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“On Earth, as it is in Heaven”:

The Holy Family and Beguines in the Southern Low Countries (ca. 1230-ca. 1500)

Harrison Klingman

HIST 150-01: Family in Premodern Europe

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Differing from their monastic contemporaries, beguines were uncloistered religious women who took temporary vows of chastity while splitting their lives between the religious and secular spheres. In the late twelfth century, beguine communities began on a small and informal scale until papal approval in 1233 sanctioned their lifestyle; thereafter, large communities known as beguinages started to materialize.¹ During this religious movement, beguines were faced with various questions over how to structure their family lives. Navigating through these uncertain waters, beguines ultimately found a solution in the Holy Family's example by modeling their lives after the Virgin and Christ through religious imitation. In analyzing various mediums where references appear, I hope to demonstrate how the Holy Family provided the ideal family type for beguines in the southern Low Countries and how this relationship can help illuminate beguine perspectives on the family prior to the Reformation. I elect to confine my time frame before the Reformation as Lutheran reformists interrupted beguine practices by liberating nunneries and beguinages, defending marriage, and destroying icons.² Change over time certainly occurs in the beguine communities until ca. 1500; however, the dedication to the Virgin and Christ stays constant enough within my timeframe to permit generalizations.

When possible, I extend my evidence beyond the scope of those saintly, legendary beguines that often dominate the sources. I hope to shed light on those who lived without leaving written footprints of their experiences and religious beliefs. Beginning with the contexts which drove beguine formation and family conflicts, I then present the mediums through which the Holy Family inspired their audience in order from least to most complex. With luck, I will do justice to a group of women who reveal much about family life in the premodern Low Countries.

The varying cultural conflicts driving the formation of early beguinages created a social vacuum needing an alternative family lifestyle for women in the southern Low Countries; a void

the Holy Family would ultimately fill. Among the many forces catalyzing the beguine movement in the thirteenth century (i.e. urbanization, religious heresy, and a decrease in female infanticide)³ was a heightened focus on female virginity. As the christian moralist James of Vitry noted in his second *Sermon to Virgins* from 1229-1240, women ““in great and grave peril”” in sinful home environments ““converge these days in great numbers to monasteries.””⁴ However, ““Those Virgins... who cannot find monasteries that will accept them”” began to ““live together in one house according to the book of Ecclesiasticus: ‘Birds resort unto their like’,”” a phenomenon describing the first beguine communities.⁵ As historians such as Simons suggest, these overflowing nunneries were caused by the *frauenfrage*: an excess of women immigrating to urban environments causing an unequal balance on the contemporary marriage market.⁶ So prevalent was the excess of women and its effects on nuptiality that in 1328, a committee of clerics evaluating the orthodoxy of a Ghent beguinage noted the following: ““there were many women in their lands who could not conclude a suitable marriage in accordance with their position or that of their kin... who wished to live in chastity,”” but could not as nunneries were full ““or because their parents were too poor.””⁷ Cultural crises thus affected families and social practices to such an extent that beguinages formed and became a necessary alternative to the traditional family life for contemporary females.

Additionally, a rise in the regional market economy fueled female skepticism toward their household’s wealth,⁸ further attracting women to a purer family structure via a union with the Holy Family. Theologians in the late twelfth century had not yet devised a sophisticated way to judge trade and usury, pinning new economic techniques as moral taboos while beguines began to coalesce.⁹ These fears appear in the beguine *vitae* that depict a desire to lead a virtuous, impoverished life amid a culture fraught with unscrupulous business tactics.¹⁰ Such a spirit

appears in the Life of Mary of Oignies by James of Vitry where he claims beguines “despised the riches of the world for the love of the heavenly bridegroom in poverty and humility,” describing a class of women divorcing their wealthy parents to initiate a spiritual marriage to Christ instead.¹¹ Ida of Nivelles obsessively worried over where her father acquired forty pounds for her monastic dowry and Ida of Louvain allegedly saw her merchant father’s wealth “as ill-gotten gain, and her conscience gnawed at her over it until she abstained from it as from a deadly poison’.”¹² As Simons phrases it, these saints “rejected” their family lives due to the vice plaguing their domestic finances.¹³ In their nuclear family’s stead, these soon-to-be beguines found a more idyllic family in following Christ and Mary’s example.

However, not all beguines came from wealthy backgrounds as the *vitae* suggest.¹⁴ As previously noted in the 1328 Memorandum of Ghent beguinages, many women entered beguinages out of economic and social necessity. Such occurrences were so common that around 1260 beguinages began creating “Tables of the Holy Spirit” as funds designed to assist those who could not provide for themselves.¹⁵ Beguinages were also a haven where childless, widowed, and poor women could “live with dignity in an urban setting” preventing scorn from their social contemporaries.¹⁶ Therefore, not all beguines were in an economic position to voluntarily “reject” their parents’ funds to adopt an apostolic life like those in the *vitae*. As texts from these poor beguines are slim to none, it is possible that the financially destitute in beguinages desired marriage and children, but were economically unable and left no record. However, the following explicit and implicit evidence regarding religious imitation seems to suggest that on the whole, the Holy Family served as the ideal family regardless of beguine class or wealth.

The contemporary popularity of religious imitation heavily influenced beguine life and is a practice essential in understanding spiritual relationships with the Holy Family. As Ziegler claims, “There was probably no single category of social experience and religious knowledge more common” in western Europe “than...identification via the imitation of Christ.”¹⁷ Apostolic poverty was also predicated on imitating Christ through heeding his command in the gospels: “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”¹⁸ Beguines were certainly no exception to these overwhelming influences. It is almost exclusively through imitation of religious figures like Christ and Mary that beguines unlocked a deeper level of self understanding and association with the Holy Family as an ideal family type. Therefore, the following paragraphs discussing mediums of influence require an understanding through this lens of religious imitation.

Of the various methods through which the Holy Family appeared in beguinages, the Virgin Mary’s role as a patron saint reveals how beguines often modeled their communal and individual lives after her example and family structure. Typically, patrons were chosen based on the availability of holy relics and local devotions; however, the most notable motive was to honor a figure embodying the spiritual aims of those living in religious communities.¹⁹ Appendix A presents the numerical breakdown of beguinage patron saints where such information is available. The Virgin Mary’s overwhelming popularity as a patroness in over a quarter of these beguine communities reveals a heightened dedication to her life and spirituality. As Simons notes in the context of Mary as a patron saint, beguines were likely attracted to her as a maternal icon as she was “chaste but not without having been married, virginal but also a mother.”²⁰ Such a life of marital chastity was actively encouraged by contemporary thinkers like Caesarius of Heisterbach where “conjugal modesty” and “widowed continence” accompanied by charity

could prove more virtuous than ““virginal continence.””²¹ Many *vitae* demonstrate how beguines adopted this life path by urging their husbands to respect their virginity after marrying, revealing similarities to the Virgin’s life. For example, Mary of Oignies convinced her husband to maintain a chaste relationship in marriage, Odilia of Liège avoided sex for five years after marriage, and Juetta of Huy “hated sex so much that she wished her husband dead.”²² Beyond the didactic hagiographies, marital chastity also appears in the lives of what Ziegler deems “ordinary” beguines.²³ Catherine of Sweden’s brother accused her of being a beguine for maintaining a chaste marriage, revealing how the average beguine had become synonymous with the Virgin-esque ideal of marrying without having intercourse.²⁴

Consequently, the Virgin Mary as a patroness was a touchstone which beguines could measure themselves against and relate to; however, such a relationship was very nuanced. As Ziegler notes, their “model was no queen of heaven or triumphant Virgin enthroned at the right hand of God” as such a desire was unrealistic for mortal flesh as being “virginal but also a mother” is a worldly impossibility.²⁵ Instead, beguines strove for “transference” of religious inspiration rather than “transcendence” over earthly concerns.²⁶ As beguinages became replacement families for large and diverse populations of women, the Virgin Mary’s namesake provided a maternal example which many beguines sought to emulate.

Another medium revealing the Holy Family’s emotional influence on beguine life appears in mystic writings. During a time period where primary sources from females were often overshadowed by their male contemporaries, beguine mystic writings provide a vital resource in observing how women understood themselves and their relationship with God without hagiographers like James of Vitry telling their story.²⁷ However, as has been stated regarding these mystics, they represent a highly literate and elite class of beguines that often differ from

their more modest peers. Nonetheless, their writings provide a valuable window into beguine opinions regarding the Holy Family, religion, and their personal lives. In Hadewijch of Brabant's "List of the Perfect," her top four most virtuous religious figures are as follows: the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, and Mary Magdalen.²⁸ Hadewijch's exaltation of Mary as the most perfect soul makes her the measure of beguines' desired existence and an emblematic family figure worthy of emulation.

Furthermore, Oliver Davies' translated mystic works offer further glimpses into the relationship between the Holy Family and beguines. Taking a courtly-love tack popularized in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, mystics utilized highly "charged and erotic images to convey the relationship between Christ and the soul" which reveals an extremely intimate, pseudo-familial tie between one's faith and holy figures.²⁹ Beginning with Beatrice of Nazareth's excerpt titled "The desire for God," she believes the soul "burns with desire for him that she cannot pay heed to any... creature" after choosing "him alone in love above all."³⁰ Demonstrating the common beguine dedication to God and Christ above all living beings, Beatrice describes a spiritual relationship reminiscent of worldly marriage. A distinguishing feature between contemporary nuns and beguines was their ability to move freely between the domestic and religious spheres. Marriage was a possibility, though a rare one, for beguines if they chose to leave the beguinage communities.³¹ However, in Beatrice's eye, an ideal Catholic chose God as a pseudo-husband over worldly marriage that distracts from religious piety. In "Love without return" she believes "the soul seeks to serve our Lord for nothing in return...just as the lady serves her lord for the sake of her love," revealing an overlap between domestic and religious roles.³² Comparing duties to God to those due a husband, the metaphor seems to imply a level of moral equality between unquestioning domestic subservience and service to God.

However, I understand this comparison to be an example of the courtly love theme mystics included in their writing, but never would have practiced in reality. As Beatrice was never married, she certainly preferred a life in “great proximity to God” in “spiritual radiance” and “ecstatic sweetness”³³ over the married life which she alludes to.

Concerning Hadewijch’s writings, she believes that “Mary, in her goodness / And with deep humility, Received the gift of love / And gave us a lamb for a lion,” establishing her as the “Mother of Love.”³⁴ Given this opinion, love and Christ are synonymous. Therefore, when she says “All that I am / I have given to sublime Love... For she has engulfed my whole being,” Hadewijch implies that her life “is no longer her own possession,”³⁵ but rather an instrument carrying out God’s will and submitting to Christ. Through reflecting on Mary and Christ’s importance in their lives, beguines like Hadewijch reveal not only their fealty to a divine life, but also their daily practices and conception of family life. What is the need of a mortal family when Christ consumes all? Imitating His life and loving as He did supersedes the groveling purpose of husbands and children. Such writings taken as a whole reveal a deep interest and connection with the Holy Family, their divine love, and a desire to imitate their lives through a literary medium.

Connections between beguines and the Holy Family also appear in the intersectionality between beguine rules, the sense of touch, and *pietà* sculptures worshiped in beguinages as Ziegler argues in *Sculpture of Compassion*. Such regulations were contingent upon imitating “the female saint” which required beguines to pay close attention to objects and their physical surroundings.³⁶ For instance, the beguinage in Sint-Truiden prohibited any expensive garments like silk gloves and velvet lined clothes.³⁷ Beguinage authorities in Bruges instructed women to move with dignity and appear “joyful, serious, and modest” when walking about to protect their virtues when in public.³⁸ Beyond the beguinages, beguines were expected to engage their hands

and sense of touch by kneading bread, nursing lepers, and sweeping the floors.³⁹ Such an awareness to physical clothing, comportment, and manual labor honed beguine tactility to unlock “private introspective feelings... to the holy figures of Christ and Mary”⁴⁰ in the *Pietà* and its Holy Family ideal. Cultural historians William James and Rodney Needham believed “feeling as sensation acknowledges that the five senses...are the only vehicle for producing and fostering inner feelings.”⁴¹ From James and Needham’s beliefs, Ziegler’s idea that beguine rules conditioned tactility and strengthened their worship before the *Pietà* appears valid. However, I hope to extend beyond her claims by demonstrating what the *Pietà* can reveal about beguine attitudes towards their family life and how it functioned as an omnipresent familial figure continuously watching over religious women.

A depiction of Mother and Son, contemporary *Pietàs* provided a three dimensional rendering of the Holy Family that served as a physical substitute for the families they left. *Pietàs* offer a nexus between the spiritual and the concrete, whereas other connections with the Holy Family (i.e. the patron saint and writings) are wholly abstract. These sculptures existed in consecrated, *public* sites that were visited by individuals out of inner motivation.⁴² The *Pietà* ca. 1375 depicted in Ziegler’s source was displayed in a house near a Mechelen beguinage as well as outside, demonstrating the public nature of the sculptures and their popular placement in urban environments.⁴³ The fact that this *Pietà* was displayed outside speaks symbolically to beguines as a whole: what made them unique was their liberty to split time between the inside contemplative life and the outside social life. Though free to enter society, there was a clear wall separating these women from their biological families. In searching for a higher family model, ordinary beguines profited greatly from having a physical representation to visually see rather than imagine in the abstract.⁴⁴ Invoking the cults of *imitatio Christi* and *imitatio Beate Virginæ* when

meditating on a *Pietà* or simply passing by, it seems the sculpture acted as a pseudo-family in stone. Always readily available for worship and guidance day and night, the *Pietà* offers a certain paternal and maternal care. Considering the rules and how a Bruges beguinage urged its members to go “to bed and rest with God,”⁴⁵ the unity between the spiritual and the physical was linked to such an extent that the ‘Holy Family as sculpture’ replaced beguines’ original families as a unit to learn from and confide in.

The *Pietà* was not the only icon beguines interacted with to observe and feel the Holy Family ideal in three dimensional form. Other *beguinalia* depicting scenes from Christ and Mary’s life would have excited similar emotions experienced upon seeing a *Pietà*. For instance, the “Virgin and Child” sculpture commissioned in 1345 by the beguines at St. Catherine in Diest stood at the high altar of the church.⁴⁶ Depicting a gleeful Mary with her equally happy newborn playfully touching her nose, the icon exudes familial bliss and presents an idealistic aesthetic. With the white marble symbolizing chastity accompanied by serious, yet joyful facial expressions, the “Virgin and Child” bears a striking resemblance to the beguine comportment rules and how they carried themselves. Additionally, the Louvain beguinage’s “Crib of the Infant Jesus” created in the fifteenth century is a highly decorated cradle with the Nativity and Magi on the front and Christ’s genealogy embroidered on the coverlet.⁴⁷ Used to swing the Infant Christ during prayer meetings,⁴⁸ the icon symbolizes a replacement cradle for what beguines might have lost in secular life. As many beguines were virgins, widowed, or without children when they pledged temporary chastity in beguinages, *beguinalia* exalting Christ’s birth reveals how beguines adopted Christ not only as their God, but also as a substitute child as well. Relating back to the mystic writings, Beatrice claims how “She has chosen [God] alone in love above

all...and ... to possess...him with all the longing of her heart and...strength of her soul,”⁴⁹ demonstrating how beguines adopted Christ rather than bear their own children.

Other *beguinalia* such as “Seated King, Probably Herod”⁵⁰ from the early fourteenth century reveals the effects of Mary’s Seven Sorrows on beguine culture. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, the Seven Sorrows cult began to appear in Europe which focused on the Virgin’s suffering upon hearing Simeon’s prophecy, the search for Jesus in Jerusalem, the Crucifixion, &c.⁵¹ Despite its popularity just before the Reformation, pre-eminent homages to Mary’s sorrows appear in sculptures like the “Seated King” which was housed in a Namur beguinage in the 1300s.⁵² Referencing the Second Sorrow (the Flight to Egypt), Herod’s instructive finger commands the Massacre of the Infants when he “killed all the male children in Bethlehem...who were two years old or under.”⁵³ Such a tragedy is inextricably linked to the concept of family and the Virgin, Christ, and Joseph’s place in it. Listening to the angel and dropping everything to follow God’s will to flee avarice and corruption, another parallel appears between the Holy Family and the beguines who left their lives to serve God in a world filled with similar sins. In worshiping this statue, beguines found another method of understanding their own family life through Mary’s Sorrows and what her motherhood could teach them through a physical sculpture waiting to be worshiped at all times.

Lastly, personalized psalters circulating in early beguinages underscore the deep familial connection beguines experienced with Mary and Christ during prayer and their everyday activities. Popularized in Liège after mendicant orders arrived in the 1220s, all beguine economic classes could access them with relative ease: those wealthy enough could specialize their own in local shops and the poor would share in borrowing networks.⁵⁴ As Oliver states, Christian exegesis holds that “Christ is the subject of the entire book, for He is the Blessed Man of

Psalm,”⁵⁵ implying that the psalters served as shrines to Christ and were no doubt predicated on the cult of *imitatio Christi*. As Psalm 1 says of the virtuous, “their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night,”⁵⁶ revealing beguine’s worship of Christ’s teachings which they realized through sculpture, patron saints, and mystic literature. In fact, the Liège psalters themselves combine many of my aforementioned mediums as they venerated the diocese’s patron saints (the Virgin and Lambert le Bégue), were used by mystics, and contain illustrations of sculptural worship as seen in a 1250 Huy psalter where a holy woman kneels before a Virgin and Child icon.⁵⁷ Therefore, the psalter acts as an accessible, holistic shrine to the Holy Family ideal that permeated contemporary thought.

Beyond printing the psalms and illustrations, the extant manuscripts also present various supplemental dedications to the Holy Family that acted as a therapeutic, “communal salvation” for beguines.⁵⁸ For example, Judith Oliver identified Mosan psalters containing French poems discussing Gospel events and passionate Ave Marias ending in a petition of forgiveness and healing from Christ and Mary.⁵⁹ Similar dedications appear in the Fitzwilliam psalter (1280) which is believed to have belonged to a beguine.⁶⁰ Containing Mass prayers such as the *Confiteor* and the *Panis angelorum* that identifies Christ’s body and blood as a “remedy,” these meditations cleanse the soul and establish Christ as a medium to receive eternal life (“*vitam eternum*”) and health.⁶¹ The Fitzwilliam psalter also contains four French poems focusing on the lives of Mary and Christ in a similar fashion as the Mosan psalters.⁶² The poems portray Mary as a spiritual medicine “from whom came forth the holy theriac by which humankind was reborn,” equating the Holy Family to the measure and means of acquiring health.⁶³ This concept agrees with the beguine belief that Mary is “the Mother of God, the parent of her bridegroom, the bearer of her only beloved” making Christ and the Virgin replacement family members as well as

spiritual healers.⁶⁴ As a whole, the psalter's explicit and implicit nods to the Holy Family depict an overwhelming influence on beguines as an exemplar of health and family life that all could access and understand during meditation.

Through patron saints, mystic writings, rules, sculpture, the psalter, and other practices, beguines expressed their adoration for the Holy Family's model, revealing their attitudes towards family life. Preferring to marry Christ, mimic the Virgin Mary, and preserve their chastity these beguine women took abstract religious ideas and practiced them in the mortal world. Though such practices were common in many Catholic communities, the beguine's lifestyle was inherently different as they could leave at their will and adopt a worldly family if they chose. Not bound by vows, they had more agency in their life paths than nuns and monks did. However, whether beguines stayed faithful to the Holy Family rather than their biological families out of choice or necessity remains debatable. With so few bachelors available for often economically insecure women in the premodern southern Low Countries, it would be easy to argue that necessity attracted holy women more than choice. Nevertheless, I believe beguines left a spiritual and physical paper trail indicating that regardless of choice, the structure of Mary, Christ, and Joseph's relationship influenced their lives more than their original nuclear families.

Appendix A

“Main Patron Saints of Beguinages”

Patron Saint	Number of Beguinages
Virgin Mary	21
Catherine	15
Elizabeth	13
Mary Magdalen	8
Agnes	4
Maragaret	3
Aubert	2
Barbara	2
Nicholas	2
John the Baptist	2
Christine	1
Holy Spirit	1
11,000 Virgins	1
Anne	1
Calixtus	1
Thomas	1
Total	78

Sources: Data from Simons (2010)

Appendix B

Virgin and Child, 1345



Appendix C

Crib of the Infant Jesus, 15th Century



Appendix D

Seated King, Probably Herod, ca. 1300-1350



Notes

1. Walter Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 48.

2. Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 1-49. For a more extensive review of marriage and the liberation of nunneries and beguinages during the Reformation, see chapter “In Defense of Marriage.”

3. Simons, 4-19. See subsequent pages 19-24 for a discussion of women’s roles in heretical movements; Joanna E. Ziegler, *Sculpture of Compassion: the Pietà and the Beguines in the Southern Low Countries, c.1300-C.1600* (Brussels: Institut historique belge de Rome; Turnhout, BE: Brepols Publishers, 1992), 74.

4. Simons, x.

5. Ibid., x.

6. Ibid., xi-9.

7. Ibid., x.

8. Ibid., 96.

9. Ibid., 64.

10. Ibid., 62-63.

11. Simons., 35.

12. Ibid., 63.

13. Ibid., 65.

14. Simons 96.

15. Ibid., 97.

16. Ziegler, 76.

17. Ziegler, 111.

18. Mt. 19:21 (New Revised Standard Version); Simons, 14.

19. Simons, 87.

20. Ibid., 87.
21. Simons, 70.
22. Ibid., 69-70.
23. Ziegler, 148.
24. Simons, 70.
25. Ziegler, 112.
26. Ibid., 112.
27. Simons, 38.
28. Simons, 128.

29. Bowie, Fiona, ed., and Oliver Davies, trans. *Beguine Spirituality: Mystical Writings of Mechthild of Magdeburg, Beatrice of Nazareth, and Hadewijch of Brabant* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1990), 40.

30. Ibid., 94.
31. Ziegler, 75.
32. Bowie., 88.

33. Bowie, 86. Beatrice herself learned under beguines beginning at age seven and later joined a Cistercian nunnery, implying she would have no experience with marriage or serving a husband as her excerpt in “Love without return” may suggest; Ibid., 89.

34. Bowie, 125.
35. Ibid., 119.
36. Ziegler, 99.
37. Ibid., 101.
38. Ziegler., 101.
39. Ibid., 103.
40. Ibid., 105.
41. Ibid., 18-19.
42. Ibid., 156.

43. *Pietà*, ca. 1375, wood, with modern polychromy, in Joanna E. Ziegler, *Sculpture of Compassion: The Pietà and the Beguines in the Southern Low Countries c. 1300 - c.1600* (Brussels: Institut historique belge de Rome; Turnhout, BE: Brepols Publishers, 1992), 400; *Ibid.*, 269. See physical copy of *Sculpture of Compassion* for the image of this *Pietà*.

44. Ziegler, 148.

45. *Ibid.*, 147.

46. Appendix B; *Virgin and Child*, 1345, marble with traces of gilding, 116.2 x 40.6 x 22.5 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/466582>.

47. Appendix C; *Crib of the Infant Jesus*, 15th Century, wood, polychromy, lead, silver-gilt, painted parchment, silk embroidery with seed pearls, gold thread, translucent enamels, 35.4 x 28.9 x 18.4 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/465966>; Simons, ix.

48. “Crib of the Infant Jesus,” Medieval Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 31, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/465966>.

49. Bowie, 40.

50. Appendix D; *Seated King, Probably Herod*, ca. 1300-1350, marble, 47.6 x 15.6 x 9.3 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/466649>.

51. Ziegler, 264-265; Land, Jeanette Martino. “The Seven Sorrows of Mary.” *St. Anthony Messenger*, September 2017. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1938835418/fulltextPDF/5D2F6842D2EB4333PQ/1?accountid=15053>.

52. “Seated King, Probably Herod,” The Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 31, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/466649>.

53. “Seated King, Probably Herod,” The Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 31, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/466649>; Mt. 2:16 (New Revised Standard Version).

54. Judith Oliver, “Devotional Psalters and the Study of Beguine Spirituality,” *Vox Benedictina*, Winter 1992, 3. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/216288749/fulltext/7487766DA0F845DDPQ/1?accountid=15053>; Sara Ritchey, *Acts of Care: Recovering Women in Late Medieval Health* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021), 182.

55. Oliver, 3.

56. Ps. 1:2 (New Revised Standard Version).

57. Oliver, 1-4.

58. Ritchey, 176.

59. Ibid., 180.

60. Ibid., 197.

61. Ibid., 198.

62. Ibid., 202.

63. Ibid., 202.

64. Oliver, 4.

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