

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

Rhonda L. McDaniel



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*Lives of Saints*

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## Chapter Five

# Material and Spiritual Bodies

### *Agatha: Femina Tamen*

In her discussion of Ælfric's "corporeal hermeneutics," Shari Horner points out Ælfric's use of *lichamlic* (bodily, carnal, physical, material) to denote a literal or historical reading of a text, saying that, "for Ælfric understanding a text *lichamlice* means understanding it both by means of the body, and in the literal sense."<sup>1</sup> Yet there is a *gastlic* (spiritual) sense that Ælfric desires his readers to attain, for it is by means of understanding the spiritual sense of the *passiones* that Ælfric's audience may come to know both God and themselves as they remember and reflect upon the legends. The legends that have already been analyzed here demonstrate the accuracy of Horner's observation inasmuch as the literal body of the saint has a *gastlic* meaning beyond itself. Both the saint's material body and the saint's temporal life function on two levels: historically as living human beings in the midst of particular historical events (regardless of whether they were actual historical people or not), and iconographically as images of the soul that draw the readers through identification and imitation into the greater reality of the *imago Dei* in the saint, the Creator whose image is reflected there, and the transcendent realm of eternal truths.<sup>2</sup> In the legend of Agatha, the opposition between reading the saint's body and the saint's *passio* literally and spiritually moves the audience beyond merely identifying with the saint's physical sufferings to the more important (from Ælfric's perspective) identification with and imitation of Agatha's mind and soul. The physical threats and tortures that Agatha endures are means to an end for Quintianus the lecherous magistrate, for the anonymous author of the Latin life, and for Ælfric himself, although obviously the ends are not the same.

The Latin life makes Quintianus's motives regarding Agatha clear from the outset. His description comes even before Agatha's and focuses on his lust and desire to gaze upon the young woman. Ælfric seems to be

dissatisfied with such a beginning and so inserts a very brief description of Agatha's character before describing Quintianus, saying that she is "snotor and gelyfed" [wise and believing].<sup>3</sup> Already Ælfric implies two things about Agatha's soul: she possesses the well-developed memory that is necessary for wisdom and she can perceive incorporeal truths beyond the surface appearances of the world around her. Ælfric then provides a condensed description of Quintianus, setting up the opposition between the wise, rightly ordered, believing mind of Agatha and the chaotic, unperceptive, unbelieving mind of Quintianus, which is subject to the passions of greed and lust that have overruled his reason and enslaved him to the devil.<sup>4</sup> The rest of the life is a dramatic enactment of these material and spiritual oppositions.

The focus of the *passio* on the opposition between a believing mind and an unbelieving mind has often been overlooked in recent criticism in favor of spotlighting Agatha's breast as a representation of her sexual identity.<sup>5</sup> The violence done to Agatha's female body in the course of her opposition to Quintianus's will rightly deserves evaluation and critical attention, yet the context of the hagiographical setting and the idea that the described violence may have a purpose beyond titillation do not always factor into analyses of the saint's body itself:

The breast emblemizes the hermeneutic function of the virgin martyr narratives: its violent mutilation stirs our horror and pity, yet the saint's denial of the significance of her own flesh reminds us that the truth of this text is not found at the literal level, but deep within its (her) beautiful surface. Agatha's spiritual reading of her own body depends upon its literal sense, while the torturer's repeated assaults on her flesh demonstrate his inability to read beyond a literal level.<sup>6</sup>

One must ask, though, whether or not the denial of the body is really the main point of the virgin martyr narratives. The body figures significantly in each one, albeit in some more than others, as both an object and a vessel of desire. Agatha has apparently cared well for her own body, since Quintianus finds it so desirable that he sends her to Aphrodosia and her nine *filiis turpissimas* (very foul daughters) for thirty days so that they might persuade her to yield to him.<sup>7</sup> The conflict arises when Agatha refuses to be persuaded, but, according to both the Latin author and Ælfric, Agatha's resolution is entirely a matter of the mind. Agatha does not speak about her body, nor does Aphrodosia directly attempt to change Agatha's

chaste behavior. The older woman tries to change Agatha's mind instead, for she understands that the mind directs behavior, that virginity of the mind protects bodily integrity rather than the other way around. One might perform bodily chastity all one wants, but according to Ambrose and Augustine, and to Aldhelm after them, only the virginal integrity of the mind counts as true purity.<sup>8</sup> The body, then, is the outward expression of inward purity, for a rightly ordered mind will manifest itself by the living of chastity, not just the outward performance of it. True chastity is an integral aspect of identity. This is why Quintianus sends Agatha to dwell with Aphrodosia for thirty days—so that Agatha might be defined by new memories formed within a new context and learn a new identity in her mind.<sup>9</sup> Agatha thwarts the attempt by means of her *“fæstrædde gepanc . / þe is gegrund-stapelod”* [steadfast mind which is firmly grounded].<sup>10</sup> The entire focus of the episode is upon Agatha's mind rather than upon her body. In the end, Aphrodosia tells Quintianus *“Stanas magon hnexian . and þæt starce isen / on leades gelicnysse . ærðan þe se geleafa mæge / of agathes breoste . beon æfre adwæsced .”* [Stones may soften and hard iron become the likeness of lead before the belief in Agatha's breast may ever be extinguished].<sup>11</sup> Agatha's faith remains immovable after Aphrodosia's best efforts and, even though Ælfric has the prostitute refer to Agatha's breast as a metaphor for her heart or mind, the comment foreshadows the site of Agatha's future torture and is not found in the closest Latin text. At the end of the thirty days in the brothel, Agatha retains the purity of both her body and her soul. In its status as a visible sign the saint's body functions as an icon, a point of entry into the transcendent world of the saint's soul and of God, and so possesses value and importance both to the saint and the reader.

This said, the breast that has borne so much of the gaze of the faithful and of scholars of the body seems to matter very little to Agatha herself. Allen J. Frantzen comments that “Agatha annihilates her womanhood more effectively than her torturers when she disowns the breast she has lost in favor of the true faith in the breast of her soul.”<sup>12</sup> “Disowns,” however, is too strong a term, for Agatha is not unmoved by her loss. Rather she rebukes Quintianus for his cruelty: *“Agatha uero respondit: Impie et crudelissime non es confusus hoc amputare in femina quod ipse in matre suxisti? Sed ego habeo mammillas integras intus in anima mea: ex quibus nutrio omnes sensus meos: quos ab infantia domino consecraui”* [Nevertheless Agatha responded, “Impious and most cruel! Are you not disordered to cut off that part on a woman which you yourself

sucked on your mother? Yet I possess whole breasts inwardly, in my soul, from which I suckle all my thinking, which from infancy I consecrated to the Lord.”] Ælfric is slightly more direct, saying, “Agathes him cwæð to . Eala ðu arleasosta / ne sceamode þe to ceorfanne þæt ðu sylf suce . / ac ic habbe mine breost on minre sawle . ansunde . / mid þam ðe Ic min andgit eallunga afede” [Agatha said to him, “Alas, you most impious man! Are you not ashamed to cut out that which you yourself have sucked! But I possess my breast whole within my soul by means of which I entirely feed my intellect.”]<sup>13</sup> In neither account does Agatha disown her flesh. Instead, she reproaches her tormentor for his cruelty and disrespect for a breast like the one that had nourished him when he was a weak and helpless child. The reference is more specific in the Latin text than in the Old English, but the idea of disrespect for the nourishment that Quintianus had received from his own mother’s breast is not lost despite Ælfric’s omission of the specific reference to Quintianus’s mother. Far from rejecting her fleshly breast, Agatha points out the inhumanity of a man cruel enough to try to deprive a woman of her womanhood. In turn, she affirms her essential femininity by claiming to have other breasts within her soul by which she nourishes her thoughts. Both the Latin author and Ælfric use active verbs in the first person, *nutrio* and *afede*, indicating that Agatha feeds herself by means of these inner breasts. Horner identifies these inner breasts with Christ: “Agatha herself is nourished through the breast (i.e., Christ) within her own soul,” an image that evokes Ambrose’s description of Christ as the virgin whose teats do not fail.<sup>14</sup> Yet Agatha claims these inward breasts for herself, saying *habeo* and *Ic habbe* rather than *Christus est* or *Crist is*. With these words in mind it seems more likely that Agatha means the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, an allegorical interpretation of breasts made by Ambrose: “Ubera vel duo Testamenta dixit, quorum altero annuntiatus est, altero demonstratus. Et bene ubera, quoniam velut quodam nos spiritali lacte nutritos educavit, et obtulit Deo Filius” [He said “the breasts” or the two testaments, in one of which he is announced, in the other he is shown forth. And well did he say breasts because the Son has raised us by nourishing us as it were with a certain spiritual milk, and has presented us to God].<sup>15</sup> While Ælfric probably did not know Ambrose’s work directly, the idea was also transmitted through Augustine and Bede as well as the Latin life.<sup>16</sup> Agatha could nourish her thoughts at any time from the lifegiving words of the breasts of the Old Testament and New Testament scriptures stored away in her memory since she was an infant. She clearly states that nourishing her mind outweighs



concern for her body, but it does not make her reject her flesh or refuse to acknowledge the loss of her physical breast. Her comment also emphasizes the distinction between her soul and her physical body in that the soul remained whole and healthy independently of her physical mutilation.<sup>17</sup> Ælfric does not allow his audience, monastic or lay, to confuse Agatha's soul with her body.

Even while Agatha thus maintains her identity as a woman after the loss of her breast, she does so through her identity with and love for Christ. She affirms her own womanhood even more after the Apostle Peter visits her that same night in her prison cell, offering to heal her wounds. Agatha refuses his aid, not realizing that the one before her is not a mortal physician but rather a heavenly messenger: "Agatha Respondit [*sic*]: Quia habeo saluatorem dominum Iesum Christum: qui uerbo curat omnia: et sermo eius solus restaurat uniuersa: hic si uult: potest me saluam facere" [Agatha replied, "Because I have a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who cures all things with a word, and his word alone restores all things. If he wishes, he is able to make me well."] Ælfric omits most of the conversation between Agatha and Peter, focusing on her reason for refusing medical treatment: "Ne gymde Ic nanes læce-cræftes næfre on minum life . / ic hæbbe minne hælend þe gehæld mid his worde . / he mæg gif he wyle . mihtelice me gehælan" [Never in my life have I cared anything for physician's remedies. I have my Savior who heals by means of his word; he is able to heal me mightily, if he wishes.]<sup>18</sup> While the refusal of medical aid may seem to support Frantzen's interpretation of Agatha disowning her breast, it is rather an assertion of hope that her dismembered flesh might yet be made whole. She knows that no medical skill can reattach her breast and so on the purely corporeal level her only hope of being made whole again lies in a miracle of Christ. And yet she does hope. She does not despair over her disfigurement, but demonstrates absolute confidence in her Savior. At a deeper, incorporeal level, Agatha's confidence in her inner breasts of the Old and New Testaments is simultaneously indicative of her confidence in Christ, the Word made flesh, who can heal her inside and out. Upon hearing Agatha's profession of confidence, Peter proclaims her restoration in Christ's name and disappears.<sup>19</sup> The author of the Latin version describes how Agatha praises God for her healing and then says, "Et dum complisset orationem suam respiciens ad omnes maculas corporis sui: sanata omnia membra sua cognouit" [And when she had finished her prayer, looking at all the injuries of her body she perceived all of her parts to be whole.] Ælfric, however, elab-

orates upon this rather terse scene, observing that “Æfter ðam gebede . beseah to hyre breoste . / and wæs þæt corfene breost / þurh crist ge-edstaðelod . / and ealle hire wunda wurdon gehælede” [After that prayer she looked upon her breast, and that breast that was cut off became restored by Christ and all her wounds became whole.]<sup>20</sup> Alone and in prison, Agatha gazes upon her own restored breast. Ælfric personalizes the moment, letting his audience see Agatha’s womanhood confirmed and affirmed through her own eyes, not through the objectifying gaze of a man. By restoring Agatha’s flesh, God demonstrates the value and importance of her body; by viewing her own breast, Agatha does the same. Ælfric’s portrayal both of Agatha’s desire for healing and of how she sees her own restored body communicates to his audience a holy appreciation for the body without making preservation of the body the highest priority.

Five days later, Quintianus again calls the saint into his presence, demanding that she sacrifice to his gods or else undergo more torture. After what Agatha has just experienced, the charge appears ridiculous, as her response makes clear:

Latin life:

Agatha respondit: Omnia uerba tua fatua et uana sunt: et iniqua praecepta tua aerem ipsum maculant: Vnde miser. et sine sensu et sine intellectu es. qui uult ad auxilium suum lapidem inuocare et non deum summum et uerum: Qui me dignatus est ab omni plaga curare: quam in me ita exercuisti: ut mammillam meam integerrimam meo corpori restitueret.

[Agatha replied, “All of your words are foolish and empty and your perverse precepts pollute the very air. Whence, wretch, you are both without feeling and without reason who wants to call upon a stone for his help and not the highest and true God, who has deigned to cure me from every blow with which you thus harassed me, in order that he might restore to me my breast quite whole.”]

Ælfric:

Ða cwæð Agathes . þu earma andgit-leasa . / hwa wyle clypian to stane . and na to þam soðan gode . / ðe me fram eallum þam witum . þe ðu wælhreowlice . / on minum lice gefæstnodest . for his naman gehælede . / and min breost ge-edstaðelode . þe ðu arleasa forcurfe.

[Then Agatha said, "You wretched, foolish man! Why do you want to call out to a stone and not to the true God, who for the sake of his name protected me from all the injuries that you cruelly committed upon my body and restored my breast that you basely cut off?"]<sup>21</sup>

After the miraculous events in the prison regarding Agatha's healing, this scene brings back to the attention of the audience the opposition between the saint's belief and Quintianus's unbelief that has been the consistent focus of the life though not discussed here. The importance of the mind and of the body are brought together in Agatha's blunt response, for after both she and the audience have directly encountered the power of Christ, praying for help to deaf stones would be utter mindlessness. Moreover, Christ's regard for Agatha's female body, signaled by the restoration of her breast, points up the cruel disregard Quintianus displayed when he ordered her mutilation. The irony in this contrast deserves mention, for it calls into question interpretations of female saints' *passiones* that insist upon the denial of the female body or upon the necessity of "becoming male" in order to attain salvation or sanctity: Christ, who supposedly should confirm the saint's rejection of her breast, instead restores it; Quintianus, who supposedly desires to possess Agatha's breast, instead destroys it. There is no rejection of female sex in Agatha's pursuit of the *virum perfectum*, for that transformation toward metagender takes place in the soul where there is no sex, so that Agatha can still value and care for her sexed body.

At the end of her life (and once again in prison) Agatha spreads her hands in prayer, saying, "Domine ... ut accipias spiritum meum modo: quia tempus est: ut me iubeas istud saeculum derelinquere: et ad tuam misericordiam peruenire" [Lord, I entreat you to receive my spirit now, because it is time for you to command me to abandon this world and to attain to your mercy.] Ælfric adjusts the Latin author's awkward attempt to demonstrate the saint's volition and God's sovereignty in the saint's prayer by writing, "ðe ic bidde drihten . þæt ðu minne gast / nu to þe genime . forðan þe nu is tima . / þæt ic þas woruld forlæte . and to þinre liðan miltheortnyssse / becuman mote . min leofa drihten" [I entreat you, Lord, that you take my spirit to you now, because now is the time, that I may leave this world and may come into your gentle mercy, my beloved Lord.]<sup>22</sup> And so saying, Agatha gives up her *gast* at a time of her own choosing rather than at the hands (or swords) of her executioners. Quintianus, helpless to obtain her body, proves equally helpless to take

her life. Agatha determines the moment of her own entry into heaven, not her persecutor. Quintianus had imprisoned her in order to possess her, but she eluded his temporal restraint, slipping beyond his reach into the realm of the eternal. As a sign to the people of her acceptance into heaven, an angel followed by a hundred men brings an inscribed stone to place at the head of Agatha's tomb, which reads: "Mentem sanctam spontaneam, honorem deo, et patrie liberationem" [A holy mind by her free will, honorable to God, and liberation to the homeland]. Ælfric gives the Latin of the inscription, then translates it into English for his readers: "halig mod . sylfville wurðmynt . þam / wel-wyllendan gode . and eardes alysednyse" [A voluntarily holy mind, glory to the benevolent God, and the redemption of the earth].<sup>23</sup> Agatha's agency in shaping her own mind into a holy place produces praise for God and benefits for the people (and chastity as a by-product).

By contrast, Quintianus meets a most ignominious death, yet one that fully symbolizes his life and his disordered mind: he is caught on a boat between two horses, one of which picks him up with its teeth while the other kicks him overboard into the river, from which his body is never recovered.<sup>24</sup> The horses serve as a symbol for the animal passions in patristic and medieval literature and so Quintianus's death by means of these beasts illustrates the idea that the mental misrule of his own lustful desire and cruel wrath, his own beastliness, kills him.<sup>25</sup> And unlike Agatha, whose body remains intact, locatable, and memorialized within its sarcophagus, Quintianus's body disappears into the river's depths. It is consigned to oblivion and forgotten. In this final irony, Agatha preserves her body because she valued her soul more, demonstrating once more the right ordering of the powers of her mind. Quintianus, on the other hand, loses his body precisely because he valued it more than his soul, seeking gratification in the animal pleasures and thus losing his mind together with his body.

In this way, the *passio* of Agatha instructs the men in Ælfric's lay audience on the importance of the soul's activity of controlling the sexual impulses of the body even more than it instructs the women. Every cruelty Quintianus commits arises from an insanity of frustrated sexual passion. Unused to curbing his own passions, he does not know how to respond to having them curbed for him by Agatha's refusal of his desires. Quintianus's unrestrained lust places him on a level with the mindless beasts, and so, by means of unusually astute beasts, he meets his end. Agatha, on the other hand, lives out the importance of memorizing Scripture and nourishing

herself mentally through reflection and meditation on the word of God. She also models a properly ordered appreciation of the body: willing to sacrifice the flesh in order to preserve her integrity of mind, but governing and loving her own flesh in an appropriate way nonetheless, by caring for the body but subordinating its needs to those of the soul. Ælfric instructs both men and women through Agatha's experience how to properly order their own loves for God, others, and self.

### Lucia: *Virgo Immobilis*

Closely associated with Agatha, Lucia of Syracuse first appears with her mother Eutychia at Agatha's tomb. They have come in response to Agatha's growing reputation, seeking physical healing for the saint-to-be's mother, who suffers from the uniquely feminine disorder of a continual flux of blood that no physician has been able to cure.<sup>26</sup> Eutychia's illness draws the reader's attention to the female anatomy, specifically the womb, and suggests the impurity that follows upon the loss of virginity in the marital embrace and childbirth. The broken integrity of Eutychia's body, the loss of stainless purity reflects the fallen nature of humanity, its integrity broken through Adam's disobedience, its soul stained and corrupted by sin, as desperately in need of salvation as Eutychia's own body is in need of healing. While at Agatha's tomb, Eutychia and Lucia hear the gospel story of Jesus's healing of the woman with a flux of blood, which gives Lucia the idea to appeal to Agatha to intercede with Christ to heal her mother. The parallel between Eutychia and the woman in the gospel reinforces the emphasis on the lack of health in Eutychia's corrupted womb and the need for divine intervention.

In contrast to Eutychia's plight, Lucia is healthy, whole, a virgin, although neither Mombricitus, the Hereford manuscript of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, nor Ælfric's translation reveal this fact directly, simply referring to Lucia once as *ge-sælige* (happy, fortunate, blessed) rather than as a virgin.<sup>27</sup> Lucia and her ailing mother spend the night at Agatha's tomb, prostrate in prayer for so long that Lucia falls asleep. While asleep, Lucia sees a vision of Agatha, accompanied by many angels and richly attired. When Agatha greets Lucia, she reveals Lucia's virginal status: "Min swustor lucia . soð godes mæden / hwi bitst þu æt me þæs þe ðu miht sylf getiðian?" [Lucia, my sister, true virgin of God, why do you pray to me for that which you yourself are able to give?]<sup>28</sup> Agatha's announcement dramatically creates the impression of a sort of annunciation of Lucia's



virginity. Up to this point in Ælfric's translation, Lucia is not directly called a virgin, but she learns through the vision that God claims her for his own, naming her a true virgin possibly before she has truly determined to be so. As a result of this knowledge of Lucia's status, God grants her ahead of time a reward for her future faithfulness—Eutychia's malady is healed. These events evoke questions about free will—an essential aspect of virginity—that are left unstated in the text. In the Latin text Lucia credits the saint with Eutychia's healing, but Ælfric shifts the credit, making Agatha explicitly emphasize that Christ healed the woman, not Agatha herself.<sup>29</sup> Agatha then explains that Lucia had the faith to effect her mother's cure, "*quia iucundum deo in tua uirginitate habitaculum præparasti*" [because you have prepared a pleasing dwelling place for God in your virginity]. Ælfric stays very close in his translation: "*forðan þe þu gearcodeð criste . on þinum clænan mægð-hade . / wynsume wununge*. [because by your pure virginity you have prepared yourself [to be] a pleasant dwelling for Christ.]"<sup>30</sup> The comment bears both bodily and spiritual meanings: Lucia's virginity is a matter of both body and soul. Understood within the practice of virginity outlined by the Latin Doctors, Lucia must have developed her memory, furnishing it with scriptures and constructing herself into a temple for God's presence reminiscent of Jerome's comparison of the virgin's soul to the mercy-seat in the holy of holies of the Old Testament temple. Young enough not to have been married yet, the virtue of Lucia's virginity seems to lie more in her mental and spiritual preparation for choosing a life of chastity than in having actually determined to set aside all corporeal entanglements.

After Agatha finishes her announcement, Lucia wakes and quickly rouses her mother to tell her about her cure and to make a request that "*per ipsam . te precor per eam quae te saluauit suis orationibus : ne tu mihi aliquando sponsum nomines : ne tu uelis de corporis mei posteritate fructum mortalitatis inquirere*" [By the same one who healed you through her prayers, I pray you that you neither name anyone to me as a husband at any time, nor that you desire to look for the fruit of mortality in offspring from my body.] Ælfric translates these lines closely, but nuances Lucia's comment: "*nu bidde ic þe . þurh þa ylcan . þe þe mid ge-bedum gehælde . / þæt þu nanne bryd-guman næfre me ne namige . / ne of minum licha-man deadlicne wæstm ne sece*" [Now I ask you, by that one that healed you through prayers, that you never name for me a bridegroom, nor ask for mortal fruit from my body.]<sup>31</sup> In Ælfric's translation, Lucia makes the point that Christ, who has cured Eutychia's womb, now lays claim to

Lucia's own so that it may never know the corruption of lust and begetting offspring as Eutychia's has known, and so that Lucia's offspring might be spiritual rather than mortal children who must themselves later die. By virtue of Lucia's pure womb, Eutychia's has been healed through Agatha's prayers and by Lucia's own heavenly bridegroom. This same idea of virginal daughters thus saving their mothers is found in Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum*, which makes the point that married women attain through their virgin children what they themselves have lost; the spiritual fruits of the child's virginity make up for the corruption of lust that accompanies copulation and of having borne bodily fruit.<sup>32</sup> In addition to warning her mother not to expect grandchildren, however, Lucia also wants the dowry that Eutychia would have provided to anyone who married her daughter, in order to use it in Christ's service.<sup>33</sup> Eutychia tries to defer because for the nine years she has been a widow she has stewarded and increased the wealth left by her husband.<sup>34</sup> Despite Eutychia's remarkable business acumen, which is clearly stated in both the Latin and Old English versions, Lucia remains adamant and eventually persuades her to sell even the land as well as the jewels, and together they distribute all of Eutychia's carefully guarded wealth to the widows and orphans and others in need. As a result, both Lucia's would-be husband and the prefect, Paschasius (whom Ælfric apparently mistakenly conflates into one person), bring her to trial.<sup>35</sup>

At this point, Ælfric abridges an already short life by editing much of the dialogue between Lucia and Paschasius at her trial out of his translation, condensing most of the debate into "and hi spræcon fela" [and they spoke much].<sup>36</sup> Ælfric does, however, retain the part of the dialogue in which Lucia describes how the Holy Spirit of God is present within her. Paschasius has just threatened to beat Lucia if she says any more, but Lucia refuses to be silent, saying that he will be unable to stop God's words:

He axode ða mid olle . Eart þu la god? / Lucia him andwyrde . Ic eom þæs ælmihtigan þinen . / forþi ic cwæð godes word . forþan þe he on his godspelle cwæð . / Ne synd ge þe þær sprecað . ac sprycþ se halga gast on eow . / eft þa pascasius orgellice befran . / wunað se halga gast on þe eornostlice . / Lucia andwyrde þam arleasan and cwæð . / Se apostol behet þam ðe healdað clænnysse . / þæt hi synd godes templ . and þæs halgan gastes wunung . / Þa cwæð se arleasa . Ic hate þe ardllice lædan . / to þæra myltestrena huse . þæt ðu þinne mægð-had forleose . / þæ se halga gast þe fram fleo . ðonne þu fullice byst gescynd . / Lucia andwyrde þus . ne bið ænig gewemmed . / lichama to plihte . gif hit ne licað þam mod."

[Then he asked with scorn, "Oh, are you God?" Lucia answered him, "I am the servant of the Almighty, therefore I speak the words of God because in his Gospel he says, 'You are not wherefrom you speak, but the Holy Spirit speaks in you.'" Then Paschasius arrogantly asked a second time, "Does the Holy Spirit really live in you?" Lucia answered that impious man and said, "The Apostle promised those who preserved chastity that they are the temple of God and the dwelling of the Holy Spirit." Then the wicked man said, "I will command [the executioner] to lead you quickly to the house of prostitutes so that you may lose your virginity and so that the Holy Spirit will flee from you when you are foully disgraced." Lucia answered in this fashion: "The body is not at all dangerously defiled if it does not please the mind."]<sup>37</sup>

Paschasius's literal (mis)understandings of Lucia's serious declarations carry great potential for a humorous interpretation. Shari Horner has already pointed out both the humor of the situation and the symbolic lesson about literal and spiritual interpretations of both texts and saints' bodies at work in this exchange, but the element of the ridiculous seems to have been lost on Ælfric. Or perhaps Ælfric saw the potential for humor all too well, and took steps to make sure that the readers of this life would not find in Paschasius a source of comedy by translating his comments so as to leave no such possibility. For instance, when Paschasius asks Lucia if she is God, the Latin simply says *Paschasius dixit*, but Ælfric interprets for his audience the attitude with which the prefect spoke, saying "He axode ða mid olle" [He then asked with scorn].<sup>38</sup> Later the Latin text again says *Paschasius dixit* when the prefect inquires whether the Holy Spirit is in Lucia. Ælfric interprets again, however: "Eft þa paschasius orgellice befran" [After that Paschasius asked insolently].<sup>39</sup>

This exchange serves as more than a moment of potential comic relief, however. Underlying the ridiculousness of Paschasius's literal misunderstanding of Lucia's comments are the ideas evoked earlier by the healing of Eutychia and the theme of Lucia's virgin body prepared as a dwelling for Christ. Lucia ties together the concepts of chastity and the inward dwelling of the Holy Spirit by literally speaking God's words from memory when she quotes the Apostle Paul's remark that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.<sup>40</sup> Paschasius makes the connection, but again takes the idea too literally and determines to take Lucia to a brothel where she might be raped so that the Holy Spirit will flee from her. He (mis)understands the connection between virginity and the dwelling of

the Holy Spirit to be a matter of bodily location, of the womb actually being the place in which the Holy Spirit lives rather than in the memory in the soul as Augustine describes. Lucia corrects the error of his thoughts, however, when she asserts that “Numquam inquinatur corpus nisi de consensu mentis” [the body may never be corrupted except by agreement of the mind].<sup>41</sup> Here Lucia repeats the teaching of Ambrose, Augustine, and Aldhelm on the primacy of mental purity over mere physical integrity, adding that God, who “de sensibus et uoluntatibus iudicat” [judges according to the understanding and the will], will hold her guiltless of any impurity because of her unwillingness. Ælfric’s source may not have had the reference to the understanding, for it is not found in the Hereford manuscript or in Ælfric’s translation: “seþe demð be þam willan” [who judges according to the will].<sup>42</sup> Ælfric makes the point that, even though threatened with rape, Lucia remains calm and fearless because she knows herself and her own will.

Not so with Paschasius. He starts to drag the saint to the brothel as he had threatened to do, but, along the way, Lucia becomes fixed to the ground, immovable. Paschasius and his men try everything they can think of to move the woman—pulling with ropes, magic spells, even a team of oxen—but all to no avail. Since Lucia cannot be brought to her torment, Paschasius orders the torment to be brought to Lucia, and his men quickly build a large pyre around her. As with the other persecutors of the saints, Paschasius depicts the mind gone mad, chaotic, violent, and disordered because ruled by the passions rather than by reason. In contrast, Lucia is quite literally steadfast and immovable, both mentally and physically. The longer Lucia stands her ground, the more violent and mindless Paschasius becomes. Ælfric uses terms that vividly describe this state of mind (or mindlessness): *wodlice geancsumode* (insanely vexed), and *mod-least* (lacking in mind).<sup>43</sup> Paschasius’s friends are unable to calm him from this violent state of mind, and so in Mombritius’s edition, they order Lucia to be jugulated, “iusserunt gladium mergi in gutture eius” [they ordered a sword to be plunged into her throat]. Here the Hereford manuscript differs from Mombritius and says, “iusserunt gladium mergi in uiscera” [they ordered a sword to be plunged into her womb], which Ælfric translates as “Ac heton acwellan þæt clæne mæden mid swurde . / heo wearð þa gewundod . þæt hire wand se innoð ut”. [but they commanded (one) to kill that pure virgin with a sword. Then she was wounded so that the womb twisted out from her.]<sup>44</sup> The violence of Paschasius’s comrades exposes Lucia’s womb, the very site of contention, revealing her essential corporeal

femininity for all to see. Lucia's injury does not prevent her from addressing the crowd that had gathered to watch her martyrdom, nor does her disembowelment prevent her from continuing to stand rooted in the middle of the street, praying and prophesying to the people. Indeed, Lucia remains standing in the same place until Paschasius himself is brought before her in chains like a wild beast, on his way to be executed.<sup>45</sup> After Paschasius meets his ignominious end, Lucia finally consents to die. Like Agatha before her, she chooses the time of her own death, not her executioners.

Lucia's life, while still demonstrating all of the evidences of active self-formation that have appeared in each life, provides a unique focus upon a different aspect of the female body from breasts that feature so prominently in Eugenia's and Agatha's legends. Lucia's life sets up an iconography of the womb as a dwelling place for God, both in terms of Christ as he was incarnated through the Virgin's womb into humanity and in terms of the Holy Spirit who dwells, according to Lucia, in believers who have prepared for the Spirit a clean and pure dwelling by living lives of chastity. The material female bodies of these two saints make a point of contact between two realities, the material and the transcendent, pointing by means of the one to the presence of the other.

### Abdon and Sennes: *Reges Credentes*

Ælfric translates legends of several devout kings in *Lives of Saints*, but the brief *passio* of Abdon and Sennes does not depict them behaving as one might expect kings to do.<sup>46</sup> As Ælfric introduces them, he highlights their Christianity, how they "on crist gelyfde" [believed in Christ].<sup>47</sup> In the Latin account, the kings' refusal to offer sacrifices to the pagan gods comes to the notice of the emperor Decius.<sup>48</sup> Ælfric omits these details, only saying that the emperor heard news about them and then continuing with a description of Decius's absolute and god-like rule over all the kings of the earth.<sup>49</sup> Ælfric sets up the emperor as a type of antichrist, ruling over all orders of men on earth, including kings, and yet possessed of that same proud will to power attributed to the devil, seeing himself as being like God, under nobody.<sup>50</sup> The description dovetails perfectly with other depictions of hegemonic masculinity and adds Ælfric's spiritual perspective in its comparison of Decius to the devil. Even when describing how Decius sent for the two kings to be brought before him, Ælfric writes that Decius "wolde hi gebigan fram godes biggenegum" [desired



to turn them back from the worship of God], even as Lucifer sought to turn his fellow angels and archangels away from serving God to serving himself.<sup>51</sup> In order to make sure that his audience understands the parallel, Ælfric describes Decius as “deoflic” [devilish] and “se deofles biggenga” [the devil’s worshiper].<sup>52</sup> Yet even as the kings are threatened with the most painful physical tortures because of their refusal to sacrifice to the pagan gods, they respond with the same fearless defiance exhibited by the female martyrs: “Dixit Abdo et Sennes: Quid tardas? Fac quod putas: nos securi sumus de Domino nostro Iesu Christo, qui potens est omnia cogitamenta tua et teipsum destruere” [Abdon and Sennes said, “Why do you wait? Do what you are thinking. We are safe on account of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is able to destroy all your intentions and you yourself.”] Ælfric expands their retort, writing, “Abdon and sennes him andsyrdon ðus . / Hwæs abitst þa casere cyð hwæt þu wylle . / þæt þu wite soðlice . þæt we orsorge syndon / on urum hælende criste . þe hælð þa mihte . / þæt he ðine geþohtas . and þe sylfne mæg / mid ealle towurpon . and on ecnysse fordon” [Abdon and Sennes answered him thus: “Why do you wait, emperor? Do what you will. Then you might truly understand that we are safe in Christ our Savior, who possesses such strength that he is able entirely to cast down your purposes and your own self and to destroy you for eternity.”]<sup>53</sup> In the opposition of will between any antichrist and Christ, the antichrist always loses. The Latin hagiographer sets Decius up in opposition to Christ and to Christ’s saints and shows that Abdon and Sennes know that the emperor is setting up his own downfall, both in time and in eternity. The kings do not try to overpower or threaten Decius with military might, but depend entirely upon Christ for their safety—a safety in which preservation of the immortal soul is more important than preservation of the physical body. Neither the Latin nor the Old English versions say anything about physical or political displays of power, but rather point out Christ’s ability to overthrow the intentions (*cogitamenta* in Latin and *geþohtas* in Old English), the purposes of Decius’s will, and so the kings’ comments speak directly to the moral functions of the soul, especially of the will. Further, in both versions, Abdon and Sennes say that Christ has the power to destroy Decius himself. Ælfric takes the point further, indicating that the warning does not refer to merely killing the body, but to eternal destruction of the essence of who Decius is, the soul itself. Decius may be ruler of all the known world, but his temporal power cannot avail him in the transcendent realm of the soul and of God.

Unfortunately, neither the Latin life nor Ælfric's translation gives Decius's response to this dire prediction, accordingly we have no way of knowing whether or not Decius understood what the kings meant. Instead, the Latin narrative abruptly shifts in time to another day in which Decius orders his prefect, Valerian, to hand over the kings to lions and bears to be slain. Ælfric makes Decius's threat rather more graphic by changing the verb to *abiton* "tear apart, devour."<sup>54</sup> Ælfric's choice of words evokes the biblical passage from I Peter 5:8, in which the devil is described as a lion seeking someone to devour. In the Old English glosses to Aldhelm's *De virginitate*, the Latin term *devorans* (devouring; from *devoro*, the same root used in I Peter 5:8, *devoret*, in the Vulgate) is glossed with the Old English *abitende* (biting in pieces, tearing to pieces, devouring; from *abitan*).<sup>55</sup> By using this word, Ælfric may have intended to draw in yet another allusion to the parallel between Decius and the devil, a subtlety that might have passed unnoticed by his lay audience, but would likely have been recognized by monastic readers.

Valerian gives the kings one last opportunity to save themselves from a painful death by worshiping the gods of Rome, but Abdon and Sennes respond, "Jam diximus tibi: Nos Dominum Jesum Christum adoramus. Nam manufactis simulacris numquam humiliamur" [Now we have said to you, we worship the Lord Jesus Christ. For this reason we will never grovel to hand-made images.] Again, Ælfric expands their comment, saying, "We gebiddað us to drihtne gebigdum limum . / and we næfre ne onbugað . þam bysmorfullum anlicnyssum . / manna handgeweorc . þe ge habbað for godas" [We pray to the Lord with limbs bowed, and we will never bow down to those disgraceful images, the handiwork of a human, that you have for gods.]<sup>56</sup> Ælfric adds emphasis and insult to the answer the two kings give to Valerian. He also embodies the action of worship by indicating that the kings pray "gebigdum limum," a posture which any audience could readily imagine. Then, in the Latin text, "eadem hora denudavit eos, et furore repletus duxit eos ante simulacrum solis. [in that same hour he stripped them bare and, filled with madness, he led them before the image of the sun.]"<sup>57</sup> Ælfric, oddly enough, omits the comment about Valerian's madness, saying only "Þa het ualerianus . ða halgan unscriðan . / and lædan swa nocode (*sic*) to ðære sunnan anlicnysse. [Then Valerian ordered the holy ones stripped and led them thus naked to the image of the sun.]"<sup>58</sup> Ælfric does not give details as to where the kings are at this point, nor where the image of the sun is, but the Latin text explains that the kings have been brought to the amphitheater to face the lions and

bears. It also describes how the image of the sun god to which the kings are led is next to the amphitheater. All of these actions, then, take place before an audience and, unlike the case of the female saints, no divine intervention preserves the modesty and dignity of Abdon and Sennes by covering their nudity from the gaze of others. The kings refuse to make offerings to the sun god, even though tortured and beaten with leaded whips. Finally, Valerian returns them to the crowd waiting in the amphitheater:

Latin life:

Et cum ingressi fuissent, responderunt in conspectu Valeriani, dicentes Abdo et Sennes: In nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christi introimus ad coronam, qui interdicat tibi, immunde spiritus, et facto signo crucis, introierunt in amphitheatrum; qui cum introissent in conspectu Valeriani nudo corpore, tamen induti corpore Christi.

[And when they had entered, Abdon and Sennes replied in the sight of Valerian, saying, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ we enter to the crown, which he will forbid to you, unclean spirit!" And having made the sign of the cross they entered into the amphitheater who, while they entered into the sight of Valerian with nude body, were nevertheless clothed (*induti*) with the body of Christ.]

Ælfric, however, tersely states, "and lādde hi syððan / to ðam wæfer-huse . þær ða deor wunodon . / beran . and leon . þe hi abitan sceoldon" [and afterwards he led them to the amphitheater where the beasts dwelt, the bears and the lions, so that they might be able to devour them.]<sup>59</sup> Ælfric leaves out several points: the two kings endure the gaze of their persecutor, who focuses upon their nakedness, but at the same time the Body of Christ invisibly clothes them. It covers them after a fashion, but not in the sense of hiding their nudity or shielding their bodies from the hostile gaze of their tormentor or the audience in the amphitheater. How the kings might be clothed with Christ's body and what kind of garment the Body of Christ might supply remain unexplained, but comes from Paul's comments in Romans 13:14, "sed induite Dominum Iesum Christum et carnis curam ne feceritis in desideriis" [but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will not regard the care of the flesh in its desires], and Galatians 3:27, "quicumque enim in Christo baptizati estis Christum induistis" [whoever truly has been baptized in Christ, you all have put on Christ.] The Latin *passio* uses the same verb, *induo* (put on, clothe), and echoes the biblical passages to imply a covering over sin. The verse in Galatians immediately

precedes Galatians 3:28, Paul's statement that there is neither male nor female among believers clothed with Christ through baptism. Christ has made all into one in his own Body. The symbolism involved in covering the naked corporeal bodies of the kings with the incorporeal Body of Christ, which is imperceptible to the unbelieving crowd, evokes concepts of metagender—being clothed in Christ spiritually covers the nakedness, the sexuality of the male bodies and signifies their reorientation of identity from kings to martyrs and their participation in the transcendent society of God and angels. The sexed body, and by implication the gendered self, are covered by the metagendered Body of Christ in a kind of spiritual transvestitism, signaling the process of transformation taking place in the souls of Abdon and Sennes. Such a spiritual covering, however, does little to protect the kings' bodily modesty, and the garment that upholds their dignity before God and the angels remains invisible to Valerian and the spectators in the amphitheater. Perhaps for this very reason, Ælfric barely touches this scene, reporting tersely that the kings were led to the amphitheater to be fed to the lions and bears. Ælfric apparently considered the change represented in the Latin *passio* by being clothed with Christ (with its implications of metagender) to be one of those subtle ideas unfit to present to a nonmonastic audience, and so he sets aside the mention of these saints being clothed with the Body of Christ. He also avoids getting into a mare's nest of explanation as to how something real might not be perceived by everybody and why the kings refer to Valerian as an unclean spirit, focusing his readers' attention instead upon the beasts whose behavior will provide a more tangible, less metaphysical miracle.

Made bloody by the severe beating, the two kings remain steadfast in their refusal to offer pagan sacrifices, and thus are brought into the arena to face the wild animals. Valerian orders two lions and four bears to be set upon the two men. In both the Latin and Old English accounts, the animals run out with awful roaring "ad pedes sanctorum" [to the feet of the saints], where they remain, protecting the saints so that none dare to approach them or, according to Ælfric, dare even to enter the arena.<sup>60</sup> In this instance, as in the legends of Thecla recounted by Ambrose and of Chrysanthus and Daria below, the positions of human persecutor and beast are inverted—the beasts have spiritual insight and honor the saints of God, thus behaving as humans ought, while the humans are blind to the image of God in the saints and so torture and attempt to kill them, revealing themselves to be like beasts.

Frustrated in his desire to see the kings devoured by the uncooperative lions and bears, Valerian “furore plenus” [full of madness] (or “swyðe gram” [exceedingly enraged] according to Ælfric) orders gladiators into the arena to kill Abdon and Sennes.<sup>61</sup> These men do what the beasts refused to do, and the kings finally meet their deaths by swordstroke. Valerian then commands that the corpses be dragged before the image of the sun god and left exposed there as a warning to other Christians. In a scene reminiscent of the fate of the two witnesses in Apocalypse 11, the bodies of these men remain the objects of the public gaze for three days before they are taken and given burial.<sup>62</sup> Ælfric translates from the Latin that the bodies then remained concealed until the time of Constantine, when Christ himself revealed the location of the two saints, and then concludes with this moral (not found in the Latin): “Ge habbað nu gehyrod hu ða halgan cyningas / heora cynedom for-sawon for cristes geleafan . / and heora agen lif forleton for hine . / Nimað eow bysne be ðam . þæt ge ne bugon fram criste / for ænigre earfoðnyse . þæt ge þæt ece lif habbon” [Now you have heard how these holy kings renounced their kingdom because of belief in Christ and lost their own lives for him. Take an example through them so that you do not turn aside from Christ for the sake of any affliction, so that you may have eternal life].<sup>63</sup> Ælfric returns here to the theme of proper desire that he laid out in the sermon in *LS* 1 and he brings it up in a statement that seems pointed directly at Æthelred *Unræd*, though perhaps only referring to the high office held by his patron, Æthelweard. Ælfric may have considered retirement with integrity and faith intact more important for the good of Æthelweard’s soul (and that of Æthelmær, as well) than continued service amid the treacherous factionalism of Æthelred’s court. Desire properly directed would lead his patrons and other readers or hearers of the life of Abdon and Sennes to Christ and thus to eternal life, the greatest goods for both body and soul, as much for kings and rulers as for anyone else. This same desire and love of the good that is God enables Abdon and Sennes, and all who would imitate them, to remain steadfast in their faith in expectation of life in the transcendent society of heaven rather than yielding for the sake of bodily comfort in the temporal world.

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There are many differences between the female *passiones* examined above and that of these two kings. In the legend of Abdon and Sennes, no one is converted to Christianity, nor do the kings instruct anyone in the tenets



of the faith. They taunt Decius and insult the pagan gods, but they do not instruct as the female saints do. Yet the focus on the material body in all three lives unites them. Agatha demonstrates a femininity characterized by knowledge and memory of Scripture, a properly ordered care for her incorporeal soul and her corporeal body that illustrates deeper spiritual truths, and agency even in the moment of her own death. Lucia's rather plainer life incorporates Agatha's sanctity in establishing Lucia's own position. As Agatha's torments open a deeper spiritual discussion of the breast and its role in nourishment, Lucia's trials and evisceration open a discussion of the womb and the indwelling of the saint with the Holy Spirit of God. The material bodies of Abdon and Sennes, by contrast, depict no such spiritual truths in Ælfric's version of their story, for the concepts they illustrate in the Latin version have been consistently excised from Ælfric's translations. Nor are these two saints healed or relieved of the pain of their torments as Agatha was, spared the humiliation of their nudity as Agnes was, or shielded from the public exposure of their naked, dead bodies—a situation not paralleled in any of the female lives Ælfric translates. In contrast to his treatment of the female bodies in the legends of Agatha and Lucia, Ælfric treats the material bodies of the two kings with remarkable disinterest, cutting off the spiritual significance found in the Latin text. The animals in the arena recognize the sanctity of the kings, but no one else seems to do so, especially not in Ælfric's rendition. The kings remain faithful to Christ even through torture and death, and such is their only demonstrated claim to sanctity.<sup>64</sup> The life of Abdon and Sennes illustrates that the one essential saintly characteristic is a steadfast, virtuous soul that remains faithful only to Christ, even at the cost of kingdoms and bodies. In this way, the life of the two kings demonstrates Gregory the Great's thought 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>65</sup> While the Latin life symbolizes the change of identity indicated by the removal of worldly dress and being clothed in Christ, with the implication of changing from masculine to metagender in the covering over of the kings' sexually differentiated bodies with the spiritual Body of Christ, Ælfric omits these features of the story from his translation. Ælfric's kings are men and remain men who, unlike the female saints, define themselves solely through the virtues of belief and faithfulness to the end.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Shari Horner, *The Discourse of Enclosure*, 136.

<sup>2</sup> For the iconographical nature of saints' lives, see Thomas Hill, "Imago Dei," 41–43.

<sup>3</sup> "Natale Sancte Agathe Uirginis," in *LS*, 8.2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.5–6.

<sup>5</sup> Frantzen, "When Women Aren't Enough," 160; Horner, *The Discourse of Enclosure*, 145–50. For other readings of St. Agatha and/or St. Lucia, see Gulley, *Displacement*, 51–66; Jorgensen, "Historicizing Emotion," 529–38; Rossi-Reder, "Embodying Christ," 183–202; Gulley, "Suffering and Salvation," 105–20.

<sup>6</sup> Horner, *The Discourse of Enclosure*, 149.

<sup>7</sup> Mombricitus, "Passio Agathae," 1.37; *LS*, 8.9–12.

<sup>8</sup> Ambrose, *De virginibus*, in *Sancti Ambrosii Episcopi Mediolanensis Opera*, ed. Gori, 2.4.24; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, in *S. Aurelii Augustini de civitate Dei libri I–X*, ed. Dombart and Kalb, 1.18; Aldhelm, "De virginitate," in *Prosa de uirginitate cum glosa Latina atque Anglosaxonica*, ed. Gwara, §27 and §53.

<sup>9</sup> *LS*, 8.12–13.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 20–21.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 29–31; Cf. Mombricitus, "Passio Agathae," 1.38.

<sup>12</sup> Frantzen, "When Women Aren't Enough," 164.

<sup>13</sup> Mombricitus, "Passio Agathae," 1.38; *LS*, 8.124–27.

<sup>14</sup> Horner, *The Discourse of Enclosure*, 149; Ambrose, *De virginibus*, in *Sancti Ambrosii Episcopi Mediolanensis Opera*, ed. Gori, 1.5.22.

<sup>15</sup> Ambrose, *De benedictionibus patriarcharum*, 11.51 (*PL* 14.722D–723A).

<sup>16</sup> Augustine, *In epistolam Joannis ad Parthos tractatus decem*, 3.1 (*PL* 35.1998A), and Bede, "Epistolas VII Catholicas," in *Bedae Venerabilis Opera*, ed. Hurst, 232.

<sup>17</sup> See Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 396–97.

<sup>18</sup> Mombricitus, "Passio Agathae," 1.39; *LS*, 8.135–37.

<sup>19</sup> Mombricitus, "Passio Agathae," 1.39; *LS*, 8.138–40.

<sup>20</sup> Mombricitus, "Passio Agathae," 1.39; *LS*, 8.144–46.

<sup>21</sup> Mombricitus, "Passio Agathae," 1.39; *LS*, 8.157–61.

<sup>22</sup> Mombricitus, "Passio Agathae," 1.39; *LS*, 8.191–94.

<sup>23</sup> Mombricitus, "Passio Agathae," 1.40; *LS*, 8.199–202.

<sup>24</sup> Mombricitus, "Passio Agathae," 1.40; *LS*, 8.207–14.

<sup>25</sup> The association of the horse with the passions is based upon Psalm 31:9, "nolite fieri sicut equus et mulus quibus non est intelligentia." [Do not become like the horse and the mule, which have no understanding.]

<sup>26</sup> *LS*, 9.210–19; Mombricitus, "Passio Lucia," 2.107.23–24.

<sup>27</sup> Mombricitus, the Hereford manuscript, and Ælfric's translation differ at this point from the text of the CCL found in CCCC 9, p. 437, in which Lucia is identified as a virgin as soon as she enters the legend. All quotations from the

Latin *Passio* of St. Lucia come from the version found in Mombritius “*Passio Sanctae Luciae virginis et martyris*,” 2.107.19–109.31.

<sup>28</sup> *LS*, 9.26–27; Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.107.31–32, cf. Hereford, Cathedral P.vi.7, 190v: “Soror mea Lucia uirgo deo deuota . quid a me petis : quod tu poteris præstare continuo?” [Lucia, my sister, virgin devoted to God, why do you ask from me what you will be able to fulfill at once?]

<sup>29</sup> *LS*, 9.29; Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.107.34–35.

<sup>30</sup> *LS*, 9.32–33a; Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.107.36–37.

<sup>31</sup> Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.107.38–40; *LS*, 9.36–38.

<sup>32</sup> Jerome, *Adversus Iovinianum*, §27.

<sup>33</sup> *LS*, 9.39–40; Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.107.40–42.

<sup>34</sup> *LS*, 9.41–45; Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.107.42–46.

<sup>35</sup> Whatley, “*Acta Sanctorum*,” 290.

<sup>36</sup> *LS*, 9.68; Ælfric removes Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.108.14–29.

<sup>37</sup> *LS*, 9.72–85; Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.108.30–38.

<sup>38</sup> Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.108.30; *LS*, 9.72.

<sup>39</sup> Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.108.34; *LS*, 9.76.

<sup>40</sup> I Corinthians 6:19.

<sup>41</sup> Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.108.38. “ne bið ænig gewemmed . / lichama to plihte . gif hit ne licað þam mode.” “The body is not at all dangerously defiled if it does not please the mind.” *LS*, 9.84b–85.

<sup>42</sup> Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.108.40; *LS*, 9.89a. For the earlier fathers on the primacy of the will in virginity, see Ambrose, *De virginibus*, 2.24; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 1.18; and Aldhelm, “*Prosa de virginitate*,” §58.

<sup>43</sup> *LS*, 9.124, 125.

<sup>44</sup> Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.109.15–16, cf. Hereford, Cathedral P.vi.7, 191v; *LS*, 9.126–27. I have translated *uiscera* here as “womb” because the context of the legend points to the womb as a specific focus of attack instead of the more general entrails. The phrase *wand se innoð ut*, which I have translated here as “the womb twisted out,” is open to several possible interpretations (“viscera, intestines, womb, inward parts”). Nor would the translation be any more certain if Ælfric had used *wamb* “stomach, belly, womb” instead of *innoð* because the same ambiguity about whether he meant the general inner parts of the abdomen or a specific part, such as the womb, stomach, or intestines, would remain. As a result, I have rendered the phrase in keeping with the emphasis upon the womb in the context of the story.

<sup>45</sup> Mombritius, “*Passio Luciae*,” 2.109.22–25; *LS*, 9.139–45.

<sup>46</sup> Whatley, “*Acta Sanctorum*,” 21; “*Natalis Sanctorum Abdon et Sennes*,” ed. Skeat, *LS* 24. The closest Latin source may be found in the CCL manuscript BL, Cotton Nero E.i (Gneuss and Lapidge #344). See the complete notice in Whatley, “*Acta Sanctorum*,” 20–21.

<sup>47</sup> *LS*, 24.2.

<sup>48</sup> *AASS*, “*Abdon et Sennen*,” §1.

<sup>49</sup> *LS*, 24.4.

<sup>50</sup> Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.16.

<sup>51</sup> *LS*, 24.10.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, *LS* 24.1 and 20. These descriptors do not appear in the Latin.

<sup>53</sup> *AASS*, "Abdon et Sennen," §4; *LS*, 24.22–27.

<sup>54</sup> *AASS*, "Abdon et Sennen," §5; *LS*, 24.30.

<sup>55</sup> Napier, *Old English Glosses*.

<sup>56</sup> *AASS*, "Abdon et Sennen," §5; *LS*, 24.37–39.

<sup>57</sup> *AASS*, "Abdon et Sennen," §5.

<sup>58</sup> *LS*, 24.40–41.

<sup>59</sup> *AASS*, "Abdon et Sennen," §6; *LS*, 24.48b–50.

<sup>60</sup> *AASS*, "Abdon et Sennen," §6; *LS*, 24.51–57.

<sup>61</sup> *AASS*, "Abdon et Sennen," §7; *LS*, 24.60.

<sup>62</sup> In Apocalypse 11:3–13, especially vv. 7–9, two witnesses (who remain unnamed) testify publicly against the beast from the pit. Finally, they are slain and their bodies left exposed for all the people to see. After three and a half days, however, the witnesses in scripture are raised to life again, whereas Abdon's and Sennes's corpses are secretly removed for burial.

<sup>63</sup> *LS*, 24.76–80.

<sup>64</sup> See Peter Brown's comments about the "non-gendered" nature of male saints in "Rise and Function," 376.

<sup>65</sup> Gregory, *Dialogues*, 1.12.4; Gregory, *Dialogues*, trans. Zimmerman, 1.12.