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The *Vita* of Douceline de Digne (1214-1274):

Beguine Spirituality and Orthodoxy in Thirteenth Century Marseilles

by

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Abstract

In the 1240s, Douceline de Digne, sister of Franciscan Hugues de Digne, founded two beguinages in Provence that espoused charitable works, collectively known as the House of Roubaud. For herself, the role of founder and spiritual mother of lay religious women included a commitment to the ideals of active charity and absolute poverty. This thesis addresses two inter-related issues. Firstly, from Douceline's *vita*, we can argue that her expressions of evangelical charity and absolute poverty were an orthodox reflection of a composite of Franciscan, beguinal, and mystic spiritual ideals. The second issue challenges Aviad Kleinberg's evaluation of Douceline as a conscious agent in the creation and manipulation of her own sanctity by demonstrating that the development of Douceline's orthodox sanctity was based upon a co-operative commitment by the community to create a lifestyle that embodied active charity.

Acknowledgements

Although the debts incurred in the completion of this project can never be fully repaid, above all I would like to thank my supervisor, G. Francine Michaud, who nurtured my efforts in this current programme as well as in an Honours undergraduate degree. She has guided my studies with acuity and warmth, and encouraged me in independent historical interpretation. I will always remain inexpressibly grateful for all that I have learned from her.

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My deepest gratitude must, of course, go to Robin Gendron and June Morris, who bore the 'crabby' days with equanimity and limitless patience.

Dedication

For June B. Morris, my mother; Emily Smuland, my grandmother; and Davis.

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INTRODUCTION

> Joy to the land of Hyères, for there she commenced her sanctity so perfectly.
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>
> Joy to the noble city of Marseilles, for in you she was blessedly and gloriously consummated.
>
> Joy and salvation and peace to the county of Provence, for through her modesty, it is illuminated.
>
> Joy to all those who take the holy name of beguine, for by her, the way to salvation by holy penance is shown.
>
> Joy, peace of God, and benediction to all true, humble, beloved daughters of the holy mother, for from her, the path of unity, charity, total purity, and perfection was assigned.
>
> *Epilogue to the Life of Douceline de Digne*[1]

At the turn of the second millennium, sparked by the celebration of a jubilee year by the Catholic Church and the portentous prophecies that accompany such an event, Christianity experienced renewed interest in spirituality and focused attention on the role

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[1] *La Vie de Sainte Douceline, fondatrice des Béguines de Marseille* (*Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina*), ed. J.-H. Albanès, (Marseille: Étienne Camoin, 1879). *Li Vida* XVI.27-32: "*Gauch a la terre d'Ieras, car en ella tan sanctamens comenset, e tan perfiechamens. Gauch a la vila d'Aics, car aqui mot benignamens profichet, e mot devotamens. Gauch a la ciutat nobla de Marsella, car en tu benauradamens consomet, e tan gloriosamens. Gauch, e salut, e pas, al comptat de prohensa, car per la sieua honestat es huei alumenada. Gauch a totas cellas ques an pres lo sant nom de beguina, car per ella, via de salut de sancta penedensa lur es mostrada. Gauch, pas de Dieu, e benediccion, a totas las veraias, humils, amadas filhas de la sancta maire, car per ella, via d'umilitat, de caritat, de tota puritat, e de perfeccion, lur es ensennhada.*" All subsequent references to *Li Vida* will be by chapter and paragraph as numbered in the Occitan version of Albanès' edition. Folio notations are not referenced. Unless otherwise noted, translations provided are my own. Hyères is located on the Mediterranean coast approximately 100km east of Marseilles while Aix (Aix-en-Provence) is about 20km north. Digne (Digne-les-Bains), Douceline's hometown, is situated approximately 105km northeast of Marseilles. Definition of the term 'beguine' is the subject of academic debate, *infra* 60-66, but for the purposes of this thesis, 'beguine' will refer to those women who pursued a religious lifestyle, were officially laypersons, belonged to no recognised order, and followed no formal rule.

of spirituality throughout history.[2] Combined with the increased awareness of women's studies that developed in the late twentieth century, this revival was especially apparent in the examination of the role played by women in Christianity, particularly during the Middle Ages, and many erstwhile forgotten medieval women have benefited from this recent attention. Amongst these is Douceline de Digne (1214-1274) whose life as a mystic and a beguine provides evidence for a new perspective on the influence and participation of women in the spirituality of the mid-thirteenth century.[3]

Douceline de Digne has been variously attributed with the founding of at least two communities of secular religious women in the south of France, collectively titled 'the House of Roubaud.'[4] She was the sister of one of the earliest and greatest Franciscan

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[2] Concerns over the "Y2K" transition neared apocalyptic proportions and, while the trend to spiritual introspection was not necessarily global in scope, it was featured in Canadian headlines. In February 2000, a provincial politician in Alberta resigned from politics as a result of what she described as "an out-of-body experience where she felt herself leave her body and look down at herself from above. ... She came away from the ordeal vowing to quit politics for a life of greater spirituality." "Barrett's dentist sanctioned in 1997," Calgary Herald, 7 February 2000, (http://www.calgaryherald.com/). Two months later, University of Toronto researcher Dr. Chandrakant Shah released findings from his public health study indicating that up to 43,000 deaths in Canada annually may be attributed to low levels of spirituality, University of Toronto News Release, (http://www.newsandevents.utoronto.ca/bin/000426b.asp). In the same month, the Ipsos Reid Media Release Centre revealed the results of an Angus Reid/CTV/Globe and Mail survey, indicating that 67% of adult Canadians "say that their religious faith is very important to their day to day life," Ipsos Reid Media Release, (http://www.angusreid.com/media/content/displaypr.cfm?id_to_view =1019). Beginning in the fall term of 2001, the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Calgary will be offering a course on the role of spiritual healing in modern medical practice.

[3] Douceline de Digne was the subject of one episode in a documentary series on medieval female mystics that was produced in 2000, "Episode Four: Douceline de Digne," Mystic Women of the Middle Ages. Produced by Redcanoe Productions Inc., in association with Vision TV, WTN, and McMaster University's Faculty of Humanities, directed by Kate Gillen, produced by David Wesley, written by Kathy Garay, Madeleine Jeay, Anne Savage and David Wesley. Episode first broadcast 25 October 2000.

[4] Her *vita* describes the founding of two houses, one at Hyères and a second at Marseilles. In his edition of Douceline's *vita*, R. Gout asserts that Douceline established other houses, possibly at Aix-en-Provence and at Digne, *La Vie de Sainte Douceline, texte provençal du XIVe siècle*, (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1927), 27. J. Daoust accepts Gout's opinion and endorses the establishment at Aix in "Douceline of the Midi, St.," in New Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume IV, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 1025. This interpretation will be questioned later in this thesis.

voices in Provence, Hugues de Digne (c.1205-c.1255), an ardent and renowned preacher and provincial minister who adhered closely to the fundamental Franciscan value of poverty and spearheaded the movement of the Spirituals.[5] She became herself a mystic of the Franciscan tradition. Indeed Salimbene de Adam (1221-c.1288) mentioned Douceline in his *Cronica* as "the lady Donolina who was frequently carried away in ecstasy."[6] Her spiritual advisors, in addition to her brother, included Jean de Parma (1208-1289), who served as Minister General of the Franciscan Order from 1247 to 1257, and Joscelin (d. 1276), later Bishop of Orange.[7] She was also involved with Charles of Anjou (1226-1285), whom she advised to accede to Pope Clement IV's (r.1265-1268) request to seize the throne of Sicily in 1266; she continued to counsel and admonish him until her death in 1274.[8] Douceline's establishments existed until 1414 when, at the death of the last beguine, Marguerite d'Alon, the Franciscans took possession of the holdings of the House of Roubaud at Marseilles.[9]

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[5] According to a document dated in 1243 at Marseilles, Hugues was a provincial minister of the Franciscans. Albanès, La Vie, xlix, *fn* 2: "*Acta sunt hec in aula nova domus episcopalis Massilie, in presentia ... ministri provincialis ordinis fratrum minorum, fratris Huguonis de Digna, ...*"

[6] Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica: Nuova Edizione Critica*, ed. Giuseppe Scalia, (Bari: Gius, Laterza, & Figli, 1966), Volume II, 805-806. "*... domina Donolina, que frequenter rapiebatur in extasim.*"

[7] Many Franciscan scholars suggest that Jean de Parma's close associations amongst the Spiritual Franciscans and the Joachimites, including Hugues de Digne, contributed to his departure from the leadership of the Order. Joscelin served as provincial minister from 1262 to 1272.

[8] *Li Vida*, XI:4: "*En aquell temps que le reis Karlle era comps de Prohensa, le Papa, per azorde[na]ment de Dieu, lo regesme de Cezilia li prepauzet de penre. ... E per l'amore e la gran reverencia qu'el avia a la Sancta, demandet l'en consell.*" XI.5: "*El sancta femena encorajet lo fort ...*"; XI.7: "*Atressi, li mandava alcunas ves, e li fazia saber per sas letras, que Dieu[s] si tenia per mal pagat d'ell ni con era aparellatz alcunas ves de punhir lo, ...*"

[9] *Pièces justicatives*, XXV, "*Prise de possession de la maison des béguines par les franciscains de Marseille* (24 *janvier* 1414)," Albanès, La Vie, 297-298.

Despite these important associations, she remains a somewhat vague entity known mostly through her *vita*, entitled *Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina*, which is in vernacular Occitan and exists in only one manuscript, held by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris in the *Fonds français* 13503. At some time after the *vita* had been written, an unknown writer appended the following notation to the title page of the manuscript: "*Vie de Madame Doncellme ou Doncellemio, fondatrice de l'ordre des dames de Robeau, en Espagne*," confounding not only her name but even moving her establishment to Spain![10] Modern scholars do little to clarify the situation – Daoust, in the 1967 version of the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* entry, gives her name as "St. Douceline of the Midi" but adds that she was also known as "Donolina, Dulcelina, and Donzeline."[11] She has been described as a nun, a beguine, a tertiary, or, simply, a deeply religious woman. Even her religious affiliations lack consistency, given by various authors as Benedictine, Cistercian, Dominican, and Franciscan.

Despite the pre-existing confusion over the details of Douceline's life, an examination of the issue of her spirituality appears, at first glance, relatively straightforward. Her *vita* informs us that Douceline herself laid claim to the title of 'beguine,' worshipped at the Churches of the Brothers Minor throughout her life, and four years after her death, her body was ultimately translated into the new Church of the

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[10] Wolfkiel and Albanès concur that the notation was made at a much later date and by someone clearly unfamiliar with either Roubaud or Douceline and whose grasp of Latin was tenuous. Albanès, La Vie, xi-xii, xxvi; The Life of the Blessed Saint Douceline (d. 1274): An Edition and Translation with Commentary (*Li Vida de la Benaurada Sancta Doucelina*), ed. Kathryn Betts Wolfkiel, Thesis (Ph.D.) – Northwestern University, 1993, (Ann Arbor, MI: U.M.I., 1993), 5-6.

[11] J. Daoust, "Douceline of the Midi, St.," Volume IV: 1025.

Friars Minor at Marseilles when it was completed in 1278.

Hugues de Digne obviously had a profound influence on the development of Douceline's spiritual life. A celebrated advocate of the apocalyptic prophecies of Joachim of Fiore (c.1132-1202), he travelled widely and undoubtedly had knowledge of, if not direct contact with, the secular piety and mysticism of the northern beguinal movement demonstrated by women such as Marie d'Oignies.

Thus, Douceline could be designated a "Franciscan beguine" whose spirituality reflects the movements of popular piety and devotion prevalent in the mid-thirteenth century, such as mysticism, ascetic poverty, and Spiritual Franciscanism. Despite the eventual condemnation of the latter as heterodox and Douceline's obviously close associations with it, her establishments maintained an aura of orthodoxy, protecting them from ecclesiastical suppression.[12] As such, she is a singular example of southern French orthodox beguinism and is critical to our understanding of lay spirituality in Mediterranean France in the later Middle Ages.

Yet this categorisation provides little evidence for the fullness of Douceline's spiritual outlook. To be sure, it is difficult to understand the quality of her spirituality since we do not have any extant writings from Douceline herself, either detailing her ecstatic visions or her interpretations thereof, such as those left by the beguines

[12] It should be noted at the outset that the use of such terms as 'heterodox,' 'heretical,' and 'heresy' reflect contemporary medieval values rather than any modern appraisal of theology or doctrine.

Mechthild of Magdeburg (c.1208-c.1282/94) and Marguerite Porete (d.1310).[13] The only clues that remain to Douceline's spirituality are in an early fourteenth century biographical *vita* whose author had specific political motivations and worked from an earlier anonymous version. Thus, the interpretation of Douceline's mystical encounters and the objectives of her religious plans are obscured by not one but two successive attempts to translate her spirituality into terms accessible to a community that, while it shared Douceline's life, could never share in her spiritual experiences. We must read between and through the lines of not only the extant text but also through the interpretations of the author of the *vita*, a task that has not been identified in any of the numerous scholarly interpretations and editions of Douceline's *vita*.

As mentioned earlier, the importance of Francis and Franciscan spirituality to the *vita* of Douceline is manifest while Douceline herself demanded the title of 'beguine,' fully aware of the negative connotations already swirling around the term. However, the second *vita* was probably prepared to counter charges of heterodoxy amongst the beguines and to respond to papal demands that beguinal communities associate themselves with regular orders as traditional nunneries. Even though the earlier portions of the second *vita*, which were probably copied directly from the first version, reflect the same religious, political, and economic conditions that resulted in the widespread influence of the Friars Minor, the greatest number of specific mentions of Franciscan associations occur in the later portions of the *vita* which were probably added in the

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[13] Mechthild of Magdeburg, The Flowing Light of the Godhead, trans. Frank Tobin, (New York: Paulist Press, 1998); Marguerite Porete, The Mirror of Simple Souls, trans. Ellen L. Babinsky, (New York: Paulist Press, 1993).

second version. Out of the sixteen chapters in the *vita*, 'Francis' or the 'Franciscans' are specifically referenced only four times in the first five chapters and, of those, two are in descriptions of Hugues rather than Douceline. It is only from the thirteenth chapter (concerning Douceline's death) onwards that Saint Francis and the Franciscans are invoked as the 'protectors' of Roubaud, a role previously ascribed to Christ or Mary. Furthermore, Saint Francis and the Franciscans are mentioned eleven times in the fifteenth chapter, each reference directly concerning Douceline and her ladies.[14]

Even more significantly, Douceline's religious expressions and spiritual ecstasies are far closer to the visionary and mystical spirituality of Saint Francis himself than they are to the later formalised models of Franciscan spirituality of either the Second Order of Poor Ladies, later known as the Poor Clares, or the Franciscan Tertiaries, the Brothers and Sisters of Penance. Despite Douceline's close associations to the Franciscan Order, the Ladies of Roubaud deliberately chose to remain separate from the Order shaped by Saint Clare, who was canonised in 1255 by Alexander IV. Indeed, there are but two references to Saint Clare in Douceline's *vita* and both are used to demonstrate that, even though they followed the Rule of Saint Francis, the beguines of Roubaud "did not wear the habit ... of Saint Clare" and that they were "not nuns."[15]

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[14] While the organisation of Douceline's *vita* is more thoroughly discussed in the following pages, it should be noted here that the structure of the *vita* is largely thematic even though the first sections consider her life before the establishment of her communities and the last sections are concerned with events following Douceline's death.

[15] *Li Vida* XIV. 29: "*E tu con non portas ... l'abiti de sancta Clara ...*"; 30: "*E dis que sotz la man de sant Frances s'es regida, e non porta son abiti, ni de sancta Clara, ni dels autres religios; ni monega non es, ni non sabem qui sia.*" Apparently, the inability to classify the beguines of Roubaud created frustration even in the fourteenth century.

The confusion concerning the categorisation of Douceline and her beguines may have contributed to the state of knowledge on this medieval Provençal saint. While it cannot be said that she has attracted a great deal of scholarship in any language, the corpus produced by French and Italian scholars on this Provençal saint and her milieu is nonetheless significant. Both Claude Carozzi and Alessandro Sisto have contributed works on Douceline's role in early Franciscanism in Provence, including the Joachimite and Spiritual controversies.[16] André Vauchez utilises Douceline in his works on both sainthood and lay religion.[17] Geneviève Brunel-Lobrichon presented a penetrating article on Douceline as a representative of a unique style of southern Christianity and touched upon several critical points of Douceline's spirituality.[18] Most recently, Douceline's *vita* formed the basis for Gérard Veyssière's analysis of conceptions of time and space and D. E. Bornstein's consideration of pornographic elements in hagiography.[19] On the other

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[16] Claude Carozzi, "*Une béguine joachimite: Douceline, soeur d'Hugues de Digne*," Franciscains d'Oc: les Spirituels ca. 1280-1324: Cahiers de Fanjeaux 10, (Toulouse: Privat, 1976), 169-201; "*Douceline et les autres*," La religion populaire en Languedoc du XIIIe siècle à la moitié du XIVe siècle: Cahiers de Fanjeaux 11, (Toulouse: Privat, 1976), 251-267; "*L'estamen de sainte Douceline*," Provence historique 23 (1976), 270-279; Alessandro Sisto, Figure del Primo Francescanesimo in Provenza: Ugo e Douceline di Digne, (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1971). Martin Aurell, Une famille de la noblesse provençale au moyen âge: les Porcelet, (Avignon: Aubanel, 1986) focused his attention on the author of the *vita* and her aristocratic family, the Porcellets.

[17] André Vauchez, The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices, ed. Daniel E. Bornstein, trans. Margery J. Schneider, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993). First published as Les laïcs du Moyen Age: pratiques et expériences religieuses, (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1987); Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages, trans. Jean Birrell, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). First published as La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Age, (Rome: École française de Rome, 1988).

[18] Geneviève Brunel-Lobrichon, "*Existe-t-il un christianisme méridional? l'exemple de Douceline: Le béguinage provençal*," Heresis 11 (1988), 41-51.

[19] Gérard Veyssière, "*Espace et temps dans la Vida de sainte Douceline, fondatrice des béguines de Marseille*," Histoire et Société, Volume III. Le moine, le clerc et le prince, (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1992), 87-99; D. E. Bornstein, "Violenza al corpo di una santa: fra agiografia e pornagrafia: A proposito di Douceline di Digne (Violence to the Body of a Saint: Elements of Hagiography and Pornography in the Life of Douceline-de-Digne)," Quaderni Medievali 39 (June, 1995), 31-46.

hand, Douceline is notably absent from Raoul Manselli's study of the Spirituals and beguines of Provence even though Douceline's *vita* continually emphasises her role as the founder of the beguine movement in Provence. Although the orthodoxy of the communities of Roubaud presents a glaring counterpoint to the stereotype of beguines as heretical, it is quite possible that the over-generalised association of the beguines with heresy, as demonstrated by Manselli's work, served as one factor that created a decline in the popularity of Douceline's *cultus* and, inevitably, a lacuna in scholarship concerning this early Franciscan.[20]

In English scholarship, Douceline has fared far worse as a subject for study in her own right. In 1905, Anne MacDonnell presented a paper on Douceline to the British Branch of the International Society of Franciscan Studies but the narrative emphasis and lack of references limits its usefulness as an academic authority.[21] Michael Goodich's work on sainthood avoids any analysis of Douceline herself, merely adding her name to a list in support of his arguments and, worse still, demonstrates his lack of familiarity with her by categorising her religious affiliation as 'Benedictine,' a conclusion that is impossible to draw from even the briefest reading of her *vita*, which clearly defines her Franciscan associations.[22] In her study on the significance of food to medieval women, Caroline Bynum Walker typically uses episodes from Douceline's life to add a further

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[20] Raoul Manselli, *Spirituels et Béguins du Midi*, trans. Jean Duvernoy, (Toulouse: Editions Privat, 1989). Originally published as *Spirituali e Beghini in Provenza*, (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1959).

[21] Anne MacDonnell, Saint Douceline, (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1905).

[22] Michael Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*: The Ideal of Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century, (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1982), 56, 90, 224.

example for arguments developed from the lives of other saints, avoiding Douceline as the basis for investigation.[23]

It is not until Aviad Kleinberg's analysis of the social context of the creation of sanctity, in which he points to Douceline as a model of 'detached sanctity,' that we see Douceline function as a fundamental element in the development of a major argument.[24] Since the reinterpretation of Aviad Kleinberg's categorisation of Douceline will comprise a significant portion of this thesis, it is appropriate to discuss his theory at the outset. Identifying the discourse between the potential saint, the local community, and the official ecclesiastical structure as the fundamental process that created, or failed to create, a full-fledged saint, Kleinberg deduces that it was the "the day-to-day encounters between living individuals considered saints by their contemporaries and other members of their communities" that formed the basis for the "social consensus" that created sanctity.[25] For a small religious community, it was critical that the whole community endorsed the saint. When this total support did not occur spontaneously and completely, it was necessary that the saint's first followers help her to "perform" before the audience that would eventually either endorse or deny sanctity to the saint and authority to the group.[26]

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[23] Caroline Walker Bynum, Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

[24] Aviad M. Kleinberg, Prophets in Their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). 99-125.

[25] Ibid., 1, 99.

[26] Ibid., 116.

Kleinberg identifies two distinct types of this socially created sainthood: co-operative and detached. In the co-operative, or 'shared,' model, the "saint's control over her collaborators' activity was rather limited" and the attributions of sanctity were imposed by her community through the spiritual activity, including visions, holy dreams, and revelations, of the other members of the community. [27] The saint's own actions, no matter how trivial, were open to re-interpretation by her companions as evidence of special grace and sanctity, often in spite of explicit denials, which were considered "pious lie[s]" and further evidence of the saint's profound humility.[28] Nevertheless, once the saint was accepted as such by her community, she was not required to continually demonstrate proof of her sanctity and she co-operated with her community by acting according to the role of 'saint,' as designed by her community, responding and meeting the requests of her companions.[29]

In the second form of created sanctity, the 'detached' model, the saint is isolated from her community by her behaviour, implying that this distancing is deliberate and conscious, motivated by the saint's own sense of sanctity. This isolation, or detachment, restricts the religious community's ability to protect the saint from the larger external community and, at the same time, limits the effectiveness of the community's endorsement of sanctity. The end result is that the external community continues to demand evidence of sanctity from the saint.

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[27] Ibid., 99, 108

[28] Ibid., 99-111.

[29] Ibid., 123-124.

Kleinberg considers Douceline to be an example of this second, detached style of communally created sanctity. According to Kleinberg, Douceline's refusal to allow other members of her community to practice the same absolute poverty that she pursued and her persistent separation in ecstatic trances served to distance her from the religious community. This distance created a distinction between Douceline and the other members of the house and placed the burden of proving her own sanctity to the external community solely upon Douceline.

Through a considered reading of her *vita*, it is my intention to demonstrate that, while Douceline utilised Franciscan ideals as the foundation for her spiritual lifestyle, she also incorporated other modes of life prevalent in the thirteenth century, most especially beguinism and female mysticism. She tailored these latter models to better coincide with her own interpretations of the *vita apostolica*, devotion to Mary and Christ's Passion, and active charity to create a distinctive style of secular spirituality for the beguines of Roubaud.

During her life, Douceline de Digne associated with many whose ideas conflicted with the more catholic elements of both the Franciscan Order and the Church itself, including Jean de Parma and her own brother, Hugues de Digne. Both men died before the height of the conflict between the Spiritual and Conventual branches of the Franciscan, saving them and by association, Douceline, from formal condemnation as heretics. Yet, despite the somewhat suspicious associations of its founder, the House of Roubaud survived the condemnations of Vienne in 1312 and the subsequent

persecutions.[30] In this context, the *vita* played a pivotal role by clearly defining the House, and its founder, as orthodox and fully within the arms of the Holy Church.[31]

By comparing Douceline's spirituality to models of Franciscan, beguinal, and mystical spiritualities, and further contrasting to a model of female sanctity, I will demonstrate that, through a combination of selected elements, Douceline successfully created an original expression of feminine piety in late thirteenth century Provence. In the first chapter, I will consider hagiography as a historical source and the manuscript itself, while the second chapter will define the models of spirituality – Franciscan, beguinal, and mystical – prevalent in Douceline's *vita* and, in the third chapter, Douceline's spirituality will be examined within the context of the established models of spirituality and sanctity and the resultant implications for Douceline's *cultus*. Furthermore, I will offer a reinterpretation of Kleinberg's analysis of Douceline's behaviour that derives from a very different internal motivation even though the outward behaviours remain similar.

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[30] Four Franciscans were burned in the marketplace at Marseilles on May 7, 1318. David Burr, Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: The Origins of the *Usus Pauper* Controversy, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), ix. David Burr has made primary sources more accessible by placing several documents concerning the prosecutions of the heretical beguines and the Spiritual Franciscans onto the World Wide Web, providing translations of confessions from the sentences at Lodève (July 1323) and Carcassone (March 1327 and November 1328) and of selected works of Peter Olivi, Angelo Clareno, and Bernard Gui. (http://dburr.hist.vt.edu/Heresy.html). Unfortunately, the association of beguines *with* heretical movements sustains the same misconception of beguines *as* heretics that existed in the Middle Ages.

[31] John XXII exempted the House of Roubaud in three papal bulls in 1320, 1323, and 1325. *Pièces justicatives* XXIII, XIV, XV, in Albanès, *La Vie*, 299-300, 276-280.

CHAPTER ONE: THE *VITA* OF DOUCELINE DE DIGNE

Hagiography as Historical Source

> ... I intend to tell of someone who truly loved Him and to translate her life ... so that it will be more pleasing to those who hear it. It was translated before and well set out according to the standards of the time. But people then were not so hard to please or so critical as they are in our day, and will be even more so after we are gone.[32]

When Clemence, a nun from the abbey of Barking, composed this prologue to the *Life of St Catherine* in the late twelfth century, she was clearly aware of the changing standards of historicity and the criticisms that surrounded earlier hagiographic works. Nonetheless, she remained confident that the information she was to impart differed only in style from those earlier works. The *Life of St Catherine* would continue to instruct and educate while the fundamental "truths" of the story remained unaltered.[33]

Despite this evident concern for historical accuracy, hagiographic writings have generally been dismissed since the Renaissance as superstitious and mythical creations designed to soothe and comfort the unenlightened mind. Although they were studied as

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[32] *The Life of St Catherine by Clemence of Barking*, trans. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Glyn Burgess, Virgin Lives and Holy Deaths: Two Exemplary Biographies for Anglo-Norman Women, (London: J.M. Dent, 1996), 3.

[33] The terms 'hagiography,' '*vita*,' and 'life' will be used interchangeably although, strictly speaking, a complete hagiography requires both an account of the life of the saint as well as a record of pre- and post-mortem miracles. The *Vita of Douceline de Digne* comprises a complete hagiographic document.

objects of historical interest in themselves, it is only recently that historians have begun to realise the full value of the content of these documents as sources of historical details and general mentalities. Since the *vita* of Douceline de Digne is the basis for this thesis, it is worthwhile considering the justifications for placing such a work within the realm of historical rather than literary analysis.

One of the first medievalists of the twentieth century to work with hagiography as a source of historical data was Hippolyte Delehaye. His analysis of a hagiographical collection, *The Legends of the Saints*, was first published in 1907 and remains a seminal work in the study of saints' lives. Developing his ideas from his work with the Bollandists, Delehaye insisted that the lives of the saints were subjects worthy of scholarly attention. However, his endorsement was mitigated by his heavy cautions that "the work of the hagiographer may be historical, but it is not necessarily so. It may assume any literary form suitable to the glorification of the saints, from an official record adapted to the use of the faithful, to a poetical composition of the most exuberant character wholly detached from reality."[34] Given the amount of reservation from such a learned medievalist, it is hardly surprising that the study of hagiography remained the domain of a small group of specialists who were interested in the texts themselves as physical artefacts of history rather than in the contents of the documents as historical evidence.

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[34] Hippolyte Delehaye, The Legends of the Saints: An Introduction to Hagiography, trans. V.M. Crawford, (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1961. First published 1907), 2. An example of a poetic framework for hagiography is the life by the troubadour poet, Bertran de Marseille, *La Vie de Sainte Énimie: poème provençal du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Clovis Brunel, (Paris: Libraire Honoré Champion, 1970).

Delehaye's caution is not unwarranted. Hagiography may or may not be historical and several aspects must be considered in the analysis of *vitae* and their use as historical sources. The purpose of the author may be to present a fact-based *vita*; then again, the 'facts' of the life may have been of less importance to the author than the lesson presented or even the political or economic aspirations of the community or the family commissioning the work.

While the content of the hagiography may contain copious amounts of historical data, Delehaye quickly reminds us that, in the absence of historical knowledge or authenticated sources, hagiographers borrowed, to varying degrees, from other lives, or even 'created' stories.[35] Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg considers the numerous reasons for casting a hypercritical eye upon much hagiographic literature:

> ... the often substantial time lapse between the redaction of a life and the events it purported to record; the uncritical approach and analysis of the hagiographers; the incompetence of style accompanied by blatant plagiarism from earlier saints' lives or borrowings from the Bible; problems of authenticity and attribution of the actions of a well-known saint to an unknown or spurious figure; invention of false information; distortion of events, actions, and virtues; the use of vague, abstract types and pious generalities rather than individualised depictions and

[35] For example, the author of the life of Saint Vincent Madelgarus copied from the prologue from the life of Saint Erminus, followed by a phrase from Sulpicius Severus, and another introduction taken from Saint Gregory of Tours' preface to the life of Saint Patroclus. The list of sources from which the author 'lifted' whole portions also includes the lives of the Saints Erminus, Waldetrudis, Aldegond, Gallus, Leobardus, Martius, Quintianus, Bavon, Ursmar, and Martin. The 'real' Saint Vincent is most notable for his absence. Delehaye, Legends of the Saints, 101-102.

> particular details; the incorporation of *topoi*, legends, and popular fantasy.[36]

With such problems so apparent, it is not surprising that many medievalists rejected the historical value of hagiography, disparaging the writings as "anthologfies] of unbelievable facts ... fiction, plagiarism, or ... hundred-fold exaggeration" or even "abominable trash," "entirely devoid of historical value."[37]

In the mid-twentieth century, however, the symbolic anthropological theories of Clifford Geertz and Derridean deconstruction combined to revolutionise medieval studies. According to Gabrielle Spiegel, these theories attacked the traditional use of documents as sources to be read at 'face value' and instead she posited that every document contains a 'text' that may only be discerned through a contrapuntal evaluation of intertextual information.[38] This disparagement of 'superficial reading' called into question the very foundation of medieval studies, that is, knowledge of medieval languages, and undermined the technical fields such as palaeography and diplomatics.[39] Combining her work in criticism, anthropology, and theory, Spiegel develops the concept

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[36] Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives as a Source for the History of Women, 500-1100," Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History, ed. Joel T. Rosenthal, (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 285-320. 302. The ideas presented by Schulenburg in this article are more fully developed in the first chapter of her subsequent book, Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500-1100, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[37] E. C. Babut and Ferdinand Lot as cited in Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives," 301.

[38] Gabrielle M. Spiegel, The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 73-74.

[39] Milada Buda presents a referential, linguistic analysis of medieval documents in Medieval History and Discourse: Toward a Topography of Textuality, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1990). It may be a stroke in favour of medievalists and against postmodern criticism of 'traditional' medievalist approaches that, in 1907, Delehaye demonstrated an awareness of 'epistemological rupture' by stating that "there is frequently a difference between what our worthy hagiographers wished to say and what, in point of fact, they have succeeded in saying," Legends of the Saints, 229.

of "the social logic of the text, ... a term and a concept that seeks to combine in a single but complex framework a protocol for the analysis of a text's social site – its location within an imbedded social environment of which it is a product and in which it acts as an agent – and its own discursive character as "logos"..."[40] For Spiegel, a text reveals the "social world from which it emerges" since it contains social as well as linguistic realities, providing "access to the past" even when read simply for its artistic value.[41]

Predating yet paralleling the postmodern linguistic consideration of documents as 'text,' feminist history shifted attention from the traditional 'public' sphere of medieval history to the 'private' sphere of home and body.[42] Feminist scholarship encouraged the recognition of many "possible histories," permitting the Middle Ages to be seen as a period of both surprising liberty and stultifying inhibition for medieval women. For example, in her article "Heroics of Virginity: Brides of Christ and Sacrificial Mutilation," Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg sees the medieval Church as an oppressive and misogynistic force in the lives of medieval women religious.[43] On the other hand, Caroline Walker Bynum's *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* provides an equally compelling argument for the use of ecclesiastically endorsed behaviours by medieval nuns to express their autonomy.[44] In *Church Fathers,*

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[40] Spiegel, The Past as Text, xviii.

[41] Ibid., xviii.

[42] Ibid., 74-75.

[43] Jane T. Schulenburg, "Heroics of Virginity: Brides of Christ and Sacrificial Mutilation," Women in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives, ed. Mary Beth Rose, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 29-72.

[44] Bynum, Holy Feast and Holy Fast, *passim.*

Independent Virgins, Joyce E. Salisbury finds a middle ground that has male authorities imposing rules that are disregarded by religious women if they conflict with the needs of the individual or the community.[45]

Clearly the recovery of the feminine perspective is neither simple nor obvious. As the great French medievalist Georges Duby commented in 1991, when he contemplated with retrospective surprise that it had taken him so long to consider the history of women, the reason was not simply that he was a man but, rather, that he was in the habit of beginning "with what was clearest and work[ing] toward an understanding of what was most obscure. ... Everything in this territory [the history of medieval women] lies shrouded in darkness. All the evidence about medieval women is deformed and distorted. ... All we have is men talking about women."[46] Joel Rosenthal echoes Duby when he compares the 'discovery' of medieval women to Columbus' 'discovery' of the New World - they were there all along but those who knew were not the ones who "controlled the hegemonies of culture and world view."[47] Indeed, "most of those who wrote explicitly about women did so to denigrate them, and most of those who wrote for other purposes were apt to give them short shrift."[48] But as Jo Ann McNamara demonstrates, even hostile sources can provide important clues to the status and condition of medieval

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[45] Joyce E. Salisbury, Church Fathers, Independent Virgins, (London: Verso, 1991).

[46] Georges Duby, History Continues, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 127. Originally published as *L'histoire continue*, 1991.

[47] Joel T. Rosenthal, "Introduction." In Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History, ed. Joel T. Rosenthal, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1990), vii-xvii. viii.

[48] Ibid., viii.

women.[49]

One of the few sources in which women are well represented both as topic and as audience are hagiographies. *Vitae* of holy men and women were popular in the Middle Ages especially as a genre for the education and edification of monks and lay people. The recent resurgence in the study of sainthood, sanctity, and saints' cults in addition to the development of anthropological and feminist methodologies permits a reconsideration of hagiography as a fruitful source of historical information.

It is necessary to always bear in mind that the hagiographer was seldom independently motivated to create a *vita*. As indicated earlier, hagiographers were always influenced by external forces, either in the form of a desire to "preserve for posterity" the life of a saint for the education and edification of others or in response to more pragmatic territorial, political, and economic ambitions.[50] Noble families utilised the *vitae* to legitimise their authority but by far the most common use of hagiography was the "promotion of the cult ... and the exaltation of a religious centre. ... [T]hrough the *fama* ... of the saint and her miracles... churchmen and churchwomen hoped to attract crowds of pilgrims, material donations, as well as special privileges to the monastery or sanctuary that "owned" and displayed the precious remains ..."[51] Thus, while many *vitae* were

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[49] Jo Ann McNamara, "*De Quibusdam Mulieribus*: Reading Women's History from Hostile Sources," Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History, ed. Joel T. Rosenthal, (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 237-258.

[50] Barbara Abou-El-Haj, The Medieval Cult of Saints: Formations and Transformations, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4. Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives," 286.

[51] Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives," 286-287.

aimed at a broad audience, they were rooted in local or regional interests.[52] As canonisation became increasingly costly to undertake in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, "many communities were satisfied with a local and, in the technical sense, "private" devotion, for their saints."[53] In combination with increasing scepticism of reformers and scientifically oriented minds, and the "historical critique of hagiographical production," this 'regionalisation' was a significant factor in the decline of popular support for cults of saints.[54] Even if one remains suspicious of all hagiographic accounts but those verified by eyewitness accounts, the written records of saints' lives remain the best evidence for the validity of claims to holiness as well as for information on the construction of concepts of piety and spirituality in the Middle Ages.

Frequently, the initial impetus arises with those most directly affected by the promotion of the saint and his or her cult, such as the abbess or abbot of a monastery, the entire community (religious or secular), or the local bishop. The very process by which hagiographies were created, from the selection of the writer to the collection of information to final version of the *vita*, can reveal information about the community, the

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[52] One of the most useful studies of the civic interests in the propagation of a saint's cult is that by André Vauchez of the Franciscan tertiary, Margherita of Cortona (1247-1297). Joanna Cannon and André Vauchez, Margherita of Cortona and the Lorenzetti: Sienese Art and the Cult of a Holy Woman in Medieval Tuscany, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 11-36. Although most of this volume is dedicated to Cannon's analysis of Tuscan art, Vauchez's contribution is essential to understanding the role of Cortona's influence in the development of Margherita's cult.

[53] Aviad Kleinberg, "Proving Sanctity: Selection and authentication of saints in the later Middle Ages," *Viator*, V20 (1989): 183-205. 205. Kleinberg's article is a concise summation of the works of Joseph-Claude Poulin, André Vauchez, and Peter Brown upon which he leans heavily to structure his argument.

[54] Ibid., 205.

author, and the patron.[55] In selecting an author for a *vita*, if no member of the community was judged worthy of the task, professional hagiographers were commissioned; they were often learned biographers with well-established reputations as competent writers, perhaps even considered hagiographic specialists. The importance of a *vita* could also be enhanced by the rank of the biographer.[56] Preferably, though, the hagiographer was someone who was familiar with both the saint and the aims of the community, ideally a member of the community that had fostered the saint. For example, the life of Saint Gertrude was commissioned by Abbess Dominica, the third abbess of Nivelles.[57] Often the author was actually a witness to the events being described.[58] This was the case with Philippine de Porcellet, the abbess of Roubaud from 1274 until her death in 1316.[59] Since Philippine's claim to personal knowledge of the saint and her eyewitness account of Douceline's life could have granted authenticity to the *vita*, her decision to remain

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[55] Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives," 289. Although most authors of hagiography are anonymous, many texts actually begin with a brief introduction that incorporates the reason why the work was undertaken, a description of the patron, and a humble, and often vague, description of the author, Legends of the Saints, 61. This was the case with Douceline's *vita*.

[56] For example, it is likely that Bonaventure's position as Minister General enhanced the authority of his version of the *Life of Saint Francis* over the earlier Celano versions. Nonetheless, the Celano versions continued to circulate despite official suppression by the Franciscan Order in 1266.

[57] Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives," 289-290.

[58] As Schulenburg and David Herlihy point out, many *vitae* were carefully compiled contemporary and eyewitness accounts of events surrounding the lives of candidates for sainthood. For example, Marsilia, the abbess at Saint-Amand in Rouen in the early twelfth century reported on the revival of a suicide, a miracle attributed to the abbey's patron, Saint Amand. Elisabeth van Houts, Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 56-57. Hucbald, a monk at Saint Amand, was commissioned in the tenth century to write the *vita* of Saint Rictrude and the fourth version of Saint Aldegonde. Schulenburg. "Saints' Lives", 289-290. David Herlihy, "Women and the Sources of Medieval History: The Towns of Northern Italy," In Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History, 145.

[59] Various hypotheses regarding the authorship and temporality of the document have been broached. The fullest analysis was completed by Father J.-H. Albanès in which he ascribed authorship to Philippine de Porcellet. Albanès, *La Vie*, xx-xxv.

anonymous, as the author, is surprising but may have been motivated by the limited authority granted to women by the Church. As well, Philippine may also have chosen anonymity as protection from the charges of heresy that fell upon other beguines' writings.[60]

Within the standard contents of the typical saint's life, there are several categories that consistently provide historical evidence about medieval women. Although the categorisation of the contents of a typical *vita* varies widely, six categories of information appear consistently in hagiographic documents:[61]

1) Birth, childhood, education – this section frequently provides information on the saint's origins, parentage, social status, as well as indications of "auspicious birth" or a "prodigious childhood," the type of education and training available.[62]

2) Adult life, including the 'holy life,' either in or outside the cloister – the determination of the saint to overcome obstacles to enter holy orders is often emphasised while the 'modesty' and 'humility' of the saint can be highlighted as the saint first refuses promotion, and then accepts it, forced by the demands of king, Church, or people. The first evidence of miracles usually occurs in this section.[63] Details of marriage and motherhood, such as age at marriage,

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[60] For example, the writings of the beguines Marguerite Porete and Na Prous Boneta were declared heretical and both women were burned at the stake as heretics.

[61] Barbara Abou-El-Haj presents a list of fifteen categories while Schulenburg presents seven. The distinctions between categories can be quite narrow. For example 'birth' and 'childhood' are often separated as are details of adult life, distinguishing between the saint's life before and after conversion or entry into holy orders. In the interests of brevity, I have chosen to combine several divisions of information based on stages of life.

[62] Abou-El-Haj, The Medieval Cult of Saints, 37; Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives," 296.

[63] Abou-El-Haj, The Medieval Cult of Saints, 37-40.

numbers of children, childbirth, and family relations can also be found within this category. Specific details on the form of monastic vows, attire, behaviour, and daily observances are also included.

3) Death and burial – "since the cult of the saint focused on the tomb and the saint's "invisible living presence" within this sacrosanct place, the events surrounding the actual death and burial of the holy dead played an extremely important role for the propagandist as well as the faithful."[64] Interestingly, while the details of the saint's earlier life can often be somewhat sketchy, the final illness, death, and burial of the saint is often recounted in surprising detail. Longevity is one aspect of individual information that can be seen in this section but this is also the section that is most likely to provide evidence of cult development.

4) A catalogue of the saint's virtues, miracles, visions, and prophecies – these may be listed separately or be included within the earlier sections of the saint's life as proof of sanctity. Within this section were the saintly virtues that were to be emulated as well as the general ideas of what encompassed 'proper feminine behaviour and associated virtues.'

5) The *miracula* or *gloria posthuma* – a record of the posthumous miracles attributed to the saint's intervention. These "miracles formed one of the most important elements ... in the propagation of the saint's life and cult."[65] Miracles were especially used to promote the veneration of the faithful, attracting crowds of pilgrims and the resultant material and economic advantages. The evidence of miracles provided irrefutable proof of sanctity. This section often provides evidence of the people who, seeking the saint's

[64] Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives," 296.

[65] Ibid., 296.

assistance, display the diseases and illnesses of the time as well as the state of medical science.

6) Finally, the *translatio* or *elevatio* – a description of the acquisition of the saint's relics or an account of the "process, events, and miracles surrounding the official elevation or translation of the saint's body."[66] Especially in the early Middle Ages, it was the act of translation that legitimatised the saint and established her cult – virtually an "informal canonisation."[67] For saints of the later Middle Ages, "the minutes of their canonisation processes" may also be included in the hagiography.[68] Records of the examinations of the 'friends of God' also provide information concerning the theological understandings of lay people, revealing significant deviations from catholic doctrine and evidence of heretical thought.

Perhaps some of the most intriguing and thought-provoking information derives from a consideration of the minutiae that often appear in *vitae* as "accidental or incidental facts."[69] The unintentional quality of this evidence leaves it less likely to be distorted or falsified since it was considered by the author to be inconsequential.[70] Many *vitae* provide information on the founding of religious communities and reveal details on

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[66] Ibid., 296-297.

[67] Although saints' cults were recognised as early as the fourth century and the earliest hagiographies date from the same time, the first saints were not officially canonised by the Church until 993 under Pope John XV. The standards for defining sanctity remained fluid until 1170 when Pope Alexander III created a set of rules for canonisation and, in 1202, the papal decree *In explenitudine potestatis* asserted that the Church possessed the exclusive right to authorise canonisations. The formalised representation of the influence and power of the patrons of the *cultus* can usually be identified in hagiographies from this later period, as is the case with Douceline's *vita*.

[68] David Herlihy, "Women and the Sources of Medieval History," 145.

[69] Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives," 303.

[70] Ibid., 303.

monastic life in general,[71] and the interactions both inside[72] and outside[73] conventual walls. Although most hagiographies focus on the saint's life following entry into a religious house, since many saints lived 'normal' secular lives before adopting a religious lifestyle, conditions of home and family life as well as business practices can be gleaned.[74] Ongoing relations with family and the community tell us about non-monastic life and allow insight into the differences between the two lifestyle categories.[75]

Saints' lives are now recognised as rich sources of intentional and unintentional information, revealing "evidence of the witnesses in spite of themselves."[76] Aspects of local history, popular ideas, beliefs, deviant behaviour, and collective *mentalités* are

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[71] Rudolph M. Bell, Holy Anorexia, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Bynum, Holy Feast and Holy Fast; Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, "Heroics of Virginity," 29-72; also Forgetful of Their Sex.

[72] Susan Millinger, "Humility and Power: Anglo-Saxon Nuns in Anglo-Norman Hagiography." In Medieval Religious Women: Volume One: Distant Echoes, eds. John A. Nichols and Lillian Thomas Shank, (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1984), 115-129.

[73] Barbara H. Rosenwein, Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

[74] Frances Beer, Women and Mystical Experience in the Middle Ages, (Bury St Edmunds: Boydell Press, 1992); Dyan Elliott, Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); David Herlihy, "Women and the Sources of Medieval History," 133-154; *Opera Muliebria*: Women and Work in Medieval Europe, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Medieval Households, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985); Jean Leclercq, Women and St Bernard of Clairvaux, trans. Marie-Bernard Said, (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1989); Suzanne Fonay Wemple, Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500 to 900, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981).

[75] The *vitae* of the beguines present especially interesting combinations of religious and lay spiritualities and lifestyles.

[76] Marc Bloch, The Historian's Craft, trans. Peter Putnam, (New York, 1959). As quoted in Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives," 302.

authenticated within the saints' lives.[77] Since so many *vitae* focus attention on the roles of women "in the church and society as well as on contemporary perceptions, ideals, and valuations of women," hagiography proves to be an important source for discovering the lives of medieval women.[78] But the historical information in these sources must be acquired by reading contrapuntally, "against the grain" or even contrary to the original intentions of the author, to reveal the depth of detail that can be recovered from these sources if approached in a conscientious manner with new questions and minds open to the vast range of experiences related within the text.

The Manuscript

The proverb of not judging a book by its cover is curiously appropriate for the *vita* of Douceline de Digne. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, many manuscripts were richly embellished works of art admired not only for literary style and content but also for the magnificence of the ornamentation and illumination that decorated each page. Images and letters glowed with brilliant colours and heavy gold and silver gilding while bindings were embossed, engraved, and bejewelled. The total effect produced a feast for the eyes as the edifying content sated the soul. By contrast, Douceline's *vita* is spartan in

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[77] Abou El-Haj, The Medieval Cult of Saints; Peter Brown, The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Thomas Head, Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800-1200, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); André Vauchez, The Laity in the Middle Ages. In the *vitae*, many women, faced with incest, fornication, homosexuality, and attempted murder, tried to maintain their chaste state with interesting strategies such as self-disfigurement, feigned illness, and insanity. There are also examples of 'bearded' female saints and cross-dressing virgins.

[78] Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives," 285.

its sober simplicity. The ornamentation is extremely limited: single large letters, decorated with red and blue, appear at the start of each chapter; chapter titles are lettered in red; and the simple border in red and blue that runs across the top and down both sides of the first page is repeated on subsequent pages where a new chapter begins.[79] The utilitarian simplicity of the *vita's* manuscript should not be interpreted as a demonstration of the poverty of the House of Roubaud. There is ample evidence that the absence of external indications of wealth in the establishment, even a chapel dedicated to the exclusive use of the community, were deliberately shunned by Douceline to preserve the humility of her House.[80] It is more likely that the sobriety of the text reflects Franciscan austerity similar to the stark lines of Franciscan architecture as seen in the west façade of Saint-Louis in Hyères and other churches erected by the Friars Minor.[81]

While the appearance of the *vita* reflects the austere aesthetics of the Franciscans, the text itself reveals the richness of the literary heritage to which it belongs. The *vita* is

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[79] Albanès, *La Vie.*, xi.

[80] "And for this [the virtue of humility], she would not suffer that they should have a church building nor any other dignities..." *Li Vida* IV.4: "*E per aisso, illi non volc sufrir qu'ellas aguessan edifici de gleisa, ni autras dignitatz...*"

[81] Constructed during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Saint-Louis was the first church built by the Franciscans in Hyères, Ministère de la Culture de France, "Hyères, la ville médiévale (Var)," (http://web.culture.fr/culture/inventai/itiinv/hyeres/fr/hyer.htm). Its west façade is extremely simple, lacking excessive ornamentation or sculptural relief. This architectural austerity, initiated by the early Cistercians and replicated in the first permanent structures erected by the Franciscans, is reflective of their ideals of simplicity, humility, and poverty. The austerity of many Franciscan buildings, however, has been erased by the artistic accretions of the centuries. The façade of Santa Croce in Florence was reworked in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and again in the nineteenth century. At San Francesco in Rimini, a new design for the façade was begun in the sixteenth century but left incomplete. The façade of Santa Maria Aracoeli in Rome, begun in the fourteenth century, remains virtually in its original state. For a discussion of Cistercian and Franciscan influence on architecture, see Georges Duby, History of Medieval Art, 980-1440, Volume II: The Europe of the Cathedrals, 1140-1280, (New York: Rizzoli, 1986. First published in three volumes, 1966-1967), 57-62, 102-103, 104-105.

considered one of the finest examples of Occitan vernacular literature, noteworthy for its early date and the elegance of the text as well as for the feminine authorship. In 1869, sections of the manuscript were edited and published by Paul Meyer in a collection of ancient French, Provençal, and 'low' Latin texts.[82] Karl Bartsch reprinted sections of Meyer's work in 1875, including parts of the Douceline *vita*, in his collection of Provençal literature.[83] Willing to rectify these partial renditions, Abbot Joseph-Hyacinthe Albanès published the first complete edition of the text in 1879, accompanied by a modern French translation and additional historical documentation in the form of wills, property transfers, hymns, oaths, and other records associated with the House of Roubaud.[84]

Subsequent editions of the text have not deviated significantly from the Albanès edition. In 1927, Raoul Gout published a second edition in French, and in 1993, Kathryn Wolfkiel presented an English translation for her doctoral dissertation.[85] A new French edition by Geneviève Brunel-Lobrichon, announced in Wolfkiel's work, has not materialised.[86] As well, Wolfkiel's English translation cannot be used without reservation for, while it is technically correct, it nonetheless fails with respect to historical precision of details.[87] Thus it is Albanès' edition that forms the basis for my project, as indeed it

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[82] Paul Meyer, *Recueil d'anciens textes bas-latins, provençaux et français*, (New York: G.E. Stechert, 1901). First published in 1869.

[83] Karl Bartsch, *Chrestomathie provençale: accompagnée d'une grammaire et d'un glossaire*, third edition, (Elberfeld: R.L. Friderichs, 1875), 305-308.

[84] Albanès, *La Vie*.

[85] Gout, *La Vie*; Wolfkiel, The Life.

[86] Wolfkiel, The Life, 1.

[87] For example, see the discussion, *infra* footnote 329.

has provided the foundation for other scholars who have pursued an interest in Douceline.

Authorship of the *Vita*

The extant document is believed to be a copy of the second version of Douceline's life.[88] That the *vita* is not the first version is clear from the discussion that it contains concerning events surrounding internal dissension caused by certain aspects of the first *vita*.[89] Based on detailed descriptions of activities within the convent, including the celebration of Douceline's feast day (September 1) on a Sunday, and on the dating of certain events associated with the reign of Charles of Anjou (Charles I of Sicily), Albanès concludes that the first *vita* was prepared in 1297 and that the second version was probably written around 1315, a determination that has been accepted by most other scholars.[90]

While the authorship of the *vita* is officially 'anonymous,' based on the extensive knowledge of the intimate life within the beguinages and the discernment of "the language of a woman" in the *vita*, Albanès determined that the author of the text was a beguine from the House of Roubaud.[91] Furthermore, since the author was a beguine who was close enough to Douceline to be present during many of her ecstatic experiences and had the requisite knowledge of Occitan to write the *vita*, Albanès concludes that the

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[88] Albanès, *La Vie*, xxi; Gout, *La Vie*, 7; Wolfkiel, The Life, 2-5.

[89] I will return to this subject later.

[90] *Albanès, La Vie*, xx-xxxix; Gout, 17.

[91] *Albanès, La Vie*, xxv-xxix. There is no way to determine whether any additional renditions of the *vita* were prepared.

author was probably Philippine de Porcellet, who succeeded Douceline as superior of Roubaud in 1274.[92] Once again, most scholars concur with Albanès' conclusion and Philippine de Porcellet is generally accepted as the author of Douceline's *vita*.[93]

Belonging to one of the highest-ranking families of the Provençal aristocracy, the Porcellets of Arles, Philippine de Porcellet was an active participant in the spiritual and commercial affairs of Marseilles during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Widowed from her husband, Foulques de Pontèves, Lord of Artignosc, Philippine joined the beguines of Roubaud, becoming the second prioress of the community in Marseilles. She devoted her time and most of her considerable resources to the House of Roubaud, administering to her financial concerns and watching over the spiritual affairs of the beguines. Although she appears to have been estranged from her two surviving daughters, who were in the care of her in-laws, Philippine developed close ties to two of her nieces who had joined the beguines and to whom she left her property in her will, dated 1312.[94]

In writing the *vita* of Douceline de Digne, Philippine de Porcellet created a document that met the main goals of medieval hagiographic literature as already discussed, that is, to give instruction and edification, to provide a model of exemplary Christian virtue, and to commemorate the founder of the House. But the *vita* was also intended to respond to more pragmatic and immediate goals, namely, the dissension

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[92] Ibid., xxx-xxxix.

[93] Gout, La Vie, 10-16; Francine Michaud, "*Porcelet, Philippa (de).*" Marseillaises: vingt-six siècles d'histoire, (Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, 1999), 183-184. Wolfkiel, despite a through discussion of Albanès arguments, insists that the author remain "anonymous," The Life, 4-13.

[94] Michaud, "*Porcelet, Philippa (de).*" 184. Even though Philippine actually had three daughters, at the time that she entered Roubaud, her youngest daughter was already dead. Albanès, La Vie, xxxi.

within the establishment and the defence of the beguines of Roubaud from the suspicion of unorthodoxy that had descended on all beguines.[95]

As already mentioned, disagreements concerning Douceline's life erupted within the House of Roubaud soon after the first *vita* was written: "It happened one time, that through a certain praise for the Saint, some troubles began in the convent in Marseilles, and some were in opposition to her *vita* when it was first written, because of some doubt that was manifested therein."[96] The text is silent on the details of what 'doubt' of which 'praise' initiated the disagreement but the use of this praise created "great conflict between those who wanted the praise and the others who, from fear, disagreed. And the enemy of all good began to agitate the heart of one of them ... who began to think that perhaps the Saint was not a Saint if she was not worthy of such praise."[97] Numerous miracles proceed from this problem, most notably Douceline's appearance to the doubter

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[95] While Brunel-Lobrichon mentions the 'standard' hagiographic goals of the *vita*, she does not address the role of the internal dissension in the creation of the second *vita*. "*Existe-t-il un christianisme méridional?*" 42.

[96] *Li Vida* XIV.6: "*Esdevenc si alcun temps, que per alcuna lauzor de la Sancta, si mogron alcunas torbacions, e alcuns contra[s]tz ell covent de Marsella, sobre la sieua vida, cant fon premieramens escricha, per alcun dupte que lur era manifestatz.*"

[97] Ibid., XIV.6-7: "*Per aisso agron torbacion entr'ellas, que las unas ho volian, las autras, per aquella temensa, hi contradizian. E l'enemics de tot ben comenset a sagitar lo cor de l'una d'aquellas, ... Soptamens li venc en sa cogitation si li Sancta non for a Sancta, que non fos digna de lauzor.*" The text is unclear whether the beguine who first raised the issue was the same one who had the doubts of Douceline's sanctity.

and the affirmation of the Saint's dignity.[98] Yet, even though the *vita* provides miraculous evidence of God's will and Douceline's sanctity, the decision to include the disputed praise for Douceline seems to have been reached through a majority decision: "And then they decided, by the will of God, to honour the Saint as they should."[99] From the seriousness of this dispute, we can see that the acceptance of Douceline's sanctity had significant ramifications for the community.

When the *vita* was written in 1315, even the orthodox beguines of Roubaud felt the "blows" and "winds" that buffeted the beguinal movement under the ecclesiastical persecutions that culminated in the papal condemnation by Clement V at the Council of Vienne in 1311-1312.[100] Even though the decree was aimed specifically at the beguines in Germany, any woman claiming the title 'beguine' was subject to suspicion and no

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[98] "And then, the one who was agitated by the foolish thought about the Saint was in the dormitory, for she was going to Matins; and with her [own] eyes she saw a lady beguine leaving and moving away from the place ... And she believed that she was another [beguine] and she thought to reprimand her for she had called to her; and she saw [the other] walking with dignity and she saw who she was and did not know her. ... And the response was made in her heart: 'This is Douceline de Digne, who is worthy of a seat in heaven, amongst the holy virgins.' " Ibid., XIV.12-14: "*e adoncs, aquilli ques avia agut aquel foll pensament de la Sancta, era en dormidor, ques annava a matinas; e vi de sos huols una donna beguina que partia e movia de la luoga, ... E crezet si fos autra, e penset la repenre, car l'avia sonada; e vi l'annar azordenadamens, e esgardet qui era, e anc non la connoc. ... E tantost fon respost en son cor: «Dulcelina hec de Digna, Sede polorum est digna, Inter sacras virgines.»*" The juxtaposition of the '*Digna*' and '*digna*' is most poetic in the Latin.

[99] Ibid., XIV.7: "*Pueis acorderon si, per volontat de Dieu, d'onrar la Sancta en aissi cant devian.*"

[100] "And no matter how many blows it receives nor what winds strike it, there is no fear that this holy establishment will perish." Ibid., XIV.33: "*E cantz que butz ques aia, ni cals qu'evens lo fieran, aquest sant estamens non es paors perisca...*"

provision was made for those beguines who, once examined, proved to be orthodox.[101] The same Council of Vienne also condemned the Spiritual Franciscans, with whom the founder of the House of Roubaud had close ties, exacerbating the precarious position in which the beguines of Roubaud found themselves.[102] It was in the best interests of the House of Roubaud to clearly associate themselves with the Franciscan Order, which had by now resolved most of its own internal controversies and was considered wholly orthodox, and to seek exemption from the papal condemnations of the beguines and the Spirituals.[103] Consequently, Saint Francis and the Franciscans are regularly mentioned in the *vita* and invoked as the 'protectors' of Roubaud: "and that under the wings of Saint

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[101] "We entertain in our heart a deep longing that the catholic faith prosper in our time and that the perverseness of heresy be rooted out of christian soil. We have therefore heard with great displeasure that an abominable sect of wicked men, commonly called Beghards, and of faithless women, commonly called Beguines, has sprung up in the realm of Germany. ... we condemn and utterly reject, ... the sect ... The diocesans and the inquisitors of heresy ... are to impose due punishment on those whom they find guilty, ..." Decree concerning the beguines: Council of Vienne (1311-1312): Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, ed. Norman P. Tanner, (http://www.piar.hu/councils/ecum15.htm). The pertinent text of this decree is in Appendix 1. Then, as now, there was confusion concerning the definition of a 'beguine.' Even Marguerite Porete, described by the inquisitors as a beguine, distinguished between herself and other beguines: "O my Lover, what will beguines say and religious types, When they hear the excellence of your divine song? Beguines say I err ...," The Mirror of Simple Souls, 25.

[102] The regulation of poverty within the Franciscan Order was detailed in the papal bull *Exiit qui seminat* issued in August 1279 by Nicholas III (r. 1277-1280) but the disputation continued well into the fourteenth century in Provence. In September 1309, Clement V examined the Spirituals of Provence and instituted an inquisition that led to the publication of the bull *Exivi de paradiso* from the Council of Vienne in May 1312. John XXII (r. 1316-1334), who condemned the Spirituals in December 1317 with the bull *Sancta Romana*, rejected the moderate tone of Clement V. See Guy Bedouelle, "*Chronologie sommaire des événements et des controverses*," Franciscains d'Oc: Les Spirituels ca. 1280-1324, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 10, (Toulouse: Édouard Privat, 1975), 21-39. 24-25, 32-37. There are numerous works on the struggles within the Franciscan Order. See Lazaro Iriarte, Franciscan History: The Three Orders of St. Francis of Assisi, trans. Patricia Ross, (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982), 442-443. First published in Spanish as *Historia Franciscana*, (Valencia: Editorial Asís, 1979) for a comprehensive history of the Order. On the struggle over the role of poverty within the Order, see: David Burr, Olivi and Franciscan Poverty; Decima L. Douie, The Nature and the Effect of the Heresy of the Fraticelli, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1932); M. D. Lambert, Franciscan Poverty: The Doctrine of the Absolute Poverty of Christ and the Apostles in the Franciscan Order, 1210-1323, (London: SPCK, 1961).

[103] It was not until several years after Philippine's death that Roubaud received official mitigation of the suppressions from Pope John XXII in 1320, 1323, and 1325: *Pièces justicatives* XXIII, XIV, XV, in Albanès, *La Vie*, 299-300, 276-280.

Francis, we will all be saved."[104]

The format of the *vita* suggests that it was intended as a first step in a formal application for canonisation. In the twelfth century, the privilege of canonisation was restricted to the Church, and specifically the Papacy, following the decretal of Alexander III (r. 1159-1181) in 1170: "For the future you will not presume to pay him reverence as, even though miracles were worked through him, it would not allow you to revere him as a saint unless with the authority of the Roman Church."[105] In 1234, during the papacy of Gregory IX, the canonical processes of investigation became the only legitimate route to recognition as a 'saint.'[106] Consequently, the process of canonisation became more formalised and evidence of the sanctity and virtue of the saint's life was considered as much proof of God's favour as a catalogue of miracles.[107]

As a result of the author's use of this formalised organisational style, the chronology of Douceline's *vita* is confusing and reading the chapters of the *Life* serially

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[104] *Li Vida* XIV.32: "...*e que sotz las alas de sant Frances, totas nos salvariam*." As already mentioned, 'Francis' or the 'Franciscans' are specifically referenced only four times in the first five chapters but in the fifteenth chapter alone, Saint Francis and the Franciscans are mentioned eleven times.

[105] Ever since Alexander III's decision, specialists in canonical law have argued whether the decretal was a new position or the restatement of an ancient privilege, inasmuch as the Church had claimed the privilege of canonisation as early as the ninth century. Camillus Beccari, "Beatification and Canonization," trans. Janet Grayson, The Catholic Encyclopedia, (New York: Robert Appleton, 1907), Vol. II. http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02364b.htm.

[106] P. Molinari, "Canonization of Saints," The New Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume III: CAN-COL (New York: Mcgraw-Hill, 1967), 55-59. Throughout the text, the evidence of witnesses is verified and authenticated, providing details of names, places, and ailments.

[107] Beccari, "Beatification and Canonization;" Molinari, "Canonization of Saints," 56.

does not provide a comprehensive narration of her life.[108] Only the barest chronological framework is present in the *vita*: the first three chapters detail Douceline's early life – her birth, her childhood, her decision to accept a beguinal life, her vows. The last four chapters, Chapters Thirteen through Sixteen, deal with Douceline's death, the translations of her body, the post-mortem miracles attributed to her intervention, and a final laudatory summation of her virtues.[109] The intervening chapters are arranged thematically into sections that reflect on specific indications of Douceline's spirituality and sanctity, such as her charity, her poverty, her ecstasies, and the depth of her contemplation. Hence, the basic information in Douceline's *vita* fits closely to the standardised hagiographic categories presented earlier in this thesis, asserting by association that the House of Roubaud, established by Douceline, was a 'proper' and orthodox community, exempt from the prohibitions of the Council of Vienne. The House of Roubaud was eventually excluded from the condemnations of the beguines in papal bulls issued by John XXII in 1320, 1323, and 1325 and the *vita* would have been a critical part of the community's

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[108] This inattention to chronological accuracy should not be seen as a deficiency specific to this text but, rather, as a characteristic of medieval hagiographic writing. According to Delehaye, neither chronological nor geographical inconsistencies concerned the popular medieval mind, The Legends of the Saints, 19-23. As discussed earlier, however, later medieval texts demonstrate a significant concern with precise dates and locations.

[109] Chapter Fourteen deals with the translations of Douceline's body, first to the "old church of the Friars Minor of Marseilles" and then, on Sunday, October 17, 1278, to the "new church" alongside the body of her brother, Hugues. *Li Vida* XIV.5: "*... en la gleiza antigua dels fraires menors de Marsella ...*"; XIV.34: "*En l'an de l'encarnacion de Ihesu Crist* .M. *e* .CC.LXXVIII., *al* .XVII. *jorns denfral mes d'Uchovre, a un dimengegue, foron translatatz li cors santz del benaurat paire e sant fraire Hugo de Dinnha, e de la benaurada maire soror sieua ma donna sancta Doucelina, en la gleiza nova dels fraires menors de Marsella.*" This is one of the few cases in the *vita* when a definite date is clearly provided. Chapter Fourteen also recounts Douceline's appearances to her daughters, confirming her sanctity, while Chapter Fifteen specifically discusses the miracles attributed to Douceline on behalf of the Ladies of Roubaud and the laity.

programme to seek exemption from the general persecutions.[110]

It is interesting to note that the most extensive chapters deal with Douceline's ecstatic experiences and miracles. Chapter Nine totals 28 pages while Chapter Ten totals 14. Chapter Fifteen, which describes miracles attributed to Douceline after her death, approaches a similar length, at 13 pages. It is hardly coincidental that these three chapters comprise nearly 45% of the entire *vita*, conveying the importance of Douceline's mystical and miraculous nature.

The Language of the *Vita*: Occitan and Latin in Provence

Praised for its uniqueness amongst any collection of saints' lives, the *vita* of Douceline de Digne offers a fine example of early Occitan, notable for both its literary and linguistic value.[111] Popularised by the great troubadours of southern France who ranged from England to the Holy Land in the twelfth century, the "Occitan *koine* became an international language for lyric expression, comparable to the Italian of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, which was written in Poland by a German native for a Polish audience, or to English as the language of lyric song around the globe at the end of the twentieth century."[112]

While Latin continued to hold its position as the language of 'officialdom,' the

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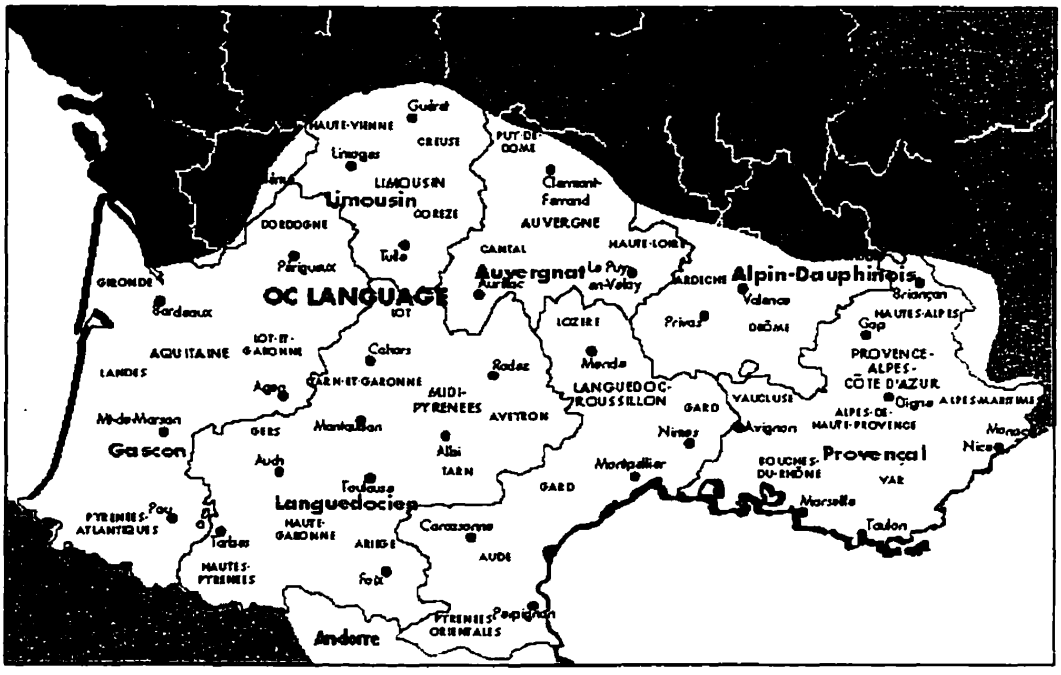
[110] Albanès, *La Vie*, 299-300, 276-280.

[111] William Paden, An Introduction to Old Occitan, (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1998), 4, *fn* 5. Paden points out that the term 'Occitan' is used more frequently by scholars outside France while most French scholars continue to utilise the term 'Provençal.'

[112] Ibid., 5.

use of vernacular languages increased dramatically in the later Middle Ages. Waldes himself had the Gospels translated into Occitan, evidence that the use of Occitan as a '*lingua franca*' had penetrated well into the province of the Langue d'Oïl.[113] The establishment of the papal court in Avignon in 1308-9 by Clement V further enhanced the reputation of Occitan not only for the laity, but also for use in official government and papal documents. Along with Latin, it became the spoken language of the pontifical court as well as one of the administrative languages, the other being Latin.[114] As the mother



The Region of Langue d'Oc.
After: Russ Collins, "Oc Language – Langue d'Oc"[115]

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[113] Duby, History of Medieval Art, Volume II, 71.

[114] "Oc Language – Langue d'Oc," Provence-*Beyond* (Beyond the French Riviera), (http://beyond.fr/history/oc.html). It is rumoured that Dante seriously considered using Occitan in his great work, *The Divine Comedy*, which has become the consummate example of late medieval-early Renaissance vernacular Italian.

[115] Russ Collins, "Oc Language – Langue d'Oc," Provence-*Beyond*, (Beyond the French Riviera), (1996-1999), (http://www.beyond.fr/history/ocP01.htm).

tongue of the beguines of Roubaud. Occitan was the logical choice for the *vita* and there is no evidence that Philippine was fluent in any other languages. Nevertheless, the official nature of Occitan in the early fourteenth century may have allowed Philippine to use the vernacular to create a document that could be submitted for ecclesiastical consideration as well as anchoring the meditations of the Ladies of Roubaud.[116]

[116] Wolfkiel claims that the use of Occitan eliminates the possibility that the *vita* was intended for the canonisation process but she fails to account for the widespread use of the language at the papal court, The Life, 25-26. In contrast, Babinsky argues that Marguerite Porete's use of vernacular French (derived from the langue d'oïl, not Occitan) was considered a challenge to Church and royal authority and was one of the reasons that contributed to her condemnation and burning in Paris on June 1, 1310. "Introduction," The Mirror of Simple Souls, 25-26.

CHAPTER TWO: MODELS OF LAY SPIRITUALITY AND SANCTITY IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES: FRANCISCANS, BEGUINES, AND MYSTICS

Marc Bloch recognised two "feudal" ages, the second following the first with "no definite break with the past... but the change of direction which, ... affected in turn all the graphs of social activity."[117] The expansion of internal and external trade in Europe, the rise of the merchant class, and the shift to a predominantly cash-oriented economy, in other words what he characterises as the "Economic Revolution of the Second Feudal Age," created "a genuine revision of social values."[118] As people struggled to adjust from the 'gift economy' of the early Middle Ages to the new 'profit economy,' a spiritual crisis developed out of the "growing discordance between new economic and social realities and a traditional, initially unresponsive, clergy and theology."[119]

Changes in the conceptions of poverty and charity were among the most compelling alterations arising from the economic evolution. Prior to the development of

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[117] Marc Bloch, Feudal Society: Volume I: The Growth of Ties of Dependence, trans. L. A. Manyon, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961. Original Title: *La société féodale*), 60.

[118] Ibid., 69, 71.

[119] Lester K. Little, Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1978. Paperback edition, 1983), xi. In addition to Bloch, as already mentioned, see Georges Duby, The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century, trans. Howard B. Clarke, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1974. First published in French in 1973); M. M. Postan, The Medieval Economy and Society, (London: Penguin Books, 1975. First published in 1972); Roberto S. Lopez, The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

the commercial economy, poverty was defined as 'weak' in relation to 'powerful' while the practice of charity was interpreted as protecting the 'weak and powerless.'[120] Material impoverishment was merely a secondary result of powerlessness. Thus the monks, who made themselves voluntarily weak – or 'poor' – by putting away their weapons, could remain "secure in the knowledge that ... they – and they alone – were Christ's poor, the poor in spirit."[121] They were unconcerned by the apparent contradiction of 'wealth' and 'poverty' in their lives, content in their "materially comfortable, in some cases even magnificent and luxurious, monastery" and charity to the involuntary poor was of secondary importance compared to charity to the voluntary poor of the monasteries.[122]

The isolation of the monasteries from the city insulated the monks from the dialectic of charity and poverty that was developing around prosperous merchants and artisans. In the twelfth century, businessmen, like the nobles before them, were compelled to engage in expansive almsgiving as a means to salvation. Over time, the "sacrificial gestures performed by early medieval kings ... gradually became the concern of townsmen..."[123] The gift-giving mentality of the early Middle Ages was perpetuated in the spiritual ideology and endorsed by a Church that continued to censure profit and money-lending.[124] Thus, the successful merchant, once his family's wants were fulfilled, gave generously to assuage the moral corruption of his soul from the very work that

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[120] Little, Religious Poverty, 68.

[121] Ibid., 68.

[122] Ibid., 66-68.

[123] Duby, The Early Growth of the European Economy, 259.

[124] Ibid., 259.

permitted the means for him to grant such largesse. Charitable gifts and donations therefore became a part of the mercantile urban society, ensconced within partnership agreements, guilds, and confraternities.[125] The overwhelming presence of urban poverty, readily apparent in the crowded conditions of the growing cities, became the outlet for these charitable impulses, creating a new focus for lay piety that incorporated the economic realities of the time.

Facing the Future – The Evangelical Movement

While the traditional monastic orders seemed to hold themselves aloof from the spiritual crises of the new economy, other movements appeared to reflect the urban culture. One of the first results of the interaction between religious structure and urban society involved a reform of the regular canons. Through a conscientious application of individual poverty and an active apostolacy, the secular clergy moulded themselves into a body clearly distinct from the laity.[126]

A second consequence involved laymen whose quest for spiritual meaning carried them outside accepted modes of religious life.[127] This second route created new expressions of poverty and piety as they rejected the overt materialism of the Church and

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[125] Robert S. Lopez, and Irving W. Raymond, Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World: Illustrative Documents Translated with Introductions and Notes. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. First published in 1955). See especially Chapters III and XXIV for documents illustrating spiritual influences in financial practices.

[126] Little, Religious Poverty, 99.

[127] Ibid., 99.

pursued the *vita apostolica*. Widespread popular piety produced confraternities devoted to penitential acts, such as self-flagellation, the singing of lauds, and active charity.[128] Even though the Church generally supported organised expressions of lay piety, some associations became too rigorous in their demands for Church reform or interfered with the responsibilities and privileges of the secular clergy – most notably preaching in public – resulting in open hostility from the ecclesiastic officials and charges of heresy.[129]

The Humiliati, one of the earliest known groups of pious laymen, were already well established in Milan by the 1170s.[130] Notable for their humility and the simple austerity of their lives, holding themselves apart from the social life of their communities yet refusing the cloister, they initially received the support of the Church. But in 1179, they were denied the privilege of preaching in their pursuit of apostolic perfection. Despite papal disapproval, the Humiliati persisted and were declared heretical by 1184. Yet the Roman curia was in a conciliatory mood under Innocent III (r. 1198-1215) and in 1198, the Humiliati whose beliefs were confirmed orthodox were divided into three groups. The 'priestly order' consisted of the canons and canonesses; the 'monastic order' was made up of continent lay people living in adjoining convents; and the 'third order'

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[128] For a consideration of penitential confraternities, see: Maureen Flynn, Sacred Charity: Confraternities and Social Welfare in Spain, 1400 – 1700, (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1989); John Henderson, Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Lester K. Little, Liberty, Charity, Fraternity: Lay Religious Confraternities at Bergamo in the Age of the Commune, ed. Sandro Buzzetti, (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina Editore, 1988); Nicholas Terpstra, Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Ronald F. E. Weissman, Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence, (New York: Academic Press, 1982).

[129] For more information on medieval heresies, see the collection of primary sources translated and annotated by Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans, Heresies of the High Middle Ages, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969, 1991).

[130] Frances Andrews provides a detailed analysis of the Humiliati in The Early Humiliati, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

was made up of married couples who led normal secular lives.[131]

Although the Humiliati appear to have been geographically restricted to Italy, their idea of integrating traditional monastic structures into lay religious communities provided a model for other tertiary and lay religious societies throughout Europe. In the early 1170s, a wealthy merchant in Lyons named Waldes also attempted to create a life of Christian perfection through poverty, mendicantism, and apostolic preaching.[132] Moved by the story of Saint Alexius who renounced both bride and inheritance on his wedding night, Waldes and his followers, the Waldensians, were initially welcomed by the papacy in 1179, the same year that the Humiliati pressed for the privilege of preaching. The vow of voluntary poverty was endorsed but, like the Humiliati, the Waldensians were strictly warned against preaching except at the express request of the local clergy. Their insistence on preaching as a necessary element of the *vita apostolica* brought them into conflict with the secular clergy and ultimately led to their condemnation as heretics in 1184 at the Council of Vienne.[133] Forced into hiding, the Waldensians, who were now divided into the Poor Men of Lyons, the Poor Lombards, and the Runcarii, continued to flourish in northern Italy, Languedoc, Provence, and the Dauphiné where they were associated with the Cathars despite theological differences and their persistent opposition

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[131] Little, Religious Poverty, 113-116

[132] Waldes is also refered to by the surnames 'Valdes,' 'Waldo,' and 'Valdo' while the first name 'Peter' is frequently ascribed to this medieval merchant.

[133] The decisions of the Council of Vienne in 1184 were clear statements of the Church's intention to retain sole jurisdiction over public preaching. See Vauchez, The Laity in the Middle Ages, 43-44, and Chapter Eight: The Pastoral Transformation of the Thirteenth Century, 95-105.

to the latter.[134]

Even though the Waldensians were condemned as heretics, the influence of the movement was extensive as they spread across Europe, reaching into virtually every major proto-industrial and trade centre. Except for the role of public preaching, Waldes' interpretation of the *vita apostolica* typified the Church's "ideal of perfection: poverty, renunciation of worldly goods, and contempt for money, which [was] deemed a blemish on the soul."[135] Indeed, just as the search for primitive monasticism stimulated the reforms that created the Carthusians and the Cistercians, the Waldensians represent a lay version of this monastic quest for a 'purer' Christianity – "to restore the early apostolic communities' austere ideals that they thought central to Christianity."[136] The Waldensians, with their apostolic poverty and fervour, served as the prototype for early Franciscanism and other lay religious organisations.

The Mendicant Orders – The Franciscans

The mendicant orders successfully fused canonically approved expressions of asceticism with the apostolic ambitions of the new lay spirituality, receiving papal approval and widespread popular support.[137] Not only were the most successful friars, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, able to create a new style of spiritual expression for

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[134] Little, Religious Poverty, 120-128; André Vauchez, The Laity in the Middle Ages, 21.

[135] Duby, The Early Growth of the European Economy, 259.

[136] Lutz Kaelber, Schools of Asceticism: Ideology and Organization in Medieval Religious Communities, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 129-173.

[137] Little, Religious Poverty, 99.

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[illegible] an echo [illegible] e story of Francis of Assisi [illegible] s of failed enterpr[illegible] under[illegible] f spiritual meanin[illegible] only by [illegible] g those of his fath[illegible] could [illegible]. In 1210, Pope In[illegible] ocent III s[illegible] who were dedicat[illegible] to lay pre[illegible] e issue of public preaching [illegible] y groups, Francis [illegible] admirat[illegible] in direct opposi[illegible] n to the [illegible] tion with Francis [illegible] reputab[illegible] on for the

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[138] Ibid., [illegible]

[139] Ther[illegible] no short[illegible] are being republis[illegible] The past [illegible] New York and Lon[illegible] Continuum [illegible]

[140] Even [illegible] ough Innoce[illegible] nteract the spread [illegible] heresy [illegible] an[illegible] Catholics,' compos[illegible] of reformed [illegible] ous of any attempts [illegible] lay preach[illegible]

themselves but "they went on to formulate a meaningful spiritual programme for the urban laity."[138] Since the Franciscans were most closely associated with the beguines in southern Europe and particularly with the House of Roubaud, this thesis will focus upon that Order rather than the Dominicans, who exercised greater influence over the beguines in the north.

In an echo of Waldes' conversion, everyone will be familiar with the story of Francis of Assisi, the young son of a merchant in Italy who, following a series of failed enterprises, underwent a cathartic experience and found his secular life devoid of spiritual meaning. Only by divesting himself of all his worldly possessions – including those of his father – could he begin to approach the reverent serenity that he desired.[139] In 1210, Pope Innocent III sanctioned the work of Francis and his eleven companions, who were dedicated to lay preaching, personal poverty, and a life of mendicancy. While the issue of public preaching had brought the Church into conflict with many other lay groups, Franciscan admiration of the material world as a creation of God stood in direct opposition to the dualist ideology of Catharism.[140] This ideology, in combination with Francis' indisputable devotion to the Catholic priesthood, provides an explanation for the

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[138] Ibid., 99.

[139] There is no shortage of biographies of Saint Francis of Assisi and even older works are being republished. The past year saw G. K. Chesterton's 1923 biography of Saint Francis re-issued (New York and London: Continuum, 2001). Original publishing (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923).

[140] Even though Innocent III had already endorsed two groups dedicated to lay preaching to counteract the spread of heresy – an orthodox group of Humiliati were approved in 1201 and the 'Poor Catholics,' composed of reformed Waldensians, received permission in 1208 – the Church remained suspicious of any attempts at lay preaching.

early support of the Church and the subsequent success of the Order.[141] The Franciscan goals of personal poverty and the *vita apostolica*, as represented by the mendicant lifestyle, provided an authorised example of the poverty, humility, and simplicity that appealed to popular piety and was winning so many converts to the heretical sects of contentious Waldensians, Humiliati, and Cathars. Franciscanism granted religious validity to the joys of living even as it demonstrated the path to a higher and purer life. The paradox of rejecting and appreciating the material world was not resolved by Franciscanism but it recognised and accepted it as a part of the human experience.

Throughout history, it is often the charismatic nature of the leader that ensures the success of any new religious movements and Franciscanism is no exception. Creative and poetic, imbued with the warmth and spirit of the *chansons de gestes* and the *romans* of southern Europe, Francis expressed his ideas in actions rather than words. While he left several writings that evoke his "spirit and life," his was not a mind attuned to the administrative details necessary in the governance of a vast multinational organisation. His ideal remained always the simple wandering lifestyle that he initially pursued with his first eleven companions.[142] The Early Rule, little more than a collection of Gospels patched together, reflects this artlessness.[143]

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[141] The prologue to *The Earlier Rule* reveals why the Order was favourably received by Innocent III: "3. Brother Francis and whoever will be the head of this Order promises obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope Innocent and to his successors. 4. And all other are bound to obey Brother Francis and his successors." Francis of Assisi, *The Earlier Rule*, Prologue. 3-4. Francis and Clare: The Complete Works, trans. Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady, (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 107-135. 109.

[142] This simplicity is reflected in many of his works including the *First Version of the Letter to the faithful*, I, 21. As cited by Armstrong and Brady, "Introduction," Francis and Clare, 62-65.

[143] Iriarte, Franciscan History, 7; Armstrong and Brady, Francis and Clare, 9.

Despite the simplicity of the Early Rule and his inattention to larger bureaucratic issues, Saint Francis succeeded in juxtaposing Scriptures to create an outline that reveals the essence, if not the specific details, of the Franciscan life that he envisioned. The first line of the first chapter expresses Francis' goals for his Order in the simple, straightforward terms that served him best:

> 1. The rule and life of these brothers is this: to live in obedience, in chastity, and without anything of their own, and to follow the teaching and the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who says: 2. If you wish to be perfect, go (Mt 19:21) and sell everything (cf. Lk 18:22) you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me (Mt 19:21).[144]

Francis' devotion to holy poverty did not lessen throughout his life and his Testament reflects precisely the same ideals that were encompassed in the Earlier Rule:

> And those who came to receive life gave to the poor everything which they were capable of possessing ... and we had no desire for anything more. ... Let the brothers beware that they by no means receive churches or poor dwellings or anything which is built for them, unless it is in harmony with [that] holy poverty which we have promised in the Rule ...[145]

At one time, the collection of Franciscan writings known as the *Speculum Perfectionis* was considered the oldest source of Franciscan spirituality. It was attributed

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[144] "The Earlier Rule," in Francis and Clare, 107-135. 109. Apparently, while Francis developed the plan of life in the Rule, Caesar of Speyer was asked to "embellish the text ... with appropriate Scriptural passages." 108.

[145] *The Testament*, Francis and Clare, 155.

to one of Saint Francis' personal companions, Brother Leo, who allegedly wrote it soon after the saint's death in 1226.[146] The collection is now believed to have reached its current form sometime around 1318 but, as Eric Doyle points out, this later date does not detract from the importance of the work to an understanding of Franciscan spirituality.[147]

In 1244, at the General Chapter in Genoa, all friars who had known Saint Francis were invited to present their recollections of the saint, his life, and the early days of the Order. This collection served as the source for Thomas of Celano's *Second Life*, prepared in the late 1240s, and Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior* and *Legenda Minor*, written in 1261.[148] The *Speculum Perfectionis* also drew on this same collection and, even though it was not compiled in its final form until the early fourteenth century, the stories contained within the work were well circulated prior to that date.[149]

Even as early as the 1240s, tensions had developed within the Order concerning the observance of the Rule and the *Speculum Perfectionis* gives the impression of a nostalgic yearning for the earlier days of the Order, an idealised and almost utopian life of austere simplicity, "in which the friars as poor, itinerant preachers moved from city to city in pairs, proclaiming the love and peace of God the Great King."[150] As a result, the

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[146] Paul Sabatier (*Speculum Perfectionis*, 1898), as cited by Eric Doyle in "Introduction: The Mirror of Perfection; St Bonaventure's Life of St Francis." In The Little Flowers of St. Francis – The Mirror of Perfection – St. Bonaventure's Life of St. Francis, (London: Dent, 1973. First published 1910), x-xiii. x.

[147] Ibid., x.

[148] Commissioned by the Franciscan Order in 1260, Bonaventure's *Legendae* were approved in 1263 at the General Chapter at Pisa. The 1266 Chapter in Paris ordered the destruction of all other *Lives* of the Francis. Ibid., xi. Bonaventure (c.1217-1274) served as Minister General of the Franciscans from 1257 to 1274.

[149] Doyle, "Introduction," x.

[150] Ibid., xi.

collection provides us with insight into the ideal spirituality contemplated by Francis and his early followers. Despite the alteration in dating the compilation, the *Speculum Perfectionis* continues to be one of the primary exemplars of Franciscan spirituality and the tenets of the Order are clearly distinguished in the topics discussed in the *Speculum*: Poverty; Charity and Compassion for the sick and poor, the Brethren, and the Order; Humility and Obedience; Spirit of Prophecy.

Table 1. Franciscan Spirituality

* Obedience to superiors in Order and to Church * Chastity * Poverty – personal and institutional, permitting manual labour and mendicancy * Active apostolacy * Uncloistered community * Personal, active charity to the poor and sick * Prophecy and visionary imagery * Appreciation of material world as creation of God * Recognition of and devotion to human Christ * Eucharistic and Marian devotion
Based on: Burr; Lambert; *Earlier* and *Later Rules*; *Speculum Perfectionis* [151]

The Franciscan ideals, summarised in Table 1, proved to be widely popular, fulfilling the spiritual needs of the urban population, and the Order multiplied quickly. In 1210, when the Order was first approved, there were only twelve Franciscans. By the middle of the thirteenth century, there were more than 30,000 avowed members of the

[151] It must be noted, however, that any attempt to define concretely Franciscan spirituality is doomed from inception since the very success of the Order lies in its adaptability to a multiplicity of circumstances and conditions. Nonetheless, this adaptability is more a function of degree than an alteration in observance and the basic elements proposed herein are common to all who follow the Franciscan Rule.

Order and many of them had entered the priesthood.[152] This rapid expansion created serious problems for Franciscan austerity as the very success of the Franciscans created conditions that jeopardised the ascetic values upon which the Order was founded.

The popularity of the Franciscans resulted in the recruitment of friars to numerous spiritual and secular posts. Encouraged to become teachers, preachers, pastors, inquisitors, bishops, and cardinals, Franciscans quickly became constants in ecclesiastical, royal, and civil administrations. Franciscanism became a "career opportunity" as joining the Order became more a way to achieve temporal success than to renounce it.[153] Manual labour in exchange for food, shelter, and clothing was disregarded in favour of increasingly erudite occupations and begging. The latter reached such extremes that the Franciscans were likened to highwaymen.[154]

The Franciscan mission to minister to the parish could not be met by an itinerant clergy and the Franciscans began to construct permanent friaries and churches to hold the vast crowds that their preachers drew. The pious poured money into the coffers of the Order, and to finance their building projects, the friars estranged the local clergy by pursuing the legacies and burial privileges that were so despised by Francis. Many Franciscan establishments became centres of ostentatious display and sumptuous living

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[152] Burr, Olivi and Franciscan Poverty, 4.

[153] Ibid., 5.

[154] Ibid., 1.

and constant contact with the laity gave rise to accusations of scandal.[155]

In 1257, shortly after his election as Minister General, Bonaventure issued an admonitory letter to his brothers, condemning the laxity and disreputable behaviour that left the Order open to ridicule and contempt. He urged a return to the basic ascetic principles of the Order – work, silence, and solitude – "and above all, obey the existing statutes."[156]

Even as Bonaventure sought a more conscientious observance by all members, serious internal tensions had already developed within the Franciscan Order and Bonaventure's counsel did not go far enough for many. The main issue was the definition and application of the rule of absolute poverty. While supporting personal poverty for individual members, the Conventual Franciscans identified more closely with the policies of traditional monastic houses and permitted their institutions to enjoy (*usus*) and administer property for charitable purposes.[157] Certain material possessions were necessary for the Order to meet the needs of the urban laity, such as books to train preachers and teachers, and permanent meeting places and churches for the pastoral care of the parish.

Yet even these items, obviously essential to the goals of the Franciscan apostolate, necessitated numerous alterations to the conception of poverty for those who wanted to

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[155] By the mid-fourteenth century, the derisive association of mendicant friars with greed and lechery was commonplace, as seen in *The Friar's Tale* in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, ed. Michael Murphy, (http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/webcore/murphy/canterbury/).

[156] Burr, Olivi and Franciscan Poverty, 1.

[157] Burr provides a full discussion of the controversy surrounding Franciscan interpretations of *usus*. Ibid., *passim*.

preserve the extreme asceticism of primitive Franciscanism that had shaped the early days of the Order when Francis himself forbade even the possession of breviaries or psalters.[158] These Spiritual Franciscans favoured a narrow interpretation of the rule and continued to pursue a radical mendicant lifestyle, eschewing both personal and institutional possessions.

In their interpretation of poverty, the Spirituals were in direct conflict with the growing administrative and political influence of the Order's superiors which placed them in danger of disregarding another of their vows, that of obedience. Faced with the choice between moderating their interpretation of poverty or disobeying their superiors within the Order, the Spirituals chose the opinion that the abrogation of any portion of their vow of poverty meant the betrayal of their vows *in toto*, ignoring Francis' own admonitions in the Testament:

> And I firmly wish to obey the minister general of this fraternity and the guardian that it shall please him to give me. And I so wish to be captive in his hands, that I could not move or act outside obedience and his will, because he is my lord. ... And all the brothers should be held thus firmly to obey their guardians and to do the office according to the rule.[159]

Although the dispute between the Spiritual and Conventual branches of the Order

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[158] *Scripta Leonis, Rufini et Angeli, Sociorum S. Francisci*, trans. Rosalind B. Brooke, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 95-283. As cited in Medieval Saints: A Reader, ed. Mary-Ann Stouck, (Peterborough: Broadview, 1999), 494.

[159] Francis of Assisi, *Testamentum*, in K. Esser, *Das Testament des heiligen Franziskus von Assisi. Eine Untersuchung über seine Echtheit und seine Bedeutung*, (Münster-I-W, 1949), 9-10. As cited in Lambert, Franciscan Poverty, 26-27.

was one of the most serious problems faced by the Franciscans, it was not the only threat to the orthodoxy of the Order. One of the earliest complaints of heresy levelled against the Franciscan Order derived from the apocalyptic prophecies of a Cistercian abbot in Calabria.

In a story that presages that of Saint Francis himself, the wealthy young Italian Joachim of Fiore (c.1132-1202) underwent a sudden conversion while on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.[160] He gave his money and clothing to the poor and completed the pilgrimage on foot. Although he joined the Cistercian Order on his return home, he soon withdrew to a hermitage that quickly became the centre of a group of a reformed branch of Cistercians. Joachim is known to have produced at least three books that expanded on his conception of a tripartite world history, associating each age with a member of the Holy Trinity.[161] The first Age of the Old Testament was identified with God the Father while the second Age of the New Testament was allied with Christ the Son. Joachim prophesied that the third Age, governed by the Holy Spirit, would begin after the Antichrist had been destroyed and that, preached by an "order of bare-footed monks," the meaning of the Scriptures would be made clear to all men.[162]

The Franciscans quickly identified themselves as the "bare-footed monks" that

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[160] Although Joachim of Fiore is frequently referred to as 'del Fiore,' the Italian version of his name would be 'da Fiore.' To avoid further linguistic confusion, I have used the English 'of Fiore' throughout this thesis.

[161] *Concordia Novi et Veteris Testamenti*, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, and *Psalterium decem Chordarum*. It is interesting to note that Joachim's writings remained popular for quite some time – the *Concordia* was printed in 1519 while the other two were printed in 1527. Decima Douie, The Nature and the Effect, 6, *fn*5.

[162] Ibid., 6.

would usher in the final Age of Enlightenment and advocated Joachim's beliefs while pseudo-Joachimite writings condemned Frederick II as the Antichrist. Joachimism was mildly encouraged by the Church in its early days and might have expanded into a major religious movement. All that changed in 1254, however, when a young Franciscan student at the University in Paris, Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, decided to publish a collection of Joachim's writings with his own glosses and interpretations, the *Eternal Gospel*. In his eagerness to interpret Joachim's writings in a manner favourable to the Franciscans, Gerard not only claimed that the Franciscans were the only preachers entitled to give instruction in spiritual matters but that Joachim's writings were the gospels of the new age.[163]

Appearing as it did, at the height of the conflict between the University teachers and the mendicant orders, the *Eternal Gospel* met with ardent opposition from the secular clergy. A curial commission was formed under Alexander IV (r.1254-1260) and condemned Gerard's work even though Joachim of Fiore himself was confirmed as wholly orthodox.[164] But even though the Church was willing to deal with the matter gently, the Franciscan Order took a much harsher attitude to such scandalous behaviour, not only depriving Gerard of his position and the authority to preach, but also imprisoning him for the rest of his life.[165]

The condemnation of Joachimism reached into the highest levels of the Order and

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[163] Ibid., 7-8.

[164] Joachim's own writings, which he had voluntarily submitted to the papacy for consideration, were never adjudged heretical. Ibid., 8.

[165] Ibid., 8.

played a role in the political manoeuvres of the Franciscan generals and their relations with the Papal See. One theory for the resignation of John of Parma from the office of Minister-General in 1257 is that Bonaventure portrayed Parma's close association with Gerard and other known Joachimites, including Hugues de Digne, as a menace to the Order.[166] Yet Joachimism persisted within the Order, especially amongst those who fought the moderating influence that was spreading through Franciscan asceticism; hence, the millennial beliefs of Joachimism were frequently associated with the Spiritual Franciscans and other Franciscan offshoots such as the *Fraticelli* and the Brethren of the Free Spirit.[167]

Combining Spiritualities: The Beguines

Even though the peripatetic lifestyle of the mendicant friars achieved official recognition, the women of these orders remained cloistered nuns that closely resembled the convents of traditional monastic orders except for differences in interpretations and applications of poverty.[168] Chastity and physical asceticism, however, were common to both cloistered nuns and pious laywomen, linking women religious throughout the

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[166] Ibid., 8-9. Having died in 1255, Hugues de Digne escaped persecution.

[167] Douie presents a more detailed evaluation of Joachimite influence in Franciscanism. Ibid., 22-48. The *Fraticelli*, the Brethren of the Free Spirit, and the Sack Friars (*Saccati*) are generally classified among the many off-shoots of the radical Zealot movement within the Franciscan Order that gave rise to the Spirituals. The ecclesiastical reforming mood of the *Fraticelli* and Brethren brought them into conflict with the Church. The Sack Friars, however, were generally accepted as orthodox and they were very popular in Marseilles. E. Baratier and F. Reynaud, "Les réguliers et les établissements hospitaliers," Le Diocèse de Marseille, ed. Jean-Remy Palanque, (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1967), 73-93. 83.

[168] Traditional female monasticism excluded the absolute poverty that the Poor Ladies of San Damiano believed essential to their interpretation of Franciscan spirituality and Clare herself, recognised as one of Francis' closest associates, spent decades fighting the moderating influence of the new administrators.

centuries.[169] These qualities, and the intensity with which they were pursued, may be seen as the defining characteristics of female spirituality. The relationship between sexuality, spirituality, and physical asceticism are especially relevant to a study of religious women in the Middle Ages.

One of the most common acts of physical asceticism for religious women was fasting. While fasting as physical asceticism did not originate with the early Desert Fathers, it was certainly part of the social and spiritual context of ancient Christianity. The Desert Fathers did not deliberately seek out hunger and physical mortification in order to punish their bodies; rather, a gruelling physical regimen was a result of their rejection of society and civilisation as they sought spiritual fulfilment in the isolation of the desert.[170] Along the Nile Valley, at the boundaries of the desert, the threat of starvation was very real and the pains of hunger were often more insistent than the pangs of sexual desire.[171]

Although both men and women exercised extremes of fasting, the practice came to be more frequently associated with women religious for three main reasons. First, because women could not effectively follow the same path and abandon the cities for the desert, "virgins frequently defined themselves as separate from the world through an

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[169] Jo Ann McNamara, Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996. Paperback edition, 1998), 3-4. Indeed, for McNamara, the feminine engenderment of sexual abstinence is so complete that the term virginity became a term for female sexual purity and was the basis for definitions of female identity.

[170] Peter Brown, The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 235-237.

[171] Ibid., 218, 222.

exceptionally rigid control of their diet."[172] Second, for the early Christians, the original sin was not the sin of 'sex,' but, rather, the sin of 'eating' and to fast heroically "was to relive Adam's first, and most fatal temptation, and to overcome it, as Adam had not done."[173] The third reason is related to the reproductive role of women. The female body was considered antithetical to the male body, as 'settled land' contrasted with 'desert.' But the virgin's body created a paradoxical situation – it held the potential of being fruitful but uninterrupted by marriage or childbearing. it symbolised "the untouched desert."[174] Held in check and controlled, it represented the 'desert tamed,' the body constrained.

These carefully constructed intellectual connections were not easily transmitted from the Desert Fathers to the clergy, the laity or even to successive generations of Christian ascetics. Rather, the behaviours and the rituals became the goals, without regard for or an understanding of the reasons and justifications for these actions.[175] Extreme asceticism was later interpreted as "contempt for the human condition and hatred of the body" and lust for food came to be related to sexual drive.[176] Thus, rejection of female sexuality and the female body came to be tied to fasting.

Even though the Franciscans were originally a lay association, the increasing professionalisation of the Order throughout the thirteenth century was accompanied with

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[172] Ibid., 269.

[173] Ibid., 220-221.

[174] Ibid., 271.

[175] Ibid., 240.

[176] Ibid., 222-223.

priestly discomfort concerning pastoral responsibility for the third orders. But lay piety had made too many inroads to be abandoned and new forms of religious life continued to develop, combining a secular life with fervent religious piety. For women outside cloister walls, the beguines offered a new route into the realms of piety, sanctity, and mystical revelation.

Despite the continuing prevalence of claustration for most religious women in the thirteenth century, alterations in the conceptualisation of female piety increased the prevalence of tertiary or lay lifestyles. A major shift from rural to urban life, the rise of mendicancy, the expansion of the cult of the Virgin and a new emphasis on the humanity of Christ, ecclesiastical war against heresy, and the political struggles of the papacy combined to change the cultural landscape of the later Middle Ages.[177] In response to these new circumstances, the characteristics of religious women evolved to include higher levels of education, intense Eucharistic devotion, personal identification with the dispossessed, mystical union with the divine, and more involvement in political and religious issues.[178]

While all of these elements contributed to the development of the beguines out of a pious and orthodox laity drawn to the *imitatio Christi* movement of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the roots of the beguines lie deeper in the early Middle Ages,

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[177] Michael Goodich, "The Contours of Female Piety in Later Medieval Hagiography," Church History, 50, N1, (1981), 20-32. 21.

[178] Ibid., 30-32. However, Goodich sees the beguines primarily as an unorthodox movement associated with the Brethren of the Free Spirit and considers the name 'beguine' a derivative of 'Albigensian.' While this perspective does not detract from his observations of the trends in female piety, it is further evidence of the misinterpretation of beguinal spirituality as heretical already mentioned, *supra*, 9.

suggesting a "spiritual matrilineage" amongst "a continuum of ill-assorted women [that] consistently irritated the orderly minds of early medieval reformers..." existing as ragtag canonesses, recluses, and hermits, even 'unendowed' nuns.[179] However, some authors see the beguines as an outgrowth of the monastic experience, blaming the male dominated gaze of the medieval Church for trivialising "the coherence and vitality of the tradition of women's piety."[180] Dennis Devlin also tries to lift the shadow over the history of female lay spirituality as he considers the differences between the beguines and Cistercian nuns, a distinction not simple even for contemporaries, and concludes that the similarity in spirituality and mysticism between the two groups "undoubtedly" accounted for the interest that the Cistercian monks had in the beguines.[181]

Despite this blurred line between the monastic and beguinal lifestyles, there are significant differences that allow us to clearly identify the beguines. First and foremost, the beguines were officially laypersons, belonging to no recognised order and following no formal rule. Their adherence to vows was only required during the period of their stay in the beguinage and, since they took no permanent vows, they were free to leave, to enter formal orders or even to marry. The apostolic life of the beguine more closely resembled lay piety than traditional monasticism, while a different interpretation of

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[179] McNamara, Sisters in Arms, 205-206.

[180] Carol Neel, "The Origins of the Beguines." In Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages, eds. Judith M. Bennett et al., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 240-260. 260.

[181] Dennis Devlin, "Feminine lay piety in the High Middle Ages: The Beguines," Distant Echoes: Medieval Religious Women: Volume 1: Cistercian Studies Series, Number 71, eds. John A. Nichols and Lillian Thomas Shank, (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1984), 183-196. 183, 190. This relationship between the Cistercians and the beguines was most prevalent in northern Europe. Unfortunately, the question of whether Cistercian interest preceded Cistercian influence remains unanswered.

poverty permitted the beguines to support themselves by manual work and mendicancy, two practices forbidden to nuns. The ascetic practices of the beguines were frequently more severe than nuns whose behaviours were monitored by superiors, and their Eucharistic devotion was typically more fervent than that of their cloistered sisters.[182] Nuns were seldom accused of heresy while the beguines were regularly suspected of association with the Albigensians. Waldensians. *Fraticelli*, Brethren of the Free Spirit, and any number of lesser-known heretical sects.[183] Despite the suspicion and outright antagonism of the official Church, the beguine lifestyle and spirituality may have offered women the ideal '*via media*,' bridging the gap between professed religious and devout laywomen.[184] Drawing elements from practical and contemplative piety, the beguines created a lifestyle that placed their early followers among the most independent religious women of the later Middle Ages.

The absence of claustration and permanent vows was an ongoing problem for the beguines. In 1289, in the papal bull *Supra montem*, Nicholas IV ordered that lay penitents attach themselves to one of the mendicant orders and forbade them to return to secular lives after joining one of the Tertiary Orders.[185] For the beguines, the situation further deteriorated after the condemnations of the beguines and beghards by John XXII in the

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[182] Ibid., 191-192.

[183] Ibid., 193.

[184] Ibid., 193.

[185] Joanna Cannon and André Vauchez, Margherita of Cortona, 27. These restrictions were a restatement of Honorius III's bull of 1220. The influence of these bulls on the beguines of Roubaud will be discussed in the third chapter of this thesis.

early fourteenth century so that lay orders sought to bind themselves even more closely to officially sanctioned Orders.[186]

The most comprehensive analysis of the development of the beguinal lifestyle comes from Ernest W. McDonnell who penned the quintessential text on the beguine lifestyle nearly half a century ago, *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture*.[187] Less an analysis than a vast compendium of sources and an extensive historical narrative of the beguine movement, this work is critical to the identification of beguines in source material. While McDonnell specifically intended his tome to redress the lack of scholarship on the beguines in English, he unintentionally created another problem. His focus on the Belgian beguines initiated a trend that has been followed all too rigidly by scholars writing in English and, until recently, only French and Italian scholars had given more than a cursory glance to the beguines of Mediterranean Europe. Credit must nonetheless be given to McDonnell, who also studied the male experience of the movement, an aspect typically omitted in most works, belying the impression that the beguines were strictly a 'female' religious movement.

The chronological stages of beguine associations developed by McDonnell has been the basis for identifying lay religious communities in the Middle Ages as 'beguines.' According to McDonnell, the first stage involved individual women living alone or with parents. Eventually, these individuals formed small communities within

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[186] Devlin, "Feminine lay piety," 193.

[187] Ernest W. McDonnell, The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture: With Special Emphasis on the Belgian Scene, (Reprint: New York: Octagon Press, 1969. First published: New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1954).

parish settings and, over time, larger groups of enclosed beguines were constituted for service in hospitals and other good works. The final stage was the organisation of large communities into independent beguine parishes (*curtes*) with large communities of women and associated personnel.[188] While Bernard McGinn agrees with the first two phases, he asserts that the final two stages were actually simultaneous developments rather than consecutive chronological stages that arose from persecution during the early fourteenth century.[189]

Table 2. The Spirituality of the Beguine

* Officially laypersons – did not take lifelong vows * Not associated with any single religious order * No formal rule * Commitment to chastity * Poverty, supported by manual labour and mendicancy * Humility * Charity, often expressed by caring for sick * Extreme asceticism * Uncloistered community * Intense Eucharistic devotion * Apostolic tendencies – preaching or spiritual guidance
Based on: McGinn, Devlin, McDonnell, Petroff

Especially important for our evaluation of the beguines of Roubaud is McDonnell's identification of the four principles of beguine spirituality – chastity, poverty, humility, and charity – but other factors can be identified, as summarised in

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[188] Ibid., 5-6.

[189] Bernard McGinn, The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism: Volume 3: The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200-1350), (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 32; "The Changing Shape of Late-Medieval Mysticism: The historical development of Christian monasticism and 12th-century liturgical life in the monastic community," Church History, V65, N2 (June 1996), 197-219. Since McGinn's 1996 article is essentially an excerpt from his 1998 volume on mysticism, I will focus my attention on the book.

Table 2.[190]

Any study of the beguines must consider the linking of medieval mysticism with the beguines, to such a degree that many definitions of 'beguine' include mysticism. McGinn traces the roots of the beguines back to the pious lay followers of the late twelfth century priest, Lambert le Bègüe (the Stammerer) of Liège, without actually calling Lambert the founder of the beguine movement.[191] Instead, he suggests that the movement, with its strong mystical component, was a spontaneous outburst of piety from devout lay women, shaped and defined by the archetypal mystic, Mary of Oignies.[192]

Mary's role in the development of the beguine movement cannot be discounted but her influence would have been extremely limited without the support and encouragement of Jacques de Vitry, who related Mary's visions and life, providing an 'officially sanctioned' model for other pious laywomen to follow. Nonetheless, Mary's experience does demonstrate the pattern of the early beguine existence, that is, a mystic woman at the centre of a group of other holy women and educated clerics.[193] While many beguines certainly experienced mystical episodes, many others did not, living simply and piously according to the rules and regulations of their beguinages.

Yet the vast amount of writing on the beguines' mysticism cannot be dismissed and must be considered within the context of their lifestyle. Elizabeth Petroff describes

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[190] McDonnell, The Beguines and Beghards, 413.

[191] McGinn, The Presence of God: The Flowering of Mysticism, 32-33.

[192] Ibid., 33, 36-38.

[193] Ibid., 34.

the beguine communities as 'radical,' unstructured, non-hierarchical spiritual communities that supported and encouraged the development of mysticism.[194] She insists that the life of the mystic Marie d'Oignies was the prototype for the beguine lifestyle, demonstrating mysticism as one of the most significant characteristics of beguinal spirituality.

Mystic Spirituality – Imagery and Union

Just as the term 'beguine' served to encompass a vast range of secular lifestyles and lay expressions of piety, the term 'mystic' has been similarly used "as a convenient umbrella term under which to shelter all varieties of religious experience."[195] Medieval mysticism entailed spiritual and doctrinal instruction given directly by God. Even though female mystics within convent walls seldom breached the boundaries of orthodox doctrine, the role of the mystic was embraced by community worship and contributed to the public ritual, reflecting and amplifying popular devotion in the high Middle Ages.[196] Mysticism also shifted the focus of penance from public confession and sacramental absolution to personal and private penitence, a concept supported by the rising ideology

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[194] Elizabeth Alvida Petroff, "A New Feminine Spirituality: The Beguines and Their Writings in Medieval Europe," Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 51-79.

[195] Rosalynn Voaden, God's Words, Women's Voices, 9. Avoiding anachronistic interpretations of past experiences is a serious problem for historians. These difficulties are illustrated by Christina Mazzoni, Saint Hysteria: Neurosis, Mysticism, and Gender in European Culture, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), who attempts to identify late nineteenth and twentieth century psychological definitions of 'female hysteria' with medieval descriptions of mysticism.

[196] McNamara, Sisters in Arms, 343, 347.

of purgatory.[197] As an alternative to scholasticism, a route available only to male religious, female mysticism systematically challenged the orthodox hierarchy by reflecting growing anticlericalism and sought to replace scholastic interpretation of Church doctrine with visionary experience.[198]

For the early Church Fathers, these two styles – the scholastic and the mystic – were distinct but complementary and could even be combined within a single person, as demonstrated by Augustine.[199] Over the course of time, however, the links between the lifestyles became increasingly strained and the theologies separated into the categories of mystical-contemplative and the dogmatic-active. This theological dichotomy resulted in the development of "mutually exclusive categories, as if mysticism were for saintly women and theological study were for practical but, alas, unsaintly men," a distinction that reflects the aforementioned tendency to see mysticism as somehow 'feminine.'[200]

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[197] Ibid., 324, 347; Jacques Le Goff, Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages, (New York: Zone Books, 1988. Originally published as *La bourse et la vie*, 1986), 65-84.

[198] Andrew Louth, The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981). Louth traces the separation of mystical theology from dogmatic theology. According to Louth, mystical theology provides the context for dogmatic theology and, as such, the two concepts are inseparable. But as Christianity accepted the "Greek philosophical identification of two lives, the active and the contemplative," the notion "that the contemplative life is superior" was also absorbed, 203. Although 'scholasticism,' *per se*, did not exist for the early Church Fathers, the term is used here to reflect the learned philosophic approach to the study of theology that prevailed in the early centuries of Christianity.

[199] Ibid., 203.

[200] Thomas Merton, Seeds of Contemplation (Anthony Clarke, 1972), 197. As cited in Lough, Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition, xii. Another attempt to explain the medieval tension between orthodox dogma and mystical theology involves a rejection of conventional devotionalism even as religious conventions provided the basis for conversion to a less conventional piety by linking the public religious culture to private meditation. Richard Kieckhefer, "Convention and Conversion: Patterns in Late Medieval Piety," Church History, V67, N1 (Mar 1998), 32-51. Unfortunately, his argument rests upon the privatisation of conventional pieties and he is forced to concede that excessive conventionality becomes unconventionality, an admission that undermines his entire argument.

The tension between the practical and the mystical was resolved by the beguines by "active service. [and] those elements of mystic grace which prevented such service, or diverted attention from it, such as visions, ecstasies and trances, were dismissed as juvenile."[201] Drawing on the writings of four thirteenth century beguine mystics – Beatrijs of Nazareth. Hadewijch (of Brabant), Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Marguerite Porete – Murk-Jansen questions the importance of mysticism to the beguines, setting herself against the conventional association of beguine lifestyle with extremes of mystical asceticism while other authors discount individual agency and spiritual motivation in medieval female mysticism by tying it to the female life cycle.[202] Concluding that most female mystics only assumed the role of teacher later in life when maturity granted them the freedom to function as active and visible leaders within the community, the theory fails to take into consideration the youth of many mystic women such as Agnes of Montepulciano and Catherine of Siena.[203] Douceline herself was not yet in her twenties when she experienced her first visions.[204] Furthermore, the life-cycle theory discounts the broad spectrum of life experiences of mystic women, which included lifelong virginity, chaste marriage, widowhood, and even extramarital motherhood.[205] Furthermore, the dismissal of the mystical element from the spirituality of the beguines also rejects many

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[201] Saskia Murk-Jansen, Brides in the Desert: Spirituality of the Beguines, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1998), 115.

[202] Elizabeth Alvida Petroff, "Women and Mysticism in the Medieval World," in Body and Soul, 3-24.

[203] Ibid., 20. 21. Agnes of Montepulciano (1268-1317) experienced visions by the age of nine; Catherine of Siena (c.1347-1380) began her mystical encounters at nineteen.

[204] The sequence of Douceline's visionary experiences will be further discussed in the next chapter.

[205] Douceline remained a virgin all her life; Margherita of Cortona (c.1247-1297) was an unwed mother.

of the unique qualities of these pious laywomen.[206]

Another interpretation of the role of mysticism in beguine spirituality is posited by Bernard McGinn who claims that the 'New Mysticism' of the High Middle Ages was an outgrowth of the monastic mysticism of the patristic and early medieval periods but with three additional elements: emphasis on experience; importance of an erotic love language; and the introduction of scholastic modes of defining a doctrine of contemplation.[207] The new emphasis on experiential theology was reinforced by a lay desire to receive the spiritual benefits of the *vita apostolica* and the evangelical components of penance, poverty, and preaching underwent subtle alterations to bring them within reach of a pious laity.[208] While penance was a concept thoroughly ingrained within Christian dogma, the boundaries of poverty and preaching were fluid and lay attempts to appropriate these roles, traditionally ascribed to male monastics and the clergy, created tension between the official ecclesiastical hierarchy and secular expressions of spirituality. Among the best exemplars of this 'New Mysticism' were the

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[206] For a more faithful, if less thoroughly analysed, rendition of the mystical writings of three of the same women considered by Murk-Jansen, we can turn to Fiona Bowie's anthology of the works of Mechthild of Magdeburg, Beatrice of Nazareth, and Hadewijch of Brabant. Fiona Bowie, Beguine Spirituality: Mystical Writings of Mechthild of Magdeburg, Beatrice of Nazareth, and Hadewijch of Brabant, (New York: Crossroad, 1990). Though the work was intended for a popular audience rather than a scholarly one, Bowie's reticence in applying her own interpretations to these writings offers a refreshing opportunity to reflect upon the texts themselves.

[207] McGinn, The Presence of God: The Flowering of Mysticism, 2.

[208] Ibid., 6.

beguines.[209]

The blending of apostolic and ecstatic experience created a new spiritual outlet for the pious laity but the mysticism of the beguines was a double-edged sword that cut at secular heresy even as it created a suspicion of the beguines.[210] Medieval female mystics faced a series of problems that most of their male counterparts did not experience: the questionable authority of a mystic without theological learning or clerical status; the presence of a misogynistic socioreligious tradition; the lack of a definite theological position on the role of visionary experience; and ecclesiastic discomfort in the face of extreme manifestations of mystical experience.[211] Nevertheless, this new style of visionary proved popular and, with the rise of Franciscan mysticism in the thirteenth century, vast numbers of devout laypersons were drawn to the revealed wisdom of mystics even though the increasingly acrimonious rivalry between Franciscan Conventuals and Spirituals led to the condemnation of the beguines as allies of the Spirituals.[212] Indeed, following the example of Jacques de Vitry, the association of the beguines with the mendicant orders became quite common during the late thirteenth and

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[209] The designation of a distinctive women's mysticism must avoid overgeneralisation and excessive dependence on modern feminist theology. There is not a single form of women's mysticism. Instead, there are distinctive aspects to the type of mysticism that was embraced by women – attempts to modify and transcend gender roles; a wide variety of perspectives and genres; and the 'conversational' quality of spiritual encounters. McGinn, "The Changing Shape of Late-Medieval Mysticism," 201-202. These cautions are less evident in his book, McGinn, The Presence of God: The Flowering of Mysticism, xii-xiii.

[210] McGinn, The Presence of God: The Flowering of Mysticism, 36.

[211] Ibid., 154-157.

[212] Ibid., 70-135.

early fourteenth centuries.[213]

Yet the construction of a model of beguine mysticism requires further identification of specific elements of female mysticism in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Delving into the lives, writings, and related mystical experiences of medieval female mystics. Frances Beer demonstrates that, while these women were strikingly individualistic and highly reflective of their cultural ethos, they also shared certain characteristics: intellectual independence; use of mystical bonding with the divine as resistance to cultural pressure to silence; adaptation of literary conventions to express mystical experiences; alteration of traditional lifestyles to suit demands of mystical expression; and a considered grounding in a temporal reality that was transcended through the mystical experience.[214] The characteristic qualities of the medieval female mystic are summarised in Table 3.

The form used by the beguines in their mystical union with God developed out of the models of 'courtly love' that prevailed in the thirteenth century. Indeed, the new emphasis on Marian devotion and the resultant erotic tension, with Christ as Divine Lover, are common themes in female mysticism and hagiography during the later Middle

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[213] By recognising and exploiting the gender distinctions between themselves and mystical women, the mendicants clarified their own connections to God and consolidated their authority within the Church hierarchy. The women provided spiritual assurances for their pastoral programmes while they offered ecclesiastical approbation. John Coakley, "Gender and Authority of Friars: The Significance of Holy Women for Thirteenth-Century Franciscans and Dominicans," Church History 60 (1991): 445-460. 449, 455.

[214] Frances Beer, Women and Mystical Experience in the Middle Ages, 159-161.

Ages.[215] Particularly associated with the northern beguines, who created literary works tying the mystical experience to union with God as an expression of ultimate love, the characterisation of Christ as Divine Lover is seen in the early thirteenth century *vitae* of the northern mystics and was not restricted to beguinal circles, as evidenced by the frankly erotic visions of Teresa of Avila (1515-1582).[216]

Table 3. The Characteristics of the Female Mystic

* Intellectually independent * Mystical bonding resists cultural pressure to silence * Adapts literary styles to express mystic experiences * Alters traditional lifestyles to suit needs * Grounded in temporal reality * Mystical experience transcends reality * Highly individualistic * Identification with Virgin Mary as grieving mother/widow or eroticism in mystical union with Christ
Based on: Beer, McGinn, McNamara

Lay Sanctity and Religious Authority

Throughout the Middle Ages, anxiety over the legitimacy of holy men and women occupied the minds of many people. The tension was increased through the theological challenge offered by mysticism to the ecclesiastically endorsed system of

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[215] Beer, Women and Mystical Experience in the Middle Ages, 65-77: Brigitte Cazelles, ed., The Lady as Saint: A Collection of French Hagiographic Romances of the Thirteenth Century, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).

[216] See Emilie Zum Brum and Georgette Épiney-Burgard, Women Mystics in Medieval Europe, trans. Sheila Hughes, (New York: Paragon House, 1989). Originally published as *Femmes troubadours de Dieu*, (Brepols, 1988).

scholasticism and in the context of formal canonisation processes from the thirteenth century onwards. Although the sanctity of a mystic cannot be used to validate mystical experiences outside the religious tradition, two major signs of veracity in the Judeo-Christian tradition – the acquisition of humility and peace by the mystic; and a 'tranquillity of soul' – are common in the relation of mystical experiences and can be used to validate the authenticity of the mystic, and thus the saint, *within the context* of medieval Christianity.[217]

As lay sanctity flourished as an element of late medieval piety, a tension developed between the 'traditional' holiness of vowed religious and the 'new' sanctity of the laity when the number of lay saints increased dramatically. It was increasingly recognised that a virtuous life was possible beyond the cloister walls that had previously been the only guarantee of such an exemplary lifestyle.[218] Just as hagiography can reveal many aspects of religious piety, it can also provide evidence of the links between the sanctity of vowed religious and that of the laity. The popularity of the hagiographic romance depended upon an understanding of the relationships between grace, good works, and sanctity. The tension of the hagiographic romance emerged from the possibility of human failure, as difficulties are overcome only with the miraculous

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[217] Mark Owen Webb concludes that validation of mystical experiences requires that "the sanctity of mystics depend counterfactually on their experiences being veridical" and attributable to God. On the other hand, Webb does not discount the validity of those claims within the religious system of the culture in which they exist. Mark Owen Webb, "Does the sanctity of Christian mystics corroborate their claims?" International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, V37, N2, (1995): 63-71. 63-64, 70-71.

[218] Indeed, in the thirteenth century, Innocent IV insisted that miracles alone could not prove sanctity – orthodoxy and a virtuous life must accompany miraculous acts – clearly a consideration of the elements of sanctity typically imparted by the monastic lifestyle. Kleinberg, "Proving Sanctity," 197, 199-200.

support of God.[219] But in many hagiographies of lay saints, no form of corruption or 'human weakness' is seen. The suggestion that an individual must be morally perfect before God can manifest great works through them eliminates the challenges required to fulfil hagiographic 'testing'.[220] This standard was a dangerous, distorted, and inhuman example for the laity and the unattainable perfection of the model undermined lay attempts to achieve sanctity and spiritual salvation.[221] Nonetheless, this was the model, summarised in Table 4, that was sought after in the *vita* of Douceline as she is described as 'saintly' from childhood.

Table 4. The Characteristics of Female Lay Sanctity

* Identification with dispossessed, service to sick and poor
* Special devotion to the Eucharist
* Frequently aristocratic
* High educational attainments
* Familial opposition to religious choices
* Tertiary/lay lifestyles
* Political and religious activism
* Community negotiation of saintliness
* Orthodox
* Miracles, commonly materialistic
* Mystical union with God
* Demonstrates stages towards perfection
Based on: Kleinberg, Goodich, McKinley, Vauchez

[219] Kathryn L. McKinley, "The 'Clerk's Tale': Hagiography and the problematics of lay sanctity," Chaucer Review, V33, N1 (1998): 90-111. 91, 105.

[220] Ibid., 94. This idea approaches heresy since perfection in a human being can only be achieved through the grace of God.

[221] Ibid., 106.

One of the main precepts in the application of the term 'saint' is that sanctity is not a process of self-acclamation. It requires the recognition and approbation of the surrounding community. One simply cannot **be** a saint until someone **else** believes that one **is** a saint. Or, in the more eloquent phraseology of André Vauchez, "one is a saint only to and through other people."[222] Just as the laity embraced new opportunities to express their piety by adapting the pious behaviours of vowed religious, they also adapted the methods of creating communally negotiated sanctity in their midst.[223]

Comparing the Beguines – North and South

To date, most scholarly attention has centred on the beguines of the north and, although the situation is changing, information on the southern beguines remains largely incomplete. Yet, just as the northern beguines provide the basis for modern research into the beguinal lifestyle, Douceline herself probably modelled the spiritual lifestyle that she shaped for herself and her followers upon the northern communities. But even as they shared elements of extreme asceticism, and charitable care of the sick, the Ladies of Roubaud differed significantly from their Flemish, German, and Italian sisters. While the Italian and German beguines eschewed stability for a wandering lifestyle that depended on alms to support their public preaching, the Flemish beguines were characterised by self-sufficiency through manual labour and, although uncloistered, a tightly controlled

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[222] Vauchez, Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages, 141.

[223] Kleinberg, Prophets in Their Own Country, *passim*. Also, *supra*, 10-11.

community life.[224] While displaying the controlled communal existence of the Flemish beguines, Douceline and the Ladies of Roubaud rejected manual labour and, instead, opted to support themselves with 'member donations' that suggested the monastic dowry system. An especial reverence for Francis and a life of poverty, and involvement in secular politics further distinguished the House of Roubaud from their northern sisters.[225] The powerful ecstatic experiences of the southern beguines were distinct from the monastic tradition commonly seen in northern communities and Douceline's life is representative of the general character of Franciscan mysticism with its increased emphasis on the mysteries of Christ's life and the excessive states of rapture, especially common amongst women.[226]

Douceline had a vast array of models available to aid in creating a rule of life for herself and her community, as seen in Tables 1 through 4. But rather than importing any single mode of life in its entirety, she chose to combine the elements of popular piety that shaped the Provençal culture of the thirteenth century – mendicantism, the *vita apostolica*, and Franciscan mysticism – with the independence and active charity of the beguinal lifestyle to create a new form of religious existence.

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[224] McDonnell, The Beguines and Beghards, 512.

[225] McGinn, The Presence of God: The Flowering of Mysticism, 137-139.

[226] Ibid., 137-139, 151.

CHAPTER THREE: THE SPIRITUALITY AND SANCTITY OF DOUCELINE DE DIGNE

Any attempt to comprehend the spirituality of Douceline de Digne must necessarily focus on the establishment of her first community of beguines as described in the early portion of her *vita*. Most of the central portion of the vita centres on the elaboration of specific aspects of her spiritual behaviour, such as her humility, poverty, and charity, or accounts of the miracles attributed to her. However, these elements are particularly susceptible to interpretative distortion, which undermines their usefulness. As a result, this analysis will concentrate on those portions of her *vita* that deal with the development of her spirituality through a description of her life.

Douceline's 'secular' life and the story of her conversion to the beguinal lifestyle are related in the first three chapters of the *vita*. The first chapter is "of her life in secular habit and her beginnings with her parents," clearly contrasting Douceline's later religious life.[227] It is in this first chapter that Douceline begins her exercises in physical mortification and active charity while the second chapter explicitly defines "in what manner she took the habit of penance," while the third chapter describes "how she organised her establishment and her religion."[228] Starting shortly after the death of her

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[227] *Li Vida* I: "*Le premiers capitols es de la sieua conversacion en habiti seglar, e de son comensament cant a sos parens.*"

[228] *Li Vida* II: "*Le segons capitols es en cal maniera pres habiti de penitentia;*" III: "*Le ters capitols es en qual maniera azordenet son estament e sa religion.*"

father, which left her effectively orphaned, Douceline first experienced the mystical visions that would shape her life and her reputation for sanctity and, hence, frame the foundation of her establishments.

Born in the Provençal town of Digne. Douceline de Digne was the younger daughter of Bérenguier de Digne and his wife, Hugua de Barjols.[229] The *vita* describes Bérenguier as a "great and rich merchant," indicating not only that he possessed wealth but that he was a man of some influence.[230] As already mentioned, Douceline had at least two brothers, one being Hugues de Digne.[231] The other brother is only known through the existence of two daughters who later entered their aunt's establishment.[232] We do not know whether there were any other members of the family.

At an early age, "in her infancy," Douceline's family moved to Barjols.[233] Her parents pursued lives of great charity and, as a young child, Douceline must have grown accustomed to seeing the poor and sick about her family home.[234] According to her *vita*,

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[229] For Digne as Douceline's birthplace, see Albanès, La Vie, xl-xlii. Albanès concludes that, even though 'de Digne' refers to Douceline's birthplace, it subsequently developed into the family name. It was certainly employed by her older brother, Hugues, and their two nieces. Barjols is located 50km NE of Marseilles and approximately 60km south of Digne.

[230] *Li Vida.* I.1: "*... grans e rix mercadiers...*"

[231] Gout, La Vie, 17.

[232] The *vita* recounts the entry into the order of Douceline's two nieces (*Li Vida* III. 4). While the girls may have been the daughters of a sister, it is more likely that they were the children of an older brother, especially since their names. Marie and Dulceline, have the surname of 'de Digne.' See Albanès, La Vie, xli, 260.

[233] Albanès, La Vie, xli; *Li Vida* I.3: "*En la etat de sa enfansa, ... el temps ques abitavan el castel de Barjols...*"

[234] *Li Vida* I.1: "*Vivian justamens e sancta ac lur estament, e lialmens gardavan et azimplian los mandamens de Dieu; car am gran pietat e am misericordia los paures acullian, els malautes els dezaizatz servian en lur hostal, e lur aministravan de lurs causas largamens, am gran compassion, e en las sanctas obras de pietat despendian so que Dieus lur donava.*"

Douceline displayed a precocious spirituality that was remarkable for her age. She shunned childhood games in favour of private and secret prayer: "through God's teaching, she went onto the terrace of her father's lodging, finding small stones to place under her bare knees. She joined her hands to God and looked to the sky and did not know what to say ... for she had not yet learned her prayers or letters."[235]

While she was still quite young, perhaps in 1230 when Douceline was about 15 or 16 years old, her mother died and the family moved from Barjols to Hyères.[236] Albanès suggests that the move was partly motivated by the presence of Hugues de Digne who was already installed there with the Franciscans.[237] Hugues was the guiding force behind Douceline's spiritual life. He was described as "a man of great erudition, imbued with the spirit of prophecy, and of such holiness that he numbered among those whose sanctity was spoken of in the Curia at the time."[238] An ardent preacher committed to the apostolic mendicancy of early Franciscanism, he was violently opposed to the acceptance of any

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[235] Ibid., I.3. "... *per ensenhament de Dieu ilh s'en anava en las terrasseas de l'alberc de son paire, e desus las peiretas que trobava el sol, metia sos genols nus, e jonhia sas mans a Dieu, e esgardava sus al cel, e non sabia re dire. ... que non sabia ancars oracions ni letras ... per ensenhament de Dieu.*" These "prayers and letters" are the formalised prayers of the catechism.

[236] Ibid., I.4: "*Cant li maires fon morta, muderon si az leras...*": Albanès, La Vie, xliii.

[237] Albanès, La Vie, xliii.

[238] Lucas Wadding, Scriptores Ordinis Minorum, (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1967), 178. "*HUGO de DINA, Gallus, vir magne eruditionis, spiritu Prophetico imbutus, tantęque sanctitatis, ut de illo Sanctis connumerando olim actum sit in Curia...*" The vigour and popularity of his preaching is also described by Salimbene: "*Hic erat unus de maioribus clericis de mundo et sollemnis predicator et gratiosus tam clero quam populo et maximus disputator et paratus ad omnia. Omnes involvebat, omnes concludebat, linguam disertissimam habebat et vocem tamquam tube sonantis et tonitrui magni et aquarum multarum sonantium, cum decurrunt per preceps. ...Spiritualis homo ultra modum, ita ut alterum Paulum crederes te videre seu alterum Helyseum,*" Cronica, 324.

mitigation of Franciscan ideals.[239] Hugues sharply denounced worldly possessions and glory, haranguing even the Pope and his cardinals at the Council of Lyons in 1244.[240]

In Hyères, Bérenguier continued his charitable enterprises and Douceline fulfilled the domestic and charitable responsibilities formerly held by her mother, shaping her future relations with her spiritual daughters.[241] The importance of charity to the spirituality of Bérenguier should not be underestimated. Typical of his time, he associated spiritual benefit with care for the sick and poor, housing them in his own home. He drew Douceline into this good work – "the sick and the diseased that he found by the roads or alleys, he led them, saying: "My daughter, I bring to you and carry to you gains."[242] Receiving them with joy and great humility, Douceline did not fail her father's expectations, devotedly caring for her charges and not fearing to neglect her own body in their service.[243] Douceline performed all the typical tasks associated with charitable care

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[239] While the early Franciscans eschewed monastic enclosure as an obstacle to both the poverty and the apostolic foundations of the Order, Hugues's frustrations with traditional monasticism probably increased in opposition to moderating influences within the Order. In fact, Hugues de Digne has often been tagged as one of the most active participants, if not the originator, in the Spiritual movement within the Franciscan order. Rosalind B. Brooke, Early Franciscan Government: Elias to Bonaventure, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 221-223.

[240] Salimbene, *Cronica*, 324-334. Jean de Joinville reports that Hugues's address to the entourage of King Louis IX, on the occasion of his return from the Seventh Crusade in July 1254, condemned monks who pursued careers outside monastic walls: " 'My lords,' he said, 'I see too many monks in the king's court, and in his company. ...the monks here are in no condition to be saved – unless the Holy Scriptures lie to us, which is impossible. For these sacred writings tell us that a monk cannot live out of his cloister, any more than a fish can live out of water.' " "The Life of Saint Louis," in Joinville & Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades, trans. M. R. B. Shaw, (London: Penguin Books, 1963), 163-353. 328.

[241] Claude Carozzi, "*Douceline et les autres*," 251-267.

[242] *Li Vida* I.5: "*... els malautes els dezaisatz que trobava per las carrieras, ho per vias, aduzia le bons homs, dizent: « Filla, ieu t'aduc e t'aporti gazinh. »*"

[243] Ibid., I.5: "*Illi recebia los alegramens, am gran humilitat ...; e lur menistrava ab gran devocion, e non temia sosmetre son cors a totz servizis que lur fossan mestier.*" I have chosen to translate the Occitan '*sosmetre*' as 'neglect' instead of the more direct 'submit' to avoid colloquial misinterpretations of the direct translation.

for the sick and poor – washing their feet, picking vermin from their legs, and curing their wounds – for the love of God.[244] "The more horrible they were ... the more strongly she encouraged herself to serve them..." even carrying them when they could not walk, recalling the exhortations of Christ and the Apostles to relieve the burden of the infirm.[245]

The *vita* clearly indicates that, while her father was alive, the poor and sick were treated in the family home and, indeed, it seems that the house was recognised as a place of respite. Douceline herself was known for her charitable care: "One time, a poor man, who was very weak and very sick, had himself carried to her [Douceline]...."[246] But the poor man who was carried to her was more than simply a weak and sick soul in need of her temporal care – it was Christ Himself. This encounter marked Douceline's introduction to the mysticism that would encompass her spirituality:

> The sick man, because of his great need, asked that she place her hands on his sides. And when she heard this, she stayed far away from him, vexed because of her great shame and humility, and wondered whether she could do this, since he was a man. And then, when he recognised her shame and great humility, he said to her: "Daughter, do not be ashamed of me for I will not be ashamed to show you to

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[244] Ibid., I.5: "*Illi, per amor del Senhor, lur lavava los pes, e lur trazia los vermes de las cambas e de la testa, mot soven, e curava lurs plagas.*

[245] Ibid., I.5: "*On plus orribles eran, ... plus fort s'encorajava a servir los ...cant non podian anar, e ili los portava.*" Cf. Matthew 8.17: "*... quod dictum est per Isaiam prophetam dicatem: « Ipse infirmitates nostras accepit et aegrotationes portavit. »*" Also Romans 15.1-2: "*Debemus autem nos firmiores imbecillitates infirmorum sustinere, et nobis placere. Unusquis que nostrum proximo placeat in bonum ad aedificatioem.*" Bibliorum Sacrorum: Nova Vulgata Editio, (Vaticana: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979).

[246] *Li Vida.* I.6: "*Una ves, li venc uns paures mot dezaisatz, e fon fort malanans; e fazia si portar az ella, ...*"

> my Father." And, as soon as he had said this, the poor man suddenly disappeared...[247]

Both Geneviève Brunel-Lobrichon and Claude Carozzi see this incident as both a critical turning point in Douceline's life, and more than merely an expression of extreme charity, a vivid representation of the sexual apprehension of the early Franciscans.[248] "Just as Saint Francis forbade himself and his brothers to raise their eyes to women and to speak to them, so Douceline kept her gaze from men, avoiding their friendship and their words...."[249] As Brunel-Lobrichon points out, the author emphasises Douceline's exceptional beauty, an attractiveness that provides a necessary psychological counter-point to Douceline's refusal of masculine attention.[250]

This aversion to men would have seriously impinged on Douceline's avowed pursuit of active charity to the poor and sick, and later incidents in the *vita* reveal sincere attempts to overcome her extreme revulsion for contact with men outside the role of religious advisors. By blending the reality of 'suffering man,' beset by the temporal

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[247] Ibid., I.6: "*E le malautz reques li per gran necessitat que le era, li menes la man per las costas. E illi adoncs cant ho auzi, enferezi en si de lueinh, pensan si ho faria: car era homs. E adoncs el conoc la vergonha de sa gran honestat, e dis li: «Filla, non aias vergonha de mi, qu'ieu non aurai vergonha de manifestar tu al paire. » E tantost con ac aisso dig, le paures avali soptamens, quez anc pueis non lo vi.*"

[248] Carozzi, "*Douceline et les autres*," 252; Brunel-Lobrichon, "*Existe-t-il un christianisme méridional?*" 45.

[249] "*de même que saint François se défendait et défendait à ses frères de lever les yeux sur les femmes et de leur parler, Douceline se garde de tourner son regard sur les hommes, fuit leur amitié et leurs paroles ...*," Brunel-Lobrichon, "*Existe-t-il un christianisme méridional?*" 45.

[250] Ibid., 45; *Li Vida* I.9: "... e *en la sieua cara quez era sobre bella, conoissia hom temensa, e honestat [e] vergonha...*" The wording of the text subtly suggests that Douceline's honesty, timidity, and modesty contributed to her beauty. ("... and in her face, which was extremely beautiful, could be seen her fear of men, honesty, and modesty...").

hardships of poverty, illness, and hunger, into the image of 'suffering Christ,' tortured by spears and arrows on the Cross. Douceline provided a way of coping with the precarious tension between desire and devotion.

Douceline's first encounter with Christ led to other visions that appeared to reassure her and to indicate that she was destined for the life of a visionary. The *vita* relates one such experience while she remained under her father's tutelage: she was caring for a poor man who was near death when, from fatigue, Douceline fell asleep. While she slept, she dreamed of her patient rejoicing in a beautiful garden where he wished to remain in great delight. When Douceline awoke, she discovered that the man had died.[251] Although the text provides details on only this single incident, the *vita* reveals that "many other consolations" occurred to encourage her life of active charity.[252]

At this time we also see Douceline engaging in acts of asceticism, including sleep deprivation and physical mortification. "Dividing the nights into three parts, the greatest part was spent reading and praying; in the other she rested; then she rose and said her morning prayers."[253] The tripartite division of the night is in imitation of the monastic canonical hours of Vespers through Lauds, a further commentary on her religiousness as

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[251] *Li Vida* I.7: "*Autra ves, li esdevenc que servia un malaute que era sus la mort; e per trop lasseza, ill si va repauzar. E fon li mostratz aquel paures qu'illi gachava, en tan gran gloria, ab tan gran resplandor, que non si poiria dire. E vi .i. bel jardin, en qu'el si deportava en pratz meravillos; e vi lo estar en sobre grans delietz. E can tost que fon tornada a si mezesma, illi l'anet esgardar, e trobet lo passat.*"

[252] Ibid., I.7: "*Motas autras consolacions li fes le Senhers, tant cant estet en aquel estament, que li mostrava lo gran plazer qu'el prenia en lo servisi qu'illi fazia als paures malautes...*"

[253] Ibid., I.8: "*Partia las nuetz en tres partz, e la major partida de la nueg illi metia en legir e en orar; l'autra, illi pauzava; pueis, illi si levava, e dizia sas matinas.*"

well as on the conservative nature of her practices.[254] She slept on a bed of straw and, so that she would not sleep too deeply, she attached a cord above her bed and, with the other end, she belted herself. When she moved in her sleep, it would pull, awakening her to say her Matins.[255]

She also practiced self-mortification as penance, secretly wearing a hair shirt "that cut itself into her flesh ... and when she had removed it, her body remained torn and wounded."[256] She tied a knotted cord tightly around her waist so that it bit into her flesh and provided a breeding ground for vermin.[257] Under the rich clothing that was suitable to her social status, she also wore a band of iron "for greater affliction of her body."[258]

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[254] The author's use of the tripartite monastic division of the night is especially interesting since only two divisions are revealed in the *vita*, one for reading and prayer, the other for sleep. The author undoubtedly was aware of the monastic division of the night into three specific segments by four canonical offices: Vespers to Compline, devoted to reading and meditation; Compline to Matins, given to sleep; and Matins to Lauds, devoted again to reading and meditation. However, in common practice, even though Matins was properly a night office that divided the canonical day, it was often combined with Lauds as 'Morning Prayers.' This effectively divided the night after Vespers into two sections: Vespers to Compline and Compline to Matins/Lauds, which, in Douceline's *vita*, are devoted to reading and prayer, and sleep, respectively. This is an obvious attempt to demonstrate the monastic conventionality of Douceline's life even though the devotional habits of the laity had already deviated from the monastic model.

[255] *Li Vida* I.12: "*Jaissi atressi ... en un petit de palla...; e per so que non si repauzes en dormir, ill estacava una corda sus desobre son lieg, e de l'autre som de la corda ill si senhia. E era en maniera que can tost si movia, li cordia la tirava, e despereissia si; e tantost si levava per dire sas matinas ...*" It is possible that the *vita* has confounded two distinct methods that Douceline employed to restrict her sleep. One would be to rest on the 'bit of straw;' the other was used when she slept in her bed. If we required further evidence that Douceline was from a wealthy family, we need only remember that only the well-to-do had their own beds during the Middle Ages.

[256] Ibid., I.10: "*Mortification de carn comenset a penre tantost, e a seguir tan afortidamens, que a son cors en ren non perdonava. Illi portava selici secretamens ... es s'encarnava en son cors ... e cant l'avia mogut, remania son cors esquintatz e plagatz.*" At least once she required the assistance of a servant to accomplish this painful task.

[257] Ibid., I.11: "*E tenia sench son cors destrechamens d'una carda nozada, qu'en la luoga dels nos, que s'eran encarnat, eran soven li verme.*"

[258] Ibid., I.11: "*...portava continuamens celcle de ferre ... per mais afligir lo cors; e desus, illi portava vestirs bels e paratz...*"

These behaviours, especially the extremes of physical deprivation, are deeply embedded in the spiritual culture of Christianity through the asceticism of the earliest monks and hermits.[259] In the later Middle Ages, extravagant displays of physical mortification, discipline, and denial had become one of the most significant expressions of female spirituality and sanctity, which are well represented in the holy biographies of the time.[260] The secrecy of acts of asceticism and contemplation is a recurring theme in medieval hagiography as evidence of 'holy humility' and even denial of sanctity by the saint is considered a "pious lie" that further enhances the saint's virtue.[261]

The use of standardised hagiographic images to recall specific behaviours to the reader may be seen in the description of Douceline's physical mutilation as penance when we first encounter the association of Douceline with Saint Cecilia, which draws our attention especially to Douceline's subjugation of her body through the use of the hair shirt and to the nights spent in prayer and holy vigil "just like Saint Cecilia."[262] Interestingly, only these two behaviours are specified even though other aspects of Douceline's spiritual feats may be compared to Saint Cecilia, according to *The Golden*

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[259] Peter Brown, The Body and Society, 248-258. On the early ascetic tradition of women, 259-284.

[260] Schulenberg, Forgetful of Their Sex, 377-392.

[261] Kleinberg, Prophets in Their Own Country, 106-107.

[262] *Li Vida* l.13: "*E en aissi fortmens son propri cors ab cilicis domptava, en aissi cant fazia sancta Cezilia, verge benaurada; e autressi las nuegz, aissi cant aquist verge, vellava en oracion e en sanctas vegilias.*"

Legend: her good works, her ardent charity, and her virginity.[263] Furthermore, since a major focus in Saint Cecilia's *Life* is the conversion of her husband and the preservation of her virginity after marriage. it is surprising that there is no suggestion of a marriage in Douceline's *vita*.

Several factors could have influenced Douceline's ability to contract a marriage and her ultimate decision to pursue a beguinal lifestyle. First, due to the Crusades and the popularity of male monastic and mendicant movements, there was a significant imbalance in the ratio of the sexes, leaving many women without appropriate suitors. Second, even though the *vita* describes Douceline's father as a "rich merchant" (*rix mercadiers*) and so Douceline's socio-economic status should have made her a desirable candidate for marriage, both marriage and monastic dowries for upper-middle class women were relatively high in the mid-thirteenth century.[264] The lack of suitable dowries may have served to eliminate both options for many women within these classes,

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[263] See "Saint Cecilia," The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine, trans. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger, (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 689-695. Jacobus de Voragine (c.1228/30-1298) was a Dominican friar who became the archbishop of Genoa in 1292. Compiled in the middle of the thirteenth century, his version of the collected lives of the saints, the *Legenda Sanctorum*, was popularised by William Caxton in the fifteenth century as 'The Golden Legend,' v-vii. Jacobus' version is especially useful to the present study, revealing aspects of popular religion during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century along the Mediterranean littoral. For simplicity's sake, however, I will continue to refer to the text as 'The Golden Legend.'

[264] At the end of the thirteenth century in Marseilles, the cost of monastic entry reached up to £100 while marriage dowries among the merchant classes were generally three to five times the value of monastic dowries. Francine Michaud, *Un signe des temps: Accroissement des crises familiales autour du patrimoine à Marseille à la fin du XIIIe siècle*, Studies and Texts 117, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1994), 87-89, Graphiques 7 and 10: 102, 105.

providing yet another reason for Douceline's preference for the beguinal lifestyle.[265] Third, at the time of her father's death, Douceline was already in her mid-twenties, well past the average age of sixteen for a first marriage.[266] It is possible that marriage arrangements were underway when Douceline's father died but that her elder brother failed to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion or that her father's death enabled her to refuse marriage.[267]

Whether Douceline's chaste lifestyle after the death of Bérenguier was the result of personal choice or the inability to contract a marriage, nonetheless there was a shift in the location at which Douceline carried out her charitable activities.[268] Where once Douceline had the poor and sick carried to her at home, the *vita* now relates that Douceline became accustomed to *visiting* the hospitals and *going out* to *visit* those in need of her charity.[269] This behaviour clearly demonstrates that there were significant

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[265] Indeed, Michaud points to one will in which arrangements were made for a wealthy citizen's five daughters. One entered the Benedictine convent and received £80 and an annual rent; two others each received £300 for marriage dowries; and another two daughters "had to content themselves with the rights to £100 only if it happened that they ceased to live with their brother Peter, the designated heir." Clearly these last two daughters were consigned to lives of secular chastity since their inheritances were not sufficient for an honourable marriage and barely enough for monastic entry. Un signe des temps, 87-88.

[266] In a forthcoming study on labour relations in Marseilles in the period 1277-1320, Michaud's analysis of marriage contracts determines that the average age at marriage was 16.4 years for girls and 21.1 years for boys, (Working title: Labour Relations in Fourteenth-Century Marseilles).

[267] Brunel-Lobrichon, "*Existe-t-il un christianisme méridional?*" 45. We do not know when Bérenguier died. However, by the time Douceline took her vows, probably around 1240, and founded her first community shortly thereafter, she had already spent time in Genoa and established a reputation for charity independent of her father, Albanès, La Vie, xliii-xlv. This suggests that her father had been dead for some time, possibily placing his death in the mid-1230s.

[268] *Li Vida* I.8: "*Aquesta obedientia de caritat tenc illi tant cant le paires visquet; e pueis, non ho dezamparet, mais en aquestas sanctas obras de pietat continuet, tant cant estet en abiti seglar.*"

[269] Ibid., II.1: "*Apres la mort del paire, ill s'alaguet a mais en obras de pietat, e donet si per fuoc de caritat, de tot en tot, a servisi dels paures. E visitava los paures malautes, on quels saupes, per amor del Senhor, am gran compassion; e fazia lur almornas e servizis largamens, de tot cant ill podia.*" The italics are my own to emphasise the need for Douceline to leave her home to perform her pious works.

alterations in Douceline's domestic situation as a result of the death of her father and that she was prompted to seek another "way of living" that would please God. Even though Douceline and her elder brother probably would have inherited equally under the system of property succession prevalent at the time in Provence, for some reason Douceline was unwilling or unable to continue to use the main family home as the base for her charitable works.[270]

The text implies that her need for another "way of living" was pressing for "she had desired for a long time and urgently asked Our Lord, with all her heart, to allow her to find an order and a manner of life more pleasing to God."[271] In answer to her prayerful plea, Douceline experienced the vision that would shape her life and, subsequently, the constitution of her houses.

With her habit of visiting the sick and poor accompanied by other women, the *vita* relates a pivotal incident in Douceline's life. Returning with three companions from the hospital outside the castle of Hyères, two women suddenly appeared to them.[272] Clothed completely in black except for their white veils, which covered their faces, they were accompanied by a young girl.[273] All three wore mantles that covered their heads.[274] When

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[270] Hugues, being in holy orders, would have been automatically disqualified from inheritance. For a discussion of inheritance conditions in Marseilles in the late thirteenth century, see Michaud, *Un signe des temps*, *passim*. Certainly Douceline was not left without property but it may have been inadequate for either marriage or monastic entry, a situation already referred to by Michaud and previously discussed.

[271] *Li Vida* II.3: "*... e avia dezirat lonc temps, e quist a Nostre Senhor de tot son cor, qui li laisses trobar orde e maniera de vieure que mais plagues a Dieu, e la mezes en aquell estament que plus li plazeria.*"

[272] Ibid., II.3-4: "*Et un jour qu'illi am tres autras venia d'un espital qu'es az leras ... Ve vos que soptamens lur aparegron en la via doas humils donnas ...*"

[273] Ibid., II.4: "*... e li vestir eran tug negres. E menavan una petita que anava aissi con ellas ...*"

[274] Ibid., "*Adons totas tres ensems pauzeron los mantels que portavan sus lur cap ...*"

they had greeted Douceline, the saint enquired who they were and what order they belonged to.[275] The women replied simply that they were from "the order that is pleasing to God" and, indicating their veils, they told Douceline to "take this and follow us."[276] With these words, they disappeared, and though Douceline and her friends searched for them, no one else had seen these humble ladies, emphasising the miraculous nature of their appearance.[277]

Even though Douceline was convinced that this was the lifestyle that God had chosen for her, she seems to have avoided discussing her vision with her brother Hugues at this time.[278] Instead, she accepted a sojourn in the convent of Poor Clares in Genoa while Hugues travelled to Paris.[279] This choice was undoubtedly motivated by Hugues' association with the Franciscans and his disdain for traditional monastic communities since, according to the *vita*, Douceline "would have been received in many nunneries of

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[275] Ibid., "... *e saluderon las mot alegramens. ... e tota plena d'ardor* [Douceline] *demandet lur qui eran, ni de qual orde.*"

[276] Ibid., "«*Nos, feron cellas, em d'aquest orde que plas a Dieu.*» *E monstrant los vels que portavan, disseron li*: «*Prin aisso, e sec nos.*»"

[277] Ibid., II.4-5: "*E de mantenent dezaparegron, quez anc non viron on si fossan tengudas. Corregron tantost apres per sequir las; e anc en luocnon las pogron trobar. Demandavan en la carriera a las gens, ... per on eran tengudas aquellas donnas que lur avian parlat ... Tut respondian*: «*Que autras donnas non avian vist mais ellas*» *E jassiaisso quel luocs en qu'ells aparegron fos grans e amples, anc pueis en luoc non las pogron vezer.*"

[278] Ibid., II.6: "*Mais li Sancta, per esperit de Dieu, entende[n]t tantost cals era aquel sequimens que li mandavan far, prepauzet fermamens en son cor, davant totz estamens, de penre aquella forma e tot aquel heissemple.*" Obviously, Douceline was immediately convinced that this was the mode of life that she was intended to follow.

[279] Ibid., II.7: "*En aquel temps, le sans homs sos frayres, frayre Hugo de Dinha, fon annatz a Paris, e fes la recebre a las sorres menors de Jenoa...*"

Provence."[280]

Given her domestic situation, it is surprising that Douceline did not remain at the convent in Genoa. Indeed we do not even know whose decision it was for Douceline to quit the Genovese convent but there are numerous factors that may have contributed to the decision. As already discussed, Douceline may not have possessed the necessary dowry for acceptance into the convent. It is also possible that Hugues may have become disillusioned by the 'conventualisation' of the female Franciscans, causing him to dissuade his sister from committing to the Poor Clares.[281] It is even more likely that the style of stability, obedience, and inactivity practiced by the *Sorores Minores* was unacceptable to Douceline herself. First, the strict claustration of the Franciscan sisters would have prevented the active charity that Douceline had associated with salvation and Christian spirituality from childhood and the claustration, in itself, may have been too restrictive for Douceline's tastes.[282] Second, Clarisses were restrained from practising the

[280] Ibid., II.7: "*...jassiaisso qu'illi fos receupuda en Prohensa en motas autras partz, en monastiers de moneguas.*" It is likely that, at the time, the nearest Franciscan convent was at Genoa and her brother's commitment to the Franciscan Order would have dissuaded Douceline from entering a convent affiliated with any other order.

[281] The discontent that Hugues' displayed towards monks in his speech to Louis IX, as already discussed, might well have encompassed a disillusionment with the Franciscan tendency towards claustration. Certainly, enclosure was contradictory to the mendicant lifestyle that he espoused for men.

[282] The papal order requiring strict enclosure that was given to the Cistercian nuns in 1213 was extended to the Franciscan Second Order in 1218. Iriarte, Franciscan History, 442-443.

absolute poverty that was such a fundamental part of Franciscan spirituality.[283] A third reason may have had more to do with Douceline's personality. Throughout the *vita*, Douceline is described as a strong-minded, even autocratic individual, comfortable and confident in the role of spiritual leader to the Ladies of Roubaud. While Douceline came from a well-to-do and perhaps influential Provençal family, she was not of the aristocracy or nobility, unlike Clare and many of the convents of the Second Order were decidedly aristocratic.[284] In such an environment, it is unlikely that Douceline would ever have achieved prominence, and therefore, would probably have been relegated to a subservient role in the community, a role not in keeping with the powerful and dynamic woman portrayed in the pages of the *vita*.

The *vita* suggests that Douceline's vision preceded her stay with the Poor Clares. When she returned to Hyères, she was immediately able to discuss this vision with her brother, her spiritual advisor, and to convince him of her great certainty that this was the

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[283] The Franciscan Second Order was affected with the same challenges to absolute poverty that divided the First Order. However, even many supporters of Clare and her vision of perfect poverty for the community of San Damiano were not willing to extend the 'privilege of poverty' to all convents. Within the Second Order, the aristocratic nature of the communities and the large dowries that were brought by novices further confounded the denial of property that was the focus of early Franciscanism. The 'perfect poverty' practised by Clare's own convent of San Damiano was a special case, requiring papal permission. Innocent III initially allowed the application of absolute poverty in all associated houses in *Sicut manifestum est* on 17 September 1228, but this ruling was altered by subsequent popes. It was not until 9 August 1253 that Innocent IV approved Clare's Rule for her House at San Damiano, including complete poverty, in his bull *Solet annuere*. Clare died two days later. In 1263, the Clarisses divided into two separate groups: the Clarisses of the 'First Rule' who followed the Rule of St Clare, and the 'Urbanist' Clarisses of the 'Second Rule,' who followed the more moderate Rule given by Pope Urban IV. Francis and Clare, 171-173. Iriarte, Franciscan History, 447.

[284] During the pontificate of Urban IV (1261-1265), the Clarisses became even more aristocratic, counting royalty as well as the nobility among their members. Iriarte, Franciscan History, 441, 448-449.

lifestyle that she should pursue.[285] It may be that this was the reason as to why Douceline did not remain in the convent at Genoa. However, this sequence begs the questions, 'Why did Douceline not discuss this lifestyle with her brother earlier? Why would she travel to Genoa instead of beginning her new way of life?' Since the chronological details of medieval hagiography are notoriously fluid, it is possible that the vision occurred after Douceline returned from Genoa, having failed to fit into the pattern of the Franciscan sisters.[286] There is nothing in the *vita* that specifically disproves this theory, the event simply described as occurring "at that time" or "in those days," implying some flexibility in interpretation.[287]

Having decided against admission into a Franciscan convent, for whatever reasons, another mode of life had to be found for the young woman who was now in her mid-twenties. The *vita* clearly attests that Hugues approved Douceline's pursuit of a secular religious lifestyle. "When the holy brother Hugues had heard this from her and understood fully, knowing all of her intentions, no other order did he wish her to take; but he desired that she should take that form and manner of living, above all others, that had

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[285] *Li Vida* II.7: "*E cant el fon vengutz, illi parlet amb el; revelet li so que li era esdevengut, ambe major certesa que crezem certamens qu'illi n'ac pueis apres.*"

[286] There is a vast corpus of works on medieval hagiography which includes discussions on the perception of time, the conception of memory and historical knowledge, and the difficulty in utilising hagiographic accounts *verbatim*. Especially useful are: René Aigrain, *L'hagiographie*; Janet Coleman, Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Hippolyte Delehaye, The Legends of the Saints; Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, "Saints' Lives;" Gabrielle M. Spiegel, The Past as Text; Michael Stanford, The Nature of Historical Knowledge, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986; 1987 in USA); Donald Sullivan, "Jean Bolland (1596-1665) and the Early Bollandists," Medieval Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline. Volume 1: History, eds. Helen Damico and Joseph B. Zavadil, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1995), 3-14; Elisabeth Van Houts, Memory and Gender.

[287] *Li Vida* II.7: "*En aquel temps...*"

been shown to her."[288] The miraculous vision may well have provided a mystical explanation for the development of the beguinal lifestyle for Douceline but Hugues was a well-travelled friar and it is entirely possible that, on one of his many journeys, he came into contact with those women described as 'beguines' and that he favoured the lay lifestyle for his sister over the cloistered monastic life of a convent.[289]

Even though definite dates are missing, the *vita* gives a very clear sequence of events, emphasising the order with the repeated use of '*adoncs*' and '*pueis*.'[290] This sequential precision is necessary to demonstrate that Douceline followed an acceptable and orthodox conversion *en route* to the founding of her establishment:

1. Douceline explained her vision to her brother, Hugues. As a provincial minister, his consent granted the endorsement of the Franciscan Order.
2. Immediately after receiving her brother's approval, Douceline "took this life for herself *and for her establishment*...,"[291] suggesting that Douceline had the nucleus of her community at this time.[292]
3. Then she "abandoned all of the clothes that she wore, ... clothed herself in black, the colour and form of the habit that was worn by the ladies that she had seen."[293]
4. Then "inflamed and burning with the fire of the charity of Christ, ... she gave herself, completely and

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[288] Ibid., II.8: "*E cant le sans fraire Huguo ac auzit d'ella e entendut diligentmentz, sauput quez ac tot son entendement, non volc prezes autre orde; mais volc qu'illi prezes en si aquella forma e maniera de vieure, davant totz estamens, am* Li Vida *que tenc.*"

[289] Brunel-Lobrichon, "*Existe-t-il un christianisme méridional?*" 45.

[290] These words are translated as the French '*donc*' and '*puis*:' both are translated as 'then' or 'next' in English.

[291] I have added italics for emphasis. *Li Vida* II.8: "*E pres aquella via en si e en son estament...*"

[292] I will return to this point shortly.

[293] *Li Vida* II.8: "*E adoncs illi, ... dezamparet tantost los vestirs que portava ... e vesti si de negre, la color e la forma de l'habiti que portavan las donas que avia vist.*"

> irrevocably, to God; and she vowed her virginity to Our Lord with all her heart. In a sermon at Hyères given by [her brother Hugues], she promised this fervently, before all the people, in the hands of her brother." Moved by her example, 131 women vowed virginity and more than 80 promised chastity, "in the hands of the holy father."[294]

Based on this sequence. Albanès concludes that Douceline was fetched home to Hyères, probably by Hugues on his return from Paris. sometime after 1240 but probably before 1242. Hugues travelled to Rome around 1242, stopping to preach at Siena and, on the first day of Lent, at Lucca. In 1244 he was with the Curia at the Council of Lyons.[295] Since there is no suggestion that Hugues had any concerns for the state of his sister during either of the journeys, Albanès concludes that she was already installed in her first foundation by the early 1240s.[296]

Obviously. since Douceline is reputed to have followed her brother to Hyères. confirmation of the date of the Franciscan establishment in that city would greatly contribute to our ability to reconstruct Douceline's life. Unfortunately, precise dates of

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[294] Ibid., II.10: "*E adoncs illi escompresa e abrazada d'aquell fuoc de la caritat de Crist, ... donet tota si mezesma a Dieu, ses tot revocament; e vodet a Nostre Senhor vergenitat de tot son cor, en un sermon az leras que fazia le Santz, e promes am mot gran fervor, davant tot lo pobol, en las mans de son fraire.*"

[295] See Albanès, *La Vie*, xlv-xlvix for the full discussion. These journeys are also described in Salimbene, *Cronica*, 324-334, 336-337.

[296] Albanès, *La Vie*, xliv. Albanès argues that the House of Roubaud successively occupied at two separate sites in Hyères. *Li Vida* III.2: "*E feron un alberc for a de la villa, lo cal apelleron Robaut ...*;" XII.3: "*En lo temps qu'ellas estavan josta lo fluvi de Robaut, az leras ...*;" XII.6: "*Cant estavan en lo premier luoc de Robaut ...*" It is equally possible that the references are meant to distinguish between the houses of Hyères and Marseilles.

foundation are lacking for most Franciscan houses in southern France. Richard Emery shows that the Franciscans were established in Aix in 1220 and, following the first attempts to settle Franciscan houses in France in 1217, the Order expanded rapidly after 1219, especially in the south of France, where there was a concentration of Franciscan foundations. On the other hand, he is only able to confirm that the Franciscans were established in Hyères and in Marseilles before 1248.[297] This dating accords with Salimbene's account of his visits to Hyères and Marseilles in 1248, and again in 1249 when he observes that he found a large number of men and women living a penitential life at Hyères.[298]

There is a possibility of some confusion between the beguines and other orders associated with the Franciscans. For example, the Sack Friars (Order of Penance of Jesus Christ), were founded just before 1250 near Hyères and received papal approval in 1251. The penitential focus of the *Saccati* resembles that of the beguines of Roubaud and, indeed, Hugues de Digne was reputed to be the founder of the Sack Friars by several contemporaries, including Salimbene.[299] Especially popular in Marseilles, the Order held a general chapter there in 1251 and, despite their suppression in 1274 at the Council of

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[297] Richard Emery, The Friars in Medieval France: A Catalogue of French Mendicant Convents, 1200-1550, (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1962), 7, 38-39, 116.

[298] Salimbene, Cronica: "... *et est ibi maxima multitudo mulierum et hominum penitentiam facientium etiam in habitu mundiali in domibus suis*," 338; see also Albanès, La Vie, xlviii.

[299] "*De principio et fine Ordinis Saccatorum: Porro homo iste qui Ordinis fratum Minorum petebat ingressum fuit principium Ordinis Saccatorum, et habebat socium qui similiter intrare volebat. Hi inspirati sunt nutu divino in predicatione fratris Hugonis. Quibus frater Hugo dixit: «Eatis ad nemora et adiscatis comedere rádices, quoniam tribulationes apropinquant»*," Salimbene, Cronica, 366. Also Douie, The Nature and the Effect, 82, *fn.* 8. On the other hand, Anne MacDonnell concludes that the attribution of unorthodox groups to Hugues' influence probably resulted from his stringent enlistment requirements rather than any deliberate exhortations to heretical behaviour. MacDonnell, Saint Douceline, 14.

Lyons, they survived into the first years of the fourteenth century.[300]

Another branch of Franciscans, the Pied Friars (Order of Blessed Mary Mother of Christ) claim Marseilles as their point of origin and received papal approval in 1257. This date also coincides with Douceline's establishment at Marseilles around 1250 – 1255.[301]

Even at the time of her first vision of the beguines, Douceline had followers. "Many others" often joined her on her visits to hospitals who, moved by her example, accompanied Douceline in the performance of charitable works.[302] The presence of these companions, perhaps in situations similar to Douceline's, quite possibly weighed on her mind, influencing her ultimate choice of lifestyle and providing the core of her community. The vision, then, endorsed an acceptable way of life, and Douceline's public avowal of virginity suggests a programme of active recruitment to further the aims of this nucleus of pious women. The popularity of Hugues' preaching would have guaranteed a large audience; he was, after all, credited with the conversion of many people, an

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[300] Baratier and Reynaud, "*Les réguliers et les établissements hospitaliers*," 83.

[301] Emery, The Friars in Medieval France, 10-12. It is worthwhile to note that both the *Saccati* and the Pied Friars appear in Massilian wills between 1277 and 1320, well after the official suppression. Michaud, *Un signe des temps*, 44-45, *fn* 17.

[302] *Li Vida* II.2: "... *e mogudas per lo sieu heissemple, motas autras acompanhavan si amb ella a far aquellas obras, per amor del Senhor.*" Albanès does not specify the gender of Douceline's companions but the feminine forms used in the *vita* – "*motas autras*" – indicate that the companions were female. Albanès, *La Vie*, 15. Wolfkiel recognises this distinction and specifies "many other women" in her translation, The Life, 236. Wolfkiel's interpretation accords with the most recent work on Occitan by William Paden, An Introduction to Occitan, 351. The *vita* does not specify whether the women who witnessed the vision followed Douceline into the first House of Roubaud but it is reasonable to assume that these companions numbered among Douceline's early proponents.

indication that he was a very persuasive speaker.[303] It is undoubtedly because they were moved by the ardent preaching of the Franciscan father and further inspired by Douceline's example that more than two hundred women promised chastity to "the holy father."[304]

Another question arises concerning the authority by which Hugues received the vows of these women. Brunel-Lobrichon sees the acceptance of these vows by Hugues, and the absence of any mention of a bishop to provide ecclesiastical regularisation, as one of the Church's formal grievances against the beguines.[305] However, Douceline and her followers did not make their vows to a simple Franciscan friar but to a provincial minister. Under the Rule of 1221, and again in the later Rule of 1223, provincial ministers were granted jurisdiction over the acceptance of new brothers into the Order without espiscopal confirmation.[306] This internal regulation over institutional admission extended to the Franciscan Third Order, the Brothers and Sisters of Penance. In this light, Douceline and her followers conformed to the prescribed procedures for recognition by

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[303] *Li Vida* III.1: "*El temps que le sans paires fraire Hugo de Dinha comenset a predicar az leras, motas gens, per la sieua predication, foron tiradas a Dieu...*"; Salimbene also considers Hugues as one of the foremost preachers of the day: "*Hic erat unus de maioribus clericis de mundo et sollemnis predicator et gratiosus tam clero quam populo et maximus disputator et paratus ad omnia*," Cronica, 324.

[304] *Li Vida* II.10: "*E motas autras si mogron per lo sieu heissemple, tant que foron .VI. vins e .XI. que voderon a Nostre Senhor vergenitat; e d'autras ganren, outra .IIII.XX., que promezeron totas castitat, az aquel sermon, per lo sieu heissemple, en las mans del sant paire.*"

[305] Brunel-Lobrichon, "*Existe-t-il un christianisme méridional*?" 47.

[306] See "The Earlier Rule" and "The Later Rule." In Francis and Clare: The Complete Works, trans. Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady, (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 107-135, 136-145. See also Iriarte, Franciscan History, 89. However, the Third Order was reminded to revere the Church's priesthood and the Eucharist, and the ministers were encouraged to consult with the bishop to resolve conflicts that arose with local officials or even between brothers and sisters of the Order. "Rule for the Franciscan Third Order," From The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi, trans. Benen Fahy, (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1964), 168-175. As cited in Medieval Popular Religion, 1000-1500: A Reader, ed. John Shinners, (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1997), 293-299. 297.

the Franciscan Order.[307]

However, the Franciscan legislation governing the acceptance of novices into the Order brings forward another important distinction in Douceline's public vows at Hyères. The Rules, which governed each of the three Orders, contain the traditional monastic requirement that all novices serve a one-year probationary period before they may be formally accepted into the Order. The probationary period was common practice for religious orders, giving the applicant time to dispose of their material possessions and to arrange for the care of their families since, after entry into religious orders, all earthly associations were annulled. This probationary period met the demands of Honorius III's bull, *Cum secundum consilium* on 22 September 1220, which not only restricted entry to the Order but also forbade anyone, once accepted, to leave the Order.[308] Even departure from the Third Order was permitted only for entry into a religious Order.[309] This restriction on the lay Tertiaries is significantly different from the beguines, who were free to withdraw from the Order without entering religious orders. Moreover, Douceline had already assumed the habit and lifestyle of the beguines; hence, her vows at Hyères cannot be considered a statement of intent to enter the Order of Penance but a formal and public declaration of the lifestyle she had already embraced.

As a beguine, or even as a tertiary, Douceline was not required to maintain a life of poverty. Her personal profession was, in fact, an enhancement of the religious life in

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[307] "Rule for the Franciscan Third Order," From The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi, 168-175. As cited in Medieval Popular Religion, 293-299.

[308] "The Earlier Rule," Francis and Clare, 110, *fn* 10.

[309] "Rule for the Franciscan Third Order," Medieval Popular Religion, 298.

which she was already established. Her vow of poverty reflected the lay piety of the time as well as the Franciscan teachings on the poverty of Christ and his apostles. By extension, the Virgin Mary was also party to this impoverished existence, as Douceline calls upon popular Marian devotion to validate her own embracing of poverty, claiming "Our Lady was the first beguine."[310] There is a sense that this claim created some uneasiness for the Ladies of Roubaud for it is qualified by confessing their belief that Douceline's statement was attributable to the "inspiration of Our Lord God."[311]

Thus we see that, by the time Douceline founded her first community, the basic elements of her spiritual life – chastity, active charity, poverty, penitential asceticism, and Franciscanism mysticism – were established. During the remainder of her life, she continued to develop these themes and deepen her spiritual union with Christ and Mary, applying herself to the practical works of charity and administering to her daughters.

With a clear vision of her chosen lifestyle and a fervent following, Douceline set about establishing, officially and publicly, her religious community, "forming them to the service of God."[312] It is possible that Douceline's original vision encompassed only the existence of a group of women who followed a religious life within their own homes, gathering together to perform charitable works in the manner of the first stage of beguinal existence.[313] However, "there were some who had a desire to join perfectly with her" and

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[310] *Li Vida* II.11: "*... qu'illi dizia que Nostra Dona fon li premiera beguina...*"

[311] Ibid., "*...aissi com nos crezem qu'il o agues per inspiracion de Nostre Seinhor Dieu.*"

[312] Ibid., "*E las enformava el servizi de Dieu....*"

[313] For a brief summary of McDonnell's stages of beguinal development, *supra* 63-64.

Douceline instituted a "lodging outside of the city [Hyères], which was called Roubaud."[314]

Douceline's *vita* also describes the founding of another house at Marseilles. As mentioned earlier, Gout concludes that Douceline established other houses as well, in Aix-en-Provence and in Digne. For evidence of a house at Aix-en-Provence, he points to Douceline being located in that town by the Count of Provence.[315] A brief mention in the registry of the convent of Récollets of Digne speaks of "'the blessed Douceline' who had 'established the Third Order' in that city in 1258."[316] Yet the *vita* itself is conspicuously silent on other establishments, dealing only with the life of the Houses at Hyères and Marseilles, with the exception of the epilogue which includes Aix in the list of towns associated with Douceline.[317] Although there is no direct evidence for other houses, it is entirely possible that there were 'unofficial' communities of women in other locales that subjected themselves to Douceline's authority, perhaps living as 'first-stage beguines,' in their own homes. Indeed, the *vita* recounts that "not only was [Douceline] head and director of the Ladies of Roubaud ... but she was also leader and mistress of those who, by her example, had made themselves beguines in the road that is near Roubaud at

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[314] *Li Vida* II.11: "*Mais alcunas n'I ac que si volgron ajustar perfiechamens ab ella;*" III.2: "*E feron un alberc for a de la villa, lo cal apelleron Robaut...*"

[315] Gout, *La Vie*, 27.

[316] Ibid., 27: "... *un vieux texte, une phrase jetée incidemment dans un registre du couvent des Récollets de Digne, parle de «la bienheureuse Dulceline» qui a «establi le Tiers-Ordre» dans cette ville, en 1258.*"

[317] *Li Vida, Épilogue*, XVI.27-30: "... *Gauch a la vila d'Aics, ...*" This thesis will only refer to the convents at Hyères and Marseilles as discussed in the *vita*.

Marseilles and also at Hyères... All. from the beginning, vowed obedience to her ...."[318] Arguably. not all of Douceline's daughters lived within the confines of the established Houses and it is extremely likely that, given her peripatetic existence, which often found her in different towns in Provence, there were many groups of women who were influenced by Douceline's beguinal lifestyle but lacked the financial or religious support to establish a separate house.

Concerning the use of the term 'order' in the *vita* when describing the House of Roubaud, the Ladies of Roubaud never achieved approval as an official order and the *vita* generally refers to the community as "*estament*" – 'establishment.' The word 'order' appears frequently in reference to Roubaud in the later chapters of the text, i.e. in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth chapters. It is likely that the use of the term reflects the conditions in the early fourteenth century, when the second version was written, that employed a less specific application of the term rather than a particular goal pursued by the saint or even the author. Furthermore, as already discussed, the difference between the Roubaud *estament* and the official vows "*d'autr'orde*," 'of the other order,' is clearly distinguished: faced with external pressure to dissolve the House of Roubaud or to associate her ladies with a monastic order (the singular nature of the noun 'orde' suggests reference to the Franciscan sisters, the Clarisses), Jean de Parma instructed Douceline to

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[318] Ibid., VI.1: "*Que non solamens era caps e regeiris d'aquellas de Robaut ...ans era atressi capdels e maistra d'aquellas que per lo sieu heissemple s'eran enbeguinidas en la carriera estant pres de Robaut, a Massella, en aissi con az Ieras. ... E totas, en lo comensament, vodavan az ella obedientia...*"

ignore these suggestions.[319] Nevertheless, at the end of her life, Douceline entrusts her ladies "to God and to the order" and "the Saint asks [Christ] to protect her *order*."[320] While there is a possibility that these references are to the Franciscan Order in general, I suspect that Philippine was more likely to elevate the House of Roubaud to the status of an 'order' independent from the Franciscans. Since Saint Francis' conception of the *vita apostolica* encompassed a migrant lifestyle of mendicancy and preaching, it is possible that Douceline's peregrinations are a further imitation of the Franciscan missionary model. It is arguable that, influenced by the ministry of other lay groups and the northern beguines as communicated by her brother, Douceline may even have taught, albeit in very small circles, in her attempts to pursue this ideal. Certainly, her *vita* is full of accounts of people who journeyed to see her in ecstasy and hear her speak. Any direct reference to this aspect of her life, however, would have been suppressed in the early fourteenth century in response to the condemnations and repressions of the Council of Vienne.

Douceline's *vita* closely follows Bonaventure's *Life of Saint Francis* and the proofs of her spirituality and sanctity are reflective of the Friars Minor. Not only does Douceline's *vita* parallel Bonaventure's *Life of Saint Francis*, her mysticism is imbued with the visual quality that characterises the visionary experiences of Francis himself and,

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[319] Ibid., X.18: "*Estai, filha, estai fermamens en so ques as ben comensat, e non vaugas alre querent, ni as a far d'autr'orde.*" Jean de Parma served as Minister General of the Franciscan Order from 1247 to 1257. Following the death of Hugues in 1255, Jean de Parma served as Douceline's spiritual advisor. Joscelin (d. 1276), later Bishop of Orange and provincial minister (1262-1272), also acted as her spiritual guide. Wolfkiel, The Life, 6, 22.

[320] *Li Vida* XIII.12: "*Ques a Dieu e a l'orde...*;" XIII.13: "*E li Sancta reques de penre tot son orde.*" (Italics added for emphasis).

like Francis, Douceline is cast into ecstasy by the song of a bird.[321] Even the mention of Francis' name lifts Douceline into an ecstatic state.[322] The author uses the strength of Douceline's attachment to Francis as proof of her orthodoxy, claiming that his name was always on her lips and in her mind and that she was often discovered in a state of rapture with the *Life of Saint Francis* in her hands.[323]

The *vita* contains an early reference to Douceline and Hugues as "two great lights ... that shone night and day; ... Brother Hugues de Digne ... [whose] preaching was enlightening and warming just like the sun... The second light, no less enlightening, because of the sanctity of her life was my lady saint Douceline de Digne..."[324] Wolfkiel's English edition of the text associates the allusion with the "two great lights" of Genesis

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[321] Ibid., IX.19: "... *que non podia sufrir nulla doussor de son, ni a penas nulh cant, pas lo cant dels aucels, qu'illi non fos raubida.*"

[322] The Count of Artois, desiring to see Douceline in ecstasy, arranged to have a religious man talk about God and Saint Francis. Even though Douceline tried to avoid falling into rapture by wounding herself under her mantle, she fell into an ecstasy. Ibid., IX.36-38: "*Esdevenc si quel comps d'Artes venc en Prohensa, le cals era homs mot devotz a Dieu. E cant auzi parlar de la gran sanctitat d'aquesta donna, e de sos raubimens, fon mogutz a gran devocion, e dezirava la mot avezer en aquell tirament. E cant fon a Massella, e all l'anet vezer, e menet am si alcuns bons fraires, que saupron ben parlar de Nostre Seinnhor. E preron a parlar de las nafras de mon seinnhor sant Frances, al qual illi avia sobeirana amor, e d'aquell dous parlament que fon entrel Seraph e mon seinnher sant Frances, cant li donet sas plagas. Mais cant il si senti moguda per aquellas paraulas que li fraire dizian, denfra la mantell, c'om non ho connogues, afligia si mezesma, estant humilmens. ... E anc per tot aquo, non remas; car les sieus esperitz era trop abrazatz, que nulla afliccion aquella ardor non li podia esteinher. Az aquellas paraulas, le sancta contemplairis de Dieu si va fort enflamar soptamens, e ill estat raubida.*"

[323] Ibid., IX.42: "... *que tortemps mon denher sant Frances avia en la boqua, don mostrava continuamens l'avia en sa memoria*;" IX.44: "*Motas ves la trbavan raubida, lo libre en las mans, legent la sieua [Francis'] vida* ..." Douceline's ability to read apparently contradicts an earlier claim that "she was a simple women without letters," Ibid., IX.4: "*Car jassiaisso qu'illi fos simpla femena, e ses letras* ...." Wolfkiel points out this contradiction but does not consider two important points, Wolfkiel, The Life, 297 *fn* 359. First, the denial of learning is frequently a pious exaggeration, the better to demonstrate divine influence in knowledge; and second, in the Middle Ages, having "letters" often specifically referred to the ability to read Latin and is not necessarily a comment on vernacular literacy.

[324] Ibid., I:2-3. "*doas grans lumnieras ... que resplandiron e la nueg e lo jorn; ... fraire Hugo de Dinha, ...fon sa predications luzens e escalfans aissi con le solels ... Li segona lumniera, non mens luzens per sanctitat de vida, fon ma dona sancta Doucelina de Dinha.*"

1:14-18 – "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and a lesser light to rule the night."[325] Yet the refusal to accept the second light as "lesser" suggests another interpretation available at the end of the thirteenth century. In "Canticle of Brother Sun," Saint Francis is said to declare "Sister Moon" as "most precious and fair" and not merely a lesser light.[326] In this comparison, the quality of Douceline's spirituality is credited with the same strength of enlightenment as that of her brother, Hugues, "the Sun."

In the first half of the thirteenth century, Jacques de Vitry prepared a description of the beguines of Oignies for the Bishop of Toulouse that focused on the life of Mary d'Oignies as the pre-eminent example of the beguinal lifestyle.[327] Mary's spirituality typified the northern beguinal spirituality, incorporating extreme poverty and asceticism, excessive Eucharistic and penitential devotion and her style of mysticism portrayed the union of the spirit with Christ as erotic bridal imagery. While Douceline's form of beguinism included the poverty, charity, and penitential asceticism of the northern beguines, she transformed the eroticism of the bride into the grief of "widowed motherhood" as embodied by Marian devotion.

Following her vision of the beguines, Douceline began to wear black clothing and a white veil. As Douceline explained to her ladies, 'lo mantel' was worn "in reverence

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[325] Genesis 1:16. "And God made two great lights: a greater light to rule the day; and a lesser light to rule the night: and the stars." Wolkiel, The Life, 228, *fn* 332.

[326] See Appendix 3 for the full verse.

[327] Jacques de Vitry, "The Life of Marie d'Oignies," in Two Lives of Marie d'Oignies, trans. Hugh Feiss, (Toronto: Peregrina, 1998), 9-199.

and following the example of the mother of God, who ... she said, after the passion of her son, always wore a mantel on her head" [328] for which reason "we go as widows and veiled."[329] The white veil provides us with a point for some consideration. While most women probably wore white, that is undyed, veils in the Middle Ages, the wimple was an indication of widowhood in the thirteenth century and it is with this understanding that Douceline dons the veil and accepts it for her beguines.

For the sick and the poor as for her spiritual daughters, Douceline's care was that of a mother – loving, tender, and giving.[330] This idea of Douceline as mother-protector to her community is demonstrated in one of Douceline's visions. The Count of Artois, desiring to see Douceline in ecstasy and to benefit from being present at such a display of holiness, contrived to induce a rapture in Douceline by turning the discussion to Saint Francis. In her ecstasy, Douceline raised herself up, lifting her arms in the form of a cross. Her ladies crowded under her arms, asking whether they would be saved.[331] Douceline's reply confirmed that they would be saved "under the wings of Saint

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[328] *Li Vida* II.9: "... *e portet pueis tostemps lo mantel sus lo cap, en reverencia e as heissemple de la maire de Dieu, que, segon qu'illi dizia, apres la passion del dil, portet tostz temps lo mantel sus lo cap.*"

[329] Ibid., II.4: "... *doas humils donnas, ques eran d'un semblant, las quals anavan mot honestamens am vels clars blancs de tela cubrent lurs caras, ab mot gran honestat; e li vestir eran tug negres.*" I prefer the translation of '*clars*' as 'bright' or 'clear,' denoting the quality of the whiteness. Albanès translates the '*vels clars blancs*' as '*voiles de toile blanche*' – merely 'veils of white cloth.' Albanès, La Vie, 15. Wolkiel, on the other hand, describes them as 'veils of white *lace*,' (italics added for emphasis). The cost of lace makes it highly unlikely that a community that otherwise demonstrated humility, simplicity, and poverty would have chosen to don such extravagant headgear as 'veils of lace.' Wolfkiel, The Life, 236.

[330] Brunel-Lobrichon, "*Existe-i-il un christianisme méridional*?" 48.

[331] *Li Vida* IX.39: "... *hubrent sos braisses mot fort, e estendutz quais en cros, levet si tant aut sobre terra, que cais semblet s'en volgues puiar sus, am meravillos gauch que mostrava li sieua cara. E adoncs cant la viron en aissi eslevar, totas ensemps, am gran fe, si van metre desotz los sieus santz brasses, e demanderon li si serian salvas.*"

Francis."[332] The gesture evokes two popular images in Christian salvation: the crucifixion of Christ and Mary sheltering humanity, both of which were the focus of many of her trances.[333] As she repeatedly shapes her body into the arms-outstretched pose of crucifixion during her trances, she demonstrated the importance of Christ's passion to her mystic spirituality.[334] The second image was a popular representation of Mary or even of Mother Church sheltering Christians, a depiction common in the sculpture and painting of the period.[335] Another vision, this time seen by a countess in a dream, reveals pure, sweet, golden oil flowing from Douceline's breasts to fuel the lamp that burned before the altar of Mary, a clear indication of Douceline's maternal qualities and her Marian devotion.[336]

While most of the declarations of salvation under the guidance of Saint Francis

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[332] Ibid., "«*Veraiamens vos dic, que sotz aquellas alas de sant Frances, totas vos salvares.*»"

[333] Ibid., IX.48: "*Cascun an, lo jorn de Venres santz, ill estava raubida continuamens tot aquell jorn, e neis aquella nuech. ... Cascun an, aquell jorn, era tan grans aquell sentiment qu'illi avia de Ihesu Crist en aquella rennembransa, que semblava quais tota defallis en la passion del Seinnhor, e en la dolor de la Verge.*"

[334] Ibid., IX. 39: "... *hubrent sos braisses mot fort, e estendutz quais en cros ...*; IX.55: "*Et intreron, e troberon la raubida, qu'estava estenduda en cros, e non tocava de pa en terra ...*"

[335] This image of the Virgin as protector is seen since at least the late thirteenth-early fourteenth century. For example, the *Madonna of Mercy* (c.1308-10) tempera painting by Simone Martini in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena; the *Madonna in Cloak* (*Madonna of Mercy*) (1400-1450) fresco in a Protestant church in Vizsoly, Hungary; the altar painting by Jean Milhairet, *Our Lady of Mercy* (sixteenth century) in the Chapelle de la Misericorde, Nice (this image may be seen in Elizabeth A. Johnson's work on Marian devotion, referenced *infra*, 407); *Madonna of Mercy* statue (fifteenth century) displayed in the National Museum of the Bargello in Florence.

[336] *Li Vida*, X.9: "*Dona una ves, fon vist per una devota comptessa, en vesion de sompni, segon ques illi al compte recomptet, qu'illi vezia issr del pietz de la sancta maire oli mot pur, e dous, e clars, aissi cant aur; le quals cremava en una lampeza bella e respandent, davant l'autar de la bezeneta Verge maire de Dieu.*" For a brief but concise discussion of Marian devotion, see Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Marian Devotion in the Western Church," in Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation, ed. Jill Raitt, (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 392-414. For a more extensive analysis, including the evolution of the role of Christ in Marian devotion, see the collection of essays by Caroline Bynum Walker, Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

that pervade the *vita* may be attributed to the desire for protection under the Franciscan Order, there are hints of Joachimism in these assertions. Recalling that the bare-footed monks of the third Spiritual Age of Joachim's prophecy had been identified as the Franciscans, it is not surprising that many of Douceline's claims included the role of Francis as the ultimate saviour and guide to salvation. Given Philippine's intent to argue the orthodoxy of the beguines of Roubaud, it is surprising that these concepts were not expunged in the second version of the *vita*. It is highly unlikely, given the proximity of the papal court in Avignon, that news of the condemnations of Joachimism had not reached Marseilles in the early fourteenth century so it is more conceivable that the popularity of Spiritual Franciscanism kept Joachimism in the public eye longer in Provence than in Paris. It is equally feasible that the intricacies of the canonical arguments that condemned Joachimism were incomprehensible to the laity's grasp of theology and that Douceline's claims, and those of Roubaud, were interpreted as orthodox Franciscan devotion.

Douceline's confidence in Saint Francis as protector of Roubaud presents yet another indication of Franciscan spirituality and devotion. Her statement that the beguines of Roubaud would be saved "under the wings of Saint Francis" reveals that Philippine, if not Douceline herself, was familiar with the vision of Saint Francis in

which he received the stigmata.[337] The stigmata are specifically referred to in the text: "For when she spoke of the standard-bearer of the army of Christ, my lord Saint Francis, marked by the sacred stigmata, she ... was always carried away by her great devotion for the balladeer of Christ."[338] Although stigmata were never attributed to Douceline, the wounds of Christ and Saint Francis, are echoed in Douceline's *vita* in two ways: in self-mutilation and in testing by others.

Her vulnerability during her raptures was the one great weakness in Douceline's otherwise strong spiritual control for while her mind was in this state of extreme meditation and prayer, her body was at the mercy of those around her. That Douceline was aware of this weakness is evidenced by repeated attempts to forestall her ecstasies by viciously pinching or stabbing herself with needles, which she kept in her sleeves for this purpose.[339] Her *vita* relates a litany of circumstances that show the manipulation of Douceline's raptures for a secular audience, contrary to the saint's own wishes. People would frequently stick her with pins and needles, and place slivers under her nails in

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[337] "Then one morning ... while he was praying on the mountainside, Francis saw a Seraphim with six fiery wings ... The vision descended swiftly and came to rest in the air near him. Then he saw the image of a man crucified in the midst of the wings ... He was lost in wonder at the sight of this mysterious vision; he knew that the agony of Christ's passion was not in keeping with the state of a seraphic spirit which is immortal. ... There and then the marks of the nails began to appear in his hands and feet ..." *Life of St. Francis*, from "Major and Minor Lives of St. Francis with excerpts from other works by St. Bonaventure," in St Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus for the Sources for the Life of St. Francis, trans. Benen Fahy, ed. Marion A. Habig, (Fourth edition; Quincy, Illinois: Franciscan Press, 1991), 729-735. As cited in Medieval Saints, 497-503. 498-500.

[338] *Li Vida* IX. 44: "*Car cant illi parllava, ni mentavia lo gonfanonier de la ost de Crist, mon seinnher sant Frances, ensenhalatz d'aquels sagratz seinnhals, non remania en si mezesma, que tantost era tirada az aquell sentiment, per la sobre fervent devocion qu'illi avia en lo bollier de Crist.*"

[339] Ibid., IX.29: "*Cant ill era entre gens que parlessan de Dieu, e si sentia alcun toc de tirament esperital, tantost queria a si mezesma alcum escapament, fazent a si alcuna afliccion que la destorbes, c'om non pogues connoisser qu'illi de Dieu agues negun bon sentiment*;" IX.34: "... *que totas las sieuas mans eran pur blavairols, en aissi az aquell sermon las s'avia tormentadas.*"

order to prove the truth of her raptures – the Count of Provence confirmed the authenticity of her ecstasy by having molten lead poured over her feet.[340] But when Douceline returned from her ecstasies, she suffered extreme pain from these tests.[341] Finally, she angrily commanded her ladies that "none of them should reveal nor ... show her while she was in this state."[342] This outburst reveals the human Douceline, undoubtedly frustrated by the repeated and painful attempts to demonstrate the validity of her miraculous raptures.

But it was a demand that was doomed from inception, for Douceline's community did not have a private church – the ladies worshipped in the church of the Friars Minor and her ecstatic experiences were visible to all. The resultant press of pious worshippers endangered Douceline as well as her ladies and the brothers of the church who attempted to preserve her privacy. Finally, Douceline was forced to forgo church attendance.[343] Yet she was still at the mercy of the unscrupulous devout – something of a contradiction in terms. The *vita* relates numerous occasions when, even though a request to view Douceline in ecstasy was refused by the saint herself, discussions were deliberately turned to holy matters to induce a rapture in the saint, again separating her from the very

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[340] Ibid., IX.35: "*Mais alcunas personas, per plus fort aproar, feron li adoncs d'engoissos proamens, com non s'en davan sueinh. Plantavan li agullhas per los detz, entre la carn e l'ongla, per plus fort afligir, per so que si moguessa;*" IX.16: "*Le premiera ves que le reis Karlle la vi raubida, ell volc prohar s'era ver raubiment. So fon el temps qu'era comps de Prohensa; e prohet en aquesta maniera. Qu'ell fes legar ganren de plomp, e davant si fes lo li gitar tot bollhent sus los pes totz descaus: e anc ren non senti.*"

[341] Ibid., IX.35: "*Mais apres, cant fon retornada d'aquell sant raubiment, n'estet mot afligada, e'n sufri gran dolor.*"

[342] Ibid., IX.41: "*E per aisso, illi adoncs, am gran confuzion, comandet a totas, en vertut de sancta obediencia, aitan autamens et aitan fort cant poc, que neguna non l'auzes revelar, ni monstrar a neguna persona, tant cant ill for a en aquel estament.*" Albanès, La Vie, 96.

[343] Ibid., IX.45: "... *e per aquo non auzia sinon messas secretas e privadas.*"

spectacle that was centred upon her.

Douceline's commitment to active charity was established early in her life with her first visionary experience in which she encountered Christ as 'suffering man.'[344] In a further development of the erotic tension faced by the early Franciscans, Douceline's refusal to touch the man because of her excessive modesty is subtly chastised in this experience: "And then, when he recognised her shame and great humility, he said to her: "Daughter, do not be ashamed of me for I will not be ashamed to show you to my Father." And, as soon as he had said this, the poor man suddenly disappeared..."[345]

This episode influenced Douceline's conception of sexual modesty and its role in charitable service. She received both men and women with equal affection, serving them and caring them for them with kindness and humility, in spite of her extreme aversion to contact with men. She admonished her followers: "Don't think, daughters, that those whom you serve are men. Rather each is indeed the person of Christ."[346] Nor was Douceline content to allow her daughters to serve at their convenience.[347] "Her charity

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[344] Ibid., I.6: "*Una ves, li venc uns paures mot dezaisatz, e fon fort malanans; e fazia si portar az ella, ... E le malautz reques li per gran necessitat que le era, li menes la man per las costas. E illi adoncs cant ho auzi, enferezi en si de lueinh, pensan si ho faria: car era homs.*"

[345] Ibid., I.6: "*E adoncs el conoc la vergonha de sa gran honestat, e dis li: «Filla, non aias vergonha de mi, qu'ieu non aurai vergonha de manifestar tu al paire.» E tantost con ac aisso dig, le paures avali soptamens, quez anc pueis non lo vi.*"

[346] Ibid., VIII.5: "*«Non vos penses, filhas, que sian homes aquestos que sirves; ans es ben, sa dizia, li persona de Crist.»*"

[347] "She arranged for women to go to the poor and to bring them to her, and she received them in the person of Christ. With marvellous joy they filled the houses of the street with poor sick people. ... All this service was done at Roubaud. They very carefully ministered to them and made their beds for them, for all those who came to them in the holy name of God." Ibid., VIII.4-5: "... *e tenia, als paures, femenas establidas quels anavan querent, e los li aduzian, los quals ill recebia en persona de crist. E dels paures malautes implian los hostals de la carriera am meravillos gauch ... E tot aquell servizis fazia si a Robaut, e mot curozamens lur menistravan, e lur fazian lur liech, a totz aquels que el sant nom de Dieu lur venian.*"

extended especially to the poor and the sick whom she served with marvellous affection. ... Where she could not succeed by giving worldly things, she gave her entire heart voluntarily and she submitted her body to all the services that she could do for them."[348]

While active charity was essential to Douceline's conception of spirituality, the role of founder and spiritual mother included a commitment to the absolute poverty of primitive Franciscanism. Douceline devoted herself to the extremes of poverty as practised by the Spiritual Franciscans but she never abandoned her commitment to active charity, encouraging it in her ladies. She recognised the importance of withdrawal from the material world for spiritual contemplation but she insisted that her community remain uncloistered to continue their works of pious charity. Indeed, it was she who insisted that her community not have its own church, perpetuating contact with the larger community that her ladies served.

But in order for us to consider the significance of charity as such a fundamental factor in Douceline's spirituality, we must consider the meaning of charity, a meaning that does not correspond precisely to our modern interpretation. In the later Middle Ages, charity or *caritas*, was not simply almsgiving or providing physical service to alleviate the suffering of the poor or sick. Rather, in its full terms, it must be considered to be 'concern for the total well-being of a soul, physically and spiritually.'[349] For Douceline,

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[348] Ibid., VIII.3: "*Majormens s'estendia li sieua caritatz als paures e als malautes, los cals am meravilloza afeccion servia, e ajudava a totz cels que podia. E aqui on non podia complir de donar las cauzas temporals, ill dava tot lo cor per volontat, e sosmetia son cors a totz servizis que lur poguessa far.*"

[349] Martha G. Newman elucidates the medieval definition of *caritas* in The Boundaries of Charity: Cistercian Culture and Ecclesiastical Reform, 1098-1180, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

this meant guarding "the purity of both the body and the soul."[350] With this understanding, many of Douceline's actions may be reinterpreted, not as detached or distancing, but rather as expressions of *caritas*, compelling participation from her community. We can now see that Douceline's poverty, her excessive asceticism, and her rigid discipline created a charitable outlet as her ladies clothed, fed, and cared for her.[351] Even her vulnerability during trances was an opportunity for her companions to pursue the *caritas* that was the foundation of the community.[352]

This definition of *caritas*, which focuses on Douceline's concern for the members of her community, goes hand in hand with Douceline's personal commitment to her faith and the associated elements of prayer, contemplation, chastity, and asceticism and belies Kleinberg's implication that Douceline's behaviour was little more than an attempt to manipulate her community to validate her own spirituality. Douceline was deeply committed to the religious expressions that she saw as methods of attaining salvation and yet again, we see that her concern for salvation was not only for herself but for her entire community. Many of her visions demonstrate her concern for the occupants of Roubaud, as she demands and receives assurances from Christ that those who follow the life-style of the beguine, and specifically the Ladies of Roubaud, will be saved.

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[350] *Li Vida* VI.3: "*e avia gran curia de gardar la pureza e del cors e de l'arma, en si e en las autras.*" That Douceline was concerned for not only herself but for others as well further demonstrates a broader definition of the quality of *caritas*.

[351] Ibid. V.3: "*Ans cant li era hops de meyrar, convenia las donnas li provissan per amor del Senhor...*" The *vita* reveals that the ladies frequently watched over her when she was ill: VI.14: "*Motas ves ho proeron las donnas que la vellavan per razon de sa malautia...*"

[352] The *vita* points out that, even though attempts were made to protect Douceline during her ecstasies, the press of the crowds was such that "nothing the brothers or the ladies did could protect her:" Ibid. IX.24: "*que per ren que fezessan li fraire, ni las donnas, non ho podian defendre.*"

There is no question that Douceline considered herself a model for her community since her religious way of life, that of the beguine, was new to the communities of Provence.[353] While she was herself devoted to the Franciscan ideal of absolute poverty, she was always aware of and sympathetic to the frailties of her charges. Her *vita* relates several occasions when she discerned a personal desire in one of her ladies and, with maternal indulgence, kindly granted the necessary relaxation of communal regulations.[354] In a similar manner, much has been made of Douceline's severity and abhorrence of contact with men, frequently citing an incident in which she learned that a young girl, "who was not yet seven years old," had been looking overlong at some men.[355] Douceline beat the girl "until blood flowed down her sides, exclaiming that she would make of her a sacrifice to God."[356] In a reconsideration of this event, we can see that Douceline's concern can equally be interpreted as exceptional *caritas*, a profound concern for the spiritual condition of the girl. In fact, the *vita* reports that the girl remained forever grateful for this punishment for it helped to draw her soul closer to God.[357]

The importance of *caritas* to Douceline is underlined by Douceline's own words to her ladies: "Stay, daughters, united in love for Our Lord; for by the love of Christ you

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[353] Indeed, the *vita* refers to Douceline's life as a "model for all." Ibid. XIII.2: "*Et en aissi, era tals li benaurada maire, que li sola vida sieua era heissemples de totas...*"

[354] Unfortunately, we are not told precisely what form this 'leniency' might have taken but it is likely that they were, in some way, a relaxation of the rigour of the communal life for a brief time – perhaps with respect to diet or visitation of family.

[355] *Li Vida* VI.5: "*Una ves, una de las petitas de Robaut, que non avia plus de .vii. ans, avia esgardat d'omes que la obravan.*"

[356] Ibid., VI.5: "*E cant li sancta maire ho saup, batet la mot duramens, en tant quel sancs li corria per la las costas; dizent li que sacrifizi faria a Dieu d'ella.*"

[357] Ibid., VI.5: "*De la qual cauza aquilli li fes gracias a la fin de sos jorns; car mot dis que aquel batres li fon huccaison de mais ajustar s'arma am Nostre Senhor.*"

have been assembled and Christ has bound you by his charity. All other holy orders are forcefully tied by their rule; but you ... you are tied only by charity."[358]

Table 5. The Spirituality of Douceline de Digne

† Especial reverence for Francis, obedience to Order and Church
† Commitment to chastity; avoidance of contact with men
† Strict adherence to life of poverty
† Commitment to active charity, service to sick and poor
† Uncloistered, lay lifestyle with no recognised order or formal rule
† Recognition of and devotion of human Christ, including physical *imitatio*
† Active in secular politics
† Intellectually independent and individualistic
† Powerfully visual ecstatic and rapturous mysticism that transcended reality
† Maternal Marian imagery
† Alters traditional lifestyles to suit needs
† Grounded in temporal reality, appreciation of material world as creation of God

In the above table, we can see that Douceline absorbed numerous elements of the Franciscan, beguinal, and mystical models into her own style of spirituality.[359] Despite Douceline's devotion to Franciscan values, one of the most fundamental and distinct elements of Douceline's spirituality was her commitment to active charity. For Douceline, charitable service to the poor and suffering was not merely a demonstration of her love for Christ – it was service to Christ himself.

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[358] Ibid., X.25: "*Estas, filhas, en unitat en l'amor dell Seinnhor; car en l'amor de Crist est aissi acampadas, e Crist vos a liadas en sieu caritat. Tut li autri sant orde an fort liam de regla; mais vos autras, sa dis, non est a plus liadas, mai sol a caritat.*"

[359] The models of spirituality contained in Tables 1-4 are presented in a single table in Appendix 2 to facilitate comparison.

Reinterpreting Douceline's Withdrawal

As already mentioned, Kleinberg identified Douceline as a 'detached' saint who deliberately separated herself from the other members of her community and restricted the elements of sanctity to herself alone. I would like to point out that there is some exception to be taken with Kleinberg's treatment of Douceline. While he intended to compare and contrast the styles of created sanctity as demonstrated by Lukardis of Oberweimar and Douceline as examples of co-operative and detached sanctity, respectively, Kleinberg devoted most of his discussion to Lukardis and the conditions that created her sanctity. When he finally did get to a discussion of Douceline, his main focus was not, as he claimed, the conditions of the creation of sanctity, but rather the control of an established sanctity.

He also failed to consider the influence of other factors in the 'lived lives' of the two women. Lukardis, a chronically ill woman living within an established monastic community, entered the convent at an early age as a simple nun. Douceline, on the other hand, embarked upon her religious path much later in life and, despite the rigours of her asceticism, remained a vital and authoritative figure, founding and administering to two innovative religious communities that deliberately remained in regular contact with the secular world.

Kleinberg considered Douceline's refusal of absolute poverty to her followers to be a distancing manoeuvre. The first section of the *Speculum Perfectionis*, however, contains a description of the creation of the Third Rule, approved by Innocent III in 1210, that suggests that there was some precedence for the superior of a house following a more

severe interpretation of the Rule. According to the legend, Francis, who had already made two Rules, set about creating a Third Rule when the Second Rule was lost. Concerned that this new rule would be too severe, the ministers of the Order relayed their concerns to Brother Elias, who led them to Francis:

> And Brother Elias said, "These are Ministers, who hearing that thou art making a new Rule, and fearing lest thou shouldst make it too harsh, do say and protest that they will not be bound to it: make it for thyself and not for them." ... Then all heard the voice of Christ ... "let those therefore who will not obey it, go out from the Order!" ... Then the Ministers, looking upon one another, went back confused and terrified. [360]

While Francis refused to permit the laxity that this situation would entail in the First Order, there is no clear evidence that this severity was intended for the laity who chose to follow Franciscanism. The crucial point, however, is that even though Douceline herself took a lifetime vow to obey the dictates of the First Order concerning poverty, this requirement was never imposed upon her community and Hugues, who in his role as Provincial Minister jealously guarded the purity of Franciscan ideals, denied absolute poverty to the beguines of Roubaud.[361] Since the vows of the beguines were only in force for the duration of their stay at the beguinage, they could not enter into any commitment

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[360] "The Mirror of Perfection," trans. Robert Steele. In The Little Flowers of St. Francis – The Mirror of Perfection – St. Bonaventure's Life of St. Francis (London: Dent, 1973. First published 1910), 183-184.

[361] *Li Vida* V.3: "*... e vodet en las mans del sant paire fraire Hugo de Dinha la sancta paupertat de Ihesu Crist am gran ardor gardar, tot en aissi cant sant Frances la tenc e la donet;*" V.11: "*E cant las filhas viron quel maire avia en si la sancta paupertat de l'evangeli autamens abrassada ... Mais le sans paires fraire Hugo non ho sufri, ni non ho conseillet ...*" The vows of the beguines of Roubaud do not include a commitment to poverty, *Formule de profession des béguines de Marseille, Pièces justicatives* I, Albanès, *La Vie*, 257.

that required a permanent change in status.[362]

As to Kleinberg's suggestion that Douceline excluded her spiritual daughters from her mystical experiences, it must be noted that her visions have been interpreted in precisely the opposite manner by others.[363] Douceline often called out to her daughters to join in the vision – to see what she saw or described the vision so that the ladies could share her experience. Moreover, as the founder and the mother of the community, Douceline's experiences could never be completely shared by the other members of the community because there could be only one mother. While Lukardis was one sister among many, Douceline was the only mother of the house and therefore her experiences and relations with the other members of the community were necessarily shaped and defined by the mother-daughter interaction that was invoked by the female religious relationship.

Part of Douceline's plan to encourage *caritas* in her community incorporated the creation of Douceline herself as 'poor.' Having taken a personal vow of poverty, she depended upon the charity of her ladies to care for her physical needs.[364] Not even the bedding that she used in her last illness was her own.[365] She had provided the means and

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[362] The wording of the profession suggests that the vows were intended to be lifelong but, lacking any specific information concerning the matter, it is likely that the Ladies of Roubaud followed the example of the northern beguines with regard to the impermanence of their vows.

[363] Brunel-Lobrichon, "*Existe-i-il un christianisme méridional*?" 46; MacDonnell, Saint Douceline, 31-33.

[364] *Li Vida* V.3: "*So es a dire que ren non avia propri, ni mais una rauba ho un vestir non avia, ni tenia, aissi con un mantell, e una gonella que portava desus, e una soteirana. Ans cant li era hops de meyrar, convenia las donnas li provissan per amor del Senhor; que d'autramens ill non prenia ren que li fos donat.*"

[365] Ibid., V.4: "*Neis li drap de son liech, que tenc en sa rediera malautia, non eran sieus ...*"

opportunity for her ladies to demonstrate *caritas* – she was herself the 'poor,' the 'sick,' and the 'weak.'

Thus we see that Douceline incorporated the most popular elements of orthodox spirituality to form a mode of life for herself and her followers. Committed to active charity and penitential asceticism, she selected the freedom of the beguinage. Establishing herself as spiritual mother, she invoked the maternal imagery of Mary in her devotion to the Passion and the Eucharist. Her mysticism reflected the same acute visionary experiences of Saint Francis and was initiated by a similar appreciation for the created world even as she denied herself material goods by her vow of absolute poverty. Her sanctity not only incorporated but also invited the participation of her community. Her life, as seen through her *vita*, reflected orthodox and popular ideals of spiritual perfection – a *speculum perfectionis popularis*.

CONCLUSION

When I first began to evaluate Douceline's spirituality and the formation of her sanctity, I theorised that absolute poverty replaced active charity as the focus of saintliness in her life, and that her expressions of evangelical charity and absolute poverty evolved along a spectrum paralleling her spiritual journey from piety to sanctity. Douceline certainly dispersed her belongings and devoted herself to the extremes of poverty as practised by the Spiritual Franciscans but she never completely abandoned her commitment to active charity and encouraged it in her ladies. While she urged withdrawal from the material world in favour of spiritual contemplation, she never intended that her community should be strictly cloistered for claustration would interfere with her determined efforts to continue her works of active charity.

This thesis reflects two aspects of Douceline: the 'real' Douceline who lived during the second half of the thirteenth century; and the Douceline of the *vita* who provided a model of orthodox spirituality for the beguines of Roubaud. The former was born into a period when a pious laity seized the initiative in formulating modes of religious expression that incorporated the socio-economic realities of an evolving urban landscape. The latter reflects the conditions when, at the Council of Vienne in 1312, the Church took action against its growing unease with a laity whose quest for a spiritual life challenged its position as arbiter and model of piety and sanctity. The lines between the two aspects are blurred and indistinct and, especially given the paucity of sources, it is

doubtful that we could ever bring them into sharper focus.

In her quest to shape a meaningful style of spirituality for her community, 'real' Douceline incorporated elements of beguinal, Franciscan, and mystical spiritualities, altering each to create a distinctive form of life that met the social and spiritual needs of her community through a complex structure of many interrelated components: the penitential asceticism of fasting and sleep deprivation; active charity and service to the poor and sick; zealous chastity; devotion to Christ's Passion and Saint Francis as revealed through mystic imagery; Marian devotion as manifested through the role of spiritual mother as guardian; and beguinal independence to maintain political, fiscal, and social interactions with the surrounding community.

As part of a programme to assure the beguines, and the rest of the larger community, of the orthodoxy of their House in response to the papal repression emanating from the Council of Vienne in 1312, the Douceline of the *vita* provides a snapshot of idealised popular orthodox religion in Provence during the late thirteenth-early fourteenth centuries. Furthermore, while Aviad Kleinberg's interpretation of Douceline's ecstatic raptures and exclusive poverty points to her withdrawal from her community, we now see that Douceline's behaviour was motivated by a broader interpretation of *caritas*. Far from isolating her, Douceline's poverty and mysticism anchored the spiritual inclinations of the Ladies of Roubaud and connected them to the larger neighbourhood by confirming the orthodox nature of their religiosity.

Political exigencies at the beginning of the fourteenth century can account for some withdrawal of support from a saint who had endorsed a now-disgraced and deposed

House of Anjou in Sicily. Yet even though Douceline's *cultus* never succeeded in breaking beyond regional status, it was long-lived. persisting beyond the death of the last beguine of Roubaud in 1414 to the present day. In 1970, a new church was dedicated to Saint Douceline in Hyères. Despite this longevity, Douceline's reputation was insufficient to elevate her beyond regional beatification.

The next step is to investigate the interaction between the community of Roubaud, the cities of Hyères and Marseilles, and the region of Provence to determine whether Douceline's daughters pursued the ideal presented in the *vita* and what extant evidence can support such a study. Questions concerning the manner in which her house promoted and perpetuated her *cultus*, and whether her reputation was exploited for civic or regional purposes are questions that remain for further investigation. The answers will not only reveal the success of Douceline, her *vita*, and her *cultus* but they will provide important information on lay spirituality, popular devotion, and the interaction between the Church and the laity in Provence during the later Middle Ages.

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Appendix 1 - The Council of Vienne (1311-1312) on the Beguines

This translation of the decree concerning the beguines, taken from Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, ed. Norman P. Tanner, appears at http://www.piar.hu/councils/ ecum15.htm

[28]. We entertain in our heart a deep longing that the catholic faith prosper in our time and that the perverseness of heresy be rooted out of christian (*sic*) soil. We have therefore heard with great displeasure that an abominable sect of wicked men, commonly called Beghards, and of faithless women, commonly called Beguines, has sprung up in the realm of Germany. This sect, planted by the sower of evil deeds, holds and asserts in its sacrilegious and perverse doctrine the following errors:

1. First, that a person in this present life can acquire a degree of perfection which renders him utterly impeccable and unable to make further progress in grace. For, as they say, if someone could always make further progress, he could become more perfect than Christ.

2. Secondly, that it is not necessary to fast or pray after gaining this degree of perfection, for then the sensitive appetite has been so perfectly subjected to the spirit and to reason that one may freely grant the body whatever pleases it.

3. Thirdly, that those who have reached the said degree of perfection and spirit of liberty, are not subject to human obedience nor obliged to any commandments of the church, for, as they say, where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

4. Fourthly, that a person can gain in this life final beatitude in every degree of perfection that he will obtain in the life of the blessed.

5. Fifthly, that any intellectual nature in itself is naturally blessed, and that the soul does not need the light of glory to elevate it to see God and enjoy him blissfully.

6. Sixthly, that the practice of the virtues belongs to the state of imperfection and the perfect soul is free from virtues.

7. Seventhly, that to kiss a woman is a mortal sin since nature does not incline one to it, but the act of intercourse is not a sin, especially in time of temptation, since it is an inclination of nature.

8. Eighthly, that at the elevation of the body of Jesus Christ, they ought not to rise or show reverence to it; it would be an imperfection for them to come down from the purity and height of their contemplation so far as to think about the ministry or sacrament of the eucharist, or about the passion of Christ as man.

With the counterfeit appearance of sanctity they say and do other things also that offend the eyes of the divine majesty and constitute a grave danger to souls. Since the duty of the office committed to us obliges us to extirpate from the catholic church this detestable sect and the above execrable errors, lest they be further propagated and corrupt the hearts of the faithful, we condemn and utterly reject, with the approval of the sacred council, the sect itself and the errors described above, and we strictly forbid anyone henceforth to hold, approve or defend the errors. We decree that those who act otherwise are to be punished with canonical censure. The diocesans and the inquisitors of heresy for the regions where these Beghards and Beguines live, are to exercise their office with

special care concerning them, making inquiries about their life and behaviour and about their beliefs in relation to the articles of faith and the sacraments of the church. They are to impose due punishment on those whom they find guilty, unless there is voluntary abjuration of the above errors and repentance with fitting satisfaction.

Appendix 2 – Models of Spirituality and Sanctity

Table 6. The Models of Medieval Spirituality and Sanctity – Summary Table

Franciscan Spirituality	Beguinal Spirituality	Female Mystical Spirituality	Female Lay Sanctity
* Obedience to superiors in Order and to Church * Chastity * Poverty – personal and institutional, permitting manual labour and mendicancy * Active apostolacy * Uncloistered community * Personal, active charity to the poor and sick * Prophecy and visionary imagery * Appreciation of material world as creation of God * Recognition of and devotion to human Christ * Eucharistic and Marian devotion	* Officially laypersons – did not take lifelong vows * Not associated with any single religious order * No formal rule * Commitment to chastity * Poverty, supported by manual labour and mendicancy * Humility * Charity, often expressed by caring for sick * Extreme asceticism * Uncloistered community * Intense Eucharistic devotion * Apostolic tendencies – preaching or spiritual guidance	* Intellectually independent * Mystical bonding resists cultural pressure to silence * Adapts literary styles to express mystic experiences * Alters traditional lifestyles to suit needs * Grounded in temporal reality * Mystical experience transcends reality * Highly individualistic * Identification with Virgin Mary as grieving mother/widow or eroticism in mystical union with Christ	* Identification with dispossessed, service to sick and poor * Special devotion to the Eucharist * Frequently aristocratic * High educational attainments * Familial opposition to religious choices * Tertiary/lay lifestyles * Political and religious activism * Community negotiation of saintliness * Orthodox * Miracles, commonly materialistic * Mystical union with God * Demonstrates stages towards perfection
Based on: Burr; Lambert; *Earlier* and *Later Rules*; *Speculum Perfectionis*	Based on: McGinn, Devlin, McDonnell, Petroff	Based on: Beer, McGinn, McNamara	Based on: Kleinberg, Goodich, McKinley, Vauchez

Appendix 3 – *Canticum Solis*

This version, contained in the Assisi Codex 338, is from the earliest known manuscript copy of the text, held by the municipal library in Assisi. Both this version, and the English translation that follows, are from St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis, Ed. M. A. Habig, (Chicago, 1973), 130-131. As cited by Eloi Leclerc in The Canticle of Creatures: Symbols of Union: An Analysis of St. Francis of Assisi. Trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977. First Published in French as *Le Cantique des creatures ou les Symboles de l'Union.* Librairie Artheme Fayard, 1970). The original text occurs on pages 237-238; English rendition is printed on pages xvii-xviii with endnote comments on the translation.

Altissimi, omnipotente, bonsignore, *tue sono le laude,* *la gloria elhonore* *et omne benedictione.*	Most high, all-powerful, all good, Lord! All praise is yours, all glory, all honour And all blessing.
Ad te solo, Altissimo, se Konfano *et nullo homo enne dignu* *te mentovare.*	To you alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy To pronounce your name.
Laudato sie, misignore, cum tucte le tue creature, *spetialmente messor lo frate sole,* *loquale iorno et allumini noi par loi.*	All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made, And first my lord Brother Sun, Who brings the day; and light you give to us through him.
Et ellu ebellu eradiante cum grande splendore: *de te, Altissimo, porta significatione.*	How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendour! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.
Laudato si, misignore, per sora luna e le stelle: *in cellu lai formate clarite* *et pretiose et belle.*	All praise be yours my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars; In the heavens you have made them, bright And precious and fair.
Laudato si, misignore, per frate vento, *et per aere et nubilo* *et sereno et omne tempo* *per loquale a le tue creature* *dai sustentamento.*	All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, And fair and stormy, all the weather's moods, By which you cherish all that you have made.
Laudato si, misignore, per sor aqua, *la quale e multo utile et humile* *et pretiosa et casta.*	All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water, So useful, lowly, precious and pure.
Laudato si misignore, per frate focu,	All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother

per loqaule ennualumani la nocte:
edello ebello et iocundo
et robustoso et forte.

Fire,
Through whom you brighten up the night.
How beautiful he is, how gay! Full of power and strength.

Laudato si, misignore, per sora matre terra,
laquale ne sustenta et governa,
et produce diversi fructi
con coloriti flori et herba.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our mother,
Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces
Various fruits and coloured flowers and herbs.

Laudato si, misignore, per quelli ke perdonano
per lo tuo amore
et sostengo infirmitate
et tribulatione.

All praise be yours, my Lord through those who grant pardon
For love of you; through those who endure
Sickness and trial.

Beate quelli kel sosterrano in pace,
ka da te, Altissimo,
sirano incoronati.

Happy those who endure in peace,
By you, Most High, they will be crowned.

Laudato si, misignore, per sora nostra
morte corporale,
da laquale nullu homo
vivente poskappare.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death,
From whose embrace no mortal can escape.

Gai acqueli ke morrano
ne le peccata mortali!

Woe to those who die in mortal sin!

Beati quelli ke trovarane
le tue sanctissime voluntati,
ka la morte secunda
nol farra male.

Happy those She finds doing your will!
The second death can do no harm to them.

Laudate et benedicite, misignore,
et rengratiate et seraite li
cum grande humilitate.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks,
And serve him with great humility