

“Ic augt polye more”: Models of Sanctity in two legends of Saints Chrysanthus and Daria

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Among the didactic and devotional genres of the Middle Ages, *vita* and *passiones* of the saints offer particular advantages to the study of medieval holy pedagogy. Collections such as the Old English Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* and the Middle English *South English Legendary* reflect contemporary didactic concerns in a focused, even intimate, pedagogical genre. Throughout the Middle Ages proliferating redactions of the legends of saints attest to the evolving role of the saints in Christian pedagogy and devotion.¹ If we compare the redactions of a particular *vita* or *passio*, we find one group of pedagogical concerns stands out in relief against another version's specific, historically- contingent concerns. This is precisely the case when the late tenth-century Old English *Passio Chrisanti et Darie sponse eius*, found in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, is compared to its fifteenth-century counterpart *Seint Crissaunt and Darige*, found in only one of the late manuscripts of the *South English Legendary*. From the earlier to the later English version, the shape of sanctity foregrounded for readers undergoes a considerable shift.² While suffering, quite predictably, plays a crucial role in each *passio*'s representation of sanctity, the versions reflect very different attitudes towards suffering, consequently offering different pedagogical models for the saints' sufferings. The Middle English version concentrates upon a desire for suffering that wholly differs from the fundamental feature of the Old English saints' faith and sanctity, their married chastity.

A brief word about the role of chaste marriage in the *passiones* of Ælfric's virginal spouses may be helpful before treating the specific developments that separate the representation of suffering in the Old and Middle English versions of the legend of

Chrysanthus and Daria. Of the three portraits of virginal spouses found in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, the *Passio Chrisanti et Dariae sponse eius* offers perhaps the most interesting and compelling representation of married chastity in the collection.³ Of the other couples included by Ælfric, St. Basilissa's early death makes it more difficult to interpret the pedagogical role he would assign to her married virginity. As for the *passio* of St. Cecilia, probably the best known of all these legends, the dominance of catechetical concerns and her husband Valerian's earlier martyrdom again diminish the "marital scope" of the legend. Only in the narrative of Chrysanthus and Daria do we find two saints pursuing chastity side-by-side (after a slightly rocky start in which Daria maladroitly tries to seduce Chrysanthus) until they are stoned and buried alive together.⁴

Differences of priority aside, the *passio* of Chrysanthus and Daria in the Old English roughly follows the same basic pattern as that of other married-virgin saints like Julian and Basilissa, or Cecilia and Valerian, in which a Christian (male or female) is forced to marry a non-Christian and converts the spouse to the virginal life. Here, the well-educated Chrysanthus is forced into marriage by his father who is trying to force his son to abandon his faith. Chrysanthus converts the young woman Daria to Christ and virginity, and the couple marries.⁵ Her conversion and the couple's chaste union clearly mark virginity as *the* signifier of uncompromising Christian faith. All worldly demands and claims (of family, secular authority, sex, and luxury alike) pale beside the claim of the call of Christ. The saints' evangelism (for Christianity and for virginity, which go hand in hand) ultimately catches the unsympathetic eye of Rome and after numerous attempted persecutions, the saints are martyred. For both saints and in their evangelistic ministry, virginity plays an iconic role (as it does ever-so-briefly in the *passio* of Julian and Basilissa), signifying the repudiation of worldly values for heavenly ones. Ultimately the irresistible attractiveness of the couple's mutual faith and purity comes to the notice of their enemies, the couple comes under imperial attack, and the sufferings begin.

Given the central role of virginity to the construction of sanctity in the Old English *passio*, it is of no small significance that the Middle English *Seint Crissaunt and Darige* bestows negligible attention on virginity in preference for a focus upon the young Crissaunt's desire to suffer in return for Christ's sufferings for Crissaunt's "loue." These are not, however, the precursors of the eschatological torments that Ælfric warns his readers they will have to endure. Physical suffering plays a very different role, and because of the extensive changes to the *SEL* version, Chrysanthus' desire to suffer in

the pattern of his Lord (rather than the sufferings themselves) becomes the central evidence of his faith. The *passio* found in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* and the one found in the *South English Legendary* share, therefore, the same skeleton of events, but the crucial signifier of married chastity is all but gone in the later text. The ambiguity of the saints' marriage in the *SEL* version suggests a deep shift in pedagogical priorities from virginity as signifier of faith and rejection of the world to suffering as the welcome demonstration of the saints' response to Christ's love. The highly eschatological framework of the Old English *passio* in which Christ is coming at the imminent end to redeem his persecuted people shifts in the Middle English version to the later medieval view of the "bleeding, dying body...as the essence of Christ's humanity."⁶ From the unseen signifier of virginity as the first mark of holiness, we move to the saint's suffering body with a concentrated treatment of Chrysanthus desiring to suffer since Christ's sufferings were the proof of His love for Chrysanthus.

The Old and Middle English versions of this *passio* nonetheless share a similar textual purpose. While there is no evidence whatsoever for a textual relationship between the Ælfrician and *SEL* versions, the Middle English legendary (or rather legendaries) share a similarity of purpose with Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, which makes the juxtaposition of the two texts both logical and profitable. The *SEL* filled a space in the religious literary oeuvre similar to that of the *Lives of Saints* as the "first collection after Ælfric that supplied texts for the complete year, and....it remained the only work of this kind in the south of England until the translation of the *Gülte Legende*."⁷ The texts thus share similar pedagogical functions. Ælfric compiled his translation of various saints' lives for the private reading of his lay patrons Æthelweard and Æthelmær; Görlach suggests, based on the manuscript evidence, that MS Bodley 779 served a similar function for private reading, although it was not compiled by a professional scribe.⁸ In the *SEL* tradition, the legend of Chrysanthus and Daria plays only the most marginal role.⁹ Of the various manuscripts of the *SEL*, only Bodley 779 contains a version of this legend. Furthermore, as this manuscript dates from the first quarter of the fifteenth century, the legend is manifestly peripheral to the *SEL* tradition.¹⁰ The significance of the legend lies not in providing insight into the complex *SEL* tradition, but rather in the shifting priorities of hagiography which are illuminated when this late Middle English version is compared to that of Ælfric. Both texts, then, served a private, pedagogical role, and it is in this context that I compare the treatment of suffering in the two versions of the *passio*.¹¹

Students of Old English hagiography are particularly fortunate in the figure of Ælfric, who not only produced a rich vernacular body of *legenda* in his *Lives of Saints*

but also laid out clearly the pedagogical purpose of these narratives. In his preface to the *Lives*, Ælfric offers the narratives of God's servant-saints as a means of glorifying God and providing examples to bolster the *torpentes* in faith.¹² At the end of *Passio Chrisanti et Dariae sponse eius*, included by Ælfric in his project of spiritual refreshment, he again addresses the purpose of saints' lives.¹³ Refining upon the Preface's vision of the saints as vivifying models, he here proposes that saints like Chrysanthus and Daria serve not simply as models of holy living and martyrdom, or holy servanthood, but as examples of suffering well. The saints still provide a source of *þingradene* "intercession" (345), and act as a *gebysnunge þat we þe beteron beon* "example that we may be the better" (344), but the exemplary role that Ælfric finds most pertinent to his audience concerns their faithfulness amid fierce torment. Citing the great suffering endured by the early martyrs, Ælfric warns that such persecutions will pale in comparison to the torments to come *on Anticristes tocyme* "at the Antichrist's coming" (347). In light of the approaching persecution—when physical suffering will be exacerbated by false miracles and spiritual deception—Ælfric holds up the saints as the model for those who would keep the faith *oð ende* "until the end" (355).

The apocalyptic note on which Ælfric ends the *passio* foregrounds the inevitability of suffering for the Christian awaiting Christ's return and ultimate destruction of the Antichrist (356-61). Suffering is imminent and unavoidable, he tells his readers, so take these saints as your model that you may endure your torment as faithfully and righteously as they did. The same concern for end-times surfaces in the Old English Preface to Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*, in which Ælfric explains the importance of the volume given the close proximity of the apocalypse:

For ðisum antimbre ic gedyrstlæhte on Gode truwiende þ[æt] ic ðas gesetnysse undergann, 7 eac for ðam ðe menn behofiað godre lare swiðost on þisum timan þe is geendung þyssere worulde, 7 beoð fela frecednyssa on mancynne ær ðan þe se ende become....Gehwa mæg þe eaðelicor þa towearðan costnunge acuman ðurh Godes fultum gif he bið þurh boclice lare getrymmed.

[For this occasion I, trusting in God, presumed to undertake this composition, and also because man has the greatest need of good teaching in this time which is the ending of this world; and there will be many harms done to mankind before the end comes...Each one will be able to withstand the more easily the approaching tribulation through God's help if he will be fortified through biblical ("bookly") teaching (ÆCH (Pref) 56-60, 67-8)].

The saints, then, fit into the larger scope of necessary and orthodox teaching which every Christian needs in order to prepare for the advent of the Antichrist and earth's final sufferings.¹⁴ With the apocalypse imminent, Ælfric offers the saints as highly practical—at least completely relevant—models of endurance for his readers. Suffering marks not only the example of the saints (who endure a battery of torments), but also dominates the pedagogical purpose behind this Old English *passio*, if not more generally the legends in the *Lives of Saints*. That Ælfric wanted Chrysanthus and Daria read as exemplars of endurance is clear not only from his instructive comments at the end, but also from the model of imitation he literally builds into the narrative in a passage that will be dealt with at length below.¹⁵ A concern for suffering similarly marks the Middle English *passio* of *Seint Crissaunt and Darige* some four hundred years later, but the Old English text's attention to the exemplary function of the saints in the face of the impending and inescapable eschaton finds no correspondence in the Middle English text. From the tenth-century Ælfrician version to the fifteenth-century *SEL* version, the role of suffering shifts fundamentally. Suffering is no longer that which must be endured to achieve eternal bliss, but the welcome means of demonstrating love for Christ. Inescapable eschatology finds itself usurped by a desire for suffering as the tangible token of faith, a role served in the earlier version by the saints' chaste marriage.

Three major differences between the versions reflect this shift in pedagogical concerns and interpretive options. First, after providing many details to set up the narrative, the Middle English version so abridges the persecutions of Crissaunt and Darige that it focuses attention upon the bedroom tortures Crissaunt endures. In the OE, by contrast, these torments occur at the beginning and do not in any way provide the climax. Secondly, the characterisation of the female saint Darige is all but eliminated, and the theme of married chastity does not even appear in the text. Lastly, there is a new focus upon the psychological and emotional motivation which compels Crissaunt to desire suffering and wilfully take up a passive role of enduring. This second development—the near excision of Darige—is of particular importance to the interpretation of suffering because passivity and the objectification of virgin saints is often treated as if it were a critical issue in the lives of female virgins alone, yet clearly Crissaunt welcomes the loss of subjectivity.¹⁷ As a consequence of these changes, the *passio*'s utility as a pedagogical model is fundamentally different.

Both the Old and Middle English versions begin with an account of Polemius devoting his son Chrysanthus to secular learning. From the very beginning, however,

the two versions represent this learning differently. For his part, Ælfric apparently felt the need to explain, even excuse, the saint's secular learning,¹⁸ whereas the *SEL* text makes no such excuses. Although it laments the youth's ignorance of "deucnyte" (23), the ME version praises Crissaunt's superlative wit and his mastery of the "artes seuene" (22). Yet, despite the positive representation of worldly learning in the ME text, it is the OE version which shows the pagan Chrysanthus as understanding and being moved to faith in Christ by the unknown Christian book that comes into his hands. The OE youth draws an immediate distinction between the *ungealeaffullan bec* "faithless books" (17) that he has studied so long and the *soðfastnysse leohte* "light of truth" (18) he has just encountered. The ME Crissaunt, however, can make nothing of the book that contains many words of Christ and Mary (29).

The difference points to a rather provocative variance between the two versions' construction of spiritual understanding. Crissaunt's difficulty arises not from a lack of desire, but rather "for he nadde no teching: al hit was for nought / & þey he seyde to himselue: bokus so derk as myste" (40-1). The Word here must be unfolded for him. It is ironic that the heathen books with which Ælfric was clearly uncomfortable provide a background against which the truth of the gospel shines upon Chrysanthus, while poor Crissaunt's learning avails him not at all, not even as a backdrop for contrast. But where book learning fails Crissaunt, divine revelation jumps in, and a voice from heaven mercifully counsels him to read the book often as it will lead him to the "knowleching of soþnes" (46). Apparently then the book should be sufficient, if read frequently enough. What follows in the *SEL*, however, is logically inconsistent. A few lines later Crissaunt apparently still has to be told by his friend Constantine that the book he is reading is even a Christian book. When his friend explains, "þis is of cristindom," Crissaunt responds "ic ne herde of cristindom" (73, 76). As a teaching model for the relationship between the Word and revelation then, the ME passage is clearly less straightforward than the OE version in which Chrysanthus' spiritual understanding and relationship to revelation is unambiguous.¹⁹ Consequently, the ME passage necessarily complicates the voice of authority of the *passio* itself, implicitly exhorting the reader to read and reread the words of the saints.²⁰

Despite the fact that Constantine (whose character is wholly absent from the OE text) cannot "open the book" for Crissaunt, and despite his exhortation that the youth seek out a priest to answer his questions, Constantine actually does a fine job of laying out a few fundamentals for his troubled friend. He tells Crissaunt: "to Jhesu Crist of heuene: þou most abouen þe, / & alle-maner oþer godus: clene þou most forsake / &

þin body & þin soule: to Jhesu Crist by-take” (84-6). Constantine’s instructions presage the teaching of Christ’s supremacy which Crissaunt himself repeatedly affirms after his conversion. For example, when confronting his father, Crissaunt asserts Christ’s eternity and his singularity as God, creator, and redeemer (143-60, 183-94). Then, when he and Daria confront the justice who wants them to sacrifice to Bacchus, Crissaunt again responds that Christ alone is the creator and worthy of honour, and Darige echoes him (303-6). This recognition of Christ’s creatorship and redemption and the response of forsaking all others are preeminent in the life of faith. Moreover, the addition of such affirmations underscores the connection between Crissaunt and Christ which later motivates the saint’s desire to suffer.

In the OE version, after the youth’s tutelage by the priest, Chrysanthus embarks at once upon a preaching career which angers his father. The ME Crissaunt, however, remains with the priest another three months before returning to his father’s house and then he does not draw attention to his new faith by publicly preaching the gospel. Instead, his arguments with friends about the gods and “maumetrie” (132) arouse concern among his father’s friends. With the ensuing confrontation between father and son, the *SEL* version finally arrives, at line 195, at the torments which began in the Old English on line 44. In the end, the expansion of this opening passage in the ME version contributes little of pedagogical value. What the various additions and expansions primarily accomplish is to make the *passio* very “front-heavy.” Far greater emphasis is placed upon the obstacles to Crissaunt’s coming to faith in Christ, and this, combined with the truncations of the couple’s sufferings, focuses the attention upon the bower torments as the great crisis of the narrative.²¹

This reduction of the saint’s sufferings is the first consequential difference between the texts. In the OE version the persecutions divide into two parts. First there are the torments which Chrysanthus endures alone at his father’s hands. Then, after Daria’s conversion and the couple’s marriage, they both endure persecution at the hands of the Roman prefect. In the torments meted out by Crissaunt’s father, Polemius, the OE and ME versions follow the same essential scheme. Fearing reprisals if his son’s Christianity should become known, Polemius tosses his son into a cell until advisers who better understand Christian resolution advise him to amend his strategy. As the *Ælfrician* text explains: *þas geswencednyssa and þas sweartan þeostra / þe þu him dest to wite awendap þa cristenan / him sylfum to wuldra na to witnungre* “These oppressions and these swart darknesses which you give him as punishment, these Christians turn to their own glory and not to punishment” (44-6). Similarly the *SEL* records the caution

that “þe more peyne þat men hem doþ: þe leuere hem to soþ is” (236). While both versions share the same principle behind Polemius’ change of tactics, they here diverge fundamentally in the characterisation of Daria/Darige and the treatment of the saints’ sufferings. While the *SEL* version, like the OE, has Polemius following the advice of his friends, and transferring Crissaunt from his cell to a bower of delights in which he tries to indulge his son with food, drink, and women, Ælfric in his version highlights the way marriage threatens Chrysanthus’ devotion to his new God:

Gif þu wille þinne sunu geweman fram Criste
 þonne most þu him olæcan and eft-mettas beodan
 and do þæt he wifige þonne wile he forgitan
 siððan he wer bið þæt he was cristen.

[If you desire to entice your son from Christ, then you must flatter him, and offer him delicacies, and make him to marry; then he will forget, after he is a husband, that he was a Christian (40-3)].

Food and delicacies may be snares, but marriage offers the lethean antidote to Chrysanthus’ religious impetuosity. On the surface the passage appears quite sexually “pessimistic,” to borrow Hugh Magennis’ phrase,²² since the counsellors can imagine no greater threat to Christian fortitude than marriage. This portrait of marriage, however, must be read in the context of not only the sexual temptations that follow, but also the characterisation of Daria. When the passage is treated in context, it seems to me that Ælfric actually is far less “pessimistic” than this excerpt suggests.

Consider the narrative development of the Old English text. Polemius’ first attempt to undermine his son’s faith does not employ legitimate marriage, but rather five frolicking virgins with instructions to *awendon mid heora wodlican plegan / his gebanc fram Criste and þæt hi sceoldon / sylfe hit gebicgan gif hi ne bigdon his mod* “turn his thoughts from Christ with their foolish play, and that they should pay for it themselves if they did not turn his mind” (53-5). Chrysanthus shuns all the delights laid before him and prays for deliverance from the *næddran* “serpents” (56). With the answer to his prayers (the maidens fall so soundly asleep that they can only be revived once they are removed from the bower) certain sexual mores are clearly communicated. The five maidens represent uncontained, unlawful, and unreasoning sexuality. Twice Ælfric refers to these maidens in connection with *wodlican plegan* “foolish sport” (53, 65). Such phrases associate unrestrained sexuality with folly and a marked absence of intellect. The saint’s response to this temptation indicates the response Ælfric wants his readers

to have in the face of sexual temptation: pray—early, often, and hard. The five maidens represent pure libido. More than that, by comparing them to serpents, the narrative alludes to the serpent of Genesis, tempting innocent and perfect creation to sin. This is not to say that Ælfric equates women generally with unrestrained sexuality or with sin, although to some degree the association is unavoidable. To simply accept such an interpretation without qualification, however, would not take into account the character of Daria, who is, without question, a woman of parts. When the frolicking virgins come to naught, Polemius brings in Daria:

þa wæs sum mæden wundorlice cræftig
 on þære ylcan byrig æþelborenre mægðe
 Daria gehaten on hæðenscipe wunigende
 wlitig on wæstmne and on uðwitegunge snoter.

[There was a certain maiden, wonderfully skilled, in the same city, of noble parentage, called Daria, living in heathenism, fair in stature and wise in philosophy (80-3)].

With her noble birth and beauty, her education and the intelligence to respond to Chrysanthus in kind, Daria is Polemius' attempt to fight fire with fire. Like her predecessors, Daria is physically beautiful, but, although she comes to him decked with gold and gems, Chrysanthus responds to her very differently, as an equal rather than a brainless nubile threatening his chastity. He addresses her *mid clannum mode* "with pure mind" (92). Unhappily for Polemius, Daria is not only intelligent enough to argue with Chrysanthus, but also wise enough to recognise the validity of his arguments. While Ælfric writes that Chrysanthus exhorts Daria *swa lange* "for a long time" (119), he only includes two elements of their discussion in the *passio*: he records first, Chrysanthus' exhortations regarding virginity and how undefiled purity unites beauty of body and mind (94-8), and, secondly, Chrysanthus' argument against false gods (104-117).²³ With Daria's conversion the two marry, giving Polemius the impression all is going according to plan, while Ælfric assures us *hi wurdon þa anrede and wunodon atgædere / gehiwodum synscipe and gehealdenre clannysse* "They were then steadfast and lived together in the appearance of marriage, their chastity being preserved" (122-3). He even specifies concerning Daria that she *Godes bec leornode æt þam gælaredum cnihte / and hire mod gestrangode on mægðhade wunigende* "[she] learned God's books from the well-taught youth, and strengthened her mind, continuing in virginity" (125-6).

In his representation of chaste marriage here Ælfric is presenting to his readers one of the most orthodox example of married chastity that he can. In many ways the *passio* presents a schematic of the Church's views on sexual activity. Outside of marriage (here represented by the five maidens), sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden, and thus such temptations are condemned roundly by the saint. Within marriage sexual activity, however lawful it may be, nevertheless makes marriage inferior to holy virginity—as the Church fathers, following St Paul, never tired of affirming.²⁴ Ælfric's saints are doing what he would himself have laymen do: they choose chastity. Essentially, these saints offer a less complicated example of the teaching which Ælfric appends to the *Life of Æthelthryth*, in which he imports, from the *Life of Malchus*, an anecdote about a couple who chose chastity after having had three children.²⁵ Unlike Æthelthryth, the elderly couple followed the prescribed, church-sanctioned manner for the laity to pursue chastity: after having had their children (the only reason for marriage), they *mutually* agree upon a life of chastity (Jackson 257). In the case of Chrysanthus and Daria, there is no question of one partner wanting the virginal life and the other not. Ælfric leaves the reader in little doubt that, had the virginal life without subterfuge been available to Chrysanthus and Daria, they clearly would have chosen it. Given the proposed efficacy of marriage for tearing the Christian away from God, Ælfric manages to avoid condemning marriage to a surprising degree. But the form of marriage Ælfric holds out as exemplary is a very particular model of marriage, chaste marriage. If one wants mind and body united and beautiful before God and to be *swa wlitig / wiþ-innan on mode swa swa þu wið-utan eart* “as beautiful within in mind as you are without” the only path is *ungewemmedum magðhade* “undefiled virginity” (97-8). The saints' chaste union dramatically asserts the priority of the virginal life above all others, and implies that the union of body and mind is necessarily imperfect in the married who are not abstinent.

For its part, the *SEL* so diminishes the character of Darige that she shrinks to near-nonentity. Like the OE legend, the ME too proposes that an assault upon Crissaunt's carnal instincts will do what torment could not: “his flesch chal nede wrye / for to loue som of hem: & to don lecherye / wit glotonye & lecherye: þus he worþ ouercome” (241b-43). Although Polemius' counsellors do not attribute here the same powerful forgetfulness to marriage, the saint recognises the deadly danger the “naddrin” (261) represent and rejects their advances accordingly. But here the ME narrative diverges radically from the OE, for Darige is herself one of the snakes, of the “naddrin.” She is reduced from brilliant, noble beauty, capable of accomplishing what the foolish maidens could not—answering and debating Chrysanthus on his own

terms—to “On of þe viue maydenus: þat me cleped Darie / þorwg Crisaunt-his preching; toward Crist gan wrye / & here wille him tolde: to him in preuyte” (281-3). Nothing makes the ME Darige special except that she turns to Christ through Crissaunt’s preaching. No singular intelligence or nobility marks her as a suitable spiritual partner for Crissaunt. Indeed, it is never explicitly stated that the two marry. We can only assume this since Polemius promised that whatever woman could draw Crissaunt from Christ could have him for her husband (249-50). The *SEL* leaves this detail ambiguous, telling us only that the other maidens leave the couple alone when they see Crissaunt kissing and embracing Darige. Mistaking Crissaunt’s “gret ioye” after Darige’s conversion for her sexual conquest of the youth, the others resign the field (286). Where Ælfric goes to great lengths to clarify the legitimate and chaste nature of the couple’s union, the ME redactor does the opposite, at least for the spectators within the bower. Admittedly we know that Crissaunt’s faith remains completely intact and that Darige has joined him in the faith rather than the flesh, but no more. This change effectively intensifies the focus upon Crissaunt and further diminishes Darige’s importance to the narrative.

There are no arguments here between Daria and Chrysanthus on the gods and the relationship of purity and beauty of mind to that of body. Absent is the life of faith shared by the couple that leads to the conversion of so many. Absent too are the furious denunciations by men who want their women back (133-4). Gone is Daria’s impassioned denunciation of lust and its wrongful subjugation of reason when she is imprisoned in a brothel and sexually attacked (270-3). It is clear that the two texts seek to foreground different holy values and criteria. Where the OE text recounts each saint’s various tortures (more accurately, various threats of torture), the ME begins rapidly winding down the narrative with a generic “sacrifice to the gods or else” exchange (299-303). Rather than converting great crowds of people to Christ and chastity, the couple instead draws the compassion of crowds as they are stripped down and prepared for beating. From saints condemned for their evangelistic activity, they are transformed into saints whose distinguishing characteristic is their passivity. Rather than evangelistic subjects, they, primarily Crissaunt, are would-be suffering objects.

Both of these changes, the reduction of Darige’s character and the celebrated passivity of the saints, find explanation in late medieval concerns and values. Historical exigencies offer good and well-known reasons why a female saint who acts to a great extent like a free agent might be minimised by the mid-fifteenth century. Ruth Mazo Karras, for example, in her discussion of the sexual double standard in the later Middle

Ages, examines the social consequences of the independence gained by women in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries after the ravages of the Black Death in England. With the depletion of the labour pool women had gained an economic independence which gave them greater leverage on the marriage exchange. Karras suggests that this independence and women's ability to be more selective in marriage met with hostility and even "attempts to control women's sexuality."²⁶ The *SEL* text not only controls Darige's sexuality, it reinforces a more desirable status quo. By making Darige one of the five maidens, the *SEL* text strips her of any autonomy in the contraction of a marriage. The female saint no longer actively participates in the contraction of a marriage, even a virginal one. Furthermore, the ambiguity of Crissaunt and Darige's marriage further reinforces the female saint's peripheral importance to the *passio*. The contemporary anxiety which Karras describes concerning single women acting as free agents accords chronologically with the elimination of the female saint/spouse's independence from the *ME passio*. In the context of such an anxiety, it is not unreasonable that the representation of a single woman engaging in premarital negotiations and taking men to task over their attempts to exercise sexual power over her might be expendable.

In place of Darige's character, the *ME* text develops Crissaunt's attitude toward his sufferings, for which there are no comparable passages in the Old English. At no point in Ælfric's version do either Chrysanthus or Daria address the purpose of suffering. The saints either cry out to the Lord for deliverance, or are delivered before they even ask. In the *SEL*, when Crissaunt responds to his persecutors, he explicitly takes Christ as the pattern for what he can and should endure, and so denies his persecutor any power over his will. Because of what Christ suffered for humanity, Crissaunt believes he himself *should* suffer:

No, Iwis...ic augt þolye more,
 for þilke tyme þat my god: on erþe was I-do
 wel ic wot for myne loue: he was I-beten so,
 þer nas no lyme on his body: þat nadden mony a wounde,
 & git may uppon my body: many a hol stede be founde.

[No, indeed...I ought to suffer more, for well I know that for my love, such time as my God was on earth he was so beaten that there was no place on his body that did not have many a wound, and yet on my body, many a whole place may be found. (202-6)].

There is obviously a concern for spiritual reciprocity foregrounded here. As Christ suffered to win Crissaunt's love, so too Crissaunt desires to suffer willingly for his Lord. The typological pattern of the saints imitating Christ's sufferings, the model which runs through saints' lives from the earliest passions, here is not only explicitly imitative, but also reciprocal. Crissaunt not only derives strength from Christ's model of suffering, he feels compelled to suffer not simply as his Lord suffered, but *because* his Lord suffered. We find this attitude throughout the ME *passio*. For example, when first deprived of food and drink, Crissaunt looks to Christ's example: "for my lord Jhesu crist: so dere me haueþ aboutge / for me he fourty dayis: & ne eet rygt nougte" (222-3). Christ suffered, bought him so dearly, that he ate nothing at all for forty days in order to *purchase* the saint. That purchase requires a return, the Christian's love. So, when threatened with crucifixion at the end of the *passio*, Crissaunt again finds comfort and encouragement in Christ's pattern of suffering which He endured "for oure loue" (328-30).

While the OE *passio* of Chrysanthus and Daria contains none of this defiant, even joyful, acceptance of torture, this attitude is not wholly absent from the *Lives of Saints*. The *Natale Sancte Agathe Virginis* includes a celebration of the efficacy of suffering:

Swa ic lust-fullige on þisum laðum witum
 swa swa se ðe gesihð þone þe he gewilnode
 oððe se þe fint fela gold-hordas.
 Ne mæg min sawl beon gebroht mid blysse to heofonum
 butan min lichama beo on þinum bendum genyrwod
 and fram ðinum cwellerum on þinum copsum agrapod.

[So greatly I rejoice in the painful torments even as one that sees him whom he has desired, or even as one that finds many hoards of gold. My soul cannot be brought with joy to heaven except my body be cramped in your bonds, and be gripped in your fetters by the executioners (ÆLS Agatha, 116-21).]

We see that the interest in suffering here concerns not reciprocity, but purification. Agatha's statement suggests the necessity of physical suffering for the salvation of the soul. Because suffering opens up this avenue for the soul's joy, Agatha accepts that she must suffer for her faith, and even desires to suffer. Given the Old English Chrysanthus' speech on the unity of the body and soul achieved in virginity, a speech which does not suggest any requirement beyond virginity for the perfection of body and soul, it

is not certain that Agatha's view of physical suffering and the body can be translated to the OE Chrysanthus' legend.²⁷ But, however ready Agatha is to suffer for her Lord, she does not treat it as a requisite exchange for Christ's *passio*. In the ME *passio*, Crissaunt's claim, "Ic aught þolye more!" stands out above all else. The absence of numerous torments from the second half of the *passio* and the treatment of Daria's character guarantee that nothing detracts from the portrait of Crissaunt's desire to suffer as did his Lord. At one point he even expresses a masochistic delight in his torments exclaiming, "Wel ic fare now / for wite hit wel to soþe: þis me lykeþ bet / þan me ded in my goupe: mylk of any tet" (I fare well now. For, understand it well as truth, this seems better to me than did the milk of any teat in my youth. 320-3). Crissaunt would transform suffering, or at the least the willingness to suffer, into a demonstration of love. He accepts suffering because Christ endured suffering "for myne loue" (204). As his Lord suffered to gain Crissaunt's love, so too he will suffer. Logically, however, he already has Christ's love, so there is no question of his gaining Christ's love by suffering. There is nothing in the text to suggest that suffering in any way works out one's purification as the *passio* of Agatha suggests. Instead, the endurance of suffering serves only to document the generosity of the Lord. As the explicit response to Christ's work to gain the saint's love, Crissaunt's willingness to suffer is—to employ the language of romance—an act of courtesy in response to his lord's largesse. The *passio* represents suffering as a matter of reciprocity whereby the actions and honour of the lord are upheld and the fealty due him is publicly acknowledged.

In her analysis of exchange in the transactions in great households of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Felicity Heal writes that contemporary documents take great care "to ensure that the whole establishment directed itself toward upholding the honour of the lord and his reputation for generosity."²⁸ The more elevated servants of a household "personated and expressed [the household head's] qualities" (Heal 180). Exchanges placing the munificence of the lord in the public eye served not only to enhance the reputation of both parties, but also to reinforce the lines of hierarchy (Heal 188). If we read the exchange of benefits and rewards between Crissaunt and Christ in this light, then the relational reward is love, and the coin of exchange whereby Crissaunt responds to Christ's "good lordship and largesse" is physical suffering (Heal 180). The use of the lord-retainer relationship to represent the relationship between Christ and Christian is obviously not a development of the later medieval period. It recurs throughout Anglo-Saxon poetry and Ælfric himself repeatedly employs the notion of serving and duty in his treatment of chastity in his homily *Nativitas Sancte*

Mariae Virginis.²⁹ In the *Nativitas* homily, however, Ælfric is interested in using the theme of service to explain the importance and true meaning of the ideal of virginal chastity. Consider, for example, his praise for those who take up the monastic life, forsaking possessions for *Godes þeowdome* “God’s service” (ÆHom M 8 [Ass 3] 44.499), as superior to those who possess virginity alone without the commitment to the service of God. Similarly, in the *Catholic Homilies*, Ælfric again links service and virginity: *Se hehsta stepe is on mægðhades mannum, þa þe fram cildhade clenlice Gode þeowigende ealle middaneardlice gælsan forhogiað* “The highest grade is in persons of virginity, those who, serving God purely from childhood, despise all worldly luxuries” (ÆCH II:4 39.303-5). In this light, virginity becomes the token of the saint’s service for and commitment to God. Given this relationship between virginity and holy service, it is natural, indeed inevitable, that the OE legend of Chrysanthus would foreground the saint’s virginity. Virginity serves as the icon of the saint’s transfer of allegiance from the secular to the eternal, from the pagan world of his father to that of his heavenly Lord.

The Middle English specifically replaces this icon, and consequently replaces the OE focus upon clashing worldviews with attention to relational or social bonding. The *SEL*’s focus parallels late medieval society’s attention to displays of generosity as the means of solidifying the bonds between individuals and households, a bonding which Heal argues received new attention in the fifteenth century.³⁰ In his willingness to receive upon his own body wounds like those suffered by his Lord, Crissaunt symbolically takes up Christ’s livery, simultaneously demonstrating Christ’s lordship over him and his own participation in Christ’s “community of honour” (Heal 185). With the combination of suffering as the emblem of God’s household and the absence of the saints’ preaching (*Wurdon þa on fyrste fela men gebigde / þurh heora drohtnunge fram deofles biggengum / to Cristes geleafan and to clenum life* “Then after a time many men were converted by their manner of life from the devil’s worship to faith in Christ and to pure living” 127-9), the ME legend necessarily offers a more passive image of sanctity. To some degree passivity is inherent to martyrial hagiography: martyrs are, by definition, acted upon. For example, after the couple’s arrest, the OE Chrysanthus is first bound, then placed in stocks, drenched with urine, sewn into an untanned oxskin, rebound and again thrown into prison (147-67). On the other hand, during the torments attempted upon him, Chrysanthus converts his persecutor Claudius, Claudius’ household, and the seventy soldiers who serve him (202-18). For her part, Daria is thrown into a whorehouse to be violated, perhaps the most objectifying of violent acts. When a lioness arrives to defend Daria’s chastity, Daria addresses her

would-be rapists and so forcefully condemns their bestial behaviour that they are, one by one, converted to Christ as well.³¹ The saints suffer (or are threatened with suffering) and in that sense they are passive, but they are not defined by passivity since they actively convert others as they undergo their trials.

Passivity is not in this way modulated in the ME version. Crissaunt endures less than the OE Chrysanthus, and his miraculous escapes do not have comparable results. The ME Darige does nothing at all; she neither suffers nor really speaks for herself. Her one assertion, “Ic him to honouri also / & alle oþer godus ic here forsake: now & euermo” (306-7) is nothing more than an echo of Crissaunt’s preceding denial of the pagan gods. Certainly the saints are miraculously delivered from the attempts to beat them, but without any evangelistic efficacy. The unmitigated passivity of these two saints recalls the passivity of romance heroes who, as Jill Mann argues, do “not seek to execute a consciously developed plan,” but instead allow “adventure” generally “to dictate the shape they will take.”³² As with the attention to exchange in the relationship between Christ and Crissaunt, the connection here between hagiography and romance is not new, for the earliest legends of Paul and Thecla are clearly rooted in Latin romance.³³ Recently Jocelyn Wogan-Browne has elegantly examined the influence of the romance genre upon early Middle English virgin *passiones*.³⁴ Here, I offer this comparison to late medieval romance to demonstrate a particular contemporary rationale for the emphasis upon passivity in the ME *passio* of Crissaunt and Darige. Mann makes her argument for the passivity of the romance hero with an analysis of Sir Gawain, with a particularly useful consideration of the beheading scene. She notes the two parts in the Green Knight’s challenge: the first is the active role when Gawain cuts off the Green Knight’s head; the second is a passive role which requires Gawain’s head be cut off by the Green Knight. Mann proposes that the fact that Gawain’s promise alone ties him to the second half of this challenge increases the knight’s passivity. Since neither logic nor necessity binds him to this fruitless bargain, but only his pledge, Mann writes, “the knight’s field of action, one could say, is not the outside world, over which he claims to exercise no control, but himself: the outside world is the means of testing and revealing his selfhood” (108-9). For Crissaunt, his concern for suffering as the indicator of his reciprocal love for his Lord suggests the same bounds of testing, and the same concern for selfhood. The outside world, the masses to be converted, do not apparently enter his field of vision. He must prove his devotion to his lord by enduring on his flesh that which his lord endured for him.

In the OE text the saints’ evangelism constitutes a very active form of struggle.

Chrysanthus and Daria did not simply sit back to revel in suffering: they deny their persecutors power over their bodies and argue with them to bring them to faith in Christ. This is not passivity, but spiritual insurrection. If the measure of heroism for the romance hero consists of “his willingness to hazard himself without claiming control over the larger forces,” as Mann argues, then Crissaunt in the ME text is a romance hero par excellence (107). Such heroism then is “not merely a negative failure to fact, but a positive act of submission” (116). Indeed, Crissaunt succeeds where Gawain fails, because the ultimate passivity, receiving death, is his highest victory. The two versions of the legend, then, give different interpretive options to their readers. Ælfric exhorts his readers to use the saints as models to follow in the approaching end-times; although he adapts the usefulness of the saints from the Latin, the eschatological emphasis of the concluding lines of the Old English *passio* is uniquely Anglo-Saxon.³⁵ The ME *passio*, however, does not explicate the purpose and usefulness of the saints, eschatological or otherwise, to direct the reader’s internalisation of the text.

Even without explanation the differences between the two texts suggest distinct models of reception. The OE text presents the reader with a strong male and an equally strong female saint, both of whom are committed to virginity. Their choice of physical chastity serves not as an outright condemnation of physical sexuality (although unrestrained sexuality clearly is demonstrably censured with the figures of the *naddran* and Daria’s would-be rapists), but rather as a sign of their rejection of the world and the values of men like Polemius. The couple offers the reader a transformational model of sanctity, and also a model of imitation. After the saints are buried alive, Ælfric records that because of the miracles performed at the site where Chrysanthus and Daria were buried alive, *þæt folc gewurðode þa wuldorfullan halgan / and gelome sohton mid geleafan þider* “people honoured the glorious saints and with faith frequently went there” (331-2). The emperor—enraged by the saints’ posthumous success as witnesses to Christ—orders that those who visit the saints’ burial site also be walled in, stoned, and buried alive (333-40). Because we are told nothing more of these people, nothing more than that they were honouring the saints (as Ælfric is encouraging his readers to do) and seeking for miracles at their tomb, the Old English text implies that honouring the saints provides a path to sanctity open to the most average Christian. Martyrdom, at least symbolically, becomes a possibility for the reader.

This strategy for participating in the lives of saints is absent from the *SEL* Crissaunt legend. On the contrary, the ME text so focuses upon the saint’s concern for suffering as the indicator of his relationship to God that it usurps the place of all evangelistic

concerns and any attention to how the saints transform the world in which they live. When suffering becomes the singular and superlative token of relational exchange between Christ and his “loue” Crissaunt, rather than a model for encouragement, then the role of the saint as model for *imitatio* clearly shifts. From saint as model of the conquering Christian to be redeemed at the end of time by Christ victorious, we move to a model of the saint as sufferer, a model that reflects the contemporary affective devotional focus upon Christ’s humanity in his Passion and Crucifixion (Aers 22). Crissaunt demonstrates the same “freely chosen infliction of bodily pain” that we see in other late medieval texts, including those of Mary d’Oignies and Julian of Norwich.

The differences we see in the *passio* of Crissaunt and Darige reflect an adjustment of the image of the saint to accommodate changing spiritual concerns. Richard Kieckhefer explores how in late medieval piety Christ’s humanity received new attention, in particular “those moments in his life that aroused sentiments of love and compassion: his infancy and his passion.”³⁶ If one of the dominant themes of late medieval devotion was the “visualisation of ‘Christ in his humanity,’” as seen in his birth and death, then perhaps here we have the interpretive function behind the ME Crissaunt legend.³⁷ It offers an example of how a late medieval hagiographer tried to represent the humanity of Christ for readers. The legend depicts the saint responding to Christ’s sufferings and sacrifice, to the demonstration of his love and humanity. Also, by reproducing Christ’s sufferings on his own body, Crissaunt re-enacts for readers Christ’s passion of love for the readers themselves, a very different interpretive function indeed.

Where Ælfric explicitly exhorts his readers to fortify themselves for trials of faith through the examples of the saints, the *SEL* instead invokes a cycle of remembrance. Crissaunt remembers Christ’s sufferings; that remembrance summons up the response of love and desire for suffering; readers are invited to enter into this cycle of remembrance since by reading the legends they rehearse the same passion that Crissaunt is rehearsing. With this we enter a stage where, as Edward Schillebeeckx writes, “‘Suffering in itself,’ no longer suffering through and for others, took on a mystical and positive significance so that instead of having a critical power it really acquired reactionary significance. Suffering in itself became a ‘symbol.’”³⁸ Suffering here revolves around love, and suffering is treated in a language of exchange which was culturally contemporary, although necessarily symbolic and culturally elite. The glory of the saint is reaffirmed, even as the legend makes claims for Christ’s sufferings as the sign of His love. The ME text relies upon the symbolic every bit as much as the

OE, but rather than virginity as the token of the saints' rejection of the secular, a world that all Christians will have to renounce in the end-times, the later medieval text employs the saint, in mind and in body, as the symbol of Christ's suffering love that can be reenacted again and again in a present which has no immediate eschatological hope.

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Notes

1 I cite only a few very different examples of scholarship on the changing interpretation of the saints. On the influence of Neo-Platonism on the role of the saints, see Marc Van Uytfanghe's essay "L'essor du culte des saints et la question de l'eschatologie" in *Les Fonctions des saints dans le monde occidental, IIIe-XIIIe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1991), pp. 91-107. Van Uytfanghe proposes that the philosophical developments of the fourth and fifth centuries led to increased attention to the saints' intercessory role as necessary intermediaries for the ascension of souls to heaven at death. In her *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture c1150-1500* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001), Jocelyn Wogan-Browne traces the reciprocal relationship between female audience, contemporary literary genres, and the shaping of sanctity in the hagiography of Anglo-Norman England. Lynda Coon, in her essay "Civilizing Merovingian Gaul: the Lives of Monegund, Radegund, and Bathild," explores how contemporary hagiographers record the lives of royal saints using both biblical and existing hagiographic models of sanctity to disseminate *vitae* that place the saint firmly under church authority and supervision; see *Sacred Fictions: Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), pp. 120-41.

2 From the inception of the hagiographic genre, suffering has played a crucial role in the establishment of sanctity. Whether the saints' martyrial sufferings were interpreted as an imitation of Christ's own sufferings, or whether the later renunciations and privations of the desert life were interpreted as a life of "daily martyrdom," physical suffering played a crucial role in the construction of holiness. The modeling of martyrial sufferings upon Christ's is seen powerfully in Irenaeus' description of the second-century martyrdom of Blandina. He writes of the other slaves being tortured with Blandina such that "in their agony [her companions] saw with their outward eyes in the person of their sister, the One who was crucified for them."

Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.1.56, quoted in Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia UP, 1988), p. 73. Brown writes that Cyprian, a church rather than desert father, used the theme of martyrdom powerfully throughout his treatment of the Christian life (195). Such discipline and suffering is writ large in the desert where the monks practise death to the world on a daily basis.

3 All three lives are found in Ælfric, *Lives of Saints*, ed. W.W. Skeat, 2 vols Early English Text Society o.s. 76, 82, 94, 114 (1881, 1885; New York: Kraus, 1966 and 1890, 1900; New York: Kraus, 1966). Citations to these and all other Ælfrician texts will follow the short titles laid out by the *Dictionary of Old English. A Microfiche Concordance to Old English: The List of Texts and Index of Editions* comp. Antonette diPaolo Healey and Richard Venezky (Toronto: PIMS, 1980). *Passio Sancti Iuliani et sponse eius Basilisse* (Skeat I:90-115) = ÆLS (Julian and Basilissa); *Passio Sancte Cecilie virginis* (Skeat II:356-77) = ÆLS (Cecilia); *Passio Chrisanti et Darie sponse eius* (Skeat, II:378-99) = ÆLS (Chrysanthus).

4 The Latin version emphasises the couple's union in death, even comparing the pit in which they were stoned to death to a bed: *Facta est in passione socia <sanguine> sicut fuerant mente etiam coniuges, quasi in uno lectulo ita in una fovea. in una voluntate durantes* (CCCC MS 9, f. 389a ll. 31-4. "It happened in their joint passion they were spouses in blood just as in mind, as if in one bed thus in one pit, enduring with one will" <sanguine> =MS sanguinis).

5 Dyan Elliott wrongly divides the model of married chastity along gender lines, saying that men flee and women stay and suffer. Both Julian and Chrysanthus marry, in the former case before the conversion of the spouse to the virginal life, in the latter case afterward; see *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993), p. 65.

6 Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), p. 303, quoted in David Aers, "The Humanity of Christ: Reflections on Orthodox Late Medieval Representation," *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1996), pp. 15-42, at p. 17.

7 Manfred Görlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary* (Iklley: Scolar Press, 1974), p. 40.

8 See ÆLS Preface 35-45 for the dedication to Æthelweard and Æthelmær. Görlach p. 61.

9 Of the married-virgin saints, only Cecilia is well represented in the *SEL*. The *passio* of Julian and Basilissa is found in none of the manuscripts.

10 The text is so marginal to the tradition that Görlach does not list it in his “Contents of Major *SEL* Manuscripts,” *Textual Tradition*, pp. 306-9. See pp. 75-7 for Görlach’s discussion of the history of the manuscript. The relevant essentials are that the manuscript was the work of a single scribe, apparently over an extended period of time. The compiler appears to have been collating lives from a variety of sources. Ff. 192-6, on which we find the Crissaunt and Darige legend, fall in a section in which the compiler has included numerous legends unique to this manuscript. As to the dialect in which the manuscript is written, Görlach assigns it to N Hants, noting that prior to its gift to the Bodleian in 1611, the provenance is unknown. Horstmann includes additional details about the manuscript plus an exhaustive list of its contents in *Altenglische Legenden* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 1875), pp. xxxiv-xxxviii.

Of the *SEL* texts generally—including Bodl. 779 and its fifteenth-century counterparts—Görlach writes that by the late Middle Ages, “The *SEL* may be of considerable depth and warmth of devotion and thus be of some literary merit....but this probably did not stop its being regarded as old-fashioned by fifteenth-century readers....There was no need for [the *SEL*] any more: for poetry one would turn to the courtly poets of the late fourteenth century and the fifteenth century, [and] religious interests were better served by the Wycliffite writings” (62). Thus the marginality of this particular legend is compounded by the increasing marginality of the legendary itself.

11 One of the differences in content which arises no doubt in part from the metrical and rhyming concerns in the later version is the augmentation of characters, names and descriptive details which play only an incidental role in the OE version. Additions to the narrative are, in general, familiar and anecdotal additions. One example of such an addition is the emphasis placed by the ME version upon Polemius’ role as a persecutor of Christians and upon his friendship with the emperor, Numerian. These details prepare the reader for the focus upon Crissaunt’s sufferings at the hands of his own father, Polemius, as well as explaining how Crissaunt’s conversion jeopardises his father’s position. The lines “swyþe glad was þe emperour: þo he was I-come; / to his preue consayl: polimyus he haþ I-nome” (10-12), which note the friendship between Polemius and Numerian, are typical of the most common forms of expansion in the Middle English *passio*. Emotion, “swyþe glad,” is attributed to them, as is the existence of a close relationship, “preue consayl,” between them.

12 In the Latin preface Ælfric proposes: *Illa vero que scripturus sum suspicor non offendere audientes, sed magis fide torpentes recreare hortationibus, quia martyrum passiones nimium fidem erigant languentem* “But I think that those things which I am now going to write will not at all offend the hearers, but will rather refresh by their exhortations such as are slothful in the faith, since the Passions of the Martyrs greatly revive a failing faith” (*Lives of Saints* I:2-3). In the ensuing Old English preface, Ælfric specifies a purpose for the lives of the saints that focuses upon the glory given to God through their holy service. The saints are the servants who display obedience not merely to God, but also to his honour. Their miracles bring him honour (ÆLS (Pref) 56-57: *forþan þe God is wundorlic on his halgum*), as well as providing Ælfric’s Anglo-Saxon readers with encouragement and the assurance of the saints’ intercession on the readers’ behalf (ÆLS (Pref) 71-72: *ac we woldon gesettan be sumum þas boc / mannum to getrymninge and to munde us sylfum þæt hi us þingion to þam almihhtigan gode*).

13 Ælfric follows BHL 1787.

14 For a survey of the presence of apocalyptic thought in Anglo-Saxon poetry and prose, see Milton McC. Gatch, “Perceptions of eternity,” *Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, eds M. Godden and M. Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), pp. 190-205; rep. in Gatch, *Eschatology and Christian Nurture: Themes in Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Religious Life* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

15 The apocalyptic passage included by Ælfric at the *passio*’s end occurs in a rather different form in the Latin version of the *passio* found in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary. While the relationship between the Cotton-Corpus Legendary and Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints* has yet to be resolved, as a representative of the Latin tradition of the *passio* found in Anglo-Saxon England the CCL provides a useful point of contrast. Although there is debate about the exact nature of the relationship between the CCL and Ælfric’s exemplar, there is general consensus that this Legendary tradition offers the closest thing to Ælfric’s exemplar that we have. For a discussion of sources and the textual tradition, see the entry for “Chrysanthus and Daria” found in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture* vol. I, eds Frederick M. Biggs *et al* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute, 2001), pp. 139-42. See also Patrick Zettel, *Ælfric’s Hagiographic Sources and the Latin Legendary Preserved in BL MS Cotton Nero I & CCC MS 9 and other MSS* (D.Phil. Oxford University, 1979), pp. 258-9.

The Cotton-Corpus Legendary version of the passion of Chrysanthus and Daria begins by addressing the efficacy of saints’ lives. The passage is highly rhetorical in nature, juxtaposing a series of contrasts between momentary earthly sufferings and

eternal sufferings which know no end. The explanation of the saints' legends concludes with the following injunction: *Horum itaque gloria [et] delectatione respiciamus mundum cum omnibus delectamentis suis, et sanctorum gesta absque incredulitatis nube serenissima recitemus historiamque Crisanti, tam nobis qui credimus quam omnibus qui credituri sunt profuturam* "And thus, with the glory and delight of the saints, let us spurn the world with all its delights, and let us recount, without the veil of incredulity, the brilliant deeds of the saints and the story of Chrysanthus, as useful for us who believe as for all who are going to believe." (CCCC 9, f. 379b, ll. 6-11). The example of the saints is here an exhortation to renounce temporal for eternal glory, and to weigh momentary sufferings in light of what is escaped in eternity. Moreover, these injunctions conclude with a command that the reader suspend disbelief. Coming as the passage does at the beginning, this injunction seems to suggest anxiety about the narrative's credibility. Certainly the Latin lacks any of the apocalyptic immediacy which marks Ælfric's concluding comments. (Since the CCL is unedited and untranslated, both transcription and translation are mine.)

16 The only edition of this life is found in "Des Ms. Bodl. 779: jüngere Zusatzlegenden zur südlichen Legendensammlung," ed. C. Horstmann *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Litteraturen* 82 (1889): 336-43.

17 One of the most recent examples is Sarah Salih's discussion of torture in the Katherine Group in *Versions of Virginity in Late Medieval England* (Rochester: Brewer, 2001), pp. 74-106. While I agree with Salih that a degree of "spectacle" exists in the female virgin lives which is absent from the male saints' lives generally, I wonder if the discussions of female virgins would not benefit from juxtaposition against contemporary representations of saints such as Sebastian, who is so spectacularly tortured and similarly subjected to the "gaze."

18 *for-ðam-þe on þam dagum ne mihte nan man beon gefogon / buton he hæfene bec hæfide geleornod* "because in those days no one could be distinguished unless he had learned heathen books" (10-11).

19 *Swa lange ic leornode þa ungeleaftfullan bec / mid þeostrum afyllede oþþæt ic ferlice become to soðfesnyse leohte* "Thus long have I learned faithless books filled with darkness, until I suddenly came to the light of truth" (17-19a).

20 Conversely, the OE text actually includes an extended explanation at the end of the *passio* arguing for the usefulness of reading the lives of saints.

21 The balance of the story more closely resembles what is found in the *Old English Martyrology*, which is predictably terse; see *An Old English Martyrology*, ed. George Herzfeld EETS o.s. 116 (1901; London: Oxford UP, 1997), pp. 212-14.

22 Hugh Magennis, “‘No Sex Please, We’re Anglo-Saxons?’ Attitudes to Sexuality in Old English Prose and Poetry,” *Leeds Studies in English* 26 (1985): 14.

23 A significantly longer version of the conversation can be found in the Latin tradition represented in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary. The debate between Chrysanthus and Daria found in CCCC 9 is extensive and wide-ranging. See 382b l. 43-385a l. 27.

24 To cite but a few select works on virginity or the three grades of chastity: I Corinthians 7; Ambrose, *De Virginitate*, ed. Egnatius Cazzaniga CSLP (Turin: G.B. Paravia, 1948); *De Virginitate, Libri Tres*, ed. Egnatius Cazzaniga CSLP (Turin: G.B. Paravia, 1948); Jerome, “Ad Eustochium, Epistle XXII,” *Hieronymus, Epistularum Pars I*, I-LXX, ed. Isidorus Hilberg CSEL 54 (Vienna: G. Gerold, 1996) 143-211; Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum Libri Duo*, PL 23, ed. J.P. Migne (1883) 221-395; Augustine, *De bono coniugali* and *De sancta virginitate*, in *Sancti Aureli Augustini*, ed. J. Zycha CSEL 41 (Vienna: G. Gerold, 1900) 186-231 and 234-302; *De bono viduitatis*, in *Sancti Aureli Augustini*, ed. J. Zycha, CSEL 41 (1900), 304-343. In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, there is most famously Aldhelm, *De Virginitate, Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Rudolf Ehwald, *MGH, Auctores Antiquissimi* 15 (Munich 1884), 226-323. Ælfric lays out the correct behaviour for the three grades of chastity in his “Letter to Sigefyrth” (printed as “Be þære halgan clænnyse”) and “Nativitas Sanctæ Mariæ Virginis,” *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben* ed. Bruno Assmann (Kassel: Wigand, 1889), 13-48. The Nativitas homily will hereafter be referred to by its DOE short title ÆHom M 8 [Ass 3], and the Letter to Sigefyrth as ÆLet 5 [Sigefyrth]. Ælfric’s “First Old English Letter for Wulfstan” extensively provides the prescriptions for chastity with reference to the consecrated, as printed in *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church, vol. I. A.D. 871-1204*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock et al (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), pp. 260-302.

25 In a recent article, Peter Jackson proposed that Ælfric inserts the anecdote as the antidote to the example of St. Æthelthryth which Ælfric could not endorse for imitation. In choosing virginity in the teeth of her second husband’s objections, Æthelthryth actually violates the guideline that decisions for chastity within marriage should be mutual. On the duties and responsibilities of the wife towards her husband, Jackson cites the following passage from ÆLS (Thomas) 385-9: *canones swa-þeah*

cwedaþ and beodað þat nan wif / ne sceole hire wer forletan swilce for eamfestnysse / buton him bam swa gelicige “canons nevertheless say and command that no woman shall leave her husband on the plea of religion unless it please them both” (quoted in “Ælfric and the purpose of Christian marriage: a reconsideration of the *Life of Æthelthryth*, ll. 120-30,” *Anglo-Saxon England* 29 (2001): 244-5).

See, regarding the purpose of marriage as being childbearing: *Riht sinscipe is on gesinhiwum / þa þe beoð geeærnode æfter Godes gesetnysse / and æmbyrce ne wyrceað wolice and sceamlice, / ac heora lif habbað, swa swa hit alyfed is / bearn strynende mid Godes bletsunge / on alyfedum timan, Godes folce to eacan* “Right cohabitation is in the wedded couple, those who are married according to God’s ordinances and do not commit adultery perversely or shamefully, but live their lives just as it is allowed, begetting children with God’s blessing in lawful times, to increase the people of God” (ÆLet 5 [Sigefyrth] 138-43).

26 Ruth Mazo Karras, “Two Models, Two Standards; Moral Teaching and Sexual Mores,” *Bodies and Discipline: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England*, eds Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 123-38 at p. 133.

27 *...þu mihtest habban þone halend to brydguman / gif þu hine lufodest and heolde þe clenlice / on ungewemmedum magðhade and þu wurde swa wlitig / wif-innan on mode swa swa þu wið-utan eart* “...you might have the Saviour as bridegroom if you would love him and keep yourself chaste in undefiled virginity, and if you would be as fair within, in your mind, as you are without” (96-8).

28 Felicity Heal, “Reciprocity and Exchange in the Late Medieval Household,” *Bodies and Discipline* eds Hanawalt and Wallace, pp. 177-98, at p. 186.

29 See note 15. Throughout the homily Ælfric employs *þeow-* and *þegn-* to represent virginity as the natural symbol of service to Christ. The relationship between service and virginity is explored in my discussion of *clennes*, *magðhad*, and service in *Virginity and the Married-Virgin Saints in Ælfric’s Lives of Saints: the Translation of an Ideal* (Ph.D. University of Toronto, 2000) pp. 92-7. See also Hugh Magennis, “*Godes Þeow* and Related Expressions in Old English: Contexts and Uses of a Traditional Literary Figure,” *Anglia* 116 (1998): 139-70. Magennis traces out the nuances of the Latin tradition as both background and contrast to the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

30 Heal 194. This need for conspicuous generosity was due, Heal argues, in part “to the Crown’s need to display power in the aftermath of Henry VI’s disastrous reign.”

31 For Daria's speech see 263-87. In part her argument follows reasoning not unlike Chrysanthus' earlier arguments with her. Opposing reason to lust, she warns one "attacker" that *galnysse* "lust" will be his destruction. Unrestrained sexuality is again linked to spiritual destruction.

32 Jill Mann, "Sir Gawain and the Romance Hero," *Heroes and Heroines in Medieval English Literature: a Festschrift Presented to André Crepin on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* ed. Leo Carruthers (London: Brewer, 1984), pp. 105-17, at p. 107.

33 Peter Brown's brief discussion of the Apocryphal Acts provides a good starting place for the relationship between romance and the continuing acts of the apostles and the developing martyrial genre; see *Body and Society*, pp. 155-6.

34 Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "Virgin Passions: Romance, *Raptus*, Ritual" in *Saints' Lives*, pp. 91-122, esp. 92-100.

35 See note 8 above. One could consider either the sermon literature represented by the *The Vercelli Homilies* ed. D.G. Scragg EETS o.s. 300 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992), or the OE poetry, such as the Judgment Day poems.

36 R. Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls, Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 90. Quoted in David Aers' "The Humanity of Christ," p. 16.

37 Aers quoting Rosemary Woolf, *English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 24-5, as quoted on page 17 of Aers' "The Humanity of Christ." Aers' chapter includes an excellent critique of the manner which medievalists have conflated "feminisation" with the "humanisation" of Christ's body in the late Middle Ages. See especially pp. 28-38.

38 Schillebeeckx, *Christ The Experience of Jesus as Lord*, trans. J. Bowden (New York: Crossroad, 1990), p. 699. Quoted in Aers 39.