

# The Third Gender and *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*

Rhonda L. McDaniel



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*Lives of Saints*

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## Chapter One

# The Latin Doctors and the Concept of Metagender

MOST DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING GENDER in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages discuss the topic in terms of a linear continuum with masculinity at one end, femininity at the other. Within the context of the Greco-Roman culture of the eastern Mediterranean, one finds ample evidence of this continuum of masculinity and femininity used as metaphors for moral strength (manly) and moral weakness (womanish). Those who occupied the exact middle of the continuum, eunuchs, held a unique place in late Roman society, often attaining positions of trust and influence but also drawing ferocious criticism, especially from the Latin authors in the western part of the empire.<sup>1</sup> Rome had long had laws against the practices necessary to make eunuchs—the crushing or surgical removal of the testicles—but eunuchs were continually imported from the east and were attested in all parts of the empire.<sup>2</sup> Their more or less common presence provided late Roman society with an example of the ambiguous midpoint of the continuum between masculinity and femininity, a sort of third gender that apparently did not settle easily into the Roman equation between morality and gender, as noted by Mathew Kuefler:

Writers of the later empire devised a whole new language for the intermediate gender status of the eunuch. According to the author of the *Historia Augusta*, the Roman emperor Severus Alexander (ruled 222–235) is said to have referred to eunuchs as a “third sex” or “third type of human being” (*tertium genus hominum*). Julian called Eusebius, the eunuch advisor to his predecessor, an androgyne (*androgynos*). The poet Claudius Mamertinus elegantly described eunuchs as “exiles from the society of the human race, belonging neither to one sex nor the other.” More rancorously, the poet Claudian called the eunuch Eutropius, a consul under Arcadius (ruled 395–408), “you whom the male sex has discarded and the female will not adopt.”<sup>3</sup>

Just at the time when such antipathy was being leveled against eunuchs in high political and social circles in the Latin west, the Christian communities were importing concepts of monasticism from the east, especially the practice of virginity for men as well as women. The monastic ideal of virginity was rooted in the intersection of Stoic and Neoplatonic philosophy with Jewish and early Gnostic Christian interpretations of the Fall of humanity into sin as the fall of spiritual beings into mortal, sexual bodies. The New Testament passage in Galatians 3:26–28, “omnes enim filii Dei estis per fidem in Christo Iesu quicumque enim in Christo baptizati estis Christum induitis non est Iudaeus neque Graecus non est servus neque liber non est masculus neque femina omnes enim vos unum estis in Christo Iesu” [You are all truly children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Whoever certainly has been baptized into Christ, you are clothed with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: you are all truly one in Christ Jesus], when interpreted in light of the earlier view about Creation and Fall, led to the idea that the gender distinctions represented by bodily sex were negated through baptism into the transcendent Body of Christ and by the practice of chastity. As a result, those who vowed themselves to chastity were no longer constrained by gender distinctions and roles.<sup>4</sup> The same late Roman cultural perspectives that looked askance at eunuchs, however, also gave these ideas and the Christian monastic concepts of virginity that sprang from them a tepid regard: “Augustine in Africa, Martin in Gaul, Paulinas of Nola and Ambrose in Italy, Priscillian in Spain, had by their prowess and reputation sanctified asceticism in the eyes of a section of the population. But the movement had not fully captured the loyalty of the leaders of society as a whole. Not only the unsympathetic pagans but sporadic Christian opinion denounced the monks as irresponsible and bizarre wretches.”<sup>5</sup> Since monks and virgins committed themselves to lives of chastity, thus making themselves eunuchs in practice if not in fact, they also did not fit into late Roman conceptions of masculinity or femininity. Instead of downplaying this aspect of Christian behavior, however, many leaders and bishops of the late Roman and early medieval church emphasized and idealized this commitment to virginity and chastity as the sign of greatest devotion to God—a kind of bloodless martyrdom that made one a citizen of the transcendent kingdom of heaven while still living in the temporal empire in this world. One of the most forceful proponents of this view in the West, St. Jerome, directly addressed the implications of the practice of chastity on gender in a number of works.

## Jerome

Without doubt, Jerome's most (in)famous work that addresses the topic of gender is *Adversus Jovinianum* 'Against Jovinian,' a polemical treatise that enlarges upon the dangers of marriage and exalts virginity and the practice of fasting.<sup>6</sup> Written in order to oppose the teaching of a monk named Jovinianus that marriage possessed equal dignity and merit with virginity, *Adversus Jovinianum* became Jerome's hammer, his "opportunity to pulverize all his opponent's propositions."<sup>7</sup> John Oppel notes that, because of its hyperbolic rhetoric and enormous influence on later misogynist texts, "Virtually all discussions of the pros and cons of marriage from late antiquity to the early Reformation take Jerome's [*Against Jovinian*] as their point of departure. If the Middle Ages was hostile to marriage, as is sometimes asserted, and bitterly antiwomen, some of this—or, at least, some of these tendencies insofar as they *are* characteristically 'medieval'—can be attributed to the influence of Jerome's work. ... The two themes of *Against Jovinian* are sex and women, and Jerome appears to be against them both."<sup>8</sup> *Adversus Jovinianum*, however, is not so much antiwomen as it is antimarriage. Jerome passes over many opportunities to deal harshly with women in general, demonstrates that virginity was honored even among the pagans, and praises faithful wives. Ultimately he says, however, that "uxores sitas in bonorum malorumque confinio" [wives stand on the border line of good and ill] because no one can tell whether he will marry a good or a bad woman, and therefore wise men seldom marry.<sup>9</sup> He did not say that therefore wise men have no traffic with women—if he did he would have had to condemn himself—but that marriage brings many distractions that interfere with single-minded service to Christ.<sup>10</sup> Jerome uses every rhetorical weapon in his considerable arsenal to convince his audience that marriage, while honorable and allowed by God, is an uncertain, enslaving, and spiritually stunting state for both men and women *in comparison to the freedom of virginity*. Because of Jerome's vituperative rhetoric against marriage, however, Andrew Cain observes that "the Christian senator Pammachius was so embarrassed by [Jerome's] incendiary tract *Against Jovinian* that he tried frantically to withdraw copies of it from circulation in Rome in the early 390s."<sup>11</sup> Augustine soon wrote *De bono coniugali* in order to present a more positive view of marriage in contrast to Jerome's work.

Jerome's ambivalence toward marriage springs from his perspective on the Fall of humanity and his understanding that "In hominem, et vir

et femina continetur: ... Legamus principium Geneseos, et inueniemus Adam, hoc est, hominem, tam virum quam feminam nuncupari" [the word *man* comprehends both male and female. ... Let us read the beginning of Genesis, and we shall find Adam, that is *man*, called both male and female].<sup>12</sup> For Jerome, Adam's existence in Paradise manifested no sexual differentiation. When Adam ate the fruit, all humanity ate with him, male and female alike. Both the guilty act and the consequences belong to "us" in Jerome's thought, equally to all men and women.<sup>13</sup> He continually works from the perspective that sexually differentiated bodies were a result of the Fall and thus neither male nor female bodies could reflect the *imago Dei*.<sup>14</sup> Rather, the soul of Adam could have existed as somehow both male and female prior to partaking of the forbidden fruit. In the work as a whole, Jerome makes the case for a parallel between fasting and virginity, noting that while Adam abstained from the forbidden fruit he lived a virgin in Paradise, but after eating the fruit and being exiled from Paradise, Adam married. Jerome specifically associates the coverings of skins mentioned in Genesis with sexualized bodies and marriage in his letters to Pacatula and Eustochium. In these letters Adam receives the full weight of responsibility for sin and the sign of the Fall is the "skin of matrimony."<sup>15</sup> For both Adam and Eve, the expulsion from the "paradise of virginity" and equation of the animal skins God provided to cover their nakedness with sexually differentiated bodies bound together in marriage signified their mutual loss and curse. The condition of Eve after the Fall and the curse is that of wife and mother, subject to the husband from which sin had distinguished her.

In *Adversus Jovinianum* the one place in which Jerome says much of anything at all about Eve is in the context of quoting Jovinian's appeal to I Timothy 2:13–15 in support of marriage. In the biblical passage, the Apostle reminds his readers that Eve was formed second and was the one who was beguiled and fell into sin, but that she will be saved through childbearing. Jerome seems most concerned that married women, who are "in conditionem Evae" [in the condition of Eve], not feel oppressed for he says that marriage places women into the ancient condition of Eve (cursed by being placed under the rule of their husbands) but that the Apostle refers to childbirth as a way for women to escape this condition as long as they raise their children to know and love Christ.<sup>16</sup> Jerome interprets Paul as saying that the children should be raised to live in chastity and on the basis of this point interprets the passage to support the superiority of virginity by saying that Paul meant that married women would be saved



by bearing virgins (in the ascetic sense) for Christ.<sup>17</sup> Jerome explains this passage not so much in order to say that women should stay home and bear children if they want to be saved—he would far rather they became chaste and devoted to the study of holy books—but in order to turn the biblical passage to his own ascetic ends of supporting the superiority of virginity.

Yet, Jerome does try to make marriage look as dangerous and unattractive to his male readers as possible. He addresses the issue from a male perspective and writes scathingly of marriage in a way that addresses the concerns of men. The charge brought against him by his detractors was of denigrating marriage and of placing female virgins in a place of higher rank than married men.<sup>18</sup> The original audience of *Adversus Jovinianum* accused Jerome of misogamy and upsetting Roman social rankings, demonstrating that his conception of participation in a transcendent society with a different moral referent truly challenged the culturally defined gender roles even among the Christians of late Roman society. His point in all of his writings, however, is consistent and in agreement with the other Doctors: marriage binds both men and women to the world with its temporal cares and distractions in such a way that they cannot devote themselves to prayer and to a life of single-minded devotion to God.<sup>19</sup> In fact, Jerome even argues in *Adversus Helvidium* that when women turn from the earthly cares of motherhood and fulfillment of their wifely duties to a life of chastity and prayer, they no longer live under the curse of submission to a husband that God laid upon Eve and her female descendants after the Fall.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, he writes in “Letter XXII, Ad Eustochium”:

nolo illi subiacere sententiae, quae in hominem est lata damnatum: in doloribus et anxietatibus paries, mulier—lex ista non mea est—, et ad uirum conuersio tua. Sit conuersio illius ad maritum, quae uirum non habet Christum, et ad extremum “morte morieris” finis iste coniugii: meum propositum sine sexu est.

[I would not have you subject to that sentence whereby condemnation has been passed upon mankind. When God says to Eve, “In pain and in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children,” say to yourself, “That is a law for a married woman, not for me.” And when He continues, “Thy desire shall be to thy husband,” say again: “Let her desire be to her husband who has not Christ for her spouse.” And when, last of all, He says, “Thou shalt surely die,” once more say, “Marriage indeed must end in death; but the life on which I have resolved is independent of sex.”]<sup>21</sup>

The reason Jerome considers marriage to be an undesirable state is not because he is anxious about women but because the worldly duties of marriage distract both men and women from pursuing a life devoted to prayer, and marriage itself is the curse of women's subjection to men. The vow to chastity deliberately rejects both sexual behavior and the gender roles imposed by the Genesis curse *and* by late Roman society upon both sexes. Jerome also urges Eustochia, whom he addresses in the neuter gender as "Eustochium" in order to show that she is no longer female or male now that she has committed herself to virginity, explicitly to reject God's sentence upon Eve from Genesis 3:16. By not participating in the marital relationship and the procreative activities that were the objects of the curse, Eustochium could signal her entrance into the prelapsarian condition, the "life of paradise," by refusing the curse itself and the subordination to a man that came with it. The virgin, Jerome explains, is no longer called a woman because she is no longer subject to the trials and bondage of marriage and the social roles associated with the feminine gender, but has begun to live what Jerome refers to as the "angelic life" on earth. She has not chosen either earthly gender, but something greater: a transcendent *metagender* defined by the deliberate choice to participate in the transcendent society of heaven through virginity.<sup>22</sup>

Nor are these the only times that Jerome describes the angelic equality that comes to women when they turn from a life focused on earthly matters. In his comments on the letter to the Ephesians contained in *In epistolas Pauli*, Jerome writes:

quamdiu mulier partui servit et liberis, hanc habet ad virum differentiam, quam corpus ad animam. Sin autem Christo magis voluerit servire quam saeculo, mulier esse cessabit, et dicetur vir, quia omnes in perfectum virum cupimus occurrere.

[However long a woman is devoted to childbearing and children, she possesses a difference to man, just as the body (possesses a difference) to the soul. If, however, she wishes to be devoted to Christ more than to the world, she will cease to be a woman and be called a man, because we all desire to hasten to meet into the perfect man.]<sup>23</sup>

The process of childbearing is the focal point of difference between women and men in this passage. If the woman refuses marriage and procreation, she refuses that difference. She has that choice. The *virum perfectum* "perfect man or manliness" to which Jerome refers is found in Ephesians 4:13,

and refers to the goal towards which all who serve Christ, both male and female, should strive: to be equipped and built up into perfect spiritual strength, the fullness of Christ.<sup>24</sup> For women who have refused marriage and childbearing, Jerome's comment above could be read: "If, however, she wishes to be devoted to Christ more than to the world, she will cease to be frail-minded and be called strong-minded, because we all desire to hasten to meet into the perfect strong-mindedness." Thus, when a woman ceases to serve others (husband and children) in the temporal flesh and single-mindedly serves Christ alone, she can attain mature spiritual discretion in all its fullness, just as any chaste man can, because she has rejected those things that differentiate her from men. Since only those who fulfill the duties and purposes of marriage are called "woman," those who devote themselves to chastity for the sake of Christ become something else, become "manly" in the sense that included both male and female prior to the Fall. Here we begin to see the nature of gender distinctions in Jerome's thought and the intractability of the language with which he must express it. He is not saying that women must physically become men, nor is he suggesting that a woman has to deny her bodily sex or her essential self when she devotes herself to Christ; in fact, he specifically argues against such a view when he insists that men and women will be "resurgentes in proprio sexu" [rising from the dead in our own sex] and therefore he cannot deny the nature of the bodily sexes.<sup>25</sup> Rather, a woman ceases to "be woman" figuratively inasmuch as she no longer concerns herself with material things (such as family) that entice the frail minds of women and men alike, but strong-mindedly pursues spiritual perfection in Christ. In this example from Jerome's commentary on Ephesians, gender is a metaphor for developing moral and mental strength, holding to the orthodox doctrines of the church, and coming to the unity of faith. Jerome writes that

*Quorum cum fuerit secure possession, parvuli esse cessantes, et mensuram interioris hominis recipientes (quae mensura plenitudinis, mensura Christi est), perfecti viri vocabulum sortiemur: ita tamen ad consummatam aetatem plenitudinis Christi, omnis credentium turba perveniat.*

[Once we possess these things securely and cease to be infants and receive the "measure" of the inner person, which "measure" is the "measure of the fullness of Christ", we will obtain the designation "perfect person." The goal, therefore, is that the whole multitude of believers might reach the complete "age of the fullness of Christ."]<sup>26</sup>

Ronald E. Heine's translation accurately reflects Jerome's conception of a perfection available to both men and women, but the Latin for "perfect person" is *virum perfectum* (perfect man). While the translation reflects Jerome's sense of each believer becoming a perfect person by attaining his or her God-oriented, prelapsarian, male/female humanity through obtaining the unity of the faith, it is inaccurate inasmuch as Jerome conceived of the *virum perfectum* as the mystical Body of Christ, the church. For "the saints," those who achieved this state of perfection, "intelligentes charitatem Christi, augebunt in eo omnia quae acceperant semina veritatis, habentes corporis Ecclesiae caput Dominum Jesum." [understanding the love of Christ they will "increase" in him in all the seeds of truth which they have received, having the Lord Jesus as "head" of his Body the church].<sup>27</sup> As the Body of Christ, who was biologically male while incarnated in the flesh, the church could be spoken of as masculine; but as the mystical bride of Christ, the church was also spoken of by Jerome and others as feminine and thus capable of the "increase" of bringing forth the offspring of a virtuous life from the seeds of truth. If both views could be held and expounded at the same time, then the mystical Body of Christ seems to be a place where Jerome's ideas about gender become reoriented and redefined because of the masculine/feminine Body's participation in Christ as its "head." Participation in a body that possessed the characteristics of both men and women and functions that were both masculine and feminine, redefined the gender of the believer who turned from the temporally and materially bound relationships of the world as even Ælfric suggests of all believers in *Catholic Homilies (CH)* II 39.38–46. This redefinition was the result of the fundamental reorientation of relationships from those based upon bodily sex to a relationship that went beyond the material world and took its source and meaning from a transcendent being who simultaneously possessed and transcended all of the abstract qualities associated with masculinity and femininity. (Ambrose agrees and actually includes angelic beings in the Body of Christ, as Ælfric appears to do, also.<sup>28</sup>) Thus, when the Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians that "quicumque enim in Christo baptizati estis Christum induitis non est Iudaeus neque Graecus non est servus neque liber non est masculus neque femina omnes enim vos unum estis in Christo Iesu" [Whoever certainly has been baptized into Christ, you are clothed with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: you are all truly one in Christ Jesus],<sup>29</sup> he meant something happened to each convert upon baptism, that old identities were replaced with a new iden-

tity symbolized by being clothed with Christ.<sup>30</sup> Jerome explicated these verses in his commentary on Galatians thus:

Cum autem quis semel Christum indutus fuerit, ... omnis diversitas generis, conditionis et corporum aufertur istiusmodi vestimento. ... sed pro qualitate fidei, vel Judaeus, vel Graecus melior, sive deterior est. Servus quoque et liber, non conditione separantur, sed fide, quia potest et servus libero esse melior, et liber servum in fidei qualitate praevertere. Masculus similiter et femina, fortitudine et imbecillitate corporum separantur. Caeterum fides pro mentis devotione censetur, et saepe evenit ut et mulier viro causa salutis fiat, et mulierem vir in religione praecedat. Cum autem ita se res habeat, et tota diversitas generis, conditionis et corporum, Christi baptisate, et indumento illius auferatur, omnes unum sumus in Christo Jesu.

[But when someone has once and for all put on Christ, ... all diversity of race, condition, and body is taken away by such a garment. ... Instead, a “Jew” or “Greek” is better or worse in view of the quality of his faith. Also, “slave” and “free” are not separated by this condition, but by faith, because a “slave” can be better than a “free” and a “free” can outstrip the “slave” by the quality of his faith. Likewise, however much “male” and “female” may be separated by the strength and weakness of their bodies, faith is assessed in view of the devotion of one’s mind, and it often happens that the woman becomes the cause of salvation for the man, and the man excels the woman in religious devotion. Now since this is the reality and the entire distinction between race, condition, and body is removed by Christ’s baptism and being clothed in him, then “we are all one in Christ Jesus.”]<sup>31</sup>

Neither race nor class nor sex would have any meaning once a Christian believer “put on Christ,” but all became one in Christ: of like spiritual substance and ability to advance and excel in faith, to transcend worldly differences. The mystical Body of Christ, therefore, both encompassed and transcended mere masculine and feminine genders and became a third, otherworldly kind of gender that had no parallel in solely human society. Instead of gender, it possessed *metagender*. Participation in the metagendered Body of Christ reoriented the gender of those who devoted themselves to lives of chastity, making them no longer male or female, but angelic.

Such a reorientation of gender identity did not just happen. The convert to virginity had to train the mind and soul, to engage in self-formation deliberately by contrasting their former temporal existence



with their new identity in Christ and violently “forgetting” temporal gender roles and distinctions. Jerome’s own excellent rhetorical education and trained memory provided him with the mental tools to do so for himself and to instruct others how to do so as well. Mary Carruthers observes that

The founders of early monasticism—men like Augustine of Hippo, John Cassian, and Jerome—were formed by this ancient education and helped integrate its emphasis on “invention,” the composition of speech, with the habits of meditation on sacred texts that had been cultivated for centuries in Judaism and then among the desert fathers of early Christianity in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. These early monks called their meditational practice *mnēmē theou*, “memory of God,” a goal achieved (though never completely) by a set of established practices, including particular postures, murmured pieces of memorized sacred text, and “pictures”—both mental and actual—used to induce a prescribed way of emotionally marked-out stages toward divine *theōria*, or “seeing.”<sup>32</sup>

This meditational practice is at the heart of all of the Latin Doctors’ programs for the construction of the new identity that they saw as necessary for the preservation of virginity. This is why Jerome writes his famous letter to Eustochium not in order to persuade her to virginity, but rather in order to instruct her and others in how to practice and keep it once committed to it. He emphasizes memorization not just in this letter, but in many others, for the virgin is the ark of the covenant, and so “*custos legis domini. ... super hoc propitiatorio quasi super cherubim sedere uult dominus*” [should be the guardian of the law of the Lord. ... For it pleases the Lord to sit in your mind as He once sat on the mercy-seat and the cherubims (lit. the Lord desires to sit upon that mercy-seat as upon the cherubim)].<sup>33</sup> When the mind of the man or woman committed to chastity is occupied with God’s Word, then God himself is enthroned in the mind and there is room for nothing else. This is why Jerome encourages Eustochium to avoid crowds, riches, and the eyes of young men, for “*cogitatio uictus spinae sunt fidei*” [the “thorns” which choke our faith are the taking thought for our life].<sup>34</sup> Taking thought for God rather than for one’s own life according to worldly desires requires will, deliberation, and *intentio*, “the attitudes, aims, and inclinations of the person remembering.”<sup>35</sup> The *intentio* must be love, alertness, and holding tightly to God while reading the scriptures and, in turn, such intentional reading will seat God securely in the virgin’s soul through recollection of what has been read.<sup>36</sup> Jerome used such means to shape his own identity and encouraged

the same in his students: “quicquid in nobis longo fuit studio congregatum et meditatione diuturna quasi in naturam uersum, hoc illa libauit, hoc didicit atque possedit” [Whatever I had gathered together by long study, and by constant meditation made part of my nature, (Marcella) tasted, she learned and made her own].<sup>37</sup> Each person is described as the agent of his or her own identity. Each gathers knowledge, learns it by inscribing it in memory, then meditates upon it so attentively that it shapes the individual’s very habits of thought and identity. This is why memorization, recitation, and study of Scripture held such a central place in Jerome’s conception of sanctity

Because of this reorientation of identity through a transcendent relationship with Christ, Jerome writes, “Et nequaquam sit sexuum ulla diversitas: sed quomodo apud angelos non est vir et mulier: ita et nos, qui similes angelis futuri sumus, jam nunc incipiamus esse quod nobis in coelestibus repromissum est.” [And may there be no diversity of the sexes at all, but as there is no man and woman among the angels, so also let us, who will be like angels, even now begin to be that which has been promised to us in the heavens.]<sup>38</sup> The attainment of the “perfect man” that fruitfully “increases” in the soul of men and women alike is the goal of virginity of mind and body: entry into the angelic life. The angelic life turns away from the temporal distractions of spouse and family that divide men from women and turns instead toward God who through the unity of the faith abolishes the divisions of the sexes and unites all believers into the transcendent, metagendered Body of Christ. The goal for Jerome is not for women to “become” men, but for all to become one, neither male nor female but both in Christ.

As a way of showing that he does not mean that women should literally become men and that he does not attach a bodily interpretation to his metaphors of gender, Jerome also puts forth the idea that men, in turning from worldly matters and pursuing a life of chaste devotion to Christ, cease to “be men” and become metaphorical eunuchs, as he comments in the letter “Ad Heliodorum Monachum”: “tu autem perfectum te esse pollicitus es. nam cum derelicta militia castrasti te propter regnum caelorum, quid aliud quam perfectam sectatus es uitam?” [You have already promised to be perfect. For when you forsook the army and made yourself an eunuch for the kingdom of heaven’s sake, you did so that you might follow the perfect life].<sup>39</sup> Similarly, in his letter to Eustochium, Jerome states, “alium eunuchum necessitas faciat, me uoluntas.” [Some men may be eunuchs of necessity; I am one by choice].<sup>40</sup> Jerome clearly states here that men must

set aside those things that define them as virile (marriage, procreation) in order to become “perfect men” and obtain the fullness of Christ. In this case, the image of the “perfect man” is the imperfect, castrated eunuch. Jerome expresses the perfect life for men in terms of metaphorical castration (becoming like a woman?) as a means of depicting men’s rejection of the worldly cares of family and of temporal power. The idea that both men and women lose their gender distinctions when they devote themselves to “the angelic life,” comes from part of Origen’s teaching that is implicated in Jerome’s ideas about women overcoming their sex and men becoming eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Women become “manly,” and men become “womanly” in a way that is considered to be positive, becoming “angelic,” for both.<sup>41</sup>

For men, this entailed being like eunuchs, living as men figuratively castrated because they remained unmarried in a late antique culture that placed a high value on the male role of *pater familias*.<sup>42</sup> The biblical example for this movement from man to eunuch comes from Christ’s comments regarding marriage and divorce in Matthew 19:11–12:

qui dixit non omnes capiunt verbum istud sed quibus datum est sunt enim eunuchi qui de matris utero sic nati sunt et sunt eunuchi qui facti sunt ab hominibus et sunt eunuchi qui se ipsos castraverunt propter regnum caelorum qui potest capere capiat.

[to whom he said, “Not all accept this saying but (those) to whom it has been given: Some certainly are eunuchs who were born thus from the womb of their mother, and some are eunuchs who have been made such by men, and some are eunuchs who have castrated themselves because of the kingdom of heaven. Let him who is able to accept (this teaching) accept (it).”]

Jerome comments upon this Scripture elsewhere in *Adversus Jovinianum* as he argues for male virginity, saying that being of the male sex is of no use if the man refuses to engage in sexual intercourse.<sup>43</sup> This refusal involves rejecting late antique definitions of manhood based upon sexual activity and turning to the idea of the *virum perfectum* contrary to the expectations of Roman society. Matthew Kuefler notes that “Roman writers consistently gave to those men who failed to live up to expectations of them as men—unmanly men—a feminine identity, and denied to them the privileges of men. The unmanly man thus became a social woman.”<sup>44</sup> On this basis, Jerome’s comments to Heliodorus about leaving the army and becoming a eunuch in order to become “perfect” reflect the male equi-

valent to the idea of women “becoming” men in order to attain the *virum perfectum*. Men must give up what defines them as men in Roman society, must become eunuchs (a kind of woman) in order to become perfect.

For Jerome the melding of masculine and feminine genders was a matter of the soul, the essential core of humanity that was without sex and was made to the image of God. The shaping of the soul was a matter of memory, of replacing memories, thoughts, and actions defined by late Roman society with those defined by the transcendent society of heaven. It was never a matter of the body alone, for in addition to teaching that chastity led to a reality beyond sex and binary gender, Jerome joined the other fathers in condemning those who cross-dressed in order to show outwardly the inward spiritual reality of sexlessness. He argues against a bodily interpretation of his comments when he expresses his disgust at women who cut their hair and dress like men and at men who grow their hair long like women’s.<sup>45</sup> Just as the concept of metagender could not be adequately rendered in human language, neither could it be expressed in male or female bodies.

No one would deny that Jerome was the literary curmudgeon of the late patristic era. In the mind, however, the place where there is no sex, Jerome viewed men and women with an equality startling in late antique culture. He thought most highly of those chaste women and chaste men who devoted themselves to the study of Scripture, for they exemplified his ideal of the life devoted to the mental training and development of the soul necessary for attaining the *virum perfectum*, perfect metagendered humanity in Christ—a humanity that was symbolized for Jerome not by the virile male or the fertile female, but by the sterile eunuch.

## Ambrose

Jerome’s robust and rather earthy discourse on the third gender and the pursuit of the *virum perfectum* through a chaste lifestyle of study, prayer, and meditation challenged his late Roman audiences (and sometimes needlessly antagonized them) with a new construction of gender and the self. Jerome based his ascetic vision upon identification with the Person of Christ and the deliberate reorientation of habits and memory formed by voluntary participation in the kingdom of God. Such a radical program of changing identity was not just something Jerome invented, but played a central role in the writings of Ambrose of Milan, as well. As a bishop, Ambrose preached regularly to an audience of the general public

and instructed catechumens in doctrine and morals prior to their baptism into the community of faith.<sup>46</sup> Ambrose's catechumens, or *competentes*, were mainly adult converts who already had well-established identities within the Roman cultural tradition, yet even these new lay members of the church had to reorient their identities as citizens now to the kingdom of Christ rather than of Rome.<sup>47</sup> Ambrose understood the process of reorienting one's identity to depend upon anchoring oneself within a new history, creating new memories within the new cultural context, and imitating the examples of model citizens in the new society. Ambrose knew from his own education that, "Romans learned who they were, and how to behave, by studying history and rhetoric. For their part, the historians and rhetors taught and argued by holding up, as examples to imitate or avoid, well-known figures from the Roman past. Imitation and the use of *exempla uirtutis* were fundamental features of classical literature and classical education alike."<sup>48</sup> Ambrose and other literate Romans shared a common education, an education that provided "a shared means of communication, but above all else it constructed the web of a community or commonality."<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Christian instruction through sermons, saints' lives, and treatises set out continually to build and induct new converts into the community of Christ's Body, the church. Ambrose's sermons outline the path to follow in the re-formation of identity and the nurture of virtue both in new converts to Christianity and in those who chose a life of asceticism. Both groups had willingly chosen to pursue a new identity, but those who chose the ascetic life would have fewer distractions and more time to devote to the practices of mind that would shape their new identities—practices that would mold and reform memories and the soul itself in pursuit of the virtue it lost in the Fall. Mary Carruthers observes that "desire and will therefore underlie remembering, and just as the mind is always in motion ... so too it always has 'intent,' or emotional content, the 'coloring' so critical in classical rhetoric. ... As much as it is involved with cognition, memory was recognized to be involved also with will and desire."<sup>50</sup> By choosing to reorient one's desire and memories toward God, a man or woman could begin intentionally to rebuild the *imago Dei* lost through the Fall.

Ambrose provides insight into the mental processes of this reorientation, noting that "Necessarius ad disciplinam bonus sermo omnibus, plenus prudentiae, et mens rationi intenta praecurrit uirtutibus, passiones coerces; docibilis enim uirtus. denique studio et discendo quaeritur, dissimulando amittitur" [Necessary for the training of all men is good



discourse, full of prudence, while the mind given to reason excels in virtue and restrains its passions, for virtue is teachable. Further, one seeks it by study and learning and loses it by neglect.”<sup>51</sup> For Ambrose, the study of virtue is the means of drawing close to God, for “*imago dei uirtus est*” [the ‘image’ of God is virtue].<sup>52</sup> Such study must be actively maintained, for virtue, once learned, could be lost if not kept constantly in mind. Those who are mindful of virtue, however, will not only draw closer to Christ, the object of their desire, but also grow more complete as human beings as the *imago Dei* that had been warped beyond recognition through sin begins to be restored through the cultivation of virtue. For Ambrose, the pursuit of the “perfect life” is the pursuit of full humanity as bearers of the *imago Dei*: “*perfecta autem uita non sensibilis ista, sed illa rationabilis secundum tractationem rationis et mentis uiuacitatem. ... nihil itaque aliud quaerit perfectus ille nisi solum et praeclarum bonum.*” [Now the perfect life is not that of the senses, but the life of reason, lived according to management exercised by the reason and natural vigor possessed by the mind. ... And so the man who has been made perfect seeks nothing else but the only and admirable good.]<sup>53</sup> The life of reason does not exist in a vacuum. It has a purpose, to seek nothing but the good that is God and so grow ever more like Christ in wisdom and virtue. This mental activity reveals itself not through worldly status, but through virtuous actions that are the end result of memory and meditation. Carruthers notes that “reading was thought to model character through memory: it is the method of ethical and civic modeling of character summed up in the Greek word *paideia*. ... There were also memorizing exercises, notably the recitation, which ‘primarily consists in saying over and over to oneself, either quietly or more loudly, certain sentences which the student wishes to engrave on his memory.’ Thus was moral character molded by means of responses and reflexes inculcated by the ruminative reflection upon ‘domesticated’ texts and stories.”<sup>54</sup> Jerome provides a small example of this method when he advises Eustochium to say to herself phrases that distinguish her life of virginity from the life of a married woman who lived under the curse of Eve.<sup>55</sup> Ambrose, however, gives a more detailed example of the method in his treatise *De bono mortis*. While addressing the topic of blessings given by those who are about to die and pointing out how the imminence of death gave unique power to such a blessing, he says, “*Ac per hoc cogitemus semper hunc versiculum et corde teneamus. si quem uiderimus pauperem moriturum, sumptu iuuemus: dicat unusquisque nostrum: benedictio morituri in me veniat.*” [On this account let us meditate upon this verse

and hold it in our heart. If we see any poor person on the point of death, let us help him at our expense. Let each person say: "Let the blessing of the person who is about to die come upon me!"]<sup>56</sup> Ambrose continues to describe how one should actively meditate upon the verse so that it shapes one's attitudes and leads to actual deeds. One memorizes and repeats the verse, not in a mindless way, but with each repetition exploring every possible way in which a woman or man might seek the blessing of those about to die by first being a blessing to the dying through giving them comfort or caring for their needs. Ambrose also invests the meditation with the emotions of desire for the blessing and of shame at passing up any opportunity to help those who are at the point of death. Through such mental activity each person could shape his or her own character, cultivate virtues such as mercy by deciding how to act in a given situation, maintain a mind alert to opportunities to show compassion, and develop the motivation to act upon those opportunities on every occasion. Each meditation would be an act of the will engaging the memory out of desire to draw close to God, for the life of meditation *is* the life of heaven for those still dwelling in this mortal, earthly realm.<sup>57</sup>

In light of this thought, Ambrose instructs virgins that,

*Sed etiam in ipso cubili uolo psalmos cum oratione dominica frequenti contexas uice, uel cum euigilaueris, uel antequam corpus sopor inriget, ... Symbolum quoque specialiter debemus tamquam nostri signaculum cordis antelucanis horis cotidie recensere, quo etiam cum horremus aliquid, animo recurrendum est.*

[Even in bed I want you to join psalms with the Lord's Prayer in frequent alternation, as also when you wake up and before drowsiness floods your body, ... Daily, too, before daybreak, we ought to make a point of going over the Creed, which is as it were the seal of our heart. Even when something frightens us we should have recourse to it in our soul.]<sup>58</sup>

This instruction, too, indicates the creative and self-forming activity of meditation as one gathers verses from the memorized Psalms to amplify and explore all the possibilities of each clause of the Lord's Prayer. By falling asleep in the midst of such meditation, the virgins might continue to seek God and learn virtue even while they slept just as Ambrose describes the Virgin Mary doing: "*cum quiesceret corpus uigilare animus: quae frequenter insomnis aut lecta repetit aut somno interrupta continuat aut disposita gerit aut gerenda pronuntiat*" [as her body rested her soul was

alert: often in her sleep she either went over what she had been reading or continued what had been interrupted by sleep or made plans or arranged what had to be done].<sup>59</sup> The soul continues reflecting and meditating upon what has been stored in memory when the body sleeps, and so men and women must intentionally prepare themselves for the work their souls would do while their bodies slept. Then repetition and reaffirmation of the memorized Creed upon waking begins each day with a statement not just of the identity of the Trinity, but also of the individual believer as she states anew, “Credo,” “I believe.” All of these passages describe the formative exercises that actively use memory to shape identity in relationship to Christ, an identity that Ambrose clearly believes to be equally attainable by both women and men.

Such a self-constructing activity requires the utmost concentration and separation from material concerns or appeals to the bodily senses, for these are means by which temptation might distract the soul from its contemplation of God. And so Ambrose points out the conditions best suited for meditation, saying “denique quando aliquid cogitamus, neminem nobis occurrere, neminem volumus obstrepere auribus nostris atque ita intendimus animo, ut plerumque non videamus praesentia. quin etiam in noctibus sincerius cogitamus et tunc melius quae movent corde meditatur.” [when we are thinking of something, we do not want anyone to appear before us or to raise a din against our ears, and we concentrate in such a way that we generally do not see what is present. Moreover, we think more clearly at night and at that time we meditate better in our hearts upon what is dear to us (lit. what inspires us).]<sup>60</sup> Minimizing sensory distractions forms an environment conducive to character-shaping meditation and contemplation of “quae movent” [what inspires]. Since the person shuts out visual and auditory input as much as possible, the matters and persons being contemplated must be present in the memory, otherwise there is nothing with which the mind may construct its meditation. For Ambrose, meditation is not a matter of emptying the mind, but of populating it with thoughts and examples intentionally gathered together as seen above in order to construct the virtues he desires to enact and embody.<sup>61</sup> By such mental effort, knowledge of oneself might be obtained and the beauty of virtue in the soul enhanced.

From Ambrose’s perspective, the ability to know oneself is the critical difference between human beings and the beasts, as he notes in his work best known in Anglo-Saxon England, a series of revised homilies called *Exameron*.<sup>62</sup> The last homily, concerning the sixth day of creation,

begins with a veritable bestiary in its discussion of the remarkable variety of animals and ends with a paean of praise for the beauty and grace of the human body. In between, Ambrose describes the nature of the human soul created to God's own image. He transitions from his depiction of animals to description of human beings by pointing out the fundamental difference between humans and beasts: the ability to know oneself by means of the rational soul. Ambrose introduces the thought by explaining the biblical text from Canticles 1:7, "If thou know not thyself, fairest among women," saying

quae est pulchra in mulieribus nisi anima, quae in utroque sexu praestantiam possidet pulchritudinis? ... huic adtende, dicit Moyses, in qua tu totus es, in qua melior tui portio est. ... non igitur caro ty es. quid enim est caro sine animae gubernaculo, mentis uigore? ... caro amictus est animae, quae se induit quodam corporis uestimento.

[What constitutes the beautiful among women if not the soul, an outstanding attribute in both sexes? ... "Keep thyself," says Moses, in that in which you form a totality—that in which the better part of you consists. ... Thus, you are not flesh alone. What is flesh without the guidance of the soul and the vigor of the mind? ... Like a garment for the body, such is flesh for the soul.]<sup>63</sup>

This transitional passage in Ambrose's work lays out several ideas that are central to his understanding of the human soul and mind and of the nature of humanity itself. First, he associates true beauty with the soul, not with physical appearance, and holds up women as the example though elsewhere Ambrose applies the point equally to men.<sup>64</sup> In the passage from *Exameron* Ambrose states unequivocally that both sexes possess the soul and thereafter he makes no distinction between the sexes in his discussion of the soul. The human soul, then, is the same in both men and women and possesses none of the differences that male and female bodies exhibit.<sup>65</sup> The soul longs for heaven, for the incorruptible, and for the imperishable. Because of these longings the natural tendency of the soul is away from the body. The soul is the better part of human beings because it cannot perish and so deserves the priority of care over the perishable body. Finally, the body is like a garment that the soul will eventually take off.<sup>66</sup> Just as clothing possesses no will or motion on its own but follows the movements of the wearer, so the body is directed by the soul and motivated by the mind.<sup>67</sup> Though the body is an integral part of every human being and the

tool for deeds both good and evil, the essential aspect of humanity is not the body, but the soul.<sup>68</sup>

Ambrose structures his exploration of the nature of the soul by looking at Genesis 1:26. In what becomes a short discussion of the Trinity, Ambrose links up ideas already introduced in passage above—principally that God is spirit and as such is incorporeal and invisible.<sup>69</sup> In terms of essential qualities, spirit and body are opposites and nothing similar to each other. In the same way, the image of God cannot be corporeal because the body is weak and subject to decay. Thus, “*imago dei uirtus est, non infirmitas, imago dei sapientia est, imago dei iustitia est, sed sapientia diuina est et sempiterna iustitia est. imago dei est solus ille qui dixit: ego et pater unum sumus*” [the “image” of God is virtue, not infirmity. The “image” of God is wisdom. (The image of God is justice, but wisdom is divine and justice is eternal.) The “image” of God is He alone who has said: “I and the Father are one”].<sup>70</sup> Ambrose asserts that Christ *is* both virtue and wisdom. They are not characteristics of him, but rather he is the very essence and substance of both. Christ is virtue, virtue is Christ; Christ is wisdom, wisdom is Christ. As a result, virtue, the moral excellence of God, can only be manifested in humanity in the soul: “*tibi igitur adtende, te ipsum scito, hoc est ... qualem animam ac mentem, unde omnia consilia proficiscuntur, ad quam operum tuorum fructus referatur. illa est enim plena sapientiae, plena pietatis atque iustitiae, quoniam omnis uirtus a deo est.*” [“Attend to thyself,” therefore, “know thyself.” ... Attend ... to your soul and mind, whence all our deliberations emanate and to which the profit of your works is referred. Here only is the fullness of wisdom, the plenitude of piety and justice of which God speaks—for all virtue comes from God.]<sup>71</sup> Ambrose emphasizes self-knowledge, which can only be attained by the soul knowing itself, and he immediately links thought and action. Judgment and choice both emanate from the rational soul and the visible works of the body, including sinful works, reflect the quality of those mental actions.<sup>72</sup> The soul that knows itself, therefore, will know it was created to reflect the divine image and will seek with God’s help to cultivate virtue in thought and deed.<sup>73</sup> For Ambrose, the beauty of the soul in women and in men is none other than the metagendered image and imprint it bears of God, the source of all virtue and goodness. Adam, however, lost this beauty through his disobedience.<sup>74</sup> Humanity lost its virtue and became distracted by the pleasures and passions of the body, thus the body became a means of temptation to evil. For Ambrose defines evil not as a thing that positively exists in itself, but rather evil “*mentis*



atque animi deprauatio a tramite uirtutis deuia, quae incuriosorum animis frequenter obrepit” [is a deviation of mind and soul away from the path of true virtue, a deviation which frequently steals upon the souls of the unaware].<sup>75</sup> Ambrose teaches his audience that in order to reject evil and pursue virtue they must first be aware and know themselves. Each must examine his own intentions, know her mental disposition, and each must then guard carefully both thoughts and desires.<sup>76</sup> These intentions, dispositions, thoughts, and desires are what direct the garment of the body. They spring from the source of deliberation and choice, shaped by memory, and bear responsibility for the actions of the whole person, body and soul, leading Ambrose to the conclusion that “tu ipse tibi causa es inprobitatis, tu ipse dux flagitiorum tuorum atque incentor criminum” [You yourself are the cause of your wickedness; you yourself are the leader of your own crimes and the instigator of your own misdeeds].<sup>77</sup> The soul, as the seat of moral excellence and the *imago Dei*, must know what it was made to be and how it has fallen from its heavenly dignity in order to guard itself from sin and pursue virtue.

Ambrose explores the spiritual psychology of temptation and sin in his interpretation of Genesis chapters two and three, named *De paradiso*.<sup>78</sup> This work reflects a heavy dependence upon the Jewish exegete Philo’s allegorical explanation of the story as Ambrose also interprets the biblical account in moral and spiritual terms of the human soul, mind, and body.<sup>79</sup> Like Philo, he portrays the soul as a paradise, cultivated by the mind (allegorically represented by the man, Adam) in order to produce the fruits of virtue. The woman dwells there, but does not seem to have much purpose, since the senses of the body (represented allegorically by the woman, Eve) do not cultivate virtues in the soul. Because the mind is housed in a body of flesh, the first humans desire to improve their condition by escaping the flesh and this desire becomes the focus of the devil’s temptation.<sup>80</sup> The serpent (pleasure) tempts the woman (bodily senses and emotions, *not* the body<sup>81</sup>) to sin; she then seduces the man (mind) into eating the forbidden fruit, after which the mind falls into subjection to the bestial passions of the body. In this same allegory, the woman is inferior because she represents the bodily senses (*αἰσθησις*, *aisthêsis*); the man is superior because he represents the spiritual and immortal mind (*νοῦς*, *nous*), which is by its nature of a higher order in creation than the physical body.<sup>82</sup>

Ambrose uses the Roman, gendered metaphors of masculine and feminine to interpret Adam and Eve in his allegorical description of the

psychology of temptation and consent to sin, applying the stereotypes of masculine strength and feminine weakness to the Genesis story in order to explain a mental process rather than make observations about the moral or mental capacities of actual men or women. This allegorical construction indicates that both masculine and feminine traits are present in the soul of each individual, showing that the human soul was created to be a unified, metagendered entity, though that entity has now been fractured through sin. In order to demonstrate in a practical way how that fracture might be mended and made whole through a life of virginity, Ambrose composes his defense of virginity, *De virginibus*.

Ambrose's *De virginibus*, written early in his episcopate around the year 377 and close to the time that he wrote *De paradiso*, seems to have been virtually unknown in Anglo-Saxon England and yet it fundamentally shaped the hagiographical works of Pseudo-Ambrose, whose *vitae* of Agnes and Sebastian were known to Ælfric. Dedicated to Ambrose's sister, Marcellina, the treatise draws its material from sermons on the subject of virginity and, according to Boniface Ramsey, "easily ranks with the greatest writings of the Church Fathers on the topic."<sup>83</sup> The second chapter of book one tells the *passio* of St. Agnes, virgin and martyr.<sup>84</sup> In this brief narrative of Agnes's martyrdom, Ambrose's enthusiastic panegyric opens with the exhortation: "mirentur viri, non desperent paruuli, stupeant nuptae, imitentur innuptae;" [Let men marvel, let children not despair, let the married be amazed, let the unmarried imitate].<sup>85</sup> Though using a formulaic expression, Ambrose apparently considered the story of Agnes to be one that men would find admirable and the unmarried (of both sexes) could take as an *exemplum virtutis*.

Ambrose goes out of his way in a short space to point out the power of Agnes's faith, her maturity despite her tender age (twelve years), and the efficacy of her testimony. He applies contrasts calculated to evoke emotion in his audience, pointing out the cruelty that would not spare a child of twelve, then stating concerning Agnes that "immo magna uis fidei, quae etiam ab illa testimonium inuenit aetate;" [great was the power of the faith which bore witness even at that age].<sup>86</sup> Ambrose opines that young girls of twelve often cry at an angry look or upon sticking themselves with a sewing needle, but then shows that Agnes, though small and physically immature, is stronger than her executioner:

Quanto terrore egit carnifex ut timeretur, quantis blanditiis ut suaderet. ... Stetit, orauit, ceruicem inflexit. Cerneris trepidare

carnificem, quasi ipse addictus fuisset, tremere percussori dexteram, pallere ora alieno timentis periculo, cum puella non timeret suo.

[With what terror the executioner behaved in order to frighten her, with what flattery he sought to persuade her! ... She stood, she prayed, she bowed her neck. You could see the executioner tremble as if he himself had been condemned, his hand shake, his face grow pale as he feared for another's distress, although the girl did not fear for her own.]<sup>87</sup>

Ambrose does not hesitate to illustrate a reversal of expected gender characteristics between the executioner and Agnes: she conducts herself with manly fortitude; the executioner trembles with girlish fear before her. Though Ambrose does not make overt references to masculine or feminine traits to describe the shift, the implication would not have been lost on his contemporary Roman audience. His audience would certainly have understood the legal issues of sex and age at work in the narrative. Late Roman society forbade both women and children in their minority to testify in court, and Agnes's evidence concerning God flouts the legal practice on both counts, for she testifies as a minor and a female not on behalf of a mere man but on behalf of God himself.<sup>88</sup> Ambrose emphasizes the fact that Agnes accomplishes this feat because, as a virgin of God, she no longer belongs to the natural order of the material world, for she testifies credibly about God "quia quod ultra naturam est de auctore naturae est" [because what is beyond nature belongs to the author of nature].<sup>89</sup>

Such portrayals of independent female strength and agency certainly challenged late antique social conventions, but Ambrose's attitude toward such behavior did not always conform to the views of late antique Roman society any more than did Jerome's. Ambrose's story of Agnes lauds her independent action (no parents or churchmen figure in her actions) and the assumption of "masculine" characteristics *and* privileges by its young protagonist. Further, Ambrose encourages young girls to act independently of family and social expectations in pursuit of virginity.<sup>90</sup> The virgin's independent exercise of will and choice lies at the very foundation of the practice of virginity, a point made later by Aldhelm, as well.<sup>91</sup> Virginity must be freely chosen or else it is invalid from the start. And that choice constitutes the first defining act of self-formation into *metagender*.

Ambrose justifies his radical advice by demonstrating that the virginal life removes its practitioners from the temporal realms of human interactions and relationships.<sup>92</sup> Virgins have entered the transcend-

ent society of God and angelic beings, wherein concepts of gender are constructed along different lines because all beings are defined by their relationship to God rather than to each other.<sup>93</sup> Ambrose taught that in temporal marital relationships, the man was to be the head of the woman, and the woman subject to the man. But for virgins, he teaches that Christ is the head; the virgin is no longer subject to mere men as married women are.<sup>94</sup> This reconstruction of relationships blurs the boundaries of sex and gender that obtain in the temporal world, for God, as a spiritual being, has no sex and yet manifests personal and abstract qualities that are associated in Roman society with both masculine and feminine genders. Even Christ, though biologically male in his incarnation, blurs the boundaries of gender through his virginity and is the source of all virginity according to Ambrose:

Christus uirginis sponsus est et, si dici potest, Christus uirgineae castitatis; uirginitas enim Christi, non uirginitatis est Christus. Virgo est ergo quae nupsit, uirgo quae nos suo utero portauit, uirgo quae genuit, uirgo quae proprio lacte nutriuit. ... Qualis est haec uirgo quae trinitatis fontibus irrigatur, cui de petra fluunt aquae, non deficiunt ubera, mella funduntur? ... Ergo a Christo non deficiunt ubera, claritas a deo, flumen ab spiritu. Haec est enim trinitas, quae ecclesiam suam irrigat, Pater, Christus et Spiritus.

[Christ is the bridegroom of a virgin and, if it can be said, Christ is the bridegroom of virginal chastity, for virginity is of Christ, but Christ is not of virginity. He is a virgin, then, who married (us); he is a virgin who bore us in his womb; he is a virgin who brought us forth; he is a virgin who nursed us with his own milk. ... Who is this virgin who is watered by the springs of the Trinity, to whom water flows from the rock, who does not lack teats and whose honey pours forth? ... Therefore teats are not lacking to Christ, nor brightness to God, nor a river to the Spirit. For this is the Trinity, Father, Christ and Spirit, which waters its Church.]<sup>95</sup>

This association of Christ with the female body and the functions of child-bearing and breastfeeding serves to illustrate his role and the role of the entire Trinity in the bringing forth and nurturing of believers with spiritual food. This theme appears also in *De Isaac uel anima*, as Ambrose describes the soul like a bride seeking the kisses of her bridegroom, the incarnate Word: “illa osculum poposcit, deus uerbum se ei totus infudit et nudauit ei ubera sua, hoc est dogmata sua et interioris sapientiae disciplinas et unguentorum suorum dulci odore fraglauit” [She sought the kiss,

God the Word poured himself into her wholly and laid bare his breasts to her, that is, his teachings and the laws of wisdom that is within, and was fragrant with the sweet fragrance of his ointments].<sup>96</sup> The breasts of Christ the Word feed the soul with wisdom and knowledge, nurturing the soul in virtue so that it grows and does not faint in the midst of trials. In this case, the female body represents nurturing, a characteristic associated with feminine gender as well as female sex, yet also associated with Christ in a way that continues to blur the distinctions of sex and gender when later theologians write about the characteristics of Christ.<sup>97</sup> The nurturing Body of Christ is where human believers and angelic beings are joined together in relationship to Christ as their head, are made into a new and transcendent body that is no longer gendered, but metagendered—a body that holds in itself all the positive attributes of masculinity and femininity and makes them into something greater than the sum of their gendered parts by melding them with the heavenly attributes of the spiritual intelligences and ultimately of Christ himself as the head of the whole body.<sup>98</sup> The distinguishing characteristic of such a transformation, according to Ambrose, is the increase in virtue to the measure of the *virum perfectum*.<sup>99</sup> In his explanation of Ephesians 4:13, Ambrose argues that the more perfectly anyone, male or female, lives a life of holiness and virtue, the more that person participates in the fullness of Christ, receives grace, and joins in the life of heaven while still on earth. As with Jerome, Ambrose identifies the *virum perfectum* as exemplifying the strength of virtue and holiness in living the life of Christ.<sup>100</sup> Those who are conformed to Christ in this manner Ambrose identifies as saints.<sup>101</sup> In this way and in his narration of saints' lives he contributes to weakening the categorical boundaries of late antique ideas about sex and gender while associating this new idea about the fluidity of gender with specifically Christian character and sainthood.

In the burlesque legend of the virgin of Antioch, Ambrose illustrates how the boundaries between sex and gender become unstable when women and men commit themselves to virginity and enter the angelic society. This virgin (whose story parallels the legend of Didymas and Theodora) becomes caught up in a wave of anti-Christian persecutions because of her professed virginity for the sake of Christ and must choose between making a pagan sacrifice or losing her virginity at a brothel. Ambrose provides the reflections of the young woman through first person narration, allowing the audience to follow the process of the saint's thoughts as she reasons her way through her dilemma and finally decides that "Tolerabilius est mentem uirginem quam carnem habere. Vtrumque

bonum, si liceat. si non liceat, saltem non homini castae, sed deo simus” [It is more tolerable to have a virgin mind than virgin flesh. Both would be good if it were possible. If it is not possible, let us at least be chaste for God and not for man].<sup>102</sup> The saint’s rationale instructs the audience in the importance of both physical and mental purity while also asserting the greater importance of mental virginity and loyalty to Christ rather than to a physical practice. The virgin could preserve her inner mental and spiritual purity through loyalty to Christ even if she lost her physical virginity through rape.<sup>103</sup>

Ambrose then describes how the virgin is removed to a brothel surrounded by eager men. One of the men, a fierce-looking soldier, rushes in but turns out to be a Christian himself and has come to save the virgin. Maintaining the idea of outward appearances that obscure the realities beneath, this soldier suggests “Vestimenta mutemus; conueniunt mihi tua et mea tibi, sed utraque Christo. tua uestis me uerum militem faciet, mea te uirginem” [Let us exchange our clothing; yours fits me and mine fits you, but both fit Christ. Your garb will make me a true soldier; mine will make you a virgin].<sup>104</sup> Ambrose here makes rich use of the symbolism of the act of exchanging clothes. The unnamed soldier clearly states that attiring himself like a woman will make him a true soldier, a true man, not violence or aggression and certainly not sexual conquest of the woman before him. In what may very well be the only instance in patristic literature wherein a male dressing as a woman is depicted in an approving manner, Ambrose suggests that, for the man, becoming more like Christ (attaining the *virum perfectum*) meant figuratively becoming more like a woman by setting aside violence and submitting to martyrdom.<sup>105</sup> By the same token, the donning of male attire would make the young woman a virgin by allowing her to escape the danger of rape. She would thus, with the courage of a soldier, preserve not only her purity of mind but her purity of body as well. Accordingly, the act of changing clothes symbolizes the way to attaining the *virum perfectum* in Christ for both the man and the woman, which the soldier emphasizes when he affirms that both sets of clothing “fit Christ.” With these words Ambrose brings a higher dimension into the comic burlesque of male and female cross-dressing, a dimension that reminds his audience that, as believers and soon-to-be martyrs, both the soldier and the virgin are clothed in Christ and united in his body and so their exchange of clothing for the purposes of preserving the maiden’s virginity and attaining martyrdom is fitting and appropriate of Christ as well. The virgin shows how much of a soldier she herself

has become when she contends with her erstwhile rescuer for the right to be martyred first and wins.<sup>106</sup> The soldier demonstrates how much of a woman he has become when he submits to her will. Both then become martyrs and together attain sainthood.

Such virgin women are not the only women that Ambrose finds admirable, however, for in *De viduis* he claims that courage is characteristic of a good widow, saying that “Haec enim vero est fortitudo, quae naturae usum, sexus infirmitatem mentis deuotione transgreditur” [This is true bravery, which surpasses the usual nature and weakness of the sex by the devotion of the mind].<sup>107</sup> Ambrose deliberately invokes the cardinal virtue of *fortitudo* with its implications of moral excellence as he describes the courage of Judith and speaks directly of the valor of Deborah, the only female judge of the early people of Israel recorded in the Bible:

Haec enim docuit non solum uiri auxilio uiduas non egere, uerum etiam uiris esse subsidio. ... Vidua populos regit, uidua ducit exercitus, uidua duces eligit, uidua bella disponit, mandat triumphos. Non ergo natura est rea culpae nec infirmitati obnoxia: strenuos non sexus, sed uirtus facit.

[For she showed not only that widows have no need of the help of a man, (but also are a help to men). ... A widow, she governs the people; a widow, she leads armies; a widow, she chooses generals; a widow, she determines wars and orders triumphs. So, then, it is not nature which is answerable for the fault or which is liable to weakness. It is not sex, but valour which makes strong.]<sup>108</sup>

The idea of the weakness of women's sex in this context can only refer to the physical weakness of women compared to men. It is a weakness, however, that in no way prevents women devoted to chastity from being mentally or spiritually as strong as any man, or, in the cases of Judith and Deborah, stronger since true strength is a matter of character, not sex. Ambrose uses Deborah's example to encourage widows to live in chastity and to urge them not to marry again out of fear what may happen to them without the protection and provision of a husband. He urges them to avoid entering again into the marital obligations that are a source of mutual bondage, a loss of liberty for both men and women.<sup>109</sup>

Ambrose, like Jerome, teaches that distinctions in sex and gender are transformed by chastity because the believer's soul is oriented toward Christ instead of toward the masculine and feminine roles that make up reproductive, temporal relationships in the world. Even so, he also

adamantly insists that this interior change does not justify women dressing themselves as men or men growing long hair or dressing like women, devoting an entire letter to the layman Irenaeus on the subject.<sup>110</sup> Ambrose associates cross-dressing with pagan practices and a falsification and denial of what he considered to be the natural tendencies of each sex—modesty for one, war for the other. Maintaining the distinction between the sexes in the physical realm becomes for Ambrose a basis for maintaining chastity.<sup>111</sup> While he did not mention to Irenaeus his belief that chastity led to the angelic life where there was no distinction of sexes, Ambrose clearly objected to cross-dressing as a deceitful degradation of the angelic life that mocked the purity of chastity by glorying in what Ambrose considered to be an unnatural impurity for both men and women.

Unlike Jerome, Ambrose rarely expresses his ideas about men and masculinity directly in his writings on virginity, for most of these works are addressed to female audiences. He does refer at least once to the verse from Matthew about becoming eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven, but he actually uses this verse in his defense of his preaching of female virginity in *De virginitate*.<sup>112</sup> In his letter to the priests at Vercelli, however, Ambrose distinguishes between the characteristics of the priest and of the monk, seemingly describing two kinds of chaste masculinity. In this letter Ambrose indicates that the highest kind of Christian life for men is that of the priest or the monk. While each lives a different kind of life, one public and confronting worldly temptation and the other private and fleeing from worldly temptation, both pursue perfection in Christ through denial of the self.<sup>113</sup> Ambrose does not describe one as being more masculine than the other though in a later part of the comparison he does use more military terminology in describing the life of the cleric, who overcomes, triumphs, and has a greater victory than the monk, who avoids, goes into a kind of exile, and keeps guard in a safer situation.<sup>114</sup> If it is the natural manner of the male to make war, as Ambrose claims in his letter to Irenaeus,<sup>115</sup> then the cleric's would seem to be the more stereotypically masculine form of Christian life, but Ambrose puts both kinds of life on an equal footing and urges the priests of the church at Vercelli to select a bishop who will honor both. He insists that priests especially must live lives of visibly greater virtue than the common populace if they are to instruct the people with integrity and earn their respect. Accordingly, Ambrose encourages priests to follow the same lives of temperance, fasting, and chastity that monks observe.<sup>116</sup> He uses the same biblical arguments to spur men toward chaste lives that he uses in his treatises on virginity to appeal to



women, and the life of monks that he describes here parallels the life he advises for virgins.

Across all of his writings, Ambrose consistently portrays the souls of those who pursue a life of chastity and prayer as both brides and soldiers, depicting the life of the soul as both a battle and a romance. Ambrose adds detail to Jerome's sketch of the mental and memorial practices central to building a new identity—an identity that transcends the categories of gender defined by Roman society and allows men and women to enter into the angelic, metagendered life defined by relationship as brides and soldiers of Christ.

### Augustine

For Augustine of Hippo, the key to human nature and relationships (including gender) lay in the divine nature of God. He believed that God's changeless nature, loving wisdom, divine freedom, and sovereignty as the creator of humankind entailed a divine right to rule over the affairs of that creation in accord with the Trinity's own purposes for creation as a whole.<sup>117</sup> For Augustine, God's just nature, love, and humility made it impossible for the divinity to be guilty of tyranny—indeed, the incarnation of the second Person of the Trinity was “not an act of assertion and authority, but rather a loss of power, and emptying (*kenosis*) of self,” and so was the defining act of divine love and mercy.<sup>118</sup> In this context, the rule of God by definition had to be one of justice and goodness. The bishop of Hippo denied that humans possessed any natural capacity for goodness after the Fall, for his understanding of original sin held that every human being from his or her earliest days inherently rebelled against God's just and good order, thus necessitating God's intervention from outside of human affairs if humanity were to be redeemed. Augustine argued for a natural social hierarchy within human relationships, but he did not see coercive relations of men over women as justified. Rather, as stated in *De bono coniugali*, he viewed the social hierarchy of men over women as natural according to the order of creation, not sex, and the fact that woman was said to be created from the side of the man instead of separately from him: “Poterat enim esse in utroque sexu etiam sine tali commixtione alterius regentis, alterius obsequentis amicalis quaedam et germana coniunctio” [for even without such sexual association there could exist a true union of friendship between the two sexes, with the one governing and the other obeying].<sup>119</sup> To Augustine, the Fall explained the existence of

coercive relations of men over women (and over other men) as the result of sin, but did not justify them, for in his ideal order of social relationships he made a sharp distinction between benevolent dominion and coercive domination.<sup>120</sup>

Augustine wrote *De bono coniugali* to highlight the goodness of marriage while also commenting on the superiority of virginity in answer to Jovinian's teaching. Though it was written fairly early in Augustine's career (circa 401 CE), it develops ideas about marriage being more than a matter of procreation, as Dyan Elliott notes when she writes that, "Augustine may rightly be considered the architect of spiritual marriage in the West since he was the first to develop a full and coherent theory of marriage that was not dependent on the conjugal debt."<sup>121</sup> It is within this context of marriage being more than just a matter of sex and procreation that Augustine can call marriage a social relationship, the "prima ... naturalis humanae societatis copula" [the first natural link in human society],<sup>122</sup> and formulate his psychology of gender relationships. As Jacqueline Murray observes, "gender is only meaningful in relational terms," and in Augustine's thought, the relationship between male and female encompassed more than just the bodied, sexual relationship, but also a natural relationship between masculine and feminine gender that rendered male and female into husband and wife, not just man and woman.<sup>123</sup> Because his belief in a natural order of relationships was based on the order of creation, Augustine wrote that a subordination similar to that of the woman to the man in marriage would have existed even if God had made a second male to be Adam's helper.<sup>124</sup> Like Jerome and Ambrose before him, however, Augustine agreed that virginity was superior in virtue to marriage because it freed men and women especially from being constantly dragged from contemplation of the eternal God into living in the temporal realm because of the troubles and burdens of marriage.<sup>125</sup>

Augustine holds that virginity merits a greater reward in the kingdom of heaven than chaste marriage because it participates already in a heavenly, non-fleshy mode of being.<sup>126</sup> All believers will share in the life of heaven, but only the practitioners of virginity begin to live that angelic life while living within this temporal world. Even as virginity brings to its followers the life that belongs to the angels, however, it also brings responsibilities and, practiced with humility, produces the restraint over one's own self that eradicates the vices and builds virtue in the virgin's life. The life of virginity is an embodied life through which heaven is made manifest

on earth.<sup>127</sup> Paige Hochschild observes that “personality, for Augustine, includes the whole of embodied life, and it is *this* embodied person that God calls into unity with himself—through purification, integration, and not rejection.”<sup>128</sup> Augustine calls not, as is often asserted, for a sharply dualistic rejection of the body, but rather for integrated personhood whereby the body is maintained and cared for by the soul in the manner God intended at its creation.<sup>129</sup> The practice of virginity subdues and controls the impulses and passions of the body for the sake of its own health and the health of the soul, thus restoring an orderly harmony between the two so that the virgin may be free for the pursuit of more important activities.

Nor did Augustine write only of virginity for women, but for men also. He devotes three sections of *De sancta virginitate* to Christ’s teaching from Matthew 19 about those who are eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven.<sup>130</sup> Augustine makes more of this dominical teaching, using it in combination with Isaiah 56:5 to argue that virgins will receive a greater reward in heaven than those who marry. Like Ambrose, Augustine applies the verse about becoming eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven to both men and women who practice virginity.<sup>131</sup> In Augustine, more than in Ambrose or Jerome, the ideal of virginity is most clearly expressed not through the symbolism of women becoming men or men becoming women, but of both *by choice* becoming a third kind of gender, the closest known analog of which is the eunuch. Yet Augustine pointedly marks the shortcomings of the comparison when he states that even physical eunuchs who would marry if they could do not merit the rewards of voluntary virginity, for such eunuchs, though presumably unable to be anything but virgins in body, are not virgins in their minds and so would not deserve the hundredfold reward for virginity. He distinguishes here between a thoughtless corporeal virginity and the true, spiritual virginity of the essential self, the mind.<sup>132</sup> By making this argument, Augustine implicitly acknowledges that even the metaphor of becoming a eunuch is not exactly analogous to the state of being that obtains in those who participate through virginity in the angelic way of life. Virgins might be compared to eunuchs in terms of sexual practice, but to Augustine the condition of the physical eunuch signifies something beyond its surface materiality: virginity takes its practitioners beyond a kind of neutral state between masculine and feminine gender into something unfleshly and angelic beyond the binary human sexes and genders. In it, they live already the life other Christians will begin to live only after death.<sup>133</sup>

While Augustine wrote about the commitment to chastity as the entrance into a heavenly mode of being, he also deplored attempts to blur or erase corporeal sexual distinction in those who undertook a monastic profession in *De opere monachorum*.<sup>134</sup> Augustine's outrage runs high as he marshals quotations from the Apostle Paul to make his point that becoming a eunuch for the kingdom of God did not mean that men should cease to think of themselves bodily as male, or women as bodily female.<sup>135</sup> Augustine, then, along with Jerome and Ambrose, actively discouraged the attempt by men or women to set aside the visible signs that signal the bodily sexes while at the same time teaching an inward change of gender to a heavenly mode of being. He advocates not a denial of the body's identity as male or female, but of Roman society's expectations for the gendered and sexual roles associated with both male and female bodies. Entrance into the society of heaven entailed a change in expectations for possessors of both male and female bodies that would result in a different kind of gender identity and therefore a different kind of behavior. Augustine taught that this change takes place in the soul as it is oriented toward Christ through memory. As with the other fathers, Augustine's theology of gender is grounded in his interpretation of the Creation and Fall of human beings recorded in Genesis 1–3. He addresses this topic in many of his works throughout the years, gradually altering his views and developing interpretations of Genesis that went far beyond those articulated by Ambrose or Jerome.<sup>136</sup> His most extensive and mature treatments of the subject are found in his later works, especially in *De trinitate*, *Confessiones*, *De Genesi ad litteram*, and *De civitate Dei*.

*De trinitate* is an extended meditation on the nature of the triune Godhead and the analogous trinities of the intelligible world through which humans may come to know and love the divine Trinity. In it, Augustine demonstrates for his readers the richness of thought to which a well-stocked memory and opportunity for meditation and contemplation may lead. In reading through Augustine's *De trinitate* with an eye on gender matters, one finds two separate but related ideas coming to the fore: the use of a feminine allegorical figure and feminine language when referring to Christ as *Sapientia* (the Wisdom of God) in the discussion of the Trinity and the figural construction of the "male" and "female" activities within the rational soul.

The figure of *Sapientia* or Wisdom in Judeo-Christian tradition goes back to the wisdom books of the Old Testament. In the first several chapters of Proverbs, Wisdom is portrayed allegorically as a woman who

claims that, “Dominus possedit me initium viarum suarum antequam quicquam faceret a principio. ... quando praeeparabat caelos aderam ... cum eo eram cuncta componens” [the Lord possessed me at the beginning of his way, Before his works of old. ... When he established the heavens, I was there ... Then I was beside him, as a master workman].<sup>137</sup> All of the characteristics of Wisdom here and elsewhere in the Old Testament are attributed to Christ by Augustine and other early fathers because the Apostle Paul calls Christ the wisdom and power of God.<sup>138</sup> What is intriguing is that when Augustine refers to Christ as *Sapientia*, he does so by means of a female figure, as when he says:

*Cum autem uenit plenitudo temporis, missa est non ut impleret angelos, nec ut esset angelus nisi in quantum consilium patris annuntiabat quod et ipsius erat, nec ut esset cum hominibus aut in hominibus, hoc enim et antea in patribus et prophetis; sed ut ipsum uerbum caro fieret, id est homo fieret.*

[But when the fulness of time came she was sent, not to fill angels nor even to be an angel—except in the sense that she declared the counsel of the Father which was also her own—nor to be with men or in men, since she had already been like this in the patriarchs and prophets; no, it was in order that the Word might become flesh, that is, become man.]<sup>139</sup>

Christ, who was most definitely a biological male in the incarnation, is spoken of by means of a female allegorical figure and Latin nouns and pronouns of the feminine gender. Augustine is not confused about whom he is writing, yet he does not hesitate on more than one occasion to speak of Christ as though he were female in much the same way that Ambrose did, using grammatical gender also to blur social concepts of gender. He does the same thing when referring to Christ as the feminine *Castitas* in *De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus liber*.<sup>140</sup> Christ as *Castitas* is in God (“in deo est” [she is in God]) as the likeness of God “per quam facta sunt omnia” [through which all things were made]. When souls participate in this chastity in God, they become chaste because Christ was chaste; they reflect the image of Christ and are made chaste through participation in the chastity that is in God. Here Augustine combines the ideas of Christ as *Sapientia* and Christ as *Castitas*, blending genders by depicting the Son as female and associating that blending with the practice of chastity itself. Thus, chastity actually becomes the means by which gendered men and

women transcend biological distinctions and participate in the metagendered life of heaven through becoming more like Christ.

In book twelve of *De trinitate*, Augustine rather impatiently reminds his less astute readers that the feminine gender in grammar cannot automatically be taken to mean the female sex, nor should anyone be timid about using the figure of a wife to talk about God.<sup>141</sup> His point is to remind his readers that they are looking for analogies—the traces of the likeness of God in known things—in the following exploration of the metaphorical genders within the human psyche, not definitive structures of the value or character of actual men and women.<sup>142</sup> Augustine stolidly affirms in more than one work that the *imago Dei* is not reflected in any body, male or female.<sup>143</sup> The only way in which the human body, male and female, symbolizes the *imago Dei* is by its upright posture, by which it could look to the heavens, as opposed to the posture of beasts who could only look at the ground.<sup>144</sup> In terms of symbolic gender when used as an analogy for spiritual things, Augustine teaches that one should not be overly fastidious about the exactness of the analogy, for “longe remotissime facta sunt” [they (the likenesses) are made very remote].<sup>145</sup> Augustine’s point is that God is a non-bodied spiritual being and the limited language and material analogies humans use to think and speak about such a Being of necessity must be remote and inexact. At the same time, however, Augustine teaches that all created things bear a likeness to God in some way because he created them and made them good, but again this likeness is remote—a vague impression rather than a portrait.<sup>146</sup> Nevertheless, this vague impression takes its fundamental form from the God who created it, and so both masculine and feminine genders, as well as male and female bodies, bear somehow a dim likeness to the eternal God who created them. Accordingly, God both encompasses and transcends all gender definitions: encompasses because they find their source in the Godhead, transcends because the divine metagender is infinitely more than just the sum of these two earthly genders. Thus could mankind be created male and female in the image of God. Thus could Augustine and other church fathers speak of Christ in feminine terms, of male and female saints in terms of characteristics associated with both genders because both masculine and feminine traits are finite refractions of the metagendered divine.

Yet Augustine does rather tie himself up into logical knots while pursuing his discussion of the “male” and “female” metaphors for activities of the human soul. Kari Elisabeth Børresen points out that “In spite

of possession by both man and woman of a rational asexual soul, there remains a kind of congruity between the male body and the asexual soul. And so the *vir* does not experience, as does the *femina*, a duality between the two elements of his being.<sup>147</sup> One must ask, however, whether this duality is a limitation constituted and imposed by the Latin language itself and by the rhetorical constructs already familiar to educated audiences in late Roman culture rather than something created or imposed by Augustine or other theologians of the time. Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, and others clearly found these rhetorical figures useful in allegorical interpretation and polemical diatribes, but Augustine especially seems not just to use the metaphors of male and female, masculine and feminine as he found them already in the culture, but also to redefine them and shape them to a new purpose. By emphasizing the inadequacy of material things and finite human language accurately to manifest or describe the divine, Augustine pushes his audience to think beyond their culturally limited definitions of male, female, masculine, and feminine.

Børresen's comment, however, points up the passage from *De trinitate* that most troubles Augustine's critics, the discussion of how woman can be understood *not* to be the image of God:

credo, illius esse quod iam dixi cum de natura humanae mentis agerem, mulierem cum uiro suo esse *imaginem dei* ut una imago sit tota illa substantia; cum autem ad adiutorium distribuitur, quod ad eam ipsam solam attinet non est imago dei; quod autem ad uirum solum attinet *imago dei est* tam plena atque integra quam in unum coniuncta muliere.

[In the same way, I believe, as what I said when I was dealing with the nature of the human mind, namely that the woman with her husband is the image of God in such a way that the whole of the substance is one image, but when she is assigned her function of being an assistant, which is her concern alone, she is not the image of God; whereas in what concerns the man alone he is the image of God as fully and completely as when the woman is joined to him in one whole.]<sup>148</sup>

Margaret Farley interprets Augustine to mean that "only the male body was (in its characteristics of activity and power) in the image of God. Hence, women shared in the image fully only in so far as they were corporally joined to men or virginally freed from their bodies."<sup>149</sup> In order to support her interpretation, however, Farley has taken her understanding

of the male metaphor from outside the context of Augustine's reflections on the Trinity. She interprets "the man" literally and bodily in terms of the greater physical strength and the classical medical concept of male activity in procreation (as opposed to female passivity in receiving into herself the vital essence carried only by men). While it is true that this symbolism of male activity and puissance was common in the late antique era, the ideas of power and activity are not the metaphorical images that Augustine invokes in book twelve of *De trinitate*. Augustine is exclusively concerned with the activity of the rational soul that is defined by its ability to recognize and contemplate the eternal Trinity because it has been created to that same triune image. Hochschild explains that, "If *sapientia* describes the mind in union with the eternal reasons, *scientia* is the demonstration *in actu* of the mind's attention to these same principles. These are not two parts, nor two faculties, of the mind; they are rather two different kinds of activity: the mind as it looks to what is 'higher,' and the mind as it looks to what is 'lower.'"<sup>150</sup> In fact, it is the "female" activity of the mind (*scientia*) that is designated as active because it has charge of all temporal and material matters. And so the "female" action is diverted from the contemplation of God to tend to temporal matters as a helper that allows the mind to multitask, so that the "male" action (*sapientia*) may continue uninterrupted the contemplation of the eternal:

Sed quia sexu corporis distat a uiro, rite potuit in eius corporali uelamento figurari pars illa rationis quae ad temporalia gubernanda deflectitur ut non maneat imago dei nisi ex qua parte mens hominis aeternis rationibus conspiciendis uel consulendis adhaerescit, quam non solum masculos sed etiam feminas habere manifestum est.

[Well, it is only because she differs from the man in the sex of her body that her bodily covering could suitably be used to symbolize that part of the reason which is diverted to the management of temporal things, signifying that the mind of man does not remain the image of God except in the part which adheres to the eternal ideas to contemplate or consult them: and it is clear that females have this as well as males. So in their minds a common nature is to be acknowledged; but in their bodies the distribution of the one mind is symbolized.]<sup>151</sup>

Herein lies the nature of the "female" action's inferiority: by tending to temporal matters (which are by definition not eternal God), it does not reflect or reflect upon the *imago Dei* and so, being separated from



contemplation by temporal concerns, by itself is not to be considered the image of God because it no longer fixes its attention upon God. Only when it turns away from temporal affairs and focuses its attention as before upon the eternal is unity restored so that it participates in the *imago Dei*. Within Augustine's new definitions of gender according to the attentions of the soul, the most power-focused and ambitious men would also be the most "female" because the domination of *scientia* in their focus on temporal status and wealth distracts *sapientia* from focusing upon God. According to Edmund Hill, "the consequence [of sin] is a disruption of the divinely appointed order by which man is under the dominion of God and exercises dominion over the world; by rejecting the lordship of God, and seeking to be his own master, he finds himself in effect dominated or fascinated by the material world."<sup>152</sup> The converse of this situation also holds, wherein the most studious and contemplative of virgins would be the most "male" because of the reorientation of *scientia* in harmony with the restored exercise of *sapientia* in turning away from worldly concerns and seeking God through prayer and meditation.

Yet even in this more contextual understanding of the passage, we must still wrestle with the fact that the "female" sciential action is inferior to the "male" sapiential activity despite the fact that men and women are equally made to the image of God. That Augustine means this inferiority to be relational and functional (conditional and temporal) rather than qualitative and essential (natural and eternal) is not immediately apparent unless we keep in mind that Augustine's focus is on how this relationship reveals the nature of the Trinity. These themes of condition (relationship and function) and nature (quality and essence) are discussed extensively when Augustine explores the nature of the Second Person of the Trinity, Christ, in the first several books of *De trinitate*.

Up to Augustine's time, the Trinity had been discussed using the inherited philosophical language of substance (essential being) and accident (appearance).<sup>153</sup> Words of accident describe appearance or changeable traits and words of substance articulate what a thing or person is in terms of essential being: what cannot be changed without changing the very being of the thing itself. The limitations of language became increasingly problematic when grappling with the nature of the unlimited divinity, a point Augustine makes early on in *De doctrina christiana* when he writes "Non enim facile nomen, quod tantae excellentiae conueniat, inueniri potest" [It is not easy, after all, to find any name that will really fit such transcendent majesty].<sup>154</sup> When terms of accident and substance

were used in reference to God, it was believed that God, being immutable, could not truly be said to have accidents, or changeable characteristics, and so accident words (adjectives such as good, wise, just, etc.) always become substance words (nouns) when used in reference to God: “Secundum hoc ergo dicuntur illa simplicia, quae principaliter uereque diuina sunt, quod non aliud est in eis qualitas, aliud substantia” [Accordingly, whatever is authentically and truly divine is said to be simple because its qualities (accidents) and its substance are one and the same].<sup>155</sup> (For example, the statement, “God is just,” does not mean that God possesses the quality of justice, but that God *is* essential justice and every aspect of true justice originates in God.) In one of his most significant contributions to the development of Trinitarian theology, Augustine recognized the need for a language beyond substance and accident; he saw that any discussion of the Trinity also needed the language of relationship, for how else is fatherhood or sonship or the love between them to be understood except in terms of relationship?<sup>156</sup> Accordingly, the persons within the Trinity are distinguished by their relationship to each other, not by any kind of difference in accidents or substance. The characteristics of divinity were possessed equally and eternally by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so they could not be rightly distinguished by accidents; if Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all God, then they cannot be distinguished by substance. Coequal, coeternal. If it were not for the incarnation the discussion might have ended there.

The incarnation translates God out of the eternal and into the temporal in the person of Jesus Christ, the God-man. As Hochschild notes, “the action of the incarnation describes a marriage and reconciliation of the corporeal and the intelligible.”<sup>157</sup> It joins in one perfect person all the rightly ordered powers of body and soul, making heaven intelligible to earth. It also brings into sharp relief both the relational, personal aspect of God’s nature and the real distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit within the Godhead. The incarnation implied an order, a hierarchy within the coequal members of the Godhead itself, because “they are equal in that they are identical in their essential nature; but they are unequal in that they are given distinct sorts of tasks.”<sup>158</sup> Misunderstanding of this distinction led to the Arian heresy: the idea that Jesus Christ was created and of a like but different substance from the Father and the Holy Spirit because of his humanity. This view was defeated at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, but Arianism did not give up easily and orthodox theologians like Augustine still had to explain why Jesus had said that the

Father was greater than he, and why St. Paul had written that Christ would be subject to the Father.<sup>159</sup> Augustine addresses the problem by introducing the language of relationship, so that, while Christ retains all of the qualities and characteristics of divinity, in taking the role of a servant in the incarnation, the Son voluntarily subjects himself to the Father and, becoming like man, introduces gender into the language by which humans discussed the divine relationships.<sup>160</sup> This subjection was not one of nature (for Christ was not inferior in his essence to the other members of the Trinity) and so it was not a matter of domination, but instead of choice, of subordination of the will—of love—within the Godhead and of Christ's temporal condition (relationship) as the God-man.<sup>161</sup>

The critical point in this discussion is that Christ loses none of the characteristics of deity by being in subjection to the Father, even though it did mean that he set aside some of the prerogatives and dignities of deity in order to enter the temporal realm by becoming human: “*Est ergo dei filius deo patri natura aequalis, habitu minor*” [So the Son of God is God the Father's equal by nature, by condition his inferior.]<sup>162</sup> Christ's inferiority and subjection were matters of his condition of incarnation into the temporal creation and of his filial relationship to a heavenly father. They were willingly assumed by him out of love for the Father and for humanity, not as a result of any sort of coercive mastery by God the Father over a somehow lesser divinity or weaker creation, and thus did not exist in violation of justice. The crucial point is that in Augustine's (and Ælfric's) understanding of the highest, most perfect reality, the Triune God, essential equality and relational hierarchy were not mutually exclusive of each other because they were based in love and volition, not assertion of power.<sup>163</sup>

In this same way, the representations of gender in Augustine's psychology of the soul also reflect the *imago Dei* in a more complex way than even Augustine explicitly states, for they reflect the intricate mystery whereby Christ could be considered both equal to the Father and yet subject to the Father without losing anything of his nature as deity. In light of this parallel, the “female” activity of the soul images Christ in a way that the “male” does not, even as the “male” activity images the Father in a way that the “female” does not, but only when the soul is restored to the proper order exemplified in the incarnate Christ. Even as the Son and the Father are one divine substance, distinguished not by nature but by relationship and joined by the love that is the Holy Spirit, so the “female” and the “male” activities are one human substance made to the image of God

in the rational soul, distinguished not by nature but by relationship, and joined by the love that one ought rightly to bear for God, others, and oneself. Augustine believed that such voluntary subordination existed among the very persons of the Godhead without loss of equality, and accordingly he and those such as Bede and Ælfric who accepted, preserved, and transmitted his theology of the Trinity into Anglo-Saxon England and the rest of medieval Europe could consider voluntary subordination as just and good not because of or in the same way as their own cultural contexts, but because this subordination was exemplified within the Godhead itself. The key to the justice of such subordination is the will—it must be voluntary on the part of the one submitting him- or herself to the other, and the other must acknowledge and extend that freedom of volition, for an enforced subjection would be unjust because it was not found in the Godhead.<sup>164</sup>

Therefore, when Augustine wrote that “Neque enim et ante peccatum aliter factam fuisse decet credere mulierem, nisi ut uir ei dominaretur et ad eum ipsa seruiendo conuerteretur” [even before her sin woman had been made to be ruled by her husband and to be submissive and subject to him], he did not have in mind a relationship of domination and servitude between husband and wife.<sup>165</sup> In Augustine’s mind the ruling and subject positions in the prelapsarian social relationship between the man and the woman would have been based upon mutual love, reflecting the relationships within the Trinity, rather than a relationship of power and powerlessness. This reflection of the Trinity meant a relationship in which each spouse for love of the other would set aside himself or herself for the sake and good of the other, rather than each looking to his or her own self-interests out of inordinate self-love. Augustine makes this point explicit in *De Genesi ad litteram* when he writes:

Hi duo amores—quorum alter sanctus est, alter immundus, alter socialis, alter priuatus, alter communi utilitati consulens propter supernam societatem, alter etiam rem communem in potestatem propriam redigens propter adrogantem dominationem. ... alter hoc uolens proximo quod sibi, alter subicere proximum sibi, alter propter proximi utilitatem regens proximum, alter propter suam.

[There are, then, two loves, of which one is holy, the other unclean; one turned towards the neighbor, the other centered on self; ... one looking to the common good, ... the other bringing the common good under its own power, arrogantly looking to domination; ... one

wishing for its neighbor what it wishes for itself, the other seeking to subject its neighbor to itself; one looking for its neighbor's advantage in ruling its neighbor, the other looking for its own advantage.]]<sup>166</sup>

Augustine sees self-love that dominates others and seeks its own advantage as an “unclean” love, characteristic of fallen humanity. Thus, what began in Paradise as a relationship in which one ruled for the good of the other and the other submitted for the good of the one, in the image of the relationships within the Trinity, became perverted through sin into a relationship of domination and subjection. Yet, even though subjection to the husband was Eve's sentence for her disobedience, Augustine clearly states that this punishment was not given to her because of her nature (substance) as woman (nor, by implication, Adam's as man), but as a result of her sin: “hoc enim uiro potius sententia dei detulit et maritum habere dominum meruit mulieris non natura, sed culpa” [The sentence pronounced by God gave this power to man; and it is not by her nature but rather by her sin that woman deserved to have her husband for a master].<sup>167</sup> Sin twisted the image of the loving relationship within the Trinity that Adam and Eve originally shared in their innocence into the perverted relationship outside of the Trinity of male domination and female subjection.<sup>168</sup> For Augustine, only salvation could bring the cacophony of marital relationships as images of the fallen “male” and “female” activities within the soul back into the harmony of the prelapsarian mutual love that reflected the relationships within the Trinity. Only faith in God's gracious intervention could restore the “male” and “female” activities of the mind to their pre-Fall unity and so renew, within the individual believer, the harmony of body and soul while reconciling the restored human being to right relationship with God. Where sin caused disorder between body and soul and even between the activities of the soul, faith actively works to put everything back into proper order within the soul and within the whole person by reorienting the individual once again toward God.<sup>169</sup>

This restored harmony in living persons reaches its greatest earthly perfection in the souls of those committed to virginity, who from the earliest age turn away from temporal matters as much as possible and devote themselves to the contemplation of God's perfections. Motivated by love, they seek to spend their lives pursuing the closest possible imitation of Christ's chastity and virtue. But how are the virgins to do this? Hochschild notes that Augustine outlines in his works “the necessity of faith in guid-

ing the restoration of memory, which in turn is seen as a pedagogy of the right valuation of the spiritual over the material.”<sup>170</sup> For memory is integral to knowing, knowing is integral to loving, and loving is integral to restoring the *imago Dei*. Augustine writes of memory as a “place” in which he meets and constructs himself:

Ibi mihi et ipse occurro meque recolo, quid quando et ubi egerim quoque modo, cum agerem, affectus fuerim. ... Ex eadem copia etiam similitudines rerum uel expertarum uel ex eis, quas expertus sum, creditarum alias atque alias et ipse contexo praeteritis atque ex his etiam futuras actiones et euenta et spes, et haec omnia rursus quasi praesentia meditor, “Faciam hoc et illud” dico apud me in ipso ingenti sinu animi mei pleno tot et tantarum rerum imaginibus, et hoc aut illud sequitur.

[And there I come to meet myself. I recall myself, what I did, when and where I acted in a certain way, and how I felt about so acting. ... Moreover, I can draw on this abundant store to form imaginary pictures which resemble the things I have myself experienced, or believed because my own experience confirmed them, and weave these together with images from the past, and so evoke future actions, occurrences or hopes; and on all these as well I can meditate as though they were present to me. In that same enormous recess of my mind, thronging with so many great images, I say to myself, “That’s what I will do!” And the action I have envisaged follows.]<sup>171</sup>

Memory, then, is where one meets and considers and comes to know oneself through reflection.<sup>172</sup> It transcends the boundaries of time inasmuch as it can recall the past in the present and in the present it can envision the future. In its crucible, the mind tests and interprets past experiences in light of everything it knows and so directs what it learns to “future actions, occurrences and hopes.” This imaginative construction of the future shapes the behavior of the individual through decisions made as a product of reflection upon the contents of memory as “the action I envisaged follows.” This is the heart of the process of self-knowledge and self-formation, for Augustine cries out, “Magna uis est memoriae, nescio quid horrendum, deus meus, profunda et infinita multiplicitas; et hoc animus est, et hoc ego ipse sum” [O my God, profound, infinite complexity, what a great faculty memory is, how awesome a mystery! It is the mind, and this is nothing other than my very self].<sup>173</sup> Without memory, who are we? Who can we be? The exhortations of Ambrose to “know

yourself” can only be fulfilled in the mind through the memory,<sup>174</sup> but there is a difference between knowing oneself and deliberately forming oneself. The work of reorienting the soul takes time and intention and requires a powerful motivation—the motivation of love.

At the end of book eight in *De trinitate* Augustine offers this conclusion:

Ita et ipsorum uitam facit a nobis diligere formae illius dilectio secundum quam uixisse creduntur, et illorum uita credita in eandem formam flagrantiore excitat caritatem ut quanto flagrantius diligimus deum, tanto certius sereniusque uideamus quia in deo conspicimus incommutabilem formam iustitiae secundum quam hominem uiuere oportere iudicamus. ... Quid est autem dilectio uel caritas quam tantopere scriptura diuina laudat et praedicat nisi amor boni? ... Quid est ergo amor nisi quaedam uita duo aliqua copulans uel copulari appetens, amantem scilicet et quod amatur?

[Thus on the one hand love of that form we believe (godly people) lived up to makes us love their life, and on the other belief in their life stirs us to a more blazing charity toward that form; with the result that the more brightly burns our love for God, the more surely and serenely we see him. ... What, then, after all that, is this love or charity which divine scriptures praise and proclaim so much, but love of the good? ... And what is love but a kind of coupling together two things, namely lover and what is being loved?]<sup>175</sup>

Love of the good *is* love of God, for God is the good Augustine refers to, the essence of the goodness in good people. Recognition of the image of the good in the lives and actions of godly people kindles desire for it, and then belief in that good fans desire into flame so that the lover of God seeks the best means to be joined together with the divine goodness, as Gregory the Great also observes.<sup>176</sup> One must know God in order to love him, and memory is the key to knowing God, just as it is to knowing oneself. Augustine observes “Ecce quantum spatatus sum in memoria mea quaerens te, domine, et non te inueni extra eam” [how widely I have ranged through my memory seeking you, Lord, and I have not found you outside it].<sup>177</sup> But Augustine’s memory was well furnished with the Christian scriptures, and he urges the readers of *De doctrina christiana* who desire to ascend to wisdom to “nosse istos libros ... legendo tamen uel mandare memoriae” [know these books, and ... by reading then to commit them to memory].<sup>178</sup> By filling the memory with the word of God and then stu-

dying and meditating upon that Word, a virgin of either sex might come truly to know and love God and to desire to draw closer and become more like God—thus working to restore the *imago Dei* in the soul that was lost through the Fall.

The work of restoring the *imago Dei* takes a lifetime of turning from temporal concerns to prioritize matters of eternal import. According to Augustine, God calls all Christians to pursue this work but those who choose an ascetic way of life have the advantage of time free of distraction in order to pursue it. In the soul, where there are no distinctions of sex, there are also no distinctions in the characteristics of holiness, for those who devote their lives single-mindedly to drawing closer to God seek him where he may be found, in the treasure-house and temple of memory through meditation and contemplation. In the practice of continence, Augustine says “quippe colligimur et redigimur in unum, a quo in multa defluximus” [the scattered elements of the self are collected and brought back into the unity from which we have slid away into dispersion],<sup>179</sup> and so by the practices of virtue and virginity souls are restored and re-oriented toward God, developing in virtue because growing closer to the source of virtue as they pursue the undivided, unified, metagendered life of God. Along with Augustine, they say to God, “Meminerim tui; intellegam te; diligam te, Auge in me ista donec me reformes ad integrum” [Let me remember you, let me understand you, let me love you. Increase these things in me until you refashion me entirely].<sup>180</sup>

### Gregory the Great

Separated by time (160–200 years) and culture from Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, the fourth Latin Doctor, Gregory the Great, holds an intriguing place in the understanding and promulgation of the teachings of the three earlier Doctors in the Western church. By the end of the sixth century, the migrating barbarians had settled upon the remains of the western Roman Empire and begun to convert to catholic Christianity. The coenobitic monasticism promoted by John Cassian had taken root, and the catholic orthodoxy of the first three Latin Doctors was well established. By the time he was elected bishop of Rome, Gregory was thoroughly versed in their writings and in the practice of a monastic life and yet, as John Moorhead observes, his appropriation of particular ideas from his forerunners “is maddeningly difficult to establish.”<sup>181</sup> Moorhead further notes that “Gregory’s resolutely synthesizing mind may have been able to



turn whatever he read to his own purposes ... [and] he may well have used the writings of earlier authorities as launching pads for his own thoughts, rather than as bodies of ideas to be engaged with. ... Moreover, the bulk of his works are the fruits of orally delivered teaching in which he would have been relying on what he remembered of his reading.”<sup>182</sup> Gregory’s works reveal not only a knowledge of the classical concepts of memory known, practiced, and encouraged in the other Doctors, but also his own exercise of the creative use of memory for the purposes of self-formation and of understanding others within the context of his roles as monk and bishop. The ideas of Augustine, Jerome, and Ambrose permeate Gregory’s own works, and so he may rightly serve as a measure of how their writings were understood and how their views were developed in his own psychology and theology of gender. Unlike the other Doctors, however, Gregory’s attitudes concerning Creation and Fall, virginity, and the image of God in the human soul are not conveniently expounded in treatises on virginity or the Trinity, nor in a focused exegetical commentary on Genesis. Instead his thoughts and teachings on these topics are spread throughout the corpus of his works and we may look not only to his interpretation of Scripture in works like *Moralia in Iob* or the *Homiliae in Euangelium*, but also to his letters, hagiography, and guidelines for rulers in the church in order to find Gregory’s own attitudes and teachings about gender and memory.

Thomas O’Loughlin best describes Gregory’s place in the tradition of commentary on Genesis, saying “While Gregory did not contribute *directly* to the Genesis tradition, ... not only was he regarded as the most illustrious exegete after Augustine throughout the seventh and eighth centuries, but indeed he was seen ... as a commentator on Genesis in his own right.”<sup>183</sup> In his comments on Genesis, however, Gregory shows the influence of Augustine and Jerome in shaping his own thought and understanding of the *imago Dei* in humans. In the *Moralia*, Gregory observes that Adam was created male and female before Eve was made.<sup>184</sup> Whether Gregory means by this that Eve existed in Adam as a sort of inactive seed or that her shared essential humanity with Adam meant that she was already present in the same substance as Adam though yet unformed cannot be discerned from this particular passage. Yet Gregory takes his allegorical psychological model of temptation from Ambrose instead when he comments that Eve represents the senses of the flesh.<sup>185</sup> He states his perception of temptation and the Fall in the *Regula pastoralis*:

In primo autem parente didicimus quia tribus modis omnis culpae nequitiam perpetramus, suggestione scilicet, delectatione, consensu. ... Vnde et illic serpens praua suggessit, Eua autem quasi caro se delectationi subdidit, Adam uero uelut spiritus suggestione ac delectatione superatus assensit. Suggestione itaque peccatum agnoscimus, delectatione uincimur, consensu etiam ligamur. Ammonendi sunt igitur qui nequitias cogitationis deflent, ut sollicite considerent in qua peccati mensura ceciderunt, quatinus iuxta ruinae modum quam in semetipsis introrsus sentiunt, etiam mensura lamentationis erigantur, ne si cogitata mala minus cruciant, usque ad perpetranda opera perducant.

[We have learned from the case of our first parents that we commit the evil of every fault in three stages: suggestion, pleasure, and consent. ... In the case mentioned, the serpent suggested something wrong, Eve (whom we may take to be the flesh) gave herself up to the pleasure, and Adam (the spirit), overcome by the suggestion and the pleasure, gave his consent. We come to know sin by suggestion, we are vanquished by pleasure, and we are bound by consent.]<sup>186</sup>

As with Ambrose and Augustine, Gregory attaches a figural meaning to the people and events of the Fall and points out the crucial power of pleasure in the process of temptation. His explanation, however, is Ambrosian: sin overpowers the will by fixing the mind upon the desire for sensual pleasure, thereby leading the mind to consent to the act.<sup>187</sup>

As with other allegorical interpretations, the tropological and allegorical nature of Gregory's comments about women and men in the *Moralia* clearly do not strive to be complimentary, but neither do they aim to depict men and women in general. Gregory focuses on his perception of a truth beyond the literal characters in the text. The texts of the Bible that Gregory explains and the orthodox doctrines of Christianity shape and direct his interpretations, yet each passage seems to have the potential to supply both positive and negative ideas and examples about gender. Job's wife plays an unattractive and equivocal role in Gregory's exegesis of Job just as she does in the scriptural story. In the biblical book, Satan afflicts Job (and, by extension, his wife) with a series of increasingly personal disasters and torments. At the height of Job's suffering, his wife comes to him and asks why he keeps clinging to his integrity, why does he not just go ahead and curse God and die.<sup>188</sup> Ann Astell demonstrates that Gregory interprets Job's wife's role in the story at this point as parallel to Eve's role in the story of the Fall—she is a source of temptation for

the pleasure of relief from physical suffering.<sup>189</sup> But was she a source or a tool? There is a fine distinction between the two, but it is a distinction that Gregory himself makes. Gregory treats Job's wife circumspectly: at no time does Gregory ever indicate or imply that she is wicked or perverse by nature. Instead, he emphasizes that she was goaded by Satan, was used, like Eve, as the devil's tool in tempting Job through the pleasure of the senses to depart from his devotion and curse God.<sup>190</sup> Gregory does not call the wife wicked, but calls her persuasion wicked.<sup>191</sup> This circumspection recalls Ambrose's point in *De paradiso* that what is called Eve's fault indicates the weakness of the senses of the flesh, not inherent wickedness in woman as such.<sup>192</sup> Gregory emphasizes this element in his historical interpretation of Job's response to his wife's advice to give up his simplicity, curse God, and die. Job compares his wife to a "stupid woman," and Gregory explains that:

*Si bona accepimus de manu Domini mala quare non sustineamus? Vbi et bene praemittit: Locuta es quasi una ex ineptis mulieribus. Quia enim sensus pravae mulieris non autem sexus in uitio est, nequaquam ait: Locuta es quasi una ex mulieribus sed ex ineptis mulieribus, ut uidelicet ostendatur quia quod prauum sapit, accedentis stultitiae, non autem conditae sit naturae.*

[He says, "If we accept good things from God's hand, why should we not receive evil?" He precedes these words by the following, "You are talking like a stupid woman." The judgment on the moral quality of a woman is not based on a vice inherent in the sex, so he did not, of course, say, "You are talking like the woman you are," but "like a stupid woman." Obviously he wanted to make it clear that her perverse stupidity was accidental, not a natural condition of her sex.]<sup>193</sup>

Gregory uses the biblical text to teach his male audience that women are not by nature stupid or wicked. Job's wife gives wicked advice not because of her sex, but because she is unwittingly being used as a tool for temptation by Satan. Thus, Job's wife not only serves as a parallel to Eve, but also as a representation in the tropological sense of what Gregory calls "fleshly minded" Christians within the church: those who are used by Satan to tempt and try the church, and whose instability allows them to be so used.<sup>194</sup> This comparison illustrates Gregory's own use of the Roman gender stereotypes in the figurative meanings of "man" as strong-minded and discreet and "woman" as wavering or indiscreet that he outlines else-

where in the *Moralia*.<sup>195</sup> Wavering Christians of either sex may be referred to as “women” when they lack stability in their commitment to God, whereas those who stand firm act “like a man.”

Gregory often balances the potentially negative effect of some of his interpretations of women by citing men as parallel examples of the points he is making, examples that show men in the same light as Job’s wife, as when he calls Job himself fickle-minded.<sup>196</sup> Gregory also provides positive interpretations of women that are then illustrated with negative examples of men. That Gregory is so careful to provide such balance suggests that he knew how such interpretations might be inappropriately applied by an unskilled audience to women or men in general, leading him to take steps to prevent such unwarranted generalizations. Gregory further explains how more than one meaning can be appropriately taken from any one person or object in Scripture.<sup>197</sup> Thus for Gregory as for the earlier Latin Doctors, biblical women and men were not just people, but also fluid metaphors that were interpreted in a variety of ways that were not defined by the literal text or the literal sex of the person.<sup>198</sup> Even so, Gregory conceived of the *Moralia* as a work for a specific kind of audience, a learned audience, and he did not think the contents appropriate fare for the general populace.<sup>199</sup>

Another work by Gregory that remained popular in monastic circles for many centuries and was translated into Old English as part of the Alfredian translation project is the *Dialogi*.<sup>200</sup> Although some scholars have disputed the authorship of the *Dialogi*,<sup>201</sup> the monks and nuns of the Middle Ages did not question Gregory’s authorship and so the weight of his name joined with the subject matter of saints’ lives helped to shape monastic concepts of gender and of men and women. Gregory comments in the preface that “Et sunt nonnulli quos ad amorem patriae caelestis plus exempla quam praedicamenta succendunt” [the lives of the saints are often more effective than mere instruction for inspiring us to love heaven as our home].<sup>202</sup> This comment is paralleled in Gregory’s comments for more general audiences in his preaching, as when he says “Sed quia nonnumquam mentes audientium plus exempla fidelium quam doctentium uerba conuertunt” [the example of the faithful often transforms the hearts of listeners more than a teacher’s words] and “Sed quia ad amorem Dei et proximi plerumque corda audientium plus exempla quam uerba excitant” [examples often rouse the hearts of one’s hearers to love of God and neighbor better than words].<sup>203</sup> The language of rousing, inspiring, and trans-

forming indicates Gregory's belief in the motivating power of examples based in narrative.

Among the legends in *Dialogi*, the tale of St. Galla, the bearded woman, amuses us because we usually associate bearded women with carnivals, not with saints. Gregory himself seems aware of the potential humor of the story, for he introduces it by saying that it was told to him "personarum grauium atque fidelium ... relatione" [by the report of serious-minded and reliable people].<sup>204</sup> Galla was married as a young girl but became a widow only a year after her marriage. Young and wealthy, she could easily have married again on her own terms, but she chose to devote herself to chastity as a bride of Christ. Her nature was unusually passionate, however, and physicians warned her that if she did not marry again, she would grow a beard. Galla cared nothing for the potential disfigurement, and, entering a convent shortly after her husband's death, grew a beard as had been predicted. Undaunted, she lived a life of prayer and service, happy in the love of her spiritual spouse, and as her death approached, was called to heaven by St. Peter, who told her when she would die and who would die soon after her.

Gregory tells the story of Galla in the fourth book of the *Dialogi*, as he is offering proof for the life of the soul after death. Thus, the brief life is not meant to be a commentary on women or gender, but for that very reason it offers insight, especially in the relationship between Galla's highly passionate nature and the beard. By refusing to be ruled by her passions, Galla endures the disfigurement of a beard, perhaps as a way of symbolizing her "manly" strength of virtue in properly governing her bodily nature.<sup>205</sup> In her later years she suffers a further attack on her physical femininity when "cancris ulcere in mamilla percussa est" [she was struck by an ulcer of cancer in her breast].<sup>206</sup> At no time, however, does Gregory himself make any reference to manly strength or steadfastness on the part of Galla. Rather he extols her love of Christ and praises her single-mindedness, generous charity, and indefatigable prayer without ever qualifying these virtues as characteristics of a particular gender. It is not just Galla, however, whose story begins to break down gender stereotypes in Gregory's book. Among the first lives of saints that Gregory includes in the *Dialogi* is the story of Equitius, who dreamed one night that "adsistente angelo eunuchizari se uidit" [he saw himself made a eunuch while an angel stood by].<sup>207</sup> As with Jerome and Augustine earlier, Equitius (and Gregory, apparently) considered this symbolic castration highly desirable, for it meant that

his soul was no longer subject to the temptations of lust and that he had moved closer to the ideal of the *virum perfectum*.<sup>208</sup>

The most renowned story in the *Dialogi* is Gregory's celebrated life of St. Benedict in book two where, among other vignettes, we find the story of a rare visit Benedict makes to see his sister, Scholastica, shortly before her death. Gregory tells the story as an example of how Benedict could not always obtain what he desired when, in the story, he wanted to return to his monastery at nightfall. Scholastica, however, desires him to stay the night so that they might continue their conversation on heavenly matters. When Benedict insists upon leaving, Scholastica weeps and prays that God will prevent his departure. In response to her tears and prayer, God sends a storm that prevents Benedict from traveling, and the monk is forced to remain the night with his sister, talking with her to the benefit of both as she had desired. Gregory concludes, "Nec mirum quod plus illo femina, quae diu fratrem uidere cupiebat, in eodem tempore ualuit. Quia enim iuxta Iohannis uocem *Deus caritas est*, iusto ualde iudicio illa plus potuit, quae amplius amauit." [We need not be surprised that in this instance she proved mightier than her brother; she had been looking forward so long to this visit. Do we not read in St. John that God is love? Surely it is no more than right that her influence was greater than his, since hers was the greater love.]<sup>209</sup> Gregory had no qualms about portraying the strength of godly women, yet he does not focus his audience's attention on the idea of Benedict being humbled by having his desires thwarted by a woman. Rather, he emphasizes the biblical teaching that love is the central practice of any religious life and shows that, in this most important area of love, Scholastica is stronger than her brother. Since Scholastica's love is greater than Benedict's, God honors her prayer over her brother's wish to return to his monastery.<sup>210</sup>

It seems odd that Gregory does not use Augustine's profound exploration of the nature of the soul in book four of the *Dialogi*, especially since he does refer to the idea that sin causes humankind to fall from a more noble nature into a less noble state in which they are no longer able to contemplate the heavenly things Adam once contemplated. Most of the book is taken up with further stories of holy men and women (including Galla) that are simply intended to prove that the soul exists after death and continues on in anticipation of either eternal reward or eternal punishment. Such an approach may be a matter of Gregory's intended purpose, since the *Dialogi* is not an interpretive work like *Moralia*. Rather, the *Dialogi* is an inspirational work, meant to arouse in its readers a love

of heaven and humility in how they regard themselves.<sup>211</sup> In recounting inspirational examples in *Dialogi*, and also in his *Homiliae in Euangelium*, Gregory demonstrates that narrative can often accomplish what propositional discourse cannot.<sup>212</sup>

Gregory's *Regula pastoralis* is a guide for the selection, conduct, and instructional responsibilities of "rulers" or bishops in the church and like *Dialogi* was translated into Old English during Alfred's reign. It contains detailed instructions on how to exhort diverse peoples to greater lives of godliness: all must be exhorted in the same truths, but because there is such a diversity of temperament and personality these truths must be presented in different ways—a difficult and challenging job for any preacher/pastor, as Gregory readily acknowledges.<sup>213</sup> The book contains a few passages that directly address the differences between men and women, but on the whole Gregory assumes that the strengths and weaknesses of personality and temperament that he discusses are *human*, not belonging exclusively or predominantly to men or to women. He carries this assumption over into his *Homiliae in Euangelium*, which also may be used to illustrate and clarify the occasionally ambiguous wording in the *Regula pastoralis*.

The first of the passages that address the difference between men and women says: "Aliter igitur ammonendi sunt uiri, atque aliter feminae, quia illis grauius, istis uero sunt iniungenda leuiora, ut illos magna exerceant, istas autem lenia demulcendo conuertant" [Men are to be admonished in one way and women in another, because heavier things are to be imposed on the former and lighter on the latter, so that great things may exercise the former and easy ones convert the latter by means of gentleness].<sup>214</sup> Gregory's use of *exerceant* (drill, exercise, practice) and *lenia* (smooth, soft, mild or gentle) in the second part of the sentence suggests that Gregory had in mind not so much a difference in mental abilities as a difference in psychology: men should be challenged (another meaning of *exerceo* is "harass") and women should be gently won or persuaded.<sup>215</sup> He gives similar advice in his comments on admonishing the shameless and the sensitive: "Illos namque ab impudentiae uitio non nisi increpatio dura compescit; istos autem plerumque ad melius exhortatio modesta componit" [For nothing less than a harsh rebuke restrains the former from their vice of shamelessness; but gentler encouragement is usually enough to turn the latter in a better direction].<sup>216</sup> Gregory does not associate shamelessness with men or sensitivity with women, rather he acknowledges two different psychological types—psychological types that seem to reflect characteristics that he might associate with masculinity and femininity, based upon

the similarity of the advice, but that he also does not explicitly align with men or women. Since his advice is addressed to preachers, however, the best way to understand what Gregory means by his statement concerning men and women may be to study his own practice in his *Homiliae in Euangelium*.

Unlike Gregory's other works, the homilies were preached *ad populum*, to an audience of the general population, during the early years of his pontificate (591–592).<sup>217</sup> These homilies became very influential in the early Middle Ages, as Thomas N. Hall notes: "By the ninth century, these were the best known and most influential collection of exegetical homilies in the Latin West, abundantly represented in the inventories of monastic libraries, and often named in Carolingian capitularies, conciliar decrees, and episcopal statutes which specify that priests should own a set of Gregory's Gospel homilies."<sup>218</sup> Further, Ælfric incorporated large portions of many of these homilies in his two series of *Catholic Homilies*. The Gospel homilies not only provide an illustration of Gregory's own practice in preaching, but also give us a context for understanding his advice on how men and women should be encouraged differently. When he contrasts the two sexes in this collection of homilies, Gregory generally does so to the praise and honor of women (especially female saints) and to shame and challenge men to lives of greater love and devotion. In Homily 3 Gregory praises St. Felicity for this purpose, saying "Considerate, fratres carissimi, in femineo corpore uirile pectus. ... Consideremus, fratres, hanc feminam, consideremus nos qui membris corporis uiri sumus, in eius comparatione quid existimabimur. ... De debilitate mentis suae quae tunc erit uiris excusatio, quando haec ostenditur quae cum saeculo sexum uicit?" [Consider, dearly beloved, the manly heart in the woman's body! ... Let us consider this woman, dearly beloved. Let us consider ourselves and what in comparison with her will be thought of us, who in body are men. ... What excuse will men have for the weakness of their hearts when we see this woman who overcame her sex as well as the world?]<sup>219</sup> Even though Gregory mentions the body of Felicity and the bodies of his male listeners, the manliness that he exalts in this passage is not one of the body and has nothing to do with sex or worldly power, but rather has to do with spiritual strength. In this case, Gregory holds up Felicity as an example of spiritual strength (manliness) that puts Gregory and his fellow men in the body to shame for their fickle weakness, deliberately reversing the ideas of gender and making Felicity a manly (strong) woman, and making himself and other men womanly (weak) in the spiritual sense. In this way Gregory



demonstrates what he means by laying heavier injunctions (the burden of shame) upon men while winningly converting women with the example of a strong and triumphant woman.

Gregory is not the first of the Doctors to speak of a woman overcoming her sex and he uses the phrase again in Homily 14 when speaking of the various inhabitants of the heavenly kingdom.<sup>220</sup> When speaking of women *sexum uicerunt* (overcoming their sex) Gregory, like Ambrose, means that these women overcome the fact that they have less physical strength than men, which puts the women at a disadvantage. Gillian Clark explains the late antique commonplace that women were weak, saying: "What was this weakness? Women, it was thought, were physically hampered by lack of strength and especially by child-bearing."<sup>221</sup> As with most Romans, Gregory thought women possessed inferior physical strength, which made them less likely to endure harsh conditions and also rendered them less physically capable of enforcing rulership over men. The physical strength of men, on the other hand, enabled them to endure harsh treatment and conditions. It also allowed some of them to enforce their rule upon other men as well as women.<sup>222</sup> Therefore, any woman overcomes her sex who rises above her disadvantage either by persevering steadfastly in the face of torture as did Felicity or by ruling effectively over men as in the case of Deborah the judge.

The physical "facts" of male strength and female weakness formed the basis of the figural meanings of "man equals strong-minded" and "woman, frailty of mind" that Gregory sets forth in the *Moralia*.<sup>223</sup> In the writings of the Doctors and early medieval hagiographers, however, the mind can change genders, so to speak, when reoriented by love for Christ, prayer, and the study of holy books, thus providing the way for women to overcome the physical and cultural disadvantages of their sex through becoming strong-minded in Christ.<sup>224</sup> Since Gregory uses "manly" to refer to the strong-minded, and he uses the term as a description not only of women, but also of men who do not succumb to worldly pleasures, he apparently does not consider corporeal maleness to be the equivalent of "manly" despite the etymology of the Latin term. Rather his statements refer figuratively to the steadfast mind that characterizes the saints and enables both women and men single-mindedly to contemplate and love the eternal God, thus attaining the metagendered *virum perfectum*, instead of falling into the gendering distractions of temporal pleasures.<sup>225</sup>

For anything that distracts the mind from contemplation of God divides it, separates it even from itself. In *Regula pastoralis* Gregory mourns

the way in which his duties as bishop keep him from the life of contemplation he so loved as a monk: “fit in exteriorum dispositione sollicita, et sui solummodo ignara, scit multa cogitare, se nesciens. Nam cum plus quam necesse est se exterioribus implicat, quasi occupata in itinere olbiuiscitur quo tendebat” [it (the mind) becomes anxious in the ordering of things that are without, and, ignorant of itself alone, knows how to think of many things, while itself it knows not. For when it implicates itself more than is needful in things that are without, it is as though it were so occupied during a journey as to forget where it was going].<sup>226</sup> For Gregory as for Augustine this separation from God, from self, and from others is the natural state of fallen humanity: those who have left God for pursuit of temporal things lose themselves as their identities become enmeshed in the unstable, changeable, material world that they love more than God.<sup>227</sup> In such a state, they do not even know their own motives or their own true will in matters, for “Nam saepe sibi de se mens ipsa mentitur” [the mind lies to itself about itself].<sup>228</sup> The only solution for a bishop or any other person is to return to oneself through memory and reflection.<sup>229</sup> He demonstrates this process in himself at the end of the *Moralia*, noting that after spending so much time speaking and writing for others he needed to return to himself for the purpose of self-examination and of anchoring himself again in relationship to God.<sup>230</sup> The return to one’s own soul recurs throughout Gregory’s works and resides at the center of his own practice and the practice he recommends publicly to all. Such a turning follows a deliberate act of will, of desire to dwell in the presence of God and thus be restored to unity of soul, mind, and body. This kind of unity with self and with God could only be attained within the soul through contemplation motivated by a burning desire for God. For this purpose, Gregory recommended that all Christian people “Verba Dei quae aure percipitis, mente retinete. Cibus enim mentis est sermo Dei” [Keep in mind the words of God which you hear. The word of God is our mind’s food].<sup>231</sup> Memorized Scripture becomes the means and focus of meditation and the key both to knowing oneself and to knowing God. A memory well-stocked with Scripture would be shaped by the words of God and so form an unchanging standard by which to measure one’s own thoughts and deeds. This same treasure-house of scriptural memory also serves as a temple, a “place” in which holy women and men might be joined with God, “Quia uero ei mente inhaerent, atque inhaerendo uel sacrae scripturae” [for they keep their hearts united to God by dwelling continually on the words of holy Scripture] and in so doing possess God within their very souls through

love.<sup>232</sup> All of the importance of memory alluded to by Jerome, recommended by Ambrose, and plumbed in depth by Augustine comes together in Gregory's examples and exhortations for monastic practitioners and layfolk alike. Gregory makes no distinction in the practice of the life of the soul between men and women, for he is addressing life centered in the part of each human being where bodily differences do not obtain. As the soul draws closer to God, it leaves behind all regard or interest in bodily distinctions, overcoming its changeable fallen nature and the gendering associated with it in order to draw closer to the unchanging *virum perfectum*, the metagendered Christ.<sup>233</sup> In his thirty-fourth gospel homily, Gregory compares such holy ones with the blazing seraphim around the throne of God, illustrating that in the contemplative, transcendent state engaged through memory, holy men and women leave behind the gender definitions of their material society, knowing and defining themselves only in relationship to the metagendered Christ.<sup>234</sup> In loving and identifying with him, they transcend their own fallen natures and become like Christ and like the seraphim of heaven.

Such women and men cannot remain in that state, however. The demands of the body and of life within time inevitably draw them from contemplation into common activities. The love remains, however, and the memory of desire for God that leads them to lives of virtue. In the *Dialogi*, Gregory states that "Neque enim si talia signa non faciunt, ideo tales non sunt. Vitae namque uera aestimatio in uirtute est operum, non in ostensione signorum" [One cannot conclude that there are no great saints just because no great miracles are worked. The true estimate of life, after all, lies in acts of virtue, not in the display of miracles].<sup>235</sup> Such acts of virtue define the saints in Gregory's opinion, and may be accomplished equally by women and men because virtue exists in the place where there is no sex, the human soul.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See especially Claudian, *In Eutropium*, written in 399 CE as a response to the appointment of the eunuch, Eutropius, as consul by the Eastern Roman emperor, Arcadius, instead of the successful western barbarian military commander, Stilicho. *In Eutropium* is one long, harsh invective that aims to defame Eutropius and undermine his political power. The author of the *Historia Augusta* also had no love for eunuchs, nor did Claudius Mamertinus.

<sup>2</sup> Ranke-Heinemann, *Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven*, 46–47.

<sup>3</sup> Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch*, 36.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the “baptismal formula” in St. Paul’s epistle to the Galatians 3:28. See Ruether, *Women and Redemption*, 29–31; Power, *Veiled Desire*, 54; and Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, 61.

<sup>5</sup> Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 43.

<sup>6</sup> Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, indicates that *Adversus Jovinianum* is cited by Aldhelm, Bede, and Ælfric (313). Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, indicate no manuscript evidence of this work in Anglo-Saxon England up to Ælfric’s day.

<sup>7</sup> Blamires, *Woman Defamed, Woman Defended*, 63–64.

<sup>8</sup> Oppel, “Saint Jerome and the History of Sex,” 6.

<sup>9</sup> Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.48 (PL 23.293a); Jerome, “Against Jovinianus,” in *St. Jerome: Letters and Selected Works*, trans. Fremantle, 1.48.

<sup>10</sup> See also Ambrose, “Epistula 15, Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem,” in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Decima*, §7.

<sup>11</sup> Cain, “Vox Clamantis in Deserto,” 501; see also Peter Brown, *Body and Society*, 377 and Rebenich, *Jerome*, 42.

<sup>12</sup> Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.29 (PL 23.262c); Jerome, “Against Jovinianus,” in *St. Jerome: Letters and Selected Works*, trans. Fremantle, 1.29.

<sup>13</sup> Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.29 (PL 23.262c–263a); Jerome, “Against Jovinianus,” in *St. Jerome: Letters and Selected Works*, trans. Fremantle, 1.29.

<sup>14</sup> Ambrose and Augustine agreed that neither male nor female bodies were in the image of God. See Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.12; *De doctrina christiana*, 1.20; Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 6.12. Also see Ambrose, “Exameron,” 6.6.39 and 6.7.42.

<sup>15</sup> Jerome, “Epistula 128, Ad Pacatulam” §3; Jerome, “Letter 128 to Pacatula,” in Rebenich, *Jerome*, §3 and Jerome, “Epistula 22, Ad Eustochium” §19; Jerome, “Letter XXII, To Eustochium,” trans. Fremantle, §19. Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, show no manuscript evidence for the letter to Pacatula in Anglo-Saxon England, nor for the famous letter to Eustochium before the late eleventh century, though Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, indicates that Aldhelm and Bede both cite from this letter (181 and 217).

<sup>16</sup> Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.27 (PL 23.260a–b); Jerome, “Against Jovinianus,” in *St. Jerome: Letters and Selected Works*, trans. Fremantle, 1.27.

<sup>17</sup> Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.27 (PL 23.260c).

<sup>18</sup> Jerome, “Epistula 49 (48 Vall.) Apologeticum ad Pammachium,” §2.

<sup>19</sup> Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.13 (PL 23.240a–43b). See also Augustine, “De Bono Coniugali,” §[9], 13 and [12], 14; “De sancta virginitate,” §[16], 16; and Ambrose, “Epistula 15, Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem,” in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Decima*, §7.

<sup>20</sup> Jerome, *Adversus Helvidium* §20 (PL 23.214c); Jerome, “Against Helvidius,” *Saint Jerome: Dogmatic and Polemical Works*, trans. Hritz. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes that this work is cited by Bede (313), but Gneuss and

Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, indicate no manuscripts are known to be in Anglo-Saxon England until after Ælfric.

<sup>21</sup> Jerome, “Epistula 22, Ad Eustochium,” §18; Jerome, “Letter 22, To Eustochium,” trans. Freemantle, §18.

<sup>22</sup> Jerome, “Epistula 49 (48),” §14; Jerome, “Letter 48, To Pammachius,” trans. Fremantle, §14. Jerome is actually quoting from Ambrose, *De viduis*. See also Jerome, *Adversus Helvidium*, §20 (PL 23.203d); Ambrose, “De virginibus,” in *Sancti Ambrosii Episcopi Mediolanensis Opera*, ed. Gori, 1.8.48 and 1.8.52; Ambrose, *De virginitate liber unus*, 6.27; Augustine, “De sancta virginitate,” §13, in *De Bono Coniugali*.

<sup>23</sup> Jerome, *ad Ephesios* (PL 26.533c). My translation. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, indicates that Bede, Lantfred, and Ælfric quote from the *Commentarius in .iv. epistulas Pauli* (314), and Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, note the eighth-century fragment #829.2 containing a portion of *ad Galatas* as probably of English origin.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Ambrose, “Epistula 13, Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem,” in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Decima*, §10–11.

<sup>25</sup> Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.36 (PL 23.271b); Jerome, “Against Jovinianus,” in *St. Jerome: Letters and Selected Works*, trans. Fremantle, 1.36.

<sup>26</sup> Jerome, *ad Ephesios* (PL 26.501b); Jerome, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians*, in *Commentaries of Origen and Jerome*, trans. Heine, 177.

<sup>27</sup> Jerome, *ad Ephesios* (PL 26.501c); Jerome, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians*, in *Commentaries of Origen and Jerome*, trans. Heine, 177. Cf. Ambrose, “De Cain et Abel,” 1.47.

<sup>28</sup> Ambrose, “Epistula 16, Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem,” in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Decima*, §13; Ælfric, *CHI* 36.16.

<sup>29</sup> Galatians 3:27–28.

<sup>30</sup> See Ælfric, *CHI* 39.94–97.

<sup>31</sup> Jerome, *ad Galatas* (PL 26.369b–c); Jerome, *St. Jerome’s Commentaries*, 151. See also Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.35 (PL 23.270d); Jerome, “Epistola 77, Ad Oceanum,” §3; Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 11.42; and Bede, *Collectio*, in *Beda Venerabilis Opera, Pars II*, ed. Jones, Item 409.

<sup>32</sup> Carruthers and Ziolkowski, *Medieval Craft of Memory*, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Jerome, “Epistula 22, Ad Eustochium,” §24; Jerome, “Letter 22, To Eustochium,” trans. Freemantle, §24. Ælfric applies a similar thought to all believers in *CHI* 28.184–86.

<sup>34</sup> Jerome, “Epistula 22, Ad Eustochium,” §31; Jerome, “Letter XXII, To Eustochium,” trans. Freemantle, §31. Cf. Ælfric, *CH II* 6.39–43 and 94–97.

<sup>35</sup> Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 15.

<sup>36</sup> Jerome, “Epistula 130, Ad Demetriadem,” §7; Jerome, “Letter 130, To Demetrias,” trans. Freemantle, §7.

<sup>37</sup> Jerome, “Epistula 127, Ad Principiam,” §7; Jerome, “Letter 127, To Principia,” in Rebenich, *Jerome*, 125. Cf. Aldhelm, “Prosa de virginitate,” §16.

<sup>38</sup> Jerome, *ad Ephesios* (PL 26.534b); Jerome, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, in *The Commentaries of Origen and Jerome*, trans. Heine, 238. Cf. Aldhelm, "Prosa de virginitate," §18.

<sup>39</sup> Jerome, "Epistula 14, Ad Heliodorum," §6; Jerome, "Letter 14, To Heliodorus," trans. Freemantle, §6. Though Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, list no copies of this letter, Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, indicates two copies known to have been in Anglo-Saxon centers on the Continent in "Appendix C," #6 and #81.

<sup>40</sup> Jerome, "Epistula 22, Ad Eustochium," §19; Jerome, "Letter 22, To Eustochium," trans. Freemantle, §19.

<sup>41</sup> Jerome, "Contra Rufinum," in *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars III*, 1 ed. Lardet, §29. Cf. Aldhelm, "Prosa de virginitate," §18. This work is cited by Bede according to Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library* (313), but Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, show no manuscripts in Anglo-Saxon England to Ælfric's time.

<sup>42</sup> Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity*, 50–51. Apparently, those who continued to live as *caelibes* (unmarried) were legally classified as such and because the classification was attended by legal penalties regarding inheritance, it carried a social stigma. When Constantine released men from this form of social and legal pressure, he released women as well.

<sup>43</sup> Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.36 (PL 23.260c–d and 271b); Jerome, "Against Jovinianus," in *St. Jerome: Letters and Selected Works*, trans. Fremantle, 1.36. See also Ambrose, *De virginitate*, 6.28–29 and Augustine, "De sancta virginitate," §23, in *De Bono Coniugali*.

<sup>44</sup> Kuefler, *Manly Eunuch*, 24.

<sup>45</sup> Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.36 (PL 23.261b); Jerome, "Against Jovinianus," in *St. Jerome: Letters and Selected Works*, trans. Fremantle, 1.36. See also *Contra Rufinum* 1.29 in *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars III*, 1 ed. Lardet, and "Epistula 22, ad Eustochium," §27. Cf. Ambrose, "Epistula 15, Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem," in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Decima*, §2–7 and Augustine, "De opere monachorum," §32.40.

<sup>46</sup> Ramsey, *Ambrose*, 49–50 and Colish, *Ambrose's Patriarchs*, 2–3.

<sup>47</sup> Colish, *Ambrose's Patriarchs*, 18.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>49</sup> Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 44.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>51</sup> Ambrose, "De Iacob et uita beata," 1.1.1; Ambrose, "Jacob and the Happy Life," in *Seven Exegetical Works*, trans. McHugh, 1.1.1. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, finds no citations of this work (277) and the only manuscript in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, post-dates Ælfric. Aldhelm places a similar emphasis on study, however, in "Prosa de virginitate," §3–4 and §10, as does Ælfric in *CH I* 18.186–88 and *CH II* 16.55–63.

<sup>52</sup> Ambrose, "Exameron," 6.7.41; Ambrose, "Hexameron," 6.7.41. Gneuss and

Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, #61.5 and #778 were either written in England or may have been in England by Ælfric's time. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, indicates the work was cited by Bede, Ælfric, and Byrhtferth (280).

<sup>53</sup> Ambrose, "De Iacob et uita beata," 1.7.29–7.30; Ambrose, "Jacob and the Happy Life," in *Seven Exegetical Works*, trans. McHugh, 1.7.29–7.30.

<sup>54</sup> Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 105. The quoted material within the quotation comes from Irénée Hausherr, *The Name of Jesus*, trans. C. Cummings (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1978), 175.

<sup>55</sup> Jerome, "Epistula 22, Ad Eustochium," §18; Jerome, "Letter 22, To Eustochium," trans. Freemantle, §18.

<sup>56</sup> Ambrose, *De Bono Mortis*, 8.36–37; Ambrose, "Death as a Good," trans. McHugh, 8.36–37. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, finds no citations of this work (276) and the manuscripts in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, postdate Ælfric.

<sup>57</sup> Ambrose, *De Bono Mortis*, 3.10; Ambrose, "Death as a Good," trans. McHugh, 3.10. Ambrose is explaining the verse he has quoted from Phil. 3:20: "*nostra autem conversatio in caelis est*" (italics in original).

<sup>58</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," in *Sancti Ambrosii Episcopi Mediolanensis Opera*, ed. Gori, 3.4.19–20; Ambrose, "On Virgins," in *Ambrose*, trans. Ramsey, 3.4.19–20. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes this work was cited by Bede (279), but the manuscripts in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, postdate Ælfric.

<sup>59</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 2.2.8; Ambrose, "On Virgins," in *Ambrose*, trans. Ramsey, 2.2.8.

<sup>60</sup> Ambrose, *De Bono Mortis*, 3.11; Ambrose, "Death as a Good," trans. McHugh, 3.11.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Augustine, *Confessionum*, 10.8.14; Augustine, *The Confessions*, 10.8.14.

<sup>62</sup> Ramsey, *Ambrose*, 56. Despite the apparent popularity of this work on the continent, the evidence for knowledge of *Exameron* or any other of Ambrose's works in later Anglo-Saxon England is slim. See Bankert, Wegmann, and Wright, *Ambrose in Anglo-Saxon England*, 12–17.

<sup>63</sup> Ambrose, "Exameron," 6.6.39; Ambrose, "Hexameron," 6.6.39. Cf. Gregory, *Moralia*, 2.52.82.

<sup>64</sup> Ambrose, "De Iacob et uita beata," 1.8.39; Ambrose, "Jacob and the Happy Life," in *Seven Exegetical Works*, trans. McHugh, 1.8.39.

<sup>65</sup> Ambrose, "De Cain et Abel," 1.47; Ambrose, "Cain and Abel," 1.47. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes this work was cited by Bede (277), but the manuscripts in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, postdate Ælfric.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Ælfric, *CHI* 14.215.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Ambrose, *De Bono Mortis*, 6.25; Ambrose, "Death as a Good," trans. McHugh, 6.25

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Ambrose, "De Isaac uel anima," 2.5.

<sup>69</sup> Ambrose, "Exameron," 6.7.40; Ambrose, "Hexameron," 6.7.40.

<sup>70</sup> Ambrose, "Exameron," 6.7.41; Ambrose, "Hexameron," 6.7.41. Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 11.10 and Augustine, *De trinitate*, 5.1–6.

<sup>71</sup> Ambrose, "Exameron," 6.7.42; Ambrose, "Hexameron," 6.7.42.

<sup>72</sup> Ambrose, "De Iacob et uita beata," 1.3.10; "Jacob and the Happy Life," in *Seven Exegetical Works*, trans. McHugh, 1.3.10.

<sup>73</sup> Ambrose, "Exameron," 6.7.42; Ambrose, "Hexameron," 6.7.42.

<sup>74</sup> Ambrose, "Exameron," 6.7.42; Ambrose, "Hexameron," 6.7.42. Cf. Ælfric, *CH II* 31.76–81.

<sup>75</sup> Ambrose, "Exameron," 1.8.31; Ambrose, "Hexameron," 1.8.31.

<sup>76</sup> Ambrose, "Exameron," 1.8.31; Ambrose, "Hexameron," 1.8.31.

<sup>77</sup> Ambrose, "Exameron," 1.8.31; Ambrose, "Hexameron," 1.8.31.

<sup>78</sup> Ramsey, *Ambrose*, 56. In "Epistola 45, Ambrosius Sabino," Ambrose comments that he wrote *De paradiso* "Nondum veteranus sacerdos" [while not yet an experienced bishop]. "Epistula et Acta, 232, in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera: Pars Decima*, ed. Zelzer; "25. Ambrose to Sabinus," trans. Beyenka, 126." [Ambrose's letters are given a different numbering in Beyenka's translation.]

<sup>79</sup> Ambrose does not name Philo, but does allude to a previous author to whom he owes his ideas (whom scholars have identified as Philo) in *De paradiso*, in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Prima*, ed. Schenkl, 2.11. See Philo, *De opificio mundi* and *Legum Allegoriae*.

<sup>80</sup> Ambrose, *De paradiso*, in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Prima*, ed. Schenkl, 12.54. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes this work was cited by Bede (278), but the manuscripts in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, postdate Ælfric.

<sup>81</sup> "in specie serpentis figuram accipiens delectationis, in figura mulieris sensum animi mentisque constituens;" [the figure of the serpent stands for enjoyment and the figure of the woman for the emotions of the mind and heart]. Ambrose, *De paradiso*, in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Prima*, ed. Schenkl, 2.11; Ambrose, "Paradise," 2.11. Ambrose repeats these figural meanings in 15.73.

<sup>82</sup> Ambrose, *De paradiso*, in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Prima*, ed. Schenkl, 2.11 and 11.51. Cf. Gregory, *Règle Pastorale*, 3.29.

<sup>83</sup> Ramsey, *Ambrose*, 71.

<sup>84</sup> Ambrose is credited as the author of the *passio* of St. Agnes that Ælfric includes in *Lives of Saints*, though the actual author has been identified as Pseudo-Ambrose. The version referred to here, however, is not the version of the Life that Ælfric translates but probably a precursor.

<sup>85</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 1.2.5; Ambrose, "On Virginity," trans. Ramsey, 1.2.5.

<sup>86</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 1.2.7; Ambrose, "On Virginity," trans. Ramsey, 1.2.7.

<sup>87</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 1.2.9; Ambrose, "On Virginity," trans. Ramsey, 1.2.9.

<sup>88</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 1.2.8; Ambrose, "On Virginity," trans. Ramsey, 1.2.8.



<sup>89</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 1.2.8; Ambrose, "On Virginity," trans. Ramsey, 1.2.8.

<sup>90</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 1.11.62; Ambrose, "On Virginity," trans. Ramsey, 1.11.62.

<sup>91</sup> Aldhelm, "Prosa de virginitate," §18.

<sup>92</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 1.8.48; Ambrose, "On Virginity," trans. Ramsey, 1.8.48. See also Ambrose, *De virginitate liber unus*, 6.27; Ambrose, *On Virginity by St. Ambrose*, 6.27. See also Jerome, "Epistula 49 (48)," §14 and Augustine, "De sancta virginitate," §13, in *De Bono Coniugali*.

<sup>93</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 1.8.52; Ambrose, "On Virginity," trans. Ramsey, 1.8.52. Cf. Augustine, "De sancta virginitate," §(53) 54; Aldhelm, "Prosa de virginitate," §18; and Ælfric, *CHI* 36.127–36.

<sup>94</sup> "ibi enim est praesidium nostrae salutis, ubi Christus, quoniam mulieris caput uir, uirginis Christus." Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 2.4.29.

<sup>95</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 1.5.22; Ambrose, "On Virginity," trans. Ramsey, 1.5.22. Cf. Gregory, *Moralia*, Pref.6.14.

<sup>96</sup> Ambrose, "De Isaac uel anima," 3.9; "Isaac or the Soul," trans. McHugh, 3.9. Cf. Gregory, *Moralia*, 1.21.29.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 93–97.

<sup>98</sup> Ambrose, "Epistula 16, Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem," §13; Ambrose, "85. Ambrose to Irenaeus," trans. Beyenka, 479–80. Cf. Ælfric, *CH I* 24.107–08, *CH I* 36.137–39, and *CH II* 40.77–82. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes no citations of this work (279), and the manuscripts in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, either postdate Ælfric or do not include this letter.

<sup>99</sup> Ambrose, "Epistula 16, Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem," §11; Ambrose, "85. Ambrose to Irenaeus," trans. Beyenka, 479. Cf. Ambrose, "Epistula 13, Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem," §10 and Ambrose, "De Cain et Abel," 2.2.

<sup>100</sup> Jerome, *ad Ephesios* (PL 26.501b).

<sup>101</sup> Ambrose, "Exameron," 6.8.46.

<sup>102</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 2.4.24; Ambrose, "On Virginity," trans. Ramsey, 2.4.24.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 1.18, quoted by Aldhelm along with verses by Prosper of Aquitaine expressing the same thoughts in "Prosa de virginitate," §58.

<sup>104</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 2.4.29; Ambrose, "On Virginity," trans. Ramsey, 2.4.29.

<sup>105</sup> See Vern L. Bullough's comments on male transvestitism in "Transvestites in the Middle Ages," 1382–84. Bullough points out how male transvestitism was consistently portrayed as undesirable because of the loss of status implied in the act of a man becoming like a woman. He does not, however, address this passage in Ambrose's *De virginibus*.

<sup>106</sup> Ambrose, "De virginibus," ed. Gori, 2.4.32.

<sup>107</sup> Ambrose, "De viduis," ed. Gori, 7.37; Ambrose, "Concerning Widows," trans. de Romestin, 7.37. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, indicates no citations of

this work (279) and the manuscripts in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, postdate Ælfric.

<sup>108</sup> Ambrose, "De viduis," ed. Gori, 8.44; Ambrose, "Concerning Widows," trans. de Romestin, 8.44. The story of Deborah is found in Judges 4:1–5:31. For Judith, see Ambrose, "De viduis," ed. Gori, 7.37; Ambrose, "Concerning Widows," trans. de Romestin, 7.37. See also Ambrose's comments on Judith's temperance making her stronger than men in "Epistula 14, Ambrosius Vercellensi ecclesiae," in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera: Pars Decima*, ed. Zelzer, §29; Ambrose, "59. Ambrose to the Church at Vercelli," trans. Beyenka, 331.

<sup>109</sup> Ambrose, "De viduis," ed. Gori, 11.69; Ambrose, "Concerning Widows," trans. de Romestin, 11.69.

<sup>110</sup> Ambrose, "Epistula 15, Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem," in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera: Pars Decima*, ed. Zelzer, §2; Ambrose, "78. Ambrose to Irenaeus," trans. Beyenka, 435. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes no citations of this work (279), and the manuscripts in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, either postdate Ælfric or do not include this letter. Cf. Augustine, "De opere monachorum," §32.40; Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.36 (PL 23.261b), *Contra Rufinum* in *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars III*, 1 ed. Lardet, 1.29, and "Epistula 22, ad Eustochium," §27.

<sup>111</sup> Ambrose, "Epistula 15, Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem," §7; Ambrose, "78. Ambrose to Irenaeus," trans. Beyenka, 437.

<sup>112</sup> Ambrose, *De virginitate*, 6.28–29. See also Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.36 (PL 23.260c–d and 271b) and Augustine, "De sancta virginitate," §23, in *De Bono Coniugali*.

<sup>113</sup> Ambrose, "Epistula 14, Ambrosius Vercellensi ecclesiae," §71–72. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes no citations of this work (279), but #581 in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, may have been in England by Ælfric's time.

<sup>114</sup> Ambrose, "Epistula 14, Ambrosius Vercellensi ecclesiae," §74; Ambrose, "59. Ambrose to the Church at Vercelli," trans. Beyenka, 348–49.

<sup>115</sup> Ambrose, "Epistula 15, Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem," §5–6; Ambrose, "78. Ambrose to Irenaeus," trans. Beyenka, 436–37.

<sup>116</sup> Ambrose, "Epistula 14, Ambrosius Vercellensi ecclesiae," §26–35; Ambrose, "59. Ambrose to the Church at Vercelli," trans. Beyenka, 330–35.

<sup>117</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 22.2; cf. Gregory, *Moralia*, 3.3.4. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, indicates that *De civitate Dei* was cited by Aldhelm, Bede, Lantfred, Ælfric, and Byrhtferth (284). Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, #760.3 from the ninth century may have come to England from Francia in the tenth or eleventh centuries.

<sup>118</sup> Hochschild, *Memory*, 151.

<sup>119</sup> Augustine, *De Bono Coniugali*, §1, p. 2–3. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes this work was cited by Bede and Ælfric (284), but no manuscripts are listed in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*.

<sup>120</sup> Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 11.15. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes this work was cited by Bede, Ælfric, and Byrhtferth (285), but the manuscripts in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, postdate Ælfric.

<sup>121</sup> Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, 43. The “conjugal debt” or the “marriage debt” is an idea based upon the teaching that spouses of both sexes should consent to sexual relations when either spouse desired them.

<sup>122</sup> Augustine, *De Bono Coniugali*, §3, p. 6–7 and §1, p. 2–3.

<sup>123</sup> Murray, Introduction to *Conflicted Identities*, x.

<sup>124</sup> Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 9.5.9.

<sup>125</sup> Augustine, *De Bono Coniugali*, §[9], 13 and [12], 14; “De sancta virginitate,” §[16], 16, in *De Bono Coniugali*. See also Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.13 (PL 23.240a–43b). Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes “De sancta virginitate” was cited by Aldhelm, Bede, and Ælfric (287), but there are no manuscripts listed in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*.

<sup>126</sup> Augustine, “De sancta virginitate,” §13, in *De Bono Coniugali*.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., §(53) 54. Cf. Jerome, “Epistula 49 (48),” §14; Jerome, *Adversus Helvidium*, §20 (PL 23.203d); Ambrose, “De virginibus,” ed. Gori, 1.8.52; Aldhelm, “Prosa de virginitate,” §18; and Ælfric, *CH I* 35.36–39 and 36.127–36, 230–32.

<sup>128</sup> Hochschild, *Memory*, 152.

<sup>129</sup> Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 1.24.24. Four paragraphs later (at 1.25.26) Augustine observes, “Praeciendum etiam, quomodo corpus suum diligit, ut ei ordinate prudenter consulat. Nam quod diligit etiam corpus suum idque saluum habere atque integrum uelit, aequè manifestum est.” [We also need to be instructed how to love our bodies, so as to care for them in an orderly and prudent manner. Because again, it is equally obvious that we do also love our bodies, and wish to have them hale and hearty.] Augustine, *Teaching Christianity*, 1.24.24. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes this work was cited by Bede, Abbo, and Ælfric (285), but the manuscript in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, postdates Ælfric.

<sup>130</sup> Augustine, “De sancta virginitate,” §23, in *De Bono Coniugali*.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., §37, p. 116–19.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., §24, p. 96–97. Cf. Aldhelm, “Prosa de virginitate,” §10–11.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Ambrose, “De virginibus,” ed. Gori, 1.8.48; Ambrose, *De virginitate liber unus*, 6.27; Ambrose, *On Virginité by St. Ambrose*, 6.27; and Jerome, “Epistula 49 (48),” §14.

<sup>134</sup> Augustine, “De opere monachorum,” §32.40; Augustine, “Of the Work of Monks,” in Augustin, ed. Schaff, §40. Cf. Ambrose, “Epistula 15, Ambrosius Irenaeo Salutem”; Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.36 (PL 23.261b); Jerome, *Contra Rufinum*, in *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars III*, 1 ed. Lardet, 1.29; and Jerome “Epistula 22, ad Eustochium,” §27. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes “De opere monachorum” was cited by Bede (287), but there are no manuscripts with it in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*.

<sup>135</sup> Augustine, “De opere monachorum,” §32.40; Augustine, “Of the Work of Monks,” §40.

<sup>136</sup> Burns, "Creation and Fall," 92.

<sup>137</sup> Proverbs 8:22, 27a.

<sup>138</sup> I Corinthians 1:24. Cf. Ælfric *CHI* 15.184–85.

<sup>139</sup> Augustine, *De trinitate*, 4.27; Augustine, *Trinity*, 4.5.27. See also Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 1.10–12. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes *De trinitate* was cited by Bede, Alcuin, Ælfric, and Byrhtferth (287). Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, list #255 from the eighth century and #30.7 from the first quarter of the eleventh century.

<sup>140</sup> Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus*, §16, p. 498; Augustine, "Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis," §57, pp. 147–48.

<sup>141</sup> Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.5; Augustine, *Trinity*, 12.2.5.

<sup>142</sup> van Bavel, "Woman as Image," 278–79.

<sup>143</sup> Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.12. See also Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 1.20. Cf. Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.29 (*PL* 23.262c–263a), Ambrose, "Exameron," 6.6.39 and 6.7.42, and Ælfric, *CHI* 20.193–97.

<sup>144</sup> Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 6.12; Augustine, "The Literal Meaning of Genesis," 6.12.22. See also Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.1.

<sup>145</sup> Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.5. [My translation]. Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 11.26.

<sup>146</sup> Augustine, *De trinitate*, 11.8; Augustine, *Trinity*, 11.8. Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 11.26. This idea is also addressed by Augustine in *De natura et origine animae*, 1.17.27 in a passage quoted by Bede, *Collectio*, in *Bedae Venerabilis Opera, Pars II, Opera Exegetica*, ed. Jones, Item 188.

<sup>147</sup> Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence*, 29.

<sup>148</sup> Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.10; Augustine, *Trinity*, 12.3.10.

<sup>149</sup> Farley, "Sources of Sexual Inequality," 167–68. Quoted in van Bavel, "Woman as the Image of God," 269.

<sup>150</sup> Hochschild, *Memory*, 208.

<sup>151</sup> Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.12; Augustine, *Trinity*, 12.3.12. This passage is quoted by Bede in his *Collectio*, in *Bedae Venerabilis Opera, Pars II, Opera Exegetica*, ed. Jones, Item 187.

<sup>152</sup> Edmund Hill, "Forward to Books IX–XIV," in *Trinity*, 262.

<sup>153</sup> For a more detailed analysis of Augustine's addition of relationship words to the development of the theology of the Trinity, see Edmund Hill's Introduction to *Trinity*, pp. 49–52.

<sup>154</sup> Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 1.5; Augustine, *Teaching Christianity*, 1.5. Cf. Gregory, *Moralia*, 5.36.66. Ælfric voices the same idea in "De fide catholica," *CH* 1.20.158–74.

<sup>155</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 11.10; Augustine, *City of God*, 11.10. Cf. Augustine, *De trinitate*, 5.1–6 and Ambrose, "Exameron," 6.7.41. This thought is paralleled in Ælfric's comments on the goodness of God in the First Series homily for the Second Sunday after Easter, *CH* 1.17.

<sup>156</sup> Augustine, *De trinitate*, 5.6.

<sup>157</sup> Hochschild, *Memory*, 87.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>159</sup> See John 14:28 and I Corinthians 15:28.

<sup>160</sup> Philippians 2:7.

<sup>161</sup> For Augustine's equation of love as will at its most effective, see *De trinitate*, 15.41. Cf. Ælfric, *CH II* 1.27–29.

<sup>162</sup> Italic as in original. Augustine, *De trinitate*, 1.14; Augustine, *Trinity*, 1.3.14. See Philippians 2:6–8. Cf. Gregory, *Moralia*, 3.14.26.

<sup>163</sup> Ælfric, *CH I* 9.221–43.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Ælfric, *CH II* 35.45–48.

<sup>165</sup> Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 11.37; Augustine, “The Literal Meaning of Genesis,” 11.37. It is clear from Augustine's treatment of this topic in such works as *De bono coniugali* and *De Genesi ad litteram* that he does not immediately associate rule with oppressive domination and subjection with slavery. Within his concept of godly love, it is possible to rule over someone without force and with the effect of making the other's life better, just as it is possible to serve another out of love without that service being abject or coerced.

<sup>166</sup> Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 11.15; Augustine, *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 11.15.

<sup>167</sup> Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 11.37; Augustine, *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 11.37.50.

<sup>168</sup> Børresen, *Subordination and Equivalence*, 62.

<sup>169</sup> Hochschild, *Memory*, 217.

<sup>170</sup> Hochschild, *Memory*, 108. Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 9.2.

<sup>171</sup> Augustine, *Confessionum*, 10.8.14; Augustine, *The Confessions*, 10.8.14. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes this work was cited by Bede, Alcuin, and Byrhtferth (282), but the manuscripts in Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, postdate Ælfric.

<sup>172</sup> Ælfric also urges such reflection in *CH II* 5.107–9 and other places.

<sup>173</sup> Augustine, *Confessionum*, 10.17.26; Augustine, *The Confessions*, 10.17.26.

<sup>174</sup> Ambrose, “Exameron,” 6.6.39 and 6.7.42.

<sup>175</sup> Augustine, *De trinitate*, 8.15; Augustine, *Trinity*, 8.15. In *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, Gneuss and Lapidge note that Cambridge, University Library, Add. 6220 no. 14 (Gneuss and Lapidge #30.7) is a portion of Augustine's *De trinitate*, 8.9–11 written in England in the beginning of the eleventh century. This portion of the text is not recorded in either the epitome of Eugippius or the collection of Bede, and so may indicate the presence of the complete work in England in Ælfric's time, including the slightly later material of book eight quoted here.

<sup>176</sup> Gregory, “Homilia 38,” 373.361–62 and “Homilia 39,” 390.270–71 in *Homiliae in Euangelia* ed. Étaix.

<sup>177</sup> Augustine, *Confessionum*, 10.24.35; Augustine, *The Confessions*, 10.24.35.

<sup>178</sup> Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 2.9.14; Augustine, *Teaching Christianity*, 2.9.14.

<sup>179</sup> Augustine, *Confessionum*, 10.29.40; Augustine, *The Confessions*, 10.29.40.

<sup>180</sup> Augustine, *De trinitate*, 15.51; Augustine, *Trinity*, 15.51.

<sup>181</sup> Moorhead, *Gregory the Great*, 31.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>183</sup> O'Loughlin, *Teachers and Code-Breakers*, 183.

<sup>184</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, 32.12.16. Cf. Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.29 (*PL* 23.262c) and Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.10.

<sup>185</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, 27.49; Gregory, *Morals*, trans. Bliss, 27.49. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes this work was cited by Aldhelm, Bede, Asser, Lantfred, Ælfric, and Byrhtferth (306). Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, #564, 668.5, #840.5, #858, #865.5, and #946.5 were or may have been available in England by Ælfric's time.

<sup>186</sup> Gregory, *Règle Pastorale*, 3.29; Gregory, *Pastoral Practice*, trans. Leinenweber, 110–11. Cf. Gregory, "Pastoral Rule," in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, trans. Barmby, 61. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes this work was cited by Aldhelm, Bede, Asser, Ælfric, and Byrhtferth (307). Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, #261, #346, #439.6, #590, #684, #771, #800, #833, #894, and #898.5 were or may have been available in England by Ælfric's time.

<sup>187</sup> See Ambrose, *De paradiso*, in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Prima*, ed. Schenkl, 2.11, 11.51, and 15.73.

<sup>188</sup> Job 1:1–2:10.

<sup>189</sup> Astell, "Job's Wife," 94.

<sup>190</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, Praefatio 6.14, and 3.32.62.

<sup>191</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, Praefatio 5.11.

<sup>192</sup> Ambrose, "De Paradiso," in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Prima*, ed. Schenkl, 2.11.

<sup>193</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, 3.9.16; Gregory, *Moral Reflections*, trans. Kerns, 3.9.16.

<sup>194</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, Liber 3.21.40; Gregory, *Moral Reflections*, trans. Kerns, 3.21.40.

<sup>195</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, 11.49.65; Gregory, *Morals*, trans. Bliss, 11.65. (The new translation called *Moral Reflections on the Book of Job* is still in progress. Only books one through ten have been made available at this point.) For another view of this passage from the *Moralia*, see Roy, "Virgin Acts Manfully," 5–6. Regarding the weakness that was associated with women in the late antique era, Gillian Clark observes "Women, it was thought, were physically hampered by lack of strength and especially by child-bearing." Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity*, 56. As Gregory's use of the idea here suggests, this physical weakness was often used as a metaphor for various other kinds of weakness that did not necessarily have anything to do with being female, such as moral weaknesses that could be found in both men and women.

<sup>196</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, 4. Praefatio 4. See also *Moralia*, 3.20.36–38.

<sup>197</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, 5.21.41. Cf. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 3.25(37).

<sup>198</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, 5.21.41.

<sup>199</sup> Gregory, *Registrum Epistularum Libri VIII–XIV*, 12.6. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, does not indicate any citations of Gregory's letters (306). Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, indicate the addition of one of Gregory's epistles to #70 in the tenth or eleventh century in England.

<sup>200</sup> Moorhead notes that "[v]arious indications suggest that, despite its apparently popular nature, the [*Dialogi*] was ... directed towards an elite public." Gregory, 15.

<sup>201</sup> For a specific challenge to Gregory's authorship of the *Dialogi*, see Francis Clark, *Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues*, and "Gregorian" *Dialogues*. Clark's argument has generally been considered unconvincing: Meyvaert wrote a particularly strong response to the first book in "Enigma," 335–81. In response to the more recent book, see Kardong, "Who Wrote the Dialogues," 31–39 and de Vogüé, "Is Gregory the Author," 309–14.

<sup>202</sup> Gregory, *Dialogues*, Praefatio 9; Gregory, *Dialogues*, trans. Zimmerman, Preface. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes this work was cited by Aldhelm, Bede, Asser, Ælfric, and Byrhtferth (304). Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, #208, #510, #667, #715, #856.1, #924, #937.3, and #943.8 were or may have been available in England by Ælfric's time.

<sup>203</sup> Gregory, "Homilia 38," 373.361–62 and "Homilia 39," 390.270–71; Gregory, "Homily 38," 351 and "Homily 39," 366 in *Forty Gospel Homilies*, trans. Hurst. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, notes this work was cited by Aldhelm, Bede, Lantfred, Ælfric, and Byrhtferth (305). Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, #42, #255, #379.3, #767, and #804.5 were or may have been available in England by Ælfric's time.

<sup>204</sup> Gregory, *Dialogues*, 4.14.1. [My translation]

<sup>205</sup> Jo Ann MacNamara interprets the beard as the result of a build up of heat from Galla's unreleased passions in her article, "Chastity as a Third Gender," 204. For another interpretation, see Frantzen, *Before the Closet*, 76–77.

<sup>206</sup> Gregory, *Dialogues*, 4.14.3. [My translation]

<sup>207</sup> Gregory, *Dialogues*, 1.4.1; Gregory, *Dialogues*, trans. Zimmerman, 1.4.

<sup>208</sup> Cf. *Moralia* 15.18.22. See also Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 1.36 (*PL* 23.260c–271b).

<sup>209</sup> Gregory, *Dialogues*, 2.3.5; Gregory, *Dialogues*, trans. Zimmerman, 2.3. Ælfric included this encounter with Scholastica in *CH* II 11.486–521, but does not include this conclusion about the greatness of Scholastica's love.

<sup>210</sup> Thomas D. Hill, "Imago Dei," 35–50. Hill goes on to build a case for greater significance in the episode than just the lesson on love stated here, but this lesson would have held a prominent part in any meaning taken from the story.

<sup>211</sup> Gregory, *Dialogues*, Praefatio 9.

<sup>212</sup> Kardong, "New Look," 62.

<sup>213</sup> Gregory, *Règle Pastorale*, 3.1.

<sup>214</sup> Gregory, *Règle Pastorale*, 3.2; Gregory, "Regula pastoralis," in *Gregory the Great*, trans. Moorhead, 96.

<sup>215</sup> Gregory's next comment is upon the different ways that young and old men are to be exhorted. If his advice to men and women was meant to be parallel to his advice about the young and old, then the *men* would be comparable to the youths, and the women comparable to the elders.

<sup>216</sup> Gregory, *Règle Pastorale*, 3.7; Gregory, "Regula pastoralis," trans. Moorhead, 103.

<sup>217</sup> Moorhead, *Gregory*, 15 and Hall, "Early English Manuscripts," 129. Because the homilies on Ezekiel seem to have been largely unknown in Anglo-Saxon England, I limit my discussion of Gregory's Gospel homilies.

<sup>218</sup> Hall, "Early English Manuscripts," 129.

<sup>219</sup> Gregory, "Homilia 3," 22.35–36, 24.79–84, 92–96; Gregory, "Homily 1," 6, 8. Hurst arranges the first twenty homilies of his translation in liturgical order rather than following the order found in Latin edition and *PL*.

<sup>220</sup> Gregory, "Homilia 14," 101.122–26; Gregory, "Homily 15," 111. See also Ambrose, "De viduis," in *Sancti Ambrosii Episcopi Mediolanensis Opera*, ed. Gori, 7.37 and 8.44.

<sup>221</sup> Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity*, 56. Clark goes on to specify social conditions that emphasized the idea of weakness in women and that opened the way for that weakness to be applied in other areas, such as education, but the only bases of weakness that were understood to be inherent in women were the lack of strength and the matter of bearing children.

<sup>222</sup> Acknowledging this fact that men's superior physical strength enabled them to enforce rule, however, does not necessarily mean endorsement of coercive relations.

<sup>223</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, 11.49.65.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. Jerome, *ad Ephesios* (*PL* 26.533c and 501b).

<sup>225</sup> Ælfric uses *werlice* "manly" in the same way in *CHI* 12.112–17.

<sup>226</sup> Gregory, *Règle Pastorale*, 1.4; Gregory, "Pastoral Rule," trans. Barmby, 1.4. Cf. Gregory, *Moralia*, 1.5.6.

<sup>227</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, 8.10.19.

<sup>228</sup> Gregory, *Règle Pastorale*, 1.9; Gregory, "Pastoral Rule," trans. Barmby, 1.9.

<sup>229</sup> Gregory, *Règle Pastorale*, 1.9.

<sup>230</sup> Gregory, *Moralia*, 35.20.49.

<sup>231</sup> Gregory, "Homilia 15," 105.25–26; Gregory, "Homily 12," 88. Cf. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 2.9.14 and Ambrose, "De Isaac uel anima," 3.9. Ælfric devotes considerable time to this idea in his "Sermo de sacrificio in die Pascae," *CHI* 15.

<sup>232</sup> Gregory, *Dialogues*, 2.16.7; Gregory, *Dialogues*, trans. Zimmerman, 2.16. On possessing God, see Gregory's Homily 30. Cf. Ælfric, *CHI* 28.184–91.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Ælfric, *CHI* 25.166–69.

<sup>234</sup> Gregory, "Homilia 34," 311.311–17. This passage is translated by Ælfric in *CHI* 24.140–46.

<sup>235</sup> Gregory, *Dialogues*, 1.12.4; Gregory, *Dialogues*, trans. Zimmerman, 1.12.