

Birgittine Circles

PEOPLE AND SAINTS IN THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

Elin Andersson, Ingela Hedström & Mia Åkestam (eds)



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ABSTRACT

This book contains the proceedings from the Fourth International Birgitta Conference, held in August 2021 in Stockholm and Vadstena. The theme for the conference, Birgittine Circles, focuses on Birgittine networks and the importance of individuals, places, and objects associated with the Birgittine Order. The concept of circles also applies to ideas, physical objects, travels, and exchange between different orders. The ten contributions collected in the present volume range from Birgitta's influence on late medieval culture in England, the spread of the Birgittine Order around the Baltic Sea and its importance in places as widely separated as Norrland and Spain, predecessors and successors such as Margery Kempe, and Birgittine spirituality linked to objects and texts.

KEYWORDS

Saint Birgitta, Vadstena Abbey, the Birgittine Order, medieval history, medieval literature, medieval manuscripts, medieval art, monasticism, theology, nuns, liturgy, church art, textual networks

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LAURA SAETVEIT MILES

Birgittine Borrowings in the Middle English Devotional Compilation *Meditaciones domini nostri**

Could Birgitta of Sweden have been the most influential female author of late medieval England? She was well known through her *Revelationes* and Syon Abbey, the sole English house of her Order, but what was the full extent of her impact on English culture? How was her authority as an author and visionary shaped by English literary agents? Scholars have approached these huge, complex questions from different directions for some time now, but much work still remains to be done.¹ In this chapter I will explore one crucial, yet neglected, piece of evidence for evaluating Birgitta's influence in England: a Middle English devotional compilation with extensive borrowings from Birgittine texts, an emphasis on Birgitta's visionary authority, and a remarkable focus on the power of the Virgin Mary.

Known as the *Meditaciones domini nostri*, or *The Lyf of Oure Lord and the Virgyn Mary*, this early 15th-century prose gospel meditation relays the story of the life of Christ and his mother Mary for the purpose of devotional reading.² As a compilation,

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1 For example, Ellis 1982; Johnston 1985; Hutchison 1999; Pezzini 2008.

2 The Latin title is taken from the incipit to the short Latin prologue whereas the English title is taken from the first line. The most extensive discussion of the text remains the introduction to the edition, an unpublished 1992 PhD dissertation by E. Blom-Smith, followed by Miles 2017, 2020a, pp. 195–199. Elizabeth Salter includes this life of Christ in her work on *Love's Mirror* and other translations of the *Meditationes vitae Christi* (*MVC*), where she grouped it with the *Speculum Devotorum*, a similar text; see Salter 1974, chapter IV, esp. 106, n. 188. Roger Ellis and Barry Windeatt both mention it in passing as part of their discussions of Birgitta's revelations in medieval England; see Ellis 1982, p. 180; Windeatt 2011, p. 199. For more on English pseudo-Bonaventuran lives of Christ, see Sargent 1984; Johnson 2013; Johnson & Westphall 2013.

it weaves together scripture with other sources to create a vivid, detailed narrative in the tradition of the widespread pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes vitae Christi*. Compilations, both Latin and vernacular, map what texts were circulating at different times in different textual circles by showing how one particular compiler chose to integrate the sources into a new whole.³ In England a rich tradition of vernacular devotional compilations emerged in the Late Middle Ages. These texts brought to a wide range of readers an equally wide range of sources woven together to promote spiritual life and meditational practice through reading.

Birgitta's *Revelationes* and other Birgittine texts proved to be fairly popular in the wave of Middle English compilations produced in largely monastic circles throughout the late 14th to the early 16th centuries. Visions containing prophecies, judgements, guidance on spiritual life, or details about Christ and the holy family were of most interest to compilers. Compilations survive as an important genre in the puzzle of precisely what Birgitta meant to late medieval English readers—especially since many more copies of these works survive than of English-origin *Revelationes*. The major compilations with Birgittine borrowings—*Chastising of God's Children*, *Pore Caitiff*, *Mirror to Devout People* (*Speculum devotorum*), *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*, and *Meditationes domini nostri* (my focus here), among others—total at least 140 manuscripts and early printed copies. In sum I would surmise that the compilation genre was, based on surviving copies, by far the largest written source of Birgittine influence in medieval England.⁴

But what kind of influence(s) did those compilations spread? How did these texts shape the figure of Birgitta for English audiences? These of course are the much more interesting questions behind the sheer numbers. Indeed, each of these compilations shapes a different version of Birgitta as it borrows from her visions to different ends, sometimes with acknowledgment, sometimes silently; sometimes closely, sometimes deeply reworked; sometimes at length and sometimes briefly. *Meditationes domini nostri* stands out as the compilation with the largest total amount of material borrowed from Birgittine sources, in this case the *Revelationes* and *Sermo Angelicus*. It explicitly acknowledges Birgitta as the visionary source the most times of any devotional compilation—and further contains a host of citations that are included silently. Finally, it offers the most Marian-centric emphasis of any of the comparable compilations, as I will discuss below.

This essay explores in depth, for the first time, the nature of these Birgittine borrowings in *Meditationes domini nostri* and what role they play in the text overall. Not

3 For more on late medieval devotional compilations in England, see Cré *et al.* 2020.

4 Ellis 1982 remains the most useful general overview of these compilatory uses.

much is known about this text so I hope my conclusions can be the basis for further research into other aspects that I do not have the scope to pursue at length here. What I detail below is how various compilatory strategies produce a text that supports and promotes the role of women in mediating access to the divine and in leading religious communities. Birgitta's visions allow an emphasis on Birgitta and the Virgin Mary as holy women—women who channelled Christ, whether through their body/womb, or through visions. This emphasis is more pronounced here than in *Mirror to Devout People*, a significant compilation that explicitly relies on the visionary writings of “approved women”, Birgitta, Mechtild of Hackeborn, and Catherine of Siena.⁵ Unusually, the *Meditaciones* promotes Mary and Birgitta as independent, assertive, authoritative figures, with no moderation or apologies. Both the manuscript page and the text demonstrate this on every level. Birgitta's authority is not explicitly discussed, as in the *Mirror to Devout People*, but rather taken as a given, as she is cited as an authoritative source in the same way as male sources. The borrowings strategically elevate Mary's position in the biblical narrative in a way that validates women's power among and over men. The *Meditaciones*, particularly by means of its Birgittine borrowings, centres an otherwise marginal version of Mary's life that grants her an authoritative voice both over her own representation as well as over the history of the early church community. This compilation offers a vital insight into how Birgitta, and holy women in general, were perceived in late medieval England.

MANUSCRIPT WITNESSES AND TEXTUAL COMPOSITION

One important factor in understanding how this unusual representation of powerful women might have been received by readers lies in its restricted circulation: *Meditaciones* survives in only two manuscripts, far fewer than most of the other compilations with Birgittine borrowings. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 578 is a small volume containing 50 paper leaves with only this text, written in a clear Anglicana. The Bodley manuscript likely dates from the first half of the 15th century; otherwise, we know nothing of its medieval provenance, and few traces of medieval readership remain.⁶ Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.42 also dates from the early to mid-15th century, and also written in Anglicana by one scribe. Its 110 parchment pages contain an assortment of eleven different Middle English and Latin religious works including some shorter catechetical pieces, Richard Rolle's *The Commandment*, the

5 Gillespie 2006; Patterson 2016a; 2016b.

6 For a more extensive description see Blom-Smith 1992, pp. liv–lxiii. See also the catalogue entry in Hunt & Madan 1895–1953, vol. 5, pp. 326–327.

Meditaciones, Contemplations on the Dread and Love of God, and the purgatory visions of the Monk of Eynsham and Tnugdál. This “core” of longer texts, as I have argued elsewhere, “consistently draws attention to the interconnectedness of body, contemplation, and vision, and the necessity of their juxtaposition for moral living and salvation”.⁷ The Trinity manuscript, in contrast to Bodley, shows signs of several medieval engagements, with at least two or three hands distinguishable in marginal annotations. Its provenance is also unknown but the contents and the 1468 ownership inscription by a “frater” William Caston suggests a monastic use.⁸

Thus, the manuscript witnesses do not leave us very much concrete information regarding the identity of the compiler, his intended audience, or the actual audience of these particular surviving copies. Unlike the compiler of the *Mirror to Devout People*, who explicitly identifies his audience as the nuns at Syon Abbey, the only Birgittine house in medieval England, and directly addresses his “sister” as the reader throughout the text, the *Meditaciones* leaves no explicit hint of its hoped-for readership in the text itself. However, the *Meditaciones* compiler leaves some clues: that he felt his readers needed even short bits of Latin translated; that Birgitta was an appropriate source to cite frequently and unreservedly; and that his readers would have a special interest in Mary. These clues suggest an intended readership not unlike that of the *Mirror to Devout People*: devout female readers, perhaps enclosed like the Syon sisters.

While *Meditaciones* is fairly typical for the genre of gospel meditation or life of Christ in its overall structure—Mary’s genealogy; Christ’s birth, life, death, and resurrection; the Ascension and Pentecost—it adds both an unusually detailed account of the Annunciation and an unusually detailed account of Mary’s life after her son’s final departure, with concluding chapters on her spiritual powers in general. The compiler or relevant scribes connected *Meditaciones* to the pseudo-Bonaventuran tradition: a Latin prologue found only in Bodley derives closely from the last section of the prologue to the *Meditationes vitae Christi*, and the same scribe also concludes the main text by noting that “here end the meditations about the life and passion and resurrection and ascension into heaven of Jesus Christ according to Bonaventure out of his third, and shortest, though best edition” (171/6–11).⁹ This somewhat academic comment identifies an authorizing source in the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes*

7 Miles 2020b, p. 364.

8 For a detailed discussion of this manuscript, see Miles 2020b. The James Catalogue is available online at <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/Manuscript/B.15.42>, with a link to a scan of the entire manuscript.

9 All citations from *Meditaciones* are from Blom-Smith 1992, by page and line numbers. All translations from Middle English are my own. Translation here from the textual note on p. 245. For the prologue, Blom-Smith 1992, Appendix pp. 308–310.

vitae Christi, one of the most widely read lives of Christ in medieval Europe, and well known in England by this time due to Nicholas Love's English translation, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, from around 1410. However, less than half of the *Meditaciones* text is actually from the *Meditationes vitae Christi*; rather, many other sources are woven into the *Meditaciones* by the compiler. Typical for vernacular lives of Christ, the *Meditaciones* incorporates Bible verses translated directly from the Vulgate and accompanied by careful explication, some apocryphal gospels, various patristic sources such as Jerome, excerpts from Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons, and small parts of Nicholas of Lyra's *Postilla*. In addition, the compiler drew from the *Legenda Aurea*, *The Pricking of Love*, Mandeville's *Travels*, once from Elizabeth of Hungary's *Revelations*, and a long borrowing from *Of Three Workings in Man's Soul*, a meditation-al treatise on the Annunciation very likely by Richard Rolle, which I have discussed elsewhere.¹⁰ However, the most prominent of all the sources cited in *Meditaciones* are Birgitta of Sweden's *Revelaciones* and *Sermo Angelicus*.

At least 25 distinct interpolations can be identified from Birgitta's *Revelaciones* or the *Sermo Angelicus*, for a total of approximately 12% of the text (see Appendix for a chart of borrowings).¹¹ In almost half of these borrowings (12 out of 25), Birgitta as visionary is identified as the source within the text itself, preserved identically by both

10 On the Rollean borrowing, see Miles 2017; 2020a, pp. 195–199. Blom-Smith 1992 discusses all the sources at length, pp. vi–xxiv (though she does not identify *Of Three Workings*). This list could also possibly include another female visionary source for a curious, unattributed passage immediately before the *Of Three Workings* interpolation: “the angell Gabriell apperid to hure to salute hyre [Mary at the Annunciation], and as scho schewid by the reuelacion vnto a deuote seruante of hure: in the tyme that the angell come to grete hure [Mary] schoo was clothid in a kuryll of blacke gyrd aboute with a small gerdull and barefote and thereto nothyng on her hede, but oonly a bende that kepte hure here vp from hure yen and fro hur visage” [“the angel Gabriel appeared to her to salute her, and as she showed by the revelation to a devout servant of her: at the time that the angel came to greet her she was clothed in a kirtle of black girded about with a small girdle and barefoot and nothing on her head, but only a band that kept her hair up from her eyes and from her face”] (13/6–13). Blom-Smith is not able to make a positive identification in her edition, and I have not yet been able to find its source either.

11 I have followed Blom-Smith's identifications of Birgittine borrowings as in her explanatory notes, with some corrections; possibly other borrowings remain to be noticed (Blom-Smith 1992). In Blom-Smith's edition, the text covers about 4,262 lines (170 pages x 25 lines per page), of which approximately 515 lines are Birgittine borrowings so far identified, that is, approximately 12%. Distinguishing what constitutes “distinct” is somewhat tricky since borrowings are sometimes only separated by a sentence or two of other material. I have counted any uninterrupted, cohesive passage as a distinct borrowing. Identifying the closest surviving Latin or vernacular source copies or compilations of the Birgittine texts remains outside the scope of this chapter.

manuscripts—that is to say, by the compiler himself almost certainly and not a later copyist. For instance, a typical borrowing from the *Revelationes* opens thus: “In the boke of revelacions of Seynt Brigitte we fynde that oure lady seide to hure these wordis that folowith ...” [“In the book of Revelations of Saint Birgitta we find that Our Lady said to her these words that follow ...”] (63/2) and for a borrowing from the *Sermo* (which is never referred to by name but always as part of the *Revelationes*), “As we rede that an angell seide to Seynt Brigitte, as we fynde in her reuelacions these wordes that folowen ...” [“As we read that an angel said to Saint Birgitta, as we find in her Revelations these words that follow ...”] (155/11). Slightly more than half of the time (16 out of 25) the borrowings are unacknowledged and interpolated without any recognition of their source. It is difficult to discern a logic to the integrated citation or lack thereof.

Not only the text itself, but also both manuscripts emphasize Birgitta’s authority as a source. In Trinity, the main scribe calls out four of the Birgittine borrowings with rubricated marginal notations of “Birgitta” (fols. 5r, 5v, 25r, 31r), whereas no other sources are written in red more than once. On fol. 5v, there is no in-text identification of Birgitta, so the scribe must either have been copying an exemplar annotation or had independently identified her vision and thought it important enough to rubricate “In revelacione sancte brigitte” (*Fig. 1*). The main scribe identifies another borrowing with “Birgitta” in black ink in the margin on fol. 13v. Two other annotators draw attention to Birgittine passages with marginal notations in Trinity: on fol. 21v, “Birgitta” in black; and fol. 42v, between columns, “in revelacionibus Sancte Birtgytte” in a different hand, also in black (*Fig. 2*).¹² (This unusual spelling “Birtgytte” is not found elsewhere in the work.) In total, seven marginal annotations in the Trinity copy establish Birgitta as its most visible textual authority among all the sources. Additionally, two of the other five rubricated marginal source annotations draw attention to women’s visionary and contemplation power: “nota de reuelacionibus elizabeth” (Elizabeth of Hungary), fol. 6r, marks a passage drawn from Elizabeth’s *Revelations* concerning Mary’s ascent of the temple steps as a young girl; and “Ricardus de sancto Victore” (Richard of St Victor), fol. 8r, marks the borrowing from *Of Three Workings* that describes Mary as an expert contemplative.¹³ Thus, the majority of marginal attributions support the authority of passages concerned with elevating Mary’s authority or the authority of the medieval visionary women who supplied new material on her life.

12 Blom-Smith (1992) identifies these two annotations as the same hand, but several letter forms differ, as well as the spelling of the saint’s name.

13 See further discussion, Miles 2020a, pp. 196–197. Other marginal attributions are “Bartholomeus” (fol. 15v), and partially indecipherable, “Barbar [...]” (98/5) and “Egla[...]” (fol. 26r).

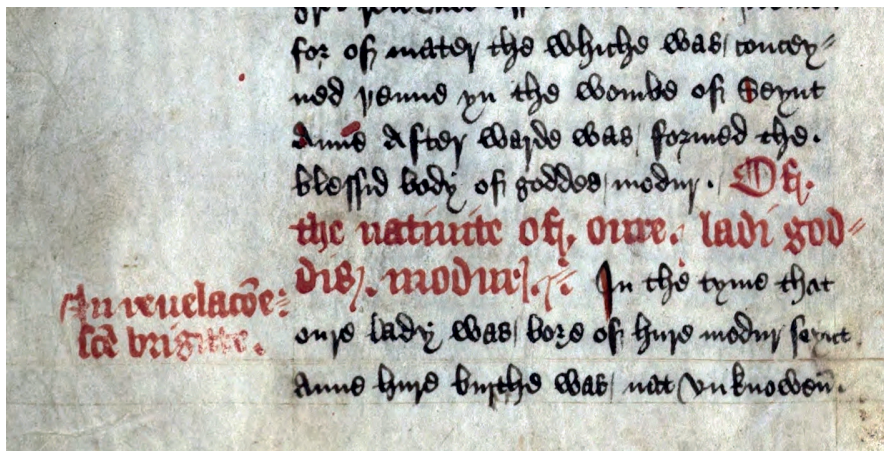


Fig. 1. Marginal annotation, main scribe: "In revelacione sancte brigitte". Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.15.42, fol. 5v, detail. Photograph: Trinity College, Cambridge. Reproduced with the permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

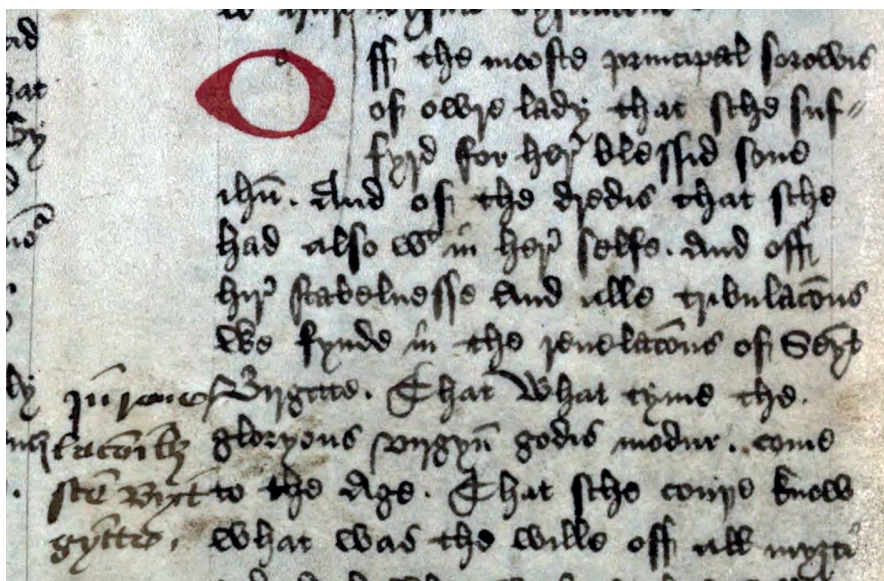


Fig. 2. Marginal annotation, non-scribal: "in revelacionibus sancte Birtgytte". Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.15.42, fol. 42v, detail. Photograph: Trinity College, Cambridge. Reproduced with the permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

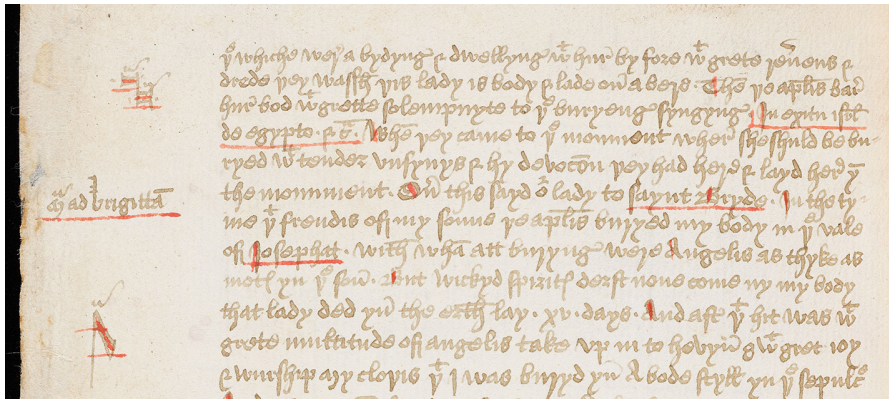


Fig. 3. Marginal annotation, main scribe: “Maria ad Brigittam”; red underline in the main text: “saynt Bryde”. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 578, fol. 46v, detail. Photograph: The Bodleian Libraries.

In Bodley the effect is even more noticeable. The main scribe rubricates and underlines “saynt Bryde” in the text itself at eleven locations (with two mentions left unembellished).¹⁴ He further draws attention to four of those moments with a rubricated marginal annotation of “Bride” and once with “Maria ad Brigittam” (Fig. 3).¹⁵ The marginal annotations match between the manuscripts except for the two additional ones found in Trinity fols. 5r and 5v, where there are none in Bodley, supporting the possibility these are an addition by the Trinity scribe. The other two scribes who note Birgittine passages on fols. 21v and 42v in Trinity, match places in Bodley with rubricated annotations in the margin. These overlaps suggest that the exemplars these two scribes were using might have had a standardized marginal apparatus, which was re-enforced by later scribes. All in all, such attentive attention-drawing to Birgitta’s visions validate her as a textual authority on par with the male sources, or of even higher importance, since she receives more emphasis than any other source.

THE ADAPTATION OF BIRGITTINE SOURCES

Some interesting patterns can be discerned in how the compiler adapts his Birgittine sources, most notably a building up of momentum towards more and more explicit reliance on the visionary’s authority. The first third or so of the borrowings (ap-

14 Fols. 11v, 18v, 19r (twice), 26v, 31v, 43v, 44r, 45v, 46r, 46v (fols. 47r, 47v not rubricated or underlined).

15 Fols. 26v, 31v, 43v, 44r, 46v.

proximately ten distinct borrowings), situated in the first third of the text, have been adapted out of the *Revelationes*' Marian first-person discourse and into a more neutral third-person discourse. Whereas in the source these passages would have been spoken in the voice of Mary with frequent use of "I" as grammatical subject, the compiler rewrites them so that the text integrates seamlessly with his own neutral third-person narrative voice. The first two *Revelationes* borrowings, in quick succession at the very beginning of the text, are identified in the margin of Trinity as being from Birgitta's *Revelationes*, but otherwise Birgitta is not mentioned in the text itself until the sixth borrowing on p. 35.

Thus, borrowings from the *Revelationes* concerning the Virgin Mary's conception, her birth, Joseph's various reactions during her pregnancy, their marital relationship, Mary's purity and its purifying power in others, Christ's nativity, and Simeon's prophecy, all go unremarked in the narrative itself. After a rather long borrowing concerning Christ's childhood retains Mary's first-person voice, two further borrowings from the *Revelationes* convert their source to third-person narrative, on the topics of Christ's flagellation and Mary's interaction with Christ on the cross. Meanwhile, all the *Sermo* borrowings are introduced as "the words" that the "angel said to Saint Birgitta", but because they are originally in a third-person voice (with no "I" from the angel) the juxtaposition of discourses is not as noticeable as when Mary speaks directly through Birgitta, through the compiler, to the reader.

Generally, the last third of the borrowings retain Mary's words to Birgitta in the first person, and are introduced as such, as in the first example: "In the boke of revelations of Seynt Brigitte we fynde that oure lady seide to hure these wordis that folowith of her dere sone Jhesu. 'My swete sone Jhesu ...'" ["In the book of Revelations of Saint Birgitta we find that our Lady said to her these words which follow about her dear son Jesus. 'My sweet son Jesus ...'"] (63/2–6). The topics presented in Mary's direct discourse concern aspects of Christ's childhood, miracles related to Christ's death, Mary's foreknowledge of her own death, Mary's burial, Mary's Assumption, the virtues of Mary's name, and the mercy of Mary. In other words, the last six borrowings, which comprise almost continuously the last six pages of the text (in the Blom-Smith edition) allow Mary to speak directly to the reader nearly uninterrupted for the end of her own story as well as for the concluding post-narrative chapters on the power of Mary's name and her mercy. The narrator effectively cedes the storytelling to the mother of God, citing Birgitta by name at every opportunity.

In its treatment of passages borrowed from the *Revelationes*, the *Mirror to Devout People* also retains Mary's voice as "gendered direct speech so that the (implied female)

reader can appropriate them for use as a personal meditation”, according to Gillespie.¹⁶ Patterson similarly discusses how “extrabiblical information on the life of Christ and his Passion is only available through Mary’s accounts of her son as given to Birgitta in a series of visions”.¹⁷ In the *Meditaciones*, however, passages kept in direct discourse concentrate in later parts of the apocryphal narrative where Christ is absent, particularly after the Ascension, and promote Mary’s agency apart from her son. Mary’s unmediated voice as an *auctor* (in turn channelled by Birgitta’s voice) in these post-Passion scenes shifts the tenor of the story away from the cheerful domesticity of Christ’s childhood and the humanly wrought violence of his death, and on to the hopeful future of a woman-led church—a remarkable shift not found in other devotional compilations.

One brief moment in the *Meditaciones* deserves closer attention in terms of a small but significant adaptation, by the compiler or possibly a later scribe, that amplifies Mary’s role. A borrowing from *Revelaciones* Book I.10:17–18, on Christ’s flagellation, is translated fairly closely from the original, if one looks at the Trinity witness:

And as we rede in the reuelacion of Seynt Brigitte, oure lady his modur was present at that skor-gynge and at the furst stroke scheo fyll downe for sorowe and lay in sownynge til þat sche herd oon of his enemyes sey at the laste ende: ‘What woll 3e do with that man, woll 3e sle hym without dom and make vs the cause of his dethe?’ And with thes wordis **he** stirte to oure Lorde and kutte the bonde that was aboute his hondys in twey pertyes. (Blom-Smith 1992, 96/14–22; Trinity MS fol. 25r; my bolding)

[And as we read in the Revelations of Saint Birgitta, Our Lady his mother was present at that scourging and at the first stroke she fell down in sorrow and lay moaning until she heard one of his enemies say at the very end: ‘What will you do with that man, will you slay him without judgement and make us the cause of his death?’ And with these words he rushed to Our Lord and cut in two parts the bond that was around his hands.]

With respect to that “he” I have bolded in the last Middle English sentence above, a translation of the Latin “Et statim secuit vincula eius” [“And straightaway he cut his bonds”] (*Rev* I.10:18),¹⁸ the Bodley witness makes a notable change:

And with þis wordes **she** stertere to our lord & cutt his bondes in tweyne. (Bodley MS fol. 26v, my bolding)

[And with these words she rushed to Our Lord and cut his bonds in two.]

¹⁶ Gillespie 2006, p. 145.

¹⁷ Patterson 2016b, p. 194.

¹⁸ Translation from Morris & Searby 2006, p. 68.

Which pronoun subject, *he* or *she*, is original to the *Meditaciones*, and which has been edited by a later scribe? Did the compiler make the decision to interpret the Latin verb as taking Mary as its subject instead of the nameless enemy, or was that revised in a later copying by a scribe?

Part of this confusion arises in the conversion of the passage from direct to indirect discourse. When Mary is actually speaking, as in the Latin, there is no doubt that *secuit* takes as a subject the person that just asked the question because otherwise it would be in the first-person conjugation instead of third-person. Since the Bodley and Trinity manuscripts disagree, it is difficult to pinpoint the source of this edit. Blom-Smith chooses Trinity as her base text based on the fact it is more accurate,¹⁹ but this does not eliminate the possibility that the Trinity scribe reverted *she* to *he* against the compiler's original wishes. Regardless of who made this choice and at what point, someone decided that it should be Mary taking the action here and releasing her son—that Mary's agency better aligns with Birgitta's vision. Paradoxically, taking the passage out of Mary's voice opens the possibility to give her more power. As Ellis has commented regarding the shift from *he* to *she* in Bodley, this

fine disregard for plausibility presumably reflects his desire to eliminate all but the protagonists of the action, and, in particular, to enhance the role of the Virgin. The irony of choosing a text because of its authority and then rewriting it to make it more relevant or dramatic does not seem to have struck him at all.²⁰

Such an approach is fairly typical of compilers throughout this late medieval period of English spirituality: Birgittine borrowings were used for their compelling details, sometimes in combination with the prestige of their visionary source, but ultimately the compiler had complete control over how the text would appear and usually had no qualms revising as they saw fit—in the case of the *Meditaciones*, to the benefit of Mary's position in the work.

MARY'S ELEVATED ROLE AFTER CHRIST'S DEATH

The *Meditaciones* presents a version of the Resurrection, Ascension, and following years that focuses on and elevates the Virgin Mary's role over what is presented in the gospel accounts, and even what is presented in the *Meditaciones vitae Christi*—instead taking its motivation from the *Sermo Angelicus*. Although the passages on Christ's

¹⁹ Blom-Smith 1992, pp. lxiv–lxv.

²⁰ Ellis 1982, p. 181.

rising from the grave (beginning on p. 141 of Blom-Smith) do not borrow directly from Birgitta's visions, they follow the *Meditationes vitae Christi* tradition that also aligns with Birgitta's position on who first greeted the risen Christ: the Virgin Mary. As explained in the *Sermo Angelicus*, "although the bible also says that Mary Magdalene and the apostles were the first witnesses of the resurrection [Matthew 28:1–8], there can be no doubt that his worthy mother had certain knowledge of it before they did and that she had seen him alive and risen from the dead before they did" (*Sermo* 19:10).²¹ The *Mirror to Devout People* and Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* likewise depict Christ as appearing first to his mother, who had been at prayer waiting outside the tomb.²²

Where the *Meditationes* departs significantly from the *Meditationes vitae Christi* tradition and its English iterations is in its continuation into the months and years after the Ascension, when it claims the Virgin Mary, not Mary Magdalene, was the *apostola apostolorum*—or in Birgitta's words, the *magistra apostolorum*—leading the nascent Church into its first 13 years after Christ. This consistent emphasis on Mary's active role points towards the compiler's recurring interest in Birgitta's version of Mary. Neither Love nor the author of *Mirror to Devout People* discuss Mary of Nazareth in this period. We learn from the *Meditationes* of Mary's special treatment at Pentecost: "At the comynge of the Holy Gost that gloryous mayde and Crystes modur was amonge Crystis disciplis, where at that tyme scheo recyvid the sevyñ 3iftis and the seuenfolde grace of the Holy Goste more plentlyvously than alle othur and in so moche more fully than oþer" ["At the coming of the Holy Ghost, that glorious maid and Christ's mother was among Christ's disciples, at which time she received the seven gifts and the sevenfold grace of the Holy Ghost more plenteously than all others and much more fully than any other"] (154/2–7). This launches the text's elevation of Mary over the disciples. A few lines later, in the Trinity manuscript, one of the blue capital initials marks this change of topic: "Owre lady aftur the ascencion of hir dere sone Cryst Jhesu abode with the apostelys vnto the tyme that they were disparclyd, and that was sone after Crystis ascencion" ["Our Lady after the Ascension of her dear son Christ Jesus lived with the apostles until the time that they were dispersed, and that was soon after Christ's Ascension"] (154/11–13). Mary emerges as both the rhetori-

21 Translation from Morris & Searby 2015, p. 187.

22 *MVC*, cap. Lxxii, pp. 240–242. Patterson 2016a, ch. 29, p. 143. Love 2005 ch. L, p. 194–195. For more on the late antique tradition that Christ first appeared to his mother the Virgin Mary of Nazareth, and not to Mary Magdalene, see Shoemaker 2003, pp. 17–30; 2005, pp. 451–452; Jansen 1998, pp. 57–96. On this motif in *Mirror to Devout People*, see Patterson 2016a, ch. 29, p. 143; Gillespie 2006, pp. 144–145.

cal and narrative subject of the post-Ascension story, in stark contrast to the Gospels, which do not mention her.

The *Meditaciones* text describes how the apostles bore witness to the resurrection and other miracles, prayed and preached, and baptized many, all fulfilled with Mary's approval. Mary spoke out about her satisfaction with their activity: "in this besynes and vertu of the apostelis oure lady was gladde and thankid God, seyng the holy conuersacyon of the kyngedome of Dauid and seyng the redempcion of the pepull of Israel" ["in all this business and virtue of the apostles Our Lady was glad and thanked God, speaking the holy conversation of the kingdom of David and speaking on the redemption of the people of Israel"] (154/18–21). She is in such a position of authority that she can approve of the apostles' work and participate in the possibly public speaking of "holy conuersacyon". Not only that, but Mary mother of God, the "mooste notabull wytnesse" ["most notable witness"] of the resurrection, "spake and comenyd of the incarnation of Jhesu Cryste moche more kunnyngly and trewly than any oþer" ["spoke and communicated about the Incarnation of Jesus Christ much more wisely and truly than any other"] (155/4–5, 8–9). As the first person to whom Christ appeared, Mary pulls rank not only on Mary Magdalene but also on all the other male apostles. Her prioritized witnessing and special grace translates into an authoritative voice prioritized over any of the men in this community. No source is cited by the compiler for these passages building up to the Birgittine borrowing immediately following, and it is unclear where, if anywhere, he borrowed them from. The broader tradition that Mary was left on earth by Christ to mother and lead the apostles has its roots in Bede and Aelred of Rievaulx, among others, but no other late medieval gospel meditation from England takes up this fascinating narrative with such investment as the *Meditaciones*.²³

All this promotion of Mary's power over the apostles crescendos to a climax with what comes next: a long borrowing from Birgitta's *Sermo Angelicus* detailing Mary's unusually extensive leadership of the apostles. In fact, one could surmise that these preceding passages became necessary for supporting the Birgittine interpolation, which takes such prominence that it seems likely its inclusion shaped the entire section both before and after. The borrowing is lengthy and I will only quote the first third:

For in the begynnyng sche lernyd all thynges more fully by the Holy goste, and clerly saw alle thynges, as we rede that an angell seide to Seynt Brigitte, as we fynde in her reuelacions these wordes that folowen. Aftur the ascension off oure Lorde to his glorious kyngedome he suffryd his modur to abyde in this worlde to the comforyng of thoo that wer good, for to corecke hem that wer yn myslyfe, **ffor by hir holy doctryne and conuersacyon sche presentyd moo sowlis to God than any othur seynt dide aftur the ascencyon of oure Lorde Jhesu, foor alle**

23 Gittens 1996, p. 106.

tho cowde do or labour. Sche was maistress off the apostelis, comforte of martiris, techer of confessours, moste clene and clere mirroure and schewer to virginis, solacere of wedewys, moste helefull monyschere to hem that were in wedlocke, and to all thoo that were in the feythe and the þe trew belyue moste perfyzt strengþere. To the apostolys that come to hir alle thinges that they couþe not parfytly of hir blessid sone, sche schewid hit hem and reasonably declaryd hit to hem. (155/10–156/3, my bolding)²⁴

While the first line echoes Luke 2:19 or 51, “She took these things and pondered them in her heart”, the rest follows very faithfully the second half of *Sermo Angelicus* chapter 19:11–20, which addresses each of the groups listed in the list: apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, widows, those in wedlock.²⁵ Before that, however, the compiler has inserted his own addition (bolded above) extending the power of Mary beyond the source material: she outperforms the apostles in her recruitment to the new sect, through the “conuersacyon” mentioned before but also through doctrine—an advantage rooted in a twist on that Lucan reference that Mary, who by means of the Holy Ghost, learned more fully and saw more clearly *than the other apostles*.²⁶ She does not “labour” or work at her evangelization because it is a spiritual gift resulting partly from her divine grace and partly from her own contemplation.

As for the aretology-like catalogue of Mary’s superlative powers, it places her at the top of a highly gendered institutional hierarchy—apostles, martyrs, confessors—as well as at the top of a social hierarchy spanned by Birgitta herself: virgins, widows, married people. The *Sermo Angelicus*’ original Latin passage, as translated in the final two sentences from the Middle English above:

[12] Erat enim magistra apostolorum, confortatrix martirum, doctrix confessorum, clarissimum speculum virginum, consolatrix viduarum, in coniugio viuencium saluberrima monitrix atque omnium in fide catholica perfectissima roboratrix. [13] Apostolis namque ad se venientibus

24 [“For in the beginning she learned all things more fully by the Holy Ghost, and clearly saw all things, as we read that an angel said to Saint Birgitta, as we find in her Revelations these words that follow. After the Ascension of Our Lord to his glorious kingdom, he allowed his mother to remain in this world in order to comfort good people, and to correct the wayward, for by her holy doctrine and conversation she presented more souls to God than any other saint did after the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus, for all they could do or labour. She was mistress/instructor of the apostles, comforter of martyrs, teacher of confessors, most clean and clear mirror of virgins, consoler of widows, most curative counsellor of the married, and the most perfect strengthener of everyone in the Catholic faith and the true belief. To the apostles that came to her, all the things that they did not fully know about her blessed Son, she showed it to them and explained it to them in a sensible way.”]

25 Sahlin discusses parts of this passage in the *Sermo* (Sahlin 2001, p. 94), as well as Falkeid 2022, pp. 80–81.

26 Leclercq 1984; Gittens 1996, pp. 105–112.

omnia, que de suo Filio perfecte non nouerant, reuelabat et racionabiliter declarabat. (*Sermo* 19:12–13)

Magistra apostolorum takes the primary position as the most important title, and it has quite an interesting history. The phrase *magistra apostolorum* emerged several hundred years before Birgitta's time in the writings of Rupert of Deutz (1085–1130), one of the greatest theologians of the 12th century.²⁷ He composed the first fully Marian commentary on the Song of Songs (an idea that came to him in a dream or vision) and in it refers to Mary as *magistra* nine times, ultimately deeming her “Magistra Magistorum, id est Apostolorum” [“the Teacher of Teachers, that is, the Teacher of the Apostles”].²⁸ Gittens, in his study of the epithet in Rupert's works, characterizes the title as “rarely used” elsewhere, appearing in only a few other sources before and after Birgitta: Richard of St Lawrence (d. 1230), the sermons of Jacob de Voragine (d. 1298), and St Antoninus (d. 1459).²⁹ The feminine form of *magister*, *magistra* encompasses a range of connotations, including expert, teacher, leader, exemplar, and demonstrator, and thus grants Mary a range of types of authority: spiritual, intellectual, and notably public. According to Chenu, in the 12th century *magister* “was a common name among preachers, school teachers, and the head of an apostolic team, applied to those totally dedicated to the Word of God, through the three means, i.e. reading, discussion, and preaching” (*legere, disputare, praedicare*).³⁰ Thus, in the Latin tradition *magister* operates in exclusively male-centred spheres of sacred, secular, and scholastic power, a power that carries over to *magistra*. While a multitude of commentators allowed that Mary might have been “mother” to and helped the apostles, only a few—among them Birgitta—dared to dub her *magistra apostolorum*, the teacher and leader of men. Any mention of Mary at this part of the story was extra-biblical, seeing as none of the Gospels mention her role amongst the disciples.

The *Meditaciones* compiler chose to translate *magistra* as Middle English *maistres*, the feminine form of *maister*, both from Old French. *Maister* encompasses a range of social positions from “a high official, civil or military” (1.a) to “holder of a master's degree” (6.a); so too does *maistres*, within what society allowed of the gender: “a woman who is in charge or control; the mistress of a household; a sovereign lady, ruler, queen; the most powerful woman; a woman who is one's superior in learning” (1.a–3.a).³¹ *Maistres* was not commonly used in reference to the Virgin Mary, but rather more often to aristocratic women in romances or figures such as Nature, Philosophy, or Venus

27 Gittens 1996; Van Engen 1983; Rupert of Deutz 1967; Stöhr 1989, p. 30.

28 Gittens 1996, pp. 59, 61, 89; Rupert of Deutz 1967, p. 24, lines 494–495.

29 Gittens 1996, p. 105, citing Marracci 1694, pp. 266–267.

30 Gittens 1996, p. 125, citing and translating Chenu 1957, p. 261.

31 *Middle English Dictionary*: “maister, n.”, and “maistres, n.”

(judging by the quotations in the Middle English Dictionary). Here the compiler's choice of *maistres* instead of "teacher" for *magistra* leaves room for him to use *techer* for *doctrix* later on in the sentence. "Teacher of confessors" places Mary in a role of startling authority extending beyond the apostles and to all priests involved in the new church. Mary possesses not just the powers of mercy and intercession rooted in the power of her son, but independent, authoritative, informed power.

For Rupert, Mary's position as *magistra apostolorum* and *doctrix confessorum* finds its scriptural basis in the allusion the *Meditaciones* compiler chose to open the passage: Luke 2:19/51, that Mary had "kept all these things in her heart": that is, spent Christ's life contemplating on what she experienced. In his Marian commentary on the canticles, Rupert refers to the earlier contemplative time in Mary's life as *tempus tacendi* and the later active time as *tempus loquendi*, derived from Ecclesiastes 3:7 "a time to be silent and a time to speak".³² In other words, her silence throughout much of the Gospels earned her the right—even the obligation—to preach and prophesy. The *Meditaciones* takes seriously Mary's meditative past: more than 15% of the text discusses the time before, during, and just after the Annunciation scene (longer than any other Middle English life of Christ). This includes a long borrowing from the treatise *Of Three Workings in Man's Soul*, likely by Richard Rolle, which presents an unusual (pre-)Annunciation scene where Mary reads, meditates, contemplates, and enters a rapture as she imagines herself as the Old Testament prophecies foretelling the Incarnation, just before Gabriel's arrival.³³ The inclusion of this particular version of the Annunciation scene, I have previously suggested, invites the reader

to gaze upon Mary as in a mirror, to re-create themselves in her image, both physically and mentally—from the Annunciation through to the very last scenes. By incorporating such a large interpolation from *Of Three Workings*, this intriguing gospel meditation confirms the importance of *imitatio Mariae* at precisely this point in a reader's devotional experience.³⁴

The extended Annunciation scene in the *Meditaciones* prepares the reader not only to accept Mary's elevated status as wise leader after the Ascension, but to be willing to see themselves as capable of following her example. In addition, just before the Annunciation scene, the visions of Elizabeth of Hungary are explicitly cited as the source of the scene where Mary climbs the temple steps, as a devout, studious girl in advance

32 Gittens 1996, p. 81.

33 Miles 2017; 2020a, pp. 175–195 on *Of Three Workings*, pp. 196–199 on its interpolation into *Meditaciones*.

34 Miles 2020a, p. 199.

of the Annunciation, further reinforcing the validity of holy contemplative women as sources of authentic visionary insight.

Though to a lesser extent than the *Meditaciones*, the *Mirror to Devout People* also emphasizes Mary “as a model contemplative and a paradigm of reflection and meditation on the events that unfolded around her”.³⁵ Luke 2:19/51 becomes an explanation for how Mary’s watchful silence preserved gospel events for the apostles to write down: “But oure lady kepte wel all in here herte haply þat sche mygth the bettyr telle hyt to hem that schulde wryte hyt aftyrwarde” [“But fortunately Our Lady kept everything in her heart so that she might better be able to relate it to them that would write it afterwards”].³⁶ In contrast, in the *Meditaciones*, instead of enabling male-mediated text, Mary’s contemplation directly fuels her own “holy conversation” and public preaching. The *Mirror* compiler stops far short of what the *Meditaciones* compiler dares: to present Mary as a model leader and a paradigm of preaching and judgement for the apostles and all involved in the early church community. The *Revelationes* and *Sermo Angelicus* borrowings transform the contemplative Virgin Mary into an active, assertive Virgin Mary, one released from the obligations of mother and wife and ready to assume power in the vacuum of Christ’s death. In many ways this version of Mary echoes Birgitta, widow and mother (though with living children), who leaves the obligations of her household back in Sweden and moves to Rome to lead her own small community of followers and spread the word of her visions. Both women display a charismatic leadership, Birgitta’s modelled on Mary’s, and Mary’s inspired by the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The *Meditaciones* compiler shifts focus off the other central figures in the post-Ascension group in order to put more emphasis on the Virgin Mary. Predictably, Birgitta’s visions downplay Mary Magdalene’s role in order to make room for the Mother of God, Birgitta’s exemplar for channelling the divine. The *Meditaciones* compiler follows suit and places Mary Magdalene second to Mary of Nazareth at every opportunity, starting with Christ appearing to his mother first in contradiction to the gospels, and through to the new church community. Then he reserves only one sentence addressing Mary Magdalene, where she humbly follows the Virgin Mary’s lead: “Pryncipaly Mary Magdleyne was euermore nexte hure to do hure alle maner seruyse as lowly handmayde in alle affections, deuocions and heuently contemplacions” [“Principally Mary Magdalene was always next to her to do for her all manner of service as lowly handmaiden in all affections, devotions, and heavenly contemplations”] (158/9–11). So disappears Mary Magdalene as preacher and *apostola apostolorum* (a title that emerged in the 12th

35 Gillespie 2006, p. 145.

36 *Mirror*, 34/200–201; Patterson 2016a, p. 195.

century and became widespread by the 13th), while the preaching *magistra apostolorum*, Mary of Nazareth, takes centre stage.³⁷

A Mirror to Devout People and other gospel meditations likewise emphasize the almost “protective custody” of John the Evangelist over a more passive Mary once she has lost her male family members, following through on Christ’s command putting his mother in John’s keeping (John 19:26–27). Chapter 33 in *A Mirror* includes long passages detailing her subservient relationship to John. The *Meditaciones*, in contrast, contains a shorter description with an interesting twist on the situation:

Thirtene 3ere and more aftur the assencyon of hure sone Jhesu sche was conuersant amonge the apostelys, and in alle that tyme Gabriell and Seynt Jon the Euangelyste hadde her in keypyng, and pou-alle hit be so that alle the disciplis worschipid her and had her in hize reuerence and drede with alle seruycz and loue that they coupe and my3t do to hir. (157/22–158/3)

[Thirteen years and more after the Ascension of her son Jesus, she was conversant among the apostles, and in all that time Gabriel and Saint John the Evangelist had her in keeping, and throughout it all ensured that all the disciples worshipped her and had her in high reverence and dread with all service and love that they could and might give to her.]

John “keeps” Mary not to control her but to ensure that the rest of the apostles pay her due respect and accept *her* control. The compiler complies with the necessity of respecting the scriptural story, yet manages to subvert its patriarchal hierarchy by having John police the other men instead of his female ward. At this point in the text, the compiler seems eager to move on to the next Birgittine borrowing and hastens to cover other aspects less obviously relevant to the elevation of Mary’s role in the story, and to adapt them to that priority.

Interpolations from Birgitta’s *Revelationes* and *Sermo Angelicus* focused on Mary dominate the remainder of the gospel meditation, with the effect of mutually elevating both women. With Mary’s leadership role established, the next passage blends verses from *Sermo* chapters 16 and 17 in order to depart from the narrative arc to circle back around to themes building up Mary’s life to this moment. The borrowing reflects backwards to discuss the sorrows of the Virgin, on the young Mary learning to dread and love God, to manage her foreknowledge of her son’s pains at the Passion, and to balance the bittersweet juxtaposition of the joys of her conception of Christ with the grief of his death. With this borrowing the *Meditaciones* compiler continues his interest in Mary as a contemplative with panoptic knowledge of past, present, and future—much like the visionary Birgitta herself. The compiler weaves in another parallel to Birgitta: also like the saint, the Virgin goes on pilgrimage simultaneously to revisit the physi-

37 Jansen 2000, p. 63.

cal places of the Passion and to revisit the attendant emotions she has been foreseeing her entire life. Mary experiences “dyuers materis of contemplacions and ouer-all full of teres of loue and compassion” [“diverse matters of contemplation and overall full of tears of love and compassion”] (164/5–6) triggered by these locations.

The passage on Mary’s Assumption likewise highlights Mary’s contemplation at that moment. Borrowings from the *Revelationes* cover the visit from the angel concerning the timing of her death, and then how Mary herself describes the Assumption as a ravishing, closely following *Rev.* VI.62:4: “when I shuld passe oute of þis world my mynd was rauysshid yn byholdyng þe wunderfull cherite of God. Then my solle yn þe contemplacion was replete with so gret ioy hit myzt nott hold hydself but yn þe consideration my solle was departyd fr þe body” [“when I should pass out of this world, my mind was ravished in beholding the wonderful charity of God. Then my soul in this contemplation was replete was so great joy it might not hold itself in but in this consideration my soul was departed from the body”] (166/11–16). In many ways this “ravishing beholding” and contemplation evokes what Mary experienced in the moments leading up to Christ’s conception and just after. The long borrowing from *Of Three Workings in Man’s Soul* details the physical effects of Mary’s high contemplation, looking forward to the actual moment of the Incarnation: “owre lady than brennyng yn the loue of God more than sched hed byfore, whan scheo felyd that sche had conceyued” [“Our Lady then burning in the love of God more than she had before, when she felt that she had conceived”] (30/19–20). So the *Meditaciones* comes full circle to have the Assumption echo the Annunciation: the spiritual ecstasy Mary cultivated through her contemplation, and felt at the spark of life inside her, she feels again when the spark of life goes out of her. These flashes of connection between divine and human find expression in the ravishing of the holiest woman in the biblical narrative.

Finally, the *Meditaciones* concludes with two chapters on broader, more standard issues of Mary’s intercession: the power of Mary’s name and the mercy of Mary. These consist entirely of borrowings from the *Revelationes* I.9, II.23, and I.50. Interestingly, the compilation’s last sentence presents Christ’s voice speaking to Mary, from within Birgitta’s visions, and addressing those readers of the Revelations and thus the *Meditaciones*: “Oure Lord sayde þes wordis to hys moder folowyng: ‘Whoso nempnyth þi name and tristith yn the with purpose to amende hys dedys he shall haue þe kyngdome of hevyn” [“Our Lord said these following words to his mother: ‘Whoever says your name and trusts in you with the aim of amending his deeds, he shall have the kingdom of heaven”] (171/1–4).³⁸ Instead of the power of the name of Jesus, a dominant phe-

38 The Latin (*Rev.* I.50:23) has “nomen tuum” whereas the Morris & Searby translation has not “your name” but “my name” for a reason that is not clear (or by error) (2006, p. 142).

nomenon in this late medieval period, Christ himself endorses the total power of his mother's name.³⁹ This reversal of the expected motif signals yet again that this compilation's top priority is the Virgin's independent, unmediated power. Of course, it would never be denied that she ultimately derives her power from her son, but the compiler elides this fact at every turn and takes any opportunity to highlight the centrality of this woman's role in the scriptural story.

CONCLUSIONS

In sum, the *Meditaciones* compiler has composed a life of Christ that stands apart from the *Meditaciones vitae Christi* tradition and the Middle English gospel meditations from the same period. He has combined a life of Christ with a life of Mary, as he announces in his first line; the life of Christ is fairly standard, while the life of Mary is decidedly not. His choice of sources to interpolate, particularly the critical mass of Birgittine borrowings as well as the long *Of Three Workings* borrowing for the Annunciation, methodically shape Mary as both expert contemplative in private and active leader in public. The frequent explicit citation of Birgitta's visions as a source of these passages granting Mary such agency connects the two women: wise, powerful, with privileged insight into God's plan.

As I mention above, this agenda suggests the compiler thought his readers would allow if not appreciate this combined contemplative/active Virgin as presented by another contemplative/active medieval woman, Birgitta. Mary had just such a position in the aesthetic imaginary of Birgitta's Order of St Saviour, of course, where the much-borrowed *Sermo Angelicus* formed the spiritual core of the nuns' weekly liturgy.⁴⁰ Syon's abbess rooted her leadership prerogative in the power of both Mary and Birgitta, and so in that way the leadership Mary performs after the Ascension in the *Meditaciones* would be immediately relevant. I would say that though it cannot yet be proven, the women readers of Syon Abbey could possibly have been the intended readership of the *Meditaciones*, as they were for the *Mirror to Devout People*, even if the *Meditaciones* compiler declines to state that as explicitly as the Carthusian monk who wrote the *Mirror*. So a monk of Sheen could have been the compiler, but so could a brother of Syon. However, he never consistently invokes a common community shared by himself and the intended readers, as we sense in the *Myroure of Oure Ladye*, a translation and commentary of the *Sermo* written by a brother for his Birgitt-

39 Renevey 2022.

40 Miles 2018.

tine sisters; this absence of an implied shared community could be a stylistic choice, or it could suggest he was not a Birgittine brother at Syon.

But is important to remember that beyond Syon, other monastic and lay communities also showed interest in Birgitta: convents like Barking and Dartford, and aristocratic readers like Cecily Neville, Margaret Beaufort, and others. The question is, would there have been enough momentum or resources in these other circles to precipitate the composition of such a long and ambitious text? I feel this is an important question in general, when considering not just the *Meditaciones*, but also other large Birgitta-centred textual projects, such as the two translations of the full Revelations, about which we know very little in terms of provenance.

Meditaciones domini nostri offers important new evidence for how Birgitta's innovative, if not radical, presentation of the Virgin Mary as a charismatic leader appealed to a late medieval English compiler and other scribes and readers. Much remains to be explored in this compelling text and its two manuscript witnesses.

APPENDIX: BIRGITTINE BORROWINGS
IN *MEDITACIONES DOMINI NOSTRI*

	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Blom-Smith 1992 page/ lines</i>	<i>Birgittine source</i>	<i>In-text citation</i>	<i>Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.42 annotations</i>	<i>Oxford, BL MS Bodley 578 annotations</i>
1	Mary's conception	2/2–22	<i>Rev.</i> I.9:2–4	none	fol. 5r: "Birgitta" rubricated in margin	none
2	Mary's birth	3/6–4/9	<i>Rev.</i> VI.56:2–6	none	fol. 5v: "In revelacione sancte brigitte" rubricated in margin (<i>Fig. 1</i>)	none
3	Joseph's doubts	32/1–13	<i>Rev.</i> VI.59:5–7	none	none	none
4	Joseph's reaction to Mary's pregnancy	32/20–33/10	<i>Rev.</i> VII.25:6–7	none	none	none

5	How Mary and Joseph lived together	33/14–34/20	<i>Rev.</i> VI.59:8–14	none	none	none
6	Power of Mary to abate sin	35/7–12	unknown	“The angell seide to Brigitte”	fol. 13v: “Birgitta” in margin	fol. 11v: “seynt bryde” rubricated in text
7	Christ’s nativity	39/18–42/7	<i>Rev.</i> VII.21:3–19	none	none	none
8	Christ’s nativity	42/23–43/9	<i>Rev.</i> VII.21:20–22	none	none	none
9	Christ’s nativity	43/23–44/9	<i>Rev.</i> I.10:13	none	none	none
10	Simeon’s prophecy	54/16–23	<i>Rev.</i> VI.57:4–5	none	none	none
11	Christ’s childhood	63/2–64/17	<i>Rev.</i> VI.58:3–14	“In the boke of revelacions of Seynt Brigitte we fynde ... Here endith the wordis of oure lady that sche spake to Seynt Brygitte.”	fol. 21r: “Birgitta” in margin	fol. 18v: “Seynt Bryde” rubricated fol. 19r: “Seynt Bryde” rubricated, twice
12	Flagellation	96/14–22	<i>Rev.</i> I.10:17–18	“And as we rede in the reuelacion of Seynt Brigitte”	fol. 25r: “Birgitta” rubricated in margin	fol. 26v: “Seynt Bryde” red underline; “Bride” rubricated in margin
13	Mary nearly loses hope	100/12–14	<i>Rev.</i> I.10:19–20	none	none	none

14	Miracles with Christ's death	116/16–118/13	<i>Rev.</i> VI.11:1–10	"We fynde in the Reuelacions of Seynt Birgitte that on a tyme our lady Godis modur aperid to her and seide ..."	fol. 31r: "Birgitta" rubricated in margin	fol. 31v: "Seynt Bryde" red underline in text; "Bride" rubricated in margin
15	Mary after the Ascension	155/11–157/11	<i>Sermo</i> 19:11–19	"As we rede that an angell seide to Seynt Brigitte, as we fynde in her reuelacions these wordes that folowen ..."	none	fol. 43v: "Seynt Bryde" red underline in text; "Bride" in margin
16	Mary's sorrows and foreknowledge	158/14–160/14	<i>Sermo</i> 16:2:3–4, 8, 9, 11, 19; <i>Sermo</i> 17:6; <i>Sermo</i> 18:11; <i>Sermo</i> 17:7–8	"we fynde in the reuelacions of Seynt Birgitte that what tyme ..."	fol. 42v: "in revelacionibus sancte Birtgytte" in margin (<i>Fig. 2</i>)	fol. 44r: "Seynt Bride" red underline in text; "Bride" rubricated in margin
17	Mary's pilgrimages	163/22–164/7	<i>Rev.</i> VI.61:3	"And also our lady sayd to Saynt Bride, ..."	–	fol. 45v: "saynt Bride" red underline in text
18	Mary's Assumption	165/20–166/6	<i>Rev.</i> VI.62:1–6	"Ouer þis our lady Godis moder sayde to Seynt Bryde þes wurdis þat folowith, as hit is wryte yn þe boke of hur reuelacions ..."	–	fol. 46r: "Seynt Bryde" red underline in text
19	Angelic visit and Mary's death	166/10–167/2	<i>Rev.</i> VI.62:1–6	none	–	none

20	Mary's burial	167/14-21	<i>Rev.</i> VI.62:7-8	"Ouer this sayd our lady to Saynt Bryde: ..."	-	fol. 46v: "Maria ad Brigittam" rubricated in margin (<i>Fig. 3</i>); "saynt Bryde" red underlined in-text
21	Mary's Assumption	168/4-12	<i>Sermo</i> 21:6-7	none	-	none
22	Mary's arrival in heaven	168/12-169/4	<i>Sermo</i> 20:19-21	"Furthermore þe angell sayde: ..."	-	none
23	Virtues of Mary's name	169/7-170/10	<i>Rev.</i> I.9:6-10	"Ovre lady Godis moder sayd to Seynt Bryde"	-	fol. 47r: "seynt Bryde" un-embellished in text
24	Mary's mercy	170/12-171/1	<i>Rev.</i> II.23:2-5	"Owre lady seid to Seynt Bryde: ..."	-	fol. 47v: "seynt Bryde" un-embellished in text
25	Power of saying Mary's name	171/1-4	<i>Rev.</i> I.50:23	"Oure Lord sayde þes wordis to hys moder folowyng: ..."	-	

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