500*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2007), p. 27 (extent of Suffolk manors in the eleventh century).

<sup>24</sup> The water mill is listed as worth £3.12s. per year and the fishery 2s. per year. For more on fisheries and their profitability in the Middle Ages, see Christopher Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, (London, 2001), pp. 101-111, esp. pp. 101-102 and p. 108. The total number of acres and annual value of the manor can be calculated from the items set out in the 1295 document: see Knox, *Is it Wiston or Wissington?*, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> Inquisition Post Mortem document for Robert de Horkesley of 1295: 192 acres are recorded as arable compared with 15 acres of meadow and 17 acres of pasture: Knox, *Is it Wiston or Wissington*, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Rosemary Knox, 'A Very Minor Manor: Villeins and Free Tenants in the Manor of Wiston from 1352 to 1455', *Suffolk Review*, New Series, Vol. 26, (Spring, 1996), p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1. The wool trade was flourishing in bigger towns such as Ipswich by the 1280s: see Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk*, p. 114.

earliest surviving record of tax paid in the vill of Wiston (Villata de Wystone), documents as few as fifteen men paying tax, including the lord, William de Horkesley.<sup>28</sup>

The living standards of most rural dwellers in Suffolk were low in the mid thirteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Bad harvests and high grain prices would no doubt have impacted the manor, which, with 192 acres of arable land, must have relied heavily on grain harvests for its income.<sup>30</sup> Lack of money, combined with population growth before 1300, would have meant circumstances were very difficult for most families and extreme poverty prevalent. Thus, the majority of people who attended St Mary's church were likely to have been working in some capacity on the manorial estate, but would almost certainly have been struggling to make ends meet.

## **Analysis of the Margaret cycle with reference to the possible textual sources**

### ***Overview***

An analysis of the Margaret cycle at Wiston is now heavily reliant on Tristram's description and sketches of the scenes, as the paintings have either faded drastically or perished.<sup>31</sup> The cycle once comprised eight framed scenes, but by the time Tristram retrieved and documented the paintings in the 1930s, three

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<sup>28</sup> Sydenham H. A. Hervey (ed.), *Suffolk in 1327: Being a Subsidy Return*, Suffolk Green Books, No. IX, Vol. 11, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1906), available from: E-Book Library, <https://archive.org/details/SuffolkIn1327/page/n189/mode/2up> (accessed 4 January 2021): p. 154. Other neighbouring villages in the same Hundred as Wiston include Stoke with 40 tax payers, Neylond (Nayland) and Bures with 22, and Boxted with 14: see, Hervey (ed.), *Suffolk in 1327*, pp. 153-54 (Stoke), pp. 147-48 (Neylond), p. 153 (Bures), p. 142 (Boxted).

<sup>29</sup> Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk*, pp. 36-37, 58.

<sup>30</sup> Figure given in Inquisition Post Mortem document for Robert de Horkesley of 1295: see Knox, *Is it Wiston or Wissington?*, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, p. 627 and Plate 186.

scenes (2-4) had been destroyed (in 1853) by the enlargement of the windows and splays on the south wall (Figure 2.10).<sup>32</sup>

The Margaret cycle at Wiston is framed with minimal decoration. One scene is separated from another by two vertical lines and the space between the lines is decorated with a wavy band of colour (Figure 2.11). The same divisions are found between the two miracles of St Nicholas. However, the border encasing the narratives of both saints is ornamented with a vine scroll motif (Figure 2.12). As discussed in Chapter 1, this motif symbolises Christ as the true vine and reminds the viewer that the saints bear witness to and imitate Christ's life.<sup>33</sup>

The fragmentary nature of the Margaret cycle at Wiston, as it appears in Tristram's sketches, makes it difficult to say with certainty whether any specific textual sources were used when the scheme was planned. However, certain details in the paintings offer an indication of the texts that the artist or architect of the scheme might have referred to.

Apart from the *Legenda Aurea*, the same textual sources used for the analysis of the paintings in Chapter 1 will be referred to for the paintings at Wiston. Although copies of the *Legenda Aurea* may well have reached monastic libraries in England towards the end of the thirteenth century, if the paintings were executed closer to 1250 the *Legenda Aurea* could not have provided a textual source for them.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 55, 627 and Plate 186. On p. 55 Tristram states that of the Margaret cycle at Wiston, six out of nine scenes remain, but he then describes only five. However, in the Catalogue on p. 627, Tristram states that the cycle comprised a total of eight scenes, with five extant and the description of these five scenes matches the drawings provided in Plate 186. My visits to the church confirm five extant scenes.

<sup>33</sup> Schiller, *Iconography*, p. 135.

<sup>34</sup> The *MLGB3* website indicates that copies of the *Legenda Aurea* had reached monastic libraries at Durham and Ramsey in the thirteenth century. The manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud. Misc. 489 came from Durham (Benedictine cathedral priory of St Cuthbert) and the manuscript Cambridge, Peterhouse College 132 came from Ramsey (Benedictine abbey of St Mary the Virgin and St Benedict). See '*Legenda aurea*', *MLGB3*, [website], [http://mlgb3.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/mlgb/?search\\_term=Legenda+aurea&page\\_size=500](http://mlgb3.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/mlgb/?search_term=Legenda+aurea&page_size=500) (accessed 18 December 2020). Manfred Goerlach states that cathedral libraries in England had copies of the *LgA* by the fourteenth century: Goerlach, *Textual Tradition*, p. 24.

Thus, only three texts have been included as possible sources for the paintings at Wiston. These are the Latin Mombritius (*Mb*) version of Margaret's *passio* (*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* no. 5303) and the two thirteenth-century vernacular verse legends of the *Stanzaic Life* (*StzL*) and the *South English Legendary* (*SEL*). It is also possible that a breviary text was used to draw up the Margaret cycle which is now lost.

Wace's *La Vie de sainte Marguerite* of 1130-1140 has not been consulted because of lack of strong evidence for its wide dissemination, as discussed in the Introduction to this thesis. However, Wace's *La Vie de saint Nicolas* will be referred to in the analysis of the depictions of the Nicholas miracles, as this work enjoyed greater popularity, particularly in England.<sup>35</sup>

### ***The Margaret cycle at Wiston***

Picture 1 (Figure 2.13a-b): Tristram describes this scene as Margaret spinning with a distaff. In the known wall-painting schemes of Margaret's Life, the most represented episode is that of the saint as a young woman tending her nurse's sheep. All these schemes represent this bucolic moment in the narrative with Margaret not just minding the flock, but spinning with a distaff (for example, Figures 2.14a-b).<sup>36</sup> The scene is also popular in visual versions of the saint's Life in other media of a similar date – for example, in the *bas-de-page* tinted drawings of the Queen Mary Psalter and in the first scene of her legend embroidered on the Pienza Cope (Figures 2.15a-b).<sup>37</sup>

At Wiston, and indeed in all the known wall-painting schemes, Margaret is depicted seated on a hillock or rock, with the sheep beside her. In this scene at Wiston, Margaret may have been shown gesturing with her right hand towards something which has since perished. However, this explanation seems unlikely, given that the hand is near the edge of the picture and the fingers

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<sup>35</sup> Le Saux, *A Companion*, p. 54.

<sup>36</sup> The schemes are: Battle, Sussex; Charlwood, Surrey; East Wellow, Hants; Limpenhoe, Norfolk (church demolished); Tarrant Crawford, Dorset; Wendens Ambo, Essex; Wiston (Wissington), Suffolk.

<sup>37</sup> Queen Mary Psalter, London, British Library, Royal MS B 2 VII, fol. 307v; Browne, et al. (eds), Exhibition Catalogue, *English Medieval Embroidery*, pp. 204-209, esp. p. 208 (full-page illustration).

appear to be curled, as if clasping something. More likely, the saint was depicted holding a now-faded distaff in her lowered left hand and the spindle in her raised right hand. She is looking steadily to the viewer's right, outwards towards the second scene, almost as if she is envisaging the fate that awaits her with the approach of Olibrius.

The figure of Margaret is not nimbed in any of the scenes at Wiston, which accords with the cycle at Battle, for example, and with the depiction of other saintly figures in the nave at Wiston, such as St Nicholas and St Francis (Figures 2.16a-b).<sup>38</sup> As one of the Nicholas miracles depicted at Wiston was believed to have occurred posthumously, haloes are not used here to highlight the state the holy person attained after death. Perhaps the omitting of haloes in the depictions of the saints at Wiston was intended to highlight the fact that saints were ordinary people who achieved extraordinary things, thus emphasizing their function as role models.

None of the textual narratives considered in this study, however, describe Margaret spinning while she looked after the sheep. Her age (fifteen) is often mentioned, as is the fact that she was in the company of other maidens, and once, she is recorded praying.<sup>39</sup> As the representation of Margaret tending sheep and spinning is so common in the visual schemes of her Life, it is unlikely that such a depiction at Wiston was intended as a reflection of the social realities of the burgeoning wool trade in East Anglia – particularly as, from the evidence of the 1295 Inquisition document, Wiston manor does not appear to have contributed to the wool trade at this time. The saint's youth emphasizes her innocence, whilst the care of the sheep – a humble, but responsible task –

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<sup>38</sup> Wall-painting schemes where Margaret is not nimbed: Ashby St Ledgers (Northants), Battle (Sussex, although figures of Margaret as a baby and as a soul being borne up to heaven are nimbed), Duxford (Cambs), East Wellow (Hants), Little Kimble (Bucks), Limpenhoe (Norfolk, non extant), Tarrant Crawford (Dorset), Wiston (Suffolk). Margaret with a halo: Charlwood (Surrey), Claverley (Salop), Wendens Ambo (Essex, shown in figure with a distaff). Uncertain: Stowell Park (Glos). Unknown whether Margaret was depicted with a halo or not: Cliffe-at-Hoo (Kent).

<sup>39</sup> Age: *Mb*: Ch 4, pp. 196-97; *SEL*: p. 293, line 37; *StzL*: p. 172, line 25. Looking after sheep with other maidens: *Mb*: Ch 5, pp. 196-97; *SEL*: p. 293, lines 39-40; *StzL*: p. 172, lines 26-27. Looking after sheep and praying: *StzL* only: p. 172, line 28.

highlights her virtues: sanctity, humility and industriousness. However, the addition of a distaff in the many visual versions of this scene appears to suggest that Margaret does not spend her time idly in the fields, thus avoiding falling into the trap of sinfulness. It also recalls the archetypal virtuous woman, the Virgin Mary. Thus, visually Margaret is associated not only with Christ as the Good Shepherd and Paschal Lamb, as discussed in Chapter 1, but also with the Virgin.

Picture 2: This scene has been destroyed but may well have shown Olibrius questioning Margaret, as Tristram suggests. If this scene did not show a confrontation between Margaret and Olibrius, it may have depicted the first of the torture episodes.

Picture 3: This scene has been destroyed. Tristram suggests that this may have been a torture scene, in which the saint was shown hung up by the hair and beaten. Being tortured in this way, that is to say hung up by the hair, seems to be peculiar to Margaret's story and is generally present in visual cycles of her Life, including, for example, Picture 17 at Battle, as well as the remains of two early fourteenth-century cycles at Ashby St Ledgers, Northants and Little Kimble, Bucks (Figures 2.17a-c).<sup>40</sup>

Although this could have been represented at Wiston as well, it is more likely, given the sequence of scenes, that Picture 3 showed Olibrius's men forcing Margaret into prison. Margaret's confinement in prison follows the initial confrontation between the saint and Olibrius in all the textual narratives considered here. A prison scene would also connect Picture 3 with Picture 4, where Margaret encounters the dragon in her cell.

Picture 4: Tristram proposes that Margaret was shown emerging from the dragon in this scene. This seems plausible, even if there is no subsequent scene depicting Margaret's encounter with the second demon, which follows the

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<sup>40</sup> The drawings were executed initially by C. J. W. Winter and copied by Monica Bardswell: V&A Museum No. E119-1932. One scene was missing when the artist first copied the paintings.

dragon episode in the *Mb passio*, *StzL* and *SEL*, and in the visual representations of Margaret's *passio* at Battle and Tarrant.

Some textual sources, such as breviary texts and the *Casinensis* version of the Latin *passio* (*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* No. 5304) omitted the demonic episode altogether or abbreviated it, owing to theological concerns about the lack of gravitas of this aspect of the saint's story.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, some other visual representations of Margaret's story do not show the second demon episode. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, a later wall-painting cycle of Margaret's Life, of c.1330-40, at Charlwood, Surrey, shows Margaret emerging from the dragon's back – but does not include her defeating the second demon. Perhaps the startling image of the saint emerging from the dragon's back or belly was thought sufficiently visually effective to convey Margaret's triumph over the devil in its own right, especially if space were limited or other concerns prevented the inclusion of both scenes.

Picture 5 (Figure 2.18a-b): Tristram suggests this is a torture scene. All that remains of the scene is the naked upper body of the saint in profile, facing, as in all scenes in this cycle, to the viewer's right. Her long hair cascades down her back and her hands are raised in prayer or supplication. Above her, an angel, depicted as two wings and a head, hovers. Behind the saint stands a male figure with grotesque features, surely one of Margaret's torturers, who is raising his left hand to her back.

It is likely this scene showed the moment in the narrative when Margaret, having been immersed in a vessel of water, is about to be lifted aloft by an angel. In all the textual narratives, this torture with water served as the final torture Margaret was subjected to.<sup>42</sup> It also reflects the place, in two of the

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<sup>41</sup> Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, pp. 13-16, 34. The fifteenth-century Battle breviary text (Cambridge, Trinity College 0.7.31, fols 161r and 161v), mentioned in Chapter 1, does not include the demonic episode at all. Jacobus de Voragine describes the dragon episode as '*apocryphum et friuolum*', see *LgA*: p. 618.

<sup>42</sup> *Mb*: Ch 18, pp. 210-13; *StzL*: p. 233, lines 245-48; *SEL*: p. 300, lines 241-51.

three possible textual sources (the *Mb passio* and the *StzL*), describing, or alluding to, Margaret's immersion in the water as a form of baptism.<sup>43</sup>

The details of the water torture episode are fairly consistent in the *Mb passio* and the *StzL*, but the procedure differs slightly in the *SEL*, in which Olibrius orders that the saint be bound and thrown into a vessel of cold water, head first.<sup>44</sup> When Margaret miraculously steps out of the vessel unscathed, in a fury Olibrius orders that boiling ('seothinge') water be prepared.<sup>45</sup> No sooner has she been plunged into this water than a clap of thunder is heard, and she calmly re-emerges, to the great astonishment of the onlookers.<sup>46</sup> Only the wall-painting scheme at Limpenhoe appears to have followed the *SEL* for the representation of this scene, depicting Margaret being thrown head first into a vessel of water (Figure 2.19).<sup>47</sup> The Queen Mary Psalter version of this scene shows the vessel being heated, but the saint is presented in a more dignified pose: waist-deep in water, looking out at the viewer, naked and nimbed, her hands together in prayer (Figure 2.20).<sup>48</sup>

In the *StzL* and *Mb passio*, however, only one vessel – of cold water – is used, and Olibrius orders the saint to be bound and thrown into it, but there is no mention of her being plunged in head first. Once Margaret is immersed in the water, thunder is heard and then, the *StzL* recounts, an angel retrieves her unharmed from the water ('*the engel ir nom of the water that alle it misten isee.*').<sup>49</sup> If, as seems most likely, this scene did indeed show Margaret emerging from the vessel of water, the fact that the artist has included an angel in the top right-hand corner suggests that the *StzL* might well have been the textual source used by the artist, as this is not mentioned in other versions. Thus, the more conventional representation of this scene, with Margaret looking out from a vessel of cold water or emerging with her fetters loosened, was probably shown here.

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<sup>43</sup> *Mb*: Ch 18, pp. 210-213; *StzL*: p. 233, lines 245-46.

<sup>44</sup> *SEL*: p. 300, lines 241-42.

<sup>45</sup> *SEL*: p. 300, line 247.

<sup>46</sup> *SEL*: p. 300, lines 249-56.

<sup>47</sup> Winter and Bardswell: V&A Museum No. E119-1932.

<sup>48</sup> Queen Mary Psalter, London, British Library, Royal MS B 2 VII, fol. 311r.

<sup>49</sup> *StzL*: p. 233, line 248.

Picture 6 (Figure 2.21): Tristram describes this as the execution scene. The executioner stands behind Margaret to the viewer's left. He holds an upright sword in his right hand, and with his left hand he grabs a fistful of the saint's hair to steady her head for the blow. The same action depicted in the slightly later wall-painting scheme (c.1300) at Little Kimble, Bucks is decidedly more animated than that at Wiston (Figure 2.22a), with the executioner shown actually in the process of striking the blow. A more lively rendition of Margaret's execution is also found in the Queen Mary Psalter – although the details of clothing and the grabbing of Margaret by the hair are similar (Figure 2.22b) – as well as on the Pienza Cope (Figure 2.22c).<sup>50</sup>

However, the lack of animation found in the Wiston depiction may well have been deliberate. It is argued here that the content of Picture 6 is linked to that of Pictures 7-8. Although divided into two scenes, Pictures 7-8 appear to belong to the same moment of the narrative, that is to say the portrayal of Margaret's final prayer. If Pictures 7-8 are taken into account, it becomes clear that Picture 6 does not show Margaret's execution, but rather the preparation for her martyrdom. This is supported by the lack of animation in the figure of the executioner and the fact that Margaret is still visibly alive, with her eyes open in Picture 8. In addition, Margaret is also depicted naked in Picture 8, which makes a seamless link with the naked figure of Margaret in Picture 6.

Picture 6, then, appears to show the moment in the textual narratives in which Margaret prepares for her martyrdom. In the *Mb passio*, the executioner asks Margaret to stretch out her neck ready for the blow, but confesses that he is afraid to carry out his task because he sees 'Christ with his angels' beside her.<sup>51</sup> Margaret seizes the moment to ask him for time to pray and, when he concedes, begins her final prayer, in which she states that she will intercede for and protect all those who call on her, especially mothers in labour.<sup>52</sup> When she finishes her prayer, a dove appears from heaven holding the 'holy cross' and tells her she is blessed – she has 'defeated the world' and remembered 'all

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<sup>50</sup> Queen Mary Psalter, London, British Library, MS Royal 2 B VII, fol. 313r; Pienza Cope, Browne et al. (eds), Exhibition Catalogue, *English Medieval Embroidery*, pp. 206-07.

<sup>51</sup> *Mb*: Ch 19, pp. 212-213.

<sup>52</sup> *Mb*: Ch 19, pp. 212-215.

people' in her prayers.<sup>53</sup> The *StzL* provides a more elaborate version of the same scene and the *SEL* a briefer one. In the *SEL* Margaret is brought to the place of execution and asks for time to pray; it omits the dialogue between the saint and the executioner.<sup>54</sup> In contrast, the *StzL* evokes a menacing atmosphere as Margaret is taken to her place of execution with the wind blowing and the sun clouding over.<sup>55</sup> A voice from heaven tells her that she will be crowned that day in paradise and the executioner is so afraid that he asks her to have mercy on him. In return, she asks him to give her time to make her 'bone', or final prayer.<sup>56</sup>

In the scene at Wiston, there is no depiction of a dove holding a cross, as is described in the *Mb passio*. Instead, the hand of God (*manus dei*) appearing from the heavens in the top right-hand corner of Picture 6 doubtless represents the voice of God and suggests that the scene is most likely to have been inspired by the text of the *StzL*. Gertrud Schiller states that the symbol of the *manus dei* had several functions: it indicated the voice or presence of God and also showed God's acceptance of a sacrifice. Used on coins during the reign of the emperor Constantine, the motif expressed divine approval for the emperor and his actions. Later, around the sixth century, the hand of God came to be deployed by artists to symbolize the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and it would make sense that the voice of God should be represented by a symbol which encompasses the three persons of the Trinity, as well as alluding to God's acceptance of Margaret's sacrifice.<sup>57</sup>

Therefore, it seems significant that in this scene the artist has chosen to represent the hand of God himself above Margaret's head, rather than a dove or perhaps an angel. Considered alongside Picture 5, it suggests that the artist at Wiston might indeed have taken inspiration from the *StzL*.

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<sup>53</sup> *Mb*: Ch 20, pp. 214-215.

<sup>54</sup> *SEL*: pp. 299-300, lines 265-68.

<sup>55</sup> *StzL*: p. 236, lines 257-60.

<sup>56</sup> *StzL*: p. 239, line 271.

<sup>57</sup> André Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of its Origins*, (London, 1969), in particular pp. 40, 114-5 and 132.

Pictures 7-8 (Figures 2.23-2.24): Picture 7 is described by Tristram as Margaret's burial, but the sketch he has drawn of the remaining fragment of the painting shows the heads of two people looking to the viewer's right, towards the following scene (Picture 8), rather than downwards, as if occupied with a burial. Indeed, these figures seem to be looking directly at the figure of Margaret shown in Picture 8. Picture 8 is described by Tristram as 'Margaret received into paradise', but his sketch of the scene shows Margaret with her eyes open, looking heavenwards, with her hands raised as if in supplication or in acceptance. As in Picture 6, her upper body appears naked and her hair extends down her back.

It is more likely that Picture 7 represents some of those people described in the *StzL* as following Margaret to the place of execution.<sup>58</sup> Thus, these people could be observing Margaret as she makes her final prayer in Picture 8, as is shown in the Queen Mary Psalter (Figure 2.25).<sup>59</sup> If this was indeed the intention of the artist or patron, it means that the visual narrative at Wiston does not end with Margaret's execution and enshrinement, but instead with the focus on her power as an intercessor and guardian. After all, her martyrdom represented a physical death, which was perceived as merely the precursor to an everlasting life in paradise. In addition, using the final prayer as the culmination of the visual narrative underlines Margaret's relevance to the parishioners who would have been able to contemplate her story on their visits to the church.

### Summary

It appears that the *Mb passio* or the *StzL*, or a very similar textual narrative, has been used as the principal source for the visual narrative at Wiston, although a greater number of extant scenes would make this more certain. A reduction in the number of confrontation and torture scenes, and what appears to be the compression of the demonic episode, means that the emphasis of the story is on Margaret's last moments and the significance of her sacrifice for ordinary

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<sup>58</sup> *StzL*: p. 236, lines 257-58 ('tho ho com widoute the toun ther me ir sculde sclo, / Al siwede hire that euer miste go.').

<sup>59</sup> Queen Mary Psalter, London, British Library, MS Royal 2 B VII, fol. 312v.

women and men. The use of a vernacular text such as the *StzL* as the main source material for the artist is suggestive of lay involvement or control of the scheme at Wiston. Such concerns will be explored further in a consideration of the paintings surrounding the Margaret cycle, which begins in the next section with an examination of the Nicholas miracles.

## **The St Nicholas miracles at Wiston**

### ***Overview***

Alongside the paintings of St Margaret on the south wall of the nave at Wiston are two framed scenes, each depicting a miracle performed by St Nicholas of Myra (Figure 2.26). One scene shows the Miracle of the Three Clerks (Figure 2.27a), while the other is more ambiguous, showing either the Son of Getron or the Miracle of the Cup (Figure 2.27b). Although Nicholas was known as patron of seafarers and merchants, he was also especially venerated as patron of children and the young more generally. Both the miracles depicted at Wiston show Nicholas's concern for young people, and it is this theme that ostensibly links his legend with that of Margaret in this church.

Nicholas and Margaret were both believed to offer special protection for children and their parents. Many of Nicholas's miracles recount the different ways in which he helped or rescued children, while, as discussed above, Margaret declares in her final prayer that, if called upon, she will help any woman in labour and their unborn child. However, it is argued here that a component of the saints' concern for children, which has not been considered previously in the literature, is their association with the sacrament of baptism. This association is manifest notably in the siting of the wall paintings of Margaret and Nicholas in the church at Wiston and in the way they are linked to each other and the surrounding paintings.

The following introductory section discusses veneration for Nicholas in England and offers a detailed analysis of the content of the wall paintings of the Nicholas miracles at Wiston. Following a discussion of other paintings in the church at Wiston, the association between the paintings of the two saints and their intended meanings will be examined.

## ***St Nicholas in England***

Both St Nicholas and St Margaret were saints of the early church, believed to have lived around the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century on the southern fringes of present-day Turkey.<sup>60</sup> Unlike Margaret, Nicholas was not a martyr. Instead, he was best known for becoming bishop of Myra as a very young man through divine intervention, and in particular for the many miracles he performed both during his lifetime and posthumously. Above all, his miracles attest to his compassion, care of the young and innocent, desire to fight idolatry, and healing of those possessed by the devil.<sup>61</sup>

A Life of Nicholas written c.880 by John the Deacon (Johannes Diaconus) in Naples, a city in which Eastern and Western Christian traditions were brought together, seems to have been largely responsible for inspiring interest in the cult of the saint in the West.<sup>62</sup> However, the first evidence for the veneration of Nicholas in England is found in three manuscripts from Worcester written in the second half of the eleventh century, the earliest of which (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 391) can be dated to c.1060-1069.<sup>63</sup> Worcester had documented connections with Lower Lotharingina

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<sup>60</sup> Nicholas was reputedly born in Patara, Lycia. In the *LgA*, the year of his death is given as AD 343 *LgA*: p. 44 (*'tradidit spiritum anno domini CCXLIII'*).

<sup>61</sup> For an overview of the miracles (as they appear in Wace's text), see Blacker, et al., *Wace, the Hagiographical Works*, pp. 241-245.

<sup>62</sup> The Life of St Nicholas by John the Deacon is listed in the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* as No. 6104-6109 and is printed by Nicolò Falcone [Falconius] in *Sancti confessoris pontificis et celeberrimi thaumaturgi, Nicolai Acta Primigenia ...* (Naples, 1751), pp. 112-126; Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, p. 579.

<sup>63</sup> The three manuscripts are: 1) Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 163: pontifical written second half of 11th century, probably at Worcester. St Nicholas appears in litany on digital p. 202, *Parker Library on the Web*, [website], (<https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/dw493fs0065>) (accessed 20 September 2020); 2) Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 391: portiforium or breviary from Worcester written c.1060-1069. St Nicholas mentioned in Calendar in red on digital p.14, *Parker Library on the Web*, [website], (<https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/th313vp6557>) (accessed 20 September 2020); 3) London, British Library, Cotton Nero MS E 1/2: legendary from Worcester, written in the second half of the 11th century *British Library, Digitized Manuscripts*, [website], [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton\\_MS\\_Nero\\_E\\_I/1](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Nero_E_I/1) (accessed 20 September 2020). Office for St Nicholas, fols 153v-155v. Charles

(Lorraine), where St Nicholas's cult was already established. Ealdred, bishop of Worcester, later archbishop of York, is known to have visited Cologne for a year in 1054 on a diplomatic mission and may have brought back manuscripts that were then copied in Worcester.<sup>64</sup> Although Lower Lotharingina seems to have been the most likely source for the spread of the cult into England, interest in Nicholas would surely have been strengthened post-Conquest by Norman enthusiasm for the saint. Veneration of Nicholas in Normandy from the early eleventh century was given substantial impetus by the abstraction of his relics from Anatolia to Norman-controlled Bari in southern Italy in 1087, and the shrine swiftly became a draw for pilgrims.<sup>65</sup>

Early evidence for Nicholas's popularity amongst the Normans and its effect on the veneration of the saint in England is found in Canterbury cathedral. An altar was erected and dedicated to Nicholas as part of the rebuilding programme initiated by St Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, which began in 1096 with the Great Choir and the crypt. The altar raised to Nicholas was one of three with a specifically Norman focus, the others being that of St Ouen and St Katherine of Alexandria.<sup>66</sup> In addition, Veronica Ortenberg identifies a strong cult presence in St Augustine's, Canterbury, and Kent more widely by the end of the eleventh century, evident in the appearance of two hymns to the saint in a psalter and hymnal written at this time.<sup>67</sup> An early twelfth-century manuscript, found in Durham University Library, includes a

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W. Jones, *The Saint Nicholas Liturgy and its Literary Relationships, Ninth to Twelfth Centuries*, (Berkeley, 1963), pp. 1-13, 64-89.

<sup>64</sup> Ortenberg, *The English Church*, p. 62

<sup>65</sup> Charles W. Jones, 'The Norman Cults of Saints Catherine and Nicholas, Saec. xi', in *Hommages à André Boutemy*, Guy Cambier (ed.), (Brussels, 1976), p. 222, fn. 44; for the early popularity of Nicholas in Normandy, Walsh, *Cult of St Katherine*, p. 114 and Dawn Marie Hayes, 'The Cult of St Nicholas of Myra in Norman Bari, c.1071-c.1111', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 67, No. 3, (July, 2016), pp. 492-512, esp. 493-97; for an overview of the translation of St Nicholas's body and the establishment of the shrine at Bari, see Hayes, 'The Cult of St Nicholas of Myra', pp. 492-512 and Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, pp. 252, 424-6.

<sup>66</sup> Walsh, *Cult of St Katherine*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>67</sup> Ortenberg, *The English Church*, p. 73: the manuscript cited is Rouen, BM 231 (A.44).

copy of the Life of Nicholas by John the Deacon, and a description of the saint's miracles and of the translation of his relics to Bari with further miracles.<sup>68</sup>

By the thirteenth century, just 25 miles or so from Wiston a significant veneration for Nicholas had developed in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, where Margaret's cult had been established since the first half of the eleventh century.<sup>69</sup> The life of the town revolved around the immensely powerful Benedictine abbey, and between 1120 and 1148 Archbishop Anselm's nephew and protégé Anselm of Bury was abbot there. Christine Walsh traces Abbot Anselm's probable promotion of the cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Bury, commenting that the young Anselm would have been in Canterbury at the time his uncle's building work on the crypt was in progress.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps, therefore, the association between St Katherine and St Nicholas, manifest in the way altars dedicated to them were sited in the crypt at Canterbury, may have engendered interest in both saints in the younger Anselm.

Whether or not Abbot Anselm was in some way responsible for generating interest in the cult of Nicholas at Bury St Edmunds, by the thirteenth century the saint was much revered in the town. A hospital dedicated to Nicholas stood just outside the east gate of the abbey, and although its exact foundation date is unknown, the Hospital of St Nicholas is mentioned in documents from c.1215 onwards.<sup>71</sup> Permission to hold a fair on the feast day of the translation of St Nicholas's relics to Bari (9 May) was

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<sup>68</sup> Durham University Library, MS B IV 14, fols 170r-181r (Life), fols 181r-189r (Miracles), fols 190r-200v (Translation and Miracles), see 'DCL MS. B.IV.14 Lives of saints', *Durham University Library Archives & Special Collections*, [website], [http://reed.dur.ac.uk/xtf/view?docId=ark/32150\\_s14q77fr46b.xml](http://reed.dur.ac.uk/xtf/view?docId=ark/32150_s14q77fr46b.xml) (accessed 12 December 2020).

<sup>69</sup> A manuscript of the second quarter of the eleventh century (Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 12), produced in Canterbury probably for Bury St Edmunds, includes Margaret in the calendar and litany of saints: see Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, pp. 74-75 (calendar), pp. 76-77 (litany). Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England*, p. 193, states that Nicholas was probably venerated in Bury St Edmunds by the late eleventh century.

<sup>70</sup> Walsh, *Cult of St Katherine*, pp. 123-125, esp. 124.

<sup>71</sup> 'Hospitals: St Nicholas, Bury St Edmunds', in *A History of the County of Suffolk: Volume 2*, ed. William Page (London, 1975), p. 134. *British History Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/suff/vol2/p134> (accessed 10 January 2021).

granted to the master of the hospital by Henry III in 1224.<sup>72</sup> Later, in 1282, a highly influential guild dedicated to Nicholas (the 'Dusse' Guild) was founded in Bury, and it probably had a clerks' Guild of St Nicholas attached to it.<sup>73</sup>

Members of the Guild of St Nicholas included both clerical and lay brethren, and their activities centred around the parish church of St Mary, which stood within the abbey grounds.<sup>74</sup> One of the ceremonies sponsored by the guild was that of the boy-bishop, in which a choirboy from a church or cathedral school was elected to hold the office of bishop for the feast of the Holy Innocents (28 December) and to preach a sermon. Such ceremonies were being performed in the cathedrals of York, Salisbury and St Paul's, London, by the 1220s.<sup>75</sup>

Symbolically electing a boy to masquerade as a bishop referenced Nicholas's appointment as bishop of Myra whilst still a young man.<sup>76</sup> Joel Fredell describes how examples of the Miracle of the Three Clerks in visual representations in England at this time were related to the boy-bishop ceremonies and comments that almost 'every one of these English examples is the product of lay patronage'.<sup>77</sup> This offers some possible indication of lay involvement, if not direct control, in the subject matter of the paintings at Wiston – especially as there appears to be an emphasis on the subject of the Massacre of the Holy Innocents, which is afforded two scenes rather than one, in the Infancy cycle situated directly above the Nicholas miracles.

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<sup>72</sup> 'Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk', *Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516*, [website], <https://archives.history.ac.uk/gazetteer/suff.html#Bury> (accessed 11 August 2020).

<sup>73</sup> Michael Graham, 'Bury St Edmunds: A Reassessment of Town-Abbey Relations', in *Essays in European History*, June K. Burton and Carolyn W. White (eds), Vol. II, 1988-1989, (New York, 1996), p. 117; S. E. Rigold, 'The St Nicholas or "Boy Bishop" Tokens', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History*, Vol. 34, Part 2, (1977), pp. 87-101, esp. p. 92.

<sup>74</sup> Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages*, (Chicago, 1994), p. 121.

<sup>75</sup> Joel Fredell, 'The Three Clerks and St Nicholas in Medieval England', *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 92, 2, (Spring, 1995), pp. 181-202, esp. p. 186.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

### ***Possible textual sources for the St Nicholas paintings at Wiston***

Two texts from northern France appear to have popularised the miracles shown at Wiston and may have provided the textual sources for the paintings.<sup>78</sup> The first of these is the Anglo-Norman poem, *La Vie de saint Nicolas*, written by Wace before 1146 or c.1150, which drew on material from earlier Latin texts of Nicholas's legend, such as the Life by John the Deacon, mentioned above.<sup>79</sup> The second source comprises two Latin plays of the saint's miracles: the Three Clerks (*Tres Clerici*) and the Son of Getron (*Filius Getronis*). Both plays are taken from a manuscript usually referred to as the 'Fleury Playbook'. The manuscript comprises ten plays in total, four of which describe miracles attributed to Nicholas.<sup>80</sup> Although the manuscript was previously thought to have been written in the Benedictine abbey of Fleury, or otherwise at the abbey of Saint-Lomer in Blois attached to the church of Saint-Nicolas there, it is now generally thought to be a collection of plays from different sources within the Loire region.<sup>81</sup> Although the plays are less firmly dated than Wace's poem, they are generally thought to have been written c.1200, but based on earlier sources.<sup>82</sup> By the mid thirteenth century both Wace's *Vie de saint Nicolas* and the plays from the Playbook would almost certainly have been known in England. Copies of Wace's poem survive in five manuscript witnesses. One of the manuscripts was probably produced for Durham Abbey in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, while another, by way of contrast, is a commonplace book from the Worcestershire area dated 1272-

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>79</sup> For the date of the poem, see Le Saux, *A Companion*, p. 53. For Wace's possible sources, see Blacker et al., *Wace, the Hagiographical Works*, p. 247. In the same volume, a transcript and translation of the Miracle of the Three Clerks is found on pp. 284-87, lines 213-26 and the Miracle of the Cup is found on pp. 312-17, lines 813-934.

<sup>80</sup> Municipal Library of Orléans, miscellany manuscript, MS 201: see Albrecht, *Four Latin Plays*, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> E. M. Rose, *The Murder of William of Norwich: the Origins of the Blood Libel in Medieval Europe*, (New York, 2017), p. 177; Blacker, et al., *Wace, the Hagiographical Works*, pp. 275-345; Albrecht, *Four Latin Plays*, pp. 126-29 (*Tres Clerici*), pp. 134-42 (*Filius Getronis*). The *SEL* omits the Miracle of the Three Clerks in all but two later manuscripts, which is why the *SEL* has not been included here: see Fredell, 'The Three Clerks', p. 182.

<sup>82</sup> Rose, *The Murder*, p. 177; Albrecht, *Four Latin Plays*, pp. 3-4.

1282, which also contains recipes and accounts.<sup>83</sup> Such variety in ownership is indicative of diverse interest in the poem in England in the thirteenth century. Indeed, Wace remarks in his *Vie* that he has written the poem in the vernacular so that all those who do not understand Latin may learn about St Nicholas.<sup>84</sup> Wace's poem is thus an important point of reference for an analysis of the paintings at Wiston.

Given that Bury St Edmunds Abbey was an influential cultural centre and St Nicholas was celebrated in the town in both monastic and lay circles, it is highly likely that a copy of the manuscript of the plays from the Playbook would have been available in the abbey's library not long after it began to circulate in France – that is to say, from 1200 onwards. Knowledge of the plays may also have been disseminated through schools such as those attached to the abbey at Bury.<sup>85</sup> However, a sermon of c.1250, found in a manuscript that also contains a version of Wace's *Vie de saint Nicolas* and a Life of St Margaret (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 14. 39), provides more concrete evidence for the dissemination of plays connected with the cult of Nicholas and possibly those of the Playbook itself.<sup>86</sup> The sermon, addressed to a general audience, is based on an antiphon (*Justum deduxit*) included in the order of service for Nicholas's feast day in the breviaries for York, Sarum and Hereford.<sup>87</sup> The text

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<sup>83</sup> The first manuscript is Oxford, Bodleian Library, 21844, Douce 270, the second is Oxford, Bodleian Library, 1687, Digby 86: see Le Saux, *A Companion*, pp. 53-54.

<sup>84</sup> Blacker, et al., *Wace, the Hagiographical Works*, p. 276, lines 41-4.

<sup>85</sup> Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: from Roman Britain to Renaissance England*, (New Haven, 2006), pp. 199, 213 (schools run by the abbey and the endowment for teaching poor clerks at Bury); Jones, *Saint Nicholas Liturgy*, p. 116 (mentions cathedral schools for development of the relationship between the cult of St Nicholas and secular drama).

<sup>86</sup> Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 14. 39: the sermon is found on fols 26r-27r, the Life of St Margaret on fol. 20r, Wace's *Vie de saint Nicolas* on fols 48r-56v: see Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B. 14. 39, The James Catalogue of Western Manuscripts, *Wren Digital Library*, [website], <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/viewpage.php?index=185> (accessed 23 December 2020); Carleton Brown, 'An Early Mention of a St. Nicholas Play in England', *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 28, 4, (October, 1931), pp. 594-601 (the connection the author makes between the story of the king in the sermon and a play from the Playbook, *Filius Getronis*, is not particularly convincing (see Brown, 'An Early Mention', p. 601).

<sup>87</sup> Brown, 'An Early Mention', p. 599.

states (lines 39-40) that if the congregation remains in place once the sermon has ended, a play will be performed:

yf ye wollet stille ben  
in *this* pleye ye mowen isen.<sup>88</sup>

Directly preceding these lines, is a story that describes how a king has his prayers answered ‘*throu senicholas bone*’ (line 38). Although the story itself is too brief to present any clear parallels with the texts of the plays in the Playbook, it does provide some evidence that from around the mid thirteenth century, plays based on St Nicholas’s life and miracles were being performed in England.

Whilst the plays in the Playbook are written in Latin, they may have reached a non-monastic audience through a performance of the stories, perhaps on St Nicholas’s feast day or as part of the boy-bishop ceremonies on the feast of the Holy Innocents. The boy-bishop ceremonies held at Bury St Edmunds and the activities of the ‘Dusse’ guild may also have offered appropriate contexts for the performance of such plays, and there is some later evidence of the ceremonies being performed in a parish context in Norfolk and at Hadleigh in Suffolk.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, even if the composition of the audience for the plays and the occasion of their performance remain uncertain, knowledge of plays about Nicholas’s miracles and suitable contexts for their performance can be traced.<sup>90</sup>

### ***Description of the St Nicholas scenes at Wiston and an analysis of the paintings with their possible textual sources***

The two miracles of St Nicholas depicted at Wiston, set in painted frames decorated with vine scrolls, are centrally placed on the south wall of the nave between two windows. The miracles sit under the Infancy cycle – specifically, under the scenes showing the Nativity of Jesus, the Annunciation to the Shepherds and the Adoration of the Shepherds (Scenes 2-5). Directly to the

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 596.

<sup>89</sup> Rigold, ‘The St Nicholas or “Boy Bishop” Tokens’, p. 87 and fn. 2.

<sup>90</sup> Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, p. 107.

right, or west, of the miracles of Nicholas, just before the window closest to the south door, the Margaret cycle begins. Only a vertical band of what was once a decorated frame, of equal width to that separating the two miracles of Nicholas, separates the narratives of the two saints (Figure 2.28).

Picture 1 (Figure 2.27a): Nicholas is shown to the right of the scene, wearing his bishop's robes and mitre. He is blessing the three clerks with his raised right hand. In his left hand he carries a staff. The painting has subsequently been damaged at the top and bottom, but the staff was almost certainly originally intended to be a crozier, in keeping with his bishop's attire. The three clerks themselves, who have been murdered and stuffed into a pickling tub, can be seen rising out of the tub, having been brought back to life by the saint. What appears to be the figure of the innkeeper, who killed the boys for their money, is shown pleading with Nicholas, his left hand gesturing towards the saint. Behind the innkeeper is another figure, possibly the innkeeper's wife – as suggested by what appears to be long hair extending down her back – although damage to the painting makes this hard to say with confidence.

A comparison of the possible textual sources for the Miracle of the Three Clerks reveals a small but telling difference. Wace's poem gives only the briefest summary of the miracle. Reputedly performed by Nicholas during his lifetime, the miracle story recounts how the saint restored to life three young men who had been robbed and killed by an innkeeper, and for this reason clerks 'hold a feast on his day / With good lessons and good singing, / And accounts of miracles'.<sup>91</sup> According to Wace, the miracle ends with the three clerks singing praises to Nicholas in thanksgiving. However, the story of the Three Clerks (*Tres Clerici*) found in the Playbook is far more detailed and introduces another, significant character: that of the innkeeper's wife. In the play, the three clerks tell the woman ('Uetula' or 'Mulier') that if she and her husband agree to shelter them for the night, even though she is old, God will

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<sup>91</sup> Blacker, et al., *Wace, the Hagiographical Works*, pp. 284-287, lines 224-226 ('*Funt li clers la feste a son jur / De ben lirë et ben chanter / Et des miracles reciter.*').

grant them a child.<sup>92</sup> Although the woman makes no direct reference to the clerks' statement, she persuades her husband to take them in. When the clerks are asleep, the innkeeper ponders to his wife how the clerks' money might be theirs, and she persuades him to kill them. Nicholas arrives in the guise of a pilgrim and uncovers the evil deed. The play ends with a prayer by the saint asking God to revive the murdered clerks and hear the petitions of the old couple for forgiveness.<sup>93</sup> The innkeeper's wife, therefore, plays a crucial role in this version of the story. She is portrayed as old and probably childless, the implication being that she persuades her husband to give lodging to the clerks because she is tempted by the promise of being able to conceive.

In the wall painting of this scene at Wiston, there is very little to indicate a textual source with any certainty. In the visual narrative, Nicholas is shown blessing the clerks, who rise up out of a pickling tub. The inclusion of the tub, a feature which first appears in thirteenth-century representations of the scene, has no textual foundation. It renders the violence shown to the clerks more dreadful than the textual narratives convey, by alluding to their bodies being cut up and salted down as meat. Nicholas's miracle is thus all the more marvellous, as the boys are now whole again.<sup>94</sup>

Although the pickling tub has no textual source, if the shadowy figure standing behind the pleading innkeeper does indeed have long hair, as suggested above, then perhaps this could be the figure of the innkeeper's wife as presented in the play of the *Tres Clerici* found in the Playbook. Indeed, the painting at Wiston may well represent the last scene of the play, where Nicholas prays for the clerks to be resurrected and the petitions of the repentant innkeeper and his wife to be heard. The young men are definitely alive in the painting and appear to be rising up out of the barrel, gesturing their thanks to the saint. Behind them, the innkeeper and his wife also appear to be pleading with or thanking the saint. It seems most likely, therefore, that the Playbook text informed the depiction of the miracle at Wiston.

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<sup>92</sup> Albrecht, *Four Latin Plays*, p. 126 ('*forsan propter hoc beneficium / uobis deus donabit puerum.*').

<sup>93</sup> Albrecht, *Four Latin Plays*, p. 129 ('*Pie deus, cuius sunt omnia / celum, tellus, aer et maria, / ut resurgant isti precipias, / et hos ad te clamantes audias.*').

<sup>94</sup> Albrecht, *Four Latin Plays*, p. 65.

Picture 2 (Figure 2.27b): The lower half of the depiction of this miracle has been obliterated, but the narrative is still clear. Nicholas stands on the right of the picture, blessing the much shorter figures of the man and woman in front of him. The man is holding out both hands towards the saint in what appears to be a gesture of gratitude or praise. The saint wears his bishop's robes and a mitre on his head, and the staff he is carrying appears to have the remnants of a crozier's curve at the top. Next to the figure of the saint stands a small boy. His hair appears to be tonsured. He is holding an object in his hands, which is almost certainly supposed to be the cup of the miracle. The boat, to the viewer's left, has its sail raised and contains three people, one of which, nearest the mast, looks out towards the viewer.

There appear to be two possible interpretations of the miracle depicted in the wall painting at Wiston: the scene could show either the Miracle of the Cup, as described in Wace's *Vie*, or the Miracle of the Son of Getron (*Filius Getronis*), as set out in the Playbook. Unlike the Miracle of the Three Clerks, both the Miracle of the Cup and that of the Son of Getron are reputedly posthumous miracles performed by Nicholas.<sup>95</sup> The stories have in common a husband and wife who become separated from their son and an object – a golden cup. Accounts of the two miracles are presented here for reference:

\* The Miracle of the Cup, as found in Wace's poem, recounts that a man has a golden cup made which he intends to take to St Nicholas's shrine. However, he decides that he likes the cup too much to give it away, so he has another, less valuable cup made and boards a ship with his wife and son to take this inferior cup to the saint's shrine. Whilst on their journey, the man asks his son to fetch him water in the original golden cup, but the son and the cup disappear and the boy is feared drowned. On arrival at the shrine, the man and his wife repeatedly place the inferior cup on the altar, but as soon as it makes contact with the altar, it bounces off and rolls away, as if being rejected. It is only when

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<sup>95</sup> Blacker, et al., *Wace, the Hagiographical Works*, (Leiden, Boston, 2013), p. 244 (Nicholas's death is found in summary on p. 243, item 10).

the man and his wife confess their duplicity that their son and the golden cup are restored to them by the saint himself.<sup>96</sup>

\* The Playbook's account of the Son of Getron describes how a pagan king, Marmorinus, sends his army to subdue any other peoples they encounter. On St Nicholas's feast day, Getron, his wife Euphrosina and their son Adeodatus make their way to church in the town of Excoranda. Marmorinus's soldiers arrive and Adeodatus is separated from his parents as they flee. Adeodatus is captured and set to work as Marmorinus's cup bearer, and the boy tells the king about the merits of the Christian god. Meanwhile, Adeodatus's mother weeps for her son and is told by those wishing to console her that she should give her wealth to the poor and pray to St Nicholas. One year later, again on Nicholas's feast day, Getron and his wife make their way to the shrine. At the same time, the boy laments his fate to Marmorinus, who tells the child that nobody will ever rescue him. Suddenly, however, through the intervention of Nicholas, Adeodatus is miraculously transported back to his parents, holding Marmorinus's golden cup.<sup>97</sup>

Tristram describes this scene at Wiston as that of the Miracle of the Cup.<sup>98</sup> This seems the most likely interpretation, as the miracle mentions a ship that transports the family to the saint's shrine, as shown on the left of Picture 2. There is no mention of a ship in the Son of Getron, although it is possible that Marmorinus's army could have been depicted setting out to conquer other territories on board a ship. However, none of the figures on board the ship at Wiston are shown wearing armour, so this would seem a doubtful interpretation of the painting. The husband and wife and the restoration of the son to the parents by the saint are common to both Wace's narrative and the text of the play; they cannot, therefore, provide any further clues as to whether one text is a more plausible source than the other, or, indeed, if either text was used at all.

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<sup>96</sup> A summary of the story can be found in Blacker, et al., *Wace, the Hagiographical Works*, p. 244.

<sup>97</sup> A summary of the story can be found in Albrecht, *Four Latin Plays*, p. 19.

<sup>98</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, p. 350.

### Summary

If in Picture 1 the figure standing behind the innkeeper was indeed intended to be the innkeeper's wife, there is a likelihood that the plays of St Nicholas's miracles, as found in the Playbook, may have influenced the depiction of the Miracle of the Three Clerks. As Fredell points out, there appears to be a strong argument for the association of the Three Clerks with the boy-bishop ceremonies, and therefore the conception of the scene at Wiston may well have been influenced by a dramatic representation of the miracle. However, the depiction of the miracle in Picture 2 suggests that a source other than one of the St Nicholas plays has been used – possibly a text such as Wace's poem. Educated lay people, who might well have acted as patrons for the paintings at Wiston, would most probably have been aware of the poem and may have known the play through having been present at a performance, perhaps in the ceremonies at Bury St Edmunds. It is intriguing, however, that even in this apparently unremarkable church it was considered necessary to consult more than one text, which suggests the importance afforded to the choice of content.

### **St Margaret, St Nicholas and baptism**

This chapter argues that one of the possible intentions of whoever conceived the wall-painting scheme at Wiston appears to have been an association between St Margaret and baptism, rebirth and resurrection, which was supported by the surrounding images, especially those of St Nicholas and the Infancy cycle. These themes are made clearer when the paintings are considered in relation to the font and nave as a whole.

One aspect of the veneration of Margaret and the depictions of her legend, which only becomes clear when compared to depictions of other saints' lives such as those of Nicholas, is that her connection to the young is not directly obvious from her legend's visual narratives themselves, other than through the association with giving birth, alluded to through the emergence of the saint unharmed from the dragon's back or belly. Protection of children, in contrast, is explicit in the Nicholas miracles, as the saint is shown resurrecting

the three murdered young clerks and restoring a cherished boy to his parents when they have atoned for their sins. At Wiston and elsewhere, Margaret is depicted, correctly, as a young girl. Other than that, however, her association with women and infants can only really be communicated through reading or listening to the text of her legend, where her protection of parturient women and their children is mentioned in her final prayer. Even though the images at Wiston seem to concentrate on, and therefore emphasize, the later stages of Margaret's life and thus the parts of the story which focus on how she earned her status of martyr and prestigious intercessor, the intended meaning of this focus would not necessarily have been obvious without a rendition of her *passio*.

The perception of Margaret and Nicholas as protectors of children is one aspect of both the saints' textual narratives that connects them with the concept of baptism, in that this sacrament is the ultimate protection for children: relieving them of original sin, putting the devil to flight and transforming their lives so they are entitled to hope for salvation if they maintain their baptismal vows. However, this aspect of the saints' stories can also be allied to parts of their narratives expressing their victory over the devil and rejection of idolatry – or worshipping other gods – in all forms. Part of the baptismal rite, as discussed, involves rejecting the devil. Yet, equally important is the commitment the catechumen (or the godparents on the child's behalf) makes to Christianity and the rejection of all other faiths, as expressed in the obligatory recitation of the Creed (*'Credo'*) after the exorcism and before the child is immersed in the water of the font.<sup>99</sup>

Apart from those miracles that show Nicholas's concern for the young, further textual evidence for Nicholas's association with baptism can be found in a number of miracles he was believed to have performed in which he overcame the devil in different guises. For example, seventeen miracles are described by Wace in his *Vie de saint Nicholas* and four directly relate to the saint subjugating demons: the Miracle of the Possessed Child, the Miracle of Diana and the Mediacon (Firebomb), the Miracle of the Strangled Child and the

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<sup>99</sup> Collins, *Manuale*, p. 30; Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 165.

Miracle of the Possessed Man.<sup>100</sup> Two of the four miracles recounted in the Playbook also show the saint as a powerful advocate for the Christian faith. One miracle, the Son of Getron (*Filius Getronis*), discussed in detail above, shows the saint rescuing a Christian boy from the clutches of a rapacious, idol-worshipping king. Another, the Icon of St Nicholas (*Iconia Sancti Nicholai*), also described in Wace, recounts how Nicholas so impresses a Jewish man with his powers of compassion and sense of justice that the man converts to Christianity and entreats his friends to do the same.<sup>101</sup>

In addition to the textual sources, two surviving English fonts serve to substantiate the connection between Nicholas and baptism. One of these fonts is still to be found in the church of St Nicholas in Brighton, Sussex, and the other is the font in Winchester Cathedral.

The first of these two fonts, that found in the church of St Nicholas, Brighton, was most probably produced between 1150 and 1200.<sup>102</sup> Lewes Priory almost certainly held the advowson of the church in the twelfth century. On the bowl of the font at Brighton, two miracles of St Nicholas are depicted (the Miracle of Diana and the Mediacon, and an unidentified miracle), as well as two scenes from the Bible (the Baptism of Christ and the Last Supper) (Figures 2.29a-d). The depiction of the Miracle of Diana and the Mediacon represents an episode in which Nicholas foils the plot of a demon to destroy his shrine. The demon is actually the goddess Diana, seeking vengeance because Nicholas destroyed her shrine in order to stamp out pagan practices. There is no consensus on the subject of the second miracle depicted on the font (Figure 2.29b). Two hooded figures, one seated and one kneeling, are shown. The kneeling figure appears to be holding out a small object with outstretched arms. It is just possible that this scene might show the Miracle of the Tooth. Wace's version describes how the King of Myra sent one of his men to try to steal Nicholas's relics from the shrine where his body lay and many miracles

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<sup>100</sup> Blacker, et al., *Wace, the Hagiographical Works*, pp. 241-245.

<sup>101</sup> For summaries of both miracles, see Albrecht, *Four Latin Plays*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>102</sup> Graham Mayhew suggests that the date might be as early as the 1120s, when work was underway at the priory of Lewes, as surviving carvings at Lewes bear similarities to the work on the font: see Mayhew, *The Monks of St Pancras*, p. 201.

were performed. The saint lets the man have a tooth but will not let him take it away from the shrine. The miracle stresses the power of Nicholas as an intercessor and the potency of his relics.<sup>103</sup>

If the depictions of the St Nicholas miracles on the font at Brighton are indeed intended to represent those just described, this suggests that Nicholas's association with baptism is linked not only to his care for children and young people but also to his power to drive out demons and his power as an intercessor, as noted for Margaret and discussed above. Certainly, the episode of Margaret's story referred to in the iconography on surviving fonts is that of her vanquishing the devil in the form of a dragon. Eight surviving fonts of different dates – from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries – show Margaret with the dragon, and in one of these depictions (on what is probably a fourteenth-century font, in St Margaret's, Stoke Golding, Leicestershire), the saint also appears with a book and a child.<sup>104</sup> However, perhaps the most dramatic rendition is found on the late eleventh- or twelfth-century font from Cottam (or Cotham), now in the church of St Peter, Langtoft, Yorks; here, Margaret is swallowed by the dragon and bursts out of its back unharmed, all in one swirling movement (Figure 2.30).<sup>105</sup>

The other subjects which appear on the font at Brighton alongside the miracles of St Nicholas are the Baptism of Christ and the Last Supper (Figures 2.29c-d). These subjects are also depicted on other fonts of a similar date: the Last Supper appears on the font at St Nicholas, North Grimston, Yorkshire, which dates to between the late eleventh and the twelfth centuries, while the Baptism of Christ is found on the font of c.1140 in the church of St Michael and

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<sup>103</sup> Blacker, et al., *Wace, the Hagiographical Works*, pp. 290-95, lines 337-444 (Diana and the Mediacon) and pp. 336-41, lines 1377-484 (Miracle of the Tooth).

<sup>104</sup> Nine fonts are given in total, but one depiction is uncertain. See Appendix B.

<sup>105</sup> Other fonts with depictions of St Margaret are listed in Appendix B. I am extremely grateful to Harriet Sonne de Torrens and Miguel A. Torrens at the University of Toronto, Canada, for furnishing me with this information from their database, *Baptisteria Sacra Index*, which is under construction at the time of writing.

All Angels, Castle Frome, Herefordshire.<sup>106</sup> If the Baptism of Christ has an obvious association with the sacrament of baptism, the depiction of the Last Supper underlines the association of baptism with death and rebirth. The Eucharistic iconography of the Last Supper reminds the viewer how Christ's sacrifice made salvation possible for mankind and that baptism is the doorway through which one can enter the Christian community. Fonts with this Eucharistic iconography appear to have been sited so that this particular scene was aligned with the high altar at the east end of the nave.<sup>107</sup>

Another font showing the miracles of St Nicholas, also produced around a century before the Nicholas miracles were painted at Wiston, is that at Winchester Cathedral. Carved from carboniferous limestone, two sides of the large, black, polished square font boast at least two, possibly three, miracles of St Nicholas. Dated to c.1150, the font is one of several found in England that were carved in Tournai in the Low Countries for export.<sup>108</sup>

The two miracles of St Nicholas most easily identified on the Winchester Cathedral font are the Miracle of the Three Clerks and the Miracle of the Three Daughters, the latter perhaps the most widely known and most widely depicted of the saint's miracles (described below) (Figures 2.31a-b). It is likely that the three figures in the ship represent the Miracle of the Cup. Thus, both of the St Nicholas miracles found at Wiston (The Three Clerks and the Miracle of the Cup) are also represented on this font.

In the story of the Miracle of the Three Daughters, which covers an entire face of the square font, St Nicholas secretly gives his money to an impoverished man and his three daughters, to avoid the girls being forced into prostitution. However, it appears that the fact Nicholas gave three bags of money to three daughters lends a symbolic significance to the tale – that of honouring the Holy Trinity.<sup>109</sup> The significance of the Trinity to the sacrament of baptism was discussed above in regards to Picture 6 of the St Margaret cycle

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<sup>106</sup> North Grimston: Twomey 'Romanesque Baptismal Fonts', p. 315 (date), p. 316 (image and description); Bond, *Fonts*, p. 165 (North Grimston) and Plate 2 (Castle Frome: image and date).

<sup>107</sup> This is, indeed, how the font at Brighton is set in the church at the time of writing.

<sup>108</sup> Bond, *Fonts*, pp. 203-05.

<sup>109</sup> Blacker et al., *Wace, the Hagiographical Works*, p. 242.

and may have been one of the reasons this miracle was included on a face of the font and given such prominence. Perhaps, therefore, the Miracle of the Three Clerks, also shown on the font and in the paintings at Wiston, was also meant to allude to the Trinity.

The Miracle of the Cup, if this is indeed what is represented on the Winchester font, can be seen as being associated primarily with baptism, through its implicit message that honesty and due reverence for the Christian faith are prerequisites for a happy life. Thus, promising a valuable cup to a saint's shrine, but then exchanging the cup for an inferior one and hoping not to be found out, is shown to be reprehensible and sinful. More important, perhaps, for this theme though is the spiritual journey that the boy's parents undergo, triggered by the loss of their son, in which they see the error of their ways and turn from sin to penitence and atonement. The rejection of sin, and sorrow for their duplicity, is then rewarded by the return of their son. In the same way, baptism is a rejection of the devil and original sin and offers the possibility of a new life of happiness and reward in heaven.

These two fonts, therefore, offer some idea of the kinds of representation of St Nicholas and possible attendant conceptual associations circulating in England around a century before the paintings at Wiston were executed.

### **The font at Wiston and the paintings in their liturgical context**

As described above, Margaret's Life is set around the south door of the church, alongside the miracles of St Nicholas and below the Infancy cycle. The location of fonts within parish churches from the twelfth century onwards was discussed in Chapter 1, but it is worth reiterating here that, predominantly, the font was located in the nave, opposite the south entrance, and the south door was the place where the initial part of the baptismal ritual and exorcism of the child took place. The south door was often highly decorated, in a similar way to the chancel arch, to suggest links between liturgically significant sites, and this is indeed the case at Wiston.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Twomey, 'Romanesque Baptismal Fonts', p. 321.

The nave at Wiston has two doorways, one on the north and one on the south side of the church, both of which have fine exterior decoration. Traditionally, the laity would have entered the church via the north doorway and monks would have expected to enter via the south doorway, but the south door and porch (if one existed in the thirteenth century) would also have provided the setting for the initial part of the baptismal rite.<sup>111</sup> At Wiston, the north and south doors are set opposite one another, roughly 6 metres apart, with the font in the middle of the nave between them. While the exterior decoration of the north doorway consists of a round-headed, plain tympanum (Figure 2.32), that of the south doorway boasts a round-headed, decorated tympanum and nook-shafts carved in a harder stone than the soft limestone (or 'clunch') used elsewhere (Figure 2.33). Concern for the preservation of the doorway against the elements may account for the use of a harder stone for the exterior decoration. As it was hard, the stone was likely to have been more difficult to carve and is therefore suggestive of the involvement of more skilled craftsmen in the project. As noted above, the decoration of the tympanum on the south door is of *opus reticulatum*. This was an apparently fashionable motif in late eleventh-century England and was found, for example, at Chepstow Castle (1067-1071), Chichester Cathedral (begun c.1091), the church at Milbourne Port (c.1090) and Westminster Hall (built c.1097).<sup>112</sup> Ron Baxter highlights the care with which this decoration was undertaken at Wiston with 'each stone chip-carved with a diaper pattern of triangles'.<sup>113</sup>

Similar care appears to have been taken with the carving on the chancel arch – the entrance to the most sacred space of the church, where liturgical celebrations took place (Figure 2.34). The chancel arch at Wiston is round-headed, of three orders, and worked in soft limestone. The second order in particular is highly decorated, with the nook-shafts displaying a variety of

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 321.

<sup>112</sup> For late eleventh-century use of *opus reticulatum* in England, see R. D. H. Gem, 'The Romanesque Rebuilding of Westminster Abbey', in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies*, R. Allen Brown (ed.), III, (1980), (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1981), p. 60.

<sup>113</sup> Baxter, 'St Mary, Wissington, Suffolk', *The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, [website], <https://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/1389/> (accessed 30 August 2018): see section: 'South Nave Doorway, First Order'.

designs, sometimes offering more than one design on each shaft. For example, on the north shaft there is a 'two strand cable alternating between rolls and quirks', and on the south shaft, a trellis with 'recessed saltires' or 'lozenge-shaped quatrefoils' in the interstices (Figure 2.35).<sup>114</sup> Thus, despite the fact that St Mary's was not ostensibly the parish church frequented by the Godebold/de Horkesley family and that it was set in a predominantly rural community, from what remains of the original Norman structure the evidence suggests that attention to detail and fashionable decoration were called for by whoever attended to its design and construction – very likely the Godebold/de Horkesley family themselves.

As the font at Wiston is set in the middle of the nave, only around 3 metres from the south door, the Life of St Margaret would have been readily accessible to anyone standing by the font attending the baptismal ceremony (Figure 2.36).<sup>115</sup> Although the font dates from the fifteenth century and may not be sited in exactly its original position, there is not actually a better location for it, especially as space in the church is quite tight. Having the font sited in the middle of the nave between the south and north doors of the church, as it stands today, allows plenty of room for people to enter the space comfortably and walk around the font if necessary.<sup>116</sup>

As argued above, the scenes of Margaret's Life that abut the south door on either side show the preparation for her execution (Picture 6) and her final prayer (Picture 8) observed by onlookers (Picture 7). The story is thus focused on her martyrdom and her powers of intercession and protection. It is the reward of her martyrdom, made possible by the constancy of her Christian faith, which imbues her with such powers.

The representation of Margaret as vanquisher of demons, her association with the protection of children, together with the depiction of the miracles of Nicholas, form a powerful statement of concern for the welfare of the young, and these are painted around the south door at Wiston and are visible from the font. The following section will explore how the meaning of the

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid. See section: 'Chancel Arch, Second Order'.

<sup>115</sup> Wiston/Wissington nave (excluding chancel) measures 14.2m in length and is 6m wide (my own measurements).

<sup>116</sup> Twomey, 'Romanesque Baptismal Fonts', p. 321.

Margaret cycle and the Nicholas miracles is further underlined by the Infancy of Christ and Last Judgement, also in the vicinity of the font and the south door.

## **Other wall paintings at Wiston**

### ***Overview***

Aside from the miracles of St Nicholas, the discussion of other thirteenth-century wall paintings at Wiston will be confined principally to the Infancy cycle of Christ, with brief reference to the Passion cycle of Christ and the Last Judgement.<sup>117</sup>

### The Infancy Cycle of Christ

Of all the other paintings at Wiston that have been identified, the most important for this study is the Infancy cycle. The cycle comprises fourteen scenes and stretches the entire length of the south wall of the nave, continuing west over the south doorway, directly above the St Margaret cycle and the St Nicholas miracles (Figures 2.37a-b). The scenes are framed in an arcade of trefoiled arches, recalling another Infancy cycle of a similar date, set on the north wall of the nave at St Mary, West Chiltington, Sussex (Figure 2.38).<sup>118</sup> The scenes of the Infancy cycle at Wiston are listed below, but only those scenes which are of greatest importance for the discussion of the paintings in this chapter have been described in detail:

Picture 1: Annunciation (Figure 2.39a)

Picture 2: Nativity (Figure 2.39b)

Pictures 3-4: Appearance of the Angel to the Shepherds (Figure 2.39c)

Picture 3 shows an angel, his right hand raised as if about to speak, standing in front of one of the shepherds who appears to have removed his cap and is

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<sup>117</sup> Brief descriptions of the scenes in the Infancy and Passion Cycles which are not given above can be found in Appendix C.

<sup>118</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, pp. 525-26, p. 526 (dating).

gazing at the angel in awe. Two other shepherds, with their sheep and a dog, appear in Picture 4. The shepherd on the left is standing, wearing a short tunic and cap. He holds a staff in his left hand and with his right hand appears to be either scratching his head in disbelief or otherwise shielding his eyes from the brilliance of the angel. Behind him, on a hillock, sits the third shepherd, holding onto a dog, with sheep gathered in the bottom right-hand corner of the painting.

Pictures 5-6: Adoration of the Shepherds (Figure 2.39d)

Picture 5 shows the three shepherds approaching what must have been the Virgin and Child in Picture 6, but the latter have since been obliterated by the enlargement of the window (in a similar manner to the Adoration of the Magi episode and Picture 8). It is possible that the first shepherd in the line was carrying a sheep or lamb, given the way his arms are configured.

Pictures 7-8: Adoration of the Magi (Figure 2.39e)

In Picture 7, the three wise men approach the enthroned Virgin and Child shown in Picture 8. The Magi are shown wearing caps, rather than the crowns depicted in later visual representations of the story.<sup>119</sup> They do not appear to be presenting gifts to the Child, but rather offer homage, receiving Christ's blessing in return. The Virgin, notably larger in size than the figures of the Magi, faces out towards the viewer, cradling the Child seated on her lap with her left arm. Her head is turned to look at one of the Magi and with her right hand she indicates the Child. The Child, a young boy rather than a baby, raises his right hand in blessing.

Picture 9: Dream of the Magi (Figure 2.39f)

At this juncture, the scenes continue across the top of the south door. The three Magi, recognisable from their caps, are depicted asleep in the same bed, which seems to have been an artistic convention designed to enable the artist to show

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<sup>119</sup> See, for example, London, British Library, Additional MS 47682 (the 'Holkham Bible Picture Book'), c.1327-1335, fol. 13v; London, British Library, Arundel MS 83 (the 'De Lisle Psalter'), c.1310, fol. 124r; London, British Library, Royal MS 2 B VII (the 'Queen Mary Psalter'), c.1310-1320, fol. 112v.

the angel warning all three Magi simultaneously not to return to Herod's court on their way home.<sup>120</sup> The angel stands over the bed, gesturing towards the figure nearest to him with his right hand.

Picture 10: Flight into Egypt (Figure 2.39g)

Pictures 11-12: Massacre of the Innocents (Figure 2.39h)

Picture 11 shows Herod holding his sword, issuing the orders for the massacre.

Picture 12, now completely faded, showed Herod's orders being carried out.

Picture 13: Presentation in the Temple (Figure 2.39i)

Picture 14: Christ among the Doctors (Figure 2.39j)

The Passion Cycle of Christ (Figure 2.40a-b)

On the north wall of the nave, to the east of the north doorway but hardly visible now, are nine scenes of the Passion of Christ. These scenes formed the central tier of painting on this wall and an apposite pendant to the Infancy cycle on the south wall of the church. The cycle begins with the Entry into Jerusalem and ends with the Resurrection.<sup>121</sup>

The Last Judgement

Set on the west wall, the Last Judgement comprised three tiers of painting. In the upper tier, Christ was shown in judgement, but this was completely obliterated by the installation of a window in the nineteenth century. However,

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<sup>120</sup> For other examples of the dream scene, see London, British Library, Royal MS 2 B VII (the 'Queen Mary Psalter'), c.1310-1320, fol. 131v; London, British Library, Yates Thompson MS 13 ('The Taymouth Hours'), second quarter of 14th century, fol. 94v.

<sup>121</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, pp. 628-29. Sketches by Tristram of the Passion cycle can be found in the accompanying volume, Plates 188-89.

some of the figures of Apostles, on either side of Christ, survived and Tristram was able to document them.<sup>122</sup>

***Other wall paintings at Wiston and their conceptual relationship with the St Margaret and St Nicholas paintings***

Superficially, the Infancy cycle at Wiston can be conceptually linked to the Margaret and Nicholas paintings in that it deals with Christ's birth and childhood. Thus, all the surviving paintings on the south wall demonstrate a connection with the care and protection of the young. However, a more comprehensive examination of the Infancy cycle reveals other correspondences with the Margaret and Nicholas paintings.

Whilst there is nothing particularly noteworthy about the Infancy cycle at Wiston in terms of the skill of the artist or the iconography of the scenes, the number of scenes allotted to certain episodes is striking. For example, the Annunciation to, and Adoration of, the Shepherds are afforded a total of four scenes; the Adoration of the Magi and the Dream of the Magi are depicted in a total of three scenes; and the Massacre of the Innocents, in two scenes. Although the Infancy Cycle of Christ at West Chiltonington shows a similar emphasis in terms of the number of scenes dedicated to the Annunciation to the Shepherds, in that two or possibly three scenes were represented, the great number of scenes at Wiston forces the scheme to climb up a level, as it were, over the south doorway, rather than sit comfortably between the east end of the church and the south entrance – indicating that the inclusion of these multi-scene episodes was important (Figure 2.41).<sup>123</sup>

It is possible that the extended number of scenes for these episodes reflected the performance of liturgical plays of the Christmas season, either at Wiston itself or in the vicinity. As argued above, it is likely that the depiction of the Miracle of the Three Clerks in the church was influenced by the play based on the miracle in the Playbook. Perhaps, then, the depiction of the Infancy cycle was also influenced by the text of a play such as the *Officium Pastorum* – the

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 628 and Plate 187.

<sup>123</sup> For the scenes at West Chiltonington, see Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, pp. 525-26.

play of the shepherds usually performed on Christmas day, and known in England since the twelfth century – the *Officium Stellae*, the play of the Magi performed for Epiphany (6 January), or the *Ordo Rachelis* performed either for the feast of the Holy Innocents (28 December) or for Epiphany.<sup>124</sup> However, there are no records of the plays ever having been performed in or around the church at Wiston, and thus this must remain speculation.

The emphasis accorded certain episodes in the Infancy cycle at Wiston undoubtedly reflects and magnifies the significance of Margaret and Nicholas: that is to say, the saints' roles as patrons of children, as well as their association with baptism and the defence of the faith. For example, the Annunciation to, and Adoration of, the Shepherds (Pictures 3-6) are traditionally viewed as the revelation of Christ's incarnation to the Jewish people, and the Adoration of the Magi as the revelation of Christ's incarnation to the Gentiles. Both episodes are therefore concerned with evangelizing: exhorting all who hear the Christian message to believe in Christ and seek baptism for salvation. Indeed, the scene of the Adoration of the Magi at Wiston does not appear to show the three men carrying their traditional gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh (Figure 2.39e). Instead, the Virgin's gesture indicating the Christ Child and the reverence shown to her and the Child by the first Magus in particular concentrates attention on the message of the incarnation, that is to say God made flesh.

Just as the story of the Magi expressed the dissemination of the message of the incarnation, the metaphorical birth of Christianity itself, it was also a call to baptism for those who heard and believed the message. By negating the legacy of original sin, the incarnation made possible the hope of everlasting life for professed Christians. Several images of the infancy of Christ appear on fonts, but the depiction of the Magi was a 'favourite subject' on fonts of the early to mid twelfth century, such as those at Cowlam and Ingleton in

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<sup>124</sup> E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, Vol. II, Book III, (London, Dover edition, 1996), p. 44 (mentioned in Lichfield *Statutes* of 1188-98), p. 48 (Norman version of *Officium Stellae*), pp. 48-49 (three plays adapted and performed as one); Karl Young, *Ordo Prophetarum*, (Madison, Wisconsin, 1922), p. 1 available from: E-Book Library <https://archive.org/details/ordoprophetarum00youn/page/n3/mode/2up> (accessed 28 December 2020).

Yorkshire, and Fincham and Sculthorpe in Norfolk.<sup>125</sup> Thus, the story of the Magi in the Infancy cycle at Wiston, like the images of Margaret and Nicholas, underlines the message of exhortation to join the Christian community through receiving the sacrament of baptism and rejecting other faiths.

The two scenes devoted to the Holy Innocents at Wiston (Pictures 11 and 12) have resonance with the paintings of Margaret and Nicholas in several ways. The story of the Innocents can be seen firstly as an expression of contemporary debates surrounding the moral worthiness of children and of increasing concern for their welfare.<sup>126</sup> In addition, the theme of baptism is recalled in the fact that all the Innocents put to the sword were deemed to have been spontaneously baptized in their own blood. Furthermore, the martyrdom of the Innocents – the first example of martyrdom for Christ’s sake – connects them to Margaret as young people dying for the Christian faith. Finally, the boy-bishop ceremonies, which took place on the feast of the Holy Innocents (28 December), were bound up with Nicholas’s Life in that the choice of a young clerk to perform the role of a bishop for that day was connected to Nicholas’s election as bishop when he was still a young man.

It is possible that whoever drew up the scheme at Wiston intended to reflect concerns surrounding heresy and the orthodox practice of Christianity, prevalent at the time the paintings were executed and associated with the Infancy of Christ and the Holy Innocents in particular. Such concerns led to an insistence on the necessity for baptism and the rejection of other faiths even in the face of persecution, as demonstrated in Margaret’s legend. Increasingly, the feast of the Holy Innocents came to be associated with anti-Jewish sentiment. Even though the Innocents were ostensibly Jewish children, in Christian exegesis they came to be considered Christian.<sup>127</sup> Herod’s actions were

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<sup>125</sup> Frances Altvater, *Sacramental Theology and the Decoration of Baptismal Fonts: Incarnation, Initiation, Institution*, (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 59, 63-64; Bond, *Fonts*, p. 157 (quote and other representations of the Annunciation – Hovingham, Yorks – and Nativity – Fincham and West Haddon, Northants), p. 158 (Sculthorpe and Ingleton).

<sup>126</sup> William F. MacLehose, *“A Tender Age”: Cultural Anxieties over the Child in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, (New York, 2008), pp. 53-55.

<sup>127</sup> Sophie Oosterwijk, “‘Long Lullynge Haue I Lorn!’: The Massacre of the Innocents in words and image”, *Medieval English Theatre*, Vol. 25, (2006), pp. 3-

characterized as those of a violent Jewish king attacking innocent Christian children. Stories accusing Jews of the ritual murder of Christian boys, such as those of William of Norwich (1144), and Robert of Bury in Bury St Edmunds (1181), underpinned by the cult of the Holy Innocents, affected the perception of Jews in East Anglia and further afield well into the thirteenth century.<sup>128</sup> Although such anti-Semitism was driven largely by political and economic motives, behaviour towards the Jews was influenced by these stories. At least a dozen accusations of attacks on Christian children were brought against Jews between 1144 and 1290; these helped to justify the expulsion of the Jews from Bury St Edmunds in 1190 and the whole Jewish community from England in 1290.<sup>129</sup>

Against the backdrop of the crusades, which sought to subdue and convert those of other faiths, and the fear of orthodox Christianity being undermined through contact with nonbelievers, the Third and Fourth Lateran Councils (1179 and 1215) issued decrees that forbade Christians from working as servants for either Jews or Muslims and stipulated that people of these faiths had to wear clothing which distinguished them from Christians.<sup>130</sup> A drive to convert Jews, promoted by Henry III himself, sought to mitigate the perceived threat posed by Jewish communities.<sup>131</sup>

In addition, the Christmas season festivities, which, of course, marked the birth and infancy of Christ and included the feast of the Holy Innocents, began with the liturgy for Advent, which itself conveyed anti-Semitic themes. Included in the Sarum Use liturgy for the second nocturn of Matins of the

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53, esp. p. 4; Rose, *The Murder*, pp. 211-12; Theresa Tinkle, 'Exegesis Reconsidered: The Fleury "Slaughter of Innocents" and the Myth of Ritual Murder', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. 102, 2, (April, 2003), pp. 211-243, esp. 212.

<sup>128</sup> E. M. Rose discusses the effects of such stories on communities of Jews in twelfth-century France, notably at Blois and in Paris: see Rose, *The Murder*, pp. 151-85 (Blois), pp. 209-32 (Paris); Tinkle, 'Exegesis Reconsidered', p. 214.

<sup>129</sup> Carpenter, *Henry III*, pp. 302-03.

<sup>130</sup> Lateran III, Canon 26 and Lateran IV, Canon 68: see *Papal Encyclicals*, [website]: Lateran III at <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum11.htm> and Lateran IV at <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum12-2.htm> (accessed 28 December 2020).

<sup>131</sup> Carpenter, *Henry III*, pp. 298-307.

Fourth Sunday in Advent were three Lessons (*iv*, *v* and *vi*) based upon a sermon believed at the time to have been written by St Augustine, *Contra Judaeos, Paganos, et Arianos*.<sup>132</sup> The Lessons serve to underpin anti-Jewish sentiment and define Christianity in contrast to the Jewish faith by berating Jews for not believing in Christ as the Son of God, despite the prophecies of the Old Testament presented in the Lessons by figures such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Moses, David and Habakkuk.<sup>133</sup>

Fears about the sovereignty and inviolability of the Christian faith and the need to convert nonbelievers may be reflected in the insistence in the Infancy cycle at Wiston on the episodes involving the shepherds and the Magi and the evangelization they allude to. Certainly, by the time the paintings were executed a firm connection had been established between the Holy Innocents and St Nicholas and this may account for the two scenes depicting the Massacre of the Innocents at Wiston. Such scenes carried associations with the protection of Christian children and the defence of the faith also pertinent to Margaret's legend.

On the north wall of the nave, in the central tier of paintings, opposite the paintings of Margaret, Nicholas and the Infancy cycle, the Passion of Christ was depicted (Figure 2.40a-b). The Passion narrative, which at Wiston culminates in a depiction of the resurrection, continues the story of Christ's life, but also reinforces the message of the incarnation and the necessity for baptism, made possible for humankind by Christ's sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the dead. The Eucharistic message of the Passion thus complements the message of the necessity for baptism on the south wall. A similar arrangement is also found on the nave walls at West Chilton.

Between the paintings on the north and south walls of the nave, at the west end, was the depiction of Christ in Majesty, with the figures of the Apostles on either side and a Last Judgement below. The subject-matter of the

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<sup>132</sup> The sermon is now attributed to the Pseudo-Augustine, see Young, *Ordo Prophetarum*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>133</sup> Francis Procter and Christopher Wordsworth, *Breviarium ad Usus Insignis Ecclesiae Sarum*, Vol. 1, (Cambridge, 1882), pp. cxxxv-cxlv; Matthew Reeve, *Thirteenth-Century Wall Painting of Salisbury Cathedral: Art Liturgy and Reform*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2008), p. 86; Young, *Ordo Prophetarum*, pp. 14-15.

west wall can be seen as the conclusion of the schemes on the other walls of the nave. Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection offered the possibility of eternal salvation rather than eternal damnation for those that believed in him, provided baptism had been received and sufficient atonement for sins had been made.

Thus, the paintings on the south wall at Wiston are all linked in some way to the theme of children and childhood. They are also connected with baptism, but present baptism as the means to salvation, which entails the firm and consistent rejection of other faiths. Margaret's story insists on this aspect of the rejection of false gods, while the Nicholas miracles emphasize repentance and rebirth. The Infancy cycle draws these features of the Margaret and Nicholas paintings together in its emphasis on the incarnation, which invites all to believe in Christ as the Messiah by rejecting all other faiths, and by seeking forgiveness of sins and baptism.

### **The relationship between the priory of St Peter's, Little Horkesley, the church at Wiston and the execution of the paintings**

Towards the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries, there appears to have been an issue with the cure of souls at Wiston. Although, as corporate rector of an appropriated church, the priory of Little Horkesley should have provided a vicar for the church at Wiston, this does not appear to have happened in practice.<sup>134</sup> In an undated charter issued by Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1205), confirming the gift of the church at Wiston to Thetford Priory for the benefit of the monks at Little Horkesley, it is stipulated that money should be put aside for the provision of a vicar to serve at Wiston.<sup>135</sup> Such a provision, set out in a legal document, probably indicates that the parishioners of Wiston were not well served with pastoral care at this

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<sup>134</sup> Pearce, 'Monasticism without Frontiers', p. 187.

<sup>135</sup> Dugdale et al., *Monasticon Anglicanum*, Vol. 5, p. 157 (Num. IV). ('*nos concessisse et confirmasse dilectis filiis monachis de Theford apud Horkeslee [...], ecclesiam de Wisetun in usus suos, cum omnibus pertinentibus ad illam perpetuo possidendam, salvâ dignitate, reverentiâ et debitis consuetudinibus sancte Norwicensis ecclesiae et honestâ et sufficienti sustentatione vicarii qui in eadem ecclesiâ ministrabit*').

time. Perhaps no vicar had yet been appointed to the parish by the monks, and the parishioners of Wiston were expected to attend Little Horkesley parish church for liturgical services and sacramental rites.

However, although Cluniac monks were not intended to perform any duties other than those of intercessory prayer and the celebration of the liturgy, Graham Mayhew argues convincingly that Lewes Priory, for example, probably used its own monks to serve parish churches where it held the advowson, at least in the early twelfth century.<sup>136</sup> Indeed, Mayhew cites a letter by the Abbot of Cluny, Peter the Venerable (1122–1156), responding to the criticisms of Bernard of Clairvaux, in which the abbot defended Cluniac ownership of tithes and churches on the grounds that the monks took care of liturgical services in these churches.<sup>137</sup>

It is possible, then, that one of the monks from the priory at Little Horkesley performed the duties of a parish priest at Wiston before a vicar was installed. If the monks did perform the cure of souls at Wiston, the revenues from the church would have been preserved for the priory intact, as no funds would have had to be found to pay for a vicar. It would have also meant that any fees or offerings made to the church by parents and godparents could also be claimed by the monks.<sup>138</sup>

It is not until c.1276 that a vicarage at Wiston is recorded, and vicars serving the church are only recorded by name from 1300.<sup>139</sup> Whether the monks were slow to act on Archbishop Hubert's directives, or whether a vicar was indeed appointed from the early thirteenth century but this went undocumented, is impossible to know.

It is possible that the paintings at Wiston, executed around the mid thirteenth century or just after, were intended to coincide with the

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<sup>136</sup> Mayhew, *The Monks of St Pancras*, p. 137 and fn. 34; Pearce, 'Monasticism without Frontiers', pp. 183-86.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>138</sup> For fees and offerings for baptism, see Davies, *Architectural Setting of Baptism*, pp. 54-5.

<sup>139</sup> Denton, Jeff et al., 'Wiston', fn. 1, *Taxatio*, [website], Published by HRI Online, Sheffield, 2014, <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/taxatio/benkey?benkey=NW.SD.SD.05> (accessed 4 August 2020); Knox, *Is it Wiston or Wissington?*, p. 139 (list of vicars from 1300).

appointment of the parish's first vicar. As the depiction of Margaret's Life appears to have been largely based on a vernacular text (the *StzL*) and the Nicholas miracles show knowledge of the Latin play *Tres Clerici*, it is likely that the scheme was drawn up by lay person with some education and exposure to the boy-bishop ceremonies. However, the combination of the paintings of the two saints with the Infancy cycle on the south wall of the nave and notably round the south door, as well as the Last Judgement on the west wall and the Passion on the north wall of the nave, shows that considerable care has been taken with the intended meanings of the scheme. Perhaps, therefore, someone from the Godebold/de Horkesley family helped draw up the scheme in conjunction with, or under the direction of, the new vicar, with the approval of the monks.

As discussed, the Godebold/de Horkesley family were lords of the manor of Wiston but appear to have focused their attention on Little Horkesley parish church, which was attached to the priory. There are no funerary monuments at Wiston, either extant or recorded in the church from the time the paintings were executed, nor is there any documentary evidence to suggest that this parish church was attended by notably wealthy parishioners. The pigments used in the paintings, Tristram's 'usual ochres', are another indicator that there were no deep pockets to fund the paintings at Wiston.<sup>140</sup> Thus, although an educated lay person could well have been involved in drawing up the content of the paintings, the unremarkable quality of their execution suggests they were not funded by the lords of the manor. As such, it is possible that the parishioners pooled their resources to fund the paintings.

## **Conclusion**

At Wiston, the wall paintings in the nave show evidence of the construction of a clear and important message for the faithful, of which Margaret's Life was an essential component. The substance of the message was one of care for the young, and of the defence of the faith. Integral to this message was the notion

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<sup>140</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, p. 629.

that entrance into the Christian community was enabled during the transformative rite of baptism, and that Christian identity was both affirmed and defined in its opposition to other faiths. On the south and north walls of the nave at Wiston the paintings refer to the construction of the Christian faith from the essential sacramental framework of baptism and the Eucharist, supported by the sacrament of penance. The culmination of the scheme is reached on the west wall in the depiction of Judgement Day, indicating that, if the sacraments have been correctly observed, they can lead the soul to salvation. Thus, the message of the paintings at Wiston is underlined by their location in the architectural space.

St Mary's, Wiston, appears to have had money spent on it only twice in the whole medieval period: for its rebuilding by the Godebold/de Horkesley family, possibly in association with the monks at Little Horkesley, and for the addition of the wall paintings. It is thus indicative of Margaret's significance to the laity, and whoever was in charge of the care of souls at the church when the paintings were executed, that Margaret's story was chosen to make important points about protecting children and the Christian faith more broadly.

This chapter has extended the discussion of St Margaret's association with child-rearing and baptism to show that other churches in different parts of the country also manifest this connection, by locating depictions of her Life in the vicinity of the font and the south doorway. It has also been argued here that other images, such as those of the miracles of St Nicholas, were used to support this conceptual link, and these themes will be taken forward in Chapter 3.

## **Part Two**

### **St Margaret and baptism in a parochial context: patronage and local concerns**

### Chapter 3

## The wall paintings of St Margaret's Life and the miracles of St Nicholas at Charlwood, Surrey

### Introduction

By examining the early fourteenth-century wall paintings found in the vicinity of the south door of St Nicholas of Myra, Charlwood, Surrey (Figure 3.1), this chapter consolidates the link between the representations of Sts Margaret and Nicholas and the sacrament of baptism established in Chapter 2. However, the main focus of the discussion will revolve around the content and execution of the Margaret cycle to suggest how and why the story was adapted to suit the space in the church and the particular concerns of the parishioners and patrons at this time. An analysis of the cycle also appears to show a remarkable independence of thought in the way the visual narrative was conceived and presented at Charlwood. As the paintings include a Margaret cycle as well as the St Nicholas Miracle of the Three Clerks and a representation of the Three Living and Three Dead, the chapter explores the similarities and differences in subject matter and the location of the paintings within the sacred space in relation to the paintings of Wiston, Battle and Tarrant Crawford. Part of this exploration discusses the possible patronage of Margaret's story and how devotees might have been expected to interact with the paintings.

### St Nicholas, Charlwood: advowson and clergy

In the fourteenth century, Charlwood church and manor were in the possession of the prior and monks of Christ Church, Canterbury.<sup>1</sup> Charlwood

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<sup>1</sup> 'Parishes: Charlwood', in *A History of the County of Surrey: Volume 3*, ed. H. E. Malden (London, 1911), pp. 182-189. *British History Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/vol3/pp182-189> (accessed 10 January 2021); 'Houses of Benedictine monks: The cathedral priory of the Holy Trinity or Christ Church, Canterbury', in *A History of the County of Kent: Volume 2*, ed. William Page (London, 1926), pp. 113-121. *British History Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/kent/vol2/pp113-121>

was a member of the larger, wealthier manor of Merstham, sited roughly ten miles to the north of Charlwood village, which also belonged to the priory at this time.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Christ Church priory also held the advowson of the church of St Nicholas from the end of the thirteenth century.

Lands pertaining to a vicar of Charlwood are documented in 1308-9, indicating that a vicarage had been established by then.<sup>3</sup> In addition, a rectory manor is also recorded from 1316-17.<sup>4</sup> From 1314 until 1349, no vicar is recorded at the church. Instead, Thomas de Codelowe was appointed as parson in 1313, but when he became archdeacon of Lewes ten years later, he was replaced at Charlwood by a certain John de Eston.<sup>5</sup> Like his predecessor, John de Eston was a man of status with connections. He owned land in Yorkshire and Northamptonshire and was a king's clerk, often travelling on official

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(accessed 10 January 2021); John Blair states that there are no records for Charlwood belonging to Christ Church Priory before the thirteenth century: see John Blair, *Early Medieval Surrey: Landholding, Church and Settlement*, (Stroud, Glos., 1991), p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> Merstham manor was held by the archbishop of Canterbury until 1018 when it was given to Christ Church Priory: see 'Parishes: Merstham', in *A History of the County of Surrey: Volume 3*, ed. H. E. Malden (London, 1911), pp. 213-221. *British History Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/vol3/pp213-221> (accessed 10 January 2021). An indication of the wealth of both manors is given in the Taxatio of 1291: the benefice of Merstham is valued at £23.6s.8d. and the benefice of Charlwood at £13.6s.8d: see *Taxatio*: Denton, Jeff et al., 'Charlwood', *Taxatio*, [website], Published by HRI Online, Sheffield, 2014, <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/taxatio/benkey?benkey=NW.SD.SD.05> (accessed 10 February 2019). Bedels Rolls in Canterbury Cathedral Archives (CCA-DCc/BR/Charlwood) for the period 1279-1368 show that Charlwood manor was accounted for separately from 1279: 'Charlwood', Order Number CCA-DCc/BR/Charlwood, Canterbury Cathedral Archives, [website], <https://archives.canterbury-cathedral.org/CalmViewRecord.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=CCA-DCc%2fBR%2fCharlwood&pos=9> (accessed 5 February 2019).

<sup>3</sup> 'Parishes: Charlwood', in *A History of the County of Surrey: Volume 3*, ed. H. E. Malden (London, 1911), pp. 182-189. *British History Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/vol3/pp182-189> (accessed 10 January 2021).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Ruth Sewill and Elizabeth Lane, *The Free Men of Charlwood*, (Crawley, Sussex, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 1980), pp. 179-80.

business.<sup>6</sup> It seems likely, therefore, that the living at Charlwood was financially worthwhile, but that neither Thomas de Codelowe nor John de Eston would have spent much time there and would have had little, if anything, to do with the cure of souls in the parish.

Another feature of the prestige of the parish of Charlwood is that it formed part of the ecclesiastical administrative district of the Deanery of Croydon and was thus, along with the nearby parishes of Merstham, Burstow and East Horley, a peculiar of the archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>7</sup> As such, Charlwood was subject to the episcopal jurisdiction of the archbishop, rather than the bishop of Winchester, in whose diocese the parish was geographically located.

Aside from Charlwood manor itself and the rectory manor mentioned above, several other manors and at least one substantial farm, all in lay hands, existed in the area in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The earliest records pertain to Rowley, a sub-manor of Charlwood, and are dated to between 1150 and 1250.<sup>8</sup> Gat(e)wyk (or Gatwick) manor was established by John de Gat(e)wyk at a similarly early date, shortly after 1241.<sup>9</sup> The manor of Sanders (or Saunders) Place is recorded from the early fourteenth century, and the Saunders family were notable patrons of the church of St Nicholas in the fifteenth century, building a chantry chapel there in 1480.<sup>10</sup> Walter atte Hoke (or de la Hok) is documented as a landholder in Charlwood from the early 1300s, as are the Edolph family, who owned a farm. It would appear, therefore,

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<sup>6</sup> William Farrer and Charles Travis Clay (eds), *Early Yorkshire Charters: The Honour of Skipton*, Vol. VII, (Cambridge, 1947), pp. 23-27, 222-29.

<sup>7</sup> 'Lambeth Palace Library Research Guide: The Diocese of Canterbury and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Peculiar Jurisdiction', *Lambeth Palace Library*, [website], [http://www.lambethpalacelibrary.org/files/Canterbury\\_Diocese.pdf](http://www.lambethpalacelibrary.org/files/Canterbury_Diocese.pdf) (accessed 28 January 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Sewill and Lane, *Free Men*, p. 17.

<sup>9</sup> 'Parishes: Charlwood', in *A History of the County of Surrey: Volume 3*, ed. H. E. Malden (London, 1911), pp. 182-189. *British History Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/vol3/pp182-189> (accessed 10 January 2021); Sewill and Lane, *Free Men*, p. 24.

<sup>10</sup> 'Parishes: Charlwood', in *A History of the County of Surrey: Volume 3*, ed. H. E. Malden (London, 1911), pp. 182-189. *British History Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/vol3/pp182-189> (accessed 10 January 2021); Sewill and Lane, *Free Men*, p. 46-51.

that the community around the church included a fairly substantial share of wealthier families at the time Margaret's legend was painted.

Although both the recorded parsons of Charlwood in the early fourteenth century were preoccupied with clerical and business matters elsewhere, it is probable that their advice or approval would have been sought for the content of the paintings in the church. Funding for the paintings may, then, have been provided by one of the important landowners in the area or perhaps a group of wealthier parishioners.

### **The church architecture: evidence of patronage**

The building campaigns carried out at Charlwood church between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries are suggestive of lay and ecclesiastical attention having been lavished on the church consistently over the years (Figure 3.2). The original two-cell structure is thought to have been built around 1100 and the south aisle constructed as early as the thirteenth century, although this will be re-examined below. In the fifteenth century, the south aisle was expanded eastwards.<sup>11</sup> Both later campaigns would, almost certainly, have been funded by the parishioners. The chancel was also extended around 1330, in line with many other parish church chancels at this time, in order to provide a more worthy space for the performance of the Eucharist, as discussed in Chapter 1.<sup>12</sup>

There is evidence to suggest that Charlwood church enjoyed wealthy patronage, be it ecclesiastical or lay, from the outset. Unlike the majority of other churches in the area, such as those of Burstow, Horley, Horne, Leigh and Newdigate, St Nicholas, Charlwood, was constructed with a stone-built tower, rather than a wooden one.<sup>13</sup> As the landscape around the church was densely wooded at this time, timber would have been in plentiful supply and it seems

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<sup>11</sup> 'Parishes: Charlwood', in *A History of the County of Surrey: Volume 3*, ed. H. E. Malden (London, 1911), pp. 182-189. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/vol3/pp182-189> (accessed 10 January 2021); Nairn and Pevsner state the church is 'Norman', but don't specify a date range: see Ian Nairn, Nikolaus Pevsner and Bridget Cherry, *Surrey*, (Harmondsworth, Middx, 1971), p. 142.

<sup>12</sup> Platt, *Parish Churches*, pp. 25-30, esp. p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Brandon, *A History of Surrey*, (London, 1977), p. 44.

likely that carpenters and joiners would have lived and worked locally too. It thus appears that a choice was made to render the church of St Nicholas distinctive and not to follow the easier route of constructing the tower in wood. Apart from the church at Barnes, St Nicholas, Charlwood, was possibly the only church in Surrey built in the late eleventh or early twelfth centuries that was not owned or constructed by a lay patron on his lands.<sup>14</sup> Anglo-Norman cultural attitudes combined with the theological implications of using stone as a material symbolizing 'permanence over earthly transition' may have determined the choice of stone for use in the construction of the tower.<sup>15</sup> In addition, using the apparently more prestigious material of stone in this context would have advertised the status of whoever had constructed the church.

As far as the interior of the church at Charlwood is concerned, the design of the window in the south aisle that separates the St Margaret legend and the St Nicholas miracle is suggestive not only of the continued care taken of the fabric of the building, but also the desire to impress and to associate the church with other significant sacred buildings (Figure 3.3a-b). Put simply, this is a Decorated window with plate tracery.<sup>16</sup> However, on closer inspection, the design is a little more refined than the term 'plate tracery' allows. If it is studied closely, it becomes clear that this is what Stephen Hart defines as 'sunk spandrel tracery'.<sup>17</sup> The design of the window as a whole is composed of two trefoil-headed lights with a cinquefoil oculus in the headwork above. Two notable examples of this design are found at Westminster Abbey in the triforium, at the east end of the building (built c.1250-72), and at Canterbury Cathedral in the wooden choir screens (before 1304) (Figures 3.4a-b).<sup>18</sup> It is

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<sup>14</sup> Blair, *Early Medieval Surrey*, p. 124.

<sup>15</sup> Twomey, 'Romanesque Baptismal Fonts', pp. 330, 331.

<sup>16</sup> Nairn, Pevsner and Cherry, *Surrey*, p. 142.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Hart, *Medieval Church Window Tracery in England*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2010), pp. 21-22.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Wilson, *The Gothic Cathedral: The Architecture of the Great Church, 1130-1530*, (London, 1990), p. 179; Paul Binski, *Gothic Wonder: Art, Artifice and the Decorated Style, 1290-1350*, (New Haven, 2014), pp. 154-55 and Plate 117.

thus possible that the design of the window at Charlwood consciously strove to imitate these illustrious models.

Later patronage of the church is evidenced in the construction of the chapel at the east end of the south aisle, which became the Saunders family chantry chapel in 1480. The erection of the chapel appears to have been the initiative of Agnes Saunders, widow of Richard, and was thus almost certainly entirely funded by the family.<sup>19</sup> The fine wooden screen, which still stands at the entrance to what is now the chancel, is all that remains of the chapel as it was then (Figure 3.5a-b). However, the construction of the chapel incurred lasting damage to the left-hand side of the paintings of St Margaret and necessitated the removal of the altar, which stood on the old east wall of the south aisle where the entrance to the current chancel is sited, beside the St Margaret cycle (Figure 3.6).

### **Overview of the paintings**

In 1858, wall paintings of St Margaret's legend, the St Nicholas Miracle of the Three Clerks and a representation of the Three Living and Three Dead were uncovered in Charlwood church on the south wall of the south aisle, to the east of the south doorway. As mentioned above, a two-light window separates Margaret's story from the Nicholas miracle and the tale of the Three Living and Three Dead (Figure 3.3a-b). Margaret's story sits to the east of the window above a *piscina*, while the other paintings lie to the west of the window, close to the south door, alongside a later fifteenth-century figure of an archer from the legend of St Edmund.

Margaret's Life is set out in three tiers: the uppermost tier reads from west to east, while the middle and lowest tiers read from east to west. There are eight scenes in total: two on the upper register and three each on the lower two registers.

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<sup>19</sup> Sewill and Lane, *Free Men*, p. 47.

### **St Margaret's legend: framing and 'telescoping' of scenes**

Unlike other cycles of St Margaret's legend, such as those at Battle, Tarrant Crawford and Wiston, the visual narrative at Charlwood is unframed, apart from the division into upper, middle and lower tiers formed by two horizontal lines painted between the tiers (Figure 3.7). Although from a practical point of view the lack of vertical framing devices offers more pictorial space for the artist, from a conceptual perspective the avoidance of frames lends a sense of urgency and drama to the depiction of the legend, with events hurtling towards the moment of Margaret's martyrdom. It also underlines the sense of narrative progression, rather than punctuating the flow of the story by encasing the individual scenes in a frame. Although frames offer more opportunity for the viewer to pause and perhaps meditate on each scene, both approaches facilitate the emotional involvement of the viewer, but in different ways.

Unframed, the visual narrative allows the viewer to be transported into the imaginative world of the story from the outset, only being given time to reflect at the end. For such an effect to work, however, the viewer's imagination has to be immediately captured successfully and their interest sustained throughout. At Charlwood, the engagement of the viewer appears to have been carefully considered. This is shown, for example, in the inclusion of the popular trope of the hunting motif at the start of the narrative, and a focus on Margaret's dealings with, and despatch of, the dragon, all of which will be discussed in detail below. Only when the story reaches its climax, with Margaret's beheading, is the viewer permitted pause for thought. The fact that the viewer should only now be allowed space to take in the story as a whole seems fitting for a narrative in which death is framed as a triumph. Thus, in this visual version of Margaret's narrative, the saint's trials and suffering appear to be de-emphasized and treated as unpleasant incidents on her journey to paradise.

Figures turning away from each other help to clarify the action, but do not interrupt the story in the same way a vertical frame would. Thus, the figure forcing Margaret into the prison cell in the middle tier turns away from the torturers on the viewer's left, indicating the start of a new episode in the

narrative (Figure 3.8a-b). Similarly, in the middle of the lower tier, Margaret and the seated figure of Olibrius face away from each other, offering the viewer a brief respite from the action and highlighting the beginning of a new episode (Figures 3.9a-b).

Several other examples of wall-painting schemes which do not use vertical framing devices appear to have been executed around the same time as the Charlwood narrative. These are schemes found in the following churches: All Saints, Croughton, Northants, c.1310, St Hubert, Idsworth, Hants, c.1330, St Mary the Virgin, Wendens Ambo, Essex, c.1330 and St Mary, Chalgrove, Oxon, c.1350.<sup>20</sup>

If the Chalgrove paintings are considered, briefly, similar motivations behind the lack of framing devices at Charlwood are also in evidence here. The Chalgrove paintings are found on the north and south walls of the chancel (Figure 3.10). They show an extended Life of Christ (north wall) and the Virgin (south wall), and with the whole wall available on each side of the chancel, lack of space does not appear to have been the reason for doing without vertical frames. It could be argued, however, that the lack of vertical framing devices at Chalgrove enables viewers to become involved with the narrative, which only releases them, as it were, when the culmination of both interrelated stories – Christ’s Ascension and the Virgin’s Coronation – is reached on the east wall.<sup>21</sup>

Another feature of the Charlwood scheme, which underlines the sense of urgency described above, is the way certain elements of the story have been combined into single moments (or ‘telescoped’). Although this technique may well have been used for the pragmatic reason that space was limited, it also sits comfortably with the general emphasis on the drama of Margaret’s story. For example, in the middle tier to the viewer’s left, Margaret’s confrontation with Olibrius (whose figure has now been virtually obliterated) is combined with

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<sup>20</sup> For the dating of the paintings in each church, see Tristram, *English Wall Painting of the Fourteenth Century*, pp. 162, 185, 261, 155 (respectively). The scheme of St Margaret’s Life of c.1390 at St Botolph, Limpenhoe, Norfolk (now destroyed) did not have any vertical divisions to the painted narrative either.

<sup>21</sup> R. W. Heath-Whyte, *An Illustrated Guide to the Medieval Wall Paintings in the Church of St Mary the Virgin at Chalgrove in the County of Oxfordshire*, (Chalgrove, Oxfordshire, 2016), esp. p. 17 and p. 55 (for diagram of the wall-painting schemes).

her initial torture (Figures 3.8a-b). Similarly, in the lower tier to the viewer's left, it appears that Margaret is about to be tortured by a man wielding a stick or club as she emerges from the dragon's back (Figures 3.11a-b).

Similarities with the technique of combining episodes of the narrative into a single scene at Charlwood can also be found in the depiction of Margaret's legend on the Pienza Cope. Made in England around the same time the Charlwood paintings were executed, c.1330-40, the six scenes illustrating Margaret's legend are found on the lowest tier of the embroidery, facing seven scenes representing the legend of St Katherine of Alexandria (Figure 3.12).<sup>22</sup> However, each scene on the cope is separated from the others by fictive arcading, indicating that the use of a framing device does not preclude the use of the telescoping technique.

Several of the scenes on the cope can be compared to the Charlwood paintings and show this telescoping technique. One of the initial scenes on the cope shows Margaret forced into a prison cell by a man who is hitting her on the back with an axe or a club, in a similar manner to the scene in the far right of the middle tier at Charlwood (Figures 3.13a-b). In the scene on the cope and at Charlwood, the wall through which Margaret apparently enters the cell also doubles as one of the two walls of the prison. Margaret is then shown in the cell emerging from the dragon's belly. A further comparison between the two schemes arises when Margaret is shown disputing with Olibrius, while undergoing torture at the same time (Figures 3.14a-b), but whilst her torso is depicted naked in the embroidered scene, at Charlwood she is fully clothed. The possible reasons for depicting Margaret naked or clothed will be addressed below. Thus, not including frames at Charlwood appears to be a deliberate choice – possibly to save space, or possibly to heighten the drama, or both.

On the one hand, therefore, the design of the visual narrative at Charlwood suggests that the best use of the available space was a consideration when the scheme was drawn up. On the other hand, the fact that space was restricted appears to have been addressed in ways which benefit the

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<sup>22</sup> Browne et al. (eds), Exhibition Catalogue, *English Medieval Embroidery*, p. 205.

retelling of Margaret's story. As with all sacred hagiographical narrative, the essential facts of the story chosen for inclusion in any scheme have to remain the same in every rendition in order to maintain the perceived veracity of the material. But by presenting the facts in a different way, the artist can breathe new life into a story that people may have heard or seen depicted many times before. Thus, by choosing not to include vertical framing devices, the artist was given more scope – but the narrative progression also became more fluid, and thereby likely more engrossing and memorable. Telescoping episodes into one scene saves space, but also enlivens the pace of the storytelling. Finally, by anchoring the narrative in the reality of life in fourteenth-century England through the inclusion of a hunt scene at the beginning, not only is the viewer's attention engaged, but the more fantastical parts of the narrative, such as the saint being swallowed by and slaying the dragon, are grounded. The lack of framing devices and the compression of scenes also have implications for the way in which devotees might have interacted with the paintings and this will also be examined in detail below.

### **Analysis of the St Margaret cycle at Charlwood in relation to the possible textual sources**

The texts referred to as possible sources for the visual narrative at Charlwood are the same as those used in relation to Battle and Tarrant Crawford in Chapter 1 – that is to say, the *Mb passio*, the *StzL*, the *SEL* and the *LgA*.

Two copies of the Charlwood paintings, one from the nineteenth and one from the twentieth century will also be referred to in the analysis of the paintings, in order to clarify certain details. The earlier copy, by William Burges, was made just after the paintings were uncovered in 1858 and is printed in *The Archaeological Journal* for the year 1864 (Figure 3.15).<sup>23</sup> A much later representation, produced by art historian Ann Worrall, is found in the

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<sup>23</sup> William Burges and Albert Way, 'Mural Paintings Discovered in Charlwood Church, Surrey, with Remarks on the more ordinary Polychromy of the thirteenth century', *The Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 21, (1864), pp. 209-15. Image not paginated (between p. 212 and p. 213).

church itself (Figure 3.16).<sup>24</sup> Although there are no contradictory features between the two copies, something more of the action had been uncovered and conserved by the time the later example was executed.

***The St Margaret cycle: upper tier (viewing from west to east or right to left)***

The upper tier is divided into two scenes. The initial scene, on the viewer's right, shows a hunt emerging from a forest with Olibrius on horseback, while the next scene, on the left, illustrates the moment Margaret is first accosted by one of Olibrius's men.

Scene 1 (Figure 3.17)

By employing the hunting motif at the outset, Margaret's story can be construed as a chase, in which Olibrius is the hunter and Margaret the hunted. As such, the lack of vertical framing, discussed above, increases the sense of movement and fluidity of the narrative as a whole. Various features of the initial scene convey the idea of a hunt to the viewer. To begin with, one of Olibrius's stewards, following behind his master, carries a bow and sounds a horn, while on either side of this figure stands a stylized tree, denoting woodland. In addition, a greyhound chasing a hare is shown in the foreground, alongside Olibrius's horse.

The use of the hunting context for the Margaret legend appears to be unique to Charlwood. It has no direct parallel in the textual narratives and is not repeated in any other surviving visual representations. Therefore, the hunting motif is apparently an interpretation of the artist or a directive to the artist from whoever designed the scheme. But the motif was particularly apt for the paintings' intended audience: that is to say those people living and hunting in and around the village of Charlwood in the fourteenth century.

Inextricably linked to hunting were the woodland and wastes of the Surrey Weald in which Charlwood church was situated. The landscape was recalled in the names of several settlements in the immediate vicinity of the

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<sup>24</sup> Photo of Ann Worrall's copy taken in the church in May 2017. The church leaflet does not say when Ann Worrall's copy was made.

church and, of course, in the name Charlwood itself.<sup>25</sup> When the Charlwood paintings were executed, large areas of the Surrey Weald were either park, chase or warren, and hunting had been an important feature of life in Surrey from at least the reign of Henry II onwards. The north west of the county was dominated by royal hunting parks, such as that at Guildford, but closer to Charlwood, the forest of Ewood, for example, was also a hunting park at one time.<sup>26</sup> Hunting would not have been an activity confined to the elite but would have affected the lives of most people in some form, either through having to comply with the strictly imposed forest laws or through the provision of services to the hunting party, such as caring for the hounds or catering for the picnic.<sup>27</sup> Both Edward II in 1316-17 and Edward III in 1364-5 granted free warren to the prior and monks of Christ Church, Canterbury, in their demesne lands of Charlwood, which suggests that the local population would have been involved in preparing and helping to carry out this kind of hunt for small game.<sup>28</sup> Thus, in medieval Surrey, for better or worse, hunting was likely to have part of most people's daily life and contextualising Margaret's legend in this way meant that the story would resonate with a wide audience.

Hunting motifs abounded in a wide variety of Middle English literature and would thus have been familiar to many parishioners at Charlwood, through reading or listening to secular and religious material, or possibly through dramatizations.<sup>29</sup> Thus, although framing Margaret's story as a hunt could well have been an effective means of capturing the viewer's attention, it may also have allowed for other themes to be associated with the story. In particular, two related associations appear to be suggested by the use of this

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<sup>25</sup> Other place names include Kingswood and Shelwood to the north of the church, and Oakwood and Wildwood to the west. 'Charlwood' means 'wood of the peasants': see Blair, *Early Medieval Surrey*, p. 30.

<sup>26</sup> 'Newdigate', *Exploring Surrey's Past*, [website], [https://www.exploringsurreypast.org.uk/themes/places/surrey/mole\\_valley/newdigate/](https://www.exploringsurreypast.org.uk/themes/places/surrey/mole_valley/newdigate/) (accessed 20 January 2019); Brandon, *History of Surrey*, p. 31.

<sup>27</sup> Blair, *Early Medieval Surrey*, p. 54; Anne Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English Literature*, (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> 'Parishes: Charlwood', in *A History of the County of Surrey: Volume 3*, ed. H. E. Malden (London, 1911), pp. 182-189. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/vol3/pp182-189> (accessed 10 January 2021).

<sup>29</sup> Rooney, *Hunting*, pp. 6, 21.

motif at Charlwood and these are the devil as a hunter and the hunt for the hart or young stag.

Despite the popularity of hunting with the aristocracy and nobility, the trope of the devil as a hunter in religious and secular texts of the period was the 'most pervasive motif to have developed from traditional sources'.<sup>30</sup> Originating in the psalms, notably Psalms 90 and 123, it was elaborated in patristic and later writing in Latin over the course of several centuries and was certainly well established at the time the Charlwood scheme was devised.<sup>31</sup> In 'The Parson's Tale', for example, a treatise on sin and repentance, Chaucer refers to the devil as a hunter of men thus: "The feend seith, "I wole chace and pursue the man by wikked suggestioun, and I wole hente [seize] hym by moevynge or styringe of synne."<sup>32</sup> In a related tradition, also derived from the psalms and Psalm 41 in particular, the devil-hunter is linked to the hunt for the hart. An early and significant instance of this is found in a passage from the work of theologian Hugh of St Victor (d.1141). Drawing on the text of Psalm 41.1-2, the human soul is described by Hugh as a hart chased by devils as hunters, who wound the noble animal with arrows of evil longings.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in the fourteenth-century *Contes moralisés* of Nicholas Bozon, *conte* 145 compares a hart tracked and trapped by a hunter to the way the devil ensnares Christians and tempts them into sin.<sup>34</sup> Such a theme is given visual expression, for example, in the *bas-de-page* scene from the *Beatus* page of the Howard Psalter (c.1308-c.1340), in which animals and birds, including deer, are shown

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>31</sup> For Psalm 123, verse 7 is key ('Our soul hath been delivered as a sparrow out of the snare of the fowlers. The snare is broken, and we are delivered.' / '*Anima nostra sicut passer erepta est de laqueo venantium; laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus.*'). For a more detailed description of the development of the devil-hunter motif, see Rooney, *Hunting*, pp. 24-34 and Marcelle Thiébaux, *The Stag of Love: The Chase in Medieval Literature*, (Ithaca, 2014), pp. 44-46.

<sup>32</sup> 'The Parson's Tale' in *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, F. N. Robinson (ed.), (London, 1957), p. 238 quoted in Thiébaux, *Stag of Love*, p. 45.

<sup>33</sup> Hugh of St Victor, *Patrologiae Latinae Cursus Completus*, 177, J. P. Migne (ed.), (Paris, 1844-64), 575A, quoted in Rooney, *Hunting*, (Cambridge, 1993), p. 26: ('*Cerva est casta et munda anima. Sagittae sunt desideria mala. Venatores sunt daemones.*').

<sup>34</sup> Rooney, *Hunting*, pp. 26-27.

in a garden with the figure of the devil as a hunter, or fowler in this instance, shown camouflaged by a bush and ready to seize his prey.<sup>35</sup>

In the textual narratives of Margaret's Life there is no explicit reference to Olibrius out hunting in woodland when he sees Margaret for the first time, as is shown at Charlwood. However, the writers do state that the Prefect journeys back and forth between Asia and Antioch in order to seek out and kill Christians, which effectively equates to a form of hunting.<sup>36</sup> Although not referred to as the devil himself, Olibrius is associated in various ways with the devil in the *Mb passio*, the *SEL*, the *StzL* and the *LgA*, and he is variously described as worshipping many, false and worthless gods.<sup>37</sup> In the *Mb passio*, he is described more than once as 'evil' and 'wicked', and Margaret says, 'You perform the works of Satan.'<sup>38</sup> The *SEL* describes him as 'the luther Iustice', and 'the luther man', 'luther' being a corruption of 'lucifer'.<sup>39</sup> Margaret herself calls him 'thou luther hond'.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, the *StzL* recounts that Olibrius 'seruede nist ant day fendes in helle' and that he behaves in the manner expected of someone related to Satan.<sup>41</sup> The *LgA*, however, alludes only once to Olibrius's association with the devil, when Margaret, referencing Psalm 21, refers to him as a dog and a lion.<sup>42</sup> Both the dog and the lion are described as attacking the

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<sup>35</sup> Howard Psalter, London, British Library, Arundel MS 83 I, fol. 14r: *British Library, Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, [website], <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6458&CollID=20&NStart=83> (accessed 23 December 2020). For more detail on this iconography, see Howard Helsinger, 'Images on the *Beatus* Page of Some Medieval Psalters', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 53, 2, (June, 1971), pp. 161-176, esp. p. 175 (where the manuscript is referred to as the Psalter of Robert de Lisle).

<sup>36</sup> *Mb*: Ch 5, p. 197; *StzL*: p. 175, lines 33-4; *SEL*: p. 292, lines 25-6, 29-30. The *LgA* describes Olibrius as simply 'passing by' while Margaret was in the fields tending her nurse's sheep, see *LgA*: p. 616 ('*prefectus Olibrius inde transitum faciens*').

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, *SEL*: p. 294, line 92 and p. 295, line 108; *Mb*: Ch 5, pp. 198-99; *StzL*: p. 205, lines 149-152 and p. 227, lines 225-228.

<sup>38</sup> *Mb*: 'evil', e.g. Ch 6, p. 199; 'wicked', e.g. Ch 10, p. 203; 'You perform ...', Ch 10, p. 201.

<sup>39</sup> *SEL*: p. 293, line 59 and p. 296, line 147.

<sup>40</sup> *SEL*: p. 296, line 143.

<sup>41</sup> *StzL*: p. 174, line 30 and p. 198, line 127 ('*Thou dest ase techet Satanus thin em!*').

<sup>42</sup> *Mb*: Ch 10, pp. 200-203; *LgA*: p. 618 ('*Dixitque ad prefectum: "Impudens canis, insatiabilis leo"*').

psalmist in Psalm 21 and had associations with the devil in medieval writing. Although often appearing in tomb sculpture, for example, and symbolising faithfulness, in religious writing dogs were more often associated with sinfulness, treachery and persecution.<sup>43</sup> Similarly the interpretation of the symbolism of the lion seems, once again, to have been dependent on the context. Whilst some texts, including the *LgA* itself, talk about Christ as a lion, the animal could equally be regarded as the devil – thanks, in large part, to biblical references.<sup>44</sup> Other religious writing, including homilies, also present lions as the devil. One twelfth-century example intended for ‘The Nativity of Our Lord’, states, ‘Our foe, that is, the devil, wandereth about us; he practises the wiles, sometimes of a fox, at other times of a wolf, sometimes of a lion ...’<sup>45</sup> Taken together, these references establish a clear link between the figure of Olibrius as a hunter of Christians, the devil and sin.

Having established the idea of Olibrius as a devil-hunter, a second possible intended meaning of Margaret’s story at Charlwood can be explored: that Margaret represents the stag or hart, hunted by the devil, as described by Hugh of St Victor. Although the Charlwood paintings themselves seek to convey to the viewer the idea of a hunt by showing a greyhound chasing a hare in the first scene, rather than a hart or stag, this may simply have been a feature of limited wall space. In order to make the narrative clear to the viewer below, large figures with a simple, unfussy background were required. However, given that the visual representation needed to conform to the texts and incorporate

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<sup>43</sup> Simona Cohen, *Animals as Disguised Symbols in Renaissance Art*, (Leiden, 2008), pp. 79-80.

<sup>44</sup> Cohen, *Animals as Disguised Symbols*, pp. 213-218; for the lion as the Antichrist, see Helsinger, ‘Images on the *Beatus* Page’, p. 165. Biblical references taken from *Douay-Rheims and Latin Vulgate Bible*, [website], <http://www.drbo.org/drl/chapter/67005.htm> (accessed 06 January 2021): 1) Peter 5.8: ‘Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.’ (*Sobrii estote, et vigilate : quia adversarius vester diabolus tamquam leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem devoret:*). and 2) Timothy 4.17: ‘But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching may be accomplished and that all the Gentiles may hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.’ (*Dominus autem mihi astitit, et confortavit me, ut per me praedicatio impleatur, et audiant omnes gentes : et liberatus sum de ore leonis.*).

<sup>45</sup> Richard Morris (ed.), *Old English Homilies of the Twelfth Century*, EETS, ss, (London, 1873), pp. 34-5.

not only Olibrius on horseback but also two stewards and Margaret spinning, it is difficult to see how the figure of a hart might have been included.

It is also possible, of course, that showing a hare and a greyhound was all that was intended here. Both animals have symbolic relevance for Margaret's story. Hares were believed to be hermaphrodite, reproducing without loss of virginity, while greyhounds sought out their prey by sight rather than by scent.<sup>46</sup> Thus, Margaret can be understood as the virginal hare, while Olibrius is the greyhound, who, once he catches sight of the saint, pursues her to her death. The symbolism of Olibrius as the greyhound also ties in with Margaret's reference to Olibrius in the *LgA* as a 'Shameless dog', as mentioned above.<sup>47</sup> Even if this is the intended meaning of the hunt motif at Charlwood, it does not exclude another interpretation of the paintings, which envisages Margaret as the hunted hart.

If, as borne out by the textual narratives, Margaret's passion is an *imitatio Christi* and thus the figure of the chaste and suffering Margaret correlates with that of the chaste and suffering Christ, who was firmly associated with the hart in religious texts and iconography, then it is also possible that the hunt of the hart may be alluded to in the Charlwood paintings.

An initial piece of evidence in the paintings that supports the argument that the hunt for the hart could have been intended at Charlwood is the steward shown sounding a hunting horn. Although the gesture is difficult to make out in the paintings as they appear today, both copies of the paintings show the steward sounding a horn (Figure 3.18a-b). If, as seems likely, this was indeed what the artist intended, the hare was almost certainly not the object of the hunt shown here. In William Twici's treatise *The Art of Hunting*, written during the reign of Edward II (1307-1327), the author describes how the hunting horn should not be used for coursing hare. Rather than fleeing from the hounds in a single direction, as a hart would do, hares double back on themselves. Thus, to encourage the pack by blowing the horn would only lead

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<sup>46</sup> For hares as hermaphrodites, see Alice Dryden (ed.), *The Art of Hunting or Three Hunting MSS: A Revised Edition of The Art of Hunting by William Twici, Huntsman to King Edward II, by Henry Dryden, (1844), The Craft of Venery, A Translation of La Chasse du Cerf, (Northampton, 1908), p. 21.*

<sup>47</sup> *LgA*: p. 618 ('*Dixitque ad prefectum: "Impudens canis, insatiabilis leo"*').

to the dogs out-running the hare and losing their prey.<sup>48</sup> Sounding a horn would therefore be relevant to hunting a hart or stag, but not to hunting a hare; as hunting was such a widely practised sport, it seems highly unlikely that the artist would have been unaware of this fact or that he would have deliberately included a feature that was incorrect.

Key events described in the texts of Margaret's Life and her response to them offer parallels between the saint and Christ and highlight her passion as an *imitatio Christi*. In Chapter 1, it was suggested that Margaret's care of her nurse's sheep presented a direct comparison with Christ as the Good Shepherd and Paschal Lamb, who, it was believed, through his death and resurrection freed humankind from sin.<sup>49</sup> Like Christ, Margaret preserves her chastity and is baptized, although Christ is baptized at the outset of his ministry, while Margaret's unofficial baptism comes towards the end of her life in her immersion in the vessel of water and later with her own blood through her martyrdom.

In her humble acceptance of suffering as part of God's plan for her and as a means of bearing witness to the truth of her faith, Margaret's passion is a reflection of Christ's own suffering and death. Details in the texts of Margaret's execution recall the account of Christ's death in the gospels and drive home this comparison. Thus, many thousands of people are converted after Margaret's immersion in the vessel of water, which is accompanied by thunder, or an earthquake, depending on the version of the story consulted.<sup>50</sup> The gospels also record that darkness covered the earth just before Christ died and in Matthew an earthquake is also mentioned.<sup>51</sup> Margaret's executioner asks her for forgiveness, reminiscent of the penitent thief in the gospel of Luke who asks

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<sup>48</sup> Dryden (ed.), *The Art of Hunting*, pp. 19, 29-30, 51.

<sup>49</sup> John 1.29: 'The next day, John [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sin of the world.' (*Altera die videt Joannes Jesum venientem ad se, et ait: Ecce agnus Dei, qui tollit peccatum mundi.*).

<sup>50</sup> *Mb*: Ch 18, pp. 212-13 (5,000 men not counting women and girls, converted); *SEL*: p. 300, line 255 (5,000 men converted); *StzL*: p. 234, lines 249-50 (1005 people converted, not counting women and children); *LgA*: p. 619 (*Tunc quinque milia uirorum crediderunt et pro nomine Christi capitalem sententiam acceperunt.*).

<sup>51</sup> Matthew 27.45-50; Mark 15.33-7; Luke 23.44-6.

Christ to remember him.<sup>52</sup> Direct references to Psalm 21 (*'Deus, deus meus'*) made by Margaret in the *Mb passio* and *LgA* during her second torture explicitly connect her suffering with Christ's passion.<sup>53</sup> In his last moments, Christ is recorded as quoting the opening lines of the psalm, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (*'Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani?'*).<sup>54</sup> In addition, the psalm expresses the anguish of the writer beset by those who harm him, likened, notably, to savage dogs and lions, and also prefigures Christ's last moment in which lots are cast for his clothing.<sup>55</sup> Intriguingly, in his commentary on the Psalms, Peter Lombard, links Psalm 21 to the tune of the *'Cerva matutina'* and the *cerva*, or hart, is likened to Christ's human nature.<sup>56</sup> The fact that Margaret refers to Psalm 21 specifically in her prayer, thus establishes a clearer connection between Christ, Margaret and the hart or stag.

Before the dragon appears, the texts describe how Margaret arms herself for the confrontation with the symbol of the cross, either in the form of a physical cross delivered to her by angels or by simply making the sign of the cross on her body.<sup>57</sup> The cross, denoting Christ's death but also resurrection, protects the saint during the state of limbo that she enters on being swallowed by the dragon and before her emergence from its belly. This moment in her *passio* can be likened to the harrowing of hell by Christ, an episode reputed to have occurred after his crucifixion and before the resurrection during which he

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<sup>52</sup> Luke 23.39-43; *Mb*: Ch 19, pp. 212-13.

<sup>53</sup> *Mb*: Ch 10, pp. 200-03; *LgA*: p. 618 (*'Dixitque ad prefectum: "Impudens canis, insatiabilis leo"'*).

<sup>54</sup> Matthew 27.46; Mark 15.34.

<sup>55</sup> Matthew 27.35; John 19.24.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Lombard, Psalmi XXI-XXV, *In Psalmos Commentarios, Magister Sententiarum*, [website],

<http://magistersententiarum.com/book/101/distinction/2433> (accessed 6 January 2021).

<sup>57</sup> *Mb*: Ch 13, pp. 204-07 (Margaret fashions a cross for herself); *SEL*: p. 297, line 163 (Margaret makes the sign of the cross inside the dragon's belly); *StzL*: p. 208, lines 161-164 (an angel brings Margaret the cross on which Christ died to help her overcome the devil); *LgA*: p. 618 (Margaret is protected from the dragon by making the sign of the cross) (*'Et ecce, draco immanissimus ibidem apparuit. Qui dum eam deuoraturus impeteret, signum crucis edidit et ille euanuit, uel, ut alibi legitur, os super caput eius ponens et linguam super calcaneum porrigens ipsam protinus deglutiuit, sed dum eam absorbere uellet, signo crucis se muniuit et ideo draco uirtute crucis crepuit et uirgo illesa exiuit.'*).

descended into hell in order to save all righteous souls who had lived before his incarnation. In the *Mb passio*, in the prayer Margaret offers up just before she is swallowed by the dragon, the saint makes direct reference to the harrowing of hell. ‘Lord God omnipotent’, she pleads, ‘[...] you whom all physical elements fear, who laid waste the region of hell, bound the devil, and destroyed the power of the dragon, look upon me now ...’ and her final words before she is engulfed are, ‘Behold, it hastens to swallow me up and wishes to lead me down into its pit.’<sup>58</sup> Medieval depictions of the harrowing of hell show hell’s mouth as that of a dragon or fearsome monster, which could thus be equated with the dragon’s maw of Margaret’s story (Figures 3.19a-b). The *StzL* emphasizes the comparison with Christ’s resurrection, by stating that after her encounter with the devil-dragon – seemingly having entered the mouth of hell and re-emerged unharmed – Margaret is released from prison with ‘*the rode on hire hond that Crist was on idon.*’<sup>59</sup>

In the patristic texts of Origen and St Ambrose in particular, Christ was primarily associated with the serpent-slaying stag and the thirsting stag.<sup>60</sup> The symbolism of these two related iconographical types was later extended so that both came to be identified not only with Christ, but with saints more generally, the human soul on its journey to God and also catechumens.<sup>61</sup> In their own ways, all of these were considered as battling evil forces and thirsting for the love of Christ and the salvation offered by his incarnation, death and resurrection. It is thus worth considering in detail the traditions behind the symbolism of the serpent-slaying and the thirsting stag before considering their relevance to paintings of Margaret’s legend at Charlwood.

Found initially in the writings of Lucretius, Lucan, Pliny the Elder and Oppian, for example, the concept of the serpent-slaying stag was taken up by Isidore of Seville in the 7th century in his *Etymologies*.<sup>62</sup> Later, the idea is found

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<sup>58</sup> *Mb*: Ch 12, pp. 204-05.

<sup>59</sup> *StzL*: p. 225, line 220.

<sup>60</sup> Henri-Charles Puech, ‘Le Cerf et le Serpent: Note sur le Symbolisme de la Mosaïque Découverte au Baptistère de l’Henchir Messaouda’, *Cahiers Archéologiques*, IV, publiés par André Grabar, (Paris, 1949), pp. 17-60, esp. pp. 34-35.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35-41.

<sup>62</sup> Thiébaux, *The Stag of Love*, pp. 40-41.

notably in medieval bestiaries.<sup>63</sup> In their descriptions of the life and behaviour of stags, the writers discussed how the animals were the enemies of the serpent or snake. It was believed that a stag would seek out snakes in their dens and blow air through their nostrils or vomit water into the crevices of rocks to flush out the snakes. Once the snakes appeared, the stag would trample on them or eat them. In order not to be overwhelmed by the poison it was believed to have absorbed by eating the snake, the stag would hurry to a river to drink. By drinking water, the stag was believed able to rejuvenate itself, losing its old set of antlers and transforming itself ready for another fifty years of life.<sup>64</sup>

Christian writers drew comparisons between the actions of the stag described above and the figure of Christ. In essence, the stag's treatment of the snake was seen as the battle between good and evil, but, through correlations made with the psalms, it came to have strong associations with the rite of baptism. Thus, Christ, the stag, vanquished the serpent, or devil. The stag's absorbing of the poison of the snake was akin to Christ assuming man's original sin through his incarnation. When the stag drank to dilute the poison in its body, it was performing a kind of baptism, drinking the living, regenerative water and washing away the poison or sin. This then left it cleansed and prepared for a new phase of life. The stag overpowering the snake is therefore strongly associated with the salvation offered by baptism and entry into the Christian community.

The fight against evil, represented by the stag slaying the snake, was considered the principal theme of the psalms, and Christian theologians such as Rabanus Maurus and Peter Lombard held that the principal subject of the psalms was Christ.<sup>65</sup> Representations of the serpent-slaying stag or stag on its own were thus eminently suitable illustrative subjects for the opening *Beatus* page of psalters. Howard Helsinger identifies eight psalters dating from the

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<sup>63</sup> Ron Baxter, *Bestiaries and their Users in the Middle Ages*, (Stroud, Glos., 1998), pp. 52-3; 'Stag', *Medieval Bestiary*, [website], <http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast162.htm> (accessed 21 September 2020).

<sup>64</sup> Puech, 'Le Cerf et le Serpent', pp. 28-29 (overview of the traits of the stag); Helsinger, 'Images on the *Beatus* Page', p. 164.

<sup>65</sup> Helsinger, 'Images on the *Beatus* Page', p. 165.

mid thirteenth to the early fourteenth centuries which show stags in the marginal scenes of the *Beatus* pages. He argues convincingly that the depictions of the stags were meant to be understood as the figure of Christ and were intended to underline the overall theme of the psalter – overcoming evil and man’s dependence on God.<sup>66</sup>

As noted above, the devil-hunter pursuing the hart in the work of Hugh of St Victor could be construed in this context as Olibrius’s pursuit of Margaret. In Hugh’s work he uses the form ‘*cerva*’, or female deer, which echoes to Peter Lombard’s mention of the ‘*cerva*’ in connection with Psalm 21. Hugh’s use of the female term for the deer was consistent with the meaning of the text from which this passage was taken and that is the struggle of the soul (*‘anima’*) to overcome temptations offered by the devil.<sup>67</sup>

The concept of the thirsting stag or hart, which is entirely complementary to that of the serpent-slaying stag, is referred to, notably, in Psalm 41.2-3, ‘As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God’.<sup>68</sup> In the exegetical writing on Psalm 41 of St Augustine and Peter Lombard in particular, the stag also became directly associated with the catechumen, desirous of the living water of baptism and salvation through Christ.<sup>69</sup> An extract from a sermon by St Augustine preached in Carthage in 414 (*‘Quemadmodum desiderat cervus’*) exemplifies this association:

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<sup>66</sup> The eight psalters are: Cuerdon Psalter, mid 13thC, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS 756, fol. 11r; Peterborough Psalter, c.1300, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9961-2, fol. 14r; Gorleston Psalter, 1310-1324, London, British Library, Additional MS 49622, fol. 8r; Bréviaire du Saint-Sépulcre de Cambrai, late 13thC, Cambrai, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 102, fol. 232r; Psalter, 1275-1299, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M 98, fol. 1r; Psalter, c.1290-1305, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M 155, fol. 1r; Bréviaire de Verdun, early 14thC, Verdun, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 107, fol. 1r; Psalter, first quarter 14thC, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Lat. 84, fol. 19r: see Helsinger, ‘Images on the *Beatus* Page’, p. 165.

<sup>67</sup> Rooney, *Hunting*, p. 26.

<sup>68</sup> Psalm 41.2-3 (*‘Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus.’*)

<sup>69</sup> Puech gives a detailed account of this development, but see especially Puech, ‘Le Cerf et le Serpent’, pp. 40-41.

We should long for the source of understanding like a stag longs for water, and I specifically mean that water which those who were about to be baptized had longed for, for the remission of sins; and even those who have already been baptized should still desire that source, about which another scripture says; 'For you are the fountain of life ...'<sup>70</sup>

Perhaps the most important visual evidence for the association of the stag with baptism, especially for the transmission of the iconography, is that of the old font of the Lateran baptistery. Now destroyed, but known from a sixth-century description in the *Liber pontificalis*, seven silver stag heads poured forth sanctified water into the basin of the font which stood in the baptistery.<sup>71</sup>

In England, the idea of stags eating snakes as a form of medicine for rejuvenation is described in the early fifteenth-century hunting manual of Edward of Norwich.<sup>72</sup> However, the association between the serpent-slaying stag or hart and baptism would have been known to medieval people primarily through the liturgy. As discussed in Chapter 1, Easter and Pentecost were the feasts traditionally associated with baptism. The tract *Sicut (or Quemadmodum) ceruus*, taken from Psalm 41 was found in both the Roman and Sarum Uses for the Mass of Holy Saturday.<sup>73</sup> In the Sarum Missal, the reference to *Sicut ceruus* is found after the blessing and lighting of the Paschal Candle and before the

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<sup>70</sup> The quotation is part of a longer extract found in Peuch, 'Le Cerf et le Serpent', p. 40, but the translation is my own ('... *Desideremus ergo velut cervus fontem, excepto illo fonte quem propter remissionem peccatorum desiderant baptizandi, et jam baptizati desideremus illum fontem, de quo scriptura alia dicit : Quoniam apud te es fons vitae ...*').

<sup>71</sup> Olof Brandt, 'Deer, Lambs and Water in the Lateran Baptistery', *Rivista di archeologia Cristiana*, LXXXI, (2005), pp. 131-156, esp. pp. 133-34; Puech, 'Le Cerf et le Serpent', p. 19.

<sup>72</sup> Edward of Norwich, *The Master of Game*, William A. Baillie-Grohman and F. N. Baillie-Grohman (eds), (Pennsylvania, 2005), p. 34.

<sup>73</sup> John Harper, *The Forms and Orders of the Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century: A Historical Introduction and Guide for Students and Musicians*, (Oxford, 1991), pp. 148-49; Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to their Organization and Terminology*, (Toronto, 1982), pp. 264-65; A. Harford Pearson, *The Sarum Missal*, (London, 1884), p. 164 (in the prayers after the Lesson): available from: E-Book Library, <https://archive.org/details/sarummissalinen00unkngoog/page/n248/mode/2up> (accessed 22 September 2020).

Sevenfold Litany, which precedes the blessing of the water for baptism. In addition, part of the baptismal ceremony set out in the Sarum Manual, the Effeta, vividly recalls the way the stag was believed to flush out snakes from their lairs by spitting water or snorting its hot, moist breath into them. The Effeta, the symbolic opening of the infant's ears and nose after the exorcism, is performed by the priest spitting on his left hand, touching the child's ears and nose with the saliva, and saying, 'Be thou put to flight O devil, for the judgement of God is at hand.'<sup>74</sup>

A representation of stags eating snakes and then drinking from a stream is found in a medieval bestiary of c.1230-14th century, possibly from Rochester (Figure 3.20).<sup>75</sup> A stag eating a snake is also shown in a *bas-de-page* scene of the early fourteenth-century Queen Mary Psalter, below the text of Psalm 29, in which the psalmist offers thanks to God for his salvation, 'Thou hast brought forth, O Lord, my soul from hell: thou hast saved me from them that go down into the pit.' (Figure 3.21).<sup>76</sup> One other significant piece of evidence for the association of the hart or stag with baptism in England is an early and direct reference made in the inscription on a tenth- or eleventh-century font from St Mary, Potterne, Wiltshire: +SICUT CERVVVS DESIDERAT AD FONTES AQUARUM [:] ITA DESIDERAT ANIMA MEA AD TE D(EU)S : AMEN (Figure 3.22a-b).<sup>77</sup>

To sum up, the initial hunting scene at Charlwood has symbolic resonance for Margaret's story in a number of ways. Firstly, the idea of Olibrius as the devil-hunter seems appropriate for this context. The hunt depicted as

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<sup>74</sup> Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 164 (Collins, *Manuale*, p. 30: 'Tu autem effugere diabole: appropinquabit enim iudicium dei.')

<sup>75</sup> London, British Library, Royal MS 12 F XIII, fol. 19r. England, c.1230-14th century.

<sup>76</sup> Queen Mary Psalter, London, British Library, Royal MS 2 B VII, fol. 116r. England, 1310-20.

Psalm 29.4 ('Domine, eduxisti ab inferno animam meam; salvasti me a descendentibus in lacum'.)

<sup>77</sup> 'Potterne 1, Wiltshire': Cramp, R. and J. Higgitt, B. Worssam, and R. Bristow, (2006). 'Corpus of Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture Vol. VII, South West England.', Oxford: Oxford University Press. British Academy., VII, *The Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture at Durham University, 2021*, [website],

[https://chacklepie.com/ascorpus/catvol7.php?pageNum\\_urls=160](https://chacklepie.com/ascorpus/catvol7.php?pageNum_urls=160) (accessed 22 January 2021). The transcription of the inscription is:

+SICUTC[E]RVV[SD]ESI[DER]AT[ADFON]TE[S]AQUARU[M:ITADE]SI[D]E[RA.]ANIMAM[EAAD]T[ED]S:AME[N].

the chase of the virginal hare by the greyhound also has resonance here, although the depiction of the steward sounding the horn suggests that the hunting theme was more likely to have referred to that of the hunt for the hart or stag. As an *imitatio Christi* Margaret's passion is inextricably linked to that of Christ, who is symbolically referred to as the serpent-slaying and thirsting stag in patristic and later Christian texts. Indeed, the symbolism of the stag came to represent not only Christ, but saints, the human soul and catechumens. The image that most clearly connects Margaret to the serpent-slaying stag, however, is her combat with the dragon and second demon: the fight of good against evil. This power of exorcism links her to the ceremony of baptism, and thus the figure of the thirsting stag, and to the protection of children more generally. It is the serpent-slaying Margaret shown in the middle and lower tiers of the cycle at Charlwood that is of most interest here.

#### Scene 2 (Figure 3.17)

Wearing a simple dress and veil, Margaret is shown seated on a kind of stool spinning with a distaff. Unusually, there are no sheep depicted at Margaret's feet, although the left-hand side of the picture was damaged when the south aisle was extended in the fifteenth century. Given that all the textual sources refer explicitly to Margaret tending sheep and that the other surviving representations of this scene show the saint surrounded by her flock, there were almost certainly sheep shown here at one time. The steward carrying the banner has been sent ahead by Olibrius to greet Margaret and offer her a ring in marriage, in a similar manner to the later scheme of Margaret's Life (c.1390) found at Limpenhoe, Norfolk, now destroyed but known from antiquarian drawings (Figure 3.23). The fact that Margaret is seated already sets up an opposition to Olibrius, galloping towards her on horseback, and suggests a calamity will befall the saint, who is seemingly hunkered down against the impact, steadfastly immobile. This idea segues neatly into the confrontation between the two protagonists in the following scene.

***The St Margaret cycle: middle tier (viewing from east to west or left to right)***

Scene 3 (Figure 3.24)

This scene was also damaged when the south aisle was lengthened. Part of the dais on which Olibrius was seated remains, as does one of his feet and a hand pointing at Margaret. Margaret is shown nimbed here: her passion has begun. This is one of the scenes, discussed above, in which two episodes of the story have been melded into one. Margaret is arguing with Olibrius, but is also undergoing the first torture, even though she seems oblivious to the efforts of the torturers standing behind her. The two torturers each wield the same weapon: a rod capped with a large object, suggestive of a hammer.

In marked contrast to the earlier painted schemes of Margaret's Life discussed in previous chapters, only two torture episodes are recorded at Charlwood: that of this scene (3) and what is possibly someone hitting Margaret's back as she emerges from the dragon (Scene 6) on the far east end of the lower tier of paintings (Figure 3.25). At Battle, for example, four of a total of twenty-four scenes (7, 11, 17 and 20) are dedicated to specific episodes of torture. Additionally, Picture 19, now completely obscured, may also have shown the saint being tortured. At least two other scenes, 9 and 12 at Battle (and perhaps also 6), evoke the saint's suffering and endurance as she is forced into a prison cell. At Tarrant Crawford, four out of twelve scenes are devoted to episodes of torture and similarly at Wiston at least two out of eight. Thus, torture and suffering appear to have been given considerable weight in the three thirteenth- to early fourteenth-century schemes. However, even the much later fourteenth-century scheme at Limpenhoe has three scenes from a total of eight which show Margaret subjected to specific tortures (being thrown head first into a vessel of water, burnt with torches and scourged). Thus, it was not just earlier schemes of Margaret's Life which placed emphasis on the saint's torture and suffering.

Margaret's suffering was compounded in the majority of the texts by her being stripped of her clothes.<sup>78</sup> At Battle, Margaret is not shown naked, although in Picture 17, where she is hung up by her hair, she may well have been depicted naked from the waist up (the conservator's drawings are unclear here). There is no suggestion that Margaret was depicted naked at Tarrant Crawford, but in Picture 5 at Wiston the top half of her body is bare and this may have also been the case for the following scene (Picture 6) as no collar of a robe is shown.

In earlier representations, depicting the saint naked from the waist up in for this torture seems to have been fairly standard, as evidenced in the early fourteenth-century scheme at All Saints', Little Kimble, Bucks, as well as the thirteenth-century single-figure depiction at St Andrew's, Stoke Dry, Rutland, (Figures 3.26a-b).<sup>79</sup> But the saint's nakedness is not necessarily linked to the paintings' early date. At the church of The Blessed Virgin Mary and St Leodegarius, Northants, the figure of Margaret being hung up by the hair to be tortured on the south wall of the south aisle, possibly the remains of a larger scheme, shows the saint apparently clothed (Figure 3.26c). However, this painting of c.1325 is more comparable in date to the Charlwood paintings. The scheme at Limpenhoe of c.1390 showed Margaret naked from the waist up as she was tortured with burning brands, but fully clothed for the other torture episodes. This is also true of the fifteenth-century scheme in stained glass at St Mary, Combs, Suffolk, discussed in the following chapter, where Margaret is depicted naked for the torture with boiling oil, but otherwise clothed (Figure 3.26d).

It seems, therefore, that the reluctance at Charlwood to dwell on Margaret's suffering is indicative of a particular attitude towards her story.

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<sup>78</sup> In the *Mb passio*, Olibrius orders Margaret to be stripped naked in Ch 17, pp. 210-11. In the *SEL*, Olibrius orders Margaret to be stripped three times (p. 295, lines 113 and 116; p. 299, line 238). In the *LgA* (p. 619), the order is given before her penultimate torture. The *StzL* does not mention that Margaret is to be stripped naked.

<sup>79</sup> It is not entirely certain that Margaret is tied by her hair to a post at St Andrew, Stoke Dry, but she does not appear bound in any other way. Her hair is not visible, so may well, therefore, be caught up above her head and there is a suggestion of two long, dark thin objects, possibly two poles, set in a point above the heads of her and her torturers.

Either whoever drew up the scheme wished to play down this aspect of the narrative for some reason, or, as will be argued here, it was perhaps considered less important than other aspects of the narrative, which they wished to emphasize. The emphasis of the Charlwood paintings appears to fall on Margaret's encounter with the dragon – the serpent of the serpent-slaying stag motif.

***The St Margaret cycle: middle and lower tiers viewing from (from east to west)***

**Scene 4 (Figure 3.27a-b)**

Although not separated by a framing device from Scene 3, it is clear that the figure standing next to the building and the building itself are to be understood as representing a new scene. Margaret is being bundled into a prison cell by one of Olibrius's men, who is carrying an axe. The man has his back turned to the group of figures on the viewer's left – the confrontation scene – as if emphasizing the fact that this is a new episode. Margaret's back, indicated by the same dress, mantle and veil as she was wearing in Scene 3, is shown disappearing into the building, or prison cell. It seems that it was important to whoever drew up the scheme to clearly separate the events up until this point from the demonic episode that follows, as will be examined below.

**Scenes 5-7**

At Charlwood, unlike all other schemes discussed in this study, the thrust of the narrative focuses on Margaret's battle with the dragon. Instead of one scene in which Margaret triumphantly emerges from the dragon's back, as is found, for example, at Battle or Tarrant Crawford, the Charlwood paintings divide the dragon episode into three parts. In addition, to underline the significance of the episode, equal weight appears to be given to each part: Scene 5 shows Margaret being devoured by the beast, in Scene 6 she bursts out of its back unharmed, while in Scene 7 she stands on it and impales it with a lance or staff.

### Scene 5 (Figure 3.28a-b)

As indicated above, in this scene the setting for the action of the visual narrative moves from the outdoors, or public realm, into the interior of Margaret's prison cell. Of course, this change of setting mirrors the textual narratives, but it also presents an opportunity to highlight the different layers of meaning that can be found in this scene. Firstly, the imprisonment of the saint in the cell echoes her forthcoming confinement in the dragon's belly. Secondly, setting the demonic episode so obviously within the confines of the prison cell by showing the structure could imply that this battle with the dragon was something which occurred in Margaret's mind, rather than as a real-world experience. Such an interpretation might well have appeased all those who dismissed the episode as 'apocryphal'.<sup>80</sup> However, thirdly, the setting also suggests that this terrible force of evil, all huge claws, teeth and scaly skin, has been contained. Although the dragon is shown in the throes of swallowing Margaret head first, with the end of her robe hanging from its maw, the *manus Dei* emerging from the heavens presides over the event, blessing Margaret and offering reassurance, as it does for a different episode at Wiston.

Although the use of arcading in this scene can be understood simply as forming the structure of Margaret's prison cell, it may also have evoked associations with the blind arcading found on earlier fonts and under the rooflines of twelfth-century churches, where it was thought to allude to the Heavenly Jerusalem or heaven, as discussed in Chapter 1.<sup>81</sup> It may thus have been intended to evoke associations of baptism in the viewer's mind.

The depiction of the dragon appears to be inspired mainly by the *Mb passio*. A couple of the features of the 'fearsome' *Mb* dragon are still apparent in the depiction of the beast at Charlwood – namely, the 'different colours in its coat' and its 'teeth of sharpest iron'.<sup>82</sup> The *StzL* describes the dragon as 'lothelye' and, like the *Mb passio*, mentions fire issuing from it, although if this was shown at Charlwood, it has not survived. However, the appearance of the dragon in the *SEL* and *LgA* is a more sober affair. The *SEL* does not describe the

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<sup>80</sup> *LgA*: p. 618 ('*apocryphum et friuolum*').

<sup>81</sup> Stalley, pp. 196-97; Twomey, 'Romanesque Baptismal Fonts', pp. 319-20.

<sup>82</sup> *Mb*: Ch 12, pp. 204-05.

dragon, but only recounts how Margaret is consumed. In the *LgA*, the dragon is described as '*immanissimus*' (which translates as both 'immense' and 'monstrous'), but the focus of this version is the way the dragon swallows the saint, being careful to show how she could have been swallowed whole, which would have made her re-emergence unharmed more credible.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, this is not the frenzied gobbling shown at Charlwood, where the saint is swallowed head first. Thus, the two texts that have the most references to baptism – the *Mb passio* and, to a lesser extent, the *StzL* – appear to be the inspiration for the visual narrative in this scene. Most important, however, in its depiction of the devil as a fearsome dragon, this scene conveys the magnitude of the force of evil that Margaret had to contend with. The scene also indicates clearly, through the representation of the *manus Dei*, that God's help enables her to overcome the dragon and that her power as an exorcist derives from God.

#### Scene 6 (Figure 3.29a-b)

Scene 6 shows Margaret rising up out of the dragon's back, praying peacefully, as if impervious to the terrible trial she has just undergone. Not only that, but she is being flogged by the man standing behind her. Representing the saint thus – calm and collected, and obviously unharmed – suggests her confidence in God's protection, but also perhaps in the power imbued in her by God. At Charlwood, Margaret clasps her hands in prayer, whereas the fragments of this same scene at Battle imply she is holding a cross as she emerges from the dragon, which is consistent with the *StzL* and possibly the *Mb passio* (where she is described as making the cross of Christ for herself in the dragon's belly).<sup>84</sup> Therefore, at Charlwood the artist may have referred to either the *SEL* or *LgA* for the iconography of this scene, as both these texts describe Margaret making the sign of the cross in the dragon's belly which then causes the dragon to burst open.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *LgA*: p. 618.

<sup>84</sup> *Mb*: Ch 13, pp. 204-07.

<sup>85</sup> *SEL*: line 163; *LgA*: p. 618 ('*signum cruces edidit et ille euanuit*').

### Scene 7 (Figure 3.30a-b)

This scene, which shows Margaret delivering the final blow to the dragon, is not present in other known visual narrative schemes of Margaret's Life and is thus particular to Charlwood. It seems that the architect of the scheme wished to insist on the fact that Margaret had utterly vanquished the dragon by showing her impaling the figure of the beast and standing on its lifeless form. The scene displaces the routing of the second demon and instead vividly portrays Margaret as the triumphant serpent-slayer and exorcist.<sup>86</sup> It likely derives from the *StzL*, as this is the only text to mention Margaret standing on the dragon when she has emerged from it: 'Meidan Maregrete upon *the* dragun stod. / Blithe was ir herte, ioiful was ir mod. / "Sclawen was *the* dragun *thoru the* uertu of *the* rod."<sup>87</sup>

Other depictions of this incident, in which Margaret impales the defeated dragon, are only found as single-figure representations of the saint. Two such representations, of a similar date to the Charlwood paintings, are those from the right-hand splay of the east window of the north aisle at St Peter ad Vincula, South Newington, Oxon, c.1330 and the Thornham Parva Retable of c.1330-1340 (Figures 3.31a-b). As single-figure representations were intended to distil the meaning of a saint's life into a single powerful image, it is noteworthy that this has been included at Charlwood in addition to the other scenes of Margaret's Life.

Another detail in Scenes 6 and 7, peculiar to Charlwood, is the chain that binds the dragon. This is a reference to the Book of Revelation 2.2:

And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon

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<sup>86</sup> Although in 1963 the conservator Eve Baker thought she could see traces of the second demon in the Charlwood paintings, in 1993 Tom Organ could not find evidence for this but confirmed Margaret was holding a staff and not a martyr's palm (as suggested by Baker): see Tom Organ, unpaginated report of June 1993, under the section headed 'Description' found in the Survey of Historic Wall Paintings of the British Isles, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London (consulted 27 February 2019).

<sup>87</sup> *StzL*: p. 213, lines 177-79.

the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.<sup>88</sup>

The depiction of the chain that constrains the dragon can be seen as referring back to the idea of confinement suggested in Scenes 4-5. It also harks back to Margaret's prayer before she encounters the dragon, in which she refers to Christ's harrowing of hell, '... you whom all physical elements fear, who laid waste the region of hell, bound the devil, and destroyed the power of the dragon ...'<sup>89</sup> However, it also sets the visual narrative of Margaret's story firmly within the sacred history of Scripture.

In the possible textual sources and other visual narratives discussed in this study, Margaret's emergence from the dragon's belly was followed by her encounter with the second demon. Even though there were many difficulties in visually presenting the long and detailed exchanges between Margaret and the second demon, the schemes at Battle and Tarrant Crawford both tackle the challenge, by carefully selecting from that episode one or two incidents, such as Margaret flogging the demon. Therefore, it would seem that whoever drew up the scheme at Charlwood was not interested in rigidly adhering to the narrative as it was set out in the texts. It is particularly remarkable that the architect of the scheme chose to focus on Margaret's encounter with the dragon despite criticism of this episode from, for example, Jacobus de Voragine, Dominican friar and compiler of the *LgA*.<sup>90</sup>

Also omitted from the scheme at Charlwood is the ordeal with fire, boiling oil and water, which comes after the demonic episode and precedes Margaret's execution. Once again, the ordeal is present in some form in all textual narratives and in the other known visual narratives and, as discussed in

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<sup>88</sup> Revelation 20.2 (*'Et vidi angelum descendentem de caelo habentem clavem abyssi, et catenam magnam in manu sua. Et apprehendit draconem, serpentem antiquum, qui est diabolus, et Satanas, et ligavit eum per annos mille: et misit eum in abyssum, et clausit, et signavit super illum ut non seducat amplius gentes, donec consummentur mille anni : et post haec oportet illum solvi modico tempore.'*)

<sup>89</sup> *Mb*: Ch 12, pp. 204-05.

<sup>90</sup> *LgA*: p. 618 (*'apocryphum et friuolum'*).

previous chapters, these tortures tie Margaret's story more closely to the baptismal rite.

What could be the reason for these significant omissions? Perhaps, as space was at a premium, it was deemed that the most important concept – that of Margaret overcoming the devil – had been sufficiently and effectively rendered by focusing on the dragon episode. Perhaps the architect of the scheme decided that by using the readily recognizable iconography of Margaret emerging from the dragon's back praying, or spearing the dragon with a lance, the story would have been more easily identifiable for the viewer. Perhaps the scheme was simply relying on the fact that the audience would have been so familiar with Margaret's legend that their knowledge of the story could have completed any gaps left in the storytelling.

If, however, the Charlwood narrative is viewed in the light of the serpent-slaying hart or stag, then a rationale for the peculiarities of this version of Margaret's story appears to emerge. If Margaret was supposed to be considered as the hart of the hunt, with the powers associated with the hart or stag, then it was natural for the focus of the narrative to show Margaret, the hart, slaughtering the dragon or giant snake. Setting this episode as three equal parts of the visual narrative underscores the importance placed on this moment in the story. Thus, the torture episodes diminish in importance because, in this instance, suffering does not further the overall message of triumph over evil. If considered as an expression of the stag slaying the snake, it gives a theologically sound basis for the dragon scene to be the focus of the story, counteracting its dismissal as frivolous. It renders the struggle with the second demon unnecessary, because he did not appear in the form of a dragon-serpent and was, after all, the devil in a different guise; finding a convincing way of representing him was also avoided. But, notably, because the association of the serpent-slaying hart with the thirsting hart and baptism was so strong in religious texts and the Easter liturgy, it also rendered obsolete the need to show the tortures by fire and water. Baptismal associations abound if Margaret is seen as the hart or stag. She is a powerful exorcist and is in this way connected to the exorcism with salt and the Effeta of the baptismal rite. This does not, however, detract from the fact that she was supposed to protect

women and infants during labour; on the contrary, it reinforces the perceived strength of her God-given powers. By associating her with baptism, her ability to protect children is extended further rather than diminished in any way. The routing of the devil recalled in this part of the ceremony is possible thanks to Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection, undertaken in order to offer humankind the possibility of eternal salvation. Baptism offers the key to unlocking the door to this salvation.

#### Scene 8 (Figure 3.32a-b)

Turning his body slightly away from the previous scene, to indicate the start of a new episode, Olibrius is depicted observing Margaret's execution. In the textual narratives, Olibrius is not present when Margaret is beheaded, and his inclusion here may have been intended to indicate the devil-hunter overseeing his 'kill', as it were. In the paradox that underlies the stories of Christian martyrs, however, Margaret's soul is seen departing heavenwards in the form of a dove. This – Margaret's acceptance into heaven and everlasting life – is Margaret's final triumph over the devil and his acolytes.

#### Summary

As discussed above, the Charlwood narrative presents interesting features which set it apart from those wall-painting cycles of Margaret's Life examined in previous chapters. To begin with, painting Margaret's legend as an uninterrupted flow of narrative is unique to Charlwood and not only allows the artist more freedom to use the wall space as best suits the scenes chosen, but also adds to the drama. By framing the story as a hunt, the legend is able to operate on a variety of levels of meaning and the relevance of Margaret's story encompasses a wide range of audiences.

It seems highly likely that an educated person (or persons), well versed in theology and biblical exegesis, would have been behind the scheme at Charlwood. This is implied by the careful thought given to the choice of subject matter and the meanings offered to the viewer. Treating Olibrius as the devil-hunter and Margaret as the serpent-slaying or thirsting hart does not misrepresent the core message of Margaret's story, but rather intensifies its

significance. Thus, man's dependence on God and overcoming evil can be clearly identified as the overarching intended message of this cycle. The focus on overcoming the devil in the form of a dragon means that torture and suffering are less relevant here than in other schemes. As well as offering associations with the sacrament of baptism, vanquishing the dragon can also be seen to have resonance for the celebration of the Eucharist, which will be addressed below.

But the person(s) who drew up the scheme also realized the importance of ensuring the paintings were accessible to the majority of parishioners. Using the hunting motif would have captured most people's attention, even if they were not well disposed towards hunting. In addition, Margaret emerging from the dragon's back or belly would have been instantly familiar to many viewers and would have offered the traditional associations of the saint as patron of parturient women and their children and an exorcist associated with the care of children's souls through baptism.

At Charlwood, as for the other pictorial cycles of Margaret's Life, discussed in previous chapters, no one textual source seems to have been used consistently as the basis for all scenes in any one scheme. From the analysis of the scenes, it seems that the texts of the *Mb passio*, *SEL* and *LgA* have been predominantly referred to for the depiction of Margaret's passion at Charlwood. The ferocity of the dragon, taken from the description in the *Mb passio*, is appropriate here because it denotes the magnitude of Margaret's triumph. The *SEL* and *LgA*, however, are the likely sources for the way the saint is shown emerging from the dragon's belly because both describe very carefully how the saint was swallowed so that her re-emergence unharmed is as unremarkable as possible. Thus, in these versions, which originated in monastic or mendicant circles, Margaret simply makes the sign of the cross in the dragon's belly in order to foil the attempt to digest her, rather than either of the more implausible versions which describe her fashioning her own cross (*Mb passio*) or being handed Christ's cross by an angel (*StzL*).<sup>91</sup> Thus, although

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<sup>91</sup> *Mb*: Ch 13, pp. 204-07; *SEL*: p. 297, line 163; *StzL*: p. 208, lines 161-64; *LgA*: p. p. 618.

the dragon episode is the focus of the Charlwood narrative, it appears that care has been taken by the architect of the scheme to avoid sensationalism.

### **Analysis of the St Nicholas miracle and the Three Living and Three Dead at Charlwood**

The Miracle of the Three Clerks at Charlwood has a similar iconography to the representation of the same miracle at Wiston (Figure 3.33a-b). The saint stands with his right hand raised in blessing over the pickling tub in which the bodies of the three murdered clerks have been concealed by the innkeeper. Thanks to the intervention of the saint and approval from heaven, the boys emerge unharmed. Set on the other side of the window to the Margaret cycle, this provides a vivid visual reminder of Margaret's re-emergence from the dragon's back or belly. As at Wiston, the outline of a female figure stands behind that of the innkeeper, suggesting that a source such as the 'Fleury' Playbook could have been used at Charlwood as well. With its vivid colours and jagged shapes, the striped ground on which the figures of the innkeeper and his wife stand can be seen to enhance the drama and the movement of the figures.

A similar rendition of the ground in the depiction of the Three Living and Three Dead below the St Nicholas miracle intensifies the drama of this story too (Figure 3.34). It is most unusual for English depictions of this tale to show the three kings out hunting on horseback, and this strongly suggests the intention to refer to hunting in the Charlwood paintings.<sup>92</sup> One of the most well-known English depictions of the scene, which echoes to the depiction of the legend at Tarrant Crawford, is that of the De Lisle Psalter, c.1308-c.1340. The three kings are shown hunting on foot with a hawk, encountering the three

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<sup>92</sup> Of thirty known wall-painting schemes of the Three Living and Three Dead (including that at Charlwood), only one other example shows the kings on horseback and that is a late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century scheme at All Saints', Belton, Norfolk (although it used to be in Suffolk). See Anne Marshall, 'Belton: Suffolk (Norwich)', *Medieval Wall Painting in the English Parish Church*, [website], <https://reeddesign.co.uk/paintedchurch/belton-three-living-three-dead.htm> (accessed 7 January 2021) and Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings*, pp. 81-83 and pp. 346-7 (for a list of the known schemes).

skeletons (Figure 3.35).<sup>93</sup> The psalter uses simple rectangular frames around the kings and the skeletons, in the manner of a diptych. Although the gestures of the two kings nearest the skeletons evoke alarm and fear, the effect is far less thrilling than the work at Charlwood. The horses of the kings at Charlwood appear to have been sharply reined in at the sight of the skeletons – a concept conveyed exceptionally well by the diagonal ground underneath them, which is suggestive of the ground itself having been pulled back. Eschewing the use a vertical frame to separate the kings and the skeletons heightens the tension, as it insists on uncomfortable proximity and having nowhere to hide. Therefore, from what remains of the Three Living and Dead at Charlwood, it appears that the artist has executed the story with great skill.

Both the Miracle of the Three Clerks and the Three Living and Three Dead are concerned with the well-being of lay people – the three young clerks and three kings. The emphasis of both stories on the necessity for all, including the young and those of high status, to prepare properly for death and atone for sins committed suggests that whoever drew up the scheme had a predominantly lay audience in mind and may well have been a lay person themselves.

Visual references to Margaret's Life in the Nicholas miracle and the Three Living and Three Dead, such as the three young men emerging from the pickling tub and the three kings depicted on horseback, connect the paintings on one level. However, on another level, as will be discussed further below, the subject matter of both stories recalls that of the Margaret cycle in that they allude to physical and metaphorical rebirth.

### **Technique, dating and style of the Charlwood paintings**

Evidence for the care taken in drawing up the paintings at Charlwood was found during an early restoration campaign in the form of a grid underneath the painting of the Three Living and Three Dead. The grid, composed of squares measuring 1ft (30cm) x 1ft (30cm), was made by snapping a carbon-black pigmented string against the dry plaster and enabled the artist to enlarge

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<sup>93</sup> De Lisle Psalter, London, British Library, Arundel MS 83 II, fol. 127r.

elements of the scheme in proportion to a smaller original.<sup>94</sup> Although little of the original colour scheme remains, the reconstruction by Ann Worrall suggests that a basic palette of red and yellow ochres, lamp black and white was used skillfully to provide a range of hues including pinks and oranges.<sup>95</sup> A very similar use of colour is found in the four-scene St Margaret cycle on the south wall of the chancel in the church of St Mary the Virgin at Wendens Ambo in Essex, which dates from c.1330.<sup>96</sup>

As regards dating, Tristram proposes a date of c.1350 for the execution of the paintings of Margaret's Life, together with those of the St Nicholas miracle and the Three Living and Three Dead. Pevsner follows Tristram, but earlier commentators, such as Burges and Way and Mainwaring Johnston, opt for a late thirteenth-century date.<sup>97</sup> However, David Park puts forward a date of c.1330, which is supported in the report of the cleaning and conservation of the paintings carried out by Tom Organ in June 1993, where c.1320-1330 is given.<sup>98</sup> It is argued here that the date range of c.1330-1340 is the most likely time frame for the execution of the paintings at Charlwood.

The first piece of evidence for this date range is the window which sits between the Margaret cycle and the representations of the St Nicholas miracle and the Three Living and Dead. It was suggested above that the tracery of this Decorated window followed models such as those at Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral. As Charlwood was under the peculiar jurisdiction of the archbishop of Canterbury and the prior of Christ Church Canterbury held the

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<sup>94</sup> Philip Mainwaring Johnston, 'Charlwood Church and its Wall-Paintings' in *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, XXXVII, (1926), pp. 64-70, Plates I, II, esp. p. 69; Organ, unpaginated report of June 1993, under the section headed 'Technique'; Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings*, p. 130.

<sup>95</sup> The pink colour is also mentioned in Mainwaring Johnston, 'Charlwood Church', p. 70.

<sup>96</sup> Ernest W. Tristram and Gerald Montagu Benton, *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, XXII, 1, (1936-40), pp. 1-27, esp. p. 22.

<sup>97</sup> Tristram, *English Wall Painting of the Fourteenth Century*, p. 156; Nairn, Pevsner and Cherry, *Surrey*, p. 142; Burges and Way, 'Mural Paintings Discovered in Charlwood Church', p. 210; Mainwaring Johnston, 'Charlwood Church', p. 68.

<sup>98</sup> David Park, private correspondence dated 27 May 1997 found in the Survey of Historic Wall Paintings of the British Isles, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London (consulted 27 February 2019); Organ, June 1993, unpaginated report, under the section headed 'Description'.

advowson, perhaps the choir screens at Canterbury were the most likely model. This would make the earliest possible reference to the screens at Charlwood some time after 1304 – yet the south aisle has been traditionally assigned a date of the late thirteenth century. However, the report by Organ suggests that the south aisle could have been built at the same time the old chancel was constructed, that is to say c.1330. Organising and carrying out work on the building would have been quite a complex task, so it would make sense if the construction projects were undertaken at the same time or with one dovetailing the other whilst the workmen and materials were on site. If this were the case, there would have been plenty of time for the possible model from Canterbury to have percolated down into a parochial context.

If the south aisle was constructed around the same time as the old chancel, that is to say c.1330, then the window would certainly have needed to be installed before the paintings were executed, or there would have been a risk of damaging them. This would make it more likely that the paintings were carried out some time after 1330. That the window was indeed installed before the paintings were executed is suggested in the way the fictive arcading shown in the middle tier of the Margaret cycle replicates the trefoil tracery motif of the window. It is also recalled in the design of the *piscina* below (Figure 3.36).

The lack of vertical framing devices in the murals at Charlwood also suggests a fourteenth-century date for the paintings, on the basis of the dating of four other cycles in the section on framing above. Two of the four cycles mentioned date from c.1330 (Idsworth, Hants and Wendens Ambo, Essex), and indeed the Wendens Ambo paintings show several similarities to those of Charlwood. In addition to the colour palette, described above, the paintings were originally set out on three tiers, and the diagonal stripes found on the bottom border of the Wendens Ambo paintings recall the striped ground on which the figures of St Nicholas and the Three Living and Three Dead stand at Charlwood (Figure 3.37).

A discussion of the style of the paintings at Charlwood offers further information about dating and patronage. Some attempt to position the figures logically in relation to one another and the horizontal framing bands has been undertaken at Charlwood – for example where Margaret stands in relation to

the torturers or the prison guard in the middle tier and in relation to the body of the dragon in the lower tier (Figure 3.38). In the upper tier, the figures of Margaret and Olibrius on horseback have been made smaller in relation to those of the two stewards in the foreground in order to suggest depth of plane (Figure 3.39a-b). Generally, however, apart perhaps from the figure of Olibrius seated in the lower tier, the figures seem to lack solidity and appear to hover rather than standing firmly on the ground. However, as only the outline of the figures remains, it is difficult to know if the shading of the ground itself or the garments, for example, might have helped to mitigate this effect.<sup>99</sup>

No facial features survive in the paintings at Charlwood. The figures in the Margaret legend have long, elegant bodies with their heads and limbs generally in proportion – apart, perhaps, from the figure of Margaret emerging out of the dragon’s back and the torturer standing behind her (lower tier, far left), whose heads seem small for the size of their bodies (Figure 3.38). All the figures in the Nicholas miracle, however, show elongated bodies and small heads. Judging by the fingers of Olibrius and the executioner in the Margaret cycle (lower tier, right) or the right hand of Nicholas in the miracle story, hands were depicted with fine, long fingers and Olibrius’s left hand is suggestive of refined gestures (Figure 3.40). Depictions of feet are also long and elegant, and perhaps rather extenuated – as, for example, in the guard who forces Margaret into the prison cell (Figure 3.41).

In some respects, with their tall, slender forms and elegant hands the figures at Charlwood are reminiscent of work carried out at Westminster, notably the wall painting of St Faith of c.1290-1310 in the Abbey chapel dedicated to her and the surviving depictions of kings painted on the *sedilia* in the sanctuary (*sacrarium*) of the Abbey which are of a similar date to the painting of St Faith (Figures 3.42a-b).<sup>100</sup> However, in what can be seen of their

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<sup>99</sup> Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285-1385*, 2 vols, *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, Vol. V, Jonathan J. G. Alexander (ed.), (London, 1986), i., pp. 45-46.

<sup>100</sup> In this discussion of the style of the Charlwood paintings I am indebted to Paul Binski’s exposition of the style of the work on the Thornham Parva Retable in Christopher Norton, David Park, Paul Binski, *Dominican Painting in East Anglia The Thornham Parva Retable and the Musée de Cluny Frontal*,

smaller heads and tenser postures, the Charlwood paintings do not convey the same ease and grace as the Westminster figures, nor their solidity. The figures in the *bas-de-page* scenes of Margaret's Life in the Queen Mary Psalter, probably executed either at Westminster or in East Anglia, are also more relaxed and assured than those of the Charlwood figures (Figure 3.43).<sup>101</sup> Similarly, the poses of the figures in the mural of c.1330-40, which forms the retable for the high altar in the church of St Mary, Brent Eleigh, Suffolk (Figures 3.44a-b), are also less rigid than those at Charlwood.

Although still very fine work, in their slightly awkward gestures and cramped disposition on the wall surface, the figures at Charlwood bear more resemblance to later work than that of Westminster. The saints depicted on the panels of the Thornham Parva Retable and Frontal, c.1330-1340, display some similarities to the figures at Charlwood (Figure 3.45).<sup>102</sup> The long, slender bodies with small heads, oval faces and elegant hand gestures are all present in both the panels and the wall paintings, yet the postures and gestures of both sets of figures on the panels seem stiff in comparison to work produced at Westminster.

Obviously, the artist at Charlwood was painting a narrative, rather than the single figures of the comparisons presented above, and thus had to convey movement and a greater range of gestures in his work. Movement is conveyed at Charlwood notably by the swing of drapery around the legs of the figures, especially that of the steward bearing the ring in the upper tier and Margaret's torturers and prison guard in the middle tier (Figure 3.46). However, the drapery of the Charlwood figures is depicted in a very different manner to the

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(Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, 1987), esp. pp. 65-76 and p. 66 (for the dating of the painting of St Faith and the *sedilia* figures). See also David Park 'Wall Painting' in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200-1400*, Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (eds.), (London, 1987), pp. 125-30, esp. p. 128.

<sup>101</sup> Queen Mary Psalter, London, British Library, Royal MS 2 B VII. England, c.1310-1320.

<sup>102</sup> The Retable and Frontal are now thought to have been produced by painters from Norwich or possibly Thetford: see Paul Binski, 'The Conservation of the Thornham Parva Retable and the art-historical implications' in *The Thornham Parva Retable: Technique, conservation and context of an English medieval painting*, Ann Massing (ed.), (Cambridge, 2003), p. 11 (dating), pp. 13-14 (argument for East Anglian provenance of artists).

paintings at Westminster and those of the Thornham Parva Retable and Frontal panels. In the depiction of St Faith, for example, the drapery hangs down from the saint's mantle in gentle curling folds and coils over her feet. The same is true of the drapery of the *sedilia* figures at Westminster. However, the drapery at Charlwood has more in common with wall paintings of c.1340 found in what was probably the Giffard Chapel in the north aisle of St Peter ad Vincula, South Newington, Oxfordshire.<sup>103</sup> The figure of the Virgin holding the Christ Child shows the long, slender body of the Virgin, with elegant fingers and a small head (Figure 3.47). Her green outer mantle swathes her body, rather than standing open to reveal a lining as, for example, in the painting of St Faith, and line rather than tone is used to suggest folds in the material which hangs down from her arms in sharp points rather than in the curls of earlier work. Likewise, in the depiction of the figure of St Margaret or the Beheading of Thomas of Lancaster, also in the north aisle at South Newington, the material of the clothing finishes in crisp points (Figure 3.48). The same effect can also be seen in the depiction of the drapery of the figure of St John the Evangelist at Brent Eleigh (Figure 3.44b). The 'hardening and flattening of the garment forms' as found at South Newington and Brent Eleigh is also present at Charlwood, particularly in the clothing of the steward bearing the ring in the upper tier and Margaret's torturers and prison guard in the middle tier (Figure 3.46).<sup>104</sup>

Wall paintings in the chancel of St Mary's, Chalgrove, Oxford also form a point of comparison with the Charlwood murals. Dated by Tristram to 1350, the figures and their gestures in the narratives of the Life and Death of Christ (north and east walls of the chancel) and Assumption of the Virgin Mary (south and east walls of the chancel) are generally not as elegant as those of Charlwood.<sup>105</sup> Overall, the grouping of figures in the scenes at Chalgrove is not as well considered in relation to other scenes as it is at Charlwood. Many figures are packed into tight spaces, such as the middle of the south wall, and

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<sup>103</sup> Norton, Park, Binski, *Dominican Painting in East Anglia*, p. 75 (dating) and pp. 74-6 (for Binski's comments on the South Newington scheme).

<sup>104</sup> Norton, Park, Binski, *Dominican Painting in East Anglia*, p. 76.

<sup>105</sup> The saints in the window splays at Chalgrove are taller, more slender and more refined than those of the figures in the narratives.

this gives the impression of overcrowding (Figure 3.10). Despite the elegance of the long, often extenuated hands and fingers of the Chalgrove figures, they tend to be shorter in stature, and the size of the heads often seems out of proportion (whether too small or too large) with the bodies. This can be seen, for example, in the figure of the Virgin in the scenes of the Presentation at the Temple, Mary with the Apostles and the Funeral Procession of the Virgin, especially the group on the right (Figures 3.49a-c). Given how the paint has faded, it is difficult to say much about how the drapery was executed at Chalgrove. However, if the figure of the Virgin in the Jesse Tree (north wall) can be taken as a guide, the more linear, angular forms apparent at South Newington, Brent Eleigh and Charlwood were present here too (Figure 3.50). Therefore, in the shortening of the figures, the flattening of the garment folds and the busy, crowded scenes, the Chalgrove paintings appear later in date than those at Charlwood.<sup>106</sup>

In light of the discussion above, it is suggested that the south aisle was constructed at the same time as the old chancel (c.1330) and the paintings were executed around this time, once the two-light window had been installed. Whilst bearing similarities to other work in a variety of media carried out around the same time in locations across England, the quality of the design and execution of the paintings at Charlwood appears particularly distinguished, especially in the way the figures are set out in relation to one another and in their presentation of movement and drama. Allied to the fact that the Margaret cycle offers complex layers of meaning to the viewer, the skill of the design and execution of the paintings at Charlwood suggests illustrious patronage.

### **The function of the paintings at Charlwood**

When the paintings of St Margaret's Life, the St Nicholas miracle and the Three Living and Three Dead were painted on the south wall of the south aisle at Charlwood, the font stood opposite the south door at the west end of the south aisle beside the arcade. At the other end of the aisle, and still visible from the

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<sup>106</sup> Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285-1385*, i., pp. 46-47

font, an altar would have been situated on the east wall (Figure 3.51). The *piscina* found under the St Margaret cycle would have served this altar. However, by the fifteenth century the altar had been dismantled and the east wall of the south aisle demolished, in order to provide the entrance to the Saunders' family chantry chapel. The powerful meaning offered by the combination of paintings, font and altar was thus irrevocably destroyed and the Margaret cycle damaged in the process.

It was argued that the cycle of St Margaret can be viewed on one level as an account of the events of her brief life and martyrdom. In addition, however, if considered as an *imitatio Christi* and Margaret as the serpent-slaying hart or stag, the cycle can also be viewed as an allegory of good overcoming evil, of rebirth and salvation. Viewed in this light, the paintings of the St Nicholas miracle and the Three Living and Three Dead, which are sited on the other side of the window to the Margaret cycle in the south aisle, also assume a deeper significance. Raising the three clerks from the dead, made possible through the saint's God-given powers, thwarted the evil intentions of the innkeeper. Instead of dying unshriven and thus unprepared for encountering the Last Judgement, when one's sins would be taken into account, Nicholas's intervention offers the clerks a second chance.<sup>107</sup> In their 'new' life on earth, they have time to prepare properly for the afterlife: to live by their baptismal vows, to contemplate their sins and seek absolution, thereby experiencing a metaphorical rebirth. Similarly, the encounter with their skeletons provides the three kings in the Three Living and Three Dead with a second chance: the opportunity to reflect on their lives, to amend their ways and prepare to meet their maker before it is too late.

Thus, all the paintings in the south aisle at Charlwood can be shown to offer meanings related to baptism and, indeed, are set only approximately 10 feet (3 metres) from the font. The paintings of Margaret and Nicholas stress their power as intercessors, but also their ability to overcome the devil. While the Nicholas miracle explicitly illustrates the saint's concern for young people, the paintings of Margaret allude to her concern for infants and their mothers in the way she emerges unharmed from the dragon. As at Wiston, St Margaret is

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<sup>107</sup> Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 301-37, esp. p. 309 and pp. 310-13.

paired with St Nicholas around the south door and at Charlwood the addition of the Three Living and Three Dead serves to emphasize the message of the need to overcome the temptations of the devil, as well for penance and right living or obedience to one's baptismal vows.

At Charlwood, the significance of the south aisle as a portal, the gateway to salvation, would have been emphasized by the combination of the paintings, the font and, before the fifteenth century, the altar set beside the Margaret cycle. In one way or another the paintings all signify a rebirthing and this concept lies at the heart of both the sacrament of baptism and that of the Eucharist. In treatises such as the *Scala Virtutem* of the thirteenth century, used at Salisbury Cathedral to instruct lay religious, the critical significance of baptism and the Eucharist is expressed as the two sacraments forming the two sides of a ladder of which each rung is a virtue.<sup>108</sup> The implication is that without the two sacraments as a framework, the soul cannot progress on its journey to heaven.

The original proximity of the altar to Margaret's cycle may just have been coincidence, in that the wall space might have been more suitable or better lit, for example. But if one of the intended meanings of the cycle was indeed to present Margaret's *passio* as an *imitatio Christi* in which she becomes the serpent-slaying stag, then the presence of the altar would only have underlined this meaning. Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection, commemorated unequivocally in the ritual of the Mass and transubstantiation of the Host overcame the work of the serpent in the garden of Eden. It also permitted mankind the chance of salvation and the human journey towards salvation that began with baptism and the exorcism of original sin.

Such a web of meaning as appears to have been created by the combination of the architecture, furnishings, paintings and liturgical ritual in the south aisle at Charlwood strongly suggests that paintings were not just intended as 'books for the illiterate'.<sup>109</sup> This has been the traditional

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<sup>108</sup> The particular manuscript referred to is Salisbury Cathedral MS 164, fols 19-27, in Matthew Reeve, *Thirteenth-Century Wall Painting*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>109</sup> A similar argument is made by Athene Reiss in "'Books for the Illiterate": Understanding English medieval wall paintings', *The British Art Journal*, Vol. 9, 1, (Spring, 2008), pp. 4-14.

justification for the use of images in a sacred setting, originally formulated by Pope Gregory I in the sixth century.<sup>110</sup> However, as the discussion of the paintings at Charlwood here and in previous chapters shows, there appears to have been an intention not just to instruct the laity in the basic tenants of the faith, but to offer the opportunity to ponder the deeper meanings that could be drawn from the images.

It is likely that some of the intended meanings of the St Margaret cycle at Charlwood, such as the devil-hunter or serpent-slaying stag, would not have been accessible to many viewers without some kind of further elucidation, probably in the form of a sermon. It is impossible to tell how many people attended Mass regularly on Sundays at Charlwood or elsewhere and whether, if they did so, the parish priest would have preached a sermon.<sup>111</sup> However, sermons on saints' lives were considered a suitable alternative to preaching on the Sunday lessons during Mass and thus the Life of St Margaret, for example, might well have provided the subject matter for sermons on more occasions than her feast day alone.<sup>112</sup> In addition, preaching at Easter or Pentecost, the traditional time for the sacrament of baptism to be performed, might also have offered an opportunity for prelates to refer to the saint. Indeed, sermons for Easter appear to have focused on 'the worth of the sacraments and the frame of mind in which they should be approached' – ideas expressed in the combination of the paintings, font and altar in the south aisle at Charlwood.<sup>113</sup>

In her examination of the links between wall paintings and sermons in the later Middle Ages, Miriam Gill describes how there is some evidence for paintings being referenced in sermons, but importantly for this study, how preachers such as John Mirk were adept at combining allegory and narrative in their work.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, it seems that the allegorical use of images appeared frequently in sermons and preaching manuals, and thus it is not impossible

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<sup>110</sup> Caecilia Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art, 300-1150: Sources and Documents*, (Toronto, 1986), pp. 47-9.

<sup>111</sup> Bernard, *Late Medieval English Church*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>112</sup> Helen Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages*, (Oxford, 1993), pp. 31, 71.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>114</sup> Gill, 'Preaching and Image', pp. 161-66.

that the meanings of the Margaret cycle might have been elaborated in a sermon.

In terms of viewing the images, unlike the cycles discussed in previous chapters, the whole Margaret cycle could have been taken in at one glance rather than having to move within the space of the nave. However, the static position of the viewer is offset by the movement within the narrative itself, which is enhanced, notably, by the lack of vertical framing devices and the sway of the drapery. Although moving in a procession past a succession of framed scenes may have perhaps provided a more meditative atmosphere for viewing the cycles, and would have taken more time, the way the narrative has been constructed and executed at Charlwood allows for a more immediate and intense impact on the viewer.

Thus, at Charlwood in the fourteenth century, Margaret's Life was presented so that anyone standing in the south aisle could easily have seen the paintings. They would have been accessible to those people attending a baptism as well as those attending Masses at the altar beside the Margaret cycle, and indeed anyone entering the church through the south door. Therefore, Margaret's Life lay at the heart of parish life and because the intended meanings of the cycle operated on a number of levels, the paintings offered significance for a broad audience.

### **Patronage**

Evidence for interest in Charlwood and the surrounding area by the prior and convent of Christ Church, Canterbury, is suggested in the grant of free warren to the priory in the fourteenth century and the priory's retention of the rights to digging iron at Charlwood until as late as 1396.<sup>115</sup> The priory also held the advowson of St Nicholas, Charlwood since at least the thirteenth century and may therefore have had some involvement in the successive building campaigns, the decision to build a stone tower and in the design of the two-

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<sup>115</sup> 'Parishes: Charlwood', in *A History of the County of Surrey: Volume 3*, ed. H. E. Malden (London, 1911), pp. 182-189. *British History Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/vol3/pp182-189> (accessed 10 January 2021).

light window in the south aisle, which references the choir screens in Canterbury Cathedral. In addition, the textual sources used for the paintings of Margaret's Life were, in the main, those of the *Mb passio*, *SEL* and *LgA*. As these are more sober versions of the Life, the guiding hand of some kind of religious authority can be detected. This is also true of the allegorical meaning identified in the representation of Margaret's legend. It is unlikely that the parsons, Thomas Codelowe and John de Eston, would have been involved in the parish because their other duties and interests meant that most of their lives were spent elsewhere. Perhaps they might have been required to give some kind of official endorsement to the execution of the paintings, but it is doubtful they would have played any significant role in drawing up the scheme. However, Christ Church Priory also owned the manors of Newington, Oxfordshire and Eleigh, Suffolk, where some of the painting parallels closest to those at Charlwood have been identified.<sup>116</sup> It is possible, therefore, that the priory provides the link between the artistic work executed in the three churches. Nevertheless, whether this was the case or not, it is clear that there was a strong connection between Charlwood church and Canterbury in the fourteenth century.

However, the elegance of the paintings in general, the way Margaret's story focuses on her battle with the dragon and the framing of the story as a hunt, are all suggestive of lay interest in the scheme. In addition, the stories of the Nicholas miracle and the Three Living and Three Dead admonish lay people in particular to repent and prepare for death.

It was noted that several wealthy families lived around the church in the fourteenth century, including the Gatwick and Saunder families, and the Saunder family later constructed their chantry chapel in the church. Perhaps, therefore, the most likely patron(s) would have been a wealthy parishioner or a group of people who used the church occasionally, possibly for motives to do

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<sup>116</sup> 'Houses of Benedictine monks: The cathedral priory of the Holy Trinity or Christ Church, Canterbury', in *A History of the County of Kent: Volume 2*, ed. William Page (London, 1926), pp. 113-121. *British History Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/kent/vol2/pp113-121> (accessed 10 January 2021).

with hunting, that had connections to the priory at Canterbury, or access to the help of a theologically-trained advisor, or both.

## **Conclusion**

Margaret's Life on the south aisle wall at Charlwood would have had many functions for those who worshipped in the church. The paintings may have provided comfort for parturient women and they may have formed part of celebrations for the birth and baptism of healthy children. However, the paintings also offered a more complex allegorical interpretation – that of the serpent-slaying hart or stag – based on features of the saint's Life, such as her dragon-slaying powers and her *imitatio Christi*. Margaret's Life was a critical element in the combination of paintings around the south door, including the miracle of the Three Clerks and the legend of the Three Living and Three Dead, which together conveyed the message of the necessity for baptism and repentance. Charlwood church was dedicated to St Nicholas, but rather than the miracle of Nicholas, instead the paintings of Margaret's Life took pride of place beside the altar in the south aisle. The paintings were, therefore, an important addition to the sacred space of the south aisle, involving careful planning and skillful execution. Further allegorical meanings associated with the saint's story will be examined in Part 2 of Chapter 5, but Chapter 4 presents additional evidence for the association of St Margaret and St Nicholas with the sacrament of baptism.

## Chapter 4

### The stained-glass panels of St Margaret's Life at Combs, Suffolk

#### Introduction

One of very few surviving visual narratives of St Margaret's Life in stained glass is found in the parish church of St Mary, Combs, Suffolk (Figure 4.1). Aside from the mid- fifteenth-century glass at Combs, only two other English parish churches, both found in East Anglia, contain remnants of Lives of St Margaret in glass.<sup>1</sup> The first of these churches is St Mary's, North Tuddenham, Norfolk. Set in the west window, the glass dates from c.1420–1430 and consists of two main-light panels and four smaller tracery fragments of what may once have been a more extensive version of Margaret's Life (Figures 4.2a-b).<sup>2</sup> The second church, that of St Peter Mancroft in Norwich, displays a later panel (1453–c.1455) in the chancel east window (I 5e), which is an amalgamation of pieces and episodes from a possible set of panels (Figure 4.3).<sup>3</sup> These vestiges of stained-glass Lives of Margaret will be considered in relation to the glass at

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<sup>1</sup> Possible date ranges for the glazing at Combs can be found in: Christopher Woodforde, *The Norwich School of Glass-Painting in the Fifteenth Century*, (London, 1950), p. 59 (indicates that the glass at Combs is 'more or less contemporary' with the North Tuddenham panels of c.1420-1430); David King, *The Medieval Stained Glass of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich*, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi (GB), Vol. V, (Oxford, 2006), p. 53 fn. 87 ('slightly later 15th-c glass' which compares the glass at Combs to the dates of the Margaret Window panels at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich of 1453-c.1455).

<sup>2</sup> David J. King, 'A Scene from the Life of St Margaret of Antioch', *Vidimus*, [online magazine], Issue 60, (2012), <https://vidimus.org/issues/issue-60/feature/> (accessed 10 May 2019). Date of the glass is given in captions to the images and in paragraph 4.

<sup>3</sup> 'Norfolk, Norwich, St Peter Mancroft, Chancel East Window, Panel I 5e', *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi*, [website], [http://www.cvma.ac.uk/jsp/record.do?mode=COUNTY&gridView=false&sortByField=WINDOW\\_NO&sortDirection=ASC&rowsPerPage=20&selectedPage=4&photodataKey=6182&recPosition=73&recordView=DETAIL](http://www.cvma.ac.uk/jsp/record.do?mode=COUNTY&gridView=false&sortByField=WINDOW_NO&sortDirection=ASC&rowsPerPage=20&selectedPage=4&photodataKey=6182&recPosition=73&recordView=DETAIL) (accessed 13 September 2019). For more on the Margaret panel at St Peter Mancroft specifically, see King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, pp. 52-53 (dating on p. 52) and pp. ccxxv-ccxxx (the Margaret Window).

Combs in the Iconography section below. However, neither the glass at North Tuddenham, nor that at Norwich is in its original window setting, unlike the Life found at Combs.<sup>4</sup> Remarkably, apart from a few pieces which have been replaced (discussed below), the glass at Combs has been very well preserved (Figure 4.4). The panels are set in the south aisle, south wall, in the second window from the easternmost end, and offer a total of six scenes: five scenes from Margaret's *passio* which can be found in all the textual narratives referred to here, and a further scene that shows what appears to be Margaret, together with a sainted bishop, presiding over the baptism of a baby.

### **Description of St Margaret's Life at Combs**

An overview of the panels of St Margaret's Life at Combs is given in this section in order to form the foundation for the discussion that follows.

Panel A (Figure 4.5a): Margaret is kneeling, surrounded by the sheep she is tending, her hands held together in prayer. She is nimbed. She looks upwards to the demi-figure of God the Father, emerging from a cloud. God's right arm and hand extend in Margaret's direction in a gesture of blessing, whilst in his left hand he holds an orb. Rays of golden light travel towards Margaret. On the right side of the scene, Olibrius, on horseback, approaches Margaret. He has a large sword hanging from his left side as if to highlight the danger in which Margaret finds herself and he points at the maiden with his right hand. He is accompanied by two of his retainers, and one of them, on his right, looks as if he is speaking to his master. He is also pointing at Margaret.

Panel B (Figure 4.5b): Margaret, nimbed, is being forced into a prison cell. She has a collar set round her neck attached to a chain and someone, who is not

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<sup>4</sup> David King argues that the panels at North Tuddenham originally came from Wiggshall St Peter, Norfolk: King, 'A Scene from the Life of St Margaret of Antioch', *Vidimus*, [online magazine], Issue 60, (2012), <https://vidimus.org/issues/issue-60/feature/> (accessed 10 May 2019). The panel at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, is now in the chancel, east window, but may originally have been located in a window of the south chancel chapel (or Lady Chapel), window (sV): see King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, pp. ccxxv-ccxxx, esp. pp. ccxxvi-ccxxvii and pp. ccxxix-ccxxx.

visible to the viewer, is dragging her inside a small, fortified structure. The building, with crenellated battlements, has a large entrance protected by a vicious-looking portcullis, which hangs ominously over Margaret's head. The structure suggests violence and thus highlights the plight of the maiden, bound and vulnerable, her hands held up in front of her to indicate she is praying. Behind Margaret stands what appears to be an elegantly-dressed torturer. Beside him stands Olibrius. He has his hands on a gold buckle at his waist and he is looking aggressively at Margaret. Two further figures at the back appear to be conferring, and one of them is holding a sword.

Panel C (Figure 4.5c): Margaret, nimbed, faces Olibrius with both hands raised at her sides as if explaining something. Her right hand appears to be indicating the pale blue devilish form standing on a pedestal in the centre of the picture. This figure has horns, large ears, wings, cloven hands and fur, holding a staff or rod in its right hand. Olibrius, turned to face Margaret and standing on a dais, also holds his hands up and open as if he too is talking.

Panel D (Figure 4.5d): The whole episode takes place on top of a crenellated structure, which may be intended to suggest that the viewer is witnessing what happened inside Margaret's prison cell – a sort of bird's eye view, as it were. Forming the focus of the panel, the dragon's snout rears upwards, separating two figures of Margaret. On the left, Margaret, nimbed, issues from the dragon's belly unharmed, a miracle made more marvellous by the artist's inclusion of rows of sharp fangs in the dragon's maw. Underneath both the dragon and the figure of Margaret, golden curls of flame are visible. The saint looks out towards the viewer and her hands, in a gesture of prayer, support what was almost certainly a long staff surmounted by a cross. Margaret's triumph over the second demon, depicted on the right of the panel, has been conceived in a similar manner. The yellow demon is shown on top of a structure resembling that which frames the dragon. Just as the dragon is defeated by Margaret, so the demon is set firmly under the maiden's feet, its mouth open to reveal small white fangs and its eyes glaring up at her. Margaret herself appears to be jumping on the body of the demon.

Panel E (Figure 4.5e): Uniquely, Margaret is shown here without a halo. She is about to be subjected to two tortures before being executed. Two filled vessels are depicted: on the left a metallic-looking receptacle similar to a milk churn and on the right a wooden tub. The vessel on the left might contain boiling water, but it might also contain boiling oil, both of which are mentioned in the textual narratives and discussed below.<sup>5</sup> The saint and two torturers are situated in front of a cityscape in what appears to be a field or scrub land, as suggested by the plants and foliage. One of the torturers, on the left, appears to be holding a pronged instrument with which he is stabbing the ground. The other man looks as if he is about to grab the saint to immerse her in the vessel of water. Margaret is naked from the waist up, in contrast to the other scenes, but her golden hair and the blue mantle, which covers her lower half, readily identify her for the viewer. She has raised her hands to her shoulders, which suggests her fright at the sight of the vessel of water, but could also be a gesture of submission or prayer.

Panel F (Figure 4.5f): Panel F has often been disassociated from the St Margaret narrative, because no such episode is found in her story. If, however, Margaret's association with baptism is accepted, as discussed in previous chapters, then Panel F has meaning and interest for the Margaret cycle at Combs.

Set in what appears to be the interior of a church or a cathedral, three men, a woman and an infant are gathered round a font. The central figure, standing behind the font and looking directly out at the viewer, is that of a bishop dressed in a red cope with gold detail and a mitre of white and gold. His right hand holds a crozier and his left is raised in blessing. Both the bishop and the woman on the right are nimbed. The woman bends over the infant, which she holds tenderly, while two other richly dressed male figures are seen approaching the font from the left. These two men may be the father and a relative or godparent, or indeed two godparents of the child. The font itself is a

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<sup>5</sup> For boiling water, see *SEL*: p. 300, line 247; Lydgate: p. 159, lines 419-20. For boiling oil, see *StzL*: pp. 229-30, lines 234-39.

large bowl set in a polygonal surround, supported by a pedestal and other smaller columns. An intricate pattern of what is made to look like multi-layered, relief-carved surfaces formed of columns and small windows decorates the outer surface of the font bowl, recalling blind arcading. Features of many of the columns, such as their bases and foliage capitals, have been systematically picked out in yellow, as if gilded. Water can be seen curling in the font basin. The font stands on a dais which is decorated along its outer edge with daisies (small, white, four-petalled flowers with golden centres) and on its upper surface with small dark discs embedded in lighter squares interspersed with a saltire cross motif. This latter design in particular is reminiscent of medieval floor tiles found at Winchester Cathedral or indeed Cosmati work (*opus sectile*), such as that before the sanctuary at Westminster Abbey (Figure 4.6). In the top right corner of the scene, the Holy Spirit, represented by a white dove, sends out rays of golden light into the water of the font.

Almost certainly, the female figure on the right is that of Margaret. The blue mantle and long, golden hair are identical to representations of the saint in the scenes discussed above. If the female figure is that of Margaret, then perhaps, on the basis of the arguments put forward in previous chapters, it is not too far-fetched to suggest that the figure of the bishop represents St Nicholas. Supporting this assertion is the manner in which the bishop has been depicted. It is notable that the bishop is beardless, as would befit a depiction of Nicholas who was ordained bishop as a young man or 'bachelor tut forme' ('a fully formed youth') shortly after his parents died.<sup>6</sup> This ordination of the youthful Nicholas, together with the saint's protection of clerks and the young more generally, were associated with the boy-bishop ceremonies, discussed in Chapter 2. These ceremonies were observed in Bury St Edmunds – less than a day's walk from Combs – and were funded jointly by the town guild and the monastery.<sup>7</sup>

In the Middle Ages, beardless, or youthful, representations of Nicholas were found predominantly in northern Europe. For example, two late-

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<sup>6</sup> For Nicholas's early life, see Blacker et al., *Wace, The Hagiographical Works*, pp. 278-83 (lines 49-156) and line 71 for the quote.

<sup>7</sup> Bury St Edmunds is between 15-20 miles from Combs; Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, pp. 121, 124.

fourteenth-century manuscripts produced in France and owned by members of the English nobility, one a copy of the *Legenda Aurea* and another a compilation of saints' Lives, show beardless depictions of the saint (Figures 4.7a-b).<sup>8</sup> Another notable English example is found in an eighteenth-century antiquarian copy of three, now lost, painted panels that probably formed an altarpiece in the church of Holy Trinity at Ingham, Norfolk. The panels were almost certainly commissioned in the late fourteenth-century by the Stapleton family who were lords of the manor at Ingham and who were known for their devotion to Nicholas.<sup>9</sup> Nicholas is depicted in four out of the six scenes on the Ingham panels and he is shown beardless throughout (Figure 4.8).

Thus, given the evidence discussed in previous chapters for the connection between St Margaret, St Nicholas and baptism, it seems likely that the panel was an integral part of the St Margaret cycle at Combs and the depiction of the youthful bishop attending the baptism of a child is a representation of St Nicholas.

### **The manor and church of Combs: introduction**

In order to discuss the function and possible patronage of the glass panels of Margaret's Life at Combs more effectively, it will be useful to begin with an overview of the structure of the church and the context for the glass.

The earliest evidence for a church at Combs dates from the fourteenth century, although the manor of Combs (*Combas*) is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086.<sup>10</sup> St Mary's, Combs, is a large church, around 40m in total

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<sup>8</sup> London, British Library, Royal MS 19 B XVII, fol. 14r (French, 1382, copy of *Legenda Aurea*, transl. Jean de Vignay. Owned originally by the Beaufort family, possibly Margaret Beaufort.); British Library, Royal MS 20 D VI, fol. 144r (French, 2nd ¼ 13thC. An inscription connects the manuscript to Henry VII and Elizabeth of York.).

<sup>9</sup> John Carter, who copied the panels in 1787, is regarded by David Park as having performed his task with great accuracy: see David Park, 'A Lost Fourteenth-Century Altar-Piece from Ingham, Norfolk', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 130, 1019, (February, 1988), pp. 132-36, esp. p. 133; Fredell, 'The Three Clerks', pp. 193-97.

<sup>10</sup> 'Combs', *Open Domesday*, [website], <https://opendomesday.org/place/TM0456/combs/> (accessed 14 September 2019); Pevsner and Bettley, *Suffolk: West*, pp. 200-01; D. P. Mortlock, *The Guide*

internal length and 20m in width at its widest point across the nave. It consists of a chancel, clerestoried nave, north and south aisles, west tower and two porches – one on the north side and a later, sixteenth-century structure to the south.<sup>11</sup> A fifteenth-century building campaign, which involved the widening of the nave, is referred to in wills from the late 1440s. The first documented glazing bequest for the aisles dates from 1452 and is discussed below.<sup>12</sup>

The church is set on a hill, close to the site of the manor house (now destroyed), but a short walk from the farms and village of Combs. In terms of population and prosperity, 34 taxpayers were recorded living in Combs in 1327 paying a total of £5. 7s. 3d. in taxes. While this figure had increased to 54 taxpayers in 1524, the sum paid was slightly less at £5. 3s. 3d. By comparison, the much larger settlement at nearby Stowmarket counted 49 taxpayers in 1327 who paid £4. 19s.  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. and 94 taxpayers in 1524 who paid £22. 16s. 10d.<sup>13</sup> The figures thus suggest that Combs was relatively more prosperous than Stowmarket in the fourteenth century, but that the wealth of the manor had declined somewhat after the Black Death.

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*To Suffolk Churches*, (Cambridge, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 2009), pp. 120-21; Norman Scarfe, *Suffolk: A Shell Guide*, (London, 1986), unpaginated; H. Munro Cautley, *Suffolk Churches and their Treasures*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1982), p. 255.

<sup>11</sup> The only plan of the building I can find was drawn up by David Elisha Davy in his nineteenth-century 'A Parochial History of Suffolk', London, British Library, Additional MS 19106, fol. 45r (see Figure 4.20). My measurement of the length of the south aisle is 22m, which corresponds to Davy's measurement of 71 ft. 5 in. (fol. 43v). This indicates that that the length of the tower, nave and chancel combined is roughly 44m and the nave would be approximately 20m in width.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Northeast (ed.), *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439-1474. Wills from the Register 'Baldwyne', Part I: 1439-1461*, Suffolk Records Society, Vol. XLIV, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2001), pp. 226-27 (609. John Adgor the Elder of Combs, 22 September, 1452).

<sup>13</sup> All the figures mentioned in this paragraph come from 'Suffolk Parishes: Combs', p. 2, *Suffolk Heritage Explorer*, [website], <https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/Data/Sites/1/media/parish-histories/combs.pdf> (accessed 25 April 2019); 'Suffolk Parishes: Stowmarket', p. 3, *Suffolk Heritage Explorer*, [website], <https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/Data/Sites/1/media/parish-histories/stowmarket.pdf> (accessed 11 November 2019).

## History of the glass panels depicting Margaret's Life and details of the window setting at Combs

The oldest surviving glass in St Mary's, which dates from 1350, can be seen in the tracery lights and heads of the arches of the main lights of two windows at the westernmost end of the chancel on the south side.<sup>14</sup> The remaining painted glass, including the panels of Margaret's Life, dates from around the mid fifteenth century. As well as the Life of Margaret, there are two extant panels from what was once the Seven Acts of Mercy and some figures from what was probably a Tree of Jesse (Figures 4.9a-c).<sup>15</sup>

No official fifteenth-century documentation for the Margaret panels survives. Therefore, to form an idea of the history of the glass and its context, it has been necessary to consider the fabric of the church itself, to consult the antiquarian records and surviving fifteenth-century wills of the parishioners, and to assemble the scant information about the families who may have attended Mass at St Mary's.

Four windows with Perpendicular-style tracery are set out along the south wall of the south aisle at Combs. At the top of each window six tracery lights are set in pairs above each of the three main lights, with the central light taller than the two flanking lights. The window containing the panels of Margaret's story is set in the second opening from the easternmost end of the south aisle, approximately 1.77m from the ground.<sup>16</sup> Images of Old Testament prophets and kings inhabit the six tracery lights, while each of the three main lights contains panels of St Margaret's story (Figure 4.4). Each panel measures 49.5cm (width) x 70cm (length).<sup>17</sup> When standing in the aisle or nave in

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<sup>14</sup> The designation of the glass to certain windows in the church in the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi* website is sometimes misleading. For example, the window containing the Margaret panels is referred to as Nave, south aisle, south window for, e.g. inv. no. 011762 and South aisle west window for inv. no. 021686 (which is incorrect).

<sup>15</sup> The two surviving Acts of Mercy are: Ministering to the Thirsty and Feeding the Hungry.

<sup>16</sup> This is my own measurement taken at St Mary's in May 2019.

<sup>17</sup> These are my own measurements taken at St Mary's in May 2019 and include the frame. Today, the figures that appear in the tracery lights above the Margaret panels are, from left to right: David, Solomon, Obed, Jesse,

daylight, the scenes are not difficult to identify – although many of the details, evident in recent photographs and discussed below, would never have been easily apparent to the naked eye. Although the panels have almost certainly always belonged to this window, their arrangement has changed over the centuries and the changes are traced in the following discussion.

Today the Margaret panels are set in the three main lights as follows: to the left, Panel B and below, Panel E; in the middle light, Panel A and below, Panel C; to the right, Panel D and below, Panel F (see Table 1).

<i>Left main light</i>	<i>Middle main light</i>	<i>Right main light</i>
	<b>Panel A</b> Olibrius approaches Margaret tending sheep	
<b>Panel B</b> Margaret dragged into prison		<b>Panel D</b> Demonic episode
	<b>Panel C</b> Confrontation between Olibrius and Margaret	
<b>Panel E</b> Torture with oil and water		<b>Panel F</b> Baptism

**Table 1:** St Mary, Combs, Suffolk. Arrangement of the panels of St Margaret’s Life in the south aisle window today.

Panel A must always have been set at the top of a main light as the first episode in Margaret’s legend, because of the position and shape of the uppermost section containing God the Father. Its depiction of Margaret with her head tilted backwards, her raised hands and her facial expression gazing upwards directs the eye out of the rectangular frame and into what might have been considered as the heavenly realm above. Panel A therefore appears to have been the only panel intended for the top of the central main light, as it is the only scene designed with the top of an arch in mind and would have looked out

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unidentified, unidentified. It is probable that some or all of these figures differ from the original arrangement, possibly having been substituted with figures from other windows in the south aisle.

of place in the left-hand panel, with no mirror or pendant image in the same position on the right.

Several factors indicate that the Margaret panels were originally located in this window of the south aisle (the second window from the easternmost end). In 1827, David Elisha Davy surveyed the church and its contents for his 'Parochial History of Suffolk' and specifically noted the Life of St Margaret in this window.<sup>18</sup> However, notable differences arise between the layout of the panels of Margaret's Life as they are set in the window today and Davy's description of them in 1827. Firstly, Davy does not mention Panel F (the baptism scene), an omission which will be discussed later in this section. In addition, the order of the panels in Davy's description is different to the order in which they appear today, with Panel C (the confrontation scene) set above Panel B (the prison scene). In his notes, Davy divides the surface area of the window into 'divisions'. These 'divisions' are frustratingly unclear, but following certain phrases in Davy's written description such as 'the above man', 'under the group described above' and 'under the above', the most likely interpretation seems to be that Panel A was positioned at the top of the middle light, as it is today, Panels C and B were set one underneath the other in the left-hand light, while Panels D and E were likewise set one underneath the other – but this could have been in either the middle light or the right-hand light, as Davy's description does not make this clear (see Table 2 below.)

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<sup>18</sup> Davy, 'A Parochial History', fols 43v-44r. Davy records the date of writing the Church Notes for Combs as 14 June 1827 on fol. 43v. For the full account of the Margaret panels by Davy, see Appendix D, item 1.

<i>Left main light</i>	<i>Middle main light</i>	<i>Right main light</i>
	<b>Panel A</b> Olibrius approaches Margaret tending sheep	
<b>Panel C</b> Confrontation between Olibrius and Margaret	<i>[Panel D</i> <i>Demonic episode]</i>	<b>Panel D</b> Demonic episode
<b>Panel B</b> Margaret dragged into prison	<i>[Panel E</i> <i>Torture with oil and water]</i>	<b>Panel E</b> Torture with oil and water

**Table 2:** St Mary, Combs, Suffolk. Probable arrangement of the panels of St Margaret's Life in the south aisle window as Davy saw them in 1827.

If Davy did see Panels D and E in the middle light under Panel A, this could suggest that there were two further panels of Margaret's Life set in the right-hand light that had been destroyed by the time Davy visited the church. Although this is possible, and scenes such as the beheading or enshrinement of the saint could have been included, it would seem strange that these were the only panels of the Life to have been completely destroyed. There does not appear to have been any easy means for iconoclasts to access the right-hand side of the window and indeed, damage to the panels visible today seems to have been concentrated on the faces of the characters. It is thus more likely that Panels D and E were set one under the other in the right-hand light.

Davy's visit to Combs, took place some forty years before the church suffered damage from an explosion at the gun-cotton works in Stowmarket in 1871 and at least fifty years before the Victorian refurbishment of the church began in 1885. It is likely that the north aisle of the church suffered the worst of the blast from the factory, as this is the side of the building which faces Stowmarket. As most of the glass in the Margaret panels appears original, with the exception of around twelve new pieces (discussed in detail below), it is unlikely that it suffered much, if any, damage from the factory explosion. For the most part, the new pieces of glass replace depictions of the saint's head, suggesting that damage was more targeted, and probably, therefore, iconoclastic. Similar damage can be found in the glass of many other parish churches, where the heads of key figures were destroyed (Figures 4.10a-c). In

addition, the Victorian refurbishment at Combs appears to have valued medieval items of the church's fabric. This is shown in the care taken to uncover the two image niches on the eastern wall of the chancel and the finely-carved triple *sedilia* and *piscina* also in the chancel on the south wall. Thus, it would seem that those in charge of the refurbishment would have been more likely to preserve the glass rather than consign it to oblivion.

As mentioned above, one important omission from Davy's notes is Panel F (the baptism panel). It is possible that the reason for the omission was that Davy did not associate the baptism panel with Margaret's story and therefore did not include it in his notes – a possibility which is supported by the way he records Margaret's legend in Latin underneath his description of the glass.<sup>19</sup> In the arrangement of the panels Davy records (Table 2), there would have been ample room to include Panel F, and it could possibly have occupied the position of Panel C in today's layout (that is to say, in the middle light, towards the centre).

However, Panel F is recorded, together with the Margaret panels, in an unspecified south aisle window by Hamlet Watling in 1894 and later by M. R. James in 1930.<sup>20</sup> Watling relates the content of the Margaret scenes as they appear today, but he misidentifies the protagonists, describing them variously as Sts Catherine, Juliana and Margaret. Watling also includes the two Acts of Mercy (currently located in the south aisle, south wall, easternmost window) in the same window as the Margaret panels, while Davy had observed them further west in the window next to the Margaret panels (that is to say, the third window from the east end of the south aisle on the south wall). This suggests that, despite advice to the contrary, the Victorian restoration repositioned the

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<sup>19</sup> Davy, 'A Parochial History', fols 47r-47v. Davy records his source as Petrus de Natalibus, *Catalogus Sanctorum*, Liber VI, and says that Jacobus de Voragine, *De Legendis Sanctorum*, 1470, fols 111-12, has a similar account.

<sup>20</sup> Hamlet Watling, 'Painted Glass in Suffolk Churches. Combs.' in *The East Anglian, or Notes and Queries on Subjects Connected with the Counties of Suffolk, Cambridge, Essex and Norfolk*, I, Part cxviii, (October, 1894), pp. 344-46, esp. p. 345; M. R. James, *Suffolk and Norfolk: A Perambulation of the Two Counties with Notices of their History and their Ancient Buildings*, (London, 1930), pp. 77-8.

Acts of Mercy.<sup>21</sup> An early photograph of the window containing the Margaret panels, found in a scrapbook compiled by George Tidmarsh, who lived in Combs from 1865 to 1912 and was churchwarden at St Mary's between 1885 and 1898, almost certainly shows the window as it would have appeared to Watling (Figure 4.11).<sup>22</sup> Here the panels are positioned in the lights as follows: Panel A at the top of the middle light, where it is seen today; in the following row, the first panel in the left-hand light is unidentified, the second panel is Feeding the Hungry (from the Acts of Mercy), and the third panel is also unidentified; in the second row, the first panel in the left-hand light is Ministering to the Thirsty (from the Acts of Mercy), Panel D is set in the middle light, and Panel B in the right-hand light; in the third (bottom) row, Panel F is set in the left-hand light, Panel C in the middle light, and Panel E in the right-hand light (see Table 3).

<i>Right main light</i>	<i>Middle main light</i>	<i>Left main light</i>
	<b>Panel A</b> Olibrius approaches Margaret tending sheep	
<i>unidentified</i>	Feeding the Hungry	<i>Unidentified</i>
Ministering to the Thirsty	<b>Panel D</b> Demonic episode	<b>Panel B</b> Margaret dragged into prison
<b>Panel F</b> Baptism	<b>Panel C</b> Confrontation between Olibrius and Margaret	<b>Panel E</b> Torture with oil and water

**Table 3:** St Mary, Combs, Suffolk. Probable arrangement of the panels of St Margaret's Life in the south aisle window as shown in Tidmarsh's photo.

The photo from Tidmarsh's book shows the scenes as they almost certainly appeared to M. R. James when he visited the church at Combs and described the Margaret panels and other surviving glass, some time before 1930 (Table

<sup>21</sup> A letter from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings to the rector of the church, dated 6 August 1884, strongly advised against removing any of the glass, with the possible exception of the east window: see Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich: FB 211/E5/1-7.

<sup>22</sup> Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich: FB211/A/2/1.

3). James does not specify which window contains the Margaret panels, other than to say that it is found in the south aisle.<sup>23</sup> He also mentions 'windows' rather than one window, but this may be because he notes other figures from the Old Testament that once formed part of a Tree of Jesse, and these figures were found in a different window to either the Margaret panels or the Acts of Mercy, as recorded by Davy in 1827.<sup>24</sup> Such an interpretation of James's findings is supported by the fact that he mentions the genealogy of Christ as 'very much scattered'.<sup>25</sup>

Shortly after James's visit to Combs, the glass was dismantled for safekeeping during World War II.<sup>26</sup> The restoration of the Margaret panels and their current location in the south aisle in the early 1950s is acknowledged as the work of Miss Joan Howson. Miss Howson (1885-1964) was a stained-glass artist who worked on various prestigious commissions to restore medieval glass, such as the windows of the Chapter House at Westminster Abbey.<sup>27</sup> It would appear that the newly painted pieces of glass at Combs are attributable to her. However, the Tidmarsh photo shows heads on the figures in all panels except perhaps Panel D (demonic episode), so it may be that the replacement heads are in fact Victorian. Of the five episodes depicting the Life of St Margaret (Panels A-E), the pieces that have been replaced are as follows:

Panel A (initial meeting with Olibrius), piece with demi-figure of God the

Father; Panel B (the imprisonment scene), head of Margaret;

Panel D (dragon scene), head of figure of Margaret on viewer's left;

Panel E (water torture), head of Margaret (x2 pieces), possibly three purple pieces above standing torturer's head, possibly the faces of the two torturers.

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<sup>23</sup> James, *Suffolk and Norfolk*, p. 78.

<sup>24</sup> Davy records Old Testament figures in a fourth and fifth window of the south aisle: 'A Parochial History', fols 44r-44v.

<sup>25</sup> For the full account of the glass taken from James, see Appendix D, item 2; James, *Suffolk and Norfolk*, p. 78.

<sup>26</sup> Roy Tricker, *Exploring St Mary's, Combs: A Guide to the Church*, unpaginated and no printing date, although a photo from 2017 included. See section *How old is the church? The 20th Century*.

<sup>27</sup> 'Joan Howson, Artist', *Westminster Abbey*, [website], <https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/joan-howson> (accessed 13 January 2021).

In Panel F (the baptism scene) the head of Margaret and the bishop are new.<sup>28</sup>

In general, the fifteenth-century depictions of Margaret have slightly hooded, rounder eyes, compared to those of the more recent faces, and the shape of the noses and mouths is also rounder. This is particularly clear if the figure of Margaret from Panel C and the left-hand depiction of Margaret in Panel D are compared (Figures 4.12a-b). Panel C presents a three-quarters view of Margaret's face, in which the eyes are round but the eyelid comes down over the uppermost part of the eye. No eyebrows are painted above the eyes and only the tip of the nose is rendered, with shading indicating the left nostril. The mouth, which sits neatly under the nose, is rendered with a dark, curved line for the upper lip and a full bottom lip. Panel D, however, presents a front view of Margaret's face with two arched eyebrows above small, round eyes and includes the profile of the nose, all clearly delineated with a thin line of paint. Margaret's mouth is narrower and her hair hangs straighter and looser than in Panel C. In addition, the later glass lets more light through than the pieces painted in the fifteenth century and is thus relatively easy to identify.

Any discussion of the replacement glass at Combs needs to consider that if, as suggested above, the bishop and the woman in Panel F are to be identified as Sts Margaret and Nicholas, then it must be established that these figures, whose heads have been replaced, were shown nimbed originally. Although James in 1930 does not mention that the bishop was nimbed, stating only that the female figure and the child bear halos, Watling, writing c.1894, clearly states that, 'Before a beautiful early English font stands a bishop, with nimbus surrounding a tall mitre, in his left hand a crosier.'<sup>29</sup> Watling's statement appears to be supported by the photo in Tidmarsh's book (Figure 4.11, bottom left-hand corner), which would have been taken some time before 1912 when Tidmarsh died. It is possible that the bishop's mitre was all that was apparent or significant to James, but it may be that not mentioning the halo was a simple oversight, for it is extremely unlikely that the glass would have been any different when James saw it to the way it was presented after the Victorian

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<sup>28</sup> The assessment of the renewed pieces is based on my own observations and information kindly supplied by David King (email of 13 May 2019), who states that Miss Howson was responsible for the new heads on the figures at Combs.

<sup>29</sup> Watling, 'Painted Glass', p. 345.

restoration. In addition, it seems doubtful that any restorer would have assigned a halo to the bishop without some kind of guidance from the original, and perhaps the shape and size of the piece might have been taken into account even if the painted features or details of the head had been lost at some point. It must also be noted that the way the piece fits with the other segments of original glass is indicative of the fact that this quasi-circular form was always the intended shape of the piece and that, therefore, the bishop was always shown nimbed. Thus, although it is impossible to prove, it seems plausible that both the bishop and the woman were shown nimbed originally.

What remains unclear, however, is whether the child was nimbed. Although both James and Watling state that such was the case, it is not apparent in Tidmarsh's photo, even when it is enlarged. This corresponds with the glass as it appears today, where the child's head sits against the background of Margaret's halo, but is thus not necessarily nimbed itself. Without the help of digital technology to enlarge the photo, and seen from a distance standing in the aisle looking up, it would be easy to mistake the halo around Margaret's head for one framing the child's head as well. It thus seems highly likely that the original artist's intention was to show the bishop and the female figure nimbed, but not the child. This would then support the identification of the figures of the bishop and the woman as Sts Margaret and Nicholas.

To sum up, although the order of the Margaret panels in the window at Combs has changed over the course of the centuries, only a few pieces of the original fifteenth-century glass have been replaced and the location of the panels in the south aisle, second window from the east, appears to have been consistent. To support this view, David King asserts that the Margaret Window (?sV), of 1453-c.1455, at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, was also likely the second window from the east end of the south aisle, although at Mancroft the window would have been part of the chancel and set behind the rood screen.<sup>30</sup> Whoever organized the Margaret panels for the Victorian layout at Combs (Table 3), as

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<sup>30</sup> King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, p. xxvii (ground plan of St Peter Mancroft), pp. lviii-lx (the South Chancel/South Chancel Chapel), p. xcvi (dating of St Margaret Window).

described by Watling and evident in Tidmarsh's photo, appears to have been unaware that the Margaret panels were all part of the same story – a situation which could have led to the misidentification of the protagonists. Today's layout of the panels (Table 1) makes complete sense in terms of the progress of the narrative of Margaret's Life, as found in all the major textual sources consulted so far. However, if the interpretation of Davy's description of the layout of the panels is correct (Table 2), and if, as is likely, it reflects the original layout of the panels, this provides food for thought, particularly when considering how the panels might have been viewed.

Firstly, it must be noted that the window containing the Margaret panels and the narrative in the glass can be seen relatively easily by standing in the south aisle close to the nave arcade (Figures 4.13a-b). Currently, the layout of the panels means that the narrative reads conventionally from top to bottom and left to right. If the viewer wished to stand in front of each panel, perhaps while Margaret's story was being read aloud, this would have required a fair amount of shuffling backwards and forwards in the aisle, from right to left and back again. However, if the panels were set as per Davy's layout (Table 2), it would have made things considerably easier for an audience, as they would only have had to make minimal movements in the space: from the middle to the left and then to the right. The text used to guide the viewer could have recounted how Margaret was seen by Olibrius (Panel A), brought before him for the confrontation scene (Panel C), put in prison (Panel B), where she encountered the devil in two guises (Panel D), and was then tortured with oil and water when she refused to recant (Panel E). This layout is also powerful semantically. Panels C and D taken together horizontally show how Margaret's unwavering faith enables her to eschew all attempts to make her worship 'deaf and dumb idols' and to triumph over the devil and his associates.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Panels B and E, also considered as a pair, show the price Margaret has to pay in humiliation and suffering in this world, but in the clear knowledge that she will obtain reward in heaven. Reading vertically, Panels D and E as a pair are also related in terms of baptismal significance, showing metaphorically three aspects of the baptismal rite: exorcising the devil, being anointed with holy oil

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<sup>31</sup> *Mb*: Ch 17, pp. 210-11.

and being immersed in water (this will be examined in detail below). Perhaps, therefore, it is not too far-fetched to suggest that in Davy's configuration, Panel F (showing the two saints attending the baptism of a child) was set in the middle light under Panel A, possibly in a similar manner to Panel C today.

### **Who might have drawn up and paid for the glass panels of St Margaret's Life at Combs?**

In the late fourteenth century, the manor of Combs passed, through inheritance, from the de Ufford family, Earls of Suffolk, to the Willoughby family.<sup>32</sup> It is unlikely that the Willoughby family ever lived in the manor house of Combs Hall, which stood to the south side of St Mary's, but they are recorded in the list of Rectors and Patrons for the parish of Combs as overseeing the appointment of the rector from 1402 onwards.<sup>33</sup>

Although the name Willoughby appears as patron (Willelmus Willoughby, miles, Dominus de Eresby) for the appointment of Dominus Gilbertus Spryngman, Junior, to the benefice of Combs in 1402, from 1410, the patron changes to another member of the Willoughby family, Robert de Willoughby (Robertus de Willoughby, Dominus de Eresby), sixth Baron Willoughby de Eresby. Robert de Willoughby died in 1452 without male issue and, although the title Baron de Eresby was passed to his daughter, Joan, it appears that the manor of Combs was inherited by his nephew of the same

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<sup>32</sup> Sir Egerton Brydges (ed.), *Collins's Peerage of England; Genealogical, Biographical and Historical*, Vol. VI, (London, 1812), pp. 609-10; Davy, 'A Parochial History', fol. 41v; W. A. Copinger, *The Manors of Suffolk: Notes on their History and Devolution*, Vol. 6, (Manchester, 1910), pp. 152-53; Augustine Page, *A Supplement to the Suffolk Traveller, Or, Topographical and Genealogical Collections Concerning that County*, (Ipswich, 1844), pp. 526-28.

<sup>33</sup> Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich: List of Rectors and Patrons of Combs, St Mary, compiled by Henry Kenelm Florance, appointed rector of Combs in 1948, FB 211/C7/1, unpaginated. The accuracy of this list is supported by John Adgor's will of 1452, which states that 'Sir William' [William Churchman, rector 1429-1456] was rector at Combs at this time: see Northeast (ed.), *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439-1474. Wills from the Register 'Baldwyne', Part I: 1439-1461*, pp. 226-27 (609. John Adgor the Elder of Combs, 22 September, 1452).

name, Robert Willoughby of Parham, Knight.<sup>34</sup> ‘Robertus Willoughby, armiger’ is recorded in 1456 as appointing Dominicus Johannes Wright as rector of St Mary’s, Combs, which indicates that Robert Willoughby of Parham had come into the inheritance of the manor from his uncle at least by this date. Robert Willoughby of Parham married Cecilia de Welles and had two, possibly more, children by her.<sup>35</sup> Their eldest son, also called Robert, was born c.1450 and died underage just after his father in 1467. His brother, Christopher, who later became Sir Christopher Willoughby, Lord Willoughby de Eresby, was born c.1453.<sup>36</sup> The date range of 1450-1456 is thus significant for Robert Willoughby of Parham and his family and coincides with the rebuilding and glazing of the south aisle of St Mary’s, Combs.

It is likely that the lords of the manor and the rectors of the church would have had some involvement with the building campaigns of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and therefore in deciding what subjects were to be represented in the new glazing schemes. Norman Scarfe suggests that the de Uffords could well have provided funds for the fourteenth-century building campaign at St Mary’s, citing as evidence, for instance, the ‘very fine examples of flowing window-tracery’ in the chancel from the early fourteenth century, as well as the shields, probably originally painted and gilded, bearing the de Ufford arms found over the north and south entrances to the tower.<sup>37</sup>

Although it is highly likely that the lords of the manor of Combs were also involved in the fifteenth-century building campaign at St Mary’s, wills of the fifteenth century show that, to some degree, money for the reconstruction of the nave and construction or reconstruction of the aisles was furnished by

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<sup>34</sup> Copinger, *Manors of Suffolk*, p. 153; Davy, ‘A Parochial History’, fol. 41v.

<sup>35</sup> Brydges (ed.), *Collins’s Peerage*, pp. 609-10; Michael Hicks, (3 January 2008). ‘Willoughby family (per c.1300-1523), magnates’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.001/odnb-9780198614128-e-52801?rskey=QttuuY&result=1> (accessed 15 January 2021). Mentions Christopher Willoughby, second son (d.1499), as great nephew of Robert (III), sixth Baron Willoughby (d.1452).

<sup>36</sup> Copinger, *Manors of Suffolk*, p. 153.

<sup>37</sup> Norman Scarfe, ‘Edgar’s Farmhouse,’ in *Counties and Communities*, Carol Rawcliffe, Roger Virgoe and Richard Wilson (eds), (Norwich, 1996), pp. 64-65. The Ufford shield of arms is ‘sable, a cross engrailed or’.

the people of the parish. Simon Cotton notes that in 1447 and 1449 there were bequests of 20s. and 12d. respectively towards the building of an aisle.<sup>38</sup> Two wills, dated to the spring of 1472, leave money for the glazing of the east window in the south aisle: 12d. was given by Nicholas Rodys and 8s. by Simon Turnour.<sup>39</sup> Neither testator specifies, however, what subject matter they wished to be included in the window or any other details of how the finished glass should look.

However, if the Margaret panels date to the mid fifteenth century, as is contended here, then an earlier will, of 1452, might provide some indications as to the commissioning of the panels. In his will of 22 September 1452, John Adgor, from a family of prosperous farmers, left 6s. 8d. for ‘the making (*opfic'o*) of a new window in (*super*) ‘le ele’ of the Holy Trinity of the said church’.<sup>40</sup> Although it is not certain that the south aisle at Combs was called the Holy Trinity aisle in the fifteenth century, the same dedication is reflected in a chapel built on the south side, south wall, of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, between c.1440 and c.1450.<sup>41</sup> In addition, the theme would have been particularly apt for the south side of a church, where the font would have been located and where baptism (‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost’) would have taken place.<sup>42</sup>

As 6s. 8d. occurs regularly in Suffolk wills of mid-fifteenth-century date for all manner of bequests – for example to pay for forgotten tithes, provide for children and for the general upkeep of parish churches – it can be considered

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<sup>38</sup> Information kindly supplied by Simon Cotton in an email dated 12 May 2019. The 1447 bequest was made by John Hasard (Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich: Suffolk Archdeaconry Court will register: IC/AA2/1/56) and the 1449 bequest was made by Edw. Dryver (Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds: Sudbury Archdeaconry Court will register: IC/500/2/9/138).

<sup>39</sup> Peter Northeast and Heather Falvey (eds), *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439-1474. Wills from the Register ‘Baldwyne’, Part II: 1461-1474*, Suffolk Records Society, Vol. LIII, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2010), p. 283 (20 April 1472: ‘to the east window of the south side (*partis*) of the same church’), p. 347 (26 March 1472: ‘to the east window of the south side of the said church’).

<sup>40</sup> Scarfe, ‘Edgar’s Farmhouse,’ p. 65; Northeast (ed.), *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439-1474. Wills from the Register ‘Baldwyne’, Part I: 1439-1461*, p. 226.

<sup>41</sup> King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, p. lx.

<sup>42</sup> Collins, *Manuale*, p. 36 (‘in nomine patris. et filii. et spiritus sancti. Amen.’).

as a standard sum of money rather than an amount where the donor had a specific commission in mind.<sup>43</sup> Thus, John Adgor appears to have been making a generic payment for an item for which the final form and content would be decided by others, possibly by a consensus of different parties. The same can be said for the later bequests made by Nicholas Rodys and Simon Turnour, except that Rodys and Turnour both specified the windows in the south aisle for which their money was intended, while there is no way of knowing from Adgor's will whether his bequest related to the St Margaret panels.

Is it possible, therefore, to work out whether 6s. 8d. was enough to fund the Margaret panels? Few windows and even fewer documents survive to shed light on what might have been similar glazing commissions to the Margaret panels at Combs. Certainly, the information available on the commissioning and execution of the west window of St Margaret's church, Westminster, at the end of the fifteenth century, suggests that 6s. 8d. was a fairly paltry sum. It is perhaps unfair to use St Margaret's to make a comparison with Combs; even though this was a parish church, its parishioners would most likely have been wealthier than the average parishioner at Combs, and craftsmen working in Westminster may well have expected higher wages than those working in East Anglia. Nevertheless, Robert Hunt, who commissioned the no-longer extant glass for the west window at St Margaret's in 1499, not only drew up a very precise idea of what he wanted the window to contain, but paid an advance of 40s. to the craftsman, Adrian, supplied him with 900 lbs of glass which, Richard Marks suggests, would have cost in excess of 30s., and instructed his executors to pay Adrian a further £6 on completion of the project.<sup>44</sup> These sums are a far

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<sup>43</sup> Northeast (ed.), *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439-1474. Wills from the Register 'Baldwyne', Part I: 1439-1461*: for forgotten tithes, e.g. p. 19 (47. John Resshebrook the elder of Combs, 14 March 1439/40), p. 130 (346. Marion Fenkele of Gipping in the parish of St Peter, Stowmarket, 2 May 1446 and 13 Feb. 1446/7), p. 170 (446. John Archer of Lavenham, 9 Sept. 1452); bequests to children, e.g. p. 225 (601. Stephen Bole of Combs, 14 March 1451/52), p. 484 (1393. John Cryketot of Buxhall, 12 April 1461); upkeep of churches, e.g. p. 225 (603. William Campyon of Icklingham, 12 June 1452), p. 227 (610. John Pursere of Stoke by Nayland, 3 Oct. 1452).

<sup>44</sup> Richard Marks 'A Will Casts Light: Robert Hunt and the West Window of St Margaret's Church, Westminster', in *Patrons and Professionals in the Middle Ages*, Proceedings of the 2010 Harlaxton Symposium, Harlaxton Medieval

cry from John Adgor's 6s. 8d. Possibly, then, rather than being intended to pay for a complex narrative scheme, perhaps the Adgor bequest would more likely have been meant to cover the lesser expense of a single figure or figures, especially as cartoons for such figures were often reused.<sup>45</sup>

However, as the sums recorded for fifteenth-century glazing bequests for Combs are quite small, it is possible that a glazing fund had been set up. Parishioners could have contributed to the fund and could perhaps have requested some form of public recognition of their piety and generosity, although no such requests are evident in the wills that mention glazing bequests discussed above. Such an initiative would, however, almost certainly have required somebody, or perhaps a group of people, to give direction about layout and subject matter, in order to achieve coherence in each window and avoid duplication.<sup>46</sup> If the Margaret panels date from around the mid fifteenth century and the later bequests of Rodys and Turnour specify that their money is to go to the glazing of the east window in the south aisle, this indicates that, as with the majority of glazing schemes in parish churches at this time, the glazing work at Combs was undertaken in phases.<sup>47</sup>

One parish church that shows a phased glazing scheme undertaken at a similar time to the work at Combs is that of St Neot, Cornwall, rebuilt and enlarged around 1480.<sup>48</sup> Although two windows in the church probably contain glass from an earlier scheme, the rest of the glazing, which has mostly survived intact, appears to have been installed in different stages over the

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Studies, XXII, Paul Binski and Elizabeth A. New (eds), (Donington, 2012), pp. 366-85, esp. p. 369.

<sup>45</sup> Richard Marks, *Stained Glass in England during the Middle Ages*, (London, 1993), p. 34; Joanna Mattingly, 'Stories in the Glass – Reconstructing the St Neot Pre-Reformation Glazing Scheme', *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*, New Series, II, Vol. III, 2 and 3, (2000), pp. 9-54, esp. p. 16.

<sup>46</sup> Duplication of subject matter occurs, for instance, at St Neot, Cornwall: see Mattingly, 'Stories in the Glass', p. 16.

<sup>47</sup> One example of a unified campaign is that of St Mary, Fairford, Gloucestershire: see *Life, Death and Art: the Medieval Stained Glass of Fairford Parish Church*, Sarah Brown and Lindsay Macdonald (eds), (Stroud, Glos., 1997), p. 49.

<sup>48</sup> Mattingly, 'Stories in the Glass', p. 10.

course of forty years, from 1490 to c.1530.<sup>49</sup> The St Neot windows also bear witness to a range of patronage, including individuals, families and other parochial groups. Patrons of the windows are indicated either by their shields of arms or, more specifically, through depictions of themselves alongside inscriptions (*tituli*) describing who they are (Figure 4.14).<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, if the process of glazing at the church of St Neot and the bequests for glazing at Combs are taken into account, it is likely that windows were glazed at Combs in stages and that a glazing fund had been set up to amalgamate smaller donations. This, of course, does not exclude the possibility of other donors funding entire windows themselves. Of the remaining glass at Combs, there does not appear to be any evidence for shields of arms to record donations, as there are in St Neot, for example. Only the tantalizing fragment of an inscription survives at Combs, in the same style as the other fifteenth-century *tituli*, which reads ‘... fieri fecerunt ...’ (‘they had made’). The inscription was recorded by Davy in 1827 in the fourth window to the west of the north aisle, so it cannot refer to the Margaret panels.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, what it does show is that donations could have been recorded by inscriptions at Combs which are now lost.

One further feature of the glass at Combs is that, unlike the glass at St Neot, it all seems to have been produced by the same workshop. Several stylistic factors indicate that the painted glass at Combs, including the Margaret panels, is the work of a glazier or team of glaziers trained in Norwich, probably in the workshop of John Wighton.<sup>52</sup> The work of the Wighton workshop can be

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<sup>49</sup> The east window and the window in the west tower probably date from the early to mid fifteenth century: Mattingly, ‘Stories in the Glass’, pp. 10, 12.

<sup>50</sup> A specific example of this is found in the window second from the east end of the north aisle on the north wall. The inscription reads, ‘*Ex Dono Harys*’ although a nineteenth-century antiquarian source records it as, ‘*Dono ... Radulphi Harys et ... lab[ore] facta fuit*’: see Mattingly, ‘Stories in the Glass’, pp. 42-43.

<sup>51</sup> Davy, ‘A Parochial History’, fol. 44v.

<sup>52</sup> For specific features attributed to the Wighton workshop, see David King, ‘Glass Painting in Late Medieval Norwich: Continuity and Patronage in the John Wighton Workshop’, in *Patrons and Professionals in the Middle Ages*, Proceedings of the 2010 Harlaxton Symposium, Harlaxton Medieval Studies, XXII, Paul Binski and Elizabeth A. New (eds), (Donington, 2012), pp. 347-65, esp. pp. 348-51; King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, pp. cxviii-cxxiii.

identified best in the tracery-light figures of Old Testament kings and prophets. It is particularly apparent in the design of the canopied niches and pairs of circles on the moulding of the arches, as well as the seaweed diaper pattern visible in the background for figures such as King David and King Asa, which stand above Panel A to either side.<sup>53</sup> In the main lights, both for the Margaret panels and for the two Acts of Mercy, 'rod-and-leaf' borders have been used: leaves curl round what appears to be a stem or stalk, which then forms a consistent vertical or horizontal line running through the length of the separate pieces of glass that surround the scenes from St Margaret's story and frame each panel (Figure 4.15a). This framing motif is characteristic of Norwich designs and can be seen in a variety of styles at, for example, St Peter Mancroft (east window).<sup>54</sup> Other features that are more specific to the Wighton workshop include the following:

- \* stylized trees and flowers in clumps: shown in Panels, A, B, C, D and E at Combs (Figure 4.15b).
- \* 'distinctive fur edging' on male clothing in particular, such as the trim of Olibrius's doublet in Panels A and B, or the torturer's doublet in Panel E, as well as the father or godfather's ermine collar in Panel F (Figure 4.15c).<sup>55</sup>
- \* alternating blue and ruby skies (although without the relieved serrated pattern found at St Peter Mancroft, for example).
- \* chequered paving designs echoed in the pattern on the dias of the font in Panel F at Combs: the pattern uses the saltire cross or four-petalled flower design, though without alternating dark and light squares.<sup>56</sup>
- \* pebbled paving as seen on the dais on which Olibrius stands in Panel C (Figure 4.15d).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Both kings are identified by the scrolls they are holding. King David is on the left in the left-hand pair of figures and King Asa is on the left in the right-hand pair of figures. For the information on the pairs of circles as indications of the work of the John Wighton workshop, see David King, 'Glass Painting in Late Medieval Norwich', p. 350 and fn. 7.

<sup>54</sup> Woodforde, *Norwich School of Glass-Painting*, p. 163 and Plate XXXVI; King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, p. 3 (I 1a), p. 5 (I 2a), p. 7 (I 3a), p. 9 (I 4a).

<sup>55</sup> King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, p. cxxiii (quote).

<sup>56</sup> An example of the chequered paving is found at St Peter and St Paul, Salle, Norfolk (tracery lights: The Annunciation sIV B2 and B7, after 1444). See King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, Figure 84.

However, the hand of the artist at Combs is unlike any identified for the workshop in Norfolk, which may suggest that the glass-painter or painters were trained in Norwich, but that their workshop was based in Bury St Edmunds, identified by David King as one of four important glass-painting centres in East Anglia in the fifteenth century.<sup>58</sup>

The question of who commissioned the glass at Combs will be addressed further below. For the present, it is important to consider the content of the narrative at Combs, which may help to shed more light on the possible donor(s) of the glass.

### **Fifteenth-century textual narratives considered as possible sources for Margaret's Life at Combs**

In addition to the textual narratives considered in the previous chapters (*Mb passio*, *StzL*, *SEL* and *LgA*), two Middle English poems from the early fifteenth century serve as points of comparison with the mid-fifteenth-century visual narrative at Combs. These poems are John Lydgate's *Lyfe of Seynt Margarete* of c.1429 and Osbern Bokenham's 'Legend of St Margaret' of 1443, the latter forming part of a collection of female saints' Lives by Bokenham known as the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*.<sup>59</sup> Both Lydgate and Bokenham were members of religious orders and resided in Suffolk and both wrote saints' legends for powerful patrons. At the time he was writing Margaret's Life, Lydgate was

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<sup>57</sup> Similar designs are found at St Peter, Ketteringham, Norfolk (Angel with lute, I B7, c.1435) and St Michael, Great Cressingham, Norfolk (Angels, nVII A1-6, c.1420-c.1430). See King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, Figures 82, 85.

<sup>58</sup> Information about the hand of the artist was kindly provided in a personal email communication by David King (13 May 2019). The glass-painting centres identified by King are Norwich and King's Lynn in Norfolk, and Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk: see King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, p. 53, fn. 87 and p. xcvi.

<sup>59</sup> For the text of Lydgate's Life (*Lydgate*) referred to throughout this study, see Sherry L. Reames (ed.), *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series, (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2003), pp. 147-168. For the text of Bokenham's Life (*Bokenham*) referred to throughout this study, see Osbern Bokenham, *Legendys of hooly wummen*, Mary Serjeantson (ed.), EETS, os 206, (Oxford, 1938), pp. 1-38.

almost certainly attached to the abbey of Bury St Edmunds, while Bokenham was based at nearby Clare priory.<sup>60</sup> What is of interest here is whether the Lives written by Lydgate and Bokenham would have been disseminated beyond the immediate circle of those who commissioned them.

Lydgate's *Lyfe* was commissioned by Anne Mortimer, countess of March, as the author states in the Prologue.<sup>61</sup> This version survives in a sizeable number of manuscripts (seven in total), which implies the text could have been copied for, and enjoyed by, a wider readership.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, Dresvina suggests that Lydgate's *Lyfe* might have been familiar to Margery Brews who paraphrased lines of Lydgate's verse in her letter of 1477 to John Paston III.<sup>63</sup> Bokenham's Life, on the other hand, exists in only two manuscripts.<sup>64</sup> Bokenham was charged with writing Margaret's Life by his friend, the Franciscan friar Thomas Burgh, and it is the only Life in Bokenham's *Legendys* to have been commissioned by a man, although it was later given to a convent.<sup>65</sup> Bokenham's Lives of St Mary Magdalene and St Elizabeth of Hungary were commissioned by noblewomen: Isabella Bouchier, countess of Eu, and Elizabeth de Vere, countess of Oxford, respectively.<sup>66</sup> Other female patrons associated with Bokenham's legendary are Katherine Denston (Life of St Anne), Agatha Flegge (Life of St Agatha) and Katherine Howard (Life of St Katherine).<sup>67</sup> The Denston and Flegge families were retainers of Richard, Duke of York, who was the brother of Isabella Bouchier, whilst Katherine Howard was a relative of Elizabeth Vere, whose family were noted for their collections

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<sup>60</sup> For more information about Bury abbey and Clare priory as cultural centres, see Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, esp. pp. 21-22, 108, and Anthony S. G. Edwards, 'The Transmission and Audience of Osbern Bokenham's Legendys of Hooly Wummen' in *Late Medieval Religious Texts and their Transmission*, (Essays in Honour of A. I. Doyle), A. J. Minnis, (ed.), (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 157-67, esp. pp. 164-65.

<sup>61</sup> *Lydgate*: p. 149, lines 66-77.

<sup>62</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 220.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221. The manuscripts are: London, British Library, Arundel MS 327, fols 5r-26r and National Library of Scotland, Advocates, Abbotsford *Legenda Aurea* MS, fols 129v-134v.

<sup>65</sup> Edwards, 'The Transmission', p. 157.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 165-66.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

of books. The circulation of manuscripts in East Anglia amongst wealthy, pious lay readers, especially women, is noted by Anthony S. G. Edwards, and Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson point to evidence in inventories and wills to suggest that readers with money to spare seem to have been able to acquire ‘small, unbound “paper books”’.<sup>68</sup> Significantly, Edwards describes how Bokenham’s legendary seems to have been prepared in a ‘piecemeal’ fashion, with no clear sense of where the different legends would sit within the collection as a whole.<sup>69</sup> Thus, it seems that St Margaret’s Life could have circulated independently from the rest of the Lives, forming as it does ‘a distinct codicological unit’.<sup>70</sup> This theory appears to be supported by the initial lines of a copy of Bokenham’s Life of St Dorothy found in a mid-fifteenth-century religious miscellany.<sup>71</sup> As self-contained units, these saints’ Lives may have been able to be passed easily from one interested reader to another within the kind of educated lay circles mentioned above. Therefore, it is likely that Bokenham’s Life, and perhaps to a lesser extent Lydgate’s poem, would have been known or accessible to whoever was responsible for the content of the visual narrative at Combs. This may therefore attest to wealthy lay patronage for the St Margaret panels.

### **Comparison of the scenes depicted in St Margaret’s Life at Combs with the textual narratives**

Panel A (Figure 4.5a): In all the textual accounts of her Life, Margaret is recorded as looking after her nurse’s sheep when Olibrius first encounters her.<sup>72</sup> However, the sequence of events preceding her first meeting with Olibrius differs slightly between the texts. It is worth considering each account

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<sup>68</sup> Edwards, ‘The Transmission’, 162; Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson, ‘Anthologies and Miscellanies: Production and Choice of Texts’ in J. Griffiths and D. Persall (eds), *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*, (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 288-91, esp. 290 (quote).

<sup>69</sup> Edwards, ‘The Transmission’, pp. 158-59.

<sup>70</sup> Edwards, ‘The Transmission’, p. 158; Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 221-22.

<sup>71</sup> Edwards, ‘The Transmission’, p. 162.

<sup>72</sup> *Mb*: Ch 5, pp. 196-7; *StzL*: p. 178, lines 45-6; *SEL*: p. 293, lines 39-41; Lydgate: p. 150, lines 97-8; Bokenham: p. 12, lines 433-34; *LgA*: p. 368 (Maggioni (ed.), p. 616: ‘*cum aliis uirginibus oues sue nutricis custodiret*’).

in order to clarify which text(s) were most likely to have provided the foundation for the scene in Panel A.

In the *Mb*, *StzL* and Bokenham versions, Olibrius comes across Margaret looking after the sheep and sends his men to fetch her. When they lay hands on her, Margaret begins to pray. The attendants return to Olibrius empty-handed with the news that he cannot associate with her because she worships a Christian god. At this, he angrily orders she be brought before him, and a confrontation between them ensues.<sup>73</sup> Three elements of this version thus accord with the scene depicted at Combs: Margaret in the field with the sheep, Margaret praying, and Olibrius's men conferring with their master.

While the *LgA* and *SEL* also follow the text of the *Mb passio*, they are both more succinct in their treatment of this episode.<sup>74</sup> Olibrius comes across Margaret tending the sheep and sends his men to ask her whether she is married or single. In the *LgA*, the action then moves directly to Margaret appearing before Olibrius for the confrontation scene, whereas the *SEL* describes how she sees Olibrius's men approaching and prays for help. The *LgA* lacks any detailed description of the characters and their actions and is thus very unlikely to have been the inspiration for Panel A. Although the *SEL* does mention Margaret tending the sheep and praying when she is discovered by Olibrius and his entourage, there are no exchanges about Margaret between Olibrius and his men. Panel A at Combs clearly shows Olibrius and his steward pointing at Margaret as if discussing her, and Olibrius's eyes are narrowed and cast down, as if he has received the bad news that she is a Christian. It is therefore unlikely that the *SEL* was the primary source for this panel.

Lydgate's text is similar to the *LgA* and *SEL* but is the most distinctive of all the textual narratives. As soon as Olibrius spies Margaret, he plans to ravish her, because he has been so completely overcome by her beauty.<sup>75</sup> He sends his men to question her, but the details of this episode are not given and, like the *LgA* and *SEL*, the narrative moves straight from Olibrius's instructions to his servants to the confrontation with Margaret. No mention is made in Lydgate's

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<sup>73</sup> *Mb*: Chs 5-6, pp. 196-9.

<sup>74</sup> *LgA*: pp. 616-17; *SEL*: p. 293, lines 39-60.

<sup>75</sup> *Lydgate*: pp. 150-51, lines 113-26.

text of Margaret praying when she sees Olibrius: the narrative focuses solely on Olibrius's reaction to encountering the saint. Lydgate's version is thus the least likely to have inspired the scene in Panel A.

It is most likely, then, that the sources used for Panel A were one or all of the *Mb passio*, the *StzL* and Bokenham versions of the Life given the following: firstly, it would appear from the gestures of the two men that this is the part of the narrative in which Olibrius is told that Margaret is a Christian, and therefore he should not associate with her, and secondly, Margaret is shown praying.

Panel B (Figure 4.5b): All the textual narratives relate that Margaret is sent to prison after the first two confrontations with Olibrius, although, during their second, tempestuous meeting, she is savagely tortured on his orders. In Panel B, torture is alluded to in that the man standing directly behind Margaret appears to be thrusting what looks like a metal rod between her shoulder blades, and a metal collar and chain have been fastened around her neck. No specific mention is made in any of the texts about a collar and chain, but in the *Mb passio*, the initial description of Olibrius and his persecution of Christians relates, 'when he heard of any people mentioning the name of Christ, at once he had them fettered in iron bonds', so perhaps the collar and chain reference this.<sup>76</sup> Rods as an instrument of torture before the demonic episode are described in the *Mb passio*, the *LgA* and in Bokenham's text. In the *Mb passio*, the translation for the instruments of the first two tortures Margaret undergoes is given as 'canes' and 'rods', but the original Latin uses 'uirgis' for both.<sup>77</sup> The *LgA* also uses 'uirgis' for the first torture, while Bokenham's text has 'yerdys' (or 'rods').<sup>78</sup> This suggests, therefore, that any one of these three texts could have been used to imagine this scene at Combs, although the *Mb passio*'s reference to Christians being 'fettered' by Olibrius perhaps ties the scene more specifically to this text. To accord better with the textual narratives, Panel B would, however, be more appropriately placed in the

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<sup>76</sup> *Mb*: Ch 5, pp. 196-97.

<sup>77</sup> *Mb*: Ch 8, pp. 200-01 ('canes') and Ch 9, pp. 200-01 ('rods').

<sup>78</sup> *LgA*: p. 617.

window at Combs after the confrontation scene between Margaret and Olibrius (Panel C) and before the scene in which Margaret encounters the devil in the form of a dragon in her prison cell (Panel D). As mentioned above, this sequence (A, C, B, D, E) is how the scenes probably appeared to Davy in 1827 (Table 2).

Panel C (Figure 4.5c): Margaret's legend, as recounted in the textual narratives considered here, revolves around three confrontation scenes between the saint and Olibrius. Each time they meet, Olibrius offers Margaret a life of luxury if she will submit to him and worship his gods. When she refuses, he has her tortured and thrown into prison, and then eventually beheaded. At Combs, therefore, the three confrontations of the textual narratives are compressed into this one beautifully-executed scene in Panel C and this skilful distillation of the narrative by whoever designed the scheme will be considered in the following section.

The focus of Panel C is the triangular nexus formed by Margaret, Olibrius and the blue, devil-like creature on the pedestal. This is an entirely appropriate reflection of the textual narratives. To a greater or lesser degree, the texts emphasize Margaret's rejection of Olibrius's gods, despite the prospect of humiliation and immense physical suffering, for the promise of eternal life with Christ in heaven.

Any number of exchanges between Margaret and Olibrius in the texts call to mind the depiction of the scene in Panel C, but three stand out as particularly appropriate. The first occurs in the *StzL*, during Margaret's second torture, with 'scarpe nailes'.<sup>79</sup> Bystanders address Margaret and tell her to have mercy on herself.<sup>80</sup> At Combs, these people could be embodied by the male figure shown behind Margaret, nearest to the creature on the pedestal. His expression appears to be one of sorrow rather than aggression, unlike the fellow standing next to him, who has glaring eyes and seemingly bared teeth and who may be intended to represent a tormentor. As she is beaten, Olibrius

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<sup>79</sup> *StzL*: p. 199, line 131.

<sup>80</sup> *StzL*: p 201, lines 137-40.

commands Margaret, 'Beleve on my goddys'.<sup>81</sup> The saint retorts that such 'goddys' are powerless, no more than carved statues 'made of stone', thus evoking the creature on the pedestal.<sup>82</sup>

A later exchange between Margaret and Olibrius in the *StzL*, which occurs towards the end of the narrative after the dragon and demon episode, is also reminiscent of the scene in Panel C. Olibrius angrily commands Margaret to believe in his gods a second time and she immediately retorts that they are 'al of helle, of Satanas cunne'.<sup>83</sup> However, this episode in the *StzL* does not include any mention of bystanders, so the figures surrounding Margaret in the panel, other than Olibrius, have no textual reference here.

One final confrontation between Margaret and Olibrius in the texts, most suggestive, perhaps, of the scene in Panel C, is that found in Bokenham's *Life* just before the dragon episode. When Olibrius is still deliberating whether to have Margaret tortured, he says to her, 'If thou my goddys no wurshep wylt do / Wyth my swerd, sekyr, thou shalt deye.'<sup>84</sup> As she refuses to obey, Margaret is beaten. While she is undergoing this punishment, a 'bedel' calls out to her, 'Beleue, Margarete, I counsele the' and he is then joined by other bystanders who also cry, 'Beleue hym, we counsele, & lyue yet style!'<sup>85</sup> Margaret responds by telling the crowd, to go about its business, for God is taking care of her. She subsequently launches into a lengthy discourse about salvation, of which the most pertinent part is as follows:

Alle fals goddys forsakyth ye,  
And leuyth in my god wych is myhty  
In vertu, and heryth alle men gladly  
Wych to hym preye puryd from vyhs,  
And opnyth hem the gatys of paradyhs.<sup>86</sup>

It is possible that the man standing behind Margaret in the Combs panel, indicating the demon on the pedestal, is meant to be the 'bedel' from

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<sup>81</sup> *StzL*: p. 204, lines 145-48.

<sup>82</sup> *StzL*: p. 205, lines 149-52.

<sup>83</sup> *StzL*: p. 227, lines 225-27.

<sup>84</sup> *Bokenham*: p. 16, lines 555-56.

<sup>85</sup> *Bokenham*: p. 16, line 588.

<sup>86</sup> *Bokenham*: p. 17, lines 603-09.

Bokenham's legend and the other man a torturer, especially as his left hand can be seen grabbing Margaret round the waist. However, the saint remains fully clothed, and there is no obvious sign of suffering or injury.

Thus, the most likely textual source of inspiration for this scene is Bokenham's version of the Life. Both text and image highlight Margaret's rejection of 'fals goddys', and thus the devil, and her enthusiastic acceptance of the difficult path, leading to eternal salvation.<sup>87</sup>

Panel D (Figure 4.5d): All the textual narratives consulted for this analysis discuss the demonic episode. Perhaps the search for a possible textual source for Panel D is best served by first examining the second demon scene on the right of the picture.

The textual sources describe the second demon, though in varying amounts of detail. However, the *Mb passio*, *SEL*, *LgA* and Lydgate's version clearly state that the second demon took the form of a man when he appeared to Margaret.<sup>88</sup> These texts, therefore, are unlikely to be direct sources for this scene at Combs. The *StzL*'s description of the second demon is quite vague, saying that Margaret encountered 'another devil moo' after killing the dragon, one that has 'E heuede eien on is clue ant eken on is to'.<sup>89</sup> Like the *StzL*, Bokenham's version, does not say that the second demon took the form of a man. Instead, the demon makes it clear that he is the dragon's brother, which implies he might physically resemble the dragon in some way.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, his snout, sharp teeth and lizard-like front legs, along with seemingly scaly skin are reminiscent of a dragon.

Addressing the dragon episode found on the left of the scene, it is again Bokenham's text which stands out as the most likely source for the representation at Combs. The *StzL*, *SEL*, *LgA* and Lydgate's version talk about

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<sup>87</sup> *Bokenham*: p. 17, line 605.

<sup>88</sup> *Mb*: Ch14, pp. 206-207 ('she saw another devil sitting there in the form of a black man'); *SEL*: p. 297, lines 171-72 ('in a monnes like / The deuel to this maide com'); *LgA*: p. 618 ('*Dyabolus iterum ut eam decipere posset in speciem hominis se mutauit.*'); *Lydgate*: p. 155, line 297 ('in the lykenesse of a man').

<sup>89</sup> *StzL*: p. 214, line 183.

<sup>90</sup> *StzL*: p. 218, line 197; *Bokenham*: p. 20, lines 722-23 ('my dere brother, Ruffyn, / In a dragons lyknesse to the I sent').

the dragon in terms of what it does, rather than indulging in an extensive description of what it looks like. Bokenham, however, once again follows the *Mb passio* closely, providing a detailed account of how frightening the dragon appeared to Margaret. An important similarity between the texts is the description of the dragon spewing forth fire from its mouth. Although in the *Mb passio* this apparently only causes a 'stench' in Margaret's prison cell, in Bokenham's text the fire engulfs the room:

And anon the presoun wex ful of lyht  
Of the feer wych owt dede renne  
From his mouth & fast gan brenne.<sup>91</sup>

In the dragon episode at Combs on the left, flames of fire appear to be curling underneath the body of the dragon, as might be imagined when reading or hearing Bokenham's description of the episode. Thus, the form of the second demon and the prison engulfed by fire strongly suggest the artist or architect of the scheme referred to Bokenham's Life when designing the scene for Panel D.

Panel E (Figure 4.5e): This scene represents Margaret's final two tortures, described in all the texts after the demonic episode and before she is executed. Before the torture with fire or boiling oil, Margaret once again refuses to renounce Christ and worship Olibrius's gods. When she shows no sign of injury after the torture with fire or oil, she is then subjected to torture with water. This is likened in three of the texts (the *Mb passio*, the *StzL* and Bokenham's Life) to a form of baptism.<sup>92</sup> Fire and water play a critical role in the sacrament of baptism and can be interpreted as physical manifestations of, and facilitators for, the workings of the Holy Spirit, which ultimately purify and bless the soul of the catechumen.

Panel E shows evidence of oil rather than fire being used for the first of these two tortures. The two bright-crimson pieces of glass towards the bottom left corner of the scene appear to be a later insertion and although they might suggest a fire by their colour, they are not shaped or set in a way which

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<sup>91</sup> *Mb*: Ch 12, pp. 204-05; *Bokenham*: p. 19, lines 698-700.

<sup>92</sup> *Mb*: Ch 18, pp. 212-13; *StzL*: p. 233, lines 245-46; *Bokenham*: p. 22, line 798.

suggests they were meant to be considered as such. Even though the man on the far left of the scene may be using his large fork to poke at twigs, possibly intended to represent a small bonfire underneath the vessel on the left, this is definitely not the penultimate torture with 'flaming torches' described in the *Mb passio* or the *LgA*, nor the penultimate torture of Lydgate and Bokenham's versions in which the saint was burnt with brands.<sup>93</sup> All four texts can therefore be eliminated as possible sources for this scene.

Before continuing, it is worth considering the shape and content of the two vessels shown in the bottom section of the glass in Panel E in detail. This may provide more information about the nature of the tortures the artist meant to represent in this scene. The smaller vessel on the left appears to be made either of stoneware pottery or metal, with the neck edged in a golden yellow band that has a ring attached to it, perhaps meant for fastening the vessel to a rope to raise it above ground. On the right, the larger vessel is apparently made of wooden staves and hoops, in a similar manner to a barrel. Neither container is depicted as large enough to hold a human body and it seems the viewer is required to use their imagination here to picture Margaret's immersion in the water. In the stoneware or metal vessel, the liquid inside is rippling close to the rim, while the wooden vessel contains a calmer substance.

One interpretation of the liquids shown in the vessels can be found in the *SEL*. Once Margaret has been stripped and cast into a fire, and has re-emerged unharmed, Olibrius has her thrown head first into a vat of cold water and then a vat of boiling water.<sup>94</sup> Thus, the vessel on the right in Panel E could represent the cold water and that on the left, the boiling water. Given that the viewer was expected to work from the left to the right of the scene for the sequence of events, as evidenced in Panel D for example, if the artist were taking inspiration from the *SEL*, the wooden vessel of cold water would surely be placed on the left of the scene and the vessel of boiling water on the right. It

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<sup>93</sup> *Mb*: Ch 17, pp. 210-11; *LgA*: p. 619 ('*Corpusque eius facibus ardentibus usque ad intima comburitur ita ...*'); *Lydgate*: p. 159, lines 412-13; *Bokenham*: p. 22, line 802.

<sup>94</sup> *SEL*: pp. 299-300, lines 237-51.

is thus unlikely that the artist intended to show a vessel of boiling water and a vessel of cold water here.

Perhaps a more convincing source for the scene in Panel E is that of the *StzL*. In this text, Olibrius orders that Margaret is burnt with boiling oil before being thrown into a vessel of water.<sup>95</sup> It is possible, therefore, that the liquid on the left is the boiling oil mentioned in the *StzL*, particularly as the vessel appears to be made of stoneware or metal, which would be more appropriate for this kind of liquid than a wooden container. The ring at the neck of the container may also have been intended to help haul the vessel to head height for torture. The colour of the liquid, creamy brown, is also more suggestive of oil than water. A comparison of this liquid with the substance in the wooden container differentiates the two further. The substance in the wooden vessel is a blue-grey colour with pale blue streaks on the surface, suggestive of the liquid moving gently and reflecting light, as appropriate for a vessel of cold water.<sup>96</sup> It would appear, then, that the artist took inspiration from the *StzL* for the scene in Panel E.

### **Iconography of the glass panels of St Margaret's Life at Combs**

David King has argued convincingly that the intended message of the North Tuddenham panels of Margaret's Life was primarily a secular one, commemorating an event in the life of the probable donor of the glass, John Wakeryng, Bishop of Norwich (1416-25). In these two panels, Margaret's story becomes a vehicle for alluding to the settlement by the bishop of a long-running dispute about the governance of King's Lynn in 1420.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> *StzL*: pp. 229-30, lines 233-39.

<sup>96</sup> M. R. James, H. Munro Cautley and writers of two subsequent guidebooks to Suffolk churches all support this identification of the contents of at least one of the vessels in Panel E with oil: James, *Suffolk and Norfolk*, p. 78; Munro Cautley, *Suffolk Churches*, p. 255; John Salmon, *Saints in Suffolk Churches*, (Suffolk, 1981), p. 37; Norman Scarfe, *Suffolk: A Shell Guide*, (London, 1986), unpaginated, entry for Combs.

<sup>97</sup> King, 'A Scene from the Life of St Margaret of Antioch', *Vidimus*, [online magazine], Issue 60, (2012), <https://vidimus.org/issues/issue-60/feature/> (accessed 10 May 2019).

It is certainly possible that, like the North Tuddenham panels, the visual narrative at Combs had some kind of ulterior meaning for a fifteenth-century audience that is now undetectable. However, it seems more likely that the Combs panels were always intended as devotional aids, which may also have memorialized a significant event in the life of a family or families connected with the church.

The fact that the intention behind the scheme was to create a series of devotional panels reflecting on the overlapping themes of Margaret's piety, her spiritual inviolability and her association with children and baptism, is immediately apparent in the way the saint is depicted nimbed in all but one scene (E). This instantly creates a clear contrast with the figure of Margaret in the North Tuddenham panels, where she is crowned either with a circlet of oak leaves or with daisies. The use of the halo to indicate the devotional nature of the panels at Combs is enhanced by the fact that Margaret is clothed in a long, white robe and blue mantle throughout, reminiscent of depictions of the Virgin Mary, and very different, for example, from the fashionable dress of rich fabric with large, elegant sleeves shown in the North Tuddenham panels. It would appear, from the fragments that remain, that this emphasis on sanctity was also found in the Life of Margaret at St Peter Mancroft (1453-c.1455), which is closer in date to the Combs panels, and where the two depictions of the saint that can be identified are also shown nimbed (Figure 4.3).<sup>98</sup> However, of the wall-painting schemes that have been discussed in previous chapters, only the fourteenth-century paintings at Charlwood show a similar emphasis on sanctity.

Furthermore, instead of being represented as spinning with a distaff when she first encounters Olibrius, as in all previously discussed visual narratives, at Combs (Panel A) Margaret is shown praying. Likewise, no ring is presented to her by Olibrius's steward, as occurs in the glass at North Tuddenham, the wall paintings at Charlwood and the now lost scheme at

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<sup>98</sup> The devotional focus of the Mancroft panels is, perhaps, unsurprising as the donor is believed to have been Robert Rynngman, Rector of Barnham Broom (Norfolk), Bishop of Gathy and suffragan to the Bishop of Norwich: see King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, pp. ccxxvii-ccxxviii.

Limpenhoe. The lack of both the distaff and the offer of the ring appears to distance the saint from worldly concerns and reinforce the idea of her sanctity.

The glazier has also skillfully deployed the leading of the glass to highlight those facial features and gestures which carry the greatest semantic significance in the scheme at Combs. For example, in Panel A, Margaret's piety is established at the outset by outlining her nimbed head and eyes gazing heavenward in one piece of glass and her hands raised in prayer in another. Margaret's absorption in her prayer sets her apart from the world around her. Also central to the narrative in this scene is Olibrius's right hand, together with that of his steward, pointing at Margaret. Represented in this gesture, seen elsewhere in the wall-painting schemes, is Olibrius's desire for Margaret, which will lead inevitably to Margaret assuming her place alongside the other virgin-martyrs in heaven. The motionless figure of Margaret and the calm radiating from the dialogue between the two holy figures is contrasted with Olibrius's charging horse, and the sheep running hither and thither between Margaret and her pursuer, as if in panic.

Panel B continues the theme of Margaret's sanctity. Despite being chained round the neck and dragged into prison, Margaret is preoccupied with her prayers. To emphasize this fact, her nimbed head and hands raised in prayer have once again been framed by the leading of the glass. Olibrius and his henchmen create an atmosphere of menace with their scowling faces and visible weapons, their strength contrasting with Margaret's vulnerability. The atmosphere is also underscored by the spikes in the portcullis, resembling teeth, in what could be described as the open mouth of the gatehouse, thus appearing to pre-figure Margaret being swallowed by the dragon. Olibrius's hands are painted on a separate piece of glass and are set on his belt so that they frame its buckle. The buckle is shaped like a shield and may thus be intended as a symbol of office. Panel B, therefore, not only emphasizes Margaret's steadfast faith in the face of suffering and harsh treatment, but highlights the impotence of Olibrius's temporal authority and the futility of his attempts to lead the saint away from her Christian god. Like other aspects of Margaret's story in this narrative at Combs, several episodes of imprisonment described in the texts have been reduced to one powerful scene here. This

technique may well have been intended to reduce the cost for the donor by limiting the amount of coloured or painted glass used, but this distillation of the narrative, and thus the elimination of unnecessary repetition, also serves to intensify the impact of the action on the viewer.

Panels C and D show Margaret fighting the devil both conceptually and physically, cumulatively driving home the message of her inviolability. As with Margaret's imprisonment (Panel B), the number of scenes that depict the confrontations with Olibrius and the demonic episode have also been reduced, from several found in the texts to one panel each in this visual narrative.

The fact that the confrontation scene (C) includes an image of the devil-like creature as a statue helps to convey the sense of this particular scene to the viewer – that is to say, Margaret rejecting the devil by rejecting all other gods. Margaret's victory over the devil is emphasized by including her triumph over both the dragon and the second demon in the following panel (D). The second demon episode was excluded from the paintings at Charlwood, possibly because of lack of space. However, space was clearly at a premium at Combs too, if the whole demonic episode had to be shown in one panel. By virtue of representing the episode from a bird's eye perspective, as it were, so that each part was shown in a separate prison cell, the artist offers the viewer a clear vantage point unobstructed by walls, whilst also managing to include both elements of the episode.

Skilful use of the leading as a frame for hand gestures and facial features, that serve to highlight the intended message, is also apparent in Panels C and D. In Panel C, three significant hand gestures are set together in one piece of glass: Margaret's right hand, and that of the bystander behind her, indicating the devil-like creature on the pedestal, and Olibrius's left hand, which reaches out towards Margaret as if he is trying to convince her of the validity of his argument. Margaret's left hand, also set in a separate piece of glass, gestures upwards and away from the creature, perhaps to indicate heaven. The torturer, standing behind Margaret, has his hand firmly gripping her waist, which emphasizes her vulnerability and the inescapability of her fate. Margaret and Olibrius look intently at one another, and the creature looks at Margaret. The gestures and the gaze of the figures convey the gravity of the

situation: the choice between good and evil, life in this world or life in the next. These gestures and expressions distil the essence of Margaret's story: her refusal to worship Olibrius's gods – or, in other words, to succumb to the devil – despite Olibrius's verbal and physical intimidation.

In Panel D, damage to the figure on the right means that only the figure on the left can be discussed with any certainty and, even there, Margaret's head is a replacement. Margaret's hands are painted on a separate piece of glass, as is her nimbed head, the dragon's head and the head of the second demon. All these pieces present fundamental elements of the story. Margaret is seen emerging bright-eyed and unharmed from the dragon's belly, holding the cross in her hands, conveying the idea that her steadfast belief has enabled her to overcome even the worst incarnation of evil. The dragon's maw is suitably ferocious, reinforcing the wonder of Margaret's triumph and the second demon, also fierce and slippery-looking, again rendering Margaret's fearlessness all the more awe-inspiring.

As discussed above, overcoming the devil in the form of the dragon and second demon finds a parallel in the exorcism of the baptismal rite. The exorcism is followed by the child's anointing with holy oil and immersion in the water of the font, just as the demonic episode of the narrative is followed by the torture with oil and water, shown in Panel E at Combs. Thus, both the content and the sequencing of the narrative reflect the baptismal ritual.<sup>99</sup>

In Panel E, Margaret's hands are depicted in two separate pieces of glass, but they are both held up to her shoulders with the palms open, suggestive of submission to her fate. However, the gesture also recalls the *orant* pose found in the paintings at Battle and in early Christian art, in which it is associated with piety and prayer, notably in depictions of the Virgin Mary.<sup>100</sup> Another significant framing of a gesture in this panel is the right hand of the torturer who stands behind Margaret, pointing at the wooden vessel of water. This gesture reinforces the idea, discussed above, that whoever designed the scheme wished to draw the viewer's attention to the methods of torture presented here. It is likely, therefore, that together with Margaret's nakedness,

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<sup>99</sup> Collins, *Manuale*, pp. 25-31 (exorcism), pp. 35-43 (baptism).

<sup>100</sup> Grabar, *Christian Iconography*, pp. 74-76.

the oil and water were intended to convey symbolic significance and remind the viewer of the baptismal rite. Underscoring this interpretation of the scene is the fact that it is only in this scene that Margaret is shown without a halo. As baptism is intended to rid the recipient of original sin, perhaps it would have been contradictory to show the saint nimbed, and thus already holy, here. The depictions of Margaret with a halo in previous scenes could thus be intended simply to make her piety clear from the outset and to help the viewer identify her more easily. Panel E is the only scene at Combs to focus on torture. Although meted out in four stages in the texts, torture at Combs is alluded to in Panels B and C, but only focused on in Panel E. Perhaps this focus was deliberate if the intention was to highlight this particular type of torture because of its associations with baptism.

Panel F, the baptism scene, is the culmination of Margaret's story at Combs, although it is possible that the scheme originally included an execution and enshrinement scenes that are now lost. Panel F offers four significant examples of the deliberate framing of gestures and facial features by the leading of the glass. Perhaps most striking in this scene is the framing of the nimbed head and right hand of the bishop. Margaret's head and that of the child she holds are depicted on the same piece of glass. Both the inclination of the saint's head and the gesture made by her left hand, highlighted by its own frame of leading, indicate the font. Thus the head of the child as well as the heads of the saints and their hand gestures convey the sanctity, power and importance of the sacrament of baptism.

But why include such an elaborate reference to baptism in this particular scheme at Combs, when, previously, the association between Margaret and the sacrament appears to have been present in the visual narratives but not explicitly introduced, as it is here? It does not appear that the representation of the baptism scene at Combs is intended simply to advocate orthodox practice of the sacrament – that is to say, to make a positive statement about the sacrament of baptism performed in a church by a member of the clergy.<sup>101</sup> Although Penny Granger notes the presence of a Lollard

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<sup>101</sup> John Wyclif is recorded as expressing doubts about the necessity of baptism for salvation in his *Triologus*: see Bryan D. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals*

community just outside Bury St Edmunds in the fifteenth century and in the 1420s punitive action was taken against Lollard activity by the authorities in the diocese of Norwich, Bernard states that probably by the mid fifteenth century Lollardy 'had long ceased to be an intellectually creative force' and Robert Swanson also cautions against over-emphasizing the pervasiveness of heresy at this time.<sup>102</sup> But the most significant argument for why this panel is extremely unlikely to have served as anti-heretical propaganda is found in the scene itself: it does not show what Ann Eljenholm Nichols describes as the 'essential action of the sacrament', or, in other words, the infant being washed with the water of the font.<sup>103</sup> This important point will be explored further presently.

In her book *Seeable Signs: The Iconography of the Seven Sacraments 1350-1544*, Nichols briefly refers to the glass at Combs. On the basis of fragments found in other 'patchwork windows', Nichols states that Panel F was originally part of a seven-sacrament window, the other panels of which have now been lost.<sup>104</sup> She makes this claim on the basis that other churches known to have had windows displaying the Acts of Mercy, as is the case at Combs, often had a companion window showing the seven sacraments and that these windows were located in the south aisles of their respective churches.<sup>105</sup> Whilst this may of course be possible, various features of Panel F and the scheme as a whole point to the fact that the scene was originally intended as the culmination of Margaret's story, rather than one element of a no longer extant seven-sacrament window.

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*and Theologies of Baptism: From the New Testament to the Council of Trent*, (London, 2016), p. 151.

<sup>102</sup> Penny Granger, *The N-Town Play: Drama and Liturgy in Medieval East Anglia*, (Cambridge, 2009), p. x (see map); Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390-1490*, Vol. I, (London, 1996), p. 44; Bernard, *Late Medieval English Church*, p. 208; Robert N. Swanson, *Church & Society in Late Medieval England*, (Oxford, 1993), p. 329.

<sup>103</sup> Ann Eljenholm Nichols, *Seeable Signs: The Iconography of the Seven Sacraments 1350-1544*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1994), p. 200.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 62 (quote).

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60 (Nichols cites in particular All Saints, Bristol and Holy Trinity, Tattershall, (Lincs), as well as roundels once found in Leicester Cathedral).

As shown in other chapters, visual representations of Margaret's story are generally sited in the south aisle or south wall of a church because of their perceived relevance to the sacrament of baptism and the proximity of the font. This is also the case with the almost contemporary Margaret Window at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich. Thus, the south aisle is an appropriate location for painted glass depicting Margaret's legend. After several visits to see the glass *in situ* and a careful examination of all the remaining glass at Combs, including that shown on the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi (CVMA)* website, there does not appear to be much in the way of evidence of the 'clerical heads, raised hands, and vestments and robes of a similar style to people a number of sacrament reliefs' described by Nichols.<sup>106</sup> Photographs on the *CVMA* website of the window containing a variety of fragments in its main lights (now south aisle, west of the Margaret panels) and the window containing the two surviving Acts of Mercy and other fragments (now south aisle, east window) show three small heads, a figure holding an orb in their left hand with the right hand raised in blessing, parts of angel wings and faces, a pair of bare legs and a bare torso, some purple legs, and clumps of vegetation.<sup>107</sup> In addition there are a couple of scrolls bearing inscriptions. The style of the painted fragments and the two Acts of Mercy is close to that of the Margaret panels, and it appears that the south aisle, at least, was glazed by the same Norwich-trained glaziers, as discussed above. Thus, the evidence for Panel F being conceived as part of a seven-sacrament window seems slim.

Panel F also stands out in terms of seven-sacrament iconography in that it is the single surviving example in fifteenth-century English glass of the sacrament of baptism where the celebrant is shown standing behind the font in the middle of the composition.<sup>108</sup> English carved fonts provide the only other representations of infant baptism, showing the celebrant placed centrally

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 196-97, 204.

<sup>107</sup> 'St Mary, Combs, Suffolk', *CVMA*, [website], [http://www.cvma.ac.uk/jsp/location.do?locationKey=730&mode=COUNTY&sortField=WINDOW\\_NO&sortDirection=ASC&nextPage=1&rowsPerPage=20](http://www.cvma.ac.uk/jsp/location.do?locationKey=730&mode=COUNTY&sortField=WINDOW_NO&sortDirection=ASC&nextPage=1&rowsPerPage=20) (accessed 1 January 2020): for example, p. 1, record 2, inv. no. 011775; p. 1, record 16, inv. no. 011758; p. 2, record 39, inv. no. 021685; p. 2, record 40, inv. no. 021687; p. 3, record 41, inv. no. 021688.

<sup>108</sup> Nichols, *Seeable Signs*, p. 200.

behind the font. Such fonts show baptism alongside the other sacraments (Confirmation, Penance, Eucharist, Orders, Matrimony, Extreme Unction). The carved fonts also usually show the celebrant holding the child, and Nichols argues that the centrality of celebrant and child is intended to focus the viewer's attention on the washing of the infant in the salvific water.<sup>109</sup>

At Combs, however, though the celebrant is standing centrally behind the font, it is St Margaret, the nimbed female figure on the right, who holds the child. Of the thirty-three representations of baptism on seven-sacrament fonts which are still decipherable, just three show the godmother, rather than the celebrant, holding the child. All of these three fonts are found in Suffolk: at St Nicholas, Denston, All Saints, Great Glemham and St Mary the Virgin, Woodbridge (Figures 4.16a-c).<sup>110</sup> Although the Suffolk carvings appear initially to have derived from Continental models, where the godparent, rather than the celebrant, is normally shown holding the child, none of the Suffolk carvings shows the child being held over or towards the font by the godparent in the manner shown in the Continental models (Figure 4.17).<sup>111</sup> Thus, the godparents in the Suffolk font carvings are not active participants in the sacramental action, unlike their Continental counterparts. In the glass at Combs, Margaret and the child are shown at the rim of the font and the saint appears to be either about to lift the child up or to be pulling it gently towards her. As this gesture could indicate this is the moment before or after the initiation with water has taken place, Margaret, the representation implies, is playing a vital role in the ceremony. Thus, the depiction at Combs does not focus on the sacramental action *per se*, but rather on the role of Margaret as godmother to the child.

It is possible, but perhaps unlikely, that the rite shown at Combs in Panel F could have been that of baptism by aspersion, rather than immersion,

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 1 (A total of forty-two seven-sacrament fonts are known, thirty-nine of which were built in East Anglia in the fifteenth or early sixteenth century.).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 205, 334, 338, 352. (Nichols cites the Campanile relief at the Florence Duomo, the pontifical of Arras (Arras, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 882, no folio no. given) and the *Retable of Bonifacio Ferrer*, Valencia Museum of Fine Arts, Spain, as examples of Continental iconography (Nichols, *Seable Signs*, p. 205).

as the Continental models generally show the godparent holding the child while the priest pours water from the font over its head. Perhaps, however, the scene at Combs is meant to represent the godparent, Margaret, retrieving the child after its immersion in the water, as instructed in the Sarum manual.<sup>112</sup> This would accord better with English practice, which favoured immersion rather than aspersion.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, it would appear that the image at Combs intended to give comparable weight to the roles of the two saints depicted: St Nicholas performing the role of the celebrant and St Margaret as the godparent actively participating in the ceremony.

Aside from the depiction of the two saints as participants in the baptism of an infant, the representation at Combs is also unusual in that it shows a bishop rather than a priest performing the sacrament. No other font carvings of the baptism of a child show the ceremony being performed by a bishop. However, it must be remembered that St Nicholas was ordained as a bishop and thus would have had to be depicted as such in this kind of representation. Furthermore, a bishop may well have performed the baptismal ceremony in the early Middle Ages during the feasts of Easter and Pentecost.<sup>114</sup> The ceremony depicted at Combs cannot be confused with that of confirmation, given the inclusion of the font, the fact that the bishop is not shown anointing the child with chrism, and that neither the pontifical or chrismatory are represented in the scene. Indeed, Nichols states that 'Solemn confirmation [as opposed to that which took place outdoors along the sides of roads] is never depicted without a chrismatory.'<sup>115</sup>

Thus, it seems that the manner in which the sacrament of baptism in Panel F was represented at Combs was quite exceptional and could be reflective of commissioning for a specific reason. It is the only representation of its kind in English glass, as noted above, and, whilst similar to the three Suffolk font carvings at Denston, Great Glemham and Woodbridge, it differs

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<sup>112</sup> Collins, *Manuale*, pp. 36-7.

<sup>113</sup> Nichols, *Seeable Signs*, p. 200, esp. fn. 28. Aspersion is mentioned in the Sarum rite in cases where the child is said to have been baptized at home: Collins, *Manuale*, p. 39.

<sup>114</sup> Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>115</sup> Nichols, *Seeable Signs*, p. 219.

significantly from its English counterparts in that the godparent is shown performing an active role in the rite. The inclusion of two saints in the critical roles of celebrant and godparent – saints who were associated with baptism and the care of the young – also serves to make this panel stand out. As discussed above, the visual narrative of Margaret’s story at Combs drew heavily for its source material on the texts of the saint’s Life most clearly connected with the baptismal rite: the *Mb passio*, Bokenham’s version and the *StzL*.<sup>116</sup> Bokenham’s text and the *StzL* are also vernacular versions of the legend, and the preference for Bokenham’s version as a source for the painted glass at Combs suggests there may well have been lay influence on the representation and perhaps some interest in using a text with local affiliations.

In one respect, the visual narrative at Combs differs from those discussed in previous chapters in that the Life begins by emphasizing Margaret’s sanctity – showing her nimbed, dressed in a manner which recalls the Virgin Mary, and praying. Additionally, Margaret’s refusal of Olibrius’s ‘false gods’ is made unequivocal at Combs by the inclusion of the blue devil-like creature on the pedestal, presiding over the confrontation scene (Panel C). Otherwise, however, the overall message of the necessity of baptism for salvation remains the same. The saint’s suffering is suggested in Panel B, but, like the paintings at Charlwood, it is not dwelt on. Instead, Margaret’s exorcism in the form of the triumph over the devil in both guises (Panel D), a direct consequence of her public rejection of other gods in Panel C, prepares her for the two tortures which recall the baptismal rite – those with oil and water (Panel E). Thus, each scene is carefully chosen to construct the baptismal narrative. The culmination of the scheme is Panel F, in which two saints (Margaret and Nicholas), known for their protection of children, play an active role in the baptism of an infant. This panel is therefore an explicit representation of the association between Margaret and Nicholas discussed in previous chapters.

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<sup>116</sup> For further information about the Fairford glass, see Brown and MacDonald (eds), *Life, Death and Art*, esp. pp. 49-69.

### **Audience and function for the glass panels of St Margaret's Life at Combs**

Evidence of care lavished on the fabric of the church by the families which held the manor of Combs dates from the fourteenth century onwards. The punctual appointment of rectors to the living is also perhaps an indication of consistent interest in the church on the part of such families.<sup>117</sup> It is likely, then, that these noble families attended Mass at the church on certain occasions such as the great feast of Easter or saints' feast days. Other social groups who made up the parishioners of St Mary's in the fifteenth century included some prosperous farmers, a few of whom are the testators of the wills mentioned above.<sup>118</sup> How far these different groups of parishioners would have been familiar with Margaret's story is impossible to say, but the great number of church dedications, known portrayals of her legend and extant single-figure representations in East Anglia, for example on glass and screens, indicates she had been a very popular saint in this region from at least the thirteenth century onwards (Figures 4.18a-d).<sup>119</sup>

The surviving medieval screens at Combs indicate the areas of the church that were partitioned off from the majority of the laity and reserved as sacred space. Thus, the lower part of the rood screen still marks the entrance to the chancel, while two further chapels, at the east end of the north and south aisles respectively, were also reserved by *parclose* screens. In the south aisle, the fifteenth-century screen, still *in situ*, stands directly to the east of the window containing the Margaret panels (Figure 4.19). In contrast to the Margaret Window at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, which was included in the chancel space behind the rood screen, the window containing the Margaret panels at Combs would have been visible to anyone circulating in the nave or

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<sup>117</sup> The exception is for the years when ownership of the manor may well have been disputed between 1392 and 1402 and here five names occur in the records.

<sup>118</sup> 'Suffolk Parishes: Combs', p. 1 (entry for Types of farming: 1086 and 1500-1640), *Suffolk Heritage Explorer*, [website], <https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/Data/Sites/1/media/parish-histories/combs.pdf> (accessed 25 April 2019).

<sup>119</sup> Ann Eljenholm Nichols, *The Early Art of Norfolk: A Subject List of Extant and Lost Art Including Items Relevant to Early Drama*, (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2002), pp. 213-16.

south aisle. Davy's ground plan of the church, drawn up in 1827, shows that the font was installed at the west end of the south aisle, next to the final column of the nave arcade and beside the south entrance to the church (Figure 4.20).<sup>120</sup> This is almost certainly its original location. The Margaret panels would not have been easily visible to those standing round the font, but they nevertheless resided within the space of the church most associated with baptism.

As the visual narrative of Margaret's Life at Combs was accessible to the laity and was presented with great attention particularly to the details of her Life highlighting her association with baptism, it seems likely that the painted glass would have been used in some official way, either as a didactic tool or as an opportunity for guided meditation and reflection. Confining the narrative to one window meant that it would not have been a suitable focus for a procession. However, groups could have been assembled in front of the glass, possibly on Margaret's feast day (20 July), but perhaps also, on occasion, before or after the baptismal rite was performed. One way the images at Combs could have been used would have been to ally them to a sermon or a reading from a legendary. Mirk's sermon on St Margaret in his late fourteenth-century *Festial*, offers an idea of the kind of content such a sermon would have contained. Mirk's text highlights the baptismal aspect of Margaret's story in three specific places. The first mention comes in the saint's encounter with the second demon, in which the demon acknowledges that his greatest pleasure is to make people forget their baptismal vows and thus lead them into sin: 'and most levest me is to makon a Criston man to brekon that vow that he made at the fonte whan he toke hys cristondam'.<sup>121</sup> In addition, baptism is referred to during the water torture scene: 'Than scheo besoght God that fatte moste ben hyr fonte, and the watur the lavyr and wassyng of alle hur synnes'.<sup>122</sup> Finally, Mirk describes how Margaret's response to her torment and torture leads to the conversion to Christianity of more than five thousand people, who are executed by Olibrius: 'so thei weryn fulwode in hur owne blode and yodon to

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<sup>120</sup> Davy, 'A Parochial History', fol. 45r.

<sup>121</sup> All references to John Mirk's 'Sermon on St Margaret' (*Mirk*) are taken from Sherry L. Reames (ed.), *Middle English Legends of Women Saints*, (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2003), pp. 139-45; *Mirk*: p. 141, lines 59-60.

<sup>122</sup> *Mirk*: p. 142, lines 72-4.

Heven holy martyres.’<sup>123</sup> Of course, the conversion of others is not shown at Combs, but Mirk’s text was always intended as a model text for adaptation as necessary. What is significant, is that his model sermon highlights the baptismal aspect of Margaret’s story.

It is possible, then, that the ritual viewing of Margaret’s Life on certain occasions may have been accompanied by a rendition of her legend in the form of a sermon. However, perhaps her Life could also have been read out from a legendary owned by the church. Evidence for legendaries belonging to parish churches in fifteenth-century Norfolk, for example, can be found in wills such as those made by two chantry priests in 1481 and 1485. William Bruyn, chantry priest at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, gave his copy of the *Legenda Aurea* to St Stephen’s church in Norwich ‘to be kept chained at a desk by the choir’.<sup>124</sup> A few years later, Robert Dapleyn, alias Dryver, clerk, also a chantry priest at St Peter Mancroft, states that the proceeds from the sale of his house are to fund ‘a legendary and an antiphonary for £10 each’ for the church.<sup>125</sup> Mancroft was well-endowed with books through bequests and lifetime donations, as befitted its status as the main parish church for Norwich. Nonetheless, by the late fourteenth century the majority of parish churches in Norfolk are recorded as owning a legendary, as indicated in Chapter 1, and it is thus likely that similar circumstances pertained to Suffolk.<sup>126</sup>

Perhaps then, the Life of Margaret shown in the painted glass at Combs could have been actively used by the clergy to enhance celebrations of Margaret’s feast or for the baptism of infants.

### **Who could have commissioned the Margaret panels at Combs?**

The explicit focus on the baptismal theme of Margaret’s Life at Combs and the unusual representation in Panel F suggest that the Margaret panels were commissioned to memorialize a specific event, but that the visual narrative

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<sup>123</sup> *Mirk*: p. 142, lines 84-5.

<sup>124</sup> King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, p. 148, entry 44.

<sup>125</sup> King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, p. 148, entry 46. (The will was proved in 1487.)

<sup>126</sup> Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church*, p. 96. (Bernard states that in 1368, 328 of 358 churches in Norfolk had a lesson book or legendary.)

could also have been used on other occasions to edify a wider audience. The decision to execute the story of Margaret's Life rather than a symbolic representation of her as a single-standing figure suggests that someone with ample funds financed the scheme. This is underlined by the way the scheme has been coherently devised and executed. Each scene has been constructed to deliver a well-focused message, underpinned by largely vernacular textual sources. In addition, the execution of the painted glass also indicates time, skill and money were lavished on the scheme. As well as the consistent use of red and blue to enable the viewer to distinguish the main characters easily, the artist has painstakingly painted a range of details on white glass, including facial features and facial hair, and there is plentiful use of highlighting using yellow stain.<sup>127</sup>

D. P. Mortlock states that the 'fine late-C15 glass' at Combs was 'given by Sir Christopher Willoughby who was Lord of the Manor'.<sup>128</sup> There appears to be no documentation to support this claim, but several factors suggest that the Willoughby family may, at least to some extent, have been patrons of the glass at Combs. As Richard Marks comments, it is difficult to assign a firm dating to surviving East Anglian glass from the latter half of the fifteenth century.<sup>129</sup> Mortlock's dating of the glass as 'late-C15' is later than that proposed in the argument set out above: that the glass depicting the Life of St Margaret at Combs was probably made for the south aisle just after the rebuilding work was completed in the mid fifteenth century. Sir Christopher Willoughby, the tenth Baron Willoughby de Eresby, was born c.1453 and became a wealthy and powerful figure at the court of Richard III; this might have led Mortlock to believe he was responsible for the commission of the Margaret panels.<sup>130</sup>

From the evidence of wills, we know that the south aisle was being built in the mid fifteenth century, probably around the time the bequests were recorded in the wills of 1447 and 1449. Two wills, those of John Adgor of 1452 and Nicholas Rodys of 1472, mention bequests for glazing, but neither of these

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<sup>127</sup> Sarah Brown and David O'Connor, *Medieval Craftsmen: Glass-Painters*, (London, 1991), esp. pp. 56-62.

<sup>128</sup> Mortlock, *Guide to Suffolk Churches*, p. 121.

<sup>129</sup> Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, pp. 198-99.

<sup>130</sup> Brydges (ed.), *Collins's Peerage*, p. 609; Davy, 'A Parochial History', fol. 41v.

sums (6s.8d. and 12d. respectively) would have been enough to pay for the Margaret panels. The bequest of 1452 suggests that construction of the south aisle (or both aisles) was complete or nearing completion at that time, and, thus, glazing may well have begun in the early 1450s.

Considerable wealth would have been required to pay for a complete series of glass panels, such as the Margaret panels. But it would appear that the workshop that produced the Margaret panels also produced the glass for other windows in the church. This suggests that there may have been a glazing fund set up into which smaller bequests, such as those of Adgor and Rodys, were paid and that the lord of the manor would also have paid perhaps for specific items such as the Margaret panels.

From the discussion of patrons of the church and lords of the manor, above, it has become clear that Robert Willoughby of Parham, Knight, had inherited the manor of Combs by at least 1456, when he is noted as appointing a new rector to the church. It is possible, however, that the same Robert Willoughby had inherited the manor somewhat earlier, given that his uncle died in 1452. His eldest son by Cecilia de Welles was born c.1450 and a second son, Christopher (later Sir Christopher), was born c.1453. Perhaps the Life of St Margaret in the church at Combs was commissioned to celebrate both the inheritance of the manor and the birth of one or both of Robert and Cecilia's sons. Indeed, in Panel F the figure of what could be the father of the child, approaching the font on the right, is wearing a red robe trimmed with ermine, which suggests that the child is the offspring of nobility.

Finally, the dates of the inheritance of the manor of Combs and the birth of Robert and Cecilia's two sons also broadly correspond with a visit made to East Anglia by the pregnant Queen Margaret of Anjou in 1453. Robert Willoughby of Parham was descended from a family closely associated with the Lancastrian court. His father had fought with Henry V at Agincourt and his uncle, also called Robert, fought many battles for both Henry V and Henry VI and was well rewarded by the monarchy with titles and land for his efforts. He also escorted Queen Margaret of Anjou to England in 1444-1445.<sup>131</sup> In addition,

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<sup>131</sup> Diana E. S. Dunn (23 September 2004). 'Margaret [Margaret of Anjou] (1430-1482)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, [website], available

Henry VI was both a friend of the abbot and a lay brother of the nearby abbey of Bury St Edmunds, which also helped organise Queen Margaret's coronation in 1445.<sup>132</sup> It is likely, therefore, that the royal couple stayed at the abbey of Bury St Edmunds on their way to Norwich in the spring of 1453. Perhaps, then, the Margaret panels at Combs could have been intended as a personal celebration, but also, as has been suggested for the Margaret Window in St Peter Mancroft, as a celebration of the first pregnancy of Margaret of Anjou after many years of childlessness.<sup>133</sup>

## Conclusion

Margaret's Life, as depicted in the glass panels at Combs, is suggestive of wealthy patronage. However, although the panels appear to have had personal significance for one family, they would have been accessible to a wider audience and may even have been intended to play an official role in the public commemoration of Queen Margaret of Anjou's pregnancy.

The legend, as set out at Combs, does not differ in any significant way from the schemes discussed in previous chapters, and therefore attests to a remarkable consistency of the intended message of Margaret's Life over the centuries. This study has discussed representations of Margaret's Life in parish churches in the light of the saint's connection with the sacrament of baptism and her association with St Nicholas in this regard. Consequently, the arguments put forward in this chapter have been able to offer an explanation for the representation in Panel F at Combs (Margaret and Nicholas taking part

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<sup>132</sup> Gibson, *Theater of Devotion*, pp. 171-73.

<sup>133</sup> King, *Medieval Stained Glass*, p. ccxxix-ccxxx; Diana E. S. Dunn (23 September 2004). 'Margaret [Margaret of Anjou] (1430-1482)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.001/odnb-9780198614128-e-18049?rskey=iTiop9&result=2> (accessed 15 January 2021).

in the baptism of an infant) and thus show how it relates conceptually to Margaret's Life.

The following chapter moves away from a discussion of the representation of Margaret in parish churches to consider her significance for individuals. However, various strands of meaning associated the saint that were discussed in previous chapters, such as the construction of a Christian community around the sacrament of baptism, will be explored further.

**Part Three**  
**St Margaret and baptism in a personal context:**  
**devotion and sacramental issues**

## Chapter 5

This chapter is divided into two parts and each part focuses on a specific book of hours. For each manuscript, the version of the saint's legend it includes – its presentation, content and possible uses and significance for the owners – will be discussed. In different ways, the manuscripts attest to St Margaret's continued relevance for lay people and a consistency in the meaning of her story that endured until at least the early sixteenth century.

### Chapter 5, Part One St Margaret's Life as a baptismal gift

#### Introduction

In the early sixteenth century, Margaret Neville received a book of hours, Use of Sarum, from her godmother, Elizabeth Hull, abbess of the Benedictine abbey of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Andrew in Malling, Kent. In a separate section at the back of this manuscript, now Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, MS Hart 21040, and usually referred to as the Tanfield-Neville Hours, is a version of the vernacular poem of the *StzL* of St Margaret.<sup>1</sup> As discussed in previous chapters, this poem appears most frequently to have underpinned the visual narratives of Margaret's Life found in the naves of parish churches, and it is also the text of her Life which includes the greatest number of references to the sacrament of baptism.

In a continuation of the work of previous chapters, the theme of baptism associated with Margaret will be discussed further here and the Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours will be used as the vehicle for this discussion. The commissioning, content and possible use of the Life, both on its

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<sup>1</sup> The text of the Life is edited by Karl Reichl in *Religiöse Dichtung, im Englischen Hochmittelalter: Untersuchung und Edition der Handschrift B. 14. 39 des Trinity College in Cambridge*, (Münich, 1973), siglum B. All references to the text of St Margaret's Life in Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, MS Hart 21040 will be taken from Reichl's version (B).

own and in relation to the manuscript as a whole, will be examined through the prism of memory and remembrance.

## **Overview of the Tanfield-Neville Hours**

### ***Overview of the Hours***

The Tanfield-Neville Hours was made in England around 1440.<sup>2</sup> It is lavishly decorated throughout with illumination which combines figural scenes executed by an English workshop with Flemish-style borders. A full-page illumination of the Annunciation (fol. 7v) follows the Calendar and initiates the Latin text of the Hours proper, while the succeeding divisions of the Hours are marked by smaller scenes of Christ's Passion (Figures 5.1a-b). Other miniatures include a Last Judgement (fol. 53r), Christ as Man of Sorrows (fol. 122r) and the Emblems of the Passion (fol. 149v). Although there are no shields of arms or portraits of the owners included in this manuscript, the Calendar pages bear inscriptions which record the births, marriages and deaths of Margaret Neville and her family (Figure 5.2).

### ***Overview of the Life of St Margaret: codicological information***

Of greatest relevance to a discussion of the cult of St Margaret, however, is the section at the back of the book containing a Life of the saint, which was probably added around the time of Margaret Neville's birth in 1520. It seems likely, although not proven, that Elizabeth Hull, the godmother who gifted the manuscript, was also responsible for the inclusion of the additional section containing the Life.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The manuscript is a parchment codex of fols ii + 183 + ii. Miniatures of Christ's Passion are found on fols 16r, 31v, 36r, 39r, 42r, 45r, 47v. Other miniatures precede the Office of the Dead (fol. 73) and the *Commendatio Animarum* (fol. 108): see Jonathan Alexander and Paul Crossley, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Treasures in the North West*, (Manchester, 1976), pp. 28-29; Cynthia Johnston and Sarah J. Biggs (eds), *Blackburn's Worthy Citizen: The Philanthropic Legacy of R. E. Hart*, (London, 2016), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Hull(e) was elected abbess in 1495 and died in 1524: see 'Houses of Benedictine Nuns: The Abbey of Malling', in *A History of the County of Kent: Volume 2*, ed. William Page (London, 1926), pp. 146-48. *British History*

As it stands, the binding of the Tanfield-Neville Hours dates from the time when the manuscript was owned by Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland (1564-1632). Karl Reichl, who transcribed the Life of St Margaret from the Tanfield-Neville Hours, noted that when the earl had the manuscript rebound and the cover stamped with his seal, four leaves of the Life of St Margaret were misplaced. Thus, the sense of the text as it is currently presented is confusing.<sup>4</sup> Folios 175 recto and verso should come after folios 176 recto and verso, and similarly folios 181 recto and verso should appear after folios 182 recto and verso. Once the reader is aware of this idiosyncrasy, however, it becomes apparent that the Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours is a recognisable version of the *StzL*.

Reichl dates the script of the Hours in the Tanfield-Neville manuscript to the early fifteenth century, which concurs with other scholarly evaluations, but he also includes the Life of St Margaret in this time frame.<sup>5</sup> In addition, he suggests that, although rounder and leaning further right than the preceding text, the Life was written by the same hand as that which wrote the Hours.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, in a more recent reference to the Tanfield-Neville Life, Dresvina echoes Reichl in ascribing a fifteenth-century date to the manuscript and providing corresponding information about the script. Mary Erler, on the other hand, implies that the new section was commissioned by Elizabeth Hull, thereby dating it to the early sixteenth century. Erler also comments on the fact that the hand of the scribe in the Life is different to that of the Hours and David

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*Online*, [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/kent/vol2/pp146-148> (accessed 20 January 2021). For references to the abbess's gift, see Mary C. Erler, 'The Abbess of Malling's Gift Manuscript (1520)' in *Prestige, Authority and Power in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts*, Felicity Riddy (ed.), (York, 2000), pp. 147-157, esp. pp. 147, 154; Paul Lee, *Nunneries, Learning and Spirituality in Late Medieval English Society: The Dominican Priory of Dartford*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2001), p. 145.

<sup>4</sup> There is a brief introduction to the Life in Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, pp. 165-66; Dresvina, *A Maid*, Appendix 1, p. 214 and pp. 54-60.

<sup>5</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, p. 165. Dating by other scholars of this manuscript refers only to the Hours, not the Life of St Margaret: see Alexander and Crossley, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Treasures*, pp. 28-29; David Bell, *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries*, (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1995), p. 152.

<sup>6</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, pp. 165-66; Dresvina, *A Maid*, Appendix 1, p. 214.

Bell concurs.<sup>7</sup> It is argued here that Erler's view is correct, as there is no clear palaeographical or codicological evidence that the Life was part of the original manuscript, considered further below.

Frequently, books of hours attest to medieval owners having added to them single leaves or even objects, such as prayers or badges.<sup>8</sup> Instead, the material added to the back of the Tanfield-Neville Hours is made up of two quires and one bifolium, which is a generous amount of parchment to dedicate to such an addition. The Life was so substantial that its inclusion in the Tanfield-Neville Hours would have necessitated rebinding the whole manuscript. Perhaps the original leather binding was already worn after around eighty years of use and thus rebinding would have been required anyway.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, as Kathryn Rudy points out, the addition of new quires 'required the assistance of a professional, and with it the provision of time, money, and planning.'<sup>10</sup> It was therefore not something to be undertaken lightly, and this feature of the Tanfield-Neville manuscript sets the intervention apart as noteworthy.

Details of the presentation of the Life of St Margaret also indicate that it was not part of the original campaign that produced the text of the Hours. The Life begins on folio 167r and ends on folio 183v. Written in black ink in Gothic bookhand, every line of verse begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, and it is likely the same hand copied the whole text. Each folio of the Life includes twenty ruled lines of text, apart from the final folio (183v), which has only four. The ruling of the folios for the text of the Life differs from that of the Hours, which is written on neatly ruled lines of what appears to be very fine red ink. Those of the Life comprise heavier lines of black ink and they do not finish carefully on the vertical rules delineating the margins, as they do in the

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<sup>7</sup> Erler, 'The Abbess of Malling's Gift', p. 154 ('Its [i.e. the Tanfield-Neville Hours] last item added in a hand different from that of the main scribe, is a verse life of St Margaret'); Bell, *What Nuns Read*, p. 152.

<sup>8</sup> Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers, 1240-1570*, (New Haven, 2011), esp. 38-42; Kathryn M. Rudy, *Piety in Pieces: How Medieval Readers Customized their Manuscripts*, (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 10-11.

<sup>9</sup> Rudy makes this point about manuscript binding generally in *Piety in Pieces*, pp. 122-23.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Hours, but instead overlap them unevenly (Figure 5.3). In addition, the width of the lines of the Life is rather less than that of the Hours: 90mm compared to 120mm. However, the length of the text space remains the same at 132mm and the size of the script is identical, even though the Hours are written in Latin and the Life, in Middle English.

Unlike the Calendar and the Hours, there are no accompanying miniatures to the text of the Life; neither is there any ornament, in terms of colourful borders and letters, or bar line-fillers, to enliven the pages. However, red and blue ink has been used to highlight the first letter of the opening word of the Life, 'Olde', in what appears to be an attempt to meld the two parts of the manuscript together by referencing the decoration found at the start of each new section of the fifteenth-century text of the Hours (Figure 5.4). Blue outlines the shape of the first letter, 'O', set on two lines, and a red penwork flourish both accentuates the letter and indicates that this is the start of a new section. The only other embellishment to the Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours is the addition of red ink to the capital letters, initiating each new line of text. From this analysis of the Life, it becomes clear that this section was conceived and produced separately to the Hours, most probably at a later date.

### ***Overview of themes arising in the discussion of the manuscript***

The incorporation of the Life of St Margaret at the back of the Hours forges a powerful theme of memory and remembrance that metaphorically binds together the two distinct parts of this manuscript book. In all the versions of Margaret's Life considered in this study, the saint reaches out in her final prayer to those who remember her in some way: by erecting a church in her name, paying for a copy of her Life, setting a light in a church, or by simply reading or listening to the story of her passion.<sup>11</sup> Variations on the favourable outcomes of these actions are given in the texts, but in all versions the saint is described as responding to those who keep her memory alive and ask for her help. In the text of the Life in the Tanfield-Neville Hours Margaret's final prayer

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix E for the different versions of Margaret's final prayer.

relates how she will intercede for the soul of anyone who commemorates her by reading her story:

Also lorde alle tho that me haueth in memorye,  
Or for my loue that alle they/ that redyn of myne a vye,  
Jhesu Cryst y pray the that thow hem warant in hyghe.  
And haue mercy on the sowlys, where so euer the body lye.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, and also relevant to a discussion of memory and remembrance, the Tanfield-Neville Life highlights Margaret's association with baptism. As arguably the most important, and certainly the most pertinent, of the seven sacraments for Christians, the focus on baptism in this text also appears to underline orthodox teaching about the relevance of the sacramental rituals. Baptism is, of course, associated with the birth of infants and Margaret was traditionally called upon for help during labour. By extension, it will be argued that the baptism of children not only served as an official, ritual entrance of the child into the faith, but also offered a means of publically introducing an heir into the wider community, with implications for inheritance. It also forged spiritual bonds of kinship between the child's family and the godparents. An inscription, discussed below, indicates that the manuscript containing this Life was given as a baptismal gift by the abbess whose gift-giving, along with a plea for prayers for her soul, was recorded prominently within the pages of the manuscript at the time of her death. Further deaths of family members, as well as marriages and the births of children, are recorded on the Calendar pages of the Tanfield-Neville Hours, as mentioned above, and such use of the manuscript can be interpreted as establishing a form of interaction or dialogue based on memory and remembrance between the Life, the Calendar and the Hours.

### **The gift and the godmother: possible reasons for gifting the manuscript**

Erler has argued that, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the struggle for land and influence by the various powerbrokers in Kent almost certainly

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<sup>12</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, siglum B, p. 242, lines 289-92.

played a part in the decision by Elizabeth Hull, abbess of Malling Abbey, to gift the Tanfield-Neville Hours to the daughter of one of the most influential men in the county, Sir Thomas Neville.<sup>13</sup> Erler points out that given the desire amongst many noblemen, including Thomas Neville, to seize land owned by Malling Abbey, Elizabeth Hull's gift could be viewed as a form of appeasement.<sup>14</sup> Whilst this issue may well have partly informed the abbess's actions, what has perhaps been underplayed is the fact that Elizabeth Hull was chosen by Thomas Neville and his wife, Katherine, to stand as godmother to their child. Thus, the abbess did not make a spontaneous decision, driven by concern for the future of the abbey, to gift the manuscript to the Nevilles. Rather, the gift seems more likely to have been a considered response to the desire of the parents, Thomas Neville and Katherine his wife, for the abbess to concern herself with the spiritual welfare of their child.

Elizabeth Hull's exact familial connection to Thomas Neville is difficult to establish, and how the abbess came to be in possession of the book of hours remains obscure. It is likely, however, that the manuscript was given to Elizabeth Hull by Catherine Neville in the early sixteenth century. As the half-sister of Thomas Neville's father, George Neville (1436-1492), second Baron Bergavenny, Catherine Neville was a member of the Kent branch of the Neville family.<sup>15</sup> Catherine was married to Robert Tanfield, whose birth (28 July 1463), just after St Margaret's feast day in the same month, is recorded in the manuscript on the Calendar page for July. Robert Tanfield died in 1504 and some time after this date it seems that the book of hours came into the hands of Elizabeth Hull.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps Catherine Neville was familiar with Malling Abbey

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<sup>13</sup> Erler, 'The Abbess of Malling's Gift', pp. 148-49.

<sup>14</sup> Erler, 'The Abbess of Malling's Gift', p. 149; Helen Miller (undated). 'Neville, Thomas (by 1484-1542) of Mereworth, Kent and London', *The History of Parliament*, [website], <http://www.histparl.ac.uk/volume/1509-1558/member/neville-thomas-1484-1542> (accessed 18 March 2020).

<sup>15</sup> T. B. Pugh (23 September 2004). 'Neville, Edward, first Baron Bergavenny, (d.1476)', *Oxford Dictionary for National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19929> (accessed 9 April 2020).

<sup>16</sup> Erler, 'The Abbess of Malling's Gift', pp. 153-54; F. J. Furnivall, 'The Nevile and Southwell Families of Mereworth in Kent, A.D. 1520-1575', *Notes and*

through social interaction with her half-brother, and later her nephew, also George (third Baron Bergavenny), who resided at Birling, just north of Malling.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps Catherine Neville had always been aware of the religious community at Malling and was able to renew or establish an acquaintance with Elizabeth Hull after her husband's death in 1504, by visiting or staying with her nephew's family. It seems probable that Catherine Neville made a personal gift of the manuscript to the abbess. Although nuns were not officially supposed to own any personal property, this rule was not always observed.<sup>18</sup> It would likely have been contentious for Elizabeth Hull to bequeath the manuscript to Margaret Neville if it had been gifted to the convent rather than the abbess herself. The Tanfield-Neville Hours is the only manuscript that can be identified with Malling Abbey before the Dissolution and therefore suggests that the convent possessed few books and probably none of any great prestige.<sup>19</sup>

If the new section containing St Margaret's Life was indeed added to the Tanfield-Neville Hours under instruction from the abbess, it strongly suggests that her overriding consideration in making such a gift was not just to protect the religious community she administered by ensuring Thomas Neville was well-disposed towards her. Elizabeth Hull could easily have given the book to Margaret Neville without bothering to add the new material. After all, the book, with its wealth of illumination and decoration, would have made a magnificent bequest in its own right and was already a Neville family heirloom, thanks to the inscription recording the birth of Robert Tanfield, husband of Catherine Neville.<sup>20</sup> Whatever her true motivations may have been, Elizabeth Hull's gift of

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*Queries*, 4th series., 2, (1868), pp. 577-78, esp. p. 577; Johnston and Biggs (eds), *Blackburn's Worthy Citizen*, p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> A catalogue description of George Neville's will, held at the East Sussex Record Office, ref. ABE/20T/1 is online at the National Archives *Discovery*, [website], <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/e321d185-5efa-44ab-8b0e-0cba71280f9a> (accessed 17 February 2017).

<sup>18</sup> Bell, *What Nuns Read*, p. 18 and fn. 92.

<sup>19</sup> Lee, *Nunneries, Learning and Spirituality*, p. 145; Bell, *What Nuns Read*, p. 152.

<sup>20</sup> For the transcription of the inscription recording Robert Tanfield's birth, see F. J. Furnivall, 'The Nevile and Southwell Families of Mereworth in Kent, A.D. 1520-1575', *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, 2, (1868), pp. 577-78, esp. p. 577.

the Tanfield-Neville Hours to her goddaughter was a notable gesture and one that had considerable significance for Margaret Neville and her family.

### **Evidence for the commissioning of the Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours**

Although it is not certain that the section containing the Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours was added in order for Elizabeth Hull to gift the manuscript to Margaret Neville, it would seem that this was the most likely juncture for its inclusion. As the new section required the whole manuscript to be rebound, such a significant undertaking might well only have been considered worthwhile for an important event such as the birth and baptism of a child. As St Margaret had traditionally been considered an invaluable protector and helper of women in labour and their infants, it is possible that the section could have been inserted at the time of Robert Tanfield's birth in 1463. However, as Thomas Neville's daughter, his only child and heir, was given the name Margaret, most probably in commemoration of her paternal grandmother, it seems more than likely that the section of the manuscript containing the Life was added on the occasion of Margaret Neville's birth.<sup>21</sup> As the Tanfield-Neville Hours was given to Margaret Neville as a baptismal gift, it seems safe to say that St Margaret's story, which highlighted the saint's relevance to baptism and the care of infants, would not only have been intended to provide Margaret Neville with spiritual support generally, but may also have been envisaged as a comfort to her when she herself was in labour with her own children.

If the section was commissioned by the abbess, it can be seen as indicative of her strong desire to present Margaret Neville and her parents with a gift which, it could be quantifiably shown, was intended to be of greater significance than the simple handing down of a family heirloom to her

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Neville's mother was Margaret Fenne (d. 1485): Pugh, T. B., (23 September 2004). 'Neville, Edward, first Baron Bergavenny, (d.1476)', *Oxford Dictionary for National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19929> (accessed 9 April 2020).

godchild. Erler states that the inscription recording Margaret Neville's birth on the calendar page for September mentions the gift of the book of hours by the abbess to the child at this time, although this is not quite accurate. The abbess's presence is mentioned, but the gift of the book is not recorded:

*Memorandum, quod Margareta Nevill, filia Thome Nevill, militis, et domine katelyne fyzgheu, consortis sue, nata fuit apud Mereworth, in festo sanctorum Cipriani et Justine, videlicet xxvj<sup>o</sup> die septembris, Ann[o] domini Millesimo ccccc xx, circa horam xij<sup>am</sup> in die mercurij, et tunc existetur plena luna. cuius compater fuit abbas de boxley; commater vero abbatissa de Malling, et domina Wyet, et comatrem coram ego fui.<sup>22</sup>*

Note that Margaret Neville, daughter of Thomas Neville, knight, and Lady Katherine Fitzhugh, his wife, was born at Mereworth [Kent] on the feast of saints Ciprian and Justina, that is to say on Wednesday the twenty-sixth day of September, in the year of our lord 1520, around the twelfth hour. The moon was full. Her godfather was the abbot of Boxley, and truly her godmothers were the abbess of Malling, and Lady Wyatt; and I [the abbess of Malling] was present at her baptism.<sup>23</sup>

Neither is it explicitly specified in the inscription whether the abbess attended Margaret Neville's birth or baptism or both. While the inscription could have been written by a scribe under the abbess's instruction, it seems more plausible that it was the abbess herself who wrote it, as the text clearly states 'coram ego fui' ('I was [there] in person'). Mention of the child's godfather (the abbot of Boxley) and another godmother (Lady Wyatt), besides the abbess herself certainly suggests the inscription refers to Margaret Neville's baptism. However, as already discussed in Chapter 1, baptising infants as soon as possible after birth was considered vital for the salvation of the baby's soul. Thus, it would have been entirely consonant for Margaret Neville to have been baptized shortly after her birth, inferring that the abbess was plausibly present for the infant's birth as well as her subsequent baptism. It was not unusual for

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<sup>22</sup> Furnivall, 'The Nevile and Southwell Families', p. 577.

<sup>23</sup> Charity Scott-Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours in Medieval England: Selected Texts Translated from Latin, Anglo-Norman French and Middle English, with an Introduction and Interpretative Essay*, (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 52-53.

expectant mothers to ask other women to be in attendance for the birth of their children. For example, in a letter dated 1476, Margaret Paston was asked by her son, John Paston III, to attend the birth of the Duchess of Norfolk's baby, as, he says, the Duchess 'wold be ryght glad to haue yow a-bought hyr at hyr labore'.<sup>24</sup> It is possible then, that in addition to the baptism of their daughter, the Neville family asked Elizabeth Hull to be present at the birth, to say prayers for mother and child. The abbess may even have brought relics with her, perhaps even a Life of St Margaret, to place on or around the mother, in order to ensure a safe delivery.<sup>25</sup>

It is only in a later record, written c.1524 at the start of the Hours proper, on the back of the Annunciation miniature, that the gift of the manuscript book is reported and, even here, the section containing the Life of St Margaret is not mentioned but the abbess's presence at Margaret's baptism is confirmed.<sup>26</sup> This later inscription is set out in a different hand to that of the Calendar page recording Margaret Neville's birth. It would appear to have been written by a professional in a Secretary script, with assured strokes and liberal use of abbreviations. It reads as follows (Figure 5.5):

Lady Elizabeth Hull, abbess of the convent of Malling, of the diocese of Rochester, whose faith in Jesus Christ is to be praised, while still active in affairs, although weak in bodily strength, of her own free will bequeathed this book to Margaret Neville, whom she commended to the faith of Christ as sponsor at her baptism in the church of Mereworth, administered 26 day of September 1520, whose patron was the father of the child, Thomas Neville Knight, devoted servant and councillor of Henry the Eighth King of the English, also younger brother of Lord George Neville, Knight of the Order of the Garter, Lord of Bergevenny, his wife [being] Lady Katherine Fitzhugh, and the child being the ultimate product of their matrimonial relations. And now, as is right, she [Elizabeth Hull] requests prayers so that the soul of the godmother who

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<sup>24</sup> Norman Davis (ed.), *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, Vol. I, (Oxford, 1971), letter 371, pp. 601-02.

<sup>25</sup> Larson, 'Who is the master of this narrative?', pp. 102-04.

<sup>26</sup> The inscription appears on Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, Hart MS 21040, fol. 7r.

hopes for heaven may achieve that even while her body succumbs and pays its debt to nature, 15<sup>th</sup> day [erasure] 1524.<sup>27</sup>

The time lapse of four years between the two inscriptions – the birth of the child in 1520 and the setting down of the second inscription that recorded the official bequest of the manuscript in 1524, the year when the abbess died – might well indicate the period when the new section containing the Life of St Margaret could have been produced and the whole manuscript rebound. Thus, it may have been the case that the manuscript was promised to the child in 1520 but the gift consigned around the time the later inscription was added and the abbess died.

What is certain, from the prominence of the inscriptions that include her name, is that Abbess Elizabeth Hull ensured she would be remembered by all those who used the manuscript book, and by Margaret Neville in particular.

### **The Version of the Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours**

It is worth exploring here what the text of the Life might reveal about the intention behind the commission and the possible impact of the story on Margaret Neville herself. This section will therefore consider the content of the Life to ascertain whether aspects of the story have been emphasized or omitted, and whether there is anything unique to this version of the Life.

As mentioned, the Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours is a version of the *StzL*. It is one of six versions of the *StzL* edited by Reichl.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Translation my own from the Latin copy in Bell in *What Nuns Read*, pp. 152-53 ('*Domina Elezabeth Hull abbatissa Ecclesiae conuentualis de Mallyng, Roffensi diocesi in humanis dum agebat viribus licet corporis ferme destituta, hunc legauit librum Margarete Nevyll, ipsius que fidem Ihesu Christo commendandam, obnix baptismatis sacramento spondens offerebat in Ecclesiam parochali de Meryworthe ministrato xxvj<sup>to</sup> die Septembris, Anno domini Millesimo cccc xx<sup>o</sup> cuius quoque patronus prefate indubitatus fuit pater Dominus Thomas Nevyle, Miles, Henrici Angolorum Regis, fideique defensoris invictissimi conciliariorum unus erat octauis, ac domini Georgii Nevyle, ordinis de le Gartere militis, dominique Bergevenny fraterculus ac coniux domine Katherine ffytzhugh, quorum in hanc commercio lucem matrimoniali procreata denique fuit. Nunc quoque (ut decet) sue astripotenti commatricis animam oraciun<cu>lis supplicat, suscipiat ille cuius corpus nature soluit debitum xv die [erasure] Anno domini Millesimo Quingentesimo vicesimo iij<sup>o</sup>.').*

Although the Tanfield-Neville Life (labelled *B* by Reichl) is one of the shortest versions, it nevertheless includes all the incidents that one would expect to find in such a text: Margaret's confrontations with Olibrius, the four tortures inflicted on her, including those with oil and water, the demonic episode, and her final prayer and beheading.

### ***The theme of baptism***

In order to understand whether the content of the Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours is unusual in any way, and whether this can therefore shed light on the commission, it will be useful to compare the text with the five other versions of the *StzL* edited by Reichl. Such a comparison reveals that the Life in the Tanfield-Neville Hours (*B*), in addition to a fifteenth-century version (Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 4122), labelled *C* by Reichl, contains the greatest number of references to baptism.

All versions report the initial confrontation between Margaret and Olibrius in which Margaret declares that she is a baptized Christian who will never forsake Christ. The Tanfield-Neville Life is one of a total of six versions that also includes:

- \* the fact that Margaret's father predicts she will be baptized and then killed;
- \* the section of the second demon's speech, in which he describes the harm he does to women in labour and unbaptized infants;
- \* Margaret's instruction to Olibrius that he should seek out baptism;
- \* Margaret's acceptance of the water torture as a form of baptism.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, pp. 163-67 (for an introduction to the six manuscripts edited by Reichl).

<sup>29</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, (all page and line references here are from the version labelled *B* by Reichl), p. 169, lines 11-12 (Margaret's father's prediction); p. 222, lines 223-26 (unbaptized infants in second demon's speech); p. 228, lines 245-48 (Margaret's instruction to Olibrius); p. 233, lines 258-59 (water torture as baptism). Version *A* (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Adv. 19.2.1), omits Margaret's father's prediction; version *Tr* (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.14.39) omits the reference to unbaptized infants in the second demon's speech; version *Or* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. poet. 34 (SC 14528)) omits Margaret's instruction to Olibrius and the reference to the water torture as a form of baptism.

The Tanfield-Neville Life is also one of four versions that includes the prayer in which Margaret calls on the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – to protect her before the demonic episode ensues. This is an obvious and important echo of the baptismal rite in which the Trinity is invoked during the exorcism with salt, the exorcism itself (for both male and female children) and the baptism proper.<sup>30</sup> Finally, the Tanfield-Neville Life is one of five versions that also alludes to baptism when Margaret delivers her final prayer and asks that all women who call on her in labour may be delivered safely. The text of the Tanfield-Neville Life is as follows:

Ffor wymmen *that* ben with chylde, if *that* they clepe on me,  
 Delyuer hem with ioye, as thow deydest on the rood tre.  
 And as thow dydest *thi* body *theron* ffor to make vs alle fre.<sup>31</sup>

Thus, the theme reaches its culmination in Margaret's final prayer, in which the act of a mother calling to Margaret for help creates a link to Christ's sacrifice on the cross and his gift of salvation or new life. Furthermore, Christ's death and resurrection with its attendant implications of rebirth underpins the sacrament of baptism, which in turn, provides an echo of the mother's own act of remembrance and prayer. Thus, the Tanfield-Neville Life is remarkable in the richness of its sacramental associations.

Prominence given to the sacrament of baptism in the versions of the Life of St Margaret is not necessarily determined by when a text was produced. For example, the early ninth-century Latin version of the *Mb passio*, from which the *StzL* derives, includes a wealth of references to baptism.<sup>32</sup> Thus, even though the three versions of the *StzL* found in Reichl that have the greatest number of references to baptism (*B*, *C* and *Ob*) date from the fifteenth century or slightly

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<sup>30</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, (*B*), p. 210, lines 165-69. Version *A* (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Adv. 19.2.1) and version *Or* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. poet. 34 (SC 14528)) omit the prayer in which Margaret calls on the Trinity to protect her. For the reference to the Trinity in the baptismal rite, see Collins, *Manuale*, p. 26 (exorcism with salt), pp. 28-31 (exorcism of male and female children), p. 36 (baptism proper).

<sup>31</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, (*B*), p. 242, lines 294-96. Version *Ob* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 779 (SC 2567)) does not allude to baptism in Margaret's final prayer.

<sup>32</sup> Grogan, *Baptisms by Blood*, pp. 377-409.

later, such emphasis is not exclusively reserved for texts of Margaret's Life produced in the later Middle Ages.<sup>33</sup> However, perhaps the emphasis on baptism found in later versions of the Life was consistent with the drive by the Church authorities, notably from the early fifteenth century, toward a strengthening of orthodox practice and an insistence on the necessity of the performance of the sacred rituals of the sacraments by a priest.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the consolidation of orthodox belief could have been one intention of the Life of St Margaret included in the Tanfield-Neville Hours. Evidence for such a use of Margaret's legend by the Church authorities can be found in the model sermon for Margaret's feast day, written by John Mirk. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Mirk's sermon, appeared in his *Festial*, an enormously influential collection of sermons probably composed in the late 1380s. The *Festial* remained popular throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, as attested by the large number of surviving manuscripts and printed editions.<sup>35</sup> Mirk's version of the virgin-martyr's story includes three direct mentions of baptism, but in the text of Margaret's final prayer Mirk, uniquely, adds a telling detail. The saint asks that any woman who calls on her be delivered safely of their child, but that in addition the child 'come to cristyndom'.<sup>36</sup> This appears to express the hope that the child is not only delivered safely, but that it is also baptized – it would not have been able to enter the Christian community fully otherwise.

The emphasis on baptism in the Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours – in the sense of both ensuring that children are baptized and that one's baptismal vows are maintained – can be considered the particular choice of whoever commissioned this version of the Life and would therefore have been entirely in keeping with the choices of a professed religious such as Elizabeth Hull. However, the ritual of baptism, administered in a public forum,

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<sup>33</sup> The manuscripts edited by Reichl in *Religiöse Dichtung* are (B) Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, Hart MS 21040, c.1520; (C) Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 4122, mid fifteenth century; (Ob) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 779 (SC 2567), first half of the fifteenth century.

<sup>34</sup> Nichols, *Seeable Signs*, pp. 92-99.

<sup>35</sup> Susan Powell, *John Mirk's Festial Edited from British Library MS Cotton Claudius A. II*, Vol. I, EETS os 334, (Oxford, 2009), pp. xix-xx.

<sup>36</sup> *Mirk*: p. 143, line 92.

was also a crucial means of acknowledging and legitimizing heirs, as suggested in the commissioning of the stained-glass panels of Margaret's Life at Combs. Public acknowledgement of heirs in the baptismal context appears to assume a particular urgency in relation to inheritance in the unsettled political social and religious climate into which Margaret Neville, an only child, and her children, were born. Thus, the emphasis on the theme of baptism in the Tanfield-Neville Life accords with the fact that the gift was intended for a noble woman destined to bear children, thereby assuring the continuance of the family line and furthering the family's ambitions.

### ***The choice of the StzL as opposed to other verse Lives of St Margaret***

To begin with, the decision to offer a vernacular, as opposed to a Latin, version of the Life implies that thought had been given to the accessibility of the text for a laywoman such as Margaret Neville, who may well have received no formal education. As there is no illumination included in this new section, rhyming verse might have helped make the story more memorable or more likely to have been appreciated by Margaret from a young age. The choice of the *StzL* verse Life instead of the other very popular verse Life of the *SEL*, for example, is also significant. While the two versions convey the same message, the *StzL* is less grisly and more thrilling than the *SEL*, and its text and style potentially more suited to a gift for a child. This point can be illustrated by a few pertinent examples.

The *SEL* places greater focus on Margaret's suffering, highlighting the fact that she is stripped naked and offering gruesome details of the effects of the torture on her body. For example, during the first torture episode, Margaret is hung up and the scourges inflict wounds which result in pieces of flesh falling away ('Bi peces *that fleiss fel adoun*'), and later Margaret's stomach is opened up and her genitals cut ('*With oules hi todrowe hure wombe • the gottes isene were / Alas also the ssendfol dede • hure deorne limes hi tortere*').<sup>37</sup> By way of contrast, the same episode in the Tanfield-Neville version of the *StzL*, while still horrific, simply states that the scourging resulted in a

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<sup>37</sup> *SEL*: p. 296, lines 122 and 125-26.

huge river of blood issuing from the saint's body, so that all who witnessed the scene believed her to be dead ('With whyppes and ik with scourges/ they layde vpon her swythe. / The blood downe of her body ran as water dothe oute of clyffe, / Tyl that they wenden alle that she were owte of lyfe.').<sup>38</sup>

Equally, while angels provide comfort to Margaret in the *SEL*, they are not depicted as colourfully in this text as they are in the *StzL*. This is noticeable in two episodes in particular: just before the demonic episode and when Margaret's soul is taken into heaven. As the saint languishes in her prison cell, the *SEL* comments, 'Bote angles confortede hure • and adoun to hure alighte / He[o] was faste in orisons • bidaie & eke binight'.<sup>39</sup> The same moment is captured in the *StzL* thus: 'The holy angel of heuene to her come he ful sone, / Shynynge as the sonne beme a daye abowte the noone, / With the holy crosse in his honde that God was on ydoon.'<sup>40</sup> Not only, then, does the *StzL* vividly depict the dazzling presence of the angel, but in order for her to escape from the dragon's belly, this angel also brings Margaret the most powerful symbol of Christ's passion – the very cross on which Christ died. At the end of the poems, the *SEL* describes Margaret's soul as a white dove flying out of her up into heaven ('A wight coluere flei out of hure • into heuene an hey'), but the *StzL* has a host of heavenly beings with lighted torches and candles accompanying her soul's journey, 'Michael and Gabriel and Raphael her fere, / Cherubyn and Seraphyn a thowsande ther were. / With torchis and with taprys tat sowle to heuen they bere.'<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps the most dramatic point of the story is where St Margaret encounters the dragon. In the *SEL* the dragon itself is not described other than by way of a matter-of-fact indication of how Margaret was swallowed and yet emerged unscathed from its belly. In the *StzL* on the other hand, the fearsome appearance of the beast and Margaret's fear are palpable:

Thanne mayde Margaret she loke[d]e here besyde  
And sawe a lothely dragon, in an hyrne can glyde,  
Brennynge as a bronde of fyre, his mowthe grennynge wyde.

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<sup>38</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, (B) p. 196, lines 120-22.

<sup>39</sup> *SEL*: p. 297, lines 153-54.

<sup>40</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, (B) p. 208, lines 158-60.

<sup>41</sup> *SEL*: p. 302, line 314; Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, (B) p. 246, lines 309-11.

The mayde wax also grene as grasse in somerys tyde.  
The lye spronge oute of his mowthe as fyre oute of the stoon.  
The mayde was so a feerde, she quaked euey boon.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, the format of the *StzL*, with its less graphic depiction of Margaret's suffering but inclusion of a lively evocation of the dragon and dramatic interventions from the heavens, may well have been considered more suitable and engrossing for a girl or young woman than a version of the *SEL*.

A further example of how St Margaret's story is made more appealing for a younger audience in this manuscript is found in the use of the first person narrator and direct speech. Unlike some of the other versions of the *StzL* mentioned above, the Tanfield-Neville text uses the first person narrator not only in the Prologue, but also for short authorial intrusions in the narrative such as the initial description of Olibrius: 'Olebrius was lorde of *that* londe, sothely as y yow now telle'.<sup>43</sup> Coupled with the use of direct speech, this use of the first person also lends immediacy to the narrative and helps intensify the impact on the reader or listener.

One unique feature of the Tanfield-Neville Life is Margaret's appeal to Christ, for the sake of the love he has for his mother, the Virgin Mary, to let her become a martyr and enjoy eternal bliss in heaven.<sup>44</sup> Margaret offers up this prayer just after she has received an initial approach by Olibrius's men and describes her readiness for martyrdom in that she has forsaken all her family ('Alle my kynne') to follow Christ.<sup>45</sup> The saint's appeal to Christ to answer her prayer for the sake of the love he bears his mother is emotionally charged in that Margaret's rejection of her relations, including her own mother, highlights her orphan-like and vulnerable status. Nonetheless, this focus on the Virgin

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<sup>42</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, (B) pp. 211-12, lines 173-78.

<sup>43</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, (B) p. 174, line 33. The versions edited in Reichl that do not use the first person throughout are *Tr*, *A* (which uses first person plural), *Or* and *C*. Only *Ob* uses first person singular throughout, like *B*.

<sup>44</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, (B) p. 182, lines 63-4 ('Jhesu Cryste, my lorde, he today me yeme, / Ffor his dere modyr loue'.) and p. 183, line 70 ('I bydde the for thi moder loue / haue now mercy vpon me.').

<sup>45</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, (B) p. 183, line 67.

Mary as supreme intercessor and beloved mother seems appropriate in a text directed at a young woman destined to bear children.

### **How might the Tanfield-Neville Hours and the Life of St Margaret have been used by Margaret Neville?**

It is highly likely that Margaret Neville had the Life read to her, especially when she was very young, although the person most likely to have performed this task, her mother, died when she was just seven years old, as attested by an inscription in the Calendar pages of the Hours.<sup>46</sup> It is equally possible that, with some initial help, Margaret learned to read the version of St Margaret's story set out in the Tanfield-Neville Hours for herself.

It is also possible that, when she was older, Margaret Neville took the book to church with her when she went to Mass.<sup>47</sup> She appears to have lived in the family home of Yokes (or Jotes) Place, in Mereworth, Kent, from her birth in 1520 and four out of five of her children are recorded in the Tanfield-Neville Hours as being born there.<sup>48</sup> The manor of Mereworth and advowson of the parish church of St Laurence were left to her for her lifetime in the will of her uncle, George Neville, third Baron Bergavenny. Margaret Neville's father, Thomas Neville, and her first husband, Sir Robert Southwell, are documented as being buried in the church, suggestive of a strong family attachment to that

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<sup>46</sup> For the inscription recording Katherine Fitzhugh's death, see Furnival, 'The Nevile and Southwell Families', p. 577; Scott-Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours*, p. 53. Phillipa Hardman discusses the role of mothers in teaching their children to read in the late medieval period in Phillipa Hardman, 'Domestic Learning and Teaching: Investigating Evidence for the Role of "Household Miscellanies" in Late-Medieval England', in *Women and Writing: the Domestication of Print Culture, c.1340-c.1650*, Anne Lawrence-Mathers and Phillipa Hardman (eds), (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2010), pp. 15-33, esp. pp. 15-16.

<sup>47</sup> For the increasing use of books of hours during the Mass in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Paul Saenger, 'Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Later Middle Ages', in *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe*, Roger Chartier (ed.), Lydia G. Cochrane (trans.), (Princeton, New Jersey, 1989), pp. 141-70, esp. p. 153.

<sup>48</sup> Furnivall, 'The Nevile and Southwell Families', pp. 577-78; Scott-Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours*, pp. 52-4.

area.<sup>49</sup>

Being the namesake of St Margaret may well have engendered curiosity about her in young Margaret Neville. It may even have permitted the child to identify in some way with the tenacious, forceful character of the young woman in the story. Whilst the pages of the Life show few signs of wear, there are marks or doodles in the margin alongside significant episodes in the saint's story. One such piece of marginalia is found alongside the lines which record the angel bearing the cross appearing to Margaret in her prison cell, just before the dragon emerges: "Mayde Margarete, as bryght as any leem," / The angelle anone her grette (Figure 5.6a).<sup>50</sup> Another mark sits beside the lines which recount how Margaret vanquishes the dragon: 'Mayde Margaret arooce and vpon the dragon stood. / Fful blythe was hur herte, wel blyther was her mood (Figure 5.6b).<sup>51</sup> A third mark has been made against the lines which precede Margaret's final prayer, as she addresses her executioner: 'Thow shalt, my leue brother, smyte of myn heed sone (Figure 5.6c).<sup>52</sup>

Although it is not possible to say with certainty when or by whom these marks were made, they do offer evidence of interaction with the text. The marks themselves, possibly pen trials, appear to have been made by a slightly unsteady hand with a poorly cut nib and therefore may well be the work of a young or unskilled reader. Such marks may have acted as aide-memoires to help the reader turn more easily to passages holding some specific meaning for them. More likely, perhaps, since they appear against significant moments in the saint's story – just before and just after Margaret encounters the dragon and beside the lines recording the saint's execution – they indicate moments when it was prudent to make the sign of the cross or bow one's head. Indeed, similar marks – a cross drawn within a square – have been identified by Phillipa

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<sup>49</sup> Furnivall, 'The Nevile and Southwell Families', pp. 577-78; Edward Hasted, 'Parishes: Mereworth', in *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent: Volume 5*, (Canterbury, 1798), pp. 70-90. *British History Online* [website], <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-kent/vol5/pp70-90> (accessed 19 January 2021).

<sup>50</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, (B) p. 209, line 161.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, (B) p. 213, lines 177-78.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, (B) p. 239, line 281.

Hardman beside the mention of the devil in a fifteenth-century manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 61, fols 63r and 65r).<sup>53</sup>

As a young woman, Margaret Neville may well have used the Life as she prepared for the birth of her own children. In 1536, at the age of sixteen and on the recommendation of Thomas Cromwell, she was married to Sir Robert Southwell, a lawyer and member of parliament.<sup>54</sup> The marriage was very much a business arrangement, as is made clear by the fact that in 1535 Thomas Neville and his family had tried to marry Margaret to Cromwell's son, Gregory. This is attested by the will of Thomas Neville's brother, George Neville, third Baron Bergavenny.<sup>55</sup> It is likely that St Margaret's story would have provided both comfort and assistance during her pregnancies and labours in the years that followed Margaret Neville's first marriage to Robert Southwell, as she was to have five children by him before her twenty-fourth birthday. As her own birth was recorded on the Calendar page for September, so the births of her children were duly recorded on the Calendar pages of the Tanfield-Neville Hours.<sup>56</sup>

In addition to the story, however, the physical manuscript book may also have been used, as texts of the saint's Life are known to have been, as a relic: placed on the belly or even sometimes on the open mouth of the mother during labour in the hope that appealing for St Margaret's help at this

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<sup>53</sup> Hardman, 'Domestic Learning and Teaching', p. 32.

<sup>54</sup> J. H. Baker (3 January 2008). 'Southwell, Sir Robert (c.1506-1559), lawyer and member of parliament', *Oxford Dictionary for National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/26063> (accessed 9 April 2020).

<sup>55</sup> Alasdair Hawkyard, (3 January 2008). 'Neville, George, third Baron Bergavenny, (c.1469-1535)', *Oxford Dictionary for National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19929> (accessed 9 April 2020); a catalogue description of George Neville's will, held at the East Sussex Record Office, ref. ABE/20T/1 is online at the National Archives *Discovery*, [website], <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/e321d185-5efa-44ab-8b0e-0cba71280f9a> (accessed 17 February 2017).

<sup>56</sup> Margaret Neville's children by Sir Robert Southwell are as follows: Thomas Southwell, 1537; Francis Southwell, 1538; Anna Southwell, 1540; Dorothea, 1542; Henry, 1543. Her second marriage, in 1561, was to William Plumbe: see Furnivall, 'The Nevile and Southwell Families', pp. 577-78 and Scott-Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours*, pp. 52-4.

treacherous time might bring some relief and ensure a safe delivery.<sup>57</sup>

The Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours may have simply given pleasure to Margaret Neville, but it may also have helped her in difficult times and reminded her of her obligations as a Christian on a daily basis. Further, it would also have underpinned and memorialized events of great significance in this woman's life: events such as the baptism of her own children, which allowed their official entrance into both a spiritual and material, familial community.

### **Analysis and summary**

An examination of the Life of St Margaret inserted at the back of the Tanfield-Neville Hours enables a greater understanding of the significance of St Margaret to people, both religious and lay, in the early sixteenth century. In the first place, it is clear that somebody deemed it worth going to the trouble, and probably expense, of incorporating the Life of St Margaret at the back of a valuable book of hours. As examined above, in what seems to have been a deliberate personalization of the manuscript, considerable thought has been given to the presentation and content of the Life, particularly in ensuring that the text was suited to the young daughter of a noble family.

The fact that Abbess Elizabeth Hull gave the Tanfield-Neville Hours to Margaret Neville, or rather returned it to the Nevilles, is undisputed. Whether she herself commissioned the Life of St Margaret is less certain, as neither of the inscriptions, which record her involvement with the family, mention the Life as such. Thus, there is a possibility that the Neville family could have commissioned the Life, but this seems most unlikely. The evidence suggests that Margaret Neville's father, Thomas Neville, was to some degree sympathetic to the teachings of the Protestant reformers – shown, for example, in the fact that he worked closely with Thomas Cromwell and had tried to

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<sup>57</sup> Leanne Gilbertson, 'Imagining St Margaret: *Imitatio Christi* and *Imitatio Mariae* in the Vanni Altarpiece', in *Images, Relics and Devotional Practices in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, Sally J. Cornelison and Scott B. Montgomery (eds), (Arizona, 2005), pp. 115-38, esp. p. 122; Larson, 'Who is the master of this narrative?', pp. 102-04.

marry Margaret to Cromwell's son. Neville's patronage of the evangelical theologian and teacher Thomas Becon can also be regarded as an indication of his religious preferences, especially as his protégée appears to have been sufficiently appreciative of his patronage to dedicate two works to Neville, one dated the year of Neville's death and one posthumously.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the possibility of Thomas Neville being sympathetic to the idea of commissioning a Life of a saint for inclusion in a book of hours, seems remote.

The four-year time span between Margaret Neville's birth in 1520 and the official record of the abbess's bequest in 1524 is, however, particularly significant. It suggests that the manuscript may well not have been handed over immediately on the birth of the child in 1520, providing a suitable window for the producing and binding of the Life with the original text of the Hours. Where this procedure might have been carried out is uncertain. The fact that there is no accompanying illumination to the text of the Life, indicating that the work was carried out on a rather limited budget, appears to support the fact that the abbess was behind the commission. As abbess, Elizabeth Hull would have had access to a secretary, for business and correspondence purposes. Indeed, the inscription that records the abbess's gift of the Tanfield-Neville Hours to Margaret Neville, appears to be the hand of a professional. Perhaps this person could have copied out the Life under the abbess's instruction. However, Elizabeth Rede, who succeeded Elizabeth Hull as abbess, was a literate woman, as surviving copies of her letters attest and perhaps she was engaged to carry out the copy of the Life of St Margaret.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps, then,

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<sup>58</sup> The two works by Becon were *Christmas Bankette* (1542) and *Potacion for Lent* (1543): see Catharine Davies, (3 January 2008). 'Neville, Sir Thomas (*b.* in or before 1484, *d.* 1542)', *Oxford Dictionary for National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19964> (accessed 14 April 2020); Seymour Baker House, (8 October 2009). 'Becon, Thomas (1512/13-1567)', *Oxford Dictionary for National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/1918> (accessed 14 April 2020). However, Thomas Neville's brothers, George and Edward were, it would appear, less enthusiastic supporters of religious reform and any interaction Margaret Neville had with them and their families might have provided her with a different religious perspective to that of her father.

<sup>59</sup> 'Houses of Benedictine nuns: The abbey of Malling', in *A History of the County of Kent: Volume 2*, ed. William Page (London, 1926), pp. 146-148. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/kent/vol2/pp146-148> (accessed

the text of the Life was copied out in the abbey itself and was sent away for binding with the Hours, or perhaps binding the two items was something that occurred at a later date at the instigation of the family.

Finally, it is evident that whoever chose to include a version of the *StzL* of St Margaret rather than a version of the *SEL*, intended the text to appeal to a lay audience, and particularly to a child. Although Margaret Neville's family may have been consulted concerning the choice of text, it seems more likely that the abbess would have selected it, or at the very least guided its selection herself, as she would have been very familiar with this kind of hagiographical material. As the text also emphasizes the necessity of baptism, and thus of orthodox Christian practice, it is also suggestive of the abbess as responsible for the commission of the Life.

### **Conclusion: benefits of the gift to recipient and gift-giver**

Attending to Margaret Neville's spiritual and physical well-being appears to have been the motivation for the inclusion of the Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours and the text acts as a pendant to the Calendar and Hours which precede it. It is clear that the inclusion of the Life was intended to offer many benefits to the recipient of the gift.

The first such benefit was St Margaret's protection and her intercession for mercy on the souls of all those who read the Life. While reading the text, or having it read to her, or perhaps reading it to her own children, Margaret Neville would have been aware of the inscriptions on the Calendar pages at the front of the book, which commemorated the lives of all those associated with her in some way. She may well have beseeched the saint to intercede for and protect all those mentioned. Indeed, the Calendar pages served as a repository for the inscriptions recording Margaret's birth and marriages, the births of her children, the deaths of her parents and first husband, and, rather poignantly,

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21 January 2021); Mary C. Erler, *Reading and Writing during the Dissolution: Monks, Friars and Nuns, 1530-1558*, (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 100-101; Marylin Oliva provides examples of nuns who could probably write and copy out texts: see Marylin Oliva, *The Convent and the Community in Late Medieval England: Female Monasteries in the Diocese of Norwich, 1350-1540*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1998), pp. 71-2.

her own death.<sup>60</sup> Such records of important family events were usually preserved within the most important book a household possessed. Given their aristocratic status, the Nevilles would almost certainly have owned other books, so the inclusion of such entries here indicates how significant this book was to them. Furthermore, the demise of the gift-giver, Elizabeth Hull, is also entered, just before the text of the Hours begins, thereby establishing a permanent association – a ‘formal state of friendship’ or a ‘bond of kinship’ – between the abbess and Margaret Neville’s family.<sup>61</sup> Occupying the entire folio that forms the reverse of the Annunciation miniature (fol. 7r) at the start of the Hours proper, the inscription recording the abbess’s gift could not have been overlooked by anyone using the book; neither could it have been excised without sacrificing the miniature. It was thus a lasting reminder to those who turned its pages that Abbess Elizabeth Hull was responsible for restoring the book to the Neville family and for giving this valuable gift to Margaret Neville in particular. In addition, and significantly for Elizabeth Hull, the inscription prompted the reader to remember the abbess in their prayers and thus, it was hoped, mitigate her time in purgatory.

Another discernible benefit of including the Life for Margaret Neville’s spiritual welfare can be found in the emphasis in the text on the necessity of baptism for salvation and on the courage required to maintain one’s baptismal vows in the face of terrible odds. By thus furnishing the child with a text that underlines religious orthodoxy, the Life, underpinned by the Calendar and Hours which precede it, formed an apposite gift for a female religious to present to Margaret Neville on the occasion of her baptism. The emphasis on baptism in the Life might also have been intended as an injunction to the young woman reading the text to ensure the baptism of her own children. Not only would this be a requirement for the salvation of their souls, but, in the secular world, a mother making certain the ritual was duly performed for her children

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<sup>60</sup> Furnivall, ‘The Nevile and Southwell Families’, pp. 577-8; Scott-Stokes, *Women’s Books of Hours*, pp. 52-54.

<sup>61</sup> John Bossy, ‘Blood and Baptism: Kinship, Community and Christianity in Western Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries’ in *Sanctity and Secularity: the Church and the World*, Derek Baker (ed.), (Oxford, 1973), pp. 129-43, esp. pp. 133, 136.

enabled public recognition of the child by the family, and affirmed its right to inherit land and wealth. The child could also claim a spiritual bond with influential godparents, as was certainly the case with Margaret Neville, who could count not only Abbess Hull amongst her godparents but also the abbot of the prestigious Cistercian foundation of nearby St Mary's, Boxley, and the recently married wife of Sir Thomas Wyatt.

One final perceived benefit of including the text of St Margaret's Life in the Tanfield-Neville Hours could have been the physical well-being of its owner. If the text of the Life was indeed used by Margaret Neville during the birth of her children in the same way a relic would have been used, it would most likely have been placed on her belly or somewhere so that it touched part of her body during labour. Thus, not only would Margaret Neville have been in contact with St Margaret's protection for her and her infant thanks to the presence of the text of the Life, but she may also have found comfort in the proximity of the inscriptions of loved ones (notably, perhaps, her own mother) on the Calendar pages, as well as the authoritative weight, both spiritual and physical, of the text of the Hours.

In some respects, the identity of whoever decided to include the Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours is not the prevailing concern. What is significantly more important is the fact that shortly before traditional Christian worship in England was to be utterly transformed and the standing of saints challenged by Protestant teachings, a Life of St Margaret was considered an enhancement to an already valuable manuscript – one that was worth going to some trouble to have executed. This suggests that the perceived benefit of this undertaking to Margaret Neville's life was worth the expense and effort involved. The inclusion of the Life of St Margaret in the Tanfield-Neville Hours is a mark of how integrated Margaret's Life was in the fabric of religious belief, even on the cusp of the Reformation, and suggests consistency of devotion to the saint, largely due, it is argued here, to her important associations with the fundamentals of life and Christian teaching – that is to say, motherhood, birth and baptism.

## **Chapter 5, Part Two** **St Margaret's feast day and devotion to the saint**

### **Introduction**

By way of contrast with Part One of this chapter, the discussion in Part Two focuses on a book of hours owned by a man – the Speaker of the House of Commons, a diplomat and a soldier. The text and the book of hours itself will be examined to suggest the significance of St Margaret for this individual and how he might have expressed his devotion to her.

### **The manuscript: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31<sup>1</sup>**

By the beginning of the twelfth century, the date of St Margaret's feast day was uniformly given in monastic calendars as 20 July. The text of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31 provides a rare insight into the liturgical celebration of this feast day.<sup>2</sup> In addition, as shown in the Tanfield-Neville Hours, this manuscript also bears witness to the strength of lay devotion to St Margaret in the later Middle Ages.

Written and decorated somewhere between 1425 and 1443, almost certainly for John Tiptoft, first Baron Tiptoft (c.1378-1443), the text of MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31, henceforth called the Tiptoft Hours in this study, is remarkable in two respects. Firstly, it is a book of hours entirely devoted to the liturgical services for the feast day of St Margaret, including Matins, Lauds and the initial hymn and psalms of Prime. Secondly, the manuscript appears to have been commissioned by and for a lay man, rather than a lay woman, thus suggesting that devotion to St Margaret was by no means entirely generated and sustained by female concerns for safe labour and childbirth.

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix F provides an overview of the structure of the text in the manuscript. Appendix G provides my own transcription and Appendix H provides my own translation of the nine Lessons for St Margaret's feast day found in the manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> Evidence for the establishment of St Margaret's feast day in England is found in Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 40-41.

Although otherwise in good condition, the Tiptoft Hours has some leaves missing at the beginning and end of the manuscript, and a foliate border cut away from the parchment on folio 66r. Thus, the first leaf of the manuscript, containing some of the text of the invitatory (Psalm 94, '*Venite exsultemus*') is wanting, as well as further leaves at the end of the manuscript containing part of Psalm 118 ('*Beati immaculati*').<sup>3</sup> The Tiptoft Hours is a small volume, the dimensions of each leaf measuring a mere 130mm x 90mm. The twelve lines of Latin text on each folio are set out in Gothic bookhand on a ruled grid of 80mm x 50mm. Even though the size of the script varies so that antiphons, responds, versicles and responses are smaller in size than the rest of the text, the hand appears to be that of a single scribe (Figure 5.7).

While there is no figural illumination in the Tiptoft Hours, each section of the liturgical material is distinguished by a decorated initial capital letter extending over either two, three or seven lines of text (Figure 5.8). The size of these letters corresponds to the type of material they introduce: a two-line capital decorated with gold leaf initiates the hymns and psalms; those of three lines mark the start of Lauds and Prime; and one seven-line letter 'I' forms the initial letter of '*Iubilate*', the first word of Psalm 99. One further extended letter, found on folio 63r, is the first letter of the rubric '*Jesu corona*' for the hymn '*Jesu corona virginum*'. This letter reaches from the penultimate line of text to the bottom of the leaf. Each of these initial capitals has a foliate border, which issues from its left-hand side and unfurls along one or more margins of the page (Figure 5.8). Smaller capital letters in the text are also elaborately decorated, using different coloured inks: red and blue or a lilac with gold leaf (Figure 5.9). The text of the Lessons is the only text which does not include decorated capitals, although each capital is picked out in red ink (Figure 5.10).

Two decorated capitals, one on folio 52r and one on folio 66r, include shields of arms (Figures 5.11a-b). Both letters are three lines in extent, and the colourful foliate border that issues from them at one time surrounded the whole text on each page. On folio 52r, the initial capital, 'D' of '*Deus in*

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<sup>3</sup> The invitatory may well have included an antiphon before Psalm 94. All psalm references follow the Vulgate numbering, as set out in Harper, *Forms and Orders*, Appendix 2, pp. 242-55.

*auditorium meum intende*' marks the beginning of Lauds, and although some of the pigment has flaked off, the royal arms of England appear to be represented inside the letter (gules, a bordure argent, three lions passant, or). However, on folio 66r, the decorated initial capital 'D' of '*Deus in auditorium meum intende*', which here marks the beginning of Prime, most likely encircles the arms of John Tiptoft (argent, a saltire engrailed, gules), while the greater part of what appears to have been a foliate border, similar to that on folio 52r, has been cut away.

The small dimensions of the Tiptoft Hours (130mm x 90mm) suggest that the manuscript was designed to be easily portable. This would have suited John Tiptoft's busy life as Speaker and administrator of the House of Commons, as well as diplomat and soldier in royal service, travelling all over England and Wales as well as taking trips overseas.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Tiptoft's duties in the various offices he held throughout his life meant that he would almost certainly have been proficient in Latin, which is attested by the fact that he is generally considered to be the author of Tiptoft's Chronicle, a commonplace book of English history. He would thus have been able to navigate and understand the liturgical text set out in the Tiptoft Hours.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Linda Clark, (26 May 2005). 'Tiptoft, John, first Baron Tiptoft, (c.1378-1443)', *Oxford Dictionary for National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27470>(accessed 23 April 2020); J. S. Roskell and L. S. Woodger, (undated). 'Tiptoft, Sir John (d.1443), of Burwell, Cambs.', *The History of Parliament*, [website], <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/tiptoft-sir-john-1443> (accessed 23 April 2020).

<sup>5</sup> The Chronicle, formerly Phillipps MS. 11301, is now lost. Antonia Grandeson rather arbitrarily attributes the Chronicle to Tiptoft's son, also John, (1427-1470, Earl of Worcester) in *Historical Writing in England II c. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century*, (London, 2000), pp. 253, 480, but Rosamond J. Mitchell in *John Tiptoft (1427-1470)*, (London, 1938), pp. 9-10, makes a convincing case for the Chronicle being written by the elder John Tiptoft (he would have had first-hand information about most of the contemporary events mentioned in the text; his son would only have been five years old when the book finishes its survey of events (1429); the text is quite unlike any of his son's other works). See also Linda Clark, (26 May 2005). 'Tiptoft, John, first Baron Tiptoft, (c.1378-1443)', *Oxford Dictionary for National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27470>(accessed 23 April 2020) and J. S. Roskell and L. S. Woodger, (undated). 'Tiptoft, Sir John (d.1443), of Burwell, Cambs.', *The History of Parliament*, [website],

As a lay person, even one of such high standing, John Tiptoft would not have had access to the reserved areas of a church building, such as the chancel, during the liturgical celebration of Margaret's feast day. His itinerant lifestyle would also have meant that he would have been unable to attend Mass regularly in any one church. Therefore, although local practices and Uses varied, and thus the liturgical text of the saint's feast day preached and sung in a specific church or chapel might not always have been identical to that found in the Tiptoft Hours (as will be discussed below), having access to the text of the feast day in a book of hours would have meant that John Tiptoft, wherever he found himself on that day, could participate as fully as any lay person were able to in the observances for the saint.

Whilst John Tiptoft may have brought his book of hours to the service for Margaret's feast day in a church, the fact that he owned his own personal copy of the text would have meant that he could read it to himself at any time, on any day, perhaps in particular remembrance of the saint or in the hope of intercession.<sup>6</sup> Duffy points out that reading the text of Matins from a book of hours, perhaps alone 'in one's closet', was a recommended devotional practice in conduct books of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Kathryn Smith describes how 'repeated rereading' of the texts in a book of hours must have established a 'deep familiarity with both the text and the physical book itself'.<sup>8</sup>

Features of the presentation of the text of the Tiptoft Hours, such as the decorated capitals, foliate borders and the use of two sizes of script, would have been used by the reader as navigational tools within the manuscript. As Matins, followed by Lauds, were generally nocturnal services, the use of gold leaf on initial capitals introducing new sections of the text may have helped attract and focus the eye of the reader in the candlelit gloom of the feast day celebrations. This may also account for the use of other, smaller capitals

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<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/tiptoft-sir-john-1443> (accessed 23 April 2020).

<sup>6</sup> Saenger 'Books of Hours', p. 155 (for attitudes to people bringing books of hours to church in the fifteenth century).

<sup>7</sup> Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, p. 57.

<sup>8</sup> Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*, p. 168.

embedded in the text, which would also have shone with gold leaf when first decorated.

Almost certainly, then, the manuscript was commissioned and used by John Tiptoft. That this was the case is demonstrated specifically in the depictions of the shields of arms on folios 52r and 66r. Placed within the bowl of the initial 'D' of the word '*Deus*', the shields have multifaceted functions. They act as expressions of piety because they associate the bearers of the arms with a liturgical manuscript. Further, the position of the shields, surrounded by the encircling letter, also suggests that the bearers of the arms themselves receive God's special protection. Indeed, the text which accompanies the shields in both instances, the first verse of Psalm 69, explicitly echoes this visual message: 'O God make speed to save me: O Lord make haste to help me.'<sup>9</sup> Tiptoft's shield, on folio 66r, follows that of the royal arms on folio 52r, thereby indicating his subservience, but also clearly associating him and his family with royalty. Certainly, the inclusion of the shield bearing the royal arms and the lack of any shields of arms in the manuscript other than those of John Tiptoft himself, mitigates against the manuscript belonging to either of his two wives, both of noble descent.<sup>10</sup> As John Tiptoft was periodically employed on royal service throughout his life, it would seem appropriate that the royal arms were included in the manuscript. If the manuscript had belonged to one of Tiptoft's wives, however, it would have been fitting to have depictions of shields commemorating their families or their ties to Tiptoft himself, which is not the case here.

The shields may also have prompted Tiptoft's personal prayers for Margaret's intercession and protection on behalf of the royal family, or for his own ancestors, family and loved ones.<sup>11</sup> Liberal use of gold leaf on the

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<sup>9</sup> '*Deus in adiutorium meum intende. Domine ad adiuuandum [me festina].*'

<sup>10</sup> John Tiptoft married Philippa (c.1367-1417), sister and coheir of John Talbot (d. 1388) of Richard's Castle, Herefs., in 1406 or 1407 and c.1422 he married Joyce (c.1403-1446), younger daughter and coheir of Edward, Baron Charlton of Powys (d. 1421): Linda Clark, (26 May 2005). 'Tiptoft, John, first Baron Tiptoft, (c.1378-1443)', *Oxford Dictionary for National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27470>(accessed 23 April 2020).

<sup>11</sup> Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*, pp. 96, 100.

decorated initials also demonstrates the wealth and status of the owner. Thus, the form and decoration of the manuscript reflect aspects of Tiptoft's life and concerns: his piety; his active, hard-working career, which necessitated a good knowledge of Latin and the commissioning of a portable manuscript; his relationship with the royal house; and, importantly, his intention to honour Margaret.

A number of motives may have led Tiptoft to commission this book of hours – motives which may not have been mutually exclusive. In 1422, Tiptoft celebrated his second marriage, to Joyce (c.1403-1446), younger daughter of Edward, Baron Charlton of Powys. Although he had been married once before, to Philippa (c.1367-1417), sister of, and coheir with, John Talbot of Richard's Castle, the marriage, though providing him with wealth and status, gave him no heir. Indeed, Philippa was already around forty years old when she married Tiptoft, who was almost ten years younger than her, and the couple would have known it was unlikely they would have children. Joyce, on the other hand, was in her late teens or early twenties when her marriage to Tiptoft was contracted, and it would appear that although she too brought him wealth and status, this time an heir was almost certainly uppermost in his mind. The importance of both wives to Tiptoft is suggested in the representation of the three of them on the funerary monument in the south choir aisle of Ely Cathedral: their effigies lie either side of his (Figure 5.12).<sup>12</sup> While this kind of representation is not uncommon in funerary monuments of the period (for example, the brass in St Margaret's, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, depicts the merchant and mayor of Lynn Robert Braunche (d.1364) and his two wives, Letice and Margaret), Tiptoft's monument in Ely Cathedral suggests that Philippa was not overshadowed by Joyce – a suggestion supported by the fact that he named his eldest daughter by Joyce after her.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Matthew Ward argues convincingly that the tomb is that of John, Lord Tiptoft, rather than his son John, earl of Worcester, as has long been supposed: see Matthew Ward, 'The tomb of "The Butcher"? The Tiptoft monument in the presbytery of Ely Cathedral', *Church Monuments*, Journal of the Church Monuments Society, Vol. XXVII, (2012), pp. 22-37, esp. pp. 32-34.

<sup>13</sup> For the brass in Kings Lynn, see John Page-Phillips and Thurston Dart, 'The Peacock Feast', *The Galpin Society Journal*, Vol. 6 (July, 1953), pp. 95-98. For all dates and information concerning Philippa and Joyce, see Linda Clark, (26 May

It is highly likely, then, that the manuscript of the Tiptoft Hours was commissioned in the hopes of eliciting St Margaret's help in protecting Joyce and any future child during labour in order to have a son and heir.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, it is also possible that the text was commissioned in thanksgiving for the healthy boy, also named John, born to the couple in 1427.<sup>15</sup> If the commissioning of the Tiptoft Hours was indeed intended for either of these purposes, it provides an indication that Margaret commanded veneration from men as well as women for a variety of different reasons. Concern for a wife and child, whether out of genuine affection or for more pragmatic reasons of inheritance, or both, may well have engendered or increased male devotion to St Margaret.

Outward displays of male devotion to the saint, however, may not have been unusual, as is shown in Margaret Paston's letter to her husband John, dated c.1441. In this letter, the heavily pregnant Margaret, at home in Norfolk, asks John, away working in London, to wear a ring 'wyth the emage of Seynt Margrete ... for a rememrav[n]se tyl ye come hom.'<sup>16</sup> An example of such a ring, showing Margaret standing over the dragon and impaling it, or Margaret on her own, is one of at least three surviving rings found in the V&A collection (Figure 5.13).<sup>17</sup>

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2005). 'Tiptoft, John, first Baron Tiptoft, (c.1378-1443)', *Oxford Dictionary for National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27470> (accessed 23 April 2020); J. S. Roskell and L. S. Woodger, (undated). 'Tiptoft, Sir John (d.1443), of Burwell, Cambs.', *The History of Parliament*, [website], <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/tiptoft-sir-john-1443> (accessed 23 April 2020).

<sup>14</sup> Mitchell, *John Tiptoft (1427-1470)*, p. 11; Linda Clark, (26 May 2005). 'Tiptoft, John, first Baron Tiptoft, (c.1378-1443)', *Oxford Dictionary for National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/27470> (accessed 23 April 2020).

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin G. Kohl, (17 September 2015). 'Tiptoft [Tibetot], John, first earl of Worcester, (1427-1470)', *Oxford Dictionary for National Biography*, [website], available from: E-Book Library, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/274701> (accessed 23 April 2020).

<sup>16</sup> Davis (ed.), *Paston Letters and Papers*, Vol. I, letter 125, p. 217.

<sup>17</sup> London, V&A Museum, collection number M.238-1962, engraved gold, made in England between 1400 and 1500. Two other rings (M.241-1962 and M.818-1926), also made in England between 1400 and 1500 show St Margaret paired with St Katherine either side of a central image (in M.241-1962 the central

Whether John Paston actually wore the ring or not is a moot point. However, from the way the request is formulated, it seems that there was nothing unusual about Margaret asking her husband to express the couple's devotion to the saint by wearing the ring – perhaps because her pregnancy meant she was unable to wear the ring herself. Margaret Paston asks, vaguely, that the ring be worn as a remembrance; thus it is unclear whether wearing the ring was intended to invoke St Margaret's protection for her in her pregnant state, or for the child, or both. If protection for mother and child was the intention, it appears that the object did not need to be in bodily contact with the pregnant woman for St Margaret's power of protection to work through it; rather, the emotional bond between husband and wife and the fact that they were honouring the saint in this way was sufficient for her to heed their prayers. It also suggests that Margaret's powers of protection may well have been perceived as encompassing a wider remit than that of the birthing chamber alone and that she may have been perceived as offering protection more generally. Even though, as a woman, she might traditionally have been regarded as weaker than a male counterpart, as her legend recounts, she not only managed to survive horrific torture, but, more significantly, she subdued and vanquished the devil twice. Thus, in the minds of those who heard or read her story, Margaret must have seemed invested by God with exceptional strength.

Returning to the Tiptoft Hours, although John Tiptoft may well have been genuinely concerned for the well-being of his wife during childbirth, particularly as this was already his second marriage, he would also have been intensely concerned for the welfare of the child, especially a son. As a man who had inherited or acquired much land and property over the course of his life, it may well have been consoling to think that he would be able to pass his wealth on to an heir. This may have been the intention when John Tiptoft commissioned or acquired his book of hours.

In a similar way to other texts of Margaret's Life discussed previously, in the text of Lesson *viii* (fols 44r-44v) of the Tiptoft Hours, Margaret declares

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image is the Throne of Pity or Seat of Mercy, while that of M.818-1926 is not recorded).

during her final prayer that, ‘if someone writes or reads prayers that recount how I have courageously endured suffering for your [Christ’s] sake or who honours my memory, may they gain pardon for their sins and in the future gain the ever-radiant crown.’<sup>18</sup> Thus, by the very act of commissioning this text, the owner, John Tiptoft, has honoured the memory of the saint and gained reward in heaven.

It seems, therefore, that St Margaret was a multivalent symbol, representing different things to different people at different times. She was a powerful exorciser of demons, driving the devil from the birthing chamber as well as a source of comfort during labour. She was therefore considered a help in worldly affairs – for example, protecting parturient women and their infants – but also, and possibly simultaneously, as an intercessor who, with Christ’s blessing, would protect their souls as they entered the afterlife. However, Margaret’s benevolence towards her devotees appears to have been consistently triggered through the act of remembering her suffering and martyrdom.

### **Features of the text of Oxford, Bodleian MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31**

This section explores the aspects of Margaret’s hagiography, as presented in the Tiptoft Hours, that were highlighted during the liturgical celebration of her feast day. It considers what the readings and prayers sought to convey about Margaret and her story to all those participating in the proceedings, clerical and lay alike. An overview of the material set out in the Tiptoft Hours is provided in Appendix F and a translation of the text of the nine Lessons contained in the manuscript, in Appendix H.

In its present form, that is to say with some leaves missing, the Tiptoft Hours consists of the service of secular (as opposed to monastic) Matins and Lauds, as well as the initial hymn and psalms for Prime. The sequence of the

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<sup>18</sup> All the quotations of the Latin text and the translations are taken from the text in Appendix H. Oxford Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *viii*, fols 44r-44v: (*‘ut si quis supplicia que pro tui nominis confessione uiriliter pertuli scripserit, aut legerit, uel mei memoriam fecerit, criminorum suorum promereatur ueniam, et in futuro inmarcessibilem percipiat coronam.’*)

proper psalms for the service of Matins for the celebration of a virgin's feast day follows English usage (Hereford, Salisbury and York): Nocturn 1: 8, 18, 23; Nocturn 2: 44, 45, 86; Nocturn 3: 95, 96, 97.<sup>19</sup> An examination of the nine Lessons for the Office of Matins in the manuscript reveals that the text is a version of the Latin *passio* BHL No. 5306, the so-called Caligula version.<sup>20</sup> In fact, the text of the Tiptoft Hours corresponds, with a few minor exceptions, almost word for word with the Caligula version found in the manuscript, London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A. VIII, edited by Elizabeth A. Francis.<sup>21</sup>

The Caligula *passio* was one of the key texts used to compile the Lessons for Margaret's feast day in many of the surviving breviaries, suggesting that it was almost as popular in medieval England as the other significant Latin version of the Life, the *Mb passio*, discussed in previous chapters.<sup>22</sup> It appears that although liturgical texts, for obvious reasons, were in the main uniform in content, minimal variance in the texts of Lessons was permitted, even within the same Use.<sup>23</sup> For example, Sarum Use could consist of Lessons which combined material from the standard Sarum breviary text with the Caligula or *Mb* versions of the Life, or both versions together, and, in one known instance, the Sarum breviary text and the *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>24</sup>

### ***Differences between Tiptoft Hours and Sarum breviary text***

Details of content and wording in the nine Lessons of the Tiptoft Hours, especially in the first three Lessons, differ from the nine Lessons of the most

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<sup>19</sup> Harper, *Forms and Orders*, Appendix 2, p. 260.

<sup>20</sup> For general information about the Caligula version, see Clayton and Magennis, *Old English Lives*, pp. 18-19; Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 18, 208.

<sup>21</sup> For an edited version, but not a translation, of the Caligula *passio*, see Elizabeth A. Francis, 'A Hitherto Unprinted Version of the *Passio Sanctae Margaritae* with Some Observations on Vernacular Derivatives', *PMLA*, Vol. 42, 1, (March, 1927) Modern Language Association, pp. 87-105, esp. pp. 97-104.

<sup>22</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, Appendix I, entry 27, pp. 211-13 (list of breviary texts containing lessons for St Margaret) and p. 18 (for the popularity of the *Mb passio* and Caligula versions of the Life in Britain).

<sup>23</sup> Richard W. Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History*, (Cambridge, 2009), p. 429.

<sup>24</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, Appendix I, entry 27, pp. 211-13.

popular Sarum breviary text and thus highlight slight variations in emphasis.<sup>25</sup> In general, the text of the Tiptoft Hours is shorter, and there is less drama and excitement. Any episodes which do not propel the narrative forward, such as those concerning Theophimus and Margaret's fostermother ministering to her in prison, have been omitted and Margaret's prayers, in particular, have in some cases been truncated.<sup>26</sup> In the Sarum breviary text, the first two Lessons present an overview of Margaret's virtues, highlighting her chastity (*'virgo erat non solum corpore, sed etiam mente'*), her physical beauty and the greater beauty of her faith (*'pulchra facie, sed pulchrior fide'*).<sup>27</sup> Lessons *i* and *ii* in the Tiptoft Hours, on the other hand, are less sentimental and endeavour to ground the narrative in a historical context, thereby ostensibly lending it more authority. Thus, Lesson *i* explains that, as the apostles preached the gospels and Christianity spread throughout the ancient world, the devil was jealous of so many new recruits to the faith and began to incite hatred and persecution of Christians. Margaret was the victim of one of these waves of persecution.<sup>28</sup> Torture, violent death and the martyrs' resilience feature prominently here and in Lesson *ii*.

From Lesson *iii* onwards, however, the text of the Sarum breviary and that of the Tiptoft Hours are more recognisably similar. In the Tiptoft Hours,

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<sup>25</sup> For the standard printed edition of the Sarum breviary text, see Francis Procter and Christopher Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium ad Usus Insignis Ecclesiae Sarum*, Vol. III, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1886), Cols. 501-510 and for information regarding this edition, Pfaff, *Liturgy in Medieval England*, pp. 425-27.

<sup>26</sup> In Lesson *vi* of the Sarum text, Theophimus (supposedly the eye-witness and author of the text of the Life) and Margaret's fostermother (or nurse) are recorded as bringing her bread and water when she is put in prison for the second time: see Procter and Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium*, Vol. III, Col. 505; an example of a prayer that has been shortened is one which Margaret says while she is tortured, towards the end of Lesson *v* in the Sarum text and in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *iv*, fol. 26r.

<sup>27</sup> Procter and Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium*, Vol. III, Lectio *ii*, Col. 502.

<sup>28</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *i*, fols 9v-10r (*'... tocius bonitatis emulus diabolus suorum detrimenta Christicolarumque incrementa uigere prospiciens zelo liuoris accensus totis conatibus aboleri ipsum ab humanis precordiis nititur.'*) and Lesson *i*, fols 11r-11v (*'Insurgit namque nouus certancium conflictus, in auditis uiri ac mulieres alliciuntur cruciatibus, insontes iugulantur puelle teneris annorum sub acte curriculum, horrende pene genere necantur. Equibus unius certamen beate scilicet Margarete ...'*.)

the description of the dragon and Margaret's reaction to it (Lesson *vi* of the Sarum breviary and Lessons *iv* and *v* in the Tiptoft Hours) is much more perfunctory, and this brevity is reminiscent of the dismissal of the dragon episode by Jacobus da Voragine in the *LgA* as 'apocryphal and frivolous' ('*apocryphum et friuolum*').<sup>29</sup> However, the saint's dialogue with the second demon is longer. He explains the awful things he incites baptized Christians to do so their souls are damned, and explains that he encourages pagans in their worship of false gods so that they too are dragged down to hell with him.<sup>30</sup> The inclusion of this outburst by the second demon suggests the author is attempting to link this episode with the subject matter of Lesson *i*, helping to explain the motivation for the devil's actions: jealousy, or 'the spirit of rivalry' ('*zelo liuoris*'), because he was losing the battle for new recruits.<sup>31</sup> There is no mention of people visiting Margaret's shrine after her execution and burial in the Tiptoft Hours as there is in the Sarum breviary text, perhaps because this was to be taken for granted and thus considered an unnecessary inclusion. Such an omission could also be intended to avoid any suggestion of excessive claims for the saint, as well as scepticism on the part of the reader or listener, in a similar way to the restrained treatment of the dragon episode.<sup>32</sup> The Tiptoft narrative is thus anxious to appear serious and grounded in fact. Accordingly, it ends with the narrator of the story, Theophimus, explaining that he was an eye-witness to the events of Margaret's life, and his experiences form the written record that has provided the foundation for the narrative of the Lessons of the service.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *LgA*: p. 618.

<sup>30</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *v*, fols 31r-31v ('*Set et apostolos eius atque martires per meos sallites peremi denique Christianorum quam plures apostatas reddidi et quibus id persuadere nequiu: homicidiis, adulteriis, uel fornicacionibus fidei promissionem quam in baptismo professi sunt, polluere feci. Porro quid de paganis dicam, quos omnino simulacris ac supersticiosis ymaginibus omni uite eorum tempore ludo, et ad cumulum mee dampnacionis pertraho.*')

<sup>31</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *i*, fol. 10r.

<sup>32</sup> Procter and Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium*, Vol. III, Lectio *ii*, Col. 510 ('*Ad tumulum autem ... sanitatum.*')

<sup>33</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *ix*, fols 48v-49r ('*Ac tormenta que pertulit propriis oculis conspexit, a cuius profecto cuncta didici prefata dictamine que pauperimo legentibus uel audientibus relinquo conscripta.*')

It is impossible to know whether Tiptoft himself chose the Caligula version of the Life to be included as the text of the Lessons for Margaret in this manuscript. However, this concise but coherent version of the Life, which eschews all the extraneous and theatrical details of other versions – such as the thousands of angels bearing Margaret’s soul to heaven holding lighted ‘tapres’ in the *StzL*, for example – seems apposite for an educated man whose life was spent fighting for and managing vast estates for himself and the king.<sup>34</sup> Given Tiptoft owned estates near Ely and his funerary monument stands in the cathedral, it is interesting to note that a thirteenth-century breviary and missal from Ely includes Lessons for Margaret’s feast day that combine material from the Sarum breviary and a version of the Caligula *passio*. Perhaps, then, the Tiptoft Hours could have been produced in the scriptorium of the Benedictine foundation at Ely in return for Tiptoft’s patronage.<sup>35</sup>

### ***Similarities between Tiptoft Hours and Sarum breviary text***

The similarities in content between the Lessons of the Sarum breviary and those of the Tiptoft Hours are perhaps more telling than the differences. There are two main points of comparison. The first is the vicious nature of the tortures inflicted on Margaret and the second is the reason given by Olibrius for subjecting her to such torture: that she is a blasphemer because she refuses to sacrifice to his (pagan) gods.

Both sets of Lessons, those of the Tiptoft Hours and of the Sarum breviary, focus on the violence of Margaret’s tortures in a way that other versions of her Life, such as those of the *Mb passio* and the *StzL*, do not. Beginning with her body being torn to pieces by scourges so that the heart and intestines are revealed, both sets of Lessons then describe Olibrius ordering her flesh to be sliced off with hooks and her most ‘intimate parts’ (*uiscerum*

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<sup>34</sup> *StzL*: p. 246, line 299.

<sup>35</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 212, fn 25 (CUL, li IV. 20); Sally Elizabeth (Roper) Harper, *Medieval English Benedictine Liturgy: Studies in the Formation, Structure and Content of the Monastic Votive Office, c.950-1540*, (London, 1993) in Tables (unpaginated).

*intimis*') torn away.<sup>36</sup> During the second round of torture, after the demonic episode, Margaret is subjected to burning torches along her sides and is then bound and thrown into a vessel of water.<sup>37</sup> All the tortures contained in the Lessons of the Tiptoft Hours and Sarum breviary appear in manuscripts that were used in liturgical contexts. Included in this group are the manuscripts of the thirteenth-century vernacular verse Life of the *SEL*.<sup>38</sup> The *SEL* texts show their reliance on the Latin Caligula version of the Life in their description of how Margaret is thrown head first into the vessel of water. This detail does not appear in the *Mb passio* or the *StzL* (which derives from the *Mb* version) and suggests that although the *SEL* texts took inspiration from the *Mb* version, as Dresvina states, the Caligula version could also have been used.<sup>39</sup>

By way of contrast, the tortures presented in the texts of the *StzL*, which was not used specifically in liturgical contexts, are different, both in their details and ferocity, to those discussed above. Whilst still horrific, Margaret is not stripped naked in these tortures, nor are her most intimate body parts alluded to. The two initial torture scenes describe how the saint is hung up by

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<sup>36</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *iii*, fols 18r-18v ('*Carnes eius flagellis discerpite, intestinis que corde tenus patefactis ...*') and Procter and Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium*, Vol. III, Lectio *v*, Col. 504 ('*carnes eius flagellis discerpite, et intestinis corde tenus patefactis ...*'); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *iv*, fols 26r-26v ('*Acutissime, inquit inmitis prefectus, afferantur ungule ut ab ipsis superstites sacrilega dirumpantur carnes.*') and Procter and Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium*, Vol. III, Lectio *v*, Col. 505 ('*Acutissimae, inquit praefectus, afferantur ungulae quibus superstites sacrilegae dirumpantur carnes.*'); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *iv*, fol. 26v ('*uiscerum intimis*') and Procter and Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium*, Vol. III, Lectio *v*, Col. 505 ('*viscerum intimis*').

<sup>37</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *vi*, fols 33v-34r ('*Lampades ardentes, ... Circa latera eius amplicate ...*') and fol. 34 ('*Afferatur, inquit, cuppa aqua repleta, in qua demergatur hec sacrilega, ut aquis intercepta morte dampnetur teterima.*' ... *et uinctis manibus ac pedibus capite deorsum precipitatur in profundum.*); Procter and Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium*, Vol. III, Lectio *vii*, Col. 507 ('*Lampades ardentes circa latera ejus applicate ...*') and ('*Affertur itaque cuppa aqua repleta : in quam ligatis manibus et pedibus demergitur, ut aquis intercepta nece teterrima damnetur.*')

<sup>38</sup> Dresvina states that the *SEL* versions of the Life (which form one of two major textual traditions of English verse Lives of St Margaret and which she labels Group B), probably had a 'clerical (monastic or mendicant) authorship' and that they appear 'in a corpus of texts used primarily for religious purposes (either devotional or homiletic)': see Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 53, 63.

<sup>39</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 215.

the hair and beaten with scourges and then whipped. Following the demonic episode, she has boiling oil poured over her head and is then, in a similar manner to the liturgical texts, bound and plunged into a vessel of water. Thus, it is in the first round of torture that the versions of the Life envisaged for liturgical use and those intended for a more general purpose differ most markedly. However, what remains consistent is the second round of torture, after the demonic episode, where fire, or some form of burning, and the water torture are used. These two tortures specifically reference baptism both implicitly and explicitly, as discussed in previous chapters.

How can the emphasis on the vicious nature of the tortures Margaret is subjected to in the liturgical versions of the Life be accounted for? In her reading of the tortures Margaret endures in versions of the *SEL*, Allison Adair Alberts argues that, as the saint was considered patron of women in childbirth, her suffering during torture may have been intended to convey to readers or listeners a comparison with the pain women might experience during labour and birth. This, she states, is particularly suggested by the mention in the *SEL* texts of Margaret's genitalia (*'derne limes'*) being torn during torture.<sup>40</sup> Whilst such an interpretation cannot be completely discounted, the fact that these tortures appear in texts that were used mainly in religious or liturgical contexts suggests that women were not intended as their primary audience. Indeed, Róisín Donohoe, in a chapter that also considers Margaret's protection of women in childbirth, focuses on three fifteenth-century English manuscripts showing evidence of use by women, one of which is a version of the *StzL*, but none of which are texts of the *SEL*.<sup>41</sup> Although such a small sample does not exclude the possibility that *SEL* texts were indeed used in the birthing chamber, it seems unlikely they were intended to be used in such a way.

However, if the tortures in liturgical texts of Margaret's Life were not to be understood as comparisons with the pain women underwent in childbirth, how else could they have been interpreted by a medieval audience? Although the main episodes of the narrative of Margaret's Life (the encounter with

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<sup>40</sup> Alberts, 'Spiritual Suffering and Physical Protection in Childbirth', pp. 296, 307.

<sup>41</sup> Donohoe, 'Unbynde her anoone': the Lives of St. Margaret of Antioch', p. 139.

Olibrius, torture, demonic episode, further torture and execution) remain consistent throughout the various versions of the legend, as would be expected of a hagiographical text, each person's interpretation of the story would have been slightly different, varying according to the devotee's particular circumstances, and socio-economic or cultural background. Nevertheless, the different emphases of the versions can be seen as attempts to guide those who heard or read them to respond in a certain way.

Lewis and Dresvina have effectively dismissed the argument presented by other scholars that Margaret's suffering during torture was intended as a form of pornography for a medieval audience.<sup>42</sup> Whilst both authors acknowledge that this may have been the case for some viewers, Lewis argues that torture is something that Margaret 'allows to happen to herself' and that to consider titillation as the intention of the Life is to misunderstand contemporary attitudes towards virgin martyrs, as well as devotional practices.<sup>43</sup> Through devotional texts in particular, audiences of mixed gender would have been well versed in responding affectively to Christ's passion, for example, and parallels were almost certainly intended to be drawn between his suffering and transcendence and those of his *sponsa*.<sup>44</sup> Dresvina, notably, adds to this rebuttal by discussing the tortures presented in different versions of the legend and their historical contexts, in order to explore how medieval audiences might have understood them – but stresses that it is Margaret's steadfast faith in the face of terrible odds which is highlighted in the versions of the Life.<sup>45</sup>

Another possible interpretation of the significance of the tortures in the liturgical texts of Margaret's Life in particular, which might have had resonance for a broad, educated fifteenth-century audience comprising vowed religious and lay men and women, is set out below. This is an interpretation derived from a widely read late fourteenth-century devotional text, *The Scale of*

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<sup>42</sup> Texts which discuss the issue of torture in saints' lives are given in the Introduction to this thesis: see, for example, Lewis, 'Lete me suffre': Reading the Torture of St Margaret', pp. 69-82; Dresvina, *A Maid*, pp. 149-57.

<sup>43</sup> Lewis, 'Lete me suffre': Reading the Torture of St Margaret', p. 78.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>45</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, esp. p. 157.

*Perfection*, written by an Augustinian Canon, Walter Hilton.<sup>46</sup> In this interpretation, the saint's life is intended to stand as a metaphor for the soul's journey towards God – a journey which can be undertaken by the souls of all Christians in receipt of God's grace. The saint's intense physical suffering in this scenario is thus symbolic, expressing the suffering and torments of temptation a soul has to undergo in order to leave the earthly world behind. It is a cleansing process of the soul, which culminates in a kind of metaphorical rebirth and rebaptism before it can then unite with God.

The two books of *The Scale of Perfection* were written in Middle English. Significantly, both books enjoyed widespread popularity from the end of the fourteenth century onwards, even though Book 1 was originally intended as a spiritual guide for an anchoress. Mary Erler notes that of seventeen known copies of the first printed edition of *The Scale*, produced in 1494, six are recorded as being owned by women: three nuns and three lay women.<sup>47</sup> It is therefore plausible that the concepts Hilton presents in *The Scale* would have been familiar to vowed religious and lay people alike. *The Scale*, then, offered those who encountered Margaret's narrative through the Lessons compiled for her feast day a means of interpreting that narrative.<sup>48</sup>

In Chapter 28 of Book 2 of *The Scale*, the author sets out an exegesis on St Paul's brief description (in Romans 8.29) of the four-stage process a soul called by God has to undergo in order to be reformed in his likeness. However, only those, like Margaret, to whom God shows 'a great abundance of grace', are

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<sup>46</sup> As a young man, Hilton was trained in civil and canon law, and later, as an Augustinian Canon, he acted as a spiritual guide, as well as playing a role in the suppression of Lollardy. His writings were thus compatible with orthodox teaching. See Walter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, John P. H. Clark and Rosemary Dorward (trans. and eds), (Mahwah, New Jersey, 1991), pp. 13-15.

<sup>47</sup> Mary C. Erler, *Women, Reading and Piety in Late Medieval England*, (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 121-22.

<sup>48</sup> The text was also translated into Latin c.1400 and both Latin and vernacular versions enjoyed wide circulation: see Richard Newhauser, 'Religious Writing: hagiography, *pastoralia*, devotional works and contemplative works', in *The Cambridge Companion to Middle English Literature, 1100-1500*, Larry Scanlon (ed.), (Cambridge, 2009), p. 48.

certain to complete this transformation.<sup>49</sup> The process is described thus and is worth quoting in full:

The first [stage or time] is the time of a soul's calling from worldly vanity, and that time is often easy and full of comfort. For at the beginning of conversion a person who is disposed to abundant grace is so vitally and perceptibly inspired, and often feels such great sweetness of devotion, with so many tears in compunction, that he sometimes feels as if he were half in heaven.

But afterwards this softness passes away for a while; and then comes the second time, that is the time of correcting. That is wearisome, for when he begins to press forward strongly in the way of righteousness and to set his will fully against all sin, within and without, and he stretches out his desire to virtues and the love of Jesus, then he feels great hindrance both inside himself, from the perversity and hardness of his own will, and from without, through the temptation of his enemy, so that he is very often in very great torment. And that is no wonder, for he has so long been crooked toward the false love of the world that he cannot be straightened without great heat and pressure, just as a twisted bar cannot be made straight and even without great baking and bending, just as a crooked staff cannot be straightened without being cast in the fire and baked. Therefore our Lord Jesus, seeing what is good for an obstinate soul, allows it to be troubled and vexed by various temptations, and well tried through tribulations of the spirit until all the rust of impurity can be burnt out of it. And that shall be inward, through fear, doubts and perplexities, so that the soul nearly falls into despair, and it will seem as if forsaken by God and left altogether in the hands of the devil, except for a little secret trust that it shall have in the goodness of God and in his mercy; for however far our Lord Jesus may go from such a soul he leaves in it that secret trust, by which it is borne up from despair and saved from spiritual harms. Outside itself, too, it shall be mortified and punished in the sensuality, either by sickness of various kinds or through feeling itself tormented by the devil, or else through a secret power of God. The poor soul shall be so punished by feeling and bearing the wretched body – and it shall not know where or how – that it could not endure being in the body were it not that our Lord Jesus keeps it there. Nevertheless, the soul would rather be in all this pain than be blinded with the false love of

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<sup>49</sup> Hilton, *The Scale*, Clark and Dorward (trans. and eds), p. 248.

the world: for that would be hell to such a soul. But the suffering of this kind of pain is nothing but purgatory, and therefore he [the soul] suffers it gladly and would not put it away even if he could, because it is so profitable. Our Lord does all this for the great benefit of the soul, in order to drive it out from rest in carnal living and to separate it from the love of sensuality, so that it might receive spiritual light.

For after this, when the soul is thus mortified and brought from worldly love into this darkness – so that it has no more savor or delight in worldly pleasure than in a straw, but finds it as bitter as wormwood – then comes the third time, of magnifying, and that is when the soul is partly reformed in feeling, and receives the gift of perfection and the grace of contemplation; and that is a time of great rest.

And after this comes the fourth time, of glorifying. That is when the soul shall be fully reformed in the bliss of heaven. For these souls that are thus called from sin and corrected – or else in another way, by various kinds of assaying through both fire and water – and afterward are thus magnified: they shall be glorified, for our Lord shall then give them in full what they here desired, and more than they knew how to desire. For he shall raise them above all other chosen souls to equality with the Cherubim and Seraphim, since they surpassed all others in the knowledge and love of God here in this life.<sup>50</sup>

Especially relevant in regard to the tortures Margaret is subjected to is the second stage of the soul's journey. In this stage, a soul is tested in various ways, in a form of ritual cleansing. Such is the vigour of this testing, the text explains, that at times it might appear as if God has withdrawn, leaving the soul at the mercy of the devil and suffering greatly.

### ***Margaret's first round of torture and the soul's journey***

As discussed earlier, in all versions of the legend Margaret experiences two rounds of torture, one before and one after the demonic episode. If considered in the light of Hilton's text, the vicious nature of the initial round of torture can be compared to the extreme nature of the bodily torments caused by the devil and Margaret's suffering equated to such pain through 'the wretched body' that

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 248-49.

it 'could not endure being in the body were it not that our Lord Jesus keeps it there.'<sup>51</sup> That a young woman, traditionally perceived as weak and tender, could withstand such atrocities with God's help, may have seemed particularly remarkable to a medieval audience and may have rendered Margaret's triumph more extraordinary. Overcoming physical pain and adversity was something that most people would have had to experience at some time in their lives; thus, it was an effective comparison for suggesting how a soul could be tested. It may also have helped to show that even a woman – perceived as the weakest of creatures – if calling on God for assistance, could overcome the greatest temptations of sin.

Indeed, Margaret's prayers, as she is seized by Olibrius's men and during the initial round of torture, indicate that she believes God to be helping her endure her trials and that she is undergoing this process willingly in order to show her love for God. This would accord with how Hilton's text describes the soul's progress: 'it will seem as if forsaken by God and left altogether in the hands of the devil, except for a little secret trust that it shall have in the goodness of God and in his mercy.'<sup>52</sup> When being led by Olibrius's men into his presence in the Tiptoft Hours (Lesson *ii*), Margaret describes God as her source of comfort and dedicates her life to him, while at the same moment in the narrative in the Sarum breviary (Lesson *iii*), she asks God for protection for her soul, as she is in the hands of wicked men.<sup>53</sup> During her first torture in the Tiptoft Hours text, she twice prays that God grant her a little respite from her suffering, but only so that she will not show weakness in the face of the onslaught. This implies that she believes God is aware of what she is going through and will sustain her if necessary, and that she has willingly submitted

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 248 (both quotes).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>53</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *ii*, fols 14v-15r ('*Deus creator omnium solamen atque tristium, me de tantis manibus nunc erue diuinitus. Nec pudorem uirginei sinas fedari corporis in mee uite articulo quem tibi uoui domino.*'); Procter and Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium*, Vol. III, Lectio *iii*, Col. 503 ('*Ne perdas cum impiis, Deus, animam meam.*').

to this trial.<sup>54</sup> In the Sarum breviary, instead of making such requests to God, she replies to Olibrius in the confrontations during the first round of torture with replies that are longer and which give an opportunity for her to demonstrate the depth of her faith, setting out her firm belief in, and love for, Jesus Christ, despite her suffering.<sup>55</sup> This echoes the passage in Hilton's text: 'the soul would rather be in all this pain than be blinded with the false love of the world: for that would be hell to such a soul.'<sup>56</sup>

Olibrius, who unleashes these tortures, is variously referred to as the devil, the son of the devil or operating on behalf of the devil in the Lessons of both the Sarum breviary and the Tiptoft Hours.<sup>57</sup> This again associates the tortures Margaret undergoes in the Lessons with the soul's temptations by the devil in Hilton's *Scale*. However, when Margaret is taken to her prison cell after the first round of torture, she asks God to show her the puppet-master, as it were. Margaret's dealings with the dragon and the second demon, and her ultimate triumph over both, can be likened to the conclusive rejection of the world and all its temptations. It is almost as if confronting the devil in his undisguised forms allows Margaret a more complete understanding of the nature of sin and how the devil operates, which is underlined by the second demon's explanation of his actions during this confrontation. First-hand knowledge of the devil then permits Margaret to make a fully conscious and complete rejection of Satan and all his works. Referring to Hilton's text, the soul, having endured the period of testing in the second stage of its journey, when 'all the rust of impurity can be burnt out of it', then enters the third stage, leaving all the cares of the world behind.<sup>58</sup>

Such an interpretation of Margaret's initial round of tortures is supported by the second significant similarity between the feast day Lessons of

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<sup>54</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *iii*, fols 18v-19r ('*Celorum rector domine ab hoc instanti uerbere et de seuis diaboli me libera discipulis, ne frangar his supliciiis ullo timore corporis, set confundantur impii penas dantes diecolis.*')

<sup>55</sup> For example, Procter and Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium*, Vol. III, Lectio v, Col. 505 ('... *sed glorifico et adoro Dominum meum Jesum Christum ...*').

<sup>56</sup> Hilton, *The Scale*, Clark and Dorward (trans. and eds), p. 248.

<sup>57</sup> For example, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *iii*, fol. 18r ('*diaboli filius*'); Procter and Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium*, Vol. III, Lectio v, Col. 505 ('*Tu facis opera patris tui Sathanae*').

<sup>58</sup> Hilton, *The Scale*, Clark and Dorward (trans. and eds), p. 248.

the Tiptoft Hours and those of the Sarum breviary. Both sets of Lessons clearly state in several instances that Margaret is being made to suffer and then lose her life because she holds steadfastly to the Christian faith and refuses to worship Olibrius's gods. Therefore, her tortures are a way of testing the tenacity of her faith.

By way of contrast, in the versions of the *StzL*, for example, Olibrius initially tries to persuade Margaret to marry him with promises of wealth and luxury. In only one version – that of the *StzL* in the Tanfield-Neville Hours – does he attempt to coerce her into worshipping his gods with these promises.<sup>59</sup> Although these actions can also be read as the devil tempting the soul, the focus is not as clear as in the liturgical texts, where marriage is mentioned only once; in contrast, six times in the Sarum breviary and seven times in the Tiptoft Hours Olibrius either upbraids Margaret for her Christian faith, orders her to abandon her faith or calls her a blasphemer.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, in the Tiptoft Hours, Olibrius orders the first torture (tearing her flesh so her heart and intestines are revealed) because, he says, she has blasphemed his gods.<sup>61</sup>

### ***Margaret's second round of torture and the soul's journey***

In the Lessons for Margaret's feast day in both the Tiptoft Hours and the Sarum breviary, the second round of torture, which follows the demonic episode, consists of two elements: burning the saint's sides with flaming torches and throwing her, with her hands and feet bound, into a vessel of water.<sup>62</sup> Hilton's text speaks of those who 'are thus called from sin and corrected – or else in

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<sup>59</sup> Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung*, (B), p. 193, lines 107-10.

<sup>60</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *ii*, fol. 16r, Lesson *iii*, fol. 17v, Lesson *iii*, fol. 18v, Lesson *iv*, fols 25v-26r, Lesson *iv*, fol. 26v, Lesson *vi*, fol. 33r, Lesson *vi*, fol. 34r, Lesson *vi*, fol. 34v; Procter and Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium*, Vol. III, Lectio *iv*, Col. 504 ('hortans eam Christi fidem ...inclinare'), Lectio *v*, Col. 504 ('deorum nostrorum blasphemiam vindicate'), Lectio *v*, Col. 505 ('et hanc superstitiosam ... amittas vitae. '), Lectio *v*, Col. 505 ('sacrilegae'), Lectio *vii*, ('sacrifica diis'), Lectio *vii* ('ut exustis carnibus discat deos non blasphemare').

<sup>61</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *iii*, fol. 18v ('Carnes eius flagellis discernite, intestinis que corde tenus patefactis deorum nostrorum blasphemiam uindicate.').

<sup>62</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *vi*, fols 32v-35v; Procter and Wordsworth (eds), *Breviarium*, Vol. III, Lectio *vii*, Cols. 507-8.

another way, by various kinds of assaying through both fire and water'.<sup>63</sup> Such souls, who have undergone this thorough cleansing process, go on to reach the third and then the final stages, in which they are 'magnified' and 'glorified'.<sup>64</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, trial by fire and water was a means of 'revealing the judgement of God' in the Middle Ages: if the accused came away from the ordeal unscathed, they were considered innocent.<sup>65</sup> Reading Margaret's narrative in this light, the fact that Olibrius orders the use of fire and then water as the means of torture specifically at this juncture, that is to say just before he orders her execution, seems unlikely to be a coincidence. In previous chapters, it was argued that the use of these two elements was intended to recall the anointing with holy oil and chrism and the immersion in water which formed part of the baptismal rite. When thrown into the vessel of water in Lesson *vi* of the Tiptoft Hours, Margaret offers up a prayer asking God to consider this trial as a baptism 'for the remission of my sins' and in order to 'break the chains by which I am bound'.<sup>66</sup> This directly references the passage in Acts 2.38 when Peter advises the crowd he addresses to repent and seek baptism for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>67</sup> The water torture is thus envisaged as a symbolic way of transitioning from, as it were, the enslavement of sin and leaving the physical world behind. It suggests how after a sustained period of torment, when physical and spiritual purification is complete, a soul can enter a higher state and thus become 'glorified' in heaven.<sup>68</sup>

## Conclusion

This part of Chapter 5 has sought to suggest the motivations for the commissioning of such a manuscript by John Tiptoft, how he might have used it

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<sup>63</sup> Hilton, *The Scale*, Clark and Dorward (trans. and eds), p. 249.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>65</sup> Dresvina, *A Maid*, p. 154; Bartlett, *Trial*, pp. 21-22, 24.

<sup>66</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Lat. liturg. f. 31: Lesson *vi*, fols 35r-35v ('... *ut fiat michi fons baptismi in regeneracionem peccatorum, et abrumpe uinula quibus nector ...*').

<sup>67</sup> Acts 2: 38 ('*Petrus vero ad illos : Poenitentiam, inquit, agite, et baptizetur unusquisque vestrum in nomine Jesu Christi in remissionem peccatorum vestrorum : et accipietis donum Spiritus Sancti.*').

<sup>68</sup> Hilton, *The Scale*, Clark and Dorward (trans. and eds), p. 249.

and some of the possible interpretations of Margaret's legend that would have been available to him. The section also examined the liturgy for Margaret's feast day and considered the kind of emphases found in the Lessons for that day, in order to show that liturgical texts can offer further interpretations of Margaret's significance for her devotees.

In the early fifteenth century, John Tiptoft owned a book of hours which was dedicated to the celebration of the life of a female virgin martyr, St Margaret of Antioch. He could have used it in church on the saint's feast day, perhaps reciting some of the material silently to himself as the service progressed, but he could also have read the material on other occasions as he saw fit. The fact that he owned such a book at all suggests that its contents were of great significance to him, and therefore he wanted them to be available at any moment. It is a beautifully produced manuscript, but at the same time a practical text, with decoration and varying script size instrumental in facilitating reading. For a busy man who travelled extensively for much of his life, the size of the volume would have been entirely appropriate. How better, indeed, to honour Margaret and remember her passion than by carrying with him, perhaps actually on his person, the very words used in the liturgy of her feast day – the most potent celebration of her life? Why he required this manuscript and how he interpreted Margaret's story is unknowable, but it seems likely that paramount in his mind must have been concern for his second wife Joyce and their children. However, concern for his soul and Margaret's promised intercession for the remission of sins for those who remembered her passion cannot be discounted either. Thus, the manuscript containing Margaret's Life may have offered hope and comfort to John Tiptoft for himself and for the fortunes of his family.

## Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that the enormous popularity enjoyed by St Margaret in late medieval England was not driven exclusively by her perceived relevance to women and infants during childbirth. On the contrary, many factors played a role in sustaining or stimulating devotion to Margaret. However, this study, uniquely, has been able to show that one of the main reasons for the continued interest in Margaret over the centuries was her association with the sacrament of baptism. In addition, another related but hitherto largely overlooked aspect of devotion to Margaret that this study has explored is the way in which devotees were encouraged to actively remember her passion in order to activate her intercession, notably for the remission of sins.

It has been demonstrated here that rather than merely acting as a Holy Helper, Margaret's association with baptism located her at the heart of Christian belief and practice. Baptism, made available to humankind as the gateway to salvation through Christ's death and resurrection, offered spiritual protection to infants, which can be seen as an extension of Margaret's protection of the physical well-being of mothers and children during labour. Through the public ceremonial of baptism, the child received legitimacy and an official entry into not only its immediate family, but the wider Christian community. Such inclusion thus afforded the child both physical and spiritual protection, as well as a strong sense of identity.

Margaret's association with baptism has been demonstrated in this study in a variety of ways. Two previous articles have discussed Margaret's *passio* in relation to the theme of baptism, which is present throughout the narrative. However, limiting the study of the cult to the texts of the Life has meant that some aspects of the saint's relevance to medieval people have remained either under-researched or overlooked. Neither article discusses, for example, what the connection between Margaret and baptism could have meant for the response to the saint and her cult outside the confines of the birthing chamber and how this response might have manifested itself. By

privileging material culture, but at the same time drawing on the texts of the Life, this study has been able to explore such issues.

Through an examination of the siting of the visual images of Margaret's Life within the architectural space of the parish churches discussed here, one of the fundamental connections between Margaret's cult and baptism has been established. Although any conclusions have to be considered in the context of the relative paucity of evidence and fragmentary nature of what remains, this study has nevertheless revealed that scenes involving the destruction of the devil-dragon were positioned near the font, as at Battle and Tarrant Crawford for example, usually opposite or around the doorway through which the baptismal party would have entered the sacred space. In this way, depictions of Margaret can be seen to embody the cleansing power of the exorcism which forms the initial part of the baptismal rite.

In addition, this thesis has also demonstrated, in Chapters 2-4, another significant connection between Margaret and baptism, constructed through the affiliation of visual narratives of the saint's Life with depictions of the miracles of St Nicholas. Such an affiliation was not as simple as forging a link between one saint perceived as protecting children and another; rather, it derived from a deeper strand of meaning, one which linked both saints to baptism. This visual association with Nicholas extended the meaning of Margaret's legend and reinforced the sacramental and liturgical importance of both saints. At Wiston and Charlwood, the cycle of Margaret's Life is paired with the miracles of Nicholas around the south door, in close proximity to the font, while at Combs, Margaret and Nicholas appear together in the final scene of the cycle of Margaret's Life on the south side of the church.

The mid- to late-thirteenth-century paintings at Wiston show the Life of Margaret and the miracles of Nicholas in conjunction with the Infancy cycle of Christ. As has been argued, the combination of these three subjects highlights themes of rebirth and salvation through baptism. Once in receipt of baptism, the individual could identify as a member of the Christian community – a community which frequently defined itself in opposition to those of heretical or other religious beliefs. Thus, in conjunction with the Infancy cycle, the

depiction of scenes from the saints' legends at Wiston formed a distilled discourse on what it meant to be a Christian.

This thesis has argued that the depiction of Margaret as dragon-slayer has several intended meanings. It expresses the necessity for Christians to fight against temptation and evokes the fundamental first part of the initiation rite – that which frees the infant from original sin in order to pave the way for baptism. Moreover, the triumphant Margaret, emerging from the dragon and killing it, reflects Christ's death and resurrection, intended to overcome the serpent's attempt in the Garden of Eden to condemn humankind to everlasting damnation.

In a similar vein, the Nicholas miracles at Wiston underline the importance of repentance – for sinful adults – in order to attain salvation. The 'rebirth' of the young people in the Miracle of the Three Clerks, afforded through Nicholas's intervention, allows them a future in which they can prepare for death, by receiving the Last Rites, the final forgiveness of sins. Renouncing sin (and thus the devil) was seen as the first necessary step on the road to salvation, which was then consolidated by baptism.

It is worth noting here the importance of, whenever possible, discussing images in their original context, rather than in isolation. Thus, by integrating the intended meaning of the depictions of the scenes from the Lives of Margaret and Nicholas with that of the Infancy cycle the baptismal message is reinforced. As argued, the emphasis of the Infancy cycle is on scenes representing the revelation of the incarnation of Christ to the Jews and Gentiles, as well as on the first martyrdom – the Massacre of the Holy Innocents. Thus, the paintings taken together present a clear message: recognizing Christ as the true god, renouncing sin or repenting for sins committed, and steadfastly maintaining one's belief in Christ and one's baptismal vows can, together, lead the Christian to salvation. Conversely, to not recognize Christ and to not receive baptism sets the individual outside the Christian community, prey to the devil and on the path to perdition.

This thesis has also argued that, although separate from Wiston in both time and place, the fourteenth-century assemblage of the miracles of St Nicholas, the depiction of the Three Living and Dead, and the scenes of

Margaret's Life at Charlwood also stresses themes of repentance, rebirth and triumph over the devil in a sacramental context. As at Wiston, both the Nicholas miracle of the Three Clerks and the story of the Three Living and Dead allude to a second chance for salvation for those who sincerely repent. Together, they also emphasize the importance of maintaining one's baptismal vows and the need for regular confession in order to protect against untimely death. Margaret's narrative on the other side of the window supports and extends these themes. Her *imitatio Christi* and triumph over the devil-dragon is highlighted in this version of the visual narrative.

At Charlwood, the choice of the content used in the presentation of Margaret's legend is another factor highlighting the association of the saint with baptism. The Charlwood narrative being set in the context of a hunt, could, it has been argued, operate on a number of levels and allow for a variety of local audiences to be addressed, both educated and unlettered. Margaret's *imitatio Christi* in this visual cycle leads to parallels being drawn with Christ as the serpent-slaying or thirsting stag and is thus closely connected with the underlying meaning of the sacrament of baptism. Margaret's suffering during torture is relegated to a secondary position here as the Charlwood version of the narrative is all about triumph: Margaret's triumph over the devil-hunter, Olibrius, over the devil itself in the form of a dragon and, finally, in the paradoxical triumph of the martyr over death by gaining everlasting life. Not only would this narrative have been visible to those standing by the font, but at the time the paintings were executed, they were sited beside an altar. Thus, the baptismal associations present in the narrative are underscored by Eucharistic connotations.

The fifteenth-century stained glass narrative of Margaret's Life at Combs maintains Margaret's connection with baptism and reiterates the importance of the sacrament itself in a different way. Significantly, in the final scene, which does not have a textual foundation in the known Lives of Margaret, Nicholas is the presiding bishop for the baptism of a baby and Margaret is the godmother. As Margaret appears to be retrieving the infant from the water after immersion, she, like Nicholas, is playing an active role in the sacramental rite. Such a depiction could have several meanings. It could be

intended as a celebration of the birth and baptism of a child from a local noble family, but like depictions of the seven sacraments on fifteenth-century East Anglian fonts, it could also have prompted more far-reaching considerations. At a time when the intrinsic power of the sacraments needed to be emphasized and defended against heretical criticisms of the Church and the clergy who administered them, such considerations could have included how fundamental the receipt of the sacrament was for entry into the established Church.<sup>1</sup>

This study has also demonstrated how the visual narratives discussed might have functioned in medieval practice. It has been argued that the layout of the cycles at Battle and Tarrant Crawford in particular allowed for processional use along the nave, most likely on Margaret's feast day. Each scene is enclosed by a rectangular frame, which suggests that the individual scenes may have prompted meditational practices, perhaps as part of a procession. The framed scenes at Wiston and Combs may also have been intended to offer the possibility of meditating on different aspects of Margaret's Life, although in these churches interaction with the visual material on the part of the viewer would not necessarily have involved moving within the sacred space. The narrative at Charlwood, in contrast, operates in a different way. It has no vertical framing devices, aiming to capture the viewer's attention immediately by setting up the narrative as a hunt and then moving swiftly to a victorious conclusion. Executing the paintings in this manner requires the story to be taken as a whole and is entirely appropriate for the intended effect – to convey Margaret's triumph. As the images would have been accessible to all viewers at the time of baptism, or indeed at any time, the narratives can be seen as visual prompts or reminders of Margaret's Life, thus able to trigger her intervention as an intercessor. In this way, she was available not just to the devotees who commissioned the narratives, but all those who viewed her story and thereby remembered her passion.

This thesis has also demonstrated that Margaret's sacramental and intercessory associations, as portrayed in the visual narratives in parish churches, were also to be found in books of hours. The gifting of the Tanfield-

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Nichols, *Seeable Signs*, pp. 96-97.

Neville Hours by the Abbess of Malling to her goddaughter Margaret Neville, with St Margaret's Life inserted at the back of the book, commemorated the child's baptism. Such a gift would also have been appropriate for a girl-child destined to one day have her own children. It could have been intended for use in the birthing chamber, to perform the function of a relic, providing, through remembrance of the saint, the key to her protection and intercession. However, the vernacular text of the Life which the manuscript contains also emphasizes the theme of baptism and may have underlined the future necessity of baptism for the spiritual welfare of Margaret Neville's own children. The text could also have prompted prayers to the saint for intercession on behalf of family members whose deaths are recorded on the Calendar pages, and for the abbess who gifted the manuscript with the Life of Margaret to the little girl. Perhaps of greatest significance, however, is that Margaret's Life was considered a suitable addition to the manuscript even on the cusp of the Reformation.

Continuing the discussion of interaction offered in books of hours between Margaret and issues of protection, intercession and commemoration, an examination of the Tiptoft Hours presented a unique insight into liturgical celebrations for Margaret's feast day. It was argued that the concept of the soul's journey to heaven was one possible allegorical reading of the Life of Margaret set out in the Lessons for the Office of Matins in the Tiptoft Hours. However, what connects the text of the Lessons here with other artefacts considered in this study is Olibrius's insistence that Margaret is a blasphemer in that she not only refuses to worship, but also denounces, his pagan gods. This recalls discussions in earlier chapters about how Christianity was often defined in juxtaposition to, and in rejection of, other religious beliefs. Thus, the text clearly demonstrates that it is Margaret's total dedication to her Christian faith that prompts her persecution, thereby undermining suggestions in previous studies that sexual frustration or temptation motivates either Olibrius or Margaret. The focus on the religious significance of Margaret's actions, rather than behaviour provoked by earthly concerns, raises the status of the saint who, through her actions, declares that it is worth experiencing hardship and physical suffering in order to be considered a Christian. Interrogation of this manuscript has additionally provided the first example of an insight into

the commissioning and use of an artefact dedicated exclusively to Margaret by a lay man, in contrast to previous scholarly literature, which has focused on women's responses to Margaret's Life. This helps to show that the images of the saint's Life on the walls of churches would have been of significance for both sexes, and individuals of all ages, not only women of child-bearing age.

As has been noted by others, Margaret's Life, like that of many virgin martyrs, was open to a variety of interpretations, including allegorical ones, and this may have accounted for her continuing popularity from the Anglo-Saxon period through to the Reformation. However, by approaching a discussion of Margaret and her cult through a study of artefacts in the first instance, a deep vein of meaning that ties her closely to the sacramental core of Christian belief is demonstrated. It is argued here that it was this feature of her legend and its manifestations, above all else, which drove devotion to her. Although clearly considered as an important source of comfort during labour, with her dragon-slaying powers holding the devil and consequent undesirable outcomes at bay, through encounters with depictions or texts of her Life, Margaret was also present for the child's exorcism and entry into the Christian community during the baptismal rite. This facet of her cult was complemented by her willingness to intercede for the remission of sins for all those who remembered her passion. Although her cult was enduringly popular in late medieval England, she was somewhat overshadowed by St Katherine of Alexandria towards the end of the period and this may be due to Katherine's highly personal relationship to Christ in the context of the 'new devotion' and its emphasis on establishing a more direct dialogue with Christ.

This thesis has also shed light on other aspects of the cult of saints worthy of further study. One aspect is the relationship of the liturgy to images, particularly in the context of parish churches, which could further our understanding of devotion to saints more generally.<sup>2</sup> The pairing of Margaret and Katherine in visual contexts in particular remains under-explored and, on

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<sup>2</sup> Work on art and the liturgy has been undertaken for cathedrals. See, for example, Margot E. Fassler, *The Virgin of Chartres: Making History through Liturgy and the Arts*, (New Haven, 2010) and Matthew Reeve, *Thirteenth-Century Wall Painting of Salisbury Cathedral: Art, Liturgy, and Reform*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2008).

initial investigation, suggests a link between the depiction of the two saints and the incarnation of Christ. Through a study focusing on images in parish churches, it would be useful to explore further how saints' cults were used in the promotion of orthodoxy. Although crusades to the Holy Land have been discounted as a factor in the development of Margaret's cult in England, it could also be fruitful to examine whether there is documentary evidence that might link individuals to both the Holy Land and to Margaret, particularly through the medium of parish churches. The transmission of Margaret's cult from the East, via Montefiascone in Italy for example, would be a related aspect that could examine devotion to Margaret in medieval Europe more broadly.

It is hoped that this study will contribute significantly to demonstrating the value of using artefacts as primary source material in general and for the study of saints' cults in particular. When artefacts are treated as sources in their own right and interrogated from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives, as has been undertaken here, they can reveal emphases that are not necessarily explicit, or which are otherwise under-researched. Although books of hours have been examined as primary source material in many studies, with some notable exceptions the material available to historians and art historians in parish churches across the United Kingdom remains a largely untapped resource.<sup>3</sup> Further detailed work on wall paintings in particular would almost certainly address gaps in the collective knowledge about aspects of devotion, especially to saints hitherto unremarked upon.

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<sup>3</sup> For books of hours, see, for example, Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and their Books of Hours*, (London, 2003) and Alexandra Barratt, *Anne Bulkeley and her Book: Fashioning Female Piety in Early Tudor England. A Study of London, British Library, MS Harley 494*, (Turnhout, Belgium, 2009). Two notable exceptions are Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, (New Haven, 1992) and Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, (Stroud, Glos, 2004).

## Appendix A

### **The Life of St Katherine based on the account in the *Legenda Aurea***

While Margaret's father was a pagan patriarch, Katherine was of royal blood. While Margaret became a shepherdess, Katherine was a well-educated young Christian woman. As the account in the *Legenda Aurea* goes, she hears Christians being persecuted by the Emperor Maxentius and hurries to challenge him in public. Astonished at the young woman's arguments, he asks her about her lineage, as Olibrius does to Margaret, and like Margaret she replies that she comes from a noble family and has become a Christian. Realising that he cannot compete with Katherine's reasoning and eloquence, Maxentius orders fifty of his 'masters of logic and rhetoric' to come to the court at Alexandria. When they learn that they have to argue against a woman, they are furious at having been brought so far for such an ignominious task. However, they soon realise that Katherine has defeated them and ask to convert to Christianity. Maxentius, in disgust, orders that they be burnt at the stake. Katherine instructs them in the faith and prepares them for death. Katherine is put in prison and is visited in secret by the empress with the captain of the guard, Porphyrius. Katherine converts both of them. On her release from prison, Katherine confronts Maxentius again and he orders her torture on the dreadful wheel. However, an angel shatters the wheel and many pagans are slain. The empress pleads for Katherine to Maxentius, but he has her tortured and beheaded. Porphyrius buries the body of the empress, but then he himself declares to the emperor that he is a Christian, as are the soldiers he commands. Maxentius has them all beheaded. Katherine too, is then executed after making a final prayer. Milk, rather than blood, flows from her wound and her body is borne by angels to Mount Sinai.

## Appendix B

List of fonts with depictions of St Margaret of Antioch from Baptisteria Sacra Index (summary of essential information from the database), compiled by Harriet Sonne de Torrens and Miguel A. Torrens at the University of Toronto, Canada.

Database number (DN): 5  
Item: 01060WAR  
St Mary the Virgin, Ware, Herts  
Late 14thC (?)  
On basin: St Margaret of Antioch with dragon

DN: 6  
Item: 03448STO  
St Margaret of Antioch, Stoke Golding, Leics  
14thC (?)  
On basin: St Margaret of Antioch with dragon, with book, with staff, with child

DN: 7  
Item: 05237DOC  
St Mary the Virgin, Docking, Norfolk  
15thC (?)  
damaged  
On basin: St Margaret of Antioch with dragon, with staff or spear.

DN: 9  
Item: 06444ALB  
St Stephen, St Alban's, Herts  
14th-15thC (?)  
(?)Image: St Margaret of Antioch.

DN: 10  
Item: 00346BUR  
St John the Baptist, Burford, Oxon  
12thC basin (?), recut 14thC carvings  
On basin: St Margaret of Antioch (?), with dragon (?), with staff or spear (?).

DN: 11  
Item: 09479HEM  
All Saints, Hemblington, Norfolk  
15thC (?)  
On base: St Margaret of Antioch, with dragon, with cross, staff or spear.

DN: 12  
Item: 12797TAV  
St Edmund, Taverham, Norfolk  
14thC (?)  
On base: St Margaret with dragon.

DN: 13  
Item: 12653HOC  
St Michael, Hockering, Norfolk  
15thC stem, 19thC basin  
On base: St Margaret with dragon.

DN: 14  
Item: 10312CLI  
St Mary, Clifton Reynes, Bucks  
c.1350 (?)  
On basin: St Margaret of Antioch.

## Appendix C

### St Mary the Virgin, Wiston (Wissington), Suffolk

#### Infancy Cycle of Christ

Description of the scenes not presented in the chapter based on Tristram's account and personal observations.<sup>1</sup>

##### Picture 1: Annunciation

Only the figure of the nimbed angel Gabriel remains, his right arm probably raised in a gesture of blessing towards the figure of Mary, now destroyed. He is dressed in robes which have the appearance of a Roman toga. Tristram states that this scene may have been followed by a Visitation which has since been lost.

##### Picture 2: Nativity

Mary is shown lying on a bed, her body angled across the scene, head on the left, feet on the right. She is clothed and turned towards the viewer. Her head is covered with a veil and she supports it with her right hand. Her upper body is, in turn, supported by pillows or cushions under a sheet. Her left arm stretches along the left side of the body, resting on it. Behind the bed stands a woman holding the baby Jesus who is nimbed. The woman appears to be wearing a fashionable headdress. Tristram states that this is the midwife, Salome, who is mentioned in the apocryphal gospels, the *Protoevangelium Jacobi* (*Proto-Gospel of James*) and the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*.<sup>2</sup> However, the withered hand Salome receives as punishment for doubting that Mary could give birth and remain a virgin, is not really in evidence in the Wiston scene. This detail may have been lost in copying from the wall to the sketch, it may have been too obscured to see at the time the sketch was made, or perhaps it was not shown and this figure could have simply been a lady-in-waiting. Joseph sits at the end of the bed contemplating Mary, his head resting on his right hand in a thoughtful pose. Interestingly, there is no evidence that the birth has taken place in a stable, as indicated in St Luke's gospel.<sup>3</sup>

##### Picture 10: Flight into Egypt

Joseph walks in front guiding the donkey on which Mary is seated with the baby in her arms.

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<sup>1</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, pp. 626-27 and Plates 177-184.

<sup>2</sup> See also David R. Cartlidge and J. Keith Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha*, (London, 2001), pp. 89-90.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 2.6-7.

### Picture 13: Presentation in the Temple

The artist has concentrated on the moment when Mary holds out the child to the holy man Simeon, who will carry out the child's circumcision. In the gospel account, Mary came with Joseph and brought a sacrificial offering of two doves does not feature here and neither is the presence of the prophet Anna recorded.<sup>4</sup> Simeon reaches towards the child and his gesture conveys the tension and energy of the scene.

### Picture 14: Christ among the Doctors

Mary and Joseph on the left of the scene, who have been searching for their child, approach him from behind as he is sitting on a stool discussing theology with learned men some of whom are depicted standing in front of him. Jesus has his hands raised to suggest he is talking animatedly.

## **Passion Cycle of Christ**

Description based on Tristram's account.<sup>5</sup>

Picture 1: The Entry into Jerusalem.

Picture 2: The Last Supper.

Picture 3: Christ Washing the Feet of the Disciples.

Picture 4: The Betrayal (The Kiss of Judas).

Picture 5: Only fragments of figures remain.

Picture 6: Christ Carrying the Cross.

Picture 7: The Crucifixion.

Picture 8: The Anointing of the Body of Christ.

Picture 9: The Resurrection.

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<sup>4</sup> Luke 2.21-39.

<sup>5</sup> Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century*, pp. 628-29 and Plates 188-189.

## Appendix D

- 1 Description of the Life of St Margaret in stained glass at St Mary, Combs, Suffolk by David Elisha Davy dated 1827 (Davy, 'A Parochial History', London, British Library, MS Additional 19106, fols 43v-44r).

The S. Isle is 71 ft. 5 in. long & 10 ft. 6 in wide covered with lead. At the E. end, the 1<sup>st</sup> arch is inclosed by a carved screen, & at the W. end is a Vault above ground for the family of Freeman, containing 6 ovens which are all full. The windows have been filled with painted glass, but it is now much broken: the following is all [that?] can now be distinctly made out:

In the 1<sup>st</sup>. Window, to the W.

In the tracery above, are 4 Kings, at full length, with labels across them; on the 1<sup>st</sup>. Amon Rex.

In the 2<sup>d</sup>. W<sup>o</sup>.

Parts of 6 Kings, in the upper tracery, on one of them, which appears to be Eral | nes Rex. – but [q?]

A female figure kneeling, with clasped hands, yellow hair, rays of light falling upon her; in front of her a man on horseback, in crimson, with a sugar loaf hat on head; behind him are 2 or 3 other figures. [now Panel A]

1<sup>st</sup>. dio<sup>n</sup>. – The above man in crimson, & the female figure about to take each other by the hand, a male and a female figure in white behind her; the Devil at a distance standing on a pedestal. Here is part of a legend, O margar ... [now Panel C]

2<sup>d</sup>. division: under the group described above:

A castle gate; the above female as if kneeling before it; behind her is the man in crimson, having the fingers of both his hands in his girdle; – a man, as if taking a sceptre from off the shoulder of the female: another behind him bearing a sword: & a female figure behind him. [now Panel B]

The foregoing, & perhaps the whole of the glass in this Isle, seems to refer to the Legend of St Margaret.

3<sup>d</sup>. division –

A female figure stooping before some animal.

Virgo beata ... et fide. [now Panel D]

Under the above,

A tub or vessel; part of some blue robes, & a man with his back turned towards the female, with a fork in his hand [now Panel E].

- 2 Description of the Life of St Margaret in stained glass at St Mary, Combs, Suffolk by M. R. James (*Suffolk and Norfolk: A Perambulation of the Two Counties with Notices of their History and their Ancient Buildings*, (London, 1930), p. 78).

Remnants of three sets of subjects, collected into the south aisle windows, are distinguishable, viz.:

- (1) The Works of Mercy, Ministering to the Thirsty: a lady by a house pours out water and a man gives it to a beggar; inscriptions in English

I am thrysty ful drye y wysse

Haue her drynke thy for hym y<sup>t</sup> doth ...

- Feeding the Hungry: man and woman give bread:

For mete ye I hungre ...

Brodyr haue mete anow y<sup>t</sup> ...

- (2) Story of St Margaret. Five scenes are left, very much out of order: the probable sequence is:

(a) She is keeping sheep: the persecutor Olybrius rides up;

(b) She is brought before a king: a demon-idol on a pedestal;

(c) She is thrust into a portcullised gateway, with a iron collar and chain on her neck;

(d) In prison the devil, a dragon, swallows her: she emerges and (on right) birches the devil;

(e) She is about to step into a cauldron of oil or pitch.

- (3) A genealogy of Christ: a number of names and figures of kings and ancestors survive [...]. A scene of baptism performed by a bishop: a dove comes on a ray of light; the mother and child are nimbed, the father is in ermine. Evidently this belongs to the life of a saint, probably of noble birth. The genealogy is very much scattered: something would be gained here by rearrangement.

## Appendix E

### Different versions of St Margaret's final prayer.

***Mb passio***: Ch 19, pp. 212-15.

'[whoever] reads this book of my deeds or hears my passion read, at that hour may that person's sins be blotted out; and whoever comes with his light to the church where my relics are, likewise [Ch 19, pp. 214-215] may his sins be blotted out. Whoever is found at the terrible judgement and is mindful of my name, deliver him from torments. I ask besides, Lord, whoever reads it [i.e. the passion] or carries it in his hand or hears it read, from that hour may his sins be blotted out. I also ask, Lord, whoever builds a basilica in my name or from his labour furnishes a manuscript of my passion, fill him with your Holy Spirit, the spirit of truth, and in his home let there not be born an infant lame or blind or dumb.'

***SEL***: p. 301, lines 273-282.

'Grante me ich bidde *the* • for *thin* wonden viue  
That yif enimon hath gode munde • Louerd of mine liue  
And of *the* pine *that* ich habbe *itholed* • for *thine* grace  
*O*ther writ in god entente • and ret in eni place  
Yif hi biddeth in god entente • grante hom milce & ore  
Yif hi in eny anuy beoth • bring hom out of sore  
Yif enymon in onur of me • eny chapel *deth* rere  
*O*ther eni weued in churche • *other* eni *light* find *there*  
In onur of me up is coust • Louerd bidde ich *the*  
Yif hi biddeth *thing that* is to bidde • grante hom for *the* loue of me'

**Lydgate:** p. 160, lines 454-62.

Praying also for thoo folks alle  
That after helpe unto hir grace calle,

And for alle thoo that have hir in memorie,  
And swiche as truste in hir helpe at nede:  
That God hem graunte, sittinge in His glorie,  
Of His grace that thei may welle spede,  
And ageyn right that no man hem myslede, [lead astray]  
“And Lorde,” quod she, “to alle be socoure  
That for thi sake done to me honoure.

**Bokenham:** p. 23, lines 834-840.

‘More-ouyr, lord, lowly I the beseche  
For them specially that my passyoun  
Othyr rede, or wryte, or other do teche,  
Or cherche or chapel make if they moun,  
Or lyht or launpe fynde of deuocyoun  
To me-ward : lord, for thy gret grace  
Hem repentaunce graunte er they hens pace.’

## Appendix F

### Overview of the structure of the text of the manuscript of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat. liturg. f. 31.

#### Description and key

Office for Secular Matins and the liturgical service for Secular Lauds for St Margaret of Antioch's feast day (20 July)

**U** = Versicle

**R** = Response or Respond (after Lesson)

**A** = Antiphon

**Capitulum** = verses from the New Testament

All references to the psalms and their numbering taken from Harper 'Forms and Orders', Appendix 2.2. Also taken from Harper 'Forms and Orders' are the text of *Te deum*, (pp. 270-271) and the full text of the *Gloria patri* and *Sicut erat* (p. 77).

Folio numbers indicate where a section starts.

[ **X** ] = decorated initial capital (2 lines) with foliate border extending from the letter out along the border on the left hand side of the folio

[ **X** ] = decorated initial capital (3 lines) with shield of arms and foliate border surrounding text on four sides

[ **X** ] = decorated initial capital (7 lines) with foliate border extending from the letter out along the border on the left hand side of the folio and along the top edge of the text

[ **X** ] = decorated initial capital (2 lines+) with foliate border extending from the letter down to the bottom of the page

#### Text

[f. 1r] Invitatory Psalm 94: *Venite exultemus*

Sections punctuated with *Et margarete*.

[f. 2v] Hymn: *Virginis proles opifexque matris*

#### *First Nocturn*

[f. 3v] Psalm 8: 'Domine dominus noster: quam admirabile est nomen tuum ...'

[f. 5r] **A**: 'Secula leta colant presentis festa diei ...'

[f. 5r] Psalm 18: 'Celi enarrant gloriam dei: et opera ...'

[f. 7v] **A**: 'Ritugentili decepta statu puerili. idola confregit ...'

[f. 7v] Psalm 23: 'Domini est terra ...'

[f. 9r] **A**: 'Glorie non ficto tenebrarum rege relicto ...'

**U**: 'Diffusa est gracia in labiis tuis. ...'

- [f. 9v] Lesson 1: 'Dum per uniuersum ...'  
 [f. 12v] R: 'Ecce triumphalis ...'  
 U: 'Uirginis in festo ...'
- [f. 13r] Lesson 2: 'Tempore illo quidam ...'  
 [f. 16v] R: 'Sicut spina rosas et flores ...'  
 [f. 17r] U: 'Hec christum confessa ...'
- [f. 17r] Lesson 3: 'Altera uero die stipatis ...'  
 [f. 19r] R: 'Dum pia simplicitas ...'  
 [f. 19v] U: 'Nunc leuit placido ...'

*Second Nocturn*

- [f. 19v] Psalm 44: 'Eructauit cor meum ...'  
 [f. 22r] U: 'Hostis ad hec seuit ...'
- [f. 22v] Psalm 45: 'Deus noster refugium ...'  
 [f. 24v] A: 'Nullam penarum ...'
- [f. 24r] Psalm 86: 'Fundamenta eius in montibus ...'  
 [f. 25r] A: 'Dum uero tormentis ...'
- [f. 25v] Lesson 4: 'Cumque iam particulatim ...'  
 [f. 28r] U: 'Postera lux fulsit ...'
- [f. 28v] Lesson 5: 'Cumque iam pene ab ipsis patentibus ...'  
 [f. 32v] R: 'Uirgo respondens ...'  
 [f. 32v] U: 'Per quem clarescit ...'
- [f. 32v] Lesson 6: 'Alterius successibus ...'  
 [f. 35v] R: 'Hinc motus ...'  
 [f. 35v] U: 'Inuidet hostis ...'

*Third Nocturn*

- [f. 35v] Psalm 95: 'Cantate domino canticum nouum : cantate ...'  
 [f. 37v] A: 'Hanc draco consurgens ...'
- [f. 38r] Psalm 96: 'Dominus regnauit exultet terra ...'  
 [f. 39v] A: 'Induit ethiopis formam ...'
- [f. 39v] Psalm 97: 'Cantate domino ... quia mirabilia fecit ...'  
 [f. 41r] A: 'Quo magis ateritur ...'
- [f. 41v] Lesson 7: 'Completa namque oracione ...'  
 [f. 43r] R: 'Carcere detracta stat nullo turbine ...'  
 [f. 43r] U: 'Angelus e celis custos ...'
- [f. 43v] Lesson 8: 'Post hoc parum ...'  
 [f. 46v] R: 'Preses turbatus inctus ...'  
 [f. 46v] U: 'Inpetrat orandi ...'
- [f. 47r] Lesson 9: 'Populi autem qui astabant ...'  
 [f. 49v] R: 'Digna petunt ...'  
 [f. 49v] U: 'Munera conportans ...'
- [f. 49v] Hymn: *Te deum laudamus*
- [f. 52r] Ora pro nobis beata margareta. At digni efficiamur  
 promissionibus christi.
- [f. 52r] [V] Deus in auditorium meum intende. [R] Domine ad  
 adiuuandum [me festina].

- Gloria patri [et filio et spiritui sancto]. Sicut erat [in principio et nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen]. Alleluia.
- [f. 52v] Psalm 92 (for Sundays and feast days): 'Dominus regnavit decorum indutus ...'
- [f. 53v] Psalm 99: 'Iubilate deo omnis terra ...'
- [f. 54r] Psalm 62: 'Deus deus meus: ad te ...'
- [f. 56v] Canticle: 'Benedicite omnia opera domini domino : laudate et super exaltate eum ...'
- [f. 59r] Psalm 148: 'Laudate dominum de celis ...'
- [f. 61r] Psalm 149: 'Cantate domino canticum nouum: laus eius ...'
- [f. 62r] Psalm 150: 'Laudate dominum in sanctis eius ...'  
[green = three psalms for end of Lauds]
- [f. 62v] A: 'Dum partu grauidas ...'
- [f. 63r] **Capitulum.**  
'Qui gloriatur in domino ... commendat' [2 Corinthians 10: 17-18]  
'Jesu corona [virginum].'  
'Specie tua, et pulchritudine tua  
intende, prospere procede, et regna.'
- [f. 63v] Canticle: [Song of Zechariah, St Luke 1: 68-79] 'Benedictus dominus deus Israel ...'
- [f. 65r] A: 'Tu que calcasti ...'
- [f. 65v] **Oremus.**  
Canticle: 'Omnipotens sempiterne deus auctor uirtutis et amator uirginitatis.'
- [f. 66r] [V] Deus in auditorium meum intende. [R] Domine ad adiuuandum [me festina].
- [f. 66r] Hymn: 'iam lucis orto sidere ...'
- [f. 67r] Psalm 53: 'Deus in nomine tuo saluum me fac ...'
- [f. 68r] Psalm 118, Verses I-IV: 'Beati immaculati ...' [some text missing]

## Appendix G

### Transcription of the manuscript of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat. liturg. f. 31.

#### Key

All references to the psalms and their numbering taken from Harper 'Forms and Orders', Appendix 2.2.

Green text is in a smaller hand to main hand.

Purple text is the Lessons.

Single letters in red stand for A = Antiphon, R = Response or Respond (after Lesson), U = Versicle, and Lesson numbers are also in red.

#### Text

##### [f. 1r]

[from hymn: *Venite exultemus domino* ]

nus super omnes deos

*quoniam non repellit*

*dominus plebem suam* .

quia in manu eius sunt

omnes fines terre et al//

titudines monicum ipse [written in ms as monticum, but shd be **monticum**]

conspicit **Et margarete** .

Quoniam ipsius est

mare et ipse fecit illud

et aridam fundauerunt

manus eius . uenite

adoremus et procidamus

##### [f. 1v]

ante deum ploremus

coram domino qui fecit

nos quia ipse est domi//

nus deus noster nos

autem populus eius et

oues pascue eius **Auc//**

**torem** . Hodie si uocem

eius audieritis nolite

obdurare corda uestra

sicut inexacerbacione

secundum diem temp//

tacionis in deserto ubi

##### [f. 2r]

temptauerunt me pa//

tres uestri probauerunt

et uiderunt opera mea .  
**Et margarete** . Quadra  
ginta annis proximus  
fui generacioni huic **et**  
dixi semper hii errant  
corde ipsi uero non cog//  
nouerunt uias meas  
quibus iurau*i* in ira me//  
a si introibunt in requi//  
em meam . **Auctorem** .

[f. 2v]

Gloria patri . Sicut  
erat . **Et margarete** . **Auc**  
**torem uite christum laud** .  
[Hymn: *Virginis proles opifexque matris*]  
Uirginis proles  
opifexque matris  
uirgo quem gessit peper//  
itque uirgo uirginis tes//  
tum . canimus trophe//  
um . accipe uotum .  
Hec tua uirgo duppli  
ci beata sorte um ges//  
sit fragilem domare

[f. 3r]

corporis sexum domu//  
it cruentum corpore seculum  
Unde nec mortem nec  
amica mortis leua pe//  
narum genera pauel//  
cens sanguine fuso me//  
ruit sacratum scandere  
celum . Huius obten//  
tu deus alme nostris .  
parce iam culp*is* uicia  
remittens quo tibi pu//  
ri resonemus alnum

[f. 3v]

pectoris y'mnum . Glo//  
ria patri geniteque pro//  
li **et** tibi comparutrus//  
que semper spiritus alme  
deus unus omni tem//  
pore seculi . Amen . **Se//**  
**cula leta colant** .  
[*Psalm 8*]  
Domine dominus  
noster : quam  
admirabile est nomen  
tuum inuniuersater//  
ra . Quoniam eleua//

[f. 4r]

ta est magnificencia tu//  
a : super celos . Ex ore  
infancium et lactencium  
prefercisti laudem propter  
inimicos tuos : ut destru//  
as inimicum et ultorem .  
Quoniam uidebo celos  
tuos et opera digitorum tuorum :  
lunam et stellas que tu  
fundasti . Quid est homo  
quod memor es eius : aut  
filius hominis quoniam

[f. 4v]

uisitas eum . Minuis//  
tie um paulo minus ab  
angelis gloria et honore  
coronasti eum et constitu//  
isti eum super opera ma//  
nuum tuarum . Omnia  
subiecisti sub pedibus  
eius : oues et loues uni//  
uersas in super et pecora  
campi . Uolucres celi et  
pisces maris : qui per  
ambulant semitas ma//

[f. 5r]

ris . Domine dominus  
noster : quam admirabi//  
le est nomen tuum inu//  
niuersa terra . Gloria .  
A Secula leta colant presen  
tis festa diei . margareta sui  
quam sacrat honore trophei .  
[Psalm 18]

Celi enarrant gloriam  
dei : et opera manu//  
um eius annunciat fir//  
mamentum . Dies diei  
eructat uerbum : et nox

[f. 5v]

nocti indicat scienciam .  
Non sunt loquele neque  
sermone : quorum non au//  
diantur uoces eorum . In  
omnem terram exunt so//  
nus eorum : et infinesor//  
bis terre uerba eorum .  
In sole posuit taberna//  
culum suum : et ipse tan//

quam sponsus procedens  
de thalamo suo . Exul//  
tauit ut gigas ad curren//

[f. 6r]

dam uiam : a summo celo  
egressio eius . Et occur//  
sus eius usque ad summum  
eius : nec est qui se ab//  
scondat a calore eius .  
Lex domini immacu//  
lata conuertens animas  
testimonium domini fi//  
dele sapienciam prestans  
paruulis . Iusticie do//  
mini recte letificantes  
corda : preceptum domi//

[f. 6v]

illucidum illuminans  
oculos . Timor domi//  
ni sanctus permanet  
in seculum seculi : iudi//  
cia domini uera iusti//  
ficata in semet ipsa .  
Desiderabilia super au//  
rum et lapidem precio//  
sum multum : et dulcio//  
ra super mel et fauum .  
Et enim seruus tuus  
custodit ea : in custodie//

[f. 7r]

dis illis retribucio mul//  
ta . Delicta quis intel//  
ligit ab occultis meis mun//  
da me : et ab alienis par//  
ceseruo tuo . Si mei non  
fuerint dominati tunc  
immaculatus ero : et e//  
mundabor a delicto max//  
imo . Et erunt ut com//  
placeant cloquia oris  
mei : et meditacio cordis  
mei in conspectus tuo sem//

[f. 7v]

per . Domine adiutor  
meus : et redemptor me//  
us . Gloria . A Ritugen//  
tili decepta statu puerili . idola  
confregit postquam trialus//  
tra peregit .  
[Psalm 23] Domini est terra et

plenitudo eius : or//  
bis terrarum et uniuersi  
qui habitant in eo . Qui//  
a ipse super maria funda//  
uit eam : et super flumi//

[f. 8r]

na preparauit eam .  
Quis ascendit in mon //  
tem domini : aut quis  
stabit in loco sancto eius .  
Innocens minibus  
et mundo corde : qui non  
accepit inuano animam  
suam nec uirauit in idlo  
proximo suo . Hic acci //  
piet benedictionem a  
domino : et misericordi //  
am a deo salutari suo .

[f. 8v]

Hec est generacio que //  
rencium eum : queren //  
cium faciem dei iacob .  
Attollite portas princi //  
pes uestras : et eleuami //  
ni porte eternales et in //  
troibit rex glorie . Quis  
est iste rex glorie : domi //  
nus fortis et potens do //  
minus potens in preli //  
o . Attollite portas prin //  
cipes uestras : et eleua //

[f. 9r]

mini porte eternales  
et introibit rex glorie .  
Quis est iste rex glorie :  
dominus uirtutum ip //  
se est rex glorie . Gloria .  
A Glorie non ficto tenebra //  
rum rege relicto . lucis in auc //  
torem totum commisit amorem .  
U Diffusa est gracia in la //  
biis tuis . Propterea benedix //  
it te des in eternum . Iube domine  
benedicere . Omnipotens do //

[f. 9v]

minus sua gracia nos benedi //  
cat .  
Dum per [lc. i.]  
uniuersum orbem  
per sancti spiritus alump //

nos christi euuangelium  
passim succedentibus  
miraculis propalaretur .  
ac plurimis palmitibus  
ex una radice sub eunti //  
bus uinea fidelium ino //  
lesceret . tocius bonitatis  
emulus diabolus . suorum

[f. 10r]

detrimenta . christicola //  
rumque incrementa ui //  
gere prospiciens : zelo  
liuoris accensus totis  
conatibus aboleri ipsum  
ab humanis precordiis  
nititur . Et primis apos //  
tolici culminis interemp //  
tis . suos per satellites e //  
dictum proponit . quati //  
nus qui libamina ido //  
lis nollet libare : aut

[f. 10v]

gladio truncaretur . aut  
diuersis suppliciis inter //  
ceptus perimeretur .  
Armantur denique inpe //  
netrabili fidei lorica mo //  
derna quique tyrones :  
malle se necem apetere  
quam quoquam ausu  
temerario a proposito se  
cedere . Et non modo  
uiri uerum eciam sexus  
femineus tormentis se

[f. 11r]

ostentans ultroneus .  
quanto natura noscitur .  
procliuior . tanto fit sancto  
adnitente spiritu crude //  
litate tucior . Insurgit  
namque nouus certanci //  
um conflictus . in audi //  
tis uiri ac mulieres al //  
liciuntur . cruciatibus  
insontes iugulantur .  
puelle teneris annorum  
sub acte curriculis hor //

[f. 11v]

rende pene genere . ne //  
cantur . Equibus uni //

us certamen beate sili //  
cet margarete si facul //  
tas inperite lingue ad //  
mitteret : pauperio dic //  
tamine opto cunctis  
pandere . hec igitur an //  
tiochenis orta : ingeni //  
is parentibus theodosii  
idolorum pontificis filia  
fuit . Que materno ab

[f. 12 r]

utero inmundi huius  
uoragine fusa : cuidam  
matrone quodam uico  
quindecim stadiis ab anti //  
ochia se posite traditur  
educanda . Susceptam  
namque nutrix comenda //  
tam puellam . sibi loco  
filie cura diligenti ad op //  
tat amoris . Interea con //  
tigit ipsius genitricem  
extremum mortis sorti //

[f. 12v]

ri diem . Qui profecto  
matre orbata cum eta //  
tis lustra explesset : cum  
aliis coetaneis puellis  
pasebat oues nutricis .  
Tu autem domine [miserere nobis] . R Ecce  
triumphalis lux fulget lux  
sperialis . festum preclarum  
tempus quoque deliciarum .  
Plaude chorus plaude festi //  
ua consona laude . U Uir //  
ginis in festo . solito iocundi //

[f. 13r]

or esto . collaudarque deum me //  
ruit quo dante tropheum .  
Plaude chorus . [lc. ii.]  
Tempore illo quidam  
Prefectus nomi //  
ne olibrius . a senatu ro //  
mano illis in partibus  
dirigitur . Qui christi  
nomen inprobe perse //  
quens : multas que de christi //  
anis strages faciens :  
sitibundo pectore marti //

**[f. 13v]**

rum siciebat infestus  
cruorem . Quorum cer //  
tamina cum uirgo iam  
prelibata famam uo //  
lantem in aure cepisset :  
abiecto simulacrorum erro //  
re christianam se profi //  
tetur et Christi nomen to //  
tis uirginitatis amplex //  
ibus oblectatur . Cuius  
uero opinionem eius  
crudelis genitor compe //

**[f. 14r]**

riens : diabolicis agita //  
tur furiis . uelut extra //  
neam a se eiecit : pater //  
nis priuans bonis . His  
itaque diebus olibrius pre //  
fectus asiam linquens :  
antiochenum carpebat  
iter . Qui calleni locosa //  
cratissima quo inerat  
uirgo terrens uicinum  
ea minus conspecta iter .  
illius pulcritudinis a

**[f. 14v]**

more solutis uiribus  
corporis illico succendi //  
tur . Missis que aparitori //  
bus suis : eam iubet as //  
scribi conspectibus . Con //  
tinuo a ministris dia //  
boli capitur . cuius dei  
et inter arocissimas du //  
cencium manus talia  
eleuans . sursum oculis :  
oracula ad dominum  
dirigit . Deus creator

**[f. 15r]**

omnium solamen atque  
tristium me de tantis  
manibus nunc erue diui //  
nitus nec pudorem uir //  
ginei sinas fedari corpo //  
ris in mee uite articu //  
lo quem tibi uoui domino .  
his ita a sancta perora //  
tis : conspectibus pesti //  
feri sistitur tyranni . ta //  
libus eam agredientis .

primo tuum genus michi

[f. 15v]

edicito . de hinc quo cen //  
seris uocabulo : uel cu //  
ius dei cultricem fore  
te dis suplicem . Cui sic  
fanti . hec responsa redi //  
dit uirgo christi nobili  
orta genere : teodosii fi //  
lia sum sacerdotis ab ip //  
sis que parentibus marga //  
retam nuncupatam :  
christicolam me esse profite //  
or toto animo . Atoni //

[f. 16r]

tus denique prefectus Christi  
nomen audiens : ita illam  
affatur . illumque christum  
quem prisci patres figen //  
tes cruci occiderunt : Nam  
tam elegantem tui speri //  
em corporis . decet meis  
iungi connubiis et spreto  
christianorum dogmate : po //  
tentes deos colere . Bea //  
ta uirgo iudici respondit .  
Hii quos patres esse no //

[f. 16v]

minas : ob hoc dampnan //  
tur ingehenna . Malaque  
eorum accio : nostra fuit re //  
dempcio . Iratus itaque  
prefectus : obscurissimo  
mancipari eam iubet  
carceri . Ingressus itaque  
antiochiam . diis more  
solito thura incendit :  
uictimas immolat ex //  
secrandas . Tu autem .  
R Sicut spina rosas et flo //

[f. 17r]

res gignit odorum . sic hanc  
preposita generauit demoni //  
orum . Set uirgo sapiens a //  
ras euertit eorum . U Hec  
christum confessa deum dominum  
dominorum . cultu sudorum non  
est polluta deorum . Set uirgo .  
Iube domine benedi Dilue seruo //  
rum . delicta margareta tuorum .

Altera uero die [lc.]  
stipatis quam [iii.]  
pluribus militum cu //

[f. 17v]

neis : sedens per tribunali  
sibi enim accersiri . sanc //  
tam uirginem precepit  
quam sic turbido aditur  
uultu . Quid inquit  
transacte noctis spacio  
boni consilii captasti tue  
saluti . uis libamina  
diis adhuc in mortalibus  
libari : an pro christi no //  
mine cum dedecore mo //  
ri : Pro christo totis ui //

[f. 18r]

ribus malo occidi : quam  
obscenis simulacris ua //  
riis . et surdis ceruices  
meas inclinari . Ffelle a //  
maritudinis motus his  
auditis diaboli filius . fu //  
renti animo tortores in  
clamat : et toto maligni //  
tatis spiritu debaccatur .  
Cur inquit boni actenus  
ministri moras nectitis .  
atrocissimus carnes eius

[f. 18v]

flagellis discerpite : in //  
testinis que cordetenus  
patefactis deorum nostrorum  
blasfemiam uindicate .  
Satagunt ergo minis //  
tri . impleri uissa tumi //  
di magistri . Exspolia //  
tam que martirem diris  
lacerant tormentis . inter  
quorum uerbera : christi spon //  
sa hec fundit precamina .  
Celorum rector domine

[f. 19r]

ab hoc instanti uerbere  
et de seuis diaboli me lib //  
era discipulis . ne fran //  
gar his supliciis ullo ti //  
more corporis . set confun //  
dantur impii penas dan //  
tes diecolis . Tu autem .

R Dum pia simplicitas pe //  
cori seruiret alendo hanc uidet  
olibrius prefectus amatque ui //  
dendo . Hec hominem renuit  
hominem que deumque sequendo :

[f. 19v]

U Nunc leuit placido . nunc  
intonat me tremendo . Hec ho //  
minem . Gloria patri . Hec .  
[Psalm 44] Eructauit cor meum  
uerbum bonum :  
dico ego opera mea regi .  
Lingua mea calamus  
scribe : uelociter scriben //  
tis . Speciosus forma  
prefiliis hominum : dif //  
fusa est gracia in labiis .  
tuis propterea benedixit te

[f. 20r]

deus in eternum . Ac  
cingere gladio tuo : super  
femur tuum potentissi //  
me . Specie tua et pulchri //  
tudine tua : intende pros //  
pere procede et regna .  
Propter ueritatem et  
mansuetudinem et ius //  
ticiam : et deducet te mi //  
rabiliter dextera tua .  
Sagitte tue acute : populi  
sub te cadent in corda

[f. 20v]

inimicorum regis .  
Uedes tua deus in se //  
culum seculi : uirga direc //  
cionis uirga regni tui .  
Dilexisti iusticiam et  
odisti iniquitatem :  
propterea unxit te deus  
deus tuus oleo leticie  
preconfortibus tuis .  
Mirra et gutta et casia  
auestimentis tuis a  
domibus eburneis : ex

[f. 21r]

quibus delectauerunt te  
filie regum in honore  
tuo . Astitit regina a  
dextris tuis in uestitu  
de aurato : circumdata

uarietate Audi fia  
et uide et inclina aurem  
tuam : et obliuiscere po //  
pulum tuum et domum  
patris tui . Et concu //  
piscet rex decorem tuum  
quoniam ipse est dominus

[f. 21v]

deus tuus et adorabunt  
eum Et filie tyri in //  
muneribus uultum tuum :  
deprecabuntur omnes  
diuites plebis . Omnis  
Gloria eius filie regis ab //  
iutus : in timbriis aure //  
is circumamicta uarieta //  
tibus Adducentur re //  
gi uirgines posteam :  
proxime eius afferentur  
tibi . Afferentur in leti //

[f. 22r]

cia et exultacione : addu //  
centur in templum regis .  
Pro patribus tuis nati  
sunt tibi filii : constitu //  
es eos principes super  
omnem terram Memo //  
res erunt nominis tui :  
in omni generacione et  
generacionem . Prop //  
terea populi confitebun //  
tur tibi : in eternum et  
in seculum seculi . U

[f. 22v]

Hostis ad hec seuit . set non  
tuam illa quieuit . immo fide  
creuit cum uerbis uerbera [spreuit  
[Psalm 45] Deus nos  
ter refugium et  
iurtus : adiutor intri //  
bulacionibus que inue //  
nerunt nos nimis .  
Propterea non time //  
bimus dum turbabitur  
terra : et transferentur  
montes in cor maris .

[f. 23r]

Souerunt et turbate  
sunt aque eorum : con //  
turbati sunt montes in

fortitudine eius Alu //  
minis impetus letifi //  
cat ciuitatem dei : sanc //  
tificauit tabernaculum  
suum altissimus De //  
us in medio eius non  
commouebitur : adiu //  
uabit eam deus mane  
diluculo Conturbate

[f. 23v]

sunt gentes et inclinata  
sunt regna : dedit uocem  
suam mota est terra .  
Dominus uirtutum  
nobiscum : susceptor nos //  
ter deus iacob . Uenite  
et uidete opera domini  
que posuit prodigia super  
terram : auferens bella  
usque adfinem terre .  
Arcum conteret et con //  
fringet arma : et scuta con //

[f. 24r]

buret igni . Uacate et ui //  
dete quoniam ego sum  
deus : exaltabor ingentibus  
et exaltabor in terra Do //  
minus uirtutum nobis //  
cum : susceptor noster deus  
iacob . **A** Nullum penarum  
reputat discrimen amarum . sic  
habet inflexum cor uincens  
femina sexum .  
[Psalm 86] Fundamenta eius  
in montibus sanctis :

[f. 24v]

diligit dominus portas  
syon super omnia taber //  
nacula iacob . Glorio //  
sa dicta sunt de te : ciui //  
tas dei . Memor ero ra //  
ab et babylonis : scienci //  
um me . Ecce alienige //  
ne et tyrus et populis ethiopum :  
hi fuerunt illic Num //  
quid syon dicet homo et  
homo natus est in ea : et  
ipse fundauit eam altis //

[f. 25r]

simus Dominus nar //

rabit in scripturis populorum :  
et principum horum qui fu //  
erunt in ea Sicut letan //  
cium omnium : habita //  
cio est in te . **A** Dum uero tor //  
mentis cedit constancia mentis .  
nec blandimentis nimium que  
diu que petentis carceris horen //  
tis penas parit ira furentis .  
**R** Specie tua et pulchritudi //  
ne tua . Intende prospere per //

[f. 25v]

cede et regna . lube domine benedicere .  
Benediccionem perpetua benedicat  
nos pater eternus . [**lc. iiii.**]  
Cumque iam particu //  
latim carnes eius  
succedentibus carnifici //  
bus succidunt : tunc odi //  
bilis olibrius dixit ei .  
Consule margareta tibi .  
et hanc supersticionem dese //  
re sectam : deos que incipe  
colere . ne quod adhuc

[f. 26r]

superest presentis amit //  
tas uite . christi sponsa  
respondit . Scito prenos //  
cens quod nullo mortis  
ac uite discrimine : pote //  
ris me a fide domini mei .  
separare deum inquam ue //  
lis nolis tuum et uiuorum  
et mortuorum omnium time //  
bis . Acutissime inquit  
inmitis prefectus afferan //  
tur ungule . ut ab ipsis

[f. 26v]

superstitis sacrilega dis //  
rumpantur carnes .  
Statim crudeles minis //  
tri compellent dicta uela //  
m derestis uiscerum inti //  
mis mactatur hostia christi .  
que resumpto spiritu :  
his uerbis deum exorat .  
Ihesu christe piissime mihi  
succurre lacere . ac de ma //  
nu seuisimi abstrae me :  
olibrii illi que obsequenci //

[f. 27r]

um de tormentis carni //  
ficium ne gaudeat dia //  
bolus meis penis diuci //  
us . Uidens itaque prefec //  
tus quod nil proficeret .  
donec suplicia excogitaret  
quod eam perimeret : car //  
ceralibus uinculis iubet  
illam attractari . uallata  
namque carceris munimi //  
ne : genibus flexis alacri  
uultu deprecabatur deum

[f. 27v]

Gracias tibi ago domine  
ihesu christe : quod michi  
in periculis semper subue //  
nis . Iuuamen in suplici //  
is funesti . ministrando  
tyranny . Iube ergo ut ip //  
sum inuisibilem inimi //  
cum qui me tam uehemen //  
ter inuadit : effigie uisi //  
bili michi asistat . quatinus  
facie ad faciem aliquan //  
tisper cum eo configam .

[f. 28r]

Surgens quoque ab ora //  
cione subito draco mire  
magnitudinis ab angu //  
lo carceris egrediens qui  
erecto capite . rugitu que  
aperto faucium mortife //  
ro . terribilibus sibilis de  
squamarum stridoribus  
maximum christi uirgi //  
ni ingerit horrorem . Tu  
autem . **U** Postera lux ful //  
sit de pena carceris exit . nec timor

[f. 28v]

urget eam quam christi gracia rex //  
it . temptans prefectus fidei per //  
uertice pectus . Christum spernen //  
dum docet esse iouemque colen //  
dum . O rabies grandis  
diis immolat ille nefandis  
surdis et mutis medicum sper //  
nendo salutis . Christii [?] spernem .  
Iube domine benedicere . Per mar //  
garetam . patriam mereamus [amenam] .  
Cumque [lc. v.]

iam pene ab ipsis

**[f. 29r]**

patentibus belue hiatibus  
absorberetur . uexillo do //  
minice crucis composito :  
serpens squalidus continu //  
o crepuit medius . Respi //  
ciens in parte altera . ecce  
ethiopem fullugine tetri //  
orem intuetur : uinctis  
minibus stantem . Cuius  
uero egregia margareta  
in capillum monstruosum  
manibus . insertis talia pro //

**[f. 29v]**

clamantem : pedibus suis  
eum subegit . parce michi  
dei ancilla : quum que lacri //  
mis tuis in cessanter in //  
cendor aprecibus tuis ab  
angelis tuis medicibus  
torqueor penis . Quin  
eciam a uirginitate tua  
que semper est michi con //  
traria : mee milicie obten //  
duntur arma . Quam  
admodum miror unde

**[f. 30r]**

tam in manus inte ui //  
get uirtus que ex parenti //  
bus procreata est paga //  
nis . contra te ideo michi  
funditus posse uelle meum .  
Beatissima christi martir  
respondit . Ab his spurcis //  
sime demon coibe linguam  
uerbis . et noli uerbosari :  
quia gracia dei sum id  
quod sum . Uerum que ta //  
men genealogiam satis

**[f. 30v]**

per horridam : opera que tu //  
a michi narrato incensor  
sum iniquitatis . Diabo //  
lus respondit . Pater noster  
ipse sathanas est : qui in  
prophetarium scripturis luci //  
fer appellatur . de celestibus  
sedibus adima dilapsus .  
Cuius genus et omnium

nostrum in libris iamnes  
et mambres reperitur con //  
scriptum . Nam quod de

**[f. 31r]**

meis scire cupis operibus :  
ipsos uidices celo inuidie  
aduersus christum quo  
eum crucifigerunt concita //  
ui . Set et apostolos eius  
atque martires per meos  
sallites peremi denique christi //  
anorum quam plures  
apostatas reddidi et quibus  
id persuadere nequiui .  
homicidiis . adulteriis .  
uel fornicacionibus fidei

**[f. 31v]**

promissionem quam in  
baptismo professi sunt :  
polluere feci . Porro quid  
de paganis dicam . quos  
omnino simulacris ac  
supersticiosis ymaginibus  
omni uite eorum tempo //  
re ludo : et ad cumulum  
mee dampnacionis per //  
traho . Audiens marga //  
reta : conuersa ad domi //  
num dixit . Ihesu christe

**[f. 32r]**

redemptor bone tibi gra //  
cias refero : qui me de tam  
funesto genere monstri  
erupuisti . et ad tuam mi //  
sericordiam perduxisti .  
Rogo te ut iniquissimus  
demon perpetuis in pre  
senti plectatur penis : ne  
tuos amplius seducat cul //  
tores . Statim que terra de  
hiscens : eundem uastis  
sinibus absorbet . Tu autem .

**[f. 32v]**

**R** Uirgo respondens pro //  
bat idola digna cremari et chris //  
tum solum dominumque deumque  
uocari . Se docet hunc colere  
laudare sequi uenerari . **U**  
Per quem clarescit solem stel //  
las que creati . sanguine qui

proprio mundum uoluit re //  
parari . Se docet . Iube domine .  
Nos pere dignare . margare //  
ta tibi sociare . Amen. [lc. vi]  
Alterius successibus

**[f. 33r]**

sole reddente terris diem .  
confestim de cauea carce //  
ris rapitur uirgo christi .  
uix tangentibus arua plan //  
tis tribunali que nepharii  
offertur iudicis . et sic ei  
dicentis . Ecce margare //  
ta in articulo mortis se //  
ro posita . consenti michi  
et sacrificia diis : ne florem  
tue amittas pulcherime  
iuuentutis . Beata uir //

**[f. 33v]**

go respondit . Deum celi  
et terre conditorem semper  
adoro . illi quoque placere  
totis uisceribus concupis //  
co . ydola autem surda et  
muta : corde integro res //  
puo et contempno . quibus  
similes fiant qui faciunt  
ea : et omnes qui confidunt  
in eis . Lampades arden //  
tes ait prefectus . Furore  
cero percussus circa latera

**[f. 34r]**

eius amplicate . ut ex istis  
carnibus discat deos non  
blasfemare . Uritur in  
terea hostia christi in odo //  
rem suauitatis uisibilibus  
flammis . set inuisibili  
refrigeratur rore sancti  
spiritus . Considerans per  
inde furibundus preses in  
latera sancta floccipendere  
incendia . illico ad alia  
iterum diuertitur argu //

**[f. 34v]**

menta . Afferatur in //  
quid cuppa aqua repleta  
inqua demergatur hec  
sacrilega : ut aquis inter //  
cepta morte dampnetur

teterima . Ex timplo ce //  
leres ministri perpetrant  
dicta iubentis . et uinctis  
manibus ac pedibus ca //  
pite deorsum precipita //  
tur in profundum . Tunc  
christi sponsa in ipsis

[f. 35r]

fluctibus . has preces fun //  
dit diuinitus . Deus cu //  
ius nutu reguntur uni //  
uersa . pater orphanorum .  
spes desperancium . res //  
pice queso super hanc a //  
quam . et tua benediccio //  
ne sanctifica . ut fiat mi //  
chi fons baptismi in re //  
generacionem peccatorum :  
et abrumpe uincula qui //  
bus nector . quatinus

[f. 35v]

astantes cognoscant quia  
tu es solus deus benedic //  
tus in secula seculorum  
amen . **R Hinc motus**  
grauius iubet illam carcere  
claudi . Illa uocat precibus diui //  
na reddita laudi . **U** Inuidet  
hostis ei commiscens prelia  
fraudi . Illa uocat . Sliu[?] . Illa .  
[Psalm 95] Cantate domino can //  
ticum nouum : can //  
tate domino omnis terra .

[f. 36r]

Cantate domino et benedi //  
cite nomini eius : annun //  
ciate de die in diem salu //  
tare eius Annunciate  
inter gentes gloriam eius :  
in omnibus populis mira //  
bilia eius . Quomam  
magnus dominus et lau //  
dabilis nimis : terribilis  
est super omnes deos .  
Quoniam omnes dii  
gencium demonia : dominis

[f. 36v]

autem celas ferit . Con //  
fessio et pulchritudo in  
conspectu eius : sancti //

monia et magnificen //  
cia in sanctificatione  
eius Afferte domino  
patrie gencium : affer //  
te domino gloriam et ho //  
norem afferte domino  
gloriam nomini eius .  
Tollite hostias et in  
troite in atria eius :

[f. 37r]  
adorate dominum in a //  
trio sancto eius . Com //  
moueat a facie eius  
uniuersa terra : dicite in  
gentibus quia dominus  
regnauit Et enim cor //  
rexit orbem terre : qui non  
commouebitur iudica //  
bit populos in equitate .  
Letentur celi et exultet  
terra : commoueat ma //  
re et plenitudo eius . gau //

[f. 37v]  
debunt campi et omnia  
que in eis sunt Tunc  
exultabunt omnia lig //  
na siluarum a facie do //  
mini quia uenit : quem ue //  
nit indicare terram .  
Iudicabit orbem terre  
in equitate : et populos  
in ueritate sua **A Hanc**  
**draco consurgens pait[?] ab**  
**sorbere crepatque per medium . sic**  
**christus eam seruatque uiuatque.**

[f. 38r]  
[Psalm 96] Dominus regnauit  
exultet terra : leten //  
tur insule multe Nu //  
bes et caligo in circuitu e //  
ius : iusticia et iudicium  
correccio sedis eius . Ig //  
nis ante ipsum precedet :  
et in flammabit in circu //  
itu inimicos eius . Al  
luxerunt fulgura eius  
orbi terre : uidit et commo //  
ta est terra Montes si //

[f. 38v]  
cut cera fluxerunt a facie

domini : a facie domini  
omnis terra . Annun //  
ciauerunt celi iusticiam  
eius : et uiderunt omnes  
populi gloriam eius .  
Confundantur omnes  
qui adorant sculptilia :  
et qui gloriantur in simu //  
lachris suis Adorate  
eum omnes angeli eius :  
audiuit et letata est syon .

[f. 39r]

Et exultauerunt filie  
iude : propter iudicia tua  
domine . Quoniam tu  
dominus altissimus su //  
per omnem terram : ni //  
mis exaltatus es super om //  
nes deos . Qui diligitis  
dominum odite malum :  
custodit dominus ani //  
mas sanctorum suorum de ma //  
nu peccatoris liberabit  
eos . Aux orta est iusto :

[f. 39v]

et rectis corde leticia Te //  
tamini iusti in domino :  
et confitermini memorie  
sanctificationis eius . **A**  
Induit ethiopsis formam de //  
formis ymago . pandens quo  
noceat . pandentem sancta uira //  
go . accipit arreptum demergit  
inima uorago .  
[Psalm 97] Cantate domino can //  
ticum nouum : quia  
mirabilia fecit . Salua //

[f. 40r]

uit sibi dextera eius . et  
brachium sanctum eius .  
Notum fecit dominus  
salutare suum : in conspec //  
tu gencium reuelauit ius //  
ticiam suam Recorda //  
tus est misericordie sue :  
et ueritatis sue domui israel.  
Uiderunt omnes termi //  
ni terre : salutare dei nostri .  
Iubilate deo omnis ter //  
ra : cantate et exultate et

[f. 40v]

psallite Psallite domi //  
no in cithara in cytha //  
ra et uoce psalmi : in tu //  
bis ductilibus et uoce  
tube cornee Iubila //  
te in conspectu regis do //  
mini : moueatur mare  
et plenitudo eius orbis  
terrarum et qui habitant  
in eo Alumina plau //  
dent manusimul : mon //  
tes exultabunt a conspec //

[f. 41r]

tu domini quoniam  
uenit iudicare terram .  
Iudicabit orbem ter //  
rarum iniusticia : et po //  
pulos inequitate . **A**  
Quo magis ateritur maio //  
ri feruet amore . christus eius  
semper in pectore semper in ore .  
Aduuabit eam deus  
uultu suo . Deus in medio  
eius non commouebitur .  
Pater noster Et ne nos .

[f. 41v]

Iube domine benedicere Christe  
perpetuedet nobis gaudia uite .  
Completa namque [**lc. vii**]  
oratione subito so //  
lutis manibus ac pedibus  
ex fonte prodiit : cuncti //  
potentem laudans ac be //  
nedicens deum . Terre //  
motus factus est magnus  
columba que niue candidi //  
or de celorum cacumine ad //  
uolans : capiti eius inse //

[f. 42r]

dit auream rostro ferens  
coronam . Insuper quoque  
uox de supernis sedibus  
per ampla aeris spacia  
auditur . Constanter cer //  
ta beata margareta quam  
chorus omnis sanctorum .  
tuum prestolatur aduen //  
tum : ut percipias perhen //  
nem palmam laborum .  
Territi autem astantes :

propter terremotum uiden //

[f. 42v]

tes dixerunt . Magnus est  
deus christianorum . Et  
crediderunt eadem hora  
in domino quinque milia  
hominum : exceptis mu //  
lieribus atque paruulis .  
Qui marmoniam ciui //  
tatem . iussu prefecti duc //  
ti proprio sanguine bap //  
tizati : in campo qui uo //  
catur limech pro christo om //  
nes decollati . Tu autem .

[f. 43r]

**R** Carcere detracta stat nul //  
lo turbine fracta . lampas utrum //  
que latus uarios coquit in cru //  
ciatus . ignibus assata set uerius  
igne probata . Flumine iacta //  
tur quo baptizata nouatur .  
**U** Angelus e celis custos  
bonus atque fidelis nullis tormen //  
tis frangi finit integra mentis .  
Flumine iactatur . Iube domine  
benedicere Sancte margarete  
precibus benedicat nos omnipotens dominus .

[f. 43v]

Post hoc parum [**lc. viii**]  
per truculentus di //  
aboli filius secum delibe //  
rans fidemque christi mar //  
tiris . inuincibilem per  
spectans capitalem . iubet  
subire sentenciam . Duc //  
ta est enim extra cuitatem .  
in locum quo rei punie //  
bantur : aspiculatore mal //  
co nomine . sibi locum  
oracionis rogauit concedi :

[f. 44r]

flexis quibus genibus has suppli //  
ces mittit ad deum preces .  
Altissime sanctorum redemp //  
tor deus gracias corde et  
me tibi ago . qui me demun //  
di huius colluione ab //  
straxisti : et ad hanc gloriam  
in pollute corpore per duxis //  
ti . Respice igitur piissime

pater ad deprecationem  
meam et presta ut si quis  
supplicia que pro tui no //

[f. 44v]

minis confessione uirili //  
ter pertuli scripserit aut  
legerit . uel mei memori //  
am fecerit : criminorum  
suorum promereatur ue //  
niam et infuturo inmar //  
cessibilem percipiat coro //  
nam . Denique qui in dis //  
tricto examine positus  
me inuocauerit : suis pre //  
cibus illi misericordia non  
denegetur clemencia et de

[f. 45r]

manu exactoris eripias .  
Adhuc clementissime  
pater percor ut qui basi //  
licam in mei honore no //  
minis tibi dedicauerit .  
uel qui de suo labore mihi  
luminaria ministraue //  
rit . adipiscatur quicquit  
perierit utile sue saluti et  
descendat iugiter super  
illam domum gracia sancti  
spiritus . Iterum si in domum

[f. 45v]

me inuocans mulier praeg //  
nans partu laborauerit :  
abiminenti eripe eam  
periculo . Infans quoque  
ex utero fusus : lumine  
pociatur huius seculi abs //  
que suorum aliquo detri //  
mento membrorum [*sic*] . His  
a martire dictis : subito  
facta sunt tonitrua mag //  
na . ac columba a stelli //  
fero celo emissa solito te //

[f. 46r]

tigit eam dicens . Beata  
es christi sponsa marga //  
reta que omnium remi //  
nisceris et merentibus  
compateris cunctis . Ec //  
ce et enim que petisti et non  
petisti : usque infinem se //

culi concessi . Ueni ergo  
in requiem patrie celes //  
tis quia statis est quod  
huc usque certasti iam de //  
bentur . tibi premia per //

[f. 46v]

petue remuneracionis .  
que sociata choris uirgi //  
num cum christo regnes  
in euum . Tu autem .  
**R** Preses turbatus uic //  
tus licet insanatus . in*pac*iens  
ire iubet hanc mucrone feri ///  
re . Set formidata non est  
sentencia lata . **U** Inpe //  
trat orandi spacium christum  
que precandi . et prece finite fi //  
nitur cum prece uita . Set for .

[f. 47r]

Lube domine benedicere . Sancte mar //  
garete merita . perducant[?] nos  
ad celestia regna . [**lc. ix**]  
Populi autem qui  
astabant concussi //  
one tonitruu patefacti .  
corruerunt in terram ue //  
lud mortui . Erigens de //  
nique se uirgo christi imper //  
at speculatori iussa prefec //  
ti perficere . Qui maxi //  
ma dei uirtutem circa

[f. 47v]

illam perlustrant renu //  
it dicens . Absit a me is //  
tud ut perimam te : cru //  
entatis manibus . Cui  
margareta . Si hoc in //  
quit non egeris : partem  
aliquam habere nequibis .  
At ille tremefactus dix //  
it . Domine nestatuas  
michi hoc in peccatum .  
Exempto gladio : caput  
eius amputauit . Qui

[f. 48r]

confestim addexteram be //  
ate margarete corruit :  
et exspirauit . De corpore  
nempe beatissime mar //  
tiris columba exiliens :

cuncta celi secreta ange //  
licis manibus penetrauit .  
Tunc uero quidam christi //  
anissimus nomine the //  
ophimus tulit corpus  
illius . et sepeliuit illud  
cum aromatibus in sepul //

[f. 48v]

ero . quod dato precio in  
antiochia ciuitate eme //  
rat in domo sincretice  
matrone . Qui thephi //  
mus assiduus uirgini  
in carcere ministrauit .  
Ac tormenta que pertu //  
lit propriis oculis conspex //  
it . a cuius profecto cunc //  
ta didici prefata dicta //  
mine que pauperimo le //  
gentibus uel audientibus

[f. 49r]

relinquo conscripta .  
Compleuit itaque beatis //  
sima martir christi mar //  
gareta certamen suum  
terciodecimo kalendas  
augusti . sub olibrio pre //  
fecto in antiochia cui //  
tate . Regnante domino  
nostro ihesu christo . cui  
honor est et gloria uirtus  
et potestas : per infinita  
secula seculorum . Amen . R

[f. 49v]

Digna petunt castra tumu //  
lum caro spiritus astra . Ad  
tumulum cuius pars orbis  
confluit huius . U Mune //  
ra conportans digne que peti //  
ta reportans . Ad tumulum .

[Hymn: *Te deum laudamus*]

Te deum laudamus :  
te dominum confite //  
mur Te eternum pa //  
rem : omnis terra ue //  
neratur Tibi omnes  
angeli : tibi celi et uniuer

[f. 50r]

se potestates . Tibi che //  
rubin et seraphin : in ces //

sabili uoce proclamant .  
Sanctus . Sanctus . Sanctus .  
Dominus deus sabaoth .  
Pleni sunt celi et terra :  
maiestatis glorie tue .  
Te gloriosus : apostolorum  
chorus . Te prophetarum :  
laudabilis numerous .  
Te martirum candida //  
tus : laudat exercitus .

[f. 50v]

Te per orbem terrarum :  
sancta confitetur ecclesi //  
a Patrem in mense :  
magestatis Ueneran //  
dum tuum uerum : et u //  
nicum filium Sanctum  
quoque paraclitum spiri //  
tum . Tu rex glorie christe .  
Tu patris sempiternus  
es filius . Tu adliberan //  
dum suscepturus homi //  
nem : non horruisti uir //

[f. 51r]

ginis uterum . Tu de //  
uicto mortis aculeo : aper //  
uisti credentibus regna ce //  
lorum Tu ad dexteram  
dei sedes : in gloriam pa //  
tris Iudex crederis :  
esse uenturus Te ergo  
quesumus tuis famulis  
subuem : quos precioso  
sanguine redemisti .  
Eterna fac cum sanctis  
tuus : gloria munerari .

[f. 51v]

Saluum fac populum  
tuum domine : et benedic  
hereditati tue . Et rege  
eos : et extolle illos usque  
meternum . Per singu ///  
los dies : benedicimus  
te Et laudamus no //  
men tuum in seculum :  
et in seculum seculi Dig //  
nare domine die isto : si //  
ne peccato nos custodire .  
Miserere nostri domi //

[f. 52r] [shield of arms]

ne : miserere nostri Fi //  
at misericordia tua domine  
super nos : quemadmo //  
dum sperauimus in te .  
In te domine speraui  
non confundar in eter //  
num . Ora pro nobis beata  
margareta . At digni efficia //  
mur promissionibus christi .  
[by shield of arms] Deus in adiuto //  
rium meum intende .  
Domine ad

[f. 52v]  
adiuuandum Gloria patri .  
Sicut erat . Alelluia .  
[Psalm 92] Dominus regnauit  
decorum indutus  
est : indutus est dominus  
fortitudinem et precinx //  
it se Et enim firma //  
uit orbem terre : qui non  
commouebitur Para //  
ta sedes tua dominus ex tunc : a  
seculo tu es . Eleua //  
uerunt flumina domine :

[f. 53r]  
eleuauerunt flumina  
nocem suam Eleua //  
uerunt flumina fluctus  
suos : auocibus anocibus  
aquare multarum .  
Mirabilis elaciones ma //  
ris : mirabilis in altis  
dominus . Testimonia  
tua credibilia facta sunt  
nimis : domum tuam de //  
cet sanctitudo domine  
in longitudinem dierum .

[f. 53v]  
[Psalm 99] Iubilate deo omnis terra :  
seruite domino in letici //  
a . Introite in conspec //  
tu eius : in exultacione .  
Scitote quoniam dominus  
ipse est deus : ipse fecit  
nos et non ipsi nos .  
Populus eius et oues  
paschue eius : introite  
portas eius in confessio //  
ne : atria eius in ymnis  
confitemini illi Lauda

[f. 54r]

ten omen eius quoniam  
suavis est dominus : me //  
ternum misericordia eius  
et usque in generacione et  
generacionem ueritas eius .  
[Psalm 62] Deus deus meus :  
ad te de luce uigilo .  
Sitiuit in te anima me //  
a : quam multipliciter  
tibi caro mea . Interia  
deserta inuia et maquo //  
sa sic in sancto apparui

[f. 54v]

tibi : ut uiderem uirtu //  
tem tuam et gloriam  
tuam Quoniam me //  
lior est misericordia tua  
super uitas : labia mea  
laudabunt te Sic be //  
nedicam te in uita mea :  
et in nomine tuo leuabo  
manus meas Sicut  
adipe et pinguedine re //  
pleatur anima mea : et  
labiis exultacionis lau //

[f. 55r]

dabit os meum Sic  
memor fui tui super stra //  
tum meum in matuti //  
nis meditabor in te quia  
fuisti adiutor meus Et  
in uelamento alarum tu //  
arum exultabo : adhesit  
anima mea posit te me  
suscepit dextera tua .  
Ipsi uero inuanum que //  
sierunt animam meam :  
introibunt in inferiora

[f. 55v]

terre tradentur in ma //  
nus gladii partes uul //  
pium erunt Rex uero  
letabitur in deo . lauda //  
buntur omnes qui iu //  
rant in eo . quia obstruct //  
tum est os loquencium  
iniqua Deus misere //  
atur nostri et benedicat  
nobis : illuminet uul //

tum suum super nos et mi //  
sereatur nostri Ut cog

[f. 56r]

noscamus in terra iuam  
tuam : in omnibus gentibus  
salutare tuum . Confite //  
antur tibi populi deus : con //  
fiteantur tibi populi om //  
nes . Aetentur et exultent  
gentes : quoniam uidi //  
cas populous in equitate  
et gentes in terra dirigis .  
Confiteantur tibi popu //  
li deus : confiteantur ti //  
bi populi omnes terra de //

[f. 56v]

dit fructum suum Be //  
nedicat nos deus deus  
noster : benedicat nos  
deus . et metuant eum  
omnes fines terre .  
[Canticle] Benedicite omnia  
opera domini domino :  
laudate et super exaltate  
eum in secula Bene //  
dicite angeli domini do //  
mino Benedicite aque

[f. 57r]

omnes que super celos  
sunt domino : benedicite  
omnes uirtutes domini  
domino Benedicite sol  
et luna domino : benedi //  
cite stelle celi domino .  
Benedicite humber [= imber] et  
ros domino : benedicite  
omnes spiritus dei domino .  
Benedicite ignis et estus  
domino : benedicite fri //  
gus et estas domino .

[f. 57v]

Benedicite rores et prui //  
na domino : benedicite  
gelu et frigus domino .  
Benedicite glacies et ui //  
ues domino : benedicite  
noctes et dies domino .  
Benedicite lux et tenebre  
domino : benedicite ful //  
gura et nubes domino .

Benedicat terra domi //  
no : laudet et super exaltet //  
eum in secula Benedi

**[f. 58r]**

cite montes et colles domino :  
benedicite uniuersa ger //  
minancia in terra domi //  
no . Benedicite fontes  
domino : benedicite mari //  
a et flumina domino Be //  
nedicite cete et omnia que  
mouentur in aquis domino :  
benedicite omnes uolu //  
cres celi domino Bene //  
dicite omnes bestie et pe //  
cora domino : benedicite

**[f. 58v]**

fili hominum domino .  
Benedicat israel domi //  
num : laudet et super ex //  
altet eum in secula Be //  
nedicite sacerdotes domini  
domino : benedicite serui  
domini domino . Benedicite  
spiritus et anime iustorum  
domino : benedicite sancti et  
humiles corde domino .  
Benedicite anania aza //  
ria misael domino : lau //

**[f. 59r]**

det et super exaltet eum  
in secula Benedicamus  
patrem et filium cum sancto  
spiritu : laudemus et super  
exaltemus eum in secu //  
la Benedictus es domine  
in firmamento celi : et  
laudabilis et gloriosus  
et super exaltatus in secula .  
[Psalm 148] Laudate dominum  
de celis : laudate  
eum in excelsis . Lau //

**[f. 59v]**

date eum omnes angeli  
eius : laudate eum omnes  
uirtutes eius . Lauda //  
te eum sol et luna : lauda //  
te eum omnes stelle et lu //  
men . Laudate eum ce //  
li celorum : et aque que

super celos sunt laudent  
nomen domini . Quia  
ipse dixit et facta sunt ip //  
se mandauit et creata sunt .  
Statuit ea in eternum

**[f. 60r]**

et in seculum seculi : precep //  
tum posuit et non prete //  
ribit . Laudate domi //  
num de terra : dracones  
et omnes abyssi ignis  
grando nix glacies spiritus  
procellarum : que faciunt  
uerbum eius . Montes  
et omnes colles : ligna  
fructifera et omnes cedri .  
Bestie et uniuersa pero //  
ra : serpents et uolucres

**[f. 60v]**

pennate . Reges terre  
et omnes populi : princi //  
pes et omnes iudices ter //  
re . Iuuenes et uirgi //  
nes senes cum iuniori //  
bus : laudet nomen  
domini quia exaltatum  
est nomen eius soluis.  
Confessio eius super  
celum et terram : et exal //  
tauit cornu populi sui .  
Ymnus omnibus sanc //

**[f. 61r]**

tis eius filiis israel populo  
appropinquanti sibi .  
[Psalm 149] Cantate domino can //  
ticum nouum : laus  
eius in ecclesia sanctorum .  
Letetur israel in eo qui  
fecit eum : et filie sion ex //  
ultent in rege suo Lau //  
dent nomen eius in cho //  
ro : in tympano et psalte //  
rio psallant ei . Quia  
beneplacitum est domino

**[f. 61v]**

in populo suo : et exalta //  
uit mansuetos in salu //  
tem Exultabunt sancti  
in Gloria : letabuntur in  
cubilibus suis . Exul //

taciones dei ingutture  
eorum : et gladii ancipi //  
tes in manibus eorum .  
Ad faciendam uindic //  
tam in nacionibus : in //  
crepaciones in populis .  
Ad alligandos reges

[f. 62r]  
corum in compedibus et no //  
biles eorum in manibus  
ferries . Ut faciant ine //  
is iudicium conscriptum :  
gloria hec est omnibus  
sanctus eius . [*Psalm 150*] Laudate  
dominum in sanctis eius :  
laudate eum in firmamen //  
to uirtutis eius Lauda //  
te eum in uirtutibus eius :  
laudate eum secundum  
multitudinem magni //

[f. 62v]  
tudinis eius Laudate  
eum in sono thube : lau //  
date eum in psalterio et  
cithara Laudate eum  
in timpano et choro : lau //  
date eum in cordis et or //  
gano Laudate eum  
in cymbalis iubilacionis :  
omnis spiritus laudet  
dominum . Gloria . A.

[f. 63r]  
Dum partu grauidas parien //  
di causa molestat . cumque nichil  
uisi mors et desperacio restat.  
Hec uirgo dat opem fera leuit  
gaudia prestat . Capitulum .  
Qui gloriatur in do //  
mino gloriatur non  
enim qui se ipsum comen //  
dat ipse probatus est : set  
quem deus commendat ys[?]  
Jesu corona .  
Sperie tua et pulcritudine

[f. 63v]  
tua . Intende prosper e procede et regna .  
[*Canticle*] Benedictus dominus  
deus israel : quia  
uisitauit et fecit redemp //  
cionem plebis sue. Et

erexit cornu salutis no //  
bis : in domo dauid pue //  
ri sui . Sicut locutus  
est per os sanctorum : qui a  
seculo sunt prophetarum  
eius Salutem ex ini //  
micis nostris : et de ma //

[f. 64r]

nu omnium qui oderunt  
nos . Ad faciendam mi //  
sericordiam cum patri //  
bus nostris : et memo //  
rari testament sui sancti .  
Iusiurandom quod  
iuravit ad Abraham pa //  
trem nostrum : daturum  
se nobis . Ut sine timo //  
re de manu inimicorum  
nostrorum liberati : serui //  
amus illi . In sancti //

[f. 64v]

tate et iusticia coram ipso :  
omnibus diebus nostris .  
Et tu puer propheta al //  
tissimi uocaberis : prei //  
bis enim ante faciem do //  
mini parare uias eius .  
Addendam scienciam  
salutis plebe eius : in re //  
missionem peccatorum  
eorum Per uiscera mi //  
sericordie dei nostri : in  
quibus uisitauit nos ori //

[f. 65r]

ens exalto . Illumina //  
re his qui in tenebris  
et in umbra mortis sedent :  
addirigendos pedes nos //  
tros in uiam pacis . **A**  
Tu que calcasti superasti  
precipitasti . serpentem uacu //  
am mentem uirtutis egentem .  
in christo funda fecunda cori //  
ge munda . tuspes lapsorum  
uia morum spes que reorum . corige  
labentes rege mentes suscipe

[f. 65v]

flentes Domine exaudi . **OR[emus]**  
[Canticle] Omnipotens sempi //  
terne deus auctor

uirtutis et amator uir //  
ginitatis . qui beatam  
margaretam dignatus  
es ad celi gaudia dedu //  
cere suppliciter implo //  
ramus clemenciam tu //  
am ut cuius sacram  
solempnitatem celebra //  
mus in terris . de eius

[f. 66r] [shield of arms: border around text removed]

dem patrociniis gaude //  
amus in celis . Per dominum  
Domine exaudi Benedica //  
mus domino Deo gracias .  
[shield of arms] Deus inadiutorium  
meum intende .  
Domine ad adiuuandum i // [Hymn: *iam lucis orto sidere*]  
am lucis orto sidere  
deum precemur suppli //  
ces ut indiurnis actibus  
nos seruet a nocentibus  
[one line missing from removal of border, although text not missing]

[f. 66v]

Linguam refrenans  
temperet ne litis horror  
insonet . uisum fouen //  
do contegat ne uauita //  
tes hauriat Sint pu [//]  
ra cordis intima absis //  
tat et uercordia carnis te //  
rat superbiam potus ci //  
bique parcitas Ut cum  
dies abscesserit noctem  
sors reduxerit mundi per  
abstinienciam ipsi cana //

[f. 67r]

mus gloriam Deo  
patri sit gloria eius que  
soli filio cum spiritu pa //  
raclito et nunc et inper //  
petuum Amen .  
[Psalm 53] Deus in nomine  
tuo saluum me  
fac : et in uirtute tua in //  
dica me Deus exan //  
di oracionem meam :  
auribus percipe uerba o //  
ris mei Quoniam

[f. 67v]

alieni in surrexerunt ad //

uersum me : et fortes que //  
sierunt animam meam  
et non proposuerunt de //  
um ante conspectum suum .  
Ecce enim deus adiu //  
uat me : et dominus sus //  
captor est anime mee .  
Auerte mala inimicis  
meis : et in ueritate tua  
disperde illos . Uolun //  
tarie sacrificabo tibi : et

**[f. 68r]**

confitebor nomini tuo  
quoniam bonum est .  
Quoniam ex omni  
tribulacione erupuisti  
me : et super inimicos  
meos despexit oculus  
meus . Gloria patri .

*[Psalm 118: Verses I-III and part of IV]* Beati immaculati

inuia : qui ambu //  
lant in lege domini .  
Beati qui serutantur  
testimonia eius : into //

**[f. 68v]**

to corde exquirunt eum .  
Non enim qui operan //  
tur iniquitatem : in iu //  
is eius ambulauerunt .  
Tu mandasti : manda //  
ta tua custodire nimis .  
Utinam dirigantur  
uie mee : ad custodien //  
das iustificationes tuas .  
Tunc non confundar :  
cum perspexero in om //  
nibus mandatis tuis .

**[f. 69r]**

Confitebor tibi indi //  
reccionem cordis : in eo quod  
didici indicia iusticie  
tue . Iustificationes  
tuas custodiam : non  
me derelinquas usque //  
quaque . In quo cori //  
git adolescencior uiam  
suam : incustodiendo  
sermons tuos . Into //  
to corde meo exquisiui  
te : ne repellas me aman //

[f. 69v]

dati tuis In corde me //  
o abscondi eloquia tua :  
ut non peccem tibi Be //  
nedictus es domine : doce  
me iustificationes tuas .  
In labiis meis pronun //  
ciaui omnia indicia o //  
ris tui . Iuuia testi //  
moniorum tuorum delecta //  
tus sum : sicut in omni //  
bus diuiciis . In man //  
dati tuis exercebor :

[f. 70r]

et considerabo uias tuas  
In iustificationibus  
tuis meditabor : non  
obliuiscar sermons tu //  
os . Gloria patri .  
Retribue seruo tuo :  
uiuifica me et cus //  
todiam sermons tuos .  
Reuela oculos meos :  
Et considerabo mirabilia  
de lege tua . Incola  
ego sum interra : non

[f. 70v]

abscondas a me manda //  
ta tua . Concupiuit  
anima mea : desiderare  
iustificationes tuas in  
omni tempore . Incre //  
pisti superbos : maledic //  
ti qui declinant amanda //  
tis tuis . Aufer a me ob //  
probrium et conteptum  
quia testimonia tua ex //  
quisiui . Et enim sede //  
runt principes et aduer //

[f. 71r]

sum me loquebantur :  
seruus autem tuus ex //  
crebatur in instificarci //  
onibus tuis . am et tes //  
timonia tua meditaci //  
o mea est et consilium  
meum instificationes [tue .  
Adhesit pa  
uimento anima  
mea : uinifica me secundum  
uerbum tuum . Uias :

meas enunciaui et ex

[f. 71v]

audisti me : doce me uis //  
tificaciones tuas . Uiam  
iustificationum tuarum  
instrue me : et exercebor  
inmirabilibus tuis . Dor //  
mitauit anima mea pre //  
tedio : confirma me in  
uerbis tuis . Uiam  
iniquitatis amouea  
me : et delege tua inise //  
rerere inei . Uiam ue //  
ritatis elegi : uidicia

## Appendix H

### Translation of the nine Lessons for the Office of Matins for the Feast of St Margaret found in the manuscript of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat. liturg. f. 31.

#### Key

Latin text **punctuated and proper nouns given initial capital letter**, generally as per Elizabeth A. Francis edited version of London, British Library, Cotton Caligula MS A VIII (although the texts are not identical). Present tense narration changed to the past in the Lessons.

#### Text

##### **Lesson i [9v-12v]**

Dum per uniuersum orbem per sancti spiritus alumptos Christi euuangelium passim succedentibus miraculis propalaretur,  
So that throughout the entire world, through the workings of the Holy Spirit [and] miracles happening everywhere, Christ's gospel was being disseminated

ac plurimis palmitibus ex una radice sub euntibus uinea fidelium inolesceret,  
and implanted from a single root of the vine supported by the greatest number of martyrs' palm branches of the faithful.

tocius bonitatis emulus diabolus suorum detrimenta Christicolarumque incrementa uigere prospiciens  
The devil was envious of all [this] virtue, seeing the increase in the number of Christians and the decrease in his own [followers and]

zelo liuoris accensus totis conatibus aboleri ipsum ab humanis precordiis nititur.  
inflamed by the spirit of rivalry and out of spite he strained against all the efforts of human hearts to destroy him.

Et primis apostolici culminis interemptis, suos per satellites edictum proponit, quatinus qui libamina idolis nollet libare, aut gladio truncaretur, aut diuersis suppliciis interceptus perimeretur.  
And the apostles, the first that were killed at the zenith [of his struggles] by his accomplices,  
he made a declaration that whoever refused to offer a libation and drink to the idols either was cut down by the sword or else was killed while making many [pleas for mercy].

Armantur denique inpenetrabili fidei lorica moderni quique tyrones,  
In fact, the present young recruits are strengthened by an impenetrable coat of armour of faith

malle se necem apetere quam quoquam ausu temerario a proposito se cedere.  
preferring with reckless daring their own slaughter than to yield.

Et non modo uiri uerum eciam sexus femineus tormentis se ostentans ultroneus,  
And, in truth, not only the male [sex] but even the female sex voluntarily submits to torture

quanto natura noscitur procliuior,  
as much as by nature the female sex is more willing to learn,

tanto fit sancto adnitente spiritu crudelitate tucior.  
so the spirit of cruelty makes the striving for sanctity more determined.

Insurgit namque nouus certancium conflictus, in auditis uiri ac mulieres alliciuntur  
For indeed, a new combat arises which, on hearing of it, men and women are encouraged to participate.

cruciatibus, insontes iugulantur puelle teneris annorum sub acte curriculis, horrende pene genere necantur.  
The innocent are killed by torture: girls of tender years are put to death with awful acts of cruelty during the carnival which accompanies the races.

Equibus unius certamen beate scilicet Margarete si facultas inperite lingue admitteret, pauperio dictamine opto cunctis pandere.  
One of those combats, of course, was that of the blessed Margaret, which if the skill with unfamiliar languages permits, a poor recitation, I choose to set out for all [below].

Hec igitur Antiochenis orta ingeniis parentibus Theodosii idolorum pontificis filia fuit.  
Thus, this same Margaret was a maiden born of Antioch, daughter of Theodosius, the high priest of pagan idols.

Que materno ab utero inmundi huius uoragine fusa, cuidam matrone quodam uico quindecim stadiis ab Antiochia se posite traditur educanda.  
And she issued forth from her mother's foul, encasing womb, and was delivered over to a matron of a certain village fifteen stades distant from Antioch.

Susceptam namque nutrix comendatam puellam sibi loco filie cura diligenti ad optat amoris.  
And indeed the fostermother accepted and was entrusted with the girl. Out of love for the girl, instead of herself her mother chose [the] attentive supervision [of the fostermother].

Interea contigit ipsius genitricem, extremum mortis sortiri diem,  
Meanwhile it came to pass that the same day the mother herself was brought to her final hour.

qui profecto matre orbata, cum etatis lustra explesset, cum aliis coetaneis puellis pascebat oues nutruis.  
Margaret, who had been able to accomplish the calling of her life by being deprived of her mother [after/and having been taken away from] the place of iniquity, was looking after her nurse's sheep with other maidens of the same age.

Tu autem domine [miserere nobis].

### Lesson ii [13r-16v]

Tempore illo quidam Prefectus nomine Olibrius a senatu Romano illis in partibus dirigitur.  
At that time, the Prefect, Olibrius, was travelling towards those parts from the Roman senate.

Qui Christi nomen inprobe persequens multas que de Christianis strages faciens,  
He who wickedly attacked the name of Christ and instigated many massacres of Christians

sitibundo pectore martirum siciebat infestus cruorem.  
quarrelsome, his thirsty soul longed for the slaughter of the martyrs.

Quorum certamina cum uirgo iam prelibata famam uolantem in aure cepisset,  
When the maiden, already of great renown, had heard about and understood the battles of the martyrs

abiecto simulacrorum errore, Christianam se profitetur, et Christi nomen totis uirginitatis amplexibus oblectatur.  
she professed herself a Christian and delighted in the name of Christ. Completely shielded by her virginity, she was thus set apart from the debased error of pagan idols.

Cuius uero opinionem eius crudelis genitor coniperiens, diabolicis agitur furiis uelut extraneam a se eiecit, paternis priuans bonis.  
Her hardhearted father, when learning of this, was shaken by a vicious fury as if beside himself, depriving her of his good opinion.

His itaque diebus Olibrius prefectus Asiam linquens, Antiochenum carpebat iter.  
And so, in those days, the Prefect Olibrius left Asia [and] despoiled the road to Antioch.

Qui callem loco sacratissima quo inerat uirgo terrens uicinum ea minus conspecta iter illius pulcritudinis a more solutis uiribus corporis illico succenditur.  
The frightened and most holy virgin, visible from afar, was found in the place near the track Olibrius [was following] and he was immediately inflamed by her beauty.

Missis que aparitoribus suis eam iubet ascribi conspectibus.  
And he sent his stewards to her and ordered them to bring her before him.

Continuo a ministris diaboli capitur ciuis dei, et inter atrocissimas ducencium manus, talia eleuans sursum oculis, oracula ad dominum dirigit.  
Immediately, Margaret, the beloved of God, was captured by the servants of the devil and such an excellent maiden was lifted up by two hundred savage hands. She raised her eyes to the heavens and directed her prayers to the Lord.

‘Deus creator omnium solamen atque tristium, me de tantis manibus nunc erue diuinitus.  
Nec pudorem uirginei sinas fedari corporis in mee uite articulo quem tibi uoui domino.’  
‘God, you are the creator of all things, the source of comfort, and so by divine intervention  
dispatch today the many harsh hands [holding] me and do not allow the chastity of a  
virgin’s body to be defiled. In this moment I dedicate my whole life to you, Lord.’

His ita a sancta peroratis conspectibus pestiferi sistitur tyranni, talibus eam agredientis.  
These, therefore, were the saint’s public prayers [offered up as] she was being led along  
by the attendants of the foul tyrant, who assailed her.

[*Olibrius says to Margaret*] ‘Primo tuum genus mihi edicito, de hinc quo censeris uocabulo  
uel cuius dei cultricem fore te dis sup[p]licem.’

‘First you [must] make known your ancestry to me, as well as to which God you have  
pledged your devotion and supplication and then you will be judged.’

Cui sic fanti, hec responsa redidit uirgo Christi.  
To which, Christ’s virgin delivered this response,

‘Nobili orta genere teodosii filia sum sacerdotis. Ab ipsis que parentibus margaretam  
nuncupatam. Christicolam me esse profiteor toto animo.’

‘I come from noble kin. I am the daughter of the priest Theodosius. By him, and by both  
parents, I am named Margaret. I profess myself to be a worshipper of Christ with all my  
soul.’

Atonitus denique prefectus Christi nomen audiens, ita illam affatur.

Upon, hearing Christ’s name, the Prefect became thunderous, [and] addressed her thus,

‘Illumque Christum quem prisci patres figentes cruci occiderunt? Nam tam elegantem tui  
speriem corporis, decet meis iungi connubiis et spreto Christianorum dogmate, potentes  
deos colere.’

‘That [very] Christ who the [my] ancestors killed, by nailing him to a cross? Because the  
beauty of your body is so exquisite, it is fitting that you [should] be joined to me in  
wedlock and [that you] scorn the teachings of Christ: you are angering powerful gods.’

Beata uirgo iudici respondit.

The blessed virgin replied to the Prefect,

‘Hii quos patres esse nominas, ob hoc dampnantur ingehenna. Malaque eorum accio  
nostra fuit redempcio.’

‘These ancestors which you name, on account of their actions they are damned in hell.  
I [call down] [destruction] on them: redemption was ours.’

Iratus itaque prefectus obscurissimo mancipari eam iubet carceri.

Thereupon the Prefect became angry. He ordered she be taken to the darkest prison [cell].

Ingressus itaque Antiochiam diis more solito thura incendit, uictimis immolat exsecradas.  
He then entered Antioch. As is the usual custom, he lit frankincense to the gods and  
offered them abhorrent burnt offerings.

Tu autem.

### Lesson iii [17r-19r]

Altera uero die stipatis quam pluribus militum cuneis, sedens pre tribunali sibi enim accersiri, sanctam uirginem precepit, quam sic turbido aditur uultu.

The next day Margaret was summoned before Olibrius, sitting on the raised platform surrounded by many soldiers in a phalanx, with a glowering face he awaited the approach of the holy virgin.

'Quid' inquit 'transacte noctis spacio boni consilii captasti tue saluti? uis libamina diis adhuc in mortalibus libari, an pro Christi nomine cum dedecore mori?'

'What good counsel, beneficial for your well-being, have you arrived at during the night?' he asked. 'Are you now willing to offer libations to the gods among men or are you to die in shame for the name of Christ?'

[Margaret replies:]

'Pro Christo totis uiribus malo occidi, quam obscenis simulacris uariis, et surdis ceruices meas inclinari.'

'I would rather be slain by all the forces of evil for Christ than incline my head to those many foul and deaf likenesses [of gods].'

Felle amaritudinis motus his auditis diaboli filius, furenti animo tortores in clamat et toto malignitatis spiritu debaccatur.

The son of the devil, hearing these things, was provoked to bitterness [and] gall. Raving, he called his torturers to him and unleashed all his malice.

'Cur,' inquit, 'boni actenus ministri moras nectitis atrocissimus? Carnes eius flagellis discerpite, intestinis que corde tenus patefactis deorum nostrorum blasphemiam uindicate.'

'Why' he asked, 'good men, the delays to the most evil act? Bind her and tear to pieces her flesh with scourges so that the intestines and the heart are revealed, so you vindicate the blaspheming of our gods.'

Satagunt ergo ministri impleri uissa tumidi magistri, expoliata que martirem diris lacerant tormentis.

Therefore, the servants scuttled about to satisfy the puffed up power of the Prefect and they tormented that ravaged martyr with agonising pain.

Inter quorum uerbera, Christi sponsa hec fundit precamina.

Between those blows, the bride of Christ uttered these prayers.

'Celorum rector domine ab hoc instanti uerbere et de seuis diaboli me libera discipulis, ne frangar his suplicis illo timore corporis, set confundantur impii penas dantes diecolis.'

'Ruler of the heavens, Lord, from this intense beating and from the disciples of the devil, deliver me, lest I am weakened by this suffering and any fear for my body, yet [so?] confound these wicked men meting out the blows [by giving me] a little respite.'

Tu autem.

#### Lesson iv [25v-28r]

Cumque iam particulatim carnes eius succedentibus carnificibus succidunt, tunc odibilis olibrius dixit ei.

As, little by little, the torturers succeed in hacking off pieces of her flesh, hateful Olibrius said to her,

‘Consule Margareta tibi, et hanc supersticionem desere sectam, deos que incipe colere ne quod adhuc superest presentis amittas uite.’

‘Have consideration for yourself, Margaret, and abandon this irrational belief. Start to worship our powerful gods, which, thus far, you have not done and thus spare what remains of your present life.’

Christi sponsa respondit.

Christ’s bride answered,

‘Scito prenoscens quod nullo mortis ac uite discrimine poteris me a fide domini mei.

Separare deum inquam uelis nolis tuum et uiuorum et mortuorum omnium timebis.’

‘Know beforehand that you possess the power to decide whether I live or die, but you won’t separate me from my faith in the Lord. I say that, like it or not, you will fear and [be able to] differentiate God, judge of the living and the dead.’

‘Acutissime,’ inquit inmitis prefectus, ‘afferantur ungule ut ab ipsis superstitis sacrilega disrumpantur carnes.’

‘Use the sharpest hook,’ said the cruel Prefect, ‘so that bits of the remaining flesh of this sacreligious woman are severed off with ease.’

Statim crudeles ministri compellent, Dicta, ‘Uelam decestis uiscerum intimis’ mactatur hostia Christi. Que resumpto spiritu, his uerbis deum exorat.

The bloodthirsty torturers immediately assembled. He declared, ‘I will tear out her most intimate body parts from her undergarments.’ And so Christ’s victim is sacrificed.

Regaining strength, she entreated God with these words,

‘Ihesu Christe piissime, mihi succurre lacere, ac de manu seuissimi abstrae me Olibrii, illi que obsequencium, de tormentis carnificium, ne gaudeat diabolus meis penis diucius.’

‘Most affectionate Jesus Christ, send help to me, mutilated as I am, and rescue me from the hand[s] of the ferocious Olibrius, and avoid my yielding to the former because of the torments of the flesh, so the devil does not rejoice any longer in my suffering.’

Uidens itaque prefectus quod nil proficeret, donec suplicia excogitaret quod eam perimeret, carceralibus uinculis iubet illam atractari.

Seeing that this treatment was not doing him any good, the Prefect therefore, until he had devised a torture which would destroy her, ordered that she be hauled away in prison chains.

Uallata namque carceris munimine, genibus flexis alacri uultu deprecabatur deum.

But for now, enclosed by the prison walls, she entreated God kneeling, the expression on her face courageous,

‘Gracias tibi ago domine Ihesu Christe : quod michi in periculis semper subuenis. Iuuamen in suplicii funesti ministrando tyranni. Iube ergo ut ipsum inuisibilem inimicum qui me tam uehementer inuadit, effigie uisibili michi asistat, quatinus facie ad faciem aliquantisper cum eo conflagam.’

‘I give thanks to you Lord Jesus Christ because you always come to my aid when I am in danger. [You are my help] during the horrendous torture carried out on the orders of the tyrant. I therefore entreat you to make known the visible likeness of the invisible enemy who attacks me so violently, given that I have been fighting with him for so long in close combat.’

Surgens quoque ab oratione, subito draco mire magnitudinis ab angulo carceris egrediens, qui erecto capite, rugitu que aperto faucium mortifero, terribilibus sibilis de squamarum stridoribus maximum. Christi uirgini ingerit horrorem.

Standing up after her prayer, suddenly a dragon of enormous proportions strode out from a corner of the prison cell, its head erect, bellowing, and its deadly maw open. From its scales [there came] the most terrible hissing and rattling. It gobbled up Christ’s horrified virgin.

Tu autem.

#### Lesson v [28v-32r]

Cumque iam pene ab ipsis patentibus belue hiatibus absorberetur, uexillo dominice crucis composito, serpens squalidus continuo crepuit medius.

However, precisely as she was being swallowed up by the vengeful monster’s vast yawning jaws, she made the sign of the cross, the standard of the Lord God, [and] the terrible dragon immediately burst in two.

Respiciens in parte altera, ecce Ethiopem fullugine [fuligine] tetriorem intuetur, uinctis manibus stantem.

Looking down from above, behold, she observed the foul, soot-black man, standing still, his hands bound.

Cuius uero egregia Margareta in capillum monstruosum manibus, insertis talia proclamantem, pedibus suis eum subegit.

He who cried out when the excellent Margaret inserted her hands into his monstrous fur and subjugated him with her feet.

‘Parce michi dei ancilla, quum que lacrimis tuis incessanter incendor, aprecibus tuis ab angelis tuis medicibus torqueor penis, quin eciam a uirginitate tua que semper est michi contraria mee milicie obtenduntur arma. Quam admodum miror, unde tam in manus inte uiget uirtus, que ex parentibus procreata est paganis, contra te ideo michi funditus posse uelle meum.’

‘Spare me, handmaid of the Lord. I unceasingly provoke your tears together with your prayers and while the angels minister to you, I torment you with punishments. In fact your chastity, which is always contrary to me, disarms my soldiers. I marvel exceedingly at how so much courage can flourish in the hands and sinews of someone who was born of pagan parents. Against you, therefore, I am willing and able to completely [exert myself].’

Beatissima Christi martyr respondit.

Christ's blessed martyr replied.

'Ab his spurcissime demon coibe linguam uerbis, et noli uerbosari, quia gracia dei sum id quod sum, uerum que tamen genealogiam satis per horridam opera que tu a michi narrato.'

'After these words, most foul demon curb your tongue and don't be so garrulous, because, thanks to God, I am what I am, and yet certainly sufficient [to take on] your frightful genealogy and the deeds that you have recounted to me.'

'Incensor sum iniquitatis,' diabolus respondit.

'I am the instigator of injustices,' the devil replied.

'Pater noster ipse sathanas est, qui in prophetarium scripturis lucifer appellatur, de celestibus sedibus adima dilapsus. Cuius genus et omnium nostrum in libris lamnes et Mambres reperitur conscriptum. Nam quod de meis scire cupis operibus, ipsos iudices celo inuidie aduersus Christum quo eum crucifigerunt concitauit. Set et apostolos eius atque martires per meos sallites peremi denique Christianorum quam plures apostatas reddidi et quibus id persuadere nequii: homicidiis, adulteriis, uel fornicacionibus fidei promissionem quam in baptismo professi sunt, polluere feci. Porro quid de paganis dicam, quos omnino simulacris ac supersticiosis ymaginibus omni uite eorum tempore ludo, et ad cumulum mee dampnacionis pertraho.'

'Our father is Satan himself, who, in the scriptures of the prophets, is called Lucifer, [and] from the home of the heavens to the deepest ruin [has fallen]. Satan's origins and everything about us is written down in the books of Jamnes and Mambres. Now because you wish to know, [I will tell you] about my labours: I hide from the judges the hatred of Christ for which reason I stirred [people] up and they [nailed] him to a cross. But both his apostles and martyrs I destroy through my followers and, in short, I return many Christians to wicked men, and when I cannot persuade them [to follow me] I make the faithful who are baptized defile themselves through murder, adultery, [and] even fornication. Moreover, I say this about pagans [too], who I mock at every opportunity by means of the likenesses and superstitious images and I drag them with me into the depths of damnation.'

Audiens Margareta conuersa ad dominum dixit.

Margaret listened and, turning her back to the demon, she said to the Lord,

'Ihesu Christe redemptor bone tibi gracias refero, qui me de tam funesto genere monstri erupuisti, et ad tuam misericordiam perduxisti. Rogo te ut iniquissimus demon perpetuis in presenti plectatur penis, ne tuos amplius seducat cultores.'

'Jesus Christ, kind Saviour, I render thanks to you who rescued me from such a destructive species of monster and [who] lead me towards your grace. I ask that this most infamous demon may suffer forever his current punishments so that he is unable to further seduce your devotees.'

Statim que terra de hiscens eundem uastis sinibus absorbet.

Immediately the ground opened wide [and] he was swallowed up in that vast black hole.

Tu autem.

### Lesson vi [32v-35v]

Alterius successibus sole reddente terris diem, confestim de cauea carceris rapitur uirgo Christi, uix tangentibus arua plantis, tribunali que nepharii offertur iudicis, et sic ei dicentis.

On the next day, with the sun shining on the world and barely touching the young plants in the fields, Christ's virgin was suddenly seized from [her] prison cell and presented to the tribunal of the wicked judge and he said to her,

'Ecce Margareta, in articulo mortis sero posita consenti michi et sacrificia diis, ne florem tue amittas pulcherime iuuentutis.'

'Margaret, picture your death at this critical juncture. Even at this late stage, consent, lay down your ammunition and sacrifice to my gods lest you lose your flower – your most beautiful youth.'

Beata uirgo respondit.

The blessed virgin answered,

'Deum celi et terre conditorem semper adoro, illi quoque placere totis uisceribus concupisco. Ydola autem surda et muta corde integro respuo et contempno quibus similes fiant qui faciunt ea, et omnes qui confidunt in eis.'

'God is the creator of the heavens and the earth, who I adore forever and ardently desire to please with my whole being. On the other hand, with my whole heart I spurn and despise the deaf and dumb idols, whose forms resemble those of the people who make them, and those who believe in them.'

'Lampades ardentis,' ait prefectus furore ceco percussus. 'Circa latera eius amplicate, ut ex istis carnibus discat deos non blasphemare.'

'Burning torches,' ordered the prefect striking out in a blind fury. 'Cover her sides with blows so that she learns through her flesh not to revile our gods.'

Uritur interea hostia Christi in odorem suauitatis uisibilibus flammis, set inuisibili refrigeratur rore sancti spiritus.

Meanwhile, Christ's sacrifice, releasing a sweet perfume, was burnt with visibly flaming torches, which were, however, invisibly cooled by a spray of water issuing from the Holy Spirit.

Considerans perinde furibundus preses in latera sancta floccipendere incendia, illico ad alia iterum diuertitur argumenta.

The furious Prefect, observing that once again the saint took little notice of the fire on her flanks, immediately moved her on [to face another trial].

'Afferatur,' inquit, 'cuppa aqua repleta, in qua demergatur hec sacrilega, ut aquis intercepta morte dampnetur teterima.'

'Convey this blasphemer,' he said, 'to be immersed in a vessel full of water, so that this most disgraceful, condemned woman has her life cut short by the water.'

Ex templo celeres ministri perpetrant dicta iubentis, et uinctis manibus ac pedibus capite deorsum precipitatur in profundum.

The servants hurried out of the temple to carry out the aforementioned orders, and they bound her hands and feet and threw her head first into the deep [water].

Tunc Christi sponsa in ipsis fluctibus, has preces fundit diuinitus.

Thereupon, as the Prefect has Christ's bride cast into the waves, under divine influence she uttered these words,

'Deus cuius nutu reguntur uniuersa, pater orphanorum, spes desperantium, respice queso super hanc aquam, et tua benedictione sanctifica, ut fiat michi fons baptismi in regenerationem peccatorum, et abrumpe uincula quibus nector, quatinus astantes cognoscant quia tu es solus deus benedictus in secula seculorum. Amen.'

'God, by whose command the universe will be ruled: father of orphans, hope of the desperate, I ask that you look with solicitude on this water and sanctify it with your blessing.

Let it serve for me as a baptismal font for the remission of my sins and break the chains by which I am bound so that those witnessing understand that you alone are God, blessed for all time. Amen.'

R Hinc motus ...

#### Lesson vii [41v-42v]

Completa namque oracione subito solutis manibus ac pedibus ex fonte prodiit, cunctipotentem laudans ac benedicens deum.

For no sooner was the prayer completed than the bindings fell from her hands and feet and she sprang from the vessel of water praising and blessing almighty God.

Terremotus factus est magnus, columba que niue candidior de celorum cacumine aduolans capiti eius insedit, auream rostro ferens coronam.

A great earthquake ensued and a dove, whiter than snow, flew down from the upper reaches of the heavens. It landed on her head, carrying the golden crown in its beak.

Insuper quoque uox de supernis sedibus per ampla aeris spacia auditur.

Also, above [the noise of the earthquake], a voice from the celestial realms was heard across the vast expanse of the heavens.

'Constanter certa beata Margareta, quam chorus omnis sanctorum tuum prestolatur aduentum ut percipias perhennem palmam laborum.'

'Firmly steadfast, blessed Margaret, your arrival is awaited by the whole multitude of the holy in heaven so that you may secure the eternal palm branch, [the badge] of suffering.'

Territi autem astantes, propter terremotum uidentes dixerunt, 'Magnus est deus Christianorum.'

However, the bystanders were terrified on account of having witnessed the earthquake. They said, 'Great is the God of the Christians.'

Et crediderunt eadem hora in domino quinque milia hominum exceptis mulieribus atque paruulis.

And at that same hour five thousand men believed in God, other than women and children.

Qui Marmoniam ciuitatem iussu prefecti ducti proprio sanguine baptizati, in campo qui uocatur Limech pro christo omnes decollati.

On the command of the Prefect, they were led away to the city of Marmonia to be baptized in their own blood [and] in a field which is called Limech they were all beheaded for Christ's sake.

Tu autem.

### Lesson viii [43v-46v]

Post hoc parum per truculentus diaboli filius secum deliberans, fidemque Christi martiris inuincibilem per spectans, capitalem iubet subire sententiam.

After this, the ferocious son of the devil, pondering the strength of the faith of Christ's martyr and observing that it was invincible, ordered that she be sentenced to death.

Ducta est enim extra ciuitatem, in locum quo rei puniebantur, aspiculatore Malco nomine, sibi locum oracionis rogauit concedi flexis, quibus genibus has supplices mittit ad deum preces.

And so she was taken out of the city to the place of punishment by the executioner whose name was Malcus. She prevailed upon him for, and was granted, time for prayer. Kneeling, she offered these prayers to God.

'Altissime sanctorum redemptor deus gracias corde et me tibi ago, qui me demundi huius colluione abstraxisti, et ad hanc gloriam in pollute corpore perduxisti. Respice igitur piissime pater ad deprecationem meam, et presta ut si quis supplicia que pro tui nominis confessione uiriliter pertuli scripserit, aut legerit, uel mei memoriam fecerit, criminorum suorum promereatur ueniam, et in futuro inmarcessibilem percipiat coronam. Denique qui in districto examine positus me inuocauerit suis precibus, illi misericordia non denegetur clemencia, et de manu exactoris eripias. Adhuc clementissime pater percor ut qui basilicam in mei honore nominis tibi dedicauerit, uel qui de suo labore mihi luminaria ministrauerit,

adipiscatur quicquid perierit utile sue salutis, et descendat iugiter super illam domum gracia sancti spiritus. Iterum si in domum me inuocans mulier praegnans partu laborauerit, abiminenti eripe eam periculo. Infans quoque ex utero fusus lumine pociatur huius seculi, absque suorum aliquo detrimento membrorum.'

'Holy of holies, mighty redeemer God, my heart's desire, I give thanks to you, who have swept me up and will remove this filth and who have led me in my foul body to this glory. Therefore, consider, most holy father, my supplication and fulfil it, so that if someone writes or reads prayers that tell how I have courageously endured suffering for your sake or who honours my memory, may they gain pardon for their sins and in the future secure the ever-radiant crown. And then whoever faces a situation that confounds them and they call on me in their prayers, do not deny them your mercy and compassion and deliver them from the hand of the grim reaper.

Besides this, most merciful father, grant whoever dedicates a church to you in honour of my name, or whoever by his own hand furnishes lights to me, that if he die, he may obtain grace for his soul and may the grace of the Holy Spirit descend on his house forever.

Likewise, if in the house a pregnant woman labouring in childbirth invokes me, rescue her from the danger of injuries. And the infant too, when it comes out of the womb, let it attain earthly life without harm to its limbs.'

His a martire dictis subito facta sunt tonitrua magna, ac columba a stellifero celo emissa solito tetigit eam dicens.

These were the martyr's words [and] thereupon there were great peals of thunder and a dove sent from the star-filled firmament, as was customary, touched her saying,

'Beata es Christi sponsa Margareta que omnium reminisceris, et merentibus compateris cunctis. Ecce et enim que petisti et non petisti usque in finem seculi concessi. Ueni ergo in requiem patrie celestis, quia statis est quod huc usque certasti. Iam debentur tibi premia perpetue remuneracionis, que sociata choris uirginum cum Christo regnes in euum.'

'Blessed are you, Christ's bride, Margaret, you who remember each and every one and have compassion for all the well-deserving. Indeed, behold that all you ask for is granted until the end of time. Come, therefore, into the peace of your father's celestial home because it is certain that you have fought continuously to this point and now their debt to you will be repaid with ever-lasting rewards and you can take your place in the choir of the virgins so that with Christ you reign for all time.'

Tu autem.

#### Lesson ix [47r-49r]

Populi autem qui astabant concussione tonitruui patefacti, corruerunt in terram uelud mortui.

However, the people who were at the scene, when the earthquake and thunder struck, fell to the ground as if dead.

Erigens denique se uirgo Christi imperat speculatori iussa prefecti perficere. Qui maxima dei uirtutem circa illam perlustrant, renuit dicens.

At last, rousing herself, Christ's virgin ordered the executioner to carry out the Prefect's orders. But, aware of the vast heavenly host all gathered about her, he refused, saying

'Absit a me istud, ut perimam te cruentatis manibus. Cui Margareta.'

'God forbid it should fall to me and I kill you with these blood-stained hands, you who are called Margaret.'

'Si hoc' inquit 'non egeris, partem aliquam habere nequibus.'

'If you do not do this,' she said, 'you can have no part [in my glory]'

At ille tremefactus dixit, 'Domine ne statuas michi hoc in peccatum.'

But he said trembling, 'Lord, do not assign this sin to me'.

Exempto gladio, caput eius amputauit. Qui confestim addexteram beate margarete corruit et exspirauit.

He took out his sword and cut off her head. Immediately, he fell down on the right hand side of blessed Margaret and died.

De corpore nempe beatissime martiris columba exiliens, cuncta celi secreta angelicis manibus penetrauit.

Of course, from the body of the blessed martyr a dove burst forth and entered the heavens hidden in the hands of angels.

Tunc uero quidam Christianissimus nomine Theophimus tulit corpus illius, et sepeliuit illud cum aromatibus in sepulero, quod dato precio in Antiochia ciuitate emerat in domo Sinclétique matrone. Qui Theophimus assiduus uirgini in carcere ministrauit.

Then, in truth, a most Christian man called Theophimus took her body away and buried it with fragrant herbs in a tomb. This precious legacy he had acquired in the city of Antioch in the house of the matron Sinclética. This same Theophimus carefully ministered to the virgin when she was in prison.

Ac tormenta que pertulit propriis oculis conspexit, a cuius profecto cuncta didici prefata dictamine que pauperimo legentibus uel audientibus relinquo conscripta.

And the torments which she underwent, he saw with his very own eyes, which I actually came to learn about, as mentioned beforehand. I leave a written record so that everyone comes to read or hear [the story].

Compleuit itaque beatissima martir Christi Margareta certamen suum terciodecimo kalendas Augusti, sub olibrio prefecto in Antiochia ciuitate.

In this way Margaret, the most blessed martyr of Christ, completed her struggle on the thirteenth day of August in the city of Antioch under the jurisdiction of Olibrius.

Regnante domino nostro Ihesu Christo, cui honor est et gloria uirtus et potestas per infinita secula seculorum. Amen.

Our Lord Jesus Christ reigns, to whom all honour, glory, strength and power belong, for ever and ever. Amen.

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Figure 3.22a: Potterne font with inscription around the rim. (Potterne 1 (S. face) Plate: 476. © Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, University of Durham. Photographer: D. J. Craig.)

Figure 3.22b: Potterne font. Detail: showing inscription around rim. (Potterne 1, inscription detail i (1:4) Plate : 473. © Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, University of Durham. Photographer: D. J. Craig.)

Figure 3.31a: St Peter ad Vincula, South Newington, Oxfordshire St Margaret stands on the dragon and impales it (c.1330). Photo by Janet Walls.

Figure 4.1: St Mary, Combs, Suffolk. Exterior. North wall. Photo © Evelyn Simak.

Figure 4.2a-b: 'St Mary, North Tuddenham, Norfolk', *Norfolk Stained Glass*, [website], [http://www.norfolkstainedglass.org/North\\_Tuddenham/home.shtm](http://www.norfolkstainedglass.org/North_Tuddenham/home.shtm) (accessed 18 December 2021).

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