



### **Mater Misericordiae:**

### **The Representation of the Miracles of the Virgin in the Queen Mary Psalter, the Taymouth Hours, the Smithfield Decretals, and the Carew-Poyntz Hours.**

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Prior to the twelfth century in Western Europe, miraculous stories about the saints omitted stories of Marian miracles.<sup>172</sup> This absence can be explained considering the association of physical remains of saints with the performance of miracles. A crucial shift in the creation of compilations of miracles of the Virgin Mary in England occurred in the first half of the twelfth century due to the influence of the monastic writers Anselm, Dominic of Evesham, and William of Malmesbury. Thus, Marian miracles represented the expression of a new form of medieval piety and devotion wherein Mary's intercession rather than veneration of relics became the central focus.

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<sup>172</sup>Southern, "The English origins of the 'Miracles of the Virgin,'" 236.

Particularly lacking in the study of the miracles of the Virgin Mary is an examination of their representations within illuminated books.<sup>173</sup> Devotional books are a valuable resource to better understand the nature and development of medieval Marian devotion because they provide the greatest number of surviving privately owned holy images.<sup>174</sup> These books condense elements of Marian devotion into a visual image for the laity. Thus, Marian miracles and their depictions reflect devotional practices. In this essay I aim to establish the purpose and permutation of these stories through a close examination of the representation of these miracles in four fourteenth-century English books: the Queen Mary Psalter, the Taymouth Hours, the Smithfield Decretals, and the Carew-Poyntz Hours. The visual representations of Marian miracles in these four case studies reveal the contrasting purposes of these stories. Furthermore, the context of each book contributes to how these miracle stories were interpreted. Ultimately, these contexts indicate the broader purpose of such miracles to establish Mary's tangible mercy that transcends simple folklore.

### **Miracles of the Virgin Mary in Text and Image:**

Previous scholarship is concerned mainly with the textual tradition of medieval Marian miracle stories. The main point of contention among this scholarship is centered on the origin and reception of these texts for either a select group or the common laity. In the introduction to her book *The Miracles of Our Lady Saint Mary*, Evelyn Underhill attributed the origin and purpose of Marian miracles as myths conceived of in monasteries for common people.<sup>175</sup> Indeed, the medieval devotional practices of the laity are particularly difficult to closely examine given the lack of extensive written and physical evidence. Thus, much of our understanding of medieval Christianity relies on the information preserved in monastic communities. R.W. Southern particularly advocated for the spread of monastic ideas and practices concerning Marian devotion to secular society in his essay titled "The English Origins of the Miracles of the Virgin."<sup>176</sup> Southern describes how the travels of the twelfth

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<sup>173</sup> See Emily Howe, Henrietta McBurney, and William Waldegrave. *Wall Paintings of Eton* (London: Scala, 2012).

<sup>174</sup> Kathleen Kamerick, *Popular piety and art in the late Middle Ages: image worship and idolatry in England 1350-1500* (New York: Macmillan, 2002), 155.

<sup>175</sup> Evelyn Underhill, *The Miracles of Our Lady Saint Mary: Brought Out of Divers Tongues and Newly Set Forth in English* (Boston: EP Dutton & Company, 1906), xiv.

<sup>176</sup> Southern, "The English origins of the 'Miracles of the Virgin,'" 176.

century abbot of Bury St. Edmunds, Anselm, allowed him to collect a widespread compilation of miracle stories.<sup>177</sup> However, Southern focuses on the English association with Marian devotion rather than noting the widespread origins of the earliest miracle stories themselves.<sup>178</sup>

Prior to the twelfth century England was characterized by a strong culture of Marian devotion. Southern argues that this culture was the ideal environment for the generation of the first miracle compilations by Anslem, Dominic of Evesham, and William of Malmesbury. However, Adrienne Boyarin challenges Southern's argument for the English origins of Marian miracles in her book, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England: Law and Jewishness in Marian Legends*. Boyarin examines what distinguishes English examples from others.<sup>179</sup> Furthermore, she aims to address the time gap noted by Peter Whiteford in his book, *The myracles of oure lady*, between the emergence of Latin collections of these miracles and the later vernacular individual miracle stories.<sup>180</sup> Unlike previous scholarship, she examines the miracles themselves as textual examples rather than simple folklore or myth. However, she neglects the visual representations of these miracles in later Psalters and Books of Hours. In this essay I will examine the representation of Marian miracles within such texts in order to provide deeper insight into the nature of lay Marian devotion. Ultimately, this approach will lead to a more holistic

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 184, 199, 205-16. J.C. Jennings notes the origins of the earliest fourth and sixth century Marian miracles in the Middle Eastern monasteries in his 1968 article. J.C. Jennings, "The origins of the" Elements series" of the Miracles of the Virgin", *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, Volume 6 (1968): 84-93.

<sup>178</sup> For more information on English Marian devotion see Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>179</sup> Adrienne Williams Boyarin, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England: Law and Jewishness in Marian Legends* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010), 1-7.

<sup>180</sup> These individual stories were more widespread in continental Europe. Miracles in Middle English were most often *exempla* included in sermons. Compilations of Marian miracles became more widespread in the later twelfth century. Perhaps most notable of these continental compilations is Alfonso X's collection of over 420 songs of miracles of the Virgin Mary. Kathleen Kulp-Hill, *Songs of holy Mary of Alfonso X, The Wise: a translation of the Cantigas de Santa Maria* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000), xix-xxvi; Boyarin, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England: Law and Jewishness in Marian Legends*, 15; Peter Whiteford, *The myracles of oure lady*: ed. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1990), 20-23.

understanding of the purpose of English Marian miracle cycles to promote essential aspects of devotional practices.

Beginning in the thirteenth century there was a notable increase in the number of private devotional books such as Psalters and Books of Hours.<sup>181</sup> The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 encouraged parish clergy to better address the spiritual needs of lay parishioners.<sup>182</sup> As a result, a new market for devotional books was created as more lay people sought to actively engage with their faith. The rise in popularity of these individual books of prayer indicates that practices such as the recitation of the daily office were no longer confined to the clergy.<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, the flexible and personalized nature of the content of Books of Hours also appealed to the lay faithful, who could select to include a variety of prayers and offices.<sup>184</sup> Notably, Books of Hours emphasized the Blessed Virgin Mary and often contained the Office of Mary, which itself was recited in monastic houses across Europe by the early twelfth century.<sup>185</sup>

The growing popularity of privately owned devotional objects such as Psalters and Books of Hours can be seen in the burgeoning English book economy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>186</sup> Lay commissioning of such texts rose about sixty percent in the period between 1190 and 1385.<sup>187</sup> In order to support this economy, a guild of book artisans organized in London during this era. It is within this group of artisans that the Queen Mary Psalter (1310-20), Taymouth Hours (1325-1335), Smithfield Decretals (1330-40), and Carew-Poyntz (1350-1360) are all believed to have been

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<sup>181</sup>Charity Scott-Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 15; Paul Binski, *Gothic Wonder: Art, Artifice and the Decorated Style 1290-1350* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 99-100.

<sup>182</sup> Scott-Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours in Medieval England*, 16.

<sup>183</sup> The daily office marked the hours of the day in monastic houses with intervals of prayer. Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1240-1570* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 5-6.

<sup>184</sup>K. Smith, *Art, identity and devotion in fourteenth-century England: Three women and their books of hours* (London: British Library and University of Toronto Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>185</sup>The earliest surviving examples of the Office of Mary come from eleventh century England. *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>186</sup> Kameron, *Popular piety and art in the late Middle Ages*, 155.

<sup>187</sup> Binski, *Gothic Wonder*, 99.

decorated and illuminated in London.<sup>188</sup> While the exact provenance of each of these texts is difficult to determine, the content of their bas-de-page Marian miracle illuminations leaves little doubt of a shared decorative and visual culture.

Examining the provenance of these books enables a better understanding of their purpose and in turn that of the miracle depictions. Because of their high-quality parchment and illumination, both the Queen Mary Psalter and the Taymouth Hours are believed to have been created for a member of the royal court.<sup>189</sup> Which member precisely is difficult to determine given the tumultuous period of the early thirteenth century. During this period there were two kings and several royal women.<sup>190</sup> The Queen Mary Psalter has been associated with Edward II, Isabelle of France, Edward III, and Thomas, Earl of Lancaster.<sup>191</sup> Most recently, the Taymouth Hours was attributed to Princess Eleanor of Woodstock.<sup>192</sup> In contrast to these other books, the Carew-Poyntz Hours is thought to have been created for an aristocratic client.<sup>193</sup> Despite the difficulty in attributing ownership, the purpose of these books can be better understood in the economic context of devotional books as wedding gifts. Devotional books were a part of the fourteenth century market for marginalia as they were often given as wedding gifts.<sup>194</sup> Decorating margins was expensive. The high cost incurred by decorating margins suggests that the chosen illuminated images were not the result of artistic creativity, but that of conscious investment and planning. Thus, the inclusion of Marian miracle imagery within these texts was intentional.

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<sup>188</sup> Sandler's reference numbers for these manuscripts are the following: Queen Mary Psalter no.56, Taymouth Hours no.98, Smithfield Decretals no.101, Carew-Poyntz Hours no. 130. Lucy Freeman Sandler, *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles: Gothic Manuscripts, 1285-1385* (Turnhout: Harvey Miller, 1986), 64-66, 107-108, 111-112.

<sup>189</sup> Anne Rudloff Stanton, *The Queen Mary Psalter: A Study of Affect and Audience*. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 1-14.

<sup>190</sup> Smith, *Art, identity and devotion in fourteenth-century England*, 9.

<sup>191</sup> Stanton, *The Queen Mary Psalter*, 5.

<sup>192</sup> Smith, *Art, identity and devotion in fourteenth-century England*, 13-14.

<sup>193</sup> Emily N. Savage, "The Manuscript as a Work-in-Progress: Creativity and Re-Creation in the Carew-Poyntz Hours," *The Mediaeval Journal* 6, no. 2 (2016): 111-135.

<sup>194</sup> Binski, *Gothic Wonder*, 299-301.

All four of these texts have been selected because of their shared inclusion of bas-de-page pictorial narratives. The Smithfield Decretals differs from the other three examples because it is a collection of papal decrees and constitutions concerning canon law. However, the decoration of the Decretals has more in common with devotional books.<sup>195</sup> The dissonance between the inclusion of a variety of bas-de-page imagery within a law book has been of great interest to scholarship. In her essay "A Pictorial Ex-Libris in the Smithfield Decretals", Alixe Bovey concluded that the Decretals was owned by the Batayle family based on the repeated heraldry depicted throughout the marginalia. However, she failed to fully investigate the importance of the manuscript's provenance with St. Bartholomew's in London. The location of this priory was close to the center of book production in London during the fourteenth century.<sup>196</sup> Given this proximity, the illuminators commissioned to decorate the Smithfield Decretals would have been accustomed to decorating psalters and books of hours. All four books contain bas-de-page scenes of the Marian miracles. The Queen Mary Psalter depicts thirty-five Miracles of the Virgin, which is the largest number of miracles in the three books. Both the Teymouth Hours and the Smithfield Decretals depict eleven miracles, while the Carew-Poyntz Hours depicts thirteen miracles.<sup>197</sup> Despite the shared subject matter of Marian miracles, the contexts of each of these texts indicates their varying purpose and reception.

### **Queen Mary Psalter: The Power of Prayer**

The placement of the miracles of the Virgin in the Queen Mary Psalter is significant because it reflects the devotional nature of these texts and the images for the purpose of prayer. Decoration in psalters organized the groupings of psalms. The miracle depictions correspond with psalms traditionally associated with two forms of Marian devotion. Firstly, the miracles accompany the psalms prayed for Saturday Matins and Lauds.<sup>198</sup> Given the monastic tradition of a celebrating a votive mass to Mary on Saturday, the placement of these depictions on the office for the same day

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<sup>195</sup> Otto Pächt, "A Giottesque episode in English mediaeval art," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, no. 6 (1943): 56.

<sup>196</sup> Alixe Bovey, "A Pictorial Ex Libris in the Smithfield Decretals: John Batayle, Canon of St Bartholomew's, and his Illuminated Law Book," *English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700: Decoration and Illustration in Medieval English Manuscripts* (2002): 64.

<sup>197</sup> Stanton, *The Queen Mary Psalter*, 223-4.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

indicates how Marian devotional practices and the miracles themselves intersected.<sup>199</sup> Secondly, images of the intercessory power of Mary are placed on the pages with important psalms for the Office of the Virgin. Psalms 92, 94, 95, 96, 97, and 99 were all options for different parts of the Office throughout the week.<sup>200</sup> Thus, in reciting the Office of the Virgin, the owner of this text could also gaze upon the following visual representations of Mary as a merciful intercessor:

<b>Miracle</b>	<b>Folio Number</b>
Theophilus	204v-205
Drowning sacristan	205v
Ebbo the thief	206
Deceased nun	206v
The drunk monk	207
Jewish boy of Bourges	207v-208
Pregnant abbess	208v-209
The cleric and the flower	209v-210
The Virgin's reward	210v
Painting of an image	211
Healed woodcutter	211v
The charitable pauper	212
Priest who only knew the mass of the Virgin	212v-213
Drowning monk	213v
Unknown miracle story	214
A monk of St. Peter's at Cologne	214v
King Louis VII	215
The stained chasuble	215v-216
The legend of Amoras	216v-217
The chaste Empress	217v-218
The nun who ran away with a knight	218v-219
Priest saved by the Virgin after confession	219v
Drowning girl	220
Monk cured of mouth cancer	220v-221v
St. Mercury	222-223
Devoted clerk of Pisa	223v-224
The immersed pilgrim	224v
Eulalia, a nun of Shaftesbury	222v-226
St. Bon, bishop of Clermont	226v-227
The priest who used magic to seduce a maiden	227v-228
St. Dunstan and the Virgin's Choir	228v-229
The Image of the Christ Child that was Held for Ransom	229v-230
The Monk who was Healed by the Virgin's Milk	230v-231
The Doubting Monk	231v-232

<sup>199</sup> The celebration of a Marian mass on Saturdays was introduced in the Regularis Concordia in the late tenth century, which reformed Benedictine practices in England. Boyarin, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England*, 3.

<sup>200</sup> The psalms and antiphons used for the Office varied based according to feasts and differing regional traditions. For a detailed examination of the most common form of the Office see Rachel Fulton Brown, *Mary and the Art of Prayer: The Hours of the Virgin in Medieval Christian Life and Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 4.

Analyzing the depiction of the story of Theophilus as the first Marian miracle in the Queen Mary Psalter demonstrates the underlying characteristics of such narratives. According to this story, Theophilus, made a pact with the devil to assume a higher clerical position before repenting and receiving forgiveness by invoking Mary's intercession.<sup>201</sup> The miracle associated with Theophilus did not originate in England, but its popularity impacted the creation of the Marian miracle as a genre.<sup>202</sup> The earliest English compilations can be described as addenda to this story.<sup>203</sup> Two core elements of Marian miracles can be found in this story. First, Theophilus can be described as the archetype of the sinner in a Marian miracle story. He sins grievously but is saved because of his supplication and invocation of the intercession of the Virgin. Secondly, Mary's mercy and authority are demonstrated in her ability to act as a legal advocate. Within the bas-de-page scenes Theophilus is depicted praying to Mary in front of her statue (Figure 1). The subsequent folio depicts Mary confronting the devil to revoke this pact (Figure 2). Thus, the reader is presented with a visual example of the power of invoking Mary's intercession.

Examining the depictions of the first miracle of Theophilus highlights how context indicates varying interpretations of a single miracle. The Smithfield Decretals, Taymouth Hours, and the Carew-Poyntz Hours all include a depiction of the story of Theophilus. In all three of these devotional books the narrative begins with the scene of the devil giving the charter to Theophilus (Figures 3 and 4). The Decretals expand this narrative by including depictions of the presentation of a charter to the bishop to advance Theophilus' position (Figure 5). The inclusion of this narrative as the first Marian miracle depicted in the Decretals has added significance given the purpose of this text as a lawbook. The miracle reflects different aspects of Marian devotion based upon their physical context within each book. Thus, its inclusion exemplifies the second core element of Marian devotion. Mary is presented as a significant legal advocate for sinners in her nullification of

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<sup>201</sup> Boyarin, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England*, 42-7.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>203</sup> Textual sources of this miracle story be found in Aelfric's first series of homilies and Dominic of Evesham and William of Malmesbury's compilations. *Ibid.*, 47, 62-74.



the contract between Theophilus and the devil. In comparison, the inclusion of this miracle in the devotional texts of the Queen Mary Psalter, the Taymouth Hours, and the Carew-Poyntz Hours serves as a visual example of the importance of prayer and devotion by presenting evidence of Mary's ability to act as a powerful intercessor.

### **Taymouth Hours: Mary as Intercessor for the Deceased**

Within the Taymouth Hours the placement of the Miracles of the Virgin with the Office of the Dead, which was said for the repose of souls, emphasizes Mary's mercy towards souls. Mary's intercession as souls pass from life to life after death is the thematic focus given this textual context. The miracles are organized as follows:

<b>Miracle</b>	<b>Folio Number</b>
The Oxford Scholar	151
Drowning sacristan and laywoman	151v-152v
Leprous cleric	153
St. Mercury	153v-154
Possessed woman	154v
Healed woodcutter	156
Pregnant Abbess	156v-158
Theophilus	158v-160v
The cleric and the flower	161-161v
The legend of Amoras	162-164
Pope Leo	164v
Man and his wife brought back to life	165-166
Rescued noblewoman	166v
Hermit and the Virgin	167
Adulterous monk or the Devil in the Stocks	167v-171
Monks who abandoned their monastery	171v-174v
Possessed Girl	175
Dying Clerk	179

The placement of the miracles and the imagery itself visually underscore Mary's role as a primary intercessor for souls. The miniature beginning this office depicts Mary interceding on behalf of a dying man (Figure 6). This scene can be traced to the story generally titled 'Oxford Scholar lead to

Heaven'.<sup>204</sup> In this miracle the scholar has a vision of Mary and the devil at the scales of justice. This vision results in the scholar's confession of and contrition for his sins. In the Taymouth miniature, Mary is depicted visually and metaphorically beside the soul. The Virgin leans outward from behind the column supporting the architectural frame of the scene to aid the soul as she raises her hand in a blessing. Thus, the reader would have been reminded of Mary's intercession for the dead.

The differences in the miracles once again demonstrate the potential for these stories to be permuted and portrayed according to various aspects of Marian devotion. In the Smithfield Decretals the depiction of Mary's mercy towards souls is focused on her role in administering justice. Thus, Mary's intercession at the scales is more prevalent in this text than the others. The scales of justice appear both at the bedside of the deceased on folio 266v (Figure 7) and on the subsequent folio (Figure 8). This depiction resembles the vision of the Oxford scholar with Mary visibly beside the dead. However, the subject of Mary's mercy is not a scholar, but a king. The depiction of the weighing of souls in the Decretals and the Taymouth Hours implements the same visual language to convey Mary's justice and mercy. While the Decretals scene does not depict a precise miracle narrative it repeats the imagery of the scales in order to depict the justice of Mary's mercy. In comparison, the focus on the power of intercessory prayer within the Queen Mary Psalter results in the depiction of Mary's mercy towards souls based on the story of the monk of St. Peter's in Cologne. Devils seize a monk's soul because he died in a state of presumed mortal sin. St. Peter appeals unsuccessfully on behalf of the soul, and thus calls on the intercession of the Virgin Mary. [Note: I think "presumed" mortal sin is needed because it is Catholic doctrine that souls who die in actual mortal sin "go into hell immediately after death" (Benedict XII, *Benedictus Deus*, Jan. 29, 1336: Denz.-H, 1002; cf. CCC, 393, 1022). The other possibility is to keep the text as is but add a footnote explaining that the image in figure 9 is not in complete accord with Catholic doctrine. Not even the intercession of Mary can liberate a soul from hell] Mary's relationship as the Mother of God establishes her as the ultimate intercessor. In the bas-de-page depiction, this narrative is condensed into a single image (Figure 9). The scales of justice are absent. Rather the focus of this image is the power of Mary's intercession over that of St. Peter, who stands nearby.

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<sup>204</sup> This miracle can be found in the 15<sup>th</sup> century miscellany British Library MS Additional 37049 and in the South English Legendary. Boyarin, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England*, 32-33, 17-55, 194.

Thus, the visual elements implemented to depict textual miracles can be permuted in order to create new variations on the same themes of Marian devotion.

### **Smithfield Decretals: Mary as Legal Advocate**

My analysis of the miracle stories depicted in the Decretals focuses on law and justice. A central theme of all the Marian miracles depicted within the Decretals is Mary's ability to enact justice. The miracles included are interspersed with other images and are organized as follows:

<b>Miracle</b>	<b>Folio Number</b>
Theophilus	166-172v
Adulterous nun	181-184
Adulterous monk or Devil in the stocks	185-191v
Drowning nun	192-192v
Pope Leo	193-195v, 197v-198v
Healed woodcutter	196-196v
Painting of an image	209-210
Jewish boy of Bourges	211-213
St. Mercury	214v-216v
Clerk of Chartres	221-225v
Drowning sacristan	226-227
Mary saving the soul of a king	226-268

The inclusion of these depictions of Marian miracles in a law book can be better understood by examining the miracle story of the drowned sacristan. This story can be found in the earliest English compilations of Marian miracles.<sup>205</sup> An adulterous sacristan falls off a bridge and drowns on the way to meet his mistress. He prays for Mary's intercession as he perishes, and thus Mary saves his soul. All four books contain bas-de-page variations of this miracle.

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<sup>205</sup>The textual sources for this narrative can be found in MS BL Additional 37049. Boyarin, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England*, 190; Southern, "The English origins of the 'Miracles of the Virgin,'" 183.

The story is condensed into one or two bas-de-page scenes in the books. The bas-de-page depiction in the Queen Mary Psalter depicts two demons drowning a sacristan and Mary interceding. The other books expand on this story to include scenes of Mary interceding on behalf of other individuals. In the Taymouth Hours Mary rescues both a monk and a laywoman from a devil attempting to drown them. The Taymouth images depict the devil fleeing the scene as Mary extends her hand over the bridge to intercede on behalf of the monk and the woman (Figures 10 and 11). The narrative is extended over additional folios in the Smithfield Decretals and differs considerably in two ways. First, the devil is depicted holding a nun rather than a laywoman in the water over a bridge (Figure 12). The depiction of the drowning monk is not found directly beside that of the woman, but rather is a number of folios away (Figure 13). The simplification of the narrative into one where demons are visually responsible for drowning the individual underscores Mary's intercessory power. The variation of these depictions within the Decretals from both the text itself and from the other books demonstrates the permuted quality of Marian miracles. The role of Mary as a just intercessor can be depicted with a variety of individuals, further reflecting the appeal of Marian devotion.

The inclusion of Marian miracles in the bas-de-page scenes of the Smithfield Decretals can be better understood by examining the text of the original miracle of the drowned sacristan. According to the British Library MS Additional 37049 narrative of the drowned sacristan, Mary presents a legal argument for the return of his soul to her. Since the sacristan was praying to her at the time of his death, he was doing her work and thus the demons have stolen what is rightfully hers. Thus, this miracle story reinforces Mary's role as the Mirror of Justice and mediator of judgment. While the bas-de-page scenes of this miracle fail to represent this textual argument, its inclusion demonstrates the ability for these images to be representative of a larger known narrative. Therefore, given the tradition of Mary's association with justice within miracle texts, it follows that these stories would appear in a book of law.

### **Carew-Poyntz Hours: Mary as Help of Christians**

Within the Carew-Poyntz Hours the Marian miracles can be interpreted with the themes of mercy and penance based on their placement in the bas-de-page scenes for the penitential psalms. This grouping traditionally consisted of psalms 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142 to be used for reflection and

repentance of sin.<sup>206</sup> The juxtaposition of the miracles of Mary with these psalms reinforces devotion to Mary as the Mother of Mercy and help of sinners. The miracle stories visually depict Mary's motherly mercy and royal power. The miracles are organized as follows:

<b>Miracle</b>	<b>Folio Number</b>
St. Mercury	152v-154
Dying clerk	154v-155
Pope Leo	155v-158
The Cleric and the flower	158v-159
Clerk of Chartres	159v-165v
Pregnant Abbess	166-167
Adulterous monk	167v-171
Healed woodcutter	172
The legend of Amoras	172v-175
Theophilus	175v-181v
Painting of an image	182-182v
The Bleeding Host	183v-188
Jewish boy of Bourges	188v-189

Analyzing the first miracle depicted of Mary raising St. Mercury from the dead within the context of the penitential psalms, aids in understanding devotion to Mary as a source of mercy. These scenes are part of the larger story of Julian the Apostate.<sup>207</sup> Julian was a Roman emperor who violently persecuted Christians. As a result of St. Basil's invocation of Mary's intercession, St. Mercury is raised from the dead in order to defeat Julian in battle. Thus, the Christian faithful are aided through the mercy of the Queen of Heaven. The juxtaposition of this imagery with the penitential psalms reinforces God's mercy as the source of Marian intercession. Line 3 of Psalm 6 calls on the Lord for mercy, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak: heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled. And my soul is troubled exceedingly: but thou, O Lord, how long? Turn to me, O Lord, and deliver

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<sup>207</sup> This story is found in the first group of Aelfric's homilies, MS BL Royal 18 B. XXIII, and Dominic of Evesham and William of Malmesbury's miracle compilations. Boyarin, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England*, 192.

my soul: O save me for thy mercy's sake.<sup>208</sup> Mary's role as a merciful intercessor is reinforced by depictions of her intercession with an accompanying text calling on God's mercy. In reflecting on the penitential psalms, the reader could gaze upon images of evidence of God's mercy through Mary's intercession on behalf of sinners in miracle stories. Both the psalms and the accompanying miracle bas-de-page scenes encourage reflection on Mary as a powerful intercessor to God's mercy.

Comparing the depictions of St. Mercury in the Carew-Poyntz Hours, the Queen Mary Psalter, the Taymouth Hours, and the Smithfield Decretals reveals how the same miracle can be permuted in varying cycles to underscore different aspects of Mary's mercy. St. Anselm's prayers to Mary often invoke her as a source of mercy: 'What I want to ask you, Lady, is that by a glance from your mercy you will cure the sickness and ulcers of my sins.'<sup>209</sup> The amount of the original story depicted in each of these examples indicates differing focuses. In the Carew-Poyntz, the Queen Mary Psalter, and the Decretals images the Virgin Mary intercedes on behalf of St. Mercury and on the following folios he is depicted fighting an adversary, thus highlighting Mary's active role in helping the faithful (Figures 14, 15, 16, and 17). The inclusion of these scenes in the Carew-Poyntz Hours visually demonstrates the result of Mary's intercession and God's mercy. The Psalter includes a depiction of St. Basil praying for the intercession of the Virgin Mary, thus reinforcing the power of intercessory prayer (Figure 18). The depiction in the Taymouth Hours only depicts the Virgin Mary's intercession as St. Mercury is raised from the dead (Figure 19). This miracle is followed by a depiction of Mary exorcising a demon from a woman (Figure 20). The context of the law within the Decretals results in understanding this story as a depiction of proper justice for the persecuted. Thus, the context of each of these texts imbues the same miracle story with different meaning.

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<sup>208</sup> Douay-Rheims Online Bible Translation.

<sup>209</sup> Benedicta Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm with the Proslogion* (London: Penguin Classics, 1973), 108.

### **Reiteration and Amplification:**

In Geoffrey of Vinsauf's thirteenth century work titled *Poetria Nova*, the importance of repetition with variation in rhetorical pedagogy is both exemplified and espoused.<sup>210</sup> The impact of this treatise on textual composition was widespread.<sup>211</sup> The use of reiteration to develop meaning and to underscore themes is perhaps best exemplified in the vast number of miracles of the Virgin Mary. The themes of Mary's mercy and royal power are at the center of all these stories. Analysis of the common themes within the textual tradition of Marian miracles establishes the central elements and themes later transmitted to their visual depictions.

In the introduction to his study on the later fifteenth century English vernacular compilation of Marian miracles, Peter Whiteford argues that authors of these texts place emphasis on the motherly mercy and royal power of Mary.<sup>212</sup> The importance of Mary's motherhood is encapsulated in one of St. Anselm's prayers to her: 'So the accused flees from the just God to the good mother of the merciful God. The accused finds refuge from the mother he has offended in the good son of the kind mother.'<sup>213</sup> Thus, the sinner can be forgiven by the mercy of Mary, which is given to her because of her role as the Mother of God. Both the motherly mercy and royal power of Mary are the basis for Marian miracles because they are essential to her ability to intercede on behalf of sinners. These themes are important in understanding the transmission of these textual miracles to their visual representations. While the differing miracles speak to their variety, the shared depictions illuminate the common themes of Mary's motherly mercy and royal power. The shared miracles found in at least two of the books are the following:

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<sup>210</sup> Marjorie Curry Woods, *Classroom commentaries: teaching the Poetria nova across medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2010), 82-84.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 21-26.

<sup>212</sup> Whiteford, *The miracles of our lady*, 15.

<sup>213</sup> Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm with the Proslogion*, 112.

Miracle	Queen Mary Psalter	Taymouth Hours	Smithfield Decretals	Carew-Poyntz Hours
Theophilus	204v-205	158v-160v	166-172v	175v-181v
Healed Woodcutter	211v	156	196-196v	172
St. Mercury	222-223	154	214v-216v	152v-154
Pregnant Abbess	208v-209	156v-158		166-167
Painting of an Image	211		209-210	182-182v
Jewish boy of Bourges	207v-208		211-213	188v-189
Pope Leo		164v	193-195v, 197v-198v	155v-158
Amoras	216v-217	163v-164		172v-175
The Cleric and the Flower	209v-210	161		158v-159
Adulterous Monk		167v-171	185-191v	167v-171
Drowning Sacristan	213v	152	226-227	
Clerk of Chartres			221-225v	159v-165v

These miracle stories can all be traced to textual sources, both early Latin miracle compilations and later Middle English examples. Their inclusion indicates a set program of miracle stories that were either the most well-known or the most popular. All four contain depictions of the story of Theophilus, the healed woodcutter, and St. Mercury. The Carew-Poyntz Hours and the Smithfield Decretals share the most miracles. The similarities in the depictions of these stories is the result of their shared textual sources and reflects their shared origins in the fourteenth century London book market. Examining depictions of the same miracle also reveals the effect of the both the original narrative and the accompanying text on visual imagery. Analysis of the story of the 'Jewish Boy of Bourges' illuminates how the textual origins of these miracles impact their visual representation. This story can be traced to the sixth century *Historia ecclesiastica* of Evagrius Scholasticus of Antioch and was spread throughout Europe in Gregory of Tours' version.<sup>214</sup> According to this text, the boy's own mother cannot save him from being thrown in the oven by his father for receiving the Eucharist by

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<sup>214</sup> The story can be found in Dominic of Evesham and William of Malmesbury's miracle compilations as well as in the South English Legendary. Boyarin, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England*, 64-5, 191.



accident, but he is unharmed once the flames subside. He recounts that the Virgin Mary covered him with her cloak and thus protected him from the fire. The bas-de-page images depicting this story in the Queen Mary Psalter, the Decretals, and in the Carew-Poyntz Hours, condense the textual narrative into one or two scenes.

Despite the condensed narrative, the central eucharistic symbolism is transmitted from text to image. The bas-de-page scene on folio 207v in the Queen Mary Psalter begins the miracle story of the 'Jewish boy of Bourges' with a depiction of the boy receiving the Eucharist (Figure 21). The story is imbued with eucharistic symbolism. After eating the Communion bread, the boy himself becomes what he has consumed. Just as the bread in the Eucharist is baked to take on its final form, so too is the boy baked in the fires of the oven to become a Christian (Figure 22). In the Smithfield Decretals and Carew-Poyntz Hours the boy is depicted about the size of a loaf of bread (Figures 23 and 24). All of these scenes depict the Virgin Mary standing between the oven and the father to prevent the child from being harmed (Figures 22, 24, and 25). Of particular note is the significance of the eucharistic symbolism conveyed in the imagery with the placement of Mary next to the oven in all of the illustrations. As the Mother of God, Mary carrying the Christ-child within her womb evokes the baking of the bread in the oven. Thus, the illumination itself underscores Mary's role as the Mother of God and the Eucharist visually in a way the miracle text cannot.

The combination of text and image within three of these books extends the devotional purpose of these miracles. This is exemplified in analysis of the accompanying psalm with the depiction of the 'Jewish Boy of Bourges' in the Queen Mary Psalter. This depiction corresponds with the beginning of psalm 95, which was one of the psalms used to begin the Office of the Virgin at Matins.<sup>215</sup> Given the increased devotional practices of this period, it can be inferred that this placement was intentional. Either the patron, their spiritual director, or artist would have been aware of the connection between psalm 95 and the Office of the Virgin. Considering the eucharistic symbolism of the bas-de-page scene, the psalm can be interpreted as one of praise for the gift of salvation made possible in Mary's bearing of Jesus Christ. Psalm 95 begins with the following lines: 'Sing ye to the Lord and bless his name: shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the Gentiles: his wonders among all people. For the Lord is great, and exceedingly to be

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<sup>215</sup> Boyarin, *Miracles of the Virgin in Medieval England*, 4.

praised.<sup>216</sup> Thus, the faithful not only sing songs of thanksgiving for Mary as a merciful and powerful intercessor, but also in order to thank her for her role as the Mother of God. The juxtaposition of this psalm of praise with the Marian miracle of the 'Jewish boy of Bourges' reinforces the purpose of these non-Biblical stories.

The incorporation of these images into these texts can be better understood by examining the depiction of actual visual objects such as statues. David Freedberg's *The Power of Images* sought to analyze the conjunction between reality itself and the reality of an art object.<sup>217</sup> Within the Christian tradition art has what Freedberg describes as 'living potentiality'.<sup>218</sup> Thus, statues and paintings can become the figure they represent. Most commonly these images are of a crucifix or of the Virgin Mary.<sup>219</sup> Such an example can be found in the Queen Mary Psalter's depiction of King Louis VII seeing victims healed by the Virgin in the cathedral of Soissons (Figure 26). This story can be traced to earlier thirteenth century Marian miracle compilations.<sup>220</sup> The depiction thereof is crucial to our understanding of the purpose of the depiction of Marian miracles because it embodies an eyewitness. Louis kneels in front of an altar with a statue to the Virgin Mary, where a priest is saying mass. His head is completely turned around to see the Virgin Mary blessing three men who kneel before her. The liturgical form of the mass and the apparition of the Virgin occur at the same time. Thus, time, space, heaven, and earth are all condensed into a single image. Both the statue and actual figure of the Virgin Mary are mirror images. Thus, while the statue does not become the Virgin Mary herself, it acts as a visual representation of her. In praying in front of the statue, Louis VII is praying for the intercession of the Virgin Mary. This juxtaposition visually represents the power of prayer and devotion in front of religious images.

The representation of Marian miracles within Psalters and Books of Hours served to both complement and support devotional practices. Depictions of

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<sup>216</sup> Douay-Rheims Online Bible Translation.

<sup>217</sup> David Freedberg. *The power of images: Studies in the history and theory of response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 436- 439.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 307.

<sup>220</sup> The story can be found in British Museum Royal 6B.X. Adolfo Mussafia. *Studien zu den mittelalterlichen Marienlegenden*. (Wien: In Commission bei F. Tempsky, 1888), 10-11.

the power of intercessory prayer to the Virgin Mary would have served as visual evidence and encouragement to the owners of these books. The Queen Mary Psalter, Taymouth Hours, Smithfield Decretals, and the Carew-Poyntz Hours implement both similar and different depictions of these miracles in order to exemplify particular aspects of Marian intercession. All of the images within these books depict Mary as an active participant in rescuing individuals from a variety of occurrences. However, the placement and distillation of specific miracles reveals how their reiteration can be used to highlight a variety of different aspects of Marian intercession. Their inclusion adds complexity to these miracle stories. Furthermore, the varying placement of the scenes within the texts themselves indicates the extension and transmission of monastic Marian devotional practices to those of the laity. Decorating a devotional text was expensive given the amount of labor it required to draw on vellum by hand.<sup>221</sup> Thus, the decoration itself cannot be dismissed as unimportant. By reexamining Marian miracles within an intended devotional setting, the nature of medieval devotion to the Virgin Mary can be more fully understood.

The variety and commonalities of the miracles within these examples demonstrates their appeal to a wide audience and their ability to be constructed based upon individual preference. The Queen Mary Psalter highlights the importance of intercessory prayer to the Virgin Mary. Within the Taymouth Hours, Mary's role as intercessor for the dead is the central focus. The context of the Decretals reinforces the depictions of Mary as a source of justice. The Carew-Poyntz hours images exemplify Mary's mercy. Their variety attests to the ability of these core elements of Marian devotion to be creatively reimagined and multiplied. As Southern noted the world of the miracle stories of Mary, 'is one of unbounded, unbridled imagination. Time and place lose all significance...Like the rain this protective power of the Virgin falls on the just and unjust alike...in a word the stories are popular and speak to the common man wherever he might be.'<sup>222</sup> The bas-de-page depictions of the Miracles of the Virgin Mary highlight another aspect of their widespread reception. Ultimately, examining the miracles within these contexts in turn deepens our understanding of the narratives as more than merely tales, but as a part of a broader Marian devotional culture.

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<sup>221</sup> Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 11.

<sup>222</sup> Southern, "The English origins of the 'Miracles of the Virgin,'" 248-50.

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Illustrations:



Figure 1 Theophilus in front of a statute of the Virgin Mary, Queen Mary Psalter

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Figure 2 Mary revoking the Devil's agreement with Theophilus, Queen Mary Psalter

© British Library Board (Royal MS 2 B VII/ folio 205)





Figure 3 Theophilus making a deal with the devil, Smithfield Decretals© British Library Board (Royal MS 10 E IV/folio 167)

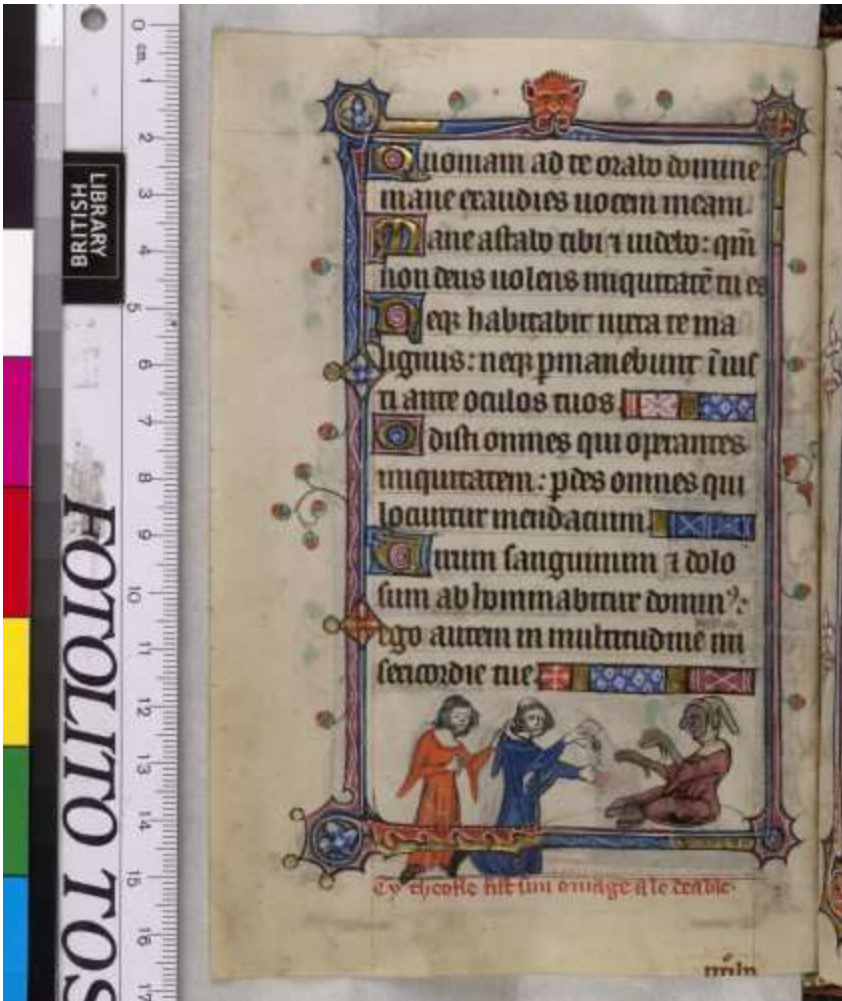


Figure 4 Theophilus making a deal with the devil, Taymouth Hours© British Library Board (Yates Thompson MS 13/folio 158v)



Figure 5 Charter presented to a bishop in the story of Theophilus,  
Smithfield Decretals  
© British Library Board (Royal MS 10 E IV/folio 169)



Figure 6 Miniature of the Oxford Scholar, Taymouth Hours  
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Figure 7 Devil and the Virgin Mary at the bedside of a king, Smithfield Decretals

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Figure 8 Weighing of a soul, Smithfield Decretals,  
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Figure 9 Monk of St. Peter's at Cologne, Queen Mary Psalter,  
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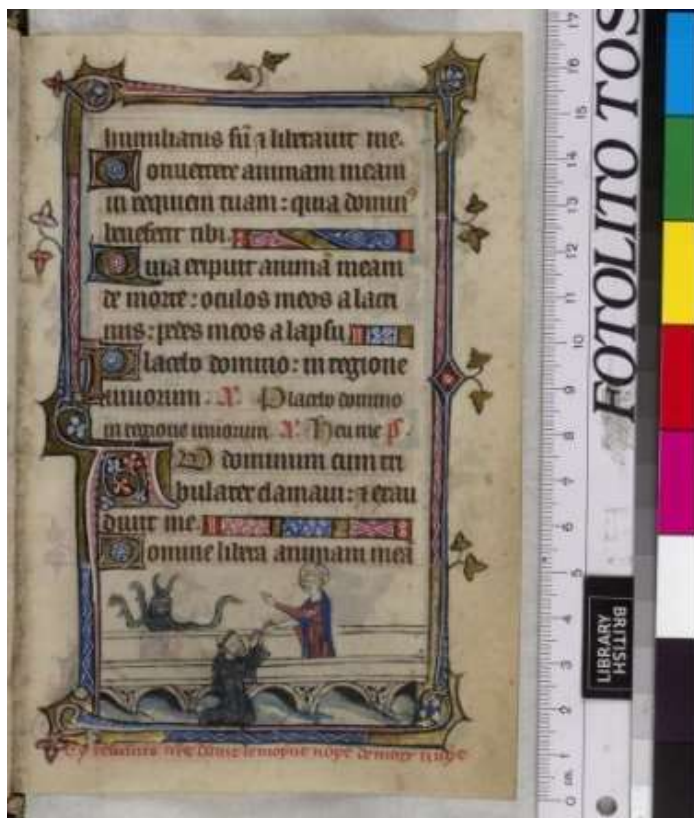


Figure 10 The Drowning Sacristan, Taymouth Hours  
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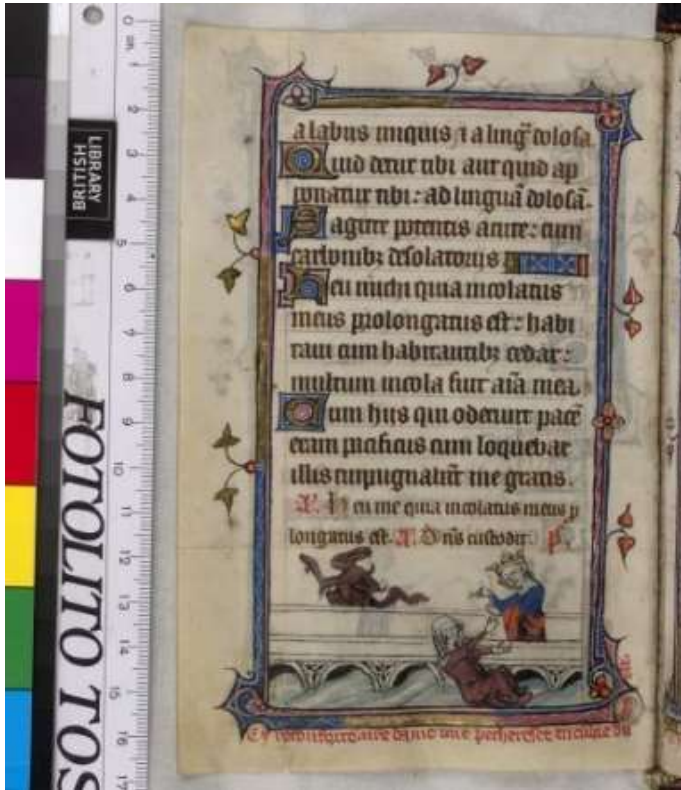


Figure 11 Drowning laywoman, Taymouth Hours,  
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Figure 12 Drowning nun, Smithfield Decretals  
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Figure 13 Drowning Sacristan, Smithfield Decretals  
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Figure 14 Mary raising St. Mercury from the dead, Carew-Poyntz Hours MS 48. Illuminated Manuscript: HORAE (Carew-Poyntz), English, 14th Century. Folio 152v © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.



Figure 15 St. Mercury in battle, Carew-Poyntz Hours, MS 48. Illuminated Manuscript: HORAE (Carew-Poyntz), English, 14th Century. Folio 154 © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.





Figure 16 Mary raising St. Mercury from the dead, Smithfield Decretals  
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Figure 17 St. Mercury in battle, Smithfield Decretals  
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Figure 18 Mary arming St. Mercury, Taymouth Hours  
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Figure 19 St. Basil praying to the Virgin Mary, Queen Mary Psalter  
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Figure 20 Mary exorcising a demon from a woman, Taymouth Hours  
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Figure 21 The Jewish Boy receiving the Eucharist, Queen Mary Psalter  
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Figure 22 Mary saving the boy from being thrown in the oven, Queen Mary Psalter

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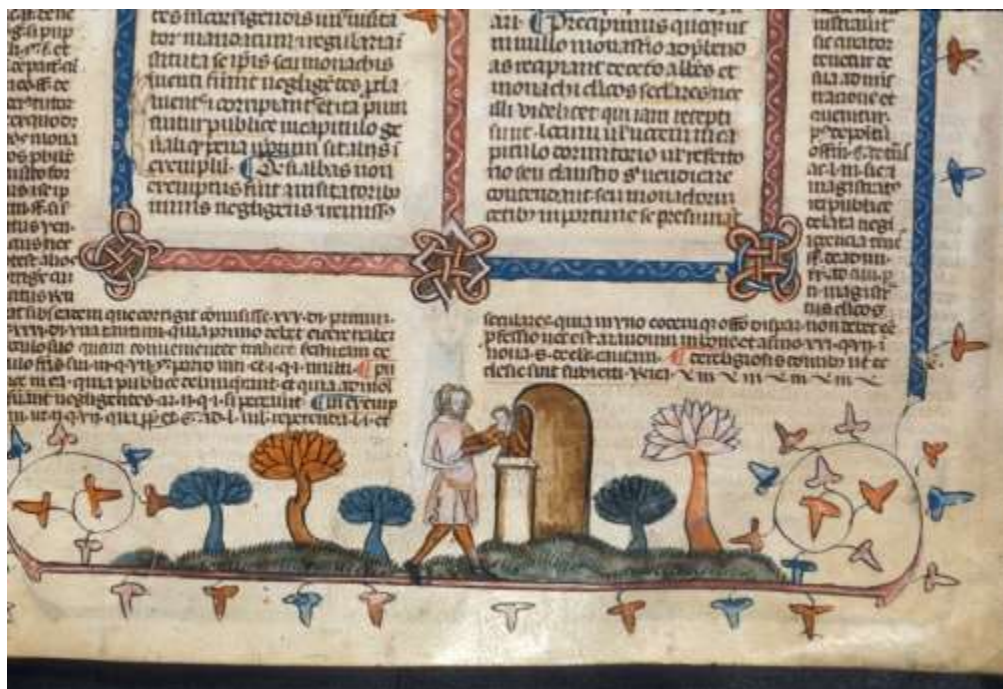


Figure 23 Father throwing his son in the oven, Smithfield Decretals  
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Figure 24 Mary saving the boy from being thrown in the oven, Smithfield Decretals  
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Figure 25 Mary saving the boy from being thrown in the oven, Carew-Poyntz Hours  
MS 48. Illuminated Manuscript: HORAE (Carew-Poyntz), English, 14th Century. Folio 189 © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.



Figure 26 King Louis VII in the Cathedral of Soissons, Queen Mary Psalter  
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