The Seat of the Soul: Blood and Spirituality in Late Medieval English Literary Culture

By Sarah Star

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Department of English
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Abstract

My dissertation uncovers the ways that medieval literature both shares a physiological vocabulary with medieval English medicine and extends it. I argue that medieval romances, devotional prose tracts, and dramatic works all use a specifically physiological language to represent transformative miracles. At the same time that these texts use this vocabulary, however, they also do what medicine cannot: medieval literature, I argue, complicates and extends its physiological background in order to represent religious identities, mark religious difference, and explain the inextricability of physical and spiritual life. To establish an intellectual context for my analysis, I examine the earliest known academic medical treatise written in English: the Liber Uricrisiarum (c. 1379) by Dominican friar, Henry Daniel. Daniel’s treatise serves not as a singular source for the medical ideas discussed here but rather as a contemporary intertext that shares a physiological language with literature and that intersects with medieval literary culture in its distinctly vernacular style. The succeeding chapters focus on the role of blood in providing physical form and conferring religious identity in the anonymous King of Tars, Julian of Norwich’s Revelation of Love, and the N-Town Nativity play. These works
collectively demonstrate a desire on the part of late medieval writers to negotiate the shifting relationship between the body, religion, and the English language. Ultimately, I reconceptualize our understanding of late medieval intellectual culture, showing that medical works have relevance beyond a strictly professional or curative context and that literary works, in their physiological and symbolic representations of blood, combine medical and theological discourses in greater detail than scholarship has acknowledged previously.
Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Reading Blood

In the Prologue to “The Wife of Bath’s Tale,” Alisoun narrates the deceitful scheme by which she charmed her fifth husband, Jankyn. While she was still married to her fourth husband, she says, she began to pursue “That Jankyn clerk” by telling him that he enchanted her:

And eek I seye I mette of hym al nyght,
He wolde han slayn me as I lay uprigh,
And al my bed was ful of verry blood;
‘But yet I hope that ye shal do me good,
For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was taught.’
And al was fals; I dremed of it right naught,
But as I folwed ay my dames loore,
As wel of this as of othere thynges moore.

(III.577-584)¹

This dream, and Alisoun’s description of it, reveals a salient point about the relationship between blood and interpretation that provides the foundation for this dissertation. Blood, for Alisoun, is the site of interpretation; it “bitokeneth” something more than the result of the violence done to her dream-self by dream-Jankyn. It signifies not violence, but gold, which must mean that Jankyn “shal do me good.” As Christine Ryan Hilary explains, this connection between blood and gold was made previously in at least two treatises on the interpretation of dreams: Artemidorus Daldianus, *Oneirocritica* (second century) and Arnoldus de Villa Nova, *Expositiones visionum* (c. thirteenth century, printed in 1524).²

¹ This and all subsequent quotations from Chaucerian texts are from Larry D. Benson, ed. *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd edn. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

² The Explanatory Notes for the Wife of Bath’s Prologue were written by Christine Ryan Hilary. See page 870. For an edition of Artemidorus’s work, see Roger A. Pack, ed. *Onirocriticon libri V* (Lipsiae: in Aedibus B.G. Teubneri, 1963). There is no modern edition of Arnoldus’s treatise. The text is printed in *Opera omnia*.
drawing on these two treatises, composed in or translated into Latin, Alisoun uses specialized ideas about the signification of blood to her own advantage, and adds a further meaning: blood betokens gold, but this is a positive signification that can in turn be analyzed to mean that Jankyn will be a good lover.

Scholars have long examined Alisoun’s hermeneutic ability and classical learning in the Prologue. For A. J. Minnis, the human source of Alisoun’s learning is crucial: Jankyn, a clerk of Oxford, who reads to her, teaching her the classical, misogynistic material contained in his book of wicked wives. Alisoun demonstrates an understanding of texts to which women would not have had access, but this knowledge is mediated through a clerical man who chooses to teach her only misogynistic rhetoric.³ For Carolyn Dinshaw and Lee Patterson, Alisoun’s interpretive capacity opposes her to male dominated clerical learning. Dinshaw argues that Alisoun’s “joly body” is in direct opposition to the “lerned mens lore”—Alisoun’s body is a text that is against the male gloss. Patterson agrees that Alisoun positions herself in opposition to male clerical traditions, but for a different reason. The Wife redefines reading: as Patterson puts it, she “avoids the preemptions of Augustinian hermeneutics,” she “offers a mode of reading that is at once literal and moral,” and she “insists that interpretation must be deferred, that meaning (whether personal or literary) is available only at the end.”⁴ All of these scholars maintain that Alisoun has an impressive connection to Latinate learning at the same time that she opposes herself to it. Her method of


interpretation is not the same as that of male authors; she has a different way of making meaning.

Alisoun displays her unique hermeneutic when she talks about Bible passages explicitly, of course, but also when she describes her (fake) dream. She interprets the blood that covers and soaks her bed in the dream: “‘But yet I hope that ye shall do me good, / For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was taught’” (III. 580-1). Alisoun here performs her own kind of glossing that is based in, and yet entirely separate from, the realm of learned men. The idea that blood signifies gold is one piece of information that Alisoun has, significantly, not learned from Jankyn, since at this point they are not yet married. Instead, this interpretation is based on her “dames lore.” Her mother taught her that blood betokens gold; but as I show above, this idea has at least two learned precedents. Just as Alisoun’s knowledge of classical rhetoric is mediated through Jankyn, her knowledge of how to interpret dreams—and of how to interpret blood in particular—is mediated through her dame. She learns this specialized information without participating in a system of Latin learning dominated by men; instead, she acquires this specialized knowledge by participating in a vernacular conversation between two women. She then adds her own additional gloss to this information, suggesting that the learned idea in itself is not enough; there must be more to blood’s signification beyond gold. Put another way, Alisoun cites specialized information only to expand it. The learned tradition to which she gains access through her dame expresses one idea about blood, and Alisoun uses that idea as a foundation from which to build her own. The blood in the dream thus does more than betoken gold and the promise of “good”; it also acts as the site of interpretation, providing Alisoun with the means through which to transpose
specialized knowledge into an English vernacular context and to put her interpretive skills into action.

This idea that specialized discourses on blood can be appropriated by and expanded in English vernacular literature is the basis of my dissertation. Just as Alisoun of Bath complicates learned information by tacking on her own interpretation of blood’s signification, authors of Middle English poetry, prose, and drama, I argue, employ a specialized vocabulary of blood only to extend it. I show that medieval English literature shares a physiological vocabulary with medieval English medical writing and complicates that vocabulary by exploring religious significations. Literature does what medicine cannot: medicine outlines the ways in which blood generates and sustains the physical and spiritual life of an individual, and literature picks up these ideas and broadens them to imagine the potential effects that religious experience can have on the blood and body. How does the mingling of Christian and ‘Saracen’ blood during conception affect the formation of a child? What happens when a non-Christian body converts to Christianity? What is the relationship between Jesus’s blood and body and that of all Christians? How can religious doubt manifest in body and blood? The texts I focus on try to answer to these questions by imaginatively extending the physiological vocabulary that they share with medical discourse.

In the chapters that follow, I analyze this dynamic between literature and medicine and, in doing so, I contribute to three strands of medieval scholarship: literary criticism, medical history, and medieval English vernacular culture. Recent studies of the symbolic and cultural significance of blood during the Middle Ages include book-length studies by Bettina Bildhauer and Caroline Walker Bynum. In *Medieval Blood*, Bildhauer analyzes the
ways that medieval writers used a symbolic system based on blood to negotiate the boundaries of the physical and, by extension, social body. For Bildhauer, blood has a transformative power, changing the body from open and fragmented to enclosed and whole, identifying and affirming its borders. Bildhauer combines medieval medicine (primarily in Latin and German) with contemporary theory, especially Judith Butler and Julia Kristeva, to suggest that medieval writers conceptualized blood as a shaper of bodies. In *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Germany and Beyond*, Bynum offers a comprehensive account of blood piety in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Europe, focusing particularly on German-speaking regions. She examines blood as both an object of veneration and a symbol in mystical writing to outline the controversies surrounding medieval blood piety and demonstrate the centrality of blood to medieval art, prayer, literature, and culture. This dissertation is informed by both of these studies, but takes a much different approach and goes in a much different direction as a result. Rather than focusing on how blood defines the body, as Bildhauer has done, I investigate blood’s role in transformative miracles, focusing instead on the ways in which blood metamorphoses the body and marks religious difference. Rather than focusing on blood piety in German history, as Bynum has done, I narrow in on the still unexplored role of blood in medieval English literature.

By analyzing blood in a specifically English literary context, I aim to connect this project not only with previous studies of medieval blood, but also with studies of the relationship between the physical body and religious identity in medieval English literature.

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This project has an expansive scope, spanning medieval romance to devotional prose to religious drama. In covering an array of literary genres, this project contributes to scholarship from a similarly wide array of critics, including Suzanne Conklin Akbari, Siobhain Bly Calkin, Nicholas Watson, Vincent Gillespie, and Gail McMurray Gibson. All of these scholars have written extensively on the relationship between religion—and not necessarily just Christianity, but indeed religion in general—and the physical body.\(^7\) I introduce my analysis of blood to these strands of literary scholarship, showing ultimately that blood is the nexus of literary, medical, and religious discourses. The vocabulary of blood in medieval English literature is one that is shared with medieval medicine and used to articulate religious experience and mark religious identity on the physical body. As a marker of religious identity, blood also has, I argue, implications for literary representations of religious difference. In literature, blood can distinguish people from one another in ways that are visible, often purifying the Christian and sullying the non-Christian, and thus has a vital importance to the way medieval English writers conceived of religious difference and represented non-Christian Others. The relationship between Christians and non-Christians is, I show, both spiritual and physical, rooted in the blood. This dissertation offers one part of a long history of representing Christians and non-Christians as being fundamentally distinct in body and in soul.

In addition to these implications for literary scholarship, my project also contributes to English medical history by maintaining a close focus on an as-yet little known English

medical writer: Henry Daniel. Henry Daniel was a Dominican friar living in late fourteenth-century England who wrote a diagnostic treatise, called the *Liber Uricrisiarum*, in English. This treatise is the earliest known academic work to be composed in the English vernacular; it is not a translation of a single Latin source, but rather a compilation of information that Daniel acquired from books and personal experience. In writing this treatise for a specifically English audience, Daniel had to develop much of the vocabulary needed to articulate his points because such a specialized vocabulary had not yet been written down in English. Daniel’s text includes English names for various parts of the body and diagnostic terms related to a wide range of ailments, as well as providing an account of the four humours and their interrelation with astrological phenomena.

I focus primarily on Daniel for a few reasons. First, his work has too long been neglected and I aim to introduce it to scholarship as a compilation that also contains original material, rather than as a translation of a single source, as it has often been presented. Secondly, Daniel’s text demonstrates his extraordinarily innovative use of the English language; this makes his work central to the history of the late medieval emergence of a vernacular learned culture. This treatise, I argue in the first chapter, is not just on the diagnostic practice of uroscopy: it is also on the English language itself, as Daniel himself declares, “trewe and parfite craft of ortographie is taugh in þis bok” (fol. 5ra). Third, Daniel’s connection to vernacular literary culture places his text in a unique position to be analyzed alongside contemporary literary texts of the period. I do not mean to use the *Liber Uricrisiarum* as a source to discover the place from which literary allusions to blood

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8 Quoted from the prologue to the *Liber Uricrisiarum*, transcribed by Jessica Henderson and Sarah Star from London, British Library, MS Royal 17.D.1, fol. 5ra. For more information on transcriptions and editions of the text, see Chapter One: “Writing ‘not newe þinges,’ but ‘newely’: Henry Daniel and Medieval English Literary Culture,” p. 25, n. 20.
originate; rather, it is an intertext, a work that shares a contemporary moment and a
specialized vernacular vocabulary with literature. It is only in examining an English medical
treatise—and one that explores, as I show in Chapter One, specifically vernacular literary
styles—that I can analyze a “shared” vocabulary between literature and medicine and that I
can, moreover, use my analysis of this vocabulary to make further inferences about the
vibrant vernacular culture of late medieval England.

Indeed, a larger goal of this dissertation is to probe English vernacularity in late
medieval England. Daniel’s treatise is academic, but its vocabulary of blood is shared by
literary texts. Literary authors do not explain their representations of blood as distinctly
medical or academic—rather, they presuppose knowledge on the part of the reader. The
casual descriptions of blood thus suggest that these ideas, grounded in medical language,
explained in an English academic treatise, are in fact also commonplace, part of lay
discourse as well as medical discourse. The specialized ideas on blood are not exclusive to
specialists: these writers, like Alisoun of Bath, have managed to acquire such knowledge,
very likely, without any medical training or learning. This sheds light on the vibrant
vernacular culture of late medieval England. Medical knowledge is not confined to medical
texts; such knowledge features in and is imaginatively extended in literature.

As I discuss in Chapter One, “Writing not ‘newe þinges’ but ‘newely’: Henry Daniel
and Medieval English Literary Culture,” this notion of the connection between academic
work and English vernacularity is different from that relationship in other academic
contexts. We often hear that ‘high’ subjects like scripture and law were written in Latin and
Anglo-Norman, while everything else, including literature, was written in English; but,
Henry Daniel’s treatise marks a shift in medical discourse from Latin to the vernacular. The
fifteenth century saw a surge of medical texts written in English,\(^9\) but this vernacularization began earlier, in the fourteenth century, with Henry Daniel. If medicine is being written in English in the late fourteenth century, and if literature is sharing a physiological vocabulary with this English material, I argue, we need to re-imagine the vernacular culture of late medieval England. In this project, I analyze a medical text and the medical language in literature to suggest a new conception of this vernacular culture as one that thrives through its specialized discourses.

The first two chapters of this dissertation provide the foundations on which the final three chapters build. In them, I outline my arguments on the two principles central to this project: vernacularity and blood. I pursue my arguments in both chapters through a sustained focus on Henry Daniel and his important treatise, the *Liber Uriconiarum*. In Chapter One, “Writing ‘not newe þinges,’ but ‘newely’: Henry Daniel and Medieval English Literary Culture,” I argue that Henry Daniel positions himself as the earliest vernacular authority of an academic medical work, and that this work is, in turn, a vital contribution to the Middle English linguistic corpus. Daniel writes the *Liber Uriconiarum* in English because, he states, his colleague asked him to, but also because he has never seen or heard of English uroscopy. He composes his work to build upon an already illustrious learned (Latinate) tradition and to begin a yet unrealized English one. This chapter uncovers the various ways that Daniel achieves these goals in completing his project of vernacularization of medical learning and establishing his vernacular authority.

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I analyze the *Dialogus inter dominum et clericum* by Daniel’s contemporary and fellow translator, John Trevisa, as a valuable frame through which to interpret Daniel’s epistemological and pedagogical aims. Daniel, like Trevisa’s Lord, imagines an audience of both Latin and English readers, and conceives of his vernacular project as a productive companion to, rather than a complete break from, the Latin uroscopic tradition from which he derives much of his knowledge. This theorization of vernacularity leads to an examination of the precise relationship between Daniel and his sources. Scholars who mention Daniel at all typically call him a translator, mistaking the *Liber Uricrisiarum* for a translation of Isaac Judaeus’s *De urinis*. I demonstrate that Daniel’s treatise is *not* a translation and examine more closely how he treats his sources. Specifically, I analyze the language Daniel uses to introduce material he has learned from his predecessors and the methods he uses to set himself up as a new authority, such as deliberately omitting information, openly disagreeing with a source, and adding material from his own experience to a concept explained previously by someone else. Daniel also employs genre as well as stylistic features—fabliaux, alliteration, doublets—that appear with great frequency in vernacular literary culture. Finally, this chapter argues that Daniel had to create much of the vocabulary needed to express scientific ideas in English. The *Liber Uricrisiarum* is replete with words that are recorded here for the first time, words that have not been recorded at all, words that are recorded only much later, and neologisms. I display these words in a chart in Appendix A, and in Chapter One I argue that these words position Daniel as a crucial contributor not just to medieval English medicine, but also to the Middle English linguistic corpus.
At the end of Chapter One, I show that the English names for the four humours and the state of one’s body when dominated by them (sanguine, melancholic, choleric, phlegmatic) appear first in the *Liber Uricrisiarum*, meaning that Daniel played a crucial role in circulating these terms and expanding knowledge about them. The humours are fundamental to medieval medicine, and were clearly common knowledge in medieval England. Chapter One demonstrates that Daniel developed and disseminated terms and concepts central to medieval knowledge of the body. Chapter Two, “‘The stat of lyf prinspally’: Blood and Medieval English Medicine” develops this focus by examining Daniel’s conceptualization of one vital humour in particular: blood. Blood was considered the purest of the four humours and had numerous roles in generating and sustaining human life in both physical and, I show, spiritual terms.

This chapter responds to Bynum’s point that medieval blood had paradoxical functions: I outline the physiological underpinnings of these paradoxes. Blood can cause sickness and heal it, can signal bodily decline or bodily renewal, can represent filth or purity. As Bynum points out, blood is too multifaceted a substance and a subject to be restricted in interpretation as either ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ male or female, etc. In this chapter, I add to our knowledge of blood’s complexity by outlining Henry Daniel’s conceptualization of it, which is based on both what Daniel has read and what he has learned from experience. First, I focus on the physical body. How can blood cause sickness? How can it signal healing? What role does it play in human generation? What is the difference between male and female blood, if any? Then, I discuss blood and spiritual life, differentiating the spirit from the soul and explaining blood’s connection to each. In doing so, I argue that material
blood affects the incorporeal soul, and thus influences both the physical and spiritual life and health of a human being.

The final three chapters use my analyses of medieval blood, physical and spiritual identity, and vernacularity from Chapters One and Two as foundations from which to examine Middle English poetry, prose, and drama. This part of the dissertation is concerned with English literary representations of identity—bodily and spiritual—and how different texts appropriate a specifically physiological language to effect these representations. I focus primarily on literary depictions of miracles involving physical metamorphoses, and analyze the ways that literary texts both share a physiological vocabulary with English medical discourse and imaginatively extend that vocabulary to further their explicitly theological agendas.

Chapter Three, “Anima carnis in sanguine est: Blood, Life, and The King of Tars” analyzes the anonymous homiletic romance The King of Tars from the Auchinleck Manuscript. The King of Tars features two transformative miracles. The first is a transformation of a lifeless lump of flesh into a beautiful baby boy, and the second is a transformation of the Sultan of Damascus’s skin from black to white. In this chapter, I draw a connection between the poem and Henry Daniel in their respective depictions of lifeless lumps: a “misforshapen þing” in the poem and a “wunderlumpe” or “elvysch cake” in Daniel’s treatise. The terms created to describe this bodily phenomenon are either *hapax legomena* or, in the case of “elvysch cake,” earliest occurrences in English. Both the poem and Daniel, I argue, must rely on a language that exceeds ordinary discourse to describe a body that defies medical categorization. This language, I then show, is specifically a language of blood. The lump of flesh in the poem is lifeless and formless precisely due to its
lack of blood. This vocabulary is also complicated by the poem; this language of blood, of
presence and absence, articulates not just bodily identity, but also religious identity. Both the
lump of flesh and the Sultan of Damascus undergo their physical metamorphoses through
Christian revelation. Their metamorphoses are enabled by their spiritual transformations,
and these transformations ultimately make their bodies readable and ‘pure.’ In analyzing
these miracles, I ultimately argue that blood is a nexus of physical and spiritual identity, and
of medical, religious, and literary discourses.

Expanding this idea of blood as a discursive nexus, Chapter Four: “‘The precious
plenty of his dereworthy blode’: Visions of Blood and Soul in Julian of Norwich’s
Revelation of Love” analyzes Julian of Norwich’s descriptions of Jesus’s bleeding body in
her Revelation, arguing that blood, for Julian and her text, has a simultaneous physical
presence and spiritual influence on the individual human body and collective body of
Julian’s “even Christians.” Whereas Chapter Three focuses on how bodies metamorphose
upon receiving Christian revelation, Chapter Four focuses on Jesus’s human body and the
relationship that blood cultivates between this body and Christians as a whole. As Julian
describes it, Jesus’s blood has two kinds of plenitude: it is abundant in and on his body, and
it effects multiple wondrous deeds even as it guarantees Christian salvation. In this chapter, I
examine both kinds of plenitude—the physical and the spiritual. This distinction between the
bodily and the spiritual is one that Julian herself makes as she identifies her visions, and one
that scholars have long described as frustratingly unclear. I focus not on the categorization
of Julian’s visions as either material or spiritual, but rather on the physical and spiritual
nature of the blood that she describes within the visions themselves. In doing so, I argue that
blood, for Julian as for Alisoun, is the site at which interpretation can occur; that Julian’s
descriptions of blood are rooted in medical language; and that Julian’s language of blood renders physical and spiritual life inextricable.

The fifth and final chapter, “Palpat Beatam Virginem: Doubt and Physiology in the N-Town Nativity Play” examines Mary’s body and blood in the N-Town Nativity play. Whereas Chapters Three and Four focus primarily on the body and blood of Jesus, and how literature conveys the effect of his body and blood on others, both Christian and non-Christian, I here turn to Mary’s flesh, the flesh that clothed Jesus in flesh of his own. In this chapter, I show the unique nature of N-Town’s representation of Mary and her body, narrow in on the description of her simultaneously virginal and maternal body in the Nativity play, and analyze the play’s treatment of doubt in this paradoxical female body. Salomé’s doubt, I argue, centres on blood: she does not believe that Mary’s body can be both virginal and maternal, and the play defines these kinds of bodies using a specifically physiological vocabulary. The punishment for Salomé’s doubt is again based in blood: her failure to believe in the pure blood of Mary results in the loss of blood in her own hand. Like The King of Tars, this play features two metamorphic miracles: in the first, the hand of the doubting midwife withers; and in the second, the withered hand is restored. Both miracles rely on a vocabulary of blood that the play shares with medieval medicine. The play introduces this medical vocabulary, I argue, only to transcend it. Mary does not actually need midwives, and the play does not actually need medical discourse: Salomé’s doubt is grounded in her knowledge of the female body, and this knowledge only gets in the way as Mary tries to show the midwife that her body defies medical categorization.

From blood as an object of medical inquiry to blood as a mystery that defies it—these are the interpretive poles around which the following chapters revolve. As in “The
Wife of Bath’s Prologue,” blood is located in specialized discourse and extended in narrative. In this dissertation I elucidate the utilitarian work and imaginative thinking that the multivalence of blood allows.
Chapter One

Writing not “newe þinges,” but “newely”: Henry Daniel and Medieval English Literary Culture

In the English prologue to his late fourteenth-century uroscopy treatise, the Liber Uricrisiarum (ca.1379), Dominican friar Henry Daniel tells “Walte r Turnour of Ketoun,” his colleague and commissioner of the English work, that he is the first to write uroscopy in English. Daniel states: “I have redde ne harde neyther this science giffen in English”; and in asking Daniel to write this English treatise, Walter has, consequently, “put me to an harde wark, and opne to the barking and to the scornyng of detractours” (fol. 4ra).¹ As literary critics deeply indebted to scholarship concerning Wycliffite vernacularization, we may be inclined to view such statements about the “scornyng of detractours” as highly politicized, as indicative of the ideological risk of vernacularizing the authoritative knowledge typically written exclusively in Latin. Fiona Somerset, Anne Hudson, and Rita Copeland have all analyzed the circumstances of translating Scripture and discussed whether or not such acts of translation could be dangerous in late medieval England.² As I demonstrate below, however, the political risks associated with Lollard endeavours do not provide a complete

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¹ This and all quotations from the English prologue to Henry Daniel’s Liber Uricrisiarum are transcribed by Jessica Henderson, Elise Williams, and the present author in 2015-2016.

framework through which to understand the English translation and vernacularization of other, ‘authoritative’ discourses.

Medicine is just such an authoritative discourse—one that can achieve, as Daniel seems to celebrate in his prologue, a new prominence in English rather than a (yet unthought of) Arundelian circumscription. In her foundational work on medieval textual culture, Linda Ehrsam Voigts has shown that the late fourteenth century marks the beginning of Middle English medicine, a field that would undergo “rapid growth” over the next hundred years. Recorded in Voigts’s collaborative eVK database, for example, are several thousand Middle English witnesses to medical and scientific texts. The records of extant medical and scientific manuscripts indicate that knowledge previously reserved for (or translated into) Latin began trickling into the vernacular around 1375, ultimately giving rise to an explosion of Middle English medicine in the fifteenth century. Though Daniel could not have predicted this forthcoming explosion, he nevertheless makes a self-conscious claim as the originator of one vernacular medical tradition: uroscopy.

If Daniel’s place at the head of this tradition has left him open to the scorn of detractors, such scorn, Daniel explains, may be directed not simply at his English medium as such, but rather at his own individual lack of English expertise. For Daniel, vernacularizing

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3 See Linda Ehrsam Voigts, “Multitudes of Middle English Manuscripts, or the Englishing of Science and Medicine” in Margaret R. Schleissner, ed., *Manuscript Sources of Medieval England: A Book of Essays* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1995), 183-196. As Voigts herself explains, these large numbers comprise both “scientific” and “medical” texts; the precise number of specifically “medical” texts, though substantial, is difficult to determine.

4 See Voigts, “Scientific and Medical Books” in Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, ed., *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 345-402. Voigts here suggests that the period of 1375-1500 is partially “arbitrary,” but also marks “a fairly well-defined period of increasing use of the vernacular for medical and scientific writing” (352). This period, indeed, is now used widely by medical historians, most notably Irma Taavitsainen and Päivi Pahta in, “Vernacularisation of Scientific and Medical Writing in its Sociohistorical Context” in *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1-22.
Latin medical material opens him to the censure of linguistic aficionados, rather than the censure of social or political authority. He may be scorned, he admits, less for his unprecedently threatening use of English, and more for his own stylistic deficiencies: “I am nouther witty ne wise of this tongue” (Pro. fol. 4ra), Daniel declares. In highlighting his stylistic shortcomings, Daniel introduces an obstacle that can be surmounted far more easily than political authority. Whatever scorn Daniel fears can be avoided through his deployment of rhetoric, instead of his subservience to the law. His profession of deficiency draws on a well-established rhetorical *topos* of modesty often found in Middle English prefatory material, including that composed by Daniel’s contemporaries, Gower and Chaucer. What Andrew Galloway has written about Gowerian modesty, and what A. J. Minnis has written about Chaucerian modesty, is equally true of Daniel. Specifically, Daniel’s skillful utilization of the *topos* in his prologue demonstrates that his language does not actually require a disclaimer; instead, Daniel’s rhetoric suggests that he may in fact have a masterful command of, and influence on, the English language.

Daniel’s use of the word “detractours” is the first known use of the term in English. The first recorded appearance of the term is from none other than the Wycliffite Bible, which the *MED* and *OED* date to 1382; Daniel’s treatise was completed ca. 1379. I discuss the many other English words in Daniel’s treatise that predate *MED* and *OED* citations in

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6 The Wycliffite Bible was likely completed earlier than this, but its manuscript is dated to 1382. I do not mean to suggest that Daniel’s treatise was certainly completed earlier, but rather that it’s possible Daniel was working around the same time or even earlier than the Wycliffite translators. For the citation, see *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* “detractor” sv. Rom. i.30: “Detractouris, or opyn bacbyteris,” Wycliffite Bible, ca. 1382. Many of the manuscript witnesses to the *Liber Uricrisiarum* are dated internally to 1379, with Daniel explaining that he has been working for three to five years.
greater detail below, but I mention his presentation of “detractours” here to illustrate in brief Daniel’s dual posture toward the English language. Daniel purports to be “nouther witty ne wise” in English at the same time that he writes a new English word. Rather than only exposing the failure of his intellectual capacity to write in English, Daniel also gestures toward his intellectual facility in the development of the English language. Daniel simultaneously registers the limitations of the English language and their potential to be surpassed.

Daniel acknowledges and showcases his English skill toward the conclusion of his prologue. Before providing his table of contents and beginning his first book, Daniel states that he hopes for a “trewe reder,” a “meke herer,” and a “lele and benigne correctour” (Pro. fols. 4vb-5ra). Above all, however, Daniel continues:

> I praie every writer or compiler of this that he kepe my writing, but if he be of the langage of annother contre; for whie as for the langage of English tong as anents a discrete man and him that hath the gift of tunge, trewe and parfite craft of ortographie is taugh in this bok; he that understondes it noght, praie he that he may interpretate it, seith the trompe of Criste i. Seynt Poule.

(Pro. fol. 5ra)

As Daniel here suggests, his “tretis of Englisshe” (Pro. fol. 5ra; emphasis added) is equally a treatise on English. To teach the learned, authoritative material of uroscopy, Daniel uses the vernacular, a medium whose efficacy he is also invested in theorizing. Daniel’s process of vernacularizing uroscopy demonstrates that the vernacular itself demands a process of development—a development which Daniel, in turn, helps effect.

Daniel’s interest in theorizing the vernacular anticipates the interest of current scholarship. The very concept of “the vernacular” has undergone significant development through such scholarly pursuits. There has, on one hand, been a recent effort by Judith A. Jefferson and Ad Putter to broaden the scope of this theorization to extend beyond close
examinations of the English language. English cannot, these scholars contend, provide a fully nuanced account of medieval England’s vernacular situation because the idea that England was, during this period, a trilingual society is a “considerable simplification” of its actual multilingual condition. Such an effort to expand the focus of medieval scholarship is, of course, valuable in its own right, for it will undoubtedly motivate further criticism on more marginalized languages. On the other hand, though, A. J. Minnis, Fiona Somerset, and Nicholas Watson have all demonstrated that a richer understanding of medieval vernacularity can be reached less through the consideration of several languages at once, and more through a deeper consideration of one language, such as English, in its cultural and linguistic context. For Somerset and Watson, “vernacularity” does not describe a language; rather, it describes a “relation between one language situation and another.” Minnis expands on this idea in his study of vernacularity, arguing that the full sense of the term can only be understood if we recognize that it encompasses “a vast array of acts of cultural transmission and negotiation.” The present chapter follows the latter critical path in its treatment of Daniel’s vernacularity, surveying the linguistic means through which he positions his treatise in relation to both a learned, authoritative medical tradition and a new, vernacular medical tradition. In doing so, this chapter examines not the relationship between two opposing languages, but between two continuous traditions.

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8 See Somerset and Watson, “Preface” in Somerset and Watson, ed., The Vulgar Tongue: Medieval and Postmedieval Vernacularity (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), x. For Minnis’s detailed analysis of the connotations of “the vernacular,” see “Introduction: Valuing the Vernacular” in Translations of Authority in Medieval English Literature: Valuing the Vernacular (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-16. Both of these instrumental studies are also indebted to Rita Copeland’s thesis in Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Copeland argues that translation was the “vehicle for vernacular appropriation of academic discourse.” I discuss this idea in greater detail in sections II and III.
To pursue this analysis of Daniel’s vernacularity, I divide my chapter into five sections. In the first, I argue that Daniel’s theorization of vernacularity and his epistemological goal are intimately linked. To do so, I explain Daniel’s ideas about the insufficiency of English and then consider his position in relation to that described by Trevisa in his *Dialogus inter dominum et clericum*. In the second section, I argue that Daniel’s treatise is not, as has been previously stated, an English translation of Constantine the African’s Latin translation of Isaac Judaeus’s originally Arabic *De urinis*. This section places Daniel’s ideas on translation within the framework established by Chaucer in his *Treatise on the Astrolabe*. The third section showcases Daniel’s original material and some emendations he makes to his sources. These sections cumulatively encourage scholars not only to rethink Daniel’s status as a translator, but also to reconceptualize his mode of translation to expand beyond language and include larger traditions.

In the fourth section, I demonstrate that Daniel transmits uroscopy in a decidedly vernacular style. By analyzing some of the particular features of Daniel’s prose, I argue here that Daniel establishes himself as a vernacular authority on uroscopy not only by writing in English, but also by adopting a style that exploits English’s formal and linguistic potential. In the fifth and final section, I focus on some of the terms Daniel introduces to the English language and demonstrate his significant contribution to the development of a medical vocabulary in English. All sections combine to identify Daniel as something more than a workman-like, vernacular translator. This chapter thus extends Ralph Hanna’s point about Daniel’s awareness of the future transmission of his works. ⁹ If Daniel is, as Hanna argues,

concerned with preserving the accuracy of his texts, he is also, as I will demonstrate, concerned with preserving his own reputation as a vernacular authority.

I. Vernacular Authority

In the process of declaring that he is the first to write about uroscopy in English, Daniel outlines the possible reasons why no one has undertaken this task before him.\textsuperscript{10} Citing the authority of Averroes, Gilbertus Anglicus, and Gilles de Corbeil, Daniel explains that “this faculte mai nogth be schewede by tonge” (Pro. fol. 4ra). According to these authorities (some of whom did in fact write about uroscopy), the science of uroscopy defies explanation in any language because it is essentially a practical skill. This knowledge, as Daniel elucidates, may not be rendered in English for two (not necessarily compatible) reasons: “outher for the langage is unsufficiant in itselife or for that we kane it noght parfitly” (Pro. fol. 4ra). With the first of his two potential reasons, Daniel points to a seeming insufficiency unique to the English language. In using the definite article “the” to denote not any “langage,” but English specifically, Daniel diverges from the argument of his predecessors. According to Daniel’s model of insufficiency, specialized knowledge cannot be held by English \textit{in particular}, as opposed to all language in general. Daniel seems to corroborate this specifically English deficiency when, later in his prologue, he asserts his deep affinity for the efficacy of another language. He tells his readers that, before writing one in English, he composed this treatise in “Latyn” (Pro. fol. 4vb). And rather than

lamenting its insufficiency, Daniel asserts his supreme comfort with this standard language; it is the “tong that forsothe is right dere to me” (Pro. fol. 4vb), Daniel proclaims.

Despite his gesture toward English’s insufficiency and his apparent privileging of Latin, however, Daniel is not willing to leave this first potential reason without qualification. As Daniel’s second possibility suggests, the absence of English uroscopy may not stem from a deficiency in English itself, but from a deficiency in its speakers. The second half of his either/or construction shifts the locus of limitation from “it” to “we,” from language as a whole to its individual users. With this shift from the general to the personal, Daniel assumes both responsibility for any linguistic limitations and the ability to transcend them. Daniel’s argument that English could be inadequate, like his claim that he could be scorned by detractors, employs a new vernacular term: “unsufficiant.” He laments the problems attendant on using English even as he begins to correct them: the frailty of English is matched by the remedy of Daniel’s own linguistic innovation. While we cannot be certain that Daniel introduced this word (or indeed any word) to the English language, the position of his treatise as the first known record of such a term suggests his prominence in developing English vocabulary. For Daniel, the limitation of English is not a reason to refrain from writing uroscopy; it is a reason to develop the English language. By committing himself to this development, Daniel yokes English uroscopy and the English language in a similarly embryonic state: Daniel’s elaboration of the English uroscopic tradition brings with it an enrichment of the language that will describe it.

This twofold vernacular project—to contribute both to the field of uroscopy and to the development of the English language—has, for Daniel, a single goal: to increase access to this knowledge. Daniel explains that he writes this treatise “noght for cause of lucre or
favour as other men doth” (Pro. fol. 4ra). Instead, Daniel elucidates, “charite broght me more herto than hardiness” (Pro. fol. 5ra). Daniel’s insistence that he is not looking for financial gain is thoroughly in keeping with his theological position; as the scholarship on medieval friar physicians has demonstrated, friars who wrote or practiced medicine did so, like Daniel, out of charity.¹¹ Daniel is unique, however, in the scope of his benevolence. His charitable impulse, indicated by his desire to be “profitable unto men,” is directed to healing the bodies of the sick, but it also involves expanding all minds. The treatise aims to make uroscopy “more openly taghte” so that it may, in turn, “be take[n] more lightly and of moo men.” Daniel is writing the *Liber Uricrisiarum* with consideration for the many people who, he thinks, “covaiteth to be expert of demyng of urines” (Pro. fol. 4vb). His charity, rather than being limited to his provision of individual diagnosis, involves his gift of the diagnostic power itself. Daniel aims to increase access to uroscopic knowledge and, in doing so, to help people learn uroscopy for themselves.

Daniel’s epistemological aim, and its attendant connection to vernacularity, productively intersects with two important strands of medieval scholarship toward which I have already gestured. The first strand, still in argumentation, concerns vernacularity in a Lollard context, positing that vernacular tracts afforded lay people access to previously unavailable knowledge and, in doing so, granted them a new intellectual power. This access to previously inaccessible knowledge brought with it an accompanying danger, for it

threatened to disrupt the marked divide between the educated Latin elite and the uneducated English commons.\textsuperscript{12} The second strand of criticism, by contrast, queries the rigidity of this divide and the total dichotomy of access that attends it. Taking the multilingual culture of late medieval England as its basis, this strand suggests that the alleged gulf between the Latin elite and English commons may, in fact, have never been so clear-cut. Access to specialized discourses was becoming increasingly available to the Latin illiterati.\textsuperscript{13} Daniel’s goal to make uroscopy “more openly taghte” evinces elements of both these critical strands. In the first place, Daniel’s treatise grants intellectual power; his shared knowledge allows “meny men” (Pro. fol. 4rb) to understand their own bodies and diagnose their own maladies. But this intellectual power is not threatening to, and need not be restricted by, the medically educated Latin “elite.” In reaching “moo men,” Daniel’s treatise supplements the already established authoritative tradition.

An analogue for how these English and Latin traditions can work in tandem is neatly provided by John Trevisa’s \textit{Dialogus inter dominum et clericum}. The \textit{Dialogus} is a meditation on the practical purpose and cultural value of English translation and, as such, it occupies a similar discursive space to Daniel’s text. At the start of the \textit{Dialogus}, the Lord laments the “gret meschef þat volweþ now mankuynde” (15-16) (namely, the inability to understand and communicate among people who speak different languages) and outlines


\textsuperscript{13} For an examination of the kinds of learned materials that were becoming available to a so-called lay audience, see Ruth Evans, Andrew Taylor, Nicholas Watson, and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, “The Notion of Vernacular Theory” in Wogan-Browne, Watson, Taylor, and Evans, ed., \textit{The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory}, 1280-1520 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 314-330; and, Lister M. Matheson, ed. \textit{Popular and Practical Science of Medieval England} (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1994).
God’s “double remedy” (17) for it. The first remedy, the Lord explains, is that some people learn “meny dyuers speches” (18) and can thus mediate between others; the second, the Lord continues, is that one language in particular, Latin, is “ylurned, yknowe and yvsed” (22-23) in many countries throughout Europe. Ranulf Higden wrote his chronicles in Latin to capitalize on this widespread currency, but (to continue God’s will of mediating between “dyuers speches”), these chronicles should, the Lord asserts, be “translated out of Latyn ynto Englysch.” In effecting this translation, “mo men scholde... vnderstonde” the chronicles “and haue þereof konnyng, informacion, and lore” (35-37).

The Clerk, for his part, disputes the Lord’s assertion that more people will have access to these chronicles if they are translated into English, interrogating the idea that writing in English will necessarily result in a broader audience than writing in Latin. After all, Latin is spoken and understood throughout Europe, while English is not so widely known. An English translation of a Latin chronicle, the Clerk thus reasons, “scholde no man vnderstone bote Englyschmen alone” (42-43). “Þanne how,” the Clerk concludes, “scholde þe mo men vnderstone þe cronyks þey [a] were translated out of Latyn þat ys so wide yvsed and yknowe in to Englysch þat ys noȝt yvsed and yknowe bote of Englyschmen alone?” (43-47). English translations, for the Clerk, do not make specialized knowledge “more openly taghte”; these translations would have, instead, a very limited audience. The answer to this

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question of audience, the Lord contends, is “esy to assoyle” (48): those who can read and understand Latin will of course read the chronicles in Latin. But if these chronicles were also translated into English, “þanne by so meny þe mo men scholde vnderstonde ham as vnderstondeþ Englysch and no Latyn” (50-52). The Lord argues not that more men are able to read and understand English than Latin, but rather that more people will have access to the specialized knowledge if it is distributed to a bifurcated audience; the “lore” contained in Higden’s chronicles will only reach “mo men” if these men comprise both Latin and English readers.

The Lord’s response to the Clerk’s inquiry dovetails with Daniel’s own conception of writing for “moo men.” Like the Lord, Daniel aims to make specialized knowledge “more openly taghte” not by writing in English instead of Latin, but by writing in English as well as Latin. After explaining the potential value of writing uroscopy in English and providing an outline of his methodology, Daniel states in his prologue that he has also “gadrede now late for tham that kan take it in Latyn a schort tretice conteynyng fully the marowe of this faculte” (Pro. fol. 4vb). As Daniel here avers, the present English treatise is a companion to a short uroscopic treatise in Latin; this treatise, titled Liber de urina fratris Henricii Danielis, survives in one manuscript now located at the Hunterian Collection in Glasgow.\(^\text{16}\) Daniel’s prologue, similarly, exists in two companion versions; it is written first in Latin and then in English. Of the extant manuscripts that include a prologue, more have it in Latin than in English (London, British Library, MSS Sloane 1100 and 1721; San Marino, Huntington Library, HM 505; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Musaeo 116, for example, all contain the Latin prologue). In making his treatise available to both Latin and English readers,

\(^{16}\) Glasgow, Glasgow University Library, MS Hunter 362, fol.1r-83v.
Daniel shows awareness both of two separate audiences, and of potential contact between them. Daniel succeeds in making uroscopy “more openly taghte,” in other words, because the specialized material contained within the treatise is available in both languages. Since Daniel, like Trevisa’s Lord, imagines a readership of both learned Latin and lewd English, he is able to transmit his expert learning to “moo men.”

As the recipients of a new intellectual power, the “moo men” toward whom Daniel directs his work warrant investigation. For Joanne Jasin, Daniel’s target audience most likely comprised uneducated medical practitioners. Jasin identifies numerous moments at which Daniel adapts the technical prose style of (what she calls) his “source” text, Isaac Judaeus’s *De urinis*, and suggests that Daniel frequently dilutes the technical jargon of this source to make his translation appeal to a broader (and less technically gifted) audience.\(^{17}\)

Despite the logical coherence of Jasin’s argument (uneducated practitioners indeed might have read or heard about Daniel’s treatise), she provides only a partial picture. As E. Ruth Harvey has demonstrated, Daniel’s treatise demands at least a competent familiarity with the body and the technical terms used to describe it. To understand Daniel’s treatise, Harvey thus reasons, his readers must have had at least some formal education. In addition to the uneducated practitioner, then, Daniel’s audience might have included the many people who began university but were, for various reasons, unable to complete their degrees.\(^{18}\) The addition of this new group of potential readers thus affixes another valence to Daniel’s objective of making uroscopy “more openly taghte.” His pedagogical aim supplements that

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of the formal education system: Daniel’s uroscopic teaching allows individuals to receive
the knowledge that they were not able to attain through institutional channels.

II. Translation, Compilation

By telling his readers that he has written this uroscopic material in English and in Latin,
Daniel reveals that his relationship to his sources is more multifaceted than previous
scholars have acknowledged. The scholarly tendency has been to claim Daniel’s *Liber
Uricrisiarum* as an English translation of Constantine’s Latin translation of Isaac Judaeus’s
*De urinis*. According to Jasin, for instance, Daniel’s *Liber Uricrisiarum* can be considered a
translation of *De urinis* based on Daniel’s own authority.\(^{19}\) To be sure, Isaac’s work is a
major influential source for Daniel, and, as Jasin points out, he does claim to provide a
translation of Isaac’s *De urinis* “nerhande woord for woord.” But Jasin assigns this
declaration a wider applicability than Daniel himself allows; he uses it to denote not the
treatise in its entirety but a few specific chapters of it. He explains that the fifth chapter of
his first book expounds material that has been taught previously by “Isaak the noble
phisicien in his *Book of uryns* in the first particule, nerhande woord for woord” (1.5. fol.
8v).\(^{20}\) The fifth, seventy-fifth, and seventy-sixth chapters of book two, similarly, are

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19 See Joanne Jasin, *A Critical Edition of the Middle English “Liber Uricrisiarum” in Wellcome ms. 225 [microform]* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1984). Jasin refers to Daniel as a compiler in her later work (see, for example, “The Transmission of Learned Medical Literature in the Middle English *Liber Uricrisiarum*” Medical History 37.3 (1993): 14); but, she maintains that Daniel’s intention in completing the *Liber Uricrisiarum* was to translate the *De urinis* of Isaac Judaeus’s “nerhand woord for woord.” Jasin’s idea (as I will argue below) is misguided, but has nevertheless influenced many scholars. See, for example, Voigts, “Multitudes of Middle English Medicine,” 188 and Taavitsainen and Pahta, “Vernacularisation of Scientific and Medical Writing,” 13. The latter scholars contend, rightly, that Daniel is a scrupulous editor of his own work; but they, like Jasin, claim that Daniel’s thorough editing occurs in spite of his alleged attempt to provide a direct translation of Isaac Judaeus’s *De urinis*.

20 This and all quotations from the English text of Henry Daniel’s *Liber Uricrisiarum* are, unless otherwise noted, taken from E. Ruth Harvey’s 2011 transcription, hereafter cited parenthetically by book, chapter, and
identified as “nerhand woord for woord” (2.5. fol. 40r; 2.76. fol. 129v) English versions of particular teachings in Isaac’s work. Lastly, Daniel’s entire treatise concludes with an account of the rules of Isaac, which are expressed, again, “nerhand word for word” (3.34. fol. 213v). But only four of the approximate one hundred and thirty chapters of Daniel’s treatise are labelled by Daniel as translations of Isaac. Daniel’s Liber Uricrisiarum is undoubtedly influenced by Isaac’s De urinis (as well as his work on fevers; 2.76 fol. 129v), but the English treatise is also assuredly not a translation of Isaac alone. Rather than translating De urinis in isolation, Daniel’s English treatise, as he states clearly in his prologue, is also a vernacular rendering of his own Latin work.

Isaac Judaeus, moreover, is not the only auctour whose work Daniel explains “nerhand woord for woord.” Chapter eight of book one is described as a “woorde for woord” account of Hippocrates in his Prognostics (1.8. fol. 14r); chapter eighty-one of book two is “woord for woord” from Constantine the African, who “hath it of Ypocras in his Afforissmis” (2.81. fol. 133r); chapter sixty-one of book two is “nerhand word for word” from a Roger of Normandy (2.61. fol. 118v); and, finally, chapter twenty-four of book two teaches material that is affirmed by “auctouris” in general, rather than by one auctour in particular, “woorde for woorde” (2.24. fol. 83v). Among the many sources Daniel cites in addition to Isaac are authorities that Isaac did not, and indeed could not, have known. These include works that post-date Isaac’s treatise (ca. 832-932) and Constantine’s Latin translation of it (ca.1020-1098/9), as well as works that Isaac simply would not have used.

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folio number. Harvey’s transcription is mainly from London, British Library MS Sloane 1101, with insertions from London, British Library MS Egerton 1624, London, Wellcome Library, MS 225, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1404, London, British Library, MS Royal 17.D.1. and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Musaeo 116. The English prologue is from Royal. I am extremely grateful to Professor Harvey for sharing with me her transcription, without which this project would not have been possible. There is currently no complete edition of Daniel’s treatise. E. Ruth Harvey, M. Teresa Tavormina, Cai E. M. Henderson, Jessica Henderson, and the current author are currently preparing the first full edition of this important text, under review with the University of Toronto Press.
In book two, for example, Daniel makes numerous references to St. Augustine’s ideas on the generation of the foetus. Augustine, of course, pre-dates Isaac; but, the saint is unlikely to have been cited by the prominent, non-Christian physician. In book two, Daniel also refers to Lanfranc of Milan (ca. 1250-1306); and, in the prologue, he refers to the verse uroscopy of Gilles de Corbeil (b. 1140) and the commentary on Gilles’s verses by Gilbertus Anglicus (ca. 1180-1250).

The verse uroscopy of Gilles is based on material from the uroscopic treatise of another of Daniel’s named sources, the De urinis of Theophilus Protospatharius. While the precise time during which Theophilus lived remains debated, Faith Wallis has convincingly argued that the Latin translation of Theophilus’s De urinis post-dates Constantine’s translation of Isaac: she cites Constantine’s introduction to his translation, in which he states that his reason for translating into Latin this Arabic uroscopy is that he has found no Latin authority on the subject (In latinis quidem libris nullum auctorem invenire potui. qui de urina certam et autenticam cognitionem dederit). If Constantine knew of no Latin uroscopic authorities, Wallis reasons, the translation of Theophilus’s treatise must post-date the Latin translation of Isaac’s work. Many of the sources cited by Daniel, in sum, could not have been first cited by Isaac. The treatise is not a translation, but a compilation of several “nerhande woord for woord” renditions of material from numerous authoritative sources.

If Daniel can be called a translator, he is a translator not of a particular Latin source, but of a Latin tradition more generally. As the phrase “word for word” suggests, Daniel simultaneously appropriates specialized ideas about the body and classical ideas about

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translation into the vernacular. This phrase does not appear elsewhere in the Middle English Corpus, but is a familiar concept of medieval translation. The rhetorical divide between a “word for word” translation and a “sense for sense” translation, first posited by classical orators and subsequently reiterated by many medieval translators, is here invoked by Daniel. He may be the originator of the phrase in English, but the phrase itself encodes a history of translation. In providing a “word for word” translation, Daniel offers a vernacular rendering of authoritative knowledge, while also signaling his appropriation of classical culture into English. If translation is, as Copeland persuasively argues, the “vehicle for vernacular appropriation of academic discourse,” then translation is also, for Daniel, the very academic discourse that he appropriates into the vernacular.

This type of translation is equally manifested in Daniel’s engagement with Constantine and comment on the need for a Latin uroscopic authority. As mentioned above, Daniel states in his prologue that he has neither read nor heard this science in English, which makes him the first to provide an English vernacular rendering of such authoritative Latin knowledge. Just as Daniel knows of no English uroscopic authority, Constantine, writing three hundred years earlier, knew of no Latin uroscopic authority. The relationship between these two medical translators and compilers is helpfully elucidated by Daniel’s contemporary, Geoffrey Chaucer, in the prologue to his Treatise on the Astrolabe (ca.1390s). For Chaucer, an English Astrolabe caters to familial interests as well as societal necessity. The Astrolabe needs to be written both because “Lyte Lowys” yearns to broaden his intellectual horizons, and because “an Astrolabie ben unknowe partiftly to eny mortal

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22 For an overview of the relationship between classical and medieval theories of translation, see Copeland, Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages.
man in this region, as I suppose.” If Chaucer claims to write for his son in particular, he also extends beyond this local audience and reaches “eny mortal man in this regioun” in general.

In addition to sounding like Daniel with his desire to transmit this specialized knowledge to a vernacular audience, Chaucer also harkens back to translators like Constantine when he highlights a chain of interlinguistic transmission. He reminds his readers that “Latyn folk had hem [i.e. conclusions of the Astrolabe] first out of othere dyverse langages, and written hem in her owne tunge, that is to seyn, in Latyn” (662).

Engaging with precedents in vernacular as well as authoritative translation, Chaucer reveals that these two, seemingly separate, modes of translation are in fact part of a shared tradition. The commonality of this tradition is attested by its common goal. As Chaucer continues, “in alle these langages and in many moo han these conclusions ben suffisantly lerned and taught, and yit by diverse reules; right as diverse pathes leden diverse folke the righte way to Rome” (662). Although each language will explain the conclusions of the Astrolabe differently, they all lead their readers in the same direction. For Chaucer, translating the “trewe conclusions” (662) of the Astrolabe from Latin into English is no different from his predecessors translating the same kind of material from “othere dyverse langages” into Latin. Chaucer’s English Astrolabe is participating in the same tradition as his various astronomical authorities. Daniel’s treatise occupies an analogous position to his uroscopic authorities; his English uroscopy is not other to, but a participant in, the same tradition as Constantine.

23 This and all subsequent quotations from the Astrolabe are taken from A Treatise on the Astrolabe in Larry D. Benson, ed., The Riverside Chaucer, 3rd edn. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 661-685 (hereafter cited parenthetically by page number).
The connection between Chaucer and Daniel runs even deeper than this. Chaucer’s Astrolabe can illuminate not only the role of the vernacular in Daniel’s Liber Uricrisiarum, but also the influence of the Liber Uricrisiarum on the vernacular. In the thirtieth to thirty-sixth chapters of Daniel’s second book, he diverges from uroscopy to explain, instead, the workings of the universe. Like his uroscopy as a whole and like Chaucer’s Astrolabe, Daniel’s digression on the planets is composed because the material has not been written in English before: Daniel concludes his tangent with the explanation that “myn herte desirith for to techin in Englysch, as bookes of Astronomey techith in Latyne” (2.36. fol. 99r). This tangent does not provide an earlier vernacular rendering of the Astrolabe, but it does share a similar vocabulary with Chaucer’s later work. This shared vocabulary is important to the study of Daniel’s vernacularity because many of the terms used by both authors are first recorded in the Astrolabe, which was written approximately ten to fifteen years later than the Liber Uricrisiarum. The words shared by Daniel and Chaucer include general astrological terms (“zodiac,” “equinoxs,” “centre,” “descensioun,” “Leo”); measurements of time (“minut,” “second”); and geographical alignments (“orientale,” “meridionale,” “occidentale,” “septemtriole”) in addition to the term “body” to refer to a celestial or heavenly body rather than a human or animal one. While the Astrolabe is, undoubtedly, a

24 Although Chaucer “appears to advertise a flat out date” of 1391 for his Astrolabe, the treatise is typically considered to be written sometime during the mid-1390s more generally. See Andrew Cole, “Chaucer’s English Lesson,” Speculum 77.4 (2002): 1154-55.

significant contribution to the development of English as a technical language, many of the specialized terms ‘introduced’ in the treatise were also ‘introduced’ by Daniel more than a decade earlier.

My point is not that Chaucer must have read Daniel, but that Daniel shares with Chaucer the project of developing a technical English vocabulary. As a participant in this shared project, Daniel positions his uroscopic work at the confluence of various emerging discourses. His pioneering influence on an emerging medical vocabulary is matched by his pioneering influence on an emerging astronomical vocabulary. The lexical terrain shared by the *Liber Uricrisiarum* and the *Astrolabe* attests an affinity that scholars have not habitually assigned to Chaucer’s practice of translation. As Andrew Cole has suggested, the *Astrolabe*’s primary connection lies with a Lollard discourse and its project of vernacularization. Chaucer’s promise to render his treatise in “naked wordes in Englissh” (662), Cole suggests, shares both a particular idiom and a general concern which recall the Wycliffite *General Prologue*.²⁶ Cole’s connection between Chaucer’s *Astrolabe* and a Wycliffite discourse, while undoubtedly persuasive, only tells part of the story. If the *Astrolabe* is, on one hand, to be read in the context of scriptural translation, it is, on the other, equally linked to a discourse of technical translation.

Daniel’s influence on this discourse is attested by the widespread circulation of his treatise. The *Liber Uricrisiarum*, like the *Astrolabe*, is extant in more than twenty manuscripts. As one of these manuscripts suggests, Daniel’s connection to the *Astrolabe* did not go unnoted. These works of Chaucer and Daniel are paired together in MS e Musaeo 116. While Daniel’s treatise was a later addition to this manuscript, it was being read

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²⁶ See Cole, “Chaucer’s English Lesson”: 1148 and passim.
alongside Chaucer’s work “sometime before 1600.” Another manuscript of the Liber Uricrisiarum, London, British Library, MS Egerton 1624, suggests the appropriateness of this paired reading; it juxtaposes Daniel’s work with a Latin treatise about the planetary influences on the human body and a table of solar eclipses. Given this juxtaposition as well as Daniel’s own lengthy account of the workings of the universe, the later addition of the Liber Uricrisiarum to MS e Musaeo 116 seems deliberate. The latter-day addition of Daniel’s treatise to this manuscript bears out both an already existing manuscript pairing and Daniel’s own conception of his linguistic project. The various emerging discourses that are enriched by Daniel’s technical vocabulary are reflected in MS e Musaeo 116, MS Egerton 1624, and their juxtaposition of uroscopic and astronomical texts.

III. Writing “Newely”

Again like Chaucer in the Astrolabe, Daniel does not outwardly declare himself a medical writer or auctour; he is acutely aware of, and overtly advertises, his status as a compiler. He remarks in his prologue that “I saie noȝt þis of myself þat I am to write newe þinges, but þat I do it newely” (Pro. fol. 4vb). Rather than inventing the field of uroscopy, Daniel is bringing it into a new, English domain and invigorating an old field with his meticulous research. As he explains in his prologue, he has been gathering knowledge from “the bokes of meny auctoures and the sayings of the comentours of tham” (Pro. fol. 4va). Daniel’s foray into this well-developed field comes with an element of linguistic novelty. The first recorded use of the word “auctoures” is from the Wycliffite Bible, ca. 1384; and the first recorded use

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28 “Egerton 1624” British Library Archives and Manuscripts (searcharchives.bl.uk).
of the word “comentours” is from Trevisa’s translation of Higden’s *Polychronicon*, ca. 1387.\(^\text{29}\) As with his earlier use of “detractours,” Daniel here establishes a dynamic relationship between external influence and self-determining innovation. In claiming that he is vulnerable to the scorn of “detractours,” Daniel records the first known appearance of the term to define them; likewise, to recognize his debt to “auctoures” and “comentours,” he is the first to write the terms needed to name them. Daniel is indebted to the work of his predecessors even as he is writing “newely.” Writing “newely” involves more than writing uroscopy in a new language; as Daniel’s new words attest, writing “newely” also requires him to develop the vocabulary needed to describe the roles of his uroscopic predecessors.

Daniel positions his treatise in relation to the authoritative tradition these predecessors helped create. After explaining that he has been gathering knowledge from *auctoures* and *comentours*, Daniel adds that, “I lefte meny things or addede to myn owne that som auctoures affermeth noght” (Pro. fol. 4va). Whereas he had earlier claimed to write uroscopy “newely,” not new uroscopy altogether, Daniel here asserts some originality.\(^\text{30}\) He advertises his omission of authoritative material with which he does not agree, as well as his addition of new ideas about uroscopy. By revealing these details about his compilation process, Daniel suggests that writing “newely” and writing “newe þinges” are not as mutually exclusive as he had earlier implied. The *Liber Uricrisiarum*, to be sure, is not an

\(^{29}\) *MED* “auctour,” sv.: 2 Maccabees 2.31: “For to enquere alle partis of the storie…accordith to an auctour,” Wycliffite Bible (De 369), ca. 1384; and *MED* “commentor,” sv.: “The commentor [L commentator], Eth. 5, [seyth] þat Socrates… seide, Men of Athene mowe dampne Socrates, but þey mowe not make him unryȝtful” (3.293), Trevisa’s translation of Higden’s *Polychronicon*, ca. 1387.

\(^{30}\) For Irma Taavitsainen, Daniel’s tendency to include his own “opinion” about some of the information he translates allows him to blur the distinction between “translator” and “commentator.” See Taavitsainen, “Transferring Classical Discourse Forms into the Vernacular,” *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English*, 54. The extent to which Daniel can indeed be considered a commentator exceeds the scope of this project; but, Taavitsainen is undoubtedly correct to observe that Daniel collapses conventional boundaries between, at the very least, “translator” and “commentator.”
entirely original work; but neither is it comprised entirely of translated ideas. Writing
“newely” grants Daniel the intellectual license to choose just how much authoritative
knowledge he will transmit in his new work. In deploying this intellectual license, Daniel
strives to establish his treatise as a vernacular uroscopic authority. If Daniel allows a pre-
existing body of specialized knowledge to be “more openly taghte,” he also decides what
this new pedagogical programme will entail.

The text proper of the *Liber Uricrisiarum* bears out Daniel’s claim to omit certain
material. When explaining women’s “flouris” (menstruation), conception, and childbirth in
the fourteenth chapter of book two, for example, Daniel provides St. Augustine’s account of
the development of the foetus. He writes that Augustine:

> seyeth that the firste 6 daeyes that it is conceyvod it is as crudden mylke; 9
deyes after that it is blod; 12 daeyes after þat a sad body, that is for to sey a
litel gobett of flesh; than in the 18 day after that it is formed into all the
membres and lymes of body þat it shall haue; and in all þe remanent of tyme
till the byrth it is waxing mikell. [f. 57v] I pass þat I shuld speke if I wrote in
Laten tong.

Daniel creates an intimate link between the decision to write in English and the decision to
leave out certain information; the only reason why he claims that he will not divulge further
information is that he is not writing in Latin. His alleged omission stems not from a moral
reservation, but from a linguistic one. Daniel does not necessarily consider this information
to be inappropriate for vernacular discourse. He knows he must limit the content for a wider
vernacular readership. And as his earlier ideas on writing in English suggest, he considers
the language to be “unsufficiant” to expand on this particular topic. In this case, Daniel
places a limit on his linguistic innovation. If the *Liber Uricrisiarum* as a whole demonstrates
the ways in which Daniel contributes to the expansion of the English language by
establishing a vernacular medical vocabulary, the above passage indicates that the achievement of this new vocabulary will not be immediate. The “insufficiency” of English, Daniel here implies, can also result in the omission of certain information, whether from a source or from his own knowledge.

Although it is unclear whether Daniel omits information from Augustine or simply cannot expand upon it, he does add his own material elsewhere when he believes that his source has not fully explained a particular concept. In the eighteenth chapter of book three, for example, Daniel amends one of Hippocrates’s ideas on testing a woman for pregnancy. Hippocrates states in his *Aphorisms*, Daniel explains, that if a woman “fele gret troblying therof in here wombe” (3.18. fols. 159r-v) when she is given *mellicratum*, or in English, “mede” to drink, it is a sign that she has conceived; and, if she feels nothing, it is a sign that she has not conceived. After explaining this Hippocratic idea, however, Daniel warns his readers to “tak good hed to this experiment and to this rewle, and that is evermor soth in the negatyf, but not evermor soth in the affirmatyf” (3.18. fol. 159v). According to Daniel, this experiment cannot effectively prove if a woman has conceived because it is all too likely that “sche hath siknesse in here wombe be sum other cause” (3.18. fol. 159v). Daniel further explains that *mellicratum* must consist of four ounces of raw honey and eight ounces of rain water, must be given to a woman before she goes to bed, and will not work on a woman who is accustomed to drinking it (3.18. fol. 159v). In advising his readers to take caution with this experiment and appending additional conditions under which it is to be tried, Daniel fulfils his earlier statement: he adds to Hippocrates’s experiment some ideas that the great *auctour* “affermeth noght.” In doing so Daniel shows that he is more concerned with providing accurate information than with producing an exact translation of his various
sources. Writing “newely,” Daniel here demonstrates, involves altering “authoritative” material, subjecting existing ideas to the judgment of his new vernacular authority.

These two examples of omission and addition are representative of a larger trend of emendation to authoritative sources in the *Liber Uricrisiarum*. For example, Daniel also passes over some details on the colour “bloheed” in the ninth chapter of book two because of “prolixite” (2.9. fol. 50v); and he adds further detail to Hippocrates’s explanation of “egestioun” in the fortieth chapter of book two. He also refers his readers repeatedly to his already-established ideas: he names his sources, but he also cites chapters in his own treatise, leading readers toward just another leaf rather than another text altogether. As Jasin has rightly observed, Daniel’s habitual cross-references to other sections in the *Liber Uricrisiarum* are consistently accurate.¹ This precise cross-referencing demonstrates, on the one hand, how intimately Daniel knows his own work, and, on the other, how frequently Daniel cites his own material as authoritative. When Daniel refers his readers to other sections of his own work, he places his treatise on the same authoritative plane as his sources: something that “I seyde” becomes, in the *Liber Uricrisiarum*, just as important as something that, say, “Ypocras seyde.” The two examples of Daniel’s authority above, then, are certainly not singular; rather, they represent a larger trend, in which Daniel attributes ideas to the *Liber Uricrisiarum* instead of, or as well as, to his source material.

Daniel opens up uroscopy to include not just other technical discourses in general, but other fields of medicine in particular. His treatise provides information on conception, the generation of the embryo, and taking proper care of women during childbirth. These details, framed by Daniel as conditions related to uroscopy, are more accurately categorized

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¹ See Jasin, “The Compiler’s Awareness of Audience in Medieval Medical Prose: The Example of Wellcome 225”: 513-514.
as aspects of sexual health, and women’s sexual health in particular. Considering his use of the pronoun “sche” to refer to a female patient and “yow” to address his reader, Daniel’s intended audience is probably male. But his detailed instructions on caring for pregnant women suggest that his new vernacular audience may also include, in a broader sense, women. As Monica Green has persuasively argued, women’s medicine was, in the Middle Ages, typically relegated to a separate sphere of medical discourse: the female body required a distinct curative domain in which it was shrouded in mystification, and access to a physician during the birthing process was, additionally, extremely limited. But Daniel, who includes women’s health in his treatise, is very clearly writing for communities outside of his own order. Rather than teaching other friars to become quasi-physicians, he imagines a much broader audience of men and women. He emends his source material to make it applicable in his inclusive vernacular project, to what Somerset and Watson would call his a new “language situation.” His treatise can be called “vernacular” not just because of the English language in which it is written, but also because of the broader vernacular culture that it addresses.

Daniel declares the importance of catering to the specific needs of his vernacular audience in the eleventh chapter of book one. He states that “neyther bokes ne awturis of this faculte yevyn ne techin the lore ne the witte for to han discrecion ne difference betwen mannys uryn and womanis uryrn” (1.11. fol. 20r). Immediately before he makes this claim, Daniel explains that it is extremely difficult to make such a distinction between the urine of a male and a female, to “demyn asundry” (1.11. fol. 19v) these urines, especially if the male


33 For a learned examination of medieval access to medical attention, see Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages*, esp. chapter 1 (3-19) and 5 (85-92).
and female patients are of the same complexion. As a general rule, however, Daniel advises
his readers that male urine is “kyndely more bryght and more lyght” than the “swartysch and
derkysch and demmysche” urine of females (1.11. fol. 19v). In advising his readers to take
heed of this “typical” distinction, Daniel here, as with his emendation of Hippocrates’s
experiment later on, overtly adds new material to the information he has learned for the
benefit of his audience. Since his sources have not taught the difference between male and
female urine, Daniel continues, they have not, consequently, explained how to use uroscopy
to examine a pregnant woman. Daniel knows of no previous teaching on how to determine
through uroscopy “qwo or qwer or qwan” (1.11. fol. 20r) conception occurred, or of what
complexion the child may turn out to be. These details are, as shown above, provided by
Daniel in book two, chapter fourteen; and he guides his readers to that very chapter here, in
book one, chapter eleven. In cross-referencing his own chapter on childbirth, Daniel
establishes a symbiotic relationship between various types of accessibility. His cross-
references make accessible the relationship between different parts of his text, and his text
itself makes accessible various medical discourses.

In discussing what kind of information has been habitually omitted from uroscopy,
Daniel also explains what kind of information cannot be provided by uroscopy. To advance
his argument, Daniel provides the first of several case studies that are to appear throughout
the Liber Uricrisiarum. Daniel’s first anecdote concerns a doctor he once knew, as he states,
“I knew a leche of gret name <Maister Gyles by name> that never knew lettre, and yit he
ded many grete dedis” (1.11. fol. 20v). Although this leche was illiterate, he learned
uroscopy “[a]mong sarzinis” (1.11. fol. 20v). A wife in Gyles’s town, who had “skorn of
hym” and “on a tyme fel discrasid,” sent a mixture of her own urine with that of her cow for Gyles to examine. Before the messenger even presented the urine to him, Gyles commands:

‘Let it be style,’ quod he, ‘go hom and sey hire that sche is with a may child, this nyght begetyn of a prest, and here cow with a flekkyd calf.’ THis {sic} was cowth among here neghebouris, and fondyn it soth. I was familier with the leche and with the wyf, and seygh the mayde child and the calf. And he bleryed and nerhande blynd; and though he ne hadde, he sawgh not the water. Of swich maner demynges techith not this faculte.

(1.11. fols. 20v-21r)

Daniel’s point here, if there indeed is one, is that uroscopy cannot determine by whom a woman has been impregnated, nor can the science be used to verify the child’s gender, nor still can it operate without empirical examination of evidence. Maister Gyles somehow knew the true details of the wife’s (and her cow’s) pregnancy; but he did not attain this knowledge through uroscopic means. Before outlining how uroscopy works, Daniel here explains how it most certainly does not work.

While this peculiar anecdote teaches, arguably, nothing of uroscopy, it reveals much about Daniel. This story is, like almost every other “case-study” in the treatise, original material.34 Rather than receiving it from a source, this story (like others he shares later on) concerns people with whom Daniel is, apparently, “familier.” Daniel cultivates a personal tone by culling narratives from his community’s history, establishing a model of authority based on his own personal knowledge as opposed to what he has learned from known experts. Daniel committed himself to making uroscopy “more openly taghte” as a means to increase “the knowlich of al tham that coveteth forto profite in this faculte” (Pro. fol. 4va). His original anecdote is consistent with these goals, for it shows him determined to explain

34 There is one case-study that Daniel attributes to Aristotle (2.14. fols. 64v-65r). I discuss this particular case in greater detail in Chapter Three, “Anima carnis in sanguine est: Blood, Life, and The King of Tars,” pp. 77-78.
even the most basic of principles, to ensure that his treatise is “profitable unto men, and also
I seand ful meny men” (Pro. fol. 4va). Daniel here sets himself apart from his predecessors
who, according to him, have not sufficiently explained what uroscopy can and cannot
achieve. Daniel grapples with this same subject; he must convince his readers that uroscopy
cannot determine the father of an unborn child because this idea is circulating elsewhere.
The elements of this anecdote recall some stock features of the *fabliau*: the punch line
reveals an adulterous plot, and the characters are a conniving wife (with an apparently
cuckolded husband) and a man who turns her trick against her. When Daniel tells this
*fabliau*, he absorbs the voice of the tradition into his own first-person voice and, in doing so,
places himself as the locus of a particular type of authority. This authority is one that
transmits its specialized knowledge in a resolutely vernacular register—vernacular not only
because it is written in English, but because it employs the decisively vernacular genre of
the *fabliau*.

**IV. Daniel’s Vernacular Style**

If Daniel is careful to explain the most basic of uroscopic principles when he declares that
the *faculte* cannot determine by whom a woman is impregnated, he is overly careful to
explain the seemingly simplest of terms when he, in an earlier chapter, begins to define
urine. Before providing his “descripcioun of uryn,” Daniel defines “descripcioun”: “the
descripcioun of a thing is the descrivyng what a thing is” (1.2. fol. 1v). Only after he defines
this term can Daniel move on to define urine. Daniel’s recourse to this preliminary definition
is striking. The word “descripcioun” is not likely to have been unfamiliar to Daniel’s
audience: both “descripcioun” and “descrivyng” date back to at least the early fourteenth
In carefully defining a term that did not necessarily require clarification, Daniel, first, demonstrates his fundamental investment in making uroscopy accessible and, second, sets himself up as a master of the English language. He reveals his deep interest in words and revels in his capacity to teach them, endeavouring to make not only uroscopy, but also English, “more openly taghte.”

While “descripcioun” might not have been a new term, Daniel’s prologue does include several new terms that describe our various relationships to language in general, and to English in particular: “vulgare,” “coment,” “comentours,” “interpret,” “interpretacions,” “diffinicions,” and “ortographie.” At the same time that Daniel aspires to write uroscopy “newely,” he is also writing English “newely” by using these terms. The “vulgare (i.e. the comune langage)” is undergoing a change in how it is used and received, and in recording these new words Daniel contributes to that change. The common tongue is expanding so that it can be used to teach the specialized discourse of uroscopy.

Daniel’s skill in developing words and describing their meanings extends beyond supplying definitions to providing strings of synonyms. In the second chapter of book one, for example, Daniel explains the concept that urination is a cleansing of the blood. To do so, he compares urine’s relationship with blood to whey’s relationship with milk:

for ryght as thu seest that the wheye is wrongen and clensedede and pressede oute fra mylke be wirkyng and travaylyng and thrusting and pressing out fram the grosse, thicke matere, that is to seyne fro the cloddis and the clumpris and the cruddis, right so the uryn is wrongin and clensed out fram massa sanguinis (i. fram the clumpre, the clodde, the stok, the mater, and the welle of blood).

(1.2. fol. 1v)

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The abundance of synonyms in this passage is remarkable for a few reasons. First, the use of synonyms here suggests that Daniel takes pains to ensure that his work is understood, that it truly is taken “more lightly and of moo men.” If his reader is not familiar with the term “wrongen,” there are still two more opportunities—“clensede” and “pressede”—to understand the point Daniel is trying to advance about whey and milk. Providing synonyms can help Daniel appeal to the greatest number of people. This push for accessibility also showcases the richness of the English language as it develops and expands. Daniel shows that English has many ways to explain the singular, mundane concept of the production of whey.

At the same time that he demonstrates this richness, Daniel also contributes to it. The terms “pressede,” “pressing,” “thristyng,” “grosse,” “cloddis,” “clodde,” “clumpris,” “clumpre,” and “cruddis” all pre-date their earliest citations in the *MED*. The vernacular has the capacity to express this comparison between whey and urine in various ways; but, as Daniel’s presentation of new terms indicates, this linguistic capability is still in progress. The presence of so many synonyms thus possesses a twofold significance for Daniel’s vernacularity: these synonyms demonstrate his commitment to making his treatise accessible, and they also illuminate one way in which Daniel contributes to the expansion of the English language. Daniel’s synonyms reveal his skill in both using and developing new English words. Some of these words are indeed “new” to the language, but Daniel makes them familiar by placing them in streams of like terms, establishing his vernacular as at once expanding and accessible.
The profusion of synonyms in the *Liber Uricrisiarum* has been noted by at least one scholar, who attributes it to Daniel’s unique “prose style.” But Daniel’s distinctiveness stems less from the sheer number of synonyms provided than from the combination of familiar and new terms presented. His style reveals his facility in expanding the English language, but it also implies the delight he takes in contributing to it. Daniel frequently makes his synonyms alliterative. In the passage above, for example, Daniel introduces three like-meaning and like-sounding terms with “cloddis,” “clumpris,” and “cruddis.” This combination of sounds (“cl-” and “cr-”) are scattered throughout the remainder of Daniel’s treatise. Similar combinations of alliterating sounds permeate the text; in book two, chapter fourteen, for example, Daniel’s description of the “matrix” or the “moder” motivates a multiplication of m-words. Daniel showcases the stylistic possibilities of the English language even when it is used to express specialized knowledge. Although Daniel had claimed in his prologue that he knew very little English and learned to write only from the gift of the Holy Spirit (Pro. fol. 4vb), his writing in fact demonstrates a mastery over an early vernacular alliterative tradition.

Daniel’s alliteration is reminiscent of Chaucer’s Parson, who claims that he “kan nat geeste ‘rum, ram, ruf,’ by lettre” (X.43). The Parson suggests that he cannot speak in a decorated style, and will thus speak entirely of “[m]oralitee and vertuous matere” (X.38) without abandoning “soothfastnesse” (X.33): he will speak the plain truth of his matter, and

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37 See, for example: 1.2. fol. 1v; 1.5. fol. 6r-8v; 1.7. fols. 10r-13r; 1.12. fols. 21r-25r; 1.14. fols. 25r-31r; 2.1. fols. 31r-33v; 2.2. fols. 33v-35v; 2.20. fols. 74v-76v; 2.22. fols. 78r-80r; 2.23. fols. 80r-81r; 2.73. fols. 125v-129v; and 3.12. fols. 148r-149v for alliterating “cl-” and “cr-” words.
avoid the stylistic luxuriousness of false, ornate tales. Just as the Parson chastises men who “tellen fables and swich wrechednesse” (X.34), Daniel reproves those leches who are “ful of fables and ful of lesinges,” as many “that bene now ar wonte to done” (Pro. fol. 4vb).

Daniel’s aim to make uroscopy “more openly taghte” is echoed by the Parson, who intends to teach moral and virtuous matters plainly and openly. If the Parson’s alliteration refers to the kind of style he chastises, Daniel’s alliteration, by contrast, points to the diversity of styles that the language affords. Daniel, like the Parson, intends to speak plainly about his topic, but he also contributes to the English vernacular by introducing new terms in an old way. Just as Daniel places old and new words together as synonyms, he presents new words in the old, familiar alliterative style, a decision signalling his affinity with a vernacular rhetorical tradition rather than a Latin one. He thereby achieves rhetorically what his treatise as a whole aims to accomplish epistemologically; alliteration is the stylistic corollary of Daniel’s overall goal to appropriate an academic discourse into the vernacular.

If providing an English rendering of uroscopic knowledge effectively appropriates that discourse into the vernacular, employing stylistic elements like the fabliau and alliteration effectively transmit that discourse in a decidedly vernacular style.

Daniel pairs elements of his vernacular style with the more “learned” tactic of providing etymologies. Many of the etymologies Daniel offers are, however, not

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consistently accurate or definitive. In book two, chapter fourteen, for example, Daniel translates the word “embrio” by explaining its composition:

Embrio is the sede of the male & of þe female from that tyme that it is conceyved & closed in þe matrice till þat tyme that the soule is yevon thereto, and that thou mayste see by the ethimology thereof, i. by the propirte þerof. For embrio is seid of en, in, and in, i not <non WS> or sine, <nozt W> or els haueles, and of this word bria, i. mensura vel racio vel vita: mesure or resoun or els lyfe; as who seyeth als leng as it is lyfless, i. till the soule be yeven therto, it is embrio.

(2.14. fol. 61v)

This confusing, fanciful etymology in no way directly clarifies the English translation of the Latin term “embrio.” Daniel’s translation does not rely on this etymology to be effective. What Daniel wants, and what the etymology allows, is to accrete information. Even when Daniel can offer two, seemingly opposing etymologies for the same term, he explains both theories without constructing an argument concerning which one may be true. The “matrice” or the “moder,” for example, is called matrix “of materia, materie, and of ministratrix, a ministratrice; or of materia and receptrix, a takere, for it ministrith, receyvith, and underfongith the seed in generacion” (2.14. fol. 59v). Here, Daniel offers two possible etymologies without taking a clear stance. The second possibility, though inaccurate, is used to explain the function of the matrice. Just as Daniel’s etymology of “embrio” in fact only provided him with the words to translate and define the term, so too does Daniel construct an etymology for matrice that elucidates its function in the female body. Daniel uses the etymological mode to accrete information about these unfamiliar, Latin terms in his English translations of them.

The general practice of providing etymologies seems methodologically indebted to a figure like Isidore of Seville (indeed, one of the many authorities whom Daniel cites in the
Liber Uricrisiarum and one who also writes imaginative etymologies). But Daniel’s tendency to provide multiple possible etymologies for the same term more closely resembles a stylistic model offered by one of Chaucer’s pilgrims. Daniel’s multiple etymologies perform the same rhetorical strategy as Chaucer’s Second Nun in the Second Nun’s Prologue. Before beginning her tale, the Second Nun announces that she will first “the name of Seint Cecilie / Expowne” (viii.85-86). The name “Cecilia” is, in English, “hevenes lilie” (viii.87), for virginity or for honesty (viii.88-89); or the name derives from “the wey to blynde” (viii.92); or it is joined from two words, “‘hevene’ and ‘Lia’” (viii.96); or, Cecilia “may eek” mean, “Wantynge of blyndnesse” (viii.100); or it may be comprised of “‘hevene’ and ‘leos’” (viii.103). As the corrections made by some Chaucerian editors attest, the Second Nun’s list of potential etymologies and derivations is comprised mostly of inaccurate, and even contradictory, information.\(^{40}\) For the Second Nun, etymology operates not as a principle of definitive termination, but rather of incessant accretion. It does not matter to the Second Nun that each possible etymology added to the list only prevents the achievement of a fixed derivation; her etymology, like Daniel’s, is used to accrete information about a particular term, and not to explain a singular interpretation.

Daniel, fortunately, does not provide quite as many etymologies for matrice as the Second Nun offers for Cecilie, but the latter affords a rhetorical framework through which to interpret Daniel’s particular mode of vernacularization. In phrasing many of his local translations as etymologies, Daniel first establishes himself as an authority on the meaning of those terms by employing a learned mode of translation; and, subsequently, he uses this etymological mode to accrete information regarding his specific term. If the Second Nun

collects information on the name Cecilie only to showcase Saint Cecilia’s multifaceted virtue, Daniel accretes knowledge about the *matrice* to explain its multifaceted role in the female body and in generation. Daniel provides his etymologies because this kind of explanation facilitates his detailed descriptions of important body parts and their functions. His etymologies are, moreover, more in keeping with those expressed by their vernacular counterpart, the Second Nun, than by a Latin authority like Isidore. Daniel’s etymologies, like his short *fabliau* and occasional alliteration, enable him to teach his knowledge both authoritatively and “openly.” Rather than only attempting to imitate the style of one or more of his predecessors, Daniel exploits many stylistic features afforded by the English language to set himself apart from his sources. Daniel appropriates uroscopy into both a vernacular language and a vernacular style and, in doing so, establishes his treatise as a new, vernacular authority.

V. Some “new þinges”

Daniel’s various stylistic techniques are linked through their shared pursuit of a new technical, medical vocabulary in the English vernacular. Some of these stylistic aspects bear resemblance to different works of Daniel’s great contemporary, Chaucer; but for Daniel, the profusion of synonyms, occasional alliteration, and etymologies contribute to his overarching goal to make uroscopy “more openly taghte.” In addition to his transmission of this medical vocabulary, Daniel also aids the development of it, and in this respect, again participates in the same culture of vernacularization as Chaucer. Daniel contributes not only

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41 Like Daniel, the Second Nun positions English writing not in absolute opposition to but as contiguous with a Latin tradition. As Florence H. Ridley notes, the *Interpretatio* is adapted from the tale of Saint Cecilia in Jacobus de Voragine’s *Golden Legend*. See “Explanatory Notes,” in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 944.
to the development of a technical vernacular in particular, but also, like Chaucer, to the expansion of the English language in general.

Many of the technical terms recorded in Daniel’s treatise have already been noted above in my brief discussion of Chaucer’s *Treatise on the Astrolabe*. Beyond these astronomically focused words, Daniel’s treatise also features the earliest known citations of numerous terms denoting specific illnesses and conditions, as well as bodily parts and functions. The accompanying appendix provides a list of these words, organized by category of meaning. There are, moreover, many words in Daniel’s treatise that cannot be considered “medical” or “specialist” in any way, although they do appear in the *Liber Uricrisiarum* prior to their earliest recorded citations according to the *MED* and *OED*. A full consideration of these terms, aside from those already discussed above, exceeds the scope of the current project. There is still much work to be done on early English medicine in general and Henry Daniel in particular, and close attention to the wide array of new terminology in Daniel’s work is one potentially fruitful avenue of inquiry. My purpose here is to show that Daniel’s intent to make uroscopy “more openly taghte” requires him to contribute to the very vocabulary in which he will teach that knowledge.

Before providing his the members of his audience with a vocabulary to understand and treat their bodies, Daniel must himself introduce much of that vocabulary. This is not to say that the *Liber Uricrisiarum* proves that Daniel invents all of these words. As I mentioned in my introduction, scholars of medical history have known since Voigts’s seminal research more than twenty years ago that there are thousands of Middle English medical and scientific manuscripts. There are likely numerous other treatises that employ some of the same vocabulary as Daniel. Rather than serving as a singular pioneer of Middle
English medicine, Daniel represents a vernacular medical tradition that has still not been the focus of contemporary research. These words were very likely being used in oral communication, and perhaps even recorded elsewhere around the same time as they appear in Daniel’s treatise; all that we can say at this point in time is that these specialized terms appear to have been recorded first by Daniel in his encyclopaedic text.

In the explanatory notes to his edition of an excerpt from Daniel’s Liber Uricrisiarum, Ralph Hanna notes forty-nine words that either pre-date or are contemporary with the earliest citations found in the MED and OED. Of these forty-nine terms from Hanna’s notes, approximately thirty denote bodily parts, functions, colours, or ailments. Of these forty-nine terms from Hanna’s edition, it should be noted, includes only the English prologue and the first three chapters from book one of Daniel’s treatise. The number of specialized terms in the entire treatise that either pre-date or are contemporary with the earliest MED and OED citations, then, is considerably greater than Hanna was able to record (see Appendix A). In expanding Hanna’s list of words by checking the entire treatise, I have followed his model of lexical dating: these datings are predicated on the approximate date of composition (ca. 1379 or, for Hanna, ca. 1376-1379) rather than the manuscript dates. I have also followed his method to include words that both pre-date and are contemporary with the earliest recorded appearance. Both kinds of terms are important to an understanding of Daniel’s vernacularity. Words that pre-date their earliest recorded occurrence, of course, might be Daniel’s own coinages; or, at the very least, these are words that became more commonly known and used only after Daniel wrote them down. Words that are contemporary with their earliest

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recorded occurrence, similarly, demonstrate Daniel’s contribution to a specialized vernacular vocabulary: he participates in and is at the vanguard of a much broader culture of vernacularization. These terms may not be Daniel’s coinages, but he contributes to a larger process of vernacularization that transmits these terms in English, thereby developing a vernacular medical vocabulary and expanding English as a whole.

Medieval medicine, as is now well-known, is based on Galen’s theory of the four humours: the idea that the human body contains four main fluid substances (blood, which is hot and wet; choler, which is hot and dry; phlegm, which is cold and wet; and melancholy, which is cold and dry) that dictate a person’s general appearance and state of health depending on how they are balanced. A person who is dominated by melancholy, for example, would be pale and thin, as Daniel explains, because of the “frigidite” and “siccite” of that particular humour (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1404: 1.10. fol. 17r). Their complexioun would, in turn, make them more susceptible to certain maladies than a person who is dominated by a different humour.

Given the centrality of humoural theory to medieval medicine, Daniel must ensure that the foundational concept of the four humours is fully explained, so he establishes a vocabulary to express these ideas. Daniel does not invent the word “humour”: the earliest citation occurs, rather, in the Ayenbite of Inwyte, ca. 1340. But aside from this earlier usage, humour does not again appear (at least in its physiological sense) until Trevisa’s translation of Higden’s Polychronicon (ca. 1387) and Chaucer’s Parson’s Tale (ca. 1390). The word “complexioun,” likewise, appears in the Ayenbite and is then not again recorded until Chaucer’s Knight’s Tale (ca. 1385) and Parson’s Tale. Though not Daniel’s coinages, these

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words seem to be relatively rare before the end of the fourteenth century or, we might say, rare before Chaucer. The *Liber Uricrisiarum* was, additionally, completed before the works of Trevisa and Chaucer that are shown contain the earliest occurrences of *humour* and *complexioun* after their first appearance in the *Ayenbite*. The term “disposicioun” is, as both Daniel and the *MED* explain, a synonym for *complexioun*; and, its first recorded occurrence is from Trevisa’s translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus’s *De proprietatibus rerum* (ca. 1398). This word appears in Daniel’s treatise approximately twenty years before its earliest dictionary citation. Daniel’s presentation of this term, as well as his use of *humour* and *complexioun*, show that the *Liber Uricrisiarum* is one of the earliest English treatises (if not the earliest) to explain the formative concept of the four humours, and that Daniel is instrumental in developing the vernacular vocabulary needed to express this crucial material.

If Daniel is instrumental in developing a vernacular medical vocabulary because he participates in a larger effort to explain the terms *humour, complexioun*, and *disposicioun* in English, he gains even more credibility as a significant contributor to this vocabulary with his recording of the names for all four humours. The names for all of the humours are also used, nearly twenty years later, by Trevisa in his translation of *De proprietatibus rerum*. The only other early records of “melancolie” are Chaucer’s *Nun’s Priest’s Tale* (ca. 1390) and Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* (ca. 1393). “Fleume,” aside from an early thirteenth-century poem, appears in Trevisa’s *Polychronicon* and the *Confessio Amantis*.44 “Colre” appears in the *Nun’s Priest’s Tale*. And, finally, “sanguin” appears in the *Confessio Amantis*. Whereas received wisdom holds that the English names for the four humours are ‘introduced’ by

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44 The early thirteenth-century poem that is recorded to have used the word “fleume” is “Louerd asse þu ard…” (Cambridge, Trinity College B.14.39), ca.1250. The term is spelled “feme,” but editors concur that it is meant to be read as “fleme” (*MED*: “fleume”).
Trevis, Chaucer, and Gower in the final thirteen years of the fourteenth century, these English terms are also ‘introduced’ by Daniel ca. 1379. In writing down the English terms to explain humoural theory, Daniel makes a major contribution to English medicine: he identifies the four humours and explains their function in the body in a new vernacular mode, but he also establishes and develops the very vocabulary that is needed to articulate these ideas in English. If medieval medicine begins with an understanding of the humours, Daniel initiates medical learning in English by enabling the vernacular transmission of this dominant, instrumental medical theory.

Of these four new terms to describe a person’s temperament (“melancolyk,” “fleumatyk,” “colerik,” and “sanguin”), one has a very common English synonym: *sanguin*. A *sanguin* person is someone who is, of course, dominated by blood. The word “blood” is used regularly by Daniel, and certainly occurs much more frequently than the Latinate *sanguis* or *sanguine*. Daniel employs *sanguin* as both a Latin and an English word, translating, for example, “*sanguinea*” as “sanguin” (1.10. fol. 16r). By using this term *sanguin* interchangeably as Latin and English, Daniel shows that developing a new, vernacular medical vocabulary does not necessarily constitute a break from the Latin, authoritative vocabulary with which he is already familiar. Establishing a specialized vocabulary in English positions Latin not as another discourse, but as a related one. Alongside the very early English term “blood” (the earliest citation of which is attributed to ca.1150), Daniel introduces a new, technical synonym with *sanguin*. Presenting a new

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45 Daniel refers to the humours consistently throughout the treatise. A full account of each humour and its associated temperament, as well as a description of the typical physical appearance of a person dominated by each humour, can be found in 1.9. fols. 14v-15v and 1.10. fols. 15v-17v.

term for “blood” suggests that Daniel also encourages a new way of thinking about blood. To be sure, a Latinate term will not necessarily encode a richer and more learned semantic range than an English one. But by introducing a new additional term, Daniel suggests that blood may have a much more nuanced meaning and function than his readers may have previously known.

It is precisely this semantic range, along with its symbolic valences, that drives the following chapters of this dissertation. The vocabulary of blood that is shared by the Liber Uricrisiarum and medieval texts like The King of Tars, Julian of Norwich’s Revelation of Love, and the N-Town Nativity play is emerging as a significant contribution to the English language both in a technical and a symbolic register. This vocabulary of blood is part of the expanding technical language of medical discourse, and the developing symbolic values of literary discourse. As Caroline Walker Bynum has argued, the fourteenth century saw an important shift in literary and artistic representations of devotion in which the Crucifixion, which would be an unambiguously unbloody death, became a decidedly bloody one.\(^\text{47}\) At the same time that English medicine is developing a new vocabulary to articulate and understand the body and blood of a person, medieval literature is exploding with new representations of holy bodies and blood in its depictions of Christian miracles. In the chapters that follow, I discuss the multifaceted function of blood in the body as described by Daniel and his sources and, subsequently, demonstrate the ways in which authors of Middle English poetry, prose, and drama pick up and extend this vocabulary of blood to generate an even greater semantic and symbolic range.

\(^{47}\) See Bynum, “Introduction,” Wonderful Blood, i.
Chapter Two

“The stat of lyf prinspally”: Blood and Medieval English Medicine

Medieval conceptualizations and representations of blood have been gaining critical attention in recent years. Bettina Bildhauer’s *Medieval Blood* reads medieval medicine and literature alongside contemporary theory, predominantly that of Judith Butler and Julia Kristeva, to argue that blood was, in medieval Europe, imagined to unify the body and establish its boundaries. Peggy McCracken argues in *The Curse of Eve, The Wound of the Hero: Blood, Gender, and Medieval Literature* that medieval blood is gendered, and consequently influenced and sustained the sex-gender system of medieval culture. In *Wounds in the Middle Ages*, Anna Kirkham and Cordelia Warr show the links between wounds and surgery in medieval Europe. Caroline Walker Bynum’s *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond*, cited in the previous chapter, provides a detailed account of medieval theoretical debates concerning the legitimacy and efficacy of blood cults and blood piety. All of these studies explore the vital influence of blood on various aspects of medieval culture and society: on understandings of the body, on gender, on medical practice, and on theological experience. The vastly divergent areas of inquiry reveal that blood influenced medieval conceptions of every aspect of being, of bodily life and spiritual life. As Bynum has rightly pointed out, this widespread

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influence has often resulted in attempts to pin down a cohesive definition of blood and its significance to medieval culture, when in fact the only way for scholars to fully comprehend this vital fluid is to accept the paradoxes attendant on it. Blood thus encloses and flows out, corrupts and nourishes, wounds and heals, is visible and invisible, is present and absent.\footnote{This point is repeated by Bynum throughout the book, but is first explained in the introduction. See Bynum, \textit{Wonderful Blood}, 9-21.}

This chapter embraces such paradoxes and investigates them through a detailed case study of Henry Daniel, whose \textit{Liber Uricrisiarum} presents blood as a capacious, multifaceted substance and, in so doing, brings together many medieval medical traditions. Following Daniel’s lead, I argue here that blood is the seat of physical and spiritual life in the medieval English imagination.

This argument unfolds in two sections: blood and physical life, and blood and spiritual life. In the first, I demonstrate the diverse and often paradoxical roles of blood by presenting Henry Daniel’s descriptions of how blood works within the body, both in terms of causing illness and maintaining health. I aim here to extend Bynum’s observation concerning blood’s paradoxical nature: Daniel’s theorization of blood explains the physiological reasoning that underlies and perpetuates these paradoxes. I devote special attention to the multitude of roles blood plays in human generation; consider the varied ways blood operates in male and female bodies; and demonstrate the status and function of blood to create, nourish, and maintain physical life. The second section moves between physical and spiritual life, and shows the connection of blood to the liver, heart, and brain, as well as to the spirit and the soul. I here approach the multifaceted conceptualization of blood through Daniel’s relation to his sources, analyzing the material presented by him as well as how he presents it. He is typically quite careful to give proper attribution to his sources, but
is also writing “newely”: although not all of the ideas expressed in the *Liber Uricrisiarum* are Daniel’s own, he articulates them in a new way as a means to ensure that they are indeed “more openly taghte.” In considering information Daniel learned from his sources, this is a study of blood in medieval medical discourse in general; but, in analyzing Daniel’s specific conceptualization of blood, it is also a study of blood in the newly evolving medieval English medical discourse in particular.

I: Physical Life

**1.A: Urine, Blood, Illness, Health**

Henry Daniel’s *Liber Uricrisiarum* is, as its title indicates, a uroscopic treatise, and readers may wonder what urine and uroscopy have to do with blood. Uroscopy, however, is not all about urine, but about the state of the whole human body. As Daniel presents it, uroscopy is a diagnostic tool that encompasses the body in every part. He aims to teach uroscopy to his audience who, Daniel insists, desire to be “experte of demying of urines” (Pro. fol.4rb); to do so, he must also teach them about the entire body. As the scope of information displayed in Daniel’s text attests, understanding uroscopy is contingent on understanding the parts and organs of the body, the humours, complexions, diseases and their causes, human generation, and astrology. This connection between uroscopy and the body dovetails with a connection to blood. As Daniel explains in the second chapter of Book 1, “Quid sit urina”: “As sayne alle autores of this faculte [*i.e.* uroscopy], this is descripcioun of uryn (the descripcioun of a

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3 For more on uroscopy as an all-encompassing method of both diagnosis and prognosis, see Faith Wallis, “Inventing Diagnosis: Theophilus’ *De urinis* in the Classroom,” *Dynamis* 20 (2000): 31-73. It is also notable that three of the texts usually contained in the *Articella*, the medical textbook used at medieval universities, were uroscopic: Theophilus’ *De urinis*, Isaac Judaeus, *De urinis*, and Giles de Corbeil, *De urinis*. 
thing is the descrivyng what a thing is): uryne is a lete and a suptil meltyng and clensyng of the blode and of the humores” (1.2. fol.1v). Urine, Daniel here explains, has everything to do with blood; the process of urination, according to Daniel and “alle autores,” is a cleansing of the blood, meaning that urine is formulated from blood. Urine would not exist, and uroscopy would not be possible, without it. Uroscopy engages with blood on a few levels: it concerns the internal workings of the body as a whole, of which blood plays a major part; it scrutinizes the particular process by which blood and the other humours are cleansed; and, it examines the contents in urine, which can include blood. The latter kind of blood is distinct from the substance that creates urine. The blood that contributes to the formation of urine is a kind of distillate, while the kind of blood that can appear in urine is much like our current understanding of bloody urine. The descriptions of blood in this treatise are encyclopaedic in scope, providing a comprehensive illustration of blood’s many roles.

Daniel makes this direct connection between urine and blood apparent when he outlines the twenty colours of urine: many of these colours are made and determined by the state of the blood. *Rubicundus* and *subrubicundus* colours, for example, are caused by choler “enflamende the blood.” If this urine is more toward a purple colour, “it seyth that the blood is thikked and dreyed and that the humidite of the blood is sokyn owt and drawen awey thuro distemperure of exces hete” (2.1. fol.33v). *Inopos* colour means that “the blood is thik and clomyd and cloiddid and brend and skolkred and meynt with flem corrupt” (2.1. fol.33v). *Kyanos* colour signifies approximately the same internal state as *inopos*, “but sumquat wers” because “it seyth adustioun and corrupcion of sundry humores bothe of the blood and of the colre” (2.1. fol.33v). *Inopos* and *kyanos* are caused in three ways: “congelacion of the blood,” “adustioun of the blood,” and “violence” in which “the blood is
distemprid and disturblid and turnyth owt of his owene kynde” (2.73. fol.121v). “Bloheed,” or *lividus* colour, occurs in urine when coldness in the liver results in blood that is not “depurid ne defyyed ne wrowt.” Since the blood lacks the nourishment it normally receives, “blohed” enters the veins and produces livid urine (2.7. fol.44v). Finally, “viride” colour indicates that melancholy reigns in the body, and “also that the blood hath lost his kynde colour, and not may be recured ageyn, be comoun cors of kynde” (2.1. fol.33v).

In addition to the main twenty colours, Daniel also expounds what causes general redness, whiteness, and blackness in urine. Redness in urine occurs when the blood is “chawfid and boylyd and suptyled.” Since blood is naturally hot, excess heat “fro withowtward” causes the blood to “ketchith onkynde hete,” which decreases the natural “humidite” of the blood (1.12. fol.21r). These factors combine to cause redness in urine. Whiteness (*albus*) in urine is difficult to define. Daniel describes it alternatively as clear and as cloudy, but “whiteness” is the closest English word to *albus* that is available. This “whiteness” is also determined by the state of the blood. Daniel, following Isaac Judaeus, explains that eating in excess will cause urine to be “qwyght in colour, and shire.” Since such eating blocks digestion, the blood is never “parfytly complet ne ful wrowt,” which, in turn, prevents the urine from “dyeng parfyghtly as it schuld han, and therfore it comith alba and *cruda*, qwyght and raw” (1.14. fols.26v-27r). Most reasons for blackness in urine are,

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4 In this section, Daniel also includes more information about how diet influences the urine, usually by way of blood. Hot food causes red and clear urine, for instance, and moist food causes thick urine. Dry food creates thin and clear urine, sometimes red and sometimes citrin, because it decreases the humidity (*i.e.* moisture) of the blood, which then makes the entire body dry. Following Johannitius’ (Hunayn ibn Ishaq’s) *Isagoge*, Daniel also lists foods that are good and bad for the blood. Fresh white bread and lamb’s flesh cause an ideal balance between blood and the other humours; “overled” bread, “evyl baken” bread, beef, and old meat cause “wikke blood and of evyl medelyd” (1.14. fol.28r). For an edition of the Latin text of the *Isagoge*, see *Articella* (Lyons: Impressum per Joannem de la Place, impensis Bartholomei Troth, 1515). The Arabic title of the *Isagoge* can be translated into English as *Questions on Medicine for Scholars*. For an English translation, see *Questions on Medicine for Scholars*, trans. Paul Ghalioungui (Cairo: Al-Ahram Centre for Scientific Translations, 1980).
similarly, caused by blood: the blood turns black through “mortificacioun of kynde heete”; the blood congeals, and thus turns black; the blood, or other humours, turn into melancholy; the blood “latchith a blakheed” though the injury of a “noble member,” that is, an artery or vein; or, blackness in urine occurs in women during menstruation (2.2. fols.34r-v).

As this final reason implies, blood may appear in urine for physiological reasons, and Daniel accordingly devotes a chapter to the significance of this content in Book 3. Citing “the coment vpon Gilys” as his source, Daniel notes that blood in urine can come either from the bladder, the kidneys, the liver, or “a veyne that is called ‘kylis.’” The blood appears differently in the urine depending on the organ or vein from which it came, and signifies different things. After guiding his readers through what Gilbert, Galen, Hippocrates, and an unnamed “summe” say regarding the different appearance and signification of blood from these various places in the body, Daniel teaches how to “knowe it asunder”—how to tell where the blood comes from. One must judge, he states, “be the body of the blood, be the colour of the blood, be the odour of uryn, or elles the blod in the uryn, be hasty or late drawing down of blood in the botme, and be the peyne felying” (3.12. fol.148v). He follows this outline with a more detailed explanation of the evaluative process, allowing his readers to put his words into practice.

Daniel’s depictions of blood, which cast it as the root of various colours and as itself a content in need of examination, stress the multifaceted nature of blood and, but they also demonstrate his own vernacular authority. His vernacular authority is apparent because he has learned what he can about blood in urine from others—Gilbert, Galen, Hippocrates—and here he clarifies that information for his English audience by adding his own description of how to judge the various kinds of blood in urine. The underlying idea that blood
influences the colour and content of urine is not original to Daniel; but he renders that idea in the vernacular through a combination of elucidating and extending the information found in his sources.

As the causes for these diverse colours of urine suggest, blood can have adverse effects on the health of the body as a whole. Two types of leprosy, for instance, are caused by problems in the blood. *Leonomya*, or “lepre leonine,” occurs when red choler infects the blood (2.69. fol.118r). “[A]llopica or vulpian, a fox, the alopis, or leper vulpien,” is caused by “huge plente of blod corrupt” and by “defaute of blodlaft” (2.69. fol.118v). *Sinochus*, a continual fever, is caused by “corrupcion of blod in the veynis,” a “wykkedhed of the blud, as when the blud is went, turnyed and changyt of hys awn kind into fylth and corrupcion” (2.62. fol.119r/ MS Wellcome 225 fol.96v). Every type of “apostem,” a morbid swelling, inflammation or sore, Daniel explains, “in what membre or what place it be, it is collection and gendring of wike humor or humoris, but principali of blood” (2.75. fol.125r). Jaundice infects the body when the blood “turnyth into a colre” by way of “unkynede het” that “stuff[es]” the “humidite of blood” (2.80. fols.132r-v). If sanies (pus) comes from the kidneys or the liver, blood will delay the healing process. If from the kidneys, sanies takes longer to heal than if it comes from the bladder because the kidneys are closer to the liver, “the wele of het and of blood.” If it comes from the liver, then, it will not heal for an especially long time because it has come from “the membre that is the principal see and place of blood, and ek is nere the wele of hete, because that ilke membre… is reft from his kynde hete and is distempered and overgon with cold” (3.9. fol.143v). A purple circle in the urine indicates “exces of blood dystourbelende the hed,” primarily “brennyng” blood. The circle causes great pain in the head (especially in the forehead, where, Daniel states, blood reigns),
nosebleeds, and the belief that one sees “rede thyngys before him” (3.2. fol.136v). In some of these examples, it seems as though choler is the real culprit, but it actually manages to harm the body only by way of harming the blood. Once the blood is corrupt, the body as a whole suffers.

Blood can even be blamed for melancholy. Melancholy is another of the four humours, and the relationship between blood and the other humours is complex. On one hand, blood is itself one of the four; but on the other, it is the origin of all of them. Phlegm, choler, and melancholy are all derived from blood, meaning that blood both forms the humours and is one itself. Melancholy in particular, Daniel explains, is “causid of the drestes of the blod” (2.43. fol.111r). Once it is thus produced, melancholy divides itself, and one part remains mixed with the blood, passing through the body with it. This partnership is actually good for the body: melancholy thickens the blood and leads it toward those body parts “wich owyn to be fed with humor of melancolie” (2.43. fol.111r). This short description is emblematic of one of blood’s great paradoxes: it corrupts and nourishes, can impede health and restore it. Melancholy, a humour that typically has adverse effects on the body, is made from blood’s impurities; once mixed, however, these humours work together to nourish the body as it ought to be. The examples above demonstrate the capacity of blood to hurt the body; the remainder of this section thus turns to the other side of the paradox, showing some ways through which blood can heal and nourish.

The healthful combination of melancholy and blood may not be altogether surprising since, Daniel states, blood is the “worthiest of alle humoris” (2.76. fol.126v). Although ideal health is contingent on a balance of all four humours, this balance does not mean that the body should contain an equal amount of each: “Proporcioun of quantite of the 4 humores in
mannys body schulde be thus: blood in evene doble proporcioun to fleume; fleume doble to colere; and colere doble to melancolie; and elles the body is discrasid, i. in evyl porporcioun and distemperure” (1.6. fol.9v). Despite the numerous instances of corrupt blood leading to illness, blood is nevertheless the humour that the body needs most in order to sustain its health. Even when blood causes an ailment, the patient can take it as a good sign. “Mene tokins in spatle,” Daniel explains, are “citrin colour, whit wateri colour, or ells thik and viscows and red colour.” These colours and consistencies indicate a strong malady that is difficult to overcome. But red colour means that this illness “is causid of blod” and is thus the “lest wikke.” Since blood is hot and moist, it can “takyn digestioun” more easily, and works “mith of kynde and of digestioun, ffor principali in hot and moist stant lif” (2.76. fol.126v). Blood can also contribute to the healing process by means of letting, and Daniel instructs his audience which veins are good to let for what reasons. Bloodletting from the “bas veyne” (basilica vein) will heal illnesses of the liver and stomach, pleurisy, and sicknesses of the nutritive members; and bloodletting from the “splene veyne” (splenetica vein) will heal sicknesses of the spleen (2.8. fols.47r-v). Blood heals indirectly and directly: it can indicate to the patient that the illness will not take long to overcome, or it can be let as a means to restore the impaired member to health.  

5 Daniel defines the “nutritive members” of the body as the liver, stomach, spleen, gallbladder, large and small intestines, the peritoneum and greater omentum, mesaraic veins, the colon, and the rectum (London, British Library, MS Egerton 1624, fol.137r).

Analyzing all of these descriptions of blood cannot lead to the certain conclusion that blood is either “bad” or “good,” that it harms the body more than it heals, or that it nourishes the body more than it corrupts. As these manifold descriptions attest, Daniel does not think blood is definitely ‘bad’ or ‘good,’ that it harms the body more than it heals, or that it corrupts the body more than it nourishes. Blood does all of these things. It can act as a sign of a malady or as a sign of strength; it can produce sickness within the body and it can heal such an illness. The status of blood as the “worthiest” humour, Daniel suggests in his treatise, does not restrict its physiological influence to matters of health and nourishment.

The multifaceted influence of blood is important for two reasons. First, it reveals the physiological vocabulary that underlies one of the paradoxes noted by Bynum. Bynum’s study focuses in large part on blood as a symbol of both health and illness; but, as we saw in this section, that dual symbolism is brought about by blood’s physiological properties. Second, this duality can offer a response to critics (usually, as Bynum observes, feminist critics) who have tended to align “good” blood with the male body and “bad” blood with the female body. The physiology of blood, as Daniel presents it, does not support such a contrast. Blood, Daniel explains, can corrupt and/or nourish any body. In the section that follows, I take up the relationship between male and female blood by examining the blood of menstruation, procreation, and nourishment, all of which creates and sustains the foetus. Both male and female blood, we will see, have important roles in the creation of human life.

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7 McCracken, for example, relies on this contrast in The Curse of Eve, the Wound of the Hero. She states in her introduction that literary texts promote a valorization of male blood through the necessary exclusion of female blood in the context of the battlefield. See the “Preface,” x. Though many local analyses are enlightening, the overall argument that male and female blood signified so differently in the Middle Ages is tenuous. Bynum’s reference to studies like these can be found in Wonderful Blood, 9-11.

8 In the following three chapters, I maintain this idea, analyzing the physiological and symbolic valences of blood in literature. Even in literary representations, I argue, this contrast collapses.
1.B: White Blood

To be sure, some aspects of women’s blood were considered utterly disgusting. Daniel explains menstruation as follows:

Ryght as the drestes and the filthe in a vessel drawith and saggith doun into the botteme, or as the filthe in a schepe be awey be the sentyne or fylthe in a kechene owt away be the gotere, right so alle the filthis and corrupcions and vile materis of superfluites in hem, of qwiche them alle arm fowl and gaderid hem togedere kyndely for to han here issu and here passing owt of here body gate (i. be here privy membre) and that vile is here sperme, and here fowle corrupt blood might togedere, caused of superfluites of the 4 humouris commende fro the matrice owt ther I seyde, and stynkith fowle and thei eek quan it comyth from hem.

(2.14. fol. 60r)

The only substances to which Daniel can compare menstruation are other kinds of filth, either in a vessel or in a ship. It is so foul that it can only be understood in relation to other kinds of filthy matter. The nautical vehicles for his double simile (which he develops with terminological precision in referring to menstruation as sentina, literally the bilge of a ship), significantly diverges from his normal comparative practice, which usually draws on agricultural examples—as he does, as shown above, when he likens the relationship between urine and blood to that between whey and milk. The nautical comparison recalls a metaphor familiar to the friar Daniel and to many of his readers, in which the human body and soul are linked to a ship at sea. In Matthew 14: 24-33, Jesus’s disciples are on a ship, *Navicula autem in medio mari iactabatur fluctibus, erat enim contrarius ventus* (“But the ship in the midst of the sea was tossed with the waves, for the wind was contrary”). To ease their minds, Jesus stills the waters and walks across easily, inviting Peter to do so as well. Latin and English writers alike take up this boat metaphor. In sermon 75, Augustine takes the vessel to

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represent the Church, and in *Piers Plowman B*, Langland uses the ship to represent the human body and soul, which, as Haukyn later embodies, can become covered with the filth of sin.\(^\text{10}\) If Daniel draws upon this same tradition stemming from Matthew to discuss menstruation, he suggests that the filth of menstruation may also have a spiritual valence. It is physical filth, but, as the image of the ship suggests, this physical filth is not altogether separate from spiritual filth.

Menstruation is “vile” and “corrupt”; it stinks and causes the woman to stink too—this is certainly not a good kind of blood. Women call menstruation “the flouris,” Daniel explains with a deftly antithetical construction, because “the vileste matere that is, thei yif it the fayrest name” (2.14. fol.60r). If a man has sex with a menstruating woman, he will either die or become leprous; if a child is conceived in the process, it will likewise either die or become leprous. If a bit of menstrual blood were somehow cast onto a dog’s tongue, the dog would go mad. If it were laid “betwen the bark and the body of a newe tre,” the tree would rot and never grow again because menstruation is so “corosyf” and so “venimows” (2.14. fol.60v). Menstrual blood, as Daniel illustrates with such rhetorical vivacity, is the vilest matter there is.

Criticism tends to emphasize the corruption of female blood, and considering Daniel’s description of it above, this is not altogether surprising. This picture of woman’s blood, however, is only a partial one. Menstrual blood corrupts, but it also nourishes. This is

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the substance, after all, that feeds the foetus, sustaining its life and enabling its maturation into a fully formed human being (2.14. fol.61v). As Bynum argues, medical and theological views of menstruation in the Middle Ages were ambivalent: menstrual blood was vile, as Daniel explains, but it was also necessary for reproduction and nourishment.\(^\text{11}\) Women produce other kinds of nourishing blood as well. As Bynum and Joan Cadden have rightly pointed out, all bodily fluids were, in the Middle Ages, considered some form of blood.\(^\text{12}\)

Writing about menstruation and the fluid of breast milk, Daniel explains that women have a vein called the *kineris*, which begins at the liver and branches into two; one goes to the left side of the body while the other goes to the right and both then branch into many more veins. Some of these veins, Daniel states, “gon to the matrice, berende with hem blood to norsching <of the matrice> and also to gendering of the floures.” The others, he continues, go “to the pappis, berende with hem also blood, ther for to makyn it qwyght, and so turneth into mylk and into foode of the child” (2.8. fol.47v). Female blood thus nourishes children in two ways: with corrupt, vile menstrual blood, and with pure, refined breast milk.

Other forms of white blood, shared by both male and female bodies, contribute to the generation and sustenance of physical life. “Sperma,” Daniel states, “is qwyght blood” (2.14. fol.62r). Like breast milk, sperm is blood in a purified state, which gives it its white colour. Within “the mowth of the… matrice,” says Daniel, following Galen “are 2 stonys in colour and in schap lyk the ballockstonys of man, and tho arn callyd *testiculi matricis* and *testiculi mulieris*, ‘the moder ballockstonys.’” These ‘moder ballockstonys’ correspond to

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\(^{11}\) Bynum also notes that menstruation was connected to the pain of childbirth and sin of the fall. See *Wonderful Blood*, 19. My focus here is on medical descriptions of blood, but it is worthwhile to keep in mind that the paradoxes present in medical discourse are not relegated to this type of knowledge.

male testicles in colour and shape but also in function. The “seed of woman” and the “seed of man” pass into the uterus by means of their corresponding testicles, “for to formen and makyn a body of bothe, if the seedes ben able to generacioun” (2.14. fol.61r). Although the *matrice* receives the male seed during intercourse, generation occurs through the mixture of male and female seed, which travel to the *matrice* together. Daniel follows the Galenic model of generation, in which both the male and female produce sperm to contribute to the process, as opposed to the Aristotelian model, in which the female acts only as the passive receptacle of male sperm.\(^{13}\) This is not a model of generation in which the woman provides the matter and the man provides the form; this is a model of generation—and one with substantial authority—that depicts males and females as equally responsible for the creation of matter and form.\(^{14}\)

Both the Aristotelian and Galenic models of generation circulated in medieval medical discourse and Daniel’s preference of the latter displays his learning and his command over his subject matter. He cites Aristotle as a source elsewhere in the treatise, but chooses to teach Galen’s theory of generation, which he deems to be the most accurate. This choice demonstrates the extent of Daniel’s learning because Galen’s work would not have been as accessible as that of Aristotle. To be sure, the main medical universities in medieval

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\(^{13}\) Although both theories circulated in the Middle Ages, Daniel’s choice to follow Galen is not surprising. As Suzanne Conklin Akbari has noted, medieval scientific writers and physicians tended to follow Galen, while literary texts more commonly drew upon Aristotle. See Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2009), 191-2.

\(^{14}\) I stress that this is an authoritative model because there still exists in literary scholarship a tendency to rely on the Aristotelian model of generation to explain medieval theories of generation in general, despite Galen’s very different conceptualization. McCracken, for example, explains medieval generation as Aristotelian generation in *The Curse of Eve, The Wound of the Hero*, 56. This is not an intentional move: she outlines the theories of both Galen and Aristotle, but seems to conflate them. She contends that, in both versions, the father’s seed is the only active participant in procreation. “The son is the father’s,” she argues, “he is a metonymic extension of the father, he shares his father’s blood and the father’s sacrifice makes visible that relationship and the institutions and hierarchies it grounds.” Others have outlined both theories and noted their difference. See, for example, Akbari, *Idols in the East*, 191-2.
Europe (Salerno, Padua, Bologna, Montpellier, and Paris) all used *The Articella*, a compendium of medical treatises that promotes Galen as the ultimate authority.\(^\text{15}\) But there is no evidence to suggest that Daniel ever attended university.\(^\text{16}\) His knowledge of Galen, and his expert ability to compare Galen with Aristotle and prefer the former, implies that he must have had access to a very extensive library, and that he used these books to advance what we would call a more egalitarian and less misogynistic view of procreation. As I argued in the previous chapter, Daniel represents an authoritative medical background and a new, vernacular authority. This new status emerges here as Daniel acts as arbitrator for what material gets to enter his English tradition. Rather than describing both theories and letting his audience determine for themselves which to believe, Daniel, significantly, explains only the theory in which both men and women contribute to the generation of life through the mingling of their white blood.

Males and females are also equally responsible for conception going awry. Two people may not be able to procreate if their sperms “acorde not in kynde of complexioun,” *i.e.* one is too hot and the other too cold; if one person is “over hasty” to give sperm and the other is “over slak”; if the woman releases her seed earlier than the man releases his; or if the seeds pass out of the *matrice* before it can be retained (2.14. fols.61r-v). Both men and women also have veins by their temples that “arn mekyl acordyng in might and in kynde to the ballok stonys.” If these veins bleed, are cut, or are hurt in any way, “be it man, be it woman, he may nevermore gendrin ne consevyn” (2.8. fol.47v). Daniel also refers to sexual intercourse as “that synful craft” (2.14. fol.59v) even when it occurs for the sake of

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\(^{15}\) Information on the location of universities can be found in Thomas F. Glick, Steven Livesy, and Faith Wallis, *Medieval Science, Technology, and Medicine: An Encyclopaedia* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 53-54.

\(^{16}\) This topic is explored more fully by E. Ruth Harvey, Jessica Henderson, and the present author in “Henry Daniel: A Medical and Linguistic Pioneer,” under review at *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*. 
conception, and accordingly underlines sperm’s polluting properties. This picture of stunted conception and polluting sperm is doubly significant. First, in Daniel’s picture, ‘the body’ is both male and female—both men and women have these veins by their temples, and both can ruin the process if their sperm is not released at the proper time or is not of the proper complexion. These details suggest that male sperm and female sperm—and, by extension, blood—is physiologically similar. Second, sperm, like blood more generally, is generative and corrupt, healthful and polluting. There are other kinds of blood within both bodies, but Daniel’s description of the function and implications of generating blood suggest that this white blood, whether for the purpose of reproduction or simply a polluting fluid, works the same way in men and in women.

This similarity is not meant to shed light on an unprecedented, coherent conceptualization of blood. Rather, the point is to show that the dichotomy scholars often establish between male and female blood is inaccurate precisely because there are so many other paradoxes attendant on blood. There is no singular definition of ‘male blood’ or ‘female blood’ in medieval medical discourse, nor is there always a clear cut distinction between them, so they should not be set up in direct opposition.¹⁷ Menstruation may be the vilest matter there is, but there is more to menstrual blood, and to female blood more broadly. Though foul, menstrual blood also nourishes the foetus. Just as blood in general can cause illness or cure it, menstrual blood can corrupt others or nourish them. Some blood within the female body turns into breast milk, adding another layer to the nourishing role of female blood. Other aspects of female blood function in the same way as blood in the body of a male: both females and males contain sperm created from blood, and in both females

¹⁷ I focus mainly on the various kinds of female blood in this chapter, but, as Bynum points out, medieval ideas on male blood are equally ambiguous. See Wonderful Blood, 271, n. 114.
and males such purified blood can create human life or corrupt it. It is not enough, then, to
equate female blood with menstruation because there is more to it, and because much female
blood fulfils the same physiological role as male blood. Female blood is not just vile
menstruation; it is also nourishing menstruation, feeding milk, and life-giving sperm.

The life created by the mixture of these two white bloods is the embryo. “Embrio,”
Daniel states, “is the seed of the male and female fro the tyme that it is conseyyvd and
closyd in the matrice tyl the sowle is yove therto” (2.14. fol.61v). An embryo cannot be
considered more than a seed until it gains a soul: the life created through procreation is only
physical and thus incomplete; the acquisition of the soul will complete the process. It is not
entirely clear at what point during the growth of the foetus the embryo attains its soul.
Daniel offers some information from various sources, but none are particularly enlightening.
Aristotle, along the same lines as Leviticus, claimed a male “hath al hys forme and lyf”
(2.14. fol.63r) after 40 days. Saint Augustine stated in a letter to Jerome that “the ferste 6
days that it is conseyyvd it is cruddyd mylk, 9 days after that it is blood; 12 days after that a
sad body; than in the 18 day after it is a forme into alle the membres of the body that it schal
han; in alle the remenaunt into the tyme of birthe” (2.14. fol.63r). Although neither of these
authorities clarifies the precise moment at which an embryo receives its soul, they agree on
one crucial point: only the presence of the soul within a physical body can create a fully
living being. The subsequent section examines blood’s role in creating and sustaining this
vital aspect of life, the spirit and the soul.
In medieval thought, spiritual life and physical life are not entirely separate, but rather two inextricable components of a human being. The liver is one of the first things Daniel defines in the *Liber Uricrisiarum* because it is the foundation of so much else. “And understonde,” says Daniel, “that *massa sanguinis* is not ellis but a collectioun (*i.a* gaderyng togedre) of the 4 humores, and that is *epar*, the lyver; for epar is nothing but *sanguis coagulatus*, ‘blood cruddede togedre’” (1.2. fol.1v). The liver, as Daniel presents it, is composed of blood; and, it also generates blood. In the liver, Daniel explains, “arn the humores caused and wroght” (1.2. fol.1v). All veins start at the liver, and the liver “divisith and depurith the clere [blood] fro the thykke, and the clene fro the unclene, and kepith to himself his owene foode of the blood; for <his> kynde nursching and fedyng is clene blood, for himself is not but blood… and that is the skil that Epar is calle *fons sanguinis*, ‘the welle and the spring of blood’” (1.4. fols.3v-4r). Once dividing the thick blood from the clear blood, and the unclean from the clean, the liver sends the blood “abowtyn to every partye that <that> longith to him” (1.4. fol.5r). Given the role of the liver to purify and divide the blood in addition to its very composition, Daniel states that “uppyn the helthe of the lyvere is the helthe of the blood, and uppyn the helthe of the blood is the helthe of the body” (1.4. fol.4r). Blood, as I showed in section one, can cause local illnesses, but here it is chiefly and explicitly responsible for all health: if the blood is healthy, the whole body is healthy; and, the blood is healthy only if the liver is healthy.
Blood and the liver are intricately linked in Daniel’s description of the body. The liver is composed of blood and called the well of blood; and, it is also the organ from which all the veins originate. When Daniel discusses the kineris vein in women, he explains that it “begynneth at the lyvere, as alle veynes don” (2.8. fol.47r, my emphasis). Veins branch off into different directions and serve different parts of the body, but they all have the same foundation in the liver. It is at this point important to remember that, at the time Daniel is writing, the concept of circulation had not yet developed. Galen and Avicenna had a sense of blood moving throughout the body to various organs, but not of the heart pumping to cause circulation. Daniel, following Galen and Avicenna, knew about veins and arteries. He knew that they carried blood throughout the body, but they also carried food and urine and, as we will see later, spiritus. Circulation as we know it today would not be described in detail until William Harvey’s De Motu Cordis in 1628. So when Daniel outlines various veins and arteries in the body, there is no sense that they facilitate circulation per se; nevertheless, they do carry blood from the liver to the body’s other members.

It is necessary, Daniel believes, to understand the distinction between veins and arteries:

Be thinges that ben seyd before it semith wel qwat arteriis ben and alle the deference atwen arteriis and veynes, for every arterie is a veyne but not ayenward; of arteriis is seyd sufficiently for to understonde; vene, a veyne, is seyd of viema as via, ‘a weye of blood’; for veynes arn wyues of blood and the places of blood, and the goteres of blood and the vesselis of blood. Also it

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are called *viema, i. vase ema* or *vasa sanguinis*, ‘the vesselis of blood,’ for
licour is consevyed in vesselis, so is blood in the veynes.
(2.9. fols.49v-50r)

Every artery is a vein, but every vein is not an artery: veins are special vessels that carry
blood. Arteries, Daniel explains earlier, draw air: “Arterie, the arteriis, as Galyen seyth in his
book of *Anathomyes*, arn certeyn veynys be qwych the hert is tyed and knet to the lunges
and drawith to hym eyre by the pypys of the lunges” (2.1. fol.33r). The concept of the
arteries, as this passage suggests, had not yet been available to an English audience, but
Daniel brings it into the vernacular: the specialized knowledge of the Roman past becomes,
in Daniel’s treatise, both specialized and accessible at once, and he uses Galen’s lofty name
to elevate the authority of his new work. The distinction between veins and arteries dovetails
with another distinction—between the spiritual members and all the other members of the
body. Arteries make it possible for “the spiritual membrers [to] drawen to hem eyre and here
refressching, and here spiritus be the pipys of the lunges and by the herte strynges… And
tho arteries passyn forth to othere partyes of the body there the pownces ben, be ful sotyl
and ful smale weyes and passis, and tho arn the veynis in the wrystes and arn callyd the
pounces veynes” (2.1. fol.33r). In addition to carrying blood, these special vessels also draw
air into the spiritual members of the body and help to create the pulse. They make life
detectable in a human body.

Spiritual members include the heart, lungs, windpipe, and epiglottis. “And thei ben
called the spiritual membrers,” Daniel explains, “because of spirit, i. of wynd and lyf” (2.12.
fol.54v). The word “spirit” here is clearly not the equivalent of “soul.” For Daniel, the spirit
is instead a material substance comprised of air and “lyf,” a mysterious ingredient
transmitted in generation that Daniel and his sources seem unable to identify. The spiritual
members are not “spiritual” in the modern sense of the word, insofar as they do not refer to anything preternatural; they are spiritual because they involve the movement of the element air, the wind within the body, as well as this curious spark of life. The liver is not a spiritual member, but a nutritive one—it nourishes the body physically, but is not responsible for producing or carrying air. The liver is still related to and has an effect on the spiritual members of the body: it is the well of the blood, and *spiritus* travels with the blood through the body. For this reason, the effect of the liver on the blood will extend to the *spiritus* as well. For example, “bloheed” will appear in the urine when vile matter corrupts the liver, which in turn corrupts the blood, which in turn corrupts the *spiritus* (2.13. fol.58r).

Moreover, one type of dropsy is formed when the liver is too hot and too moist, because this excess heat and moisture causes the *spiritus* to “dwynen and feynten and fadyn” (2.16. fol.69r). The liver is not a spiritual member, but its close relationship to the blood creates a connection to the *spiritus* that is not typical of a nutritive member. The liver is categorized as nutritive, but it also exerts force on the spiritual members through its close relation to blood and *spiritus*.

2. B. Spirit and Soul

Daniel extends his description of the liver by turning to one of his sources: Gilbertus Anglicus, in his commentary on Gilles de Corbeil’s *De urinis*. According to Gilbert, says Daniel, “ther are 2 principal membris of life in man, and on that is the formal membre of life, and that is *cor*… Another is callyd ‘the material membre of life,’ *epar*” (2.49).
The heart is the “formal member” because of its natural heat, and the liver is the “material member” because of its natural “humidite norschend the lyfe” (2.49. fol.107r). The heart and the liver cannot be classed in the same category, but together they are the two principle members of life, “for in hete and in moyste stant the lyf of <all that is vegetable, i. of all that bredyth, wexeth or springeth>” (2.49. fol.107r). Daniel does not openly disagree with his source on this issue, but he does revise Gilbert’s idea that the life of all creatures is determined by the natural heat of the heart and the natural moisture of the liver. Rather than confirming Gilbert’s argument, Daniel states earlier: “in the helthe of the lyvere is the helthe of the blood, and in the helthe of the blood is the stat of lyf prinspally” (2.1. fol.33v). The liver still has a very clear and important role in Daniel’s version of the “stat of lyf prinspally,” but it is rather the blood that determines this overarching state. It is precisely blood’s connection to both principle members—one spiritual, one nutritive—that affords it this privileged role in the body. Life is determined by both spiritual and nutritive members, and blood provides a connection between them and carries out their functions. For Daniel, it is not the members themselves, but the blood that ties them that determines the overall state of life.

Daniel uses the word “spiritual,” as I’ve noted already, to mean something that involves the corporeal *spiritus*. But in stating that the condition of “lyf prinspally” stands in the blood, he conceives of “lyf” in terms both physical and spiritual (in its modern meaning): life includes, for Daniel, both physical and spiritual existence. As I noted earlier, Daniel explains that an embryo remains an embryo until the soul enters the foetus (2.14. fol.61v). Only when the foetus receives the soul can it be considered a “life.” Life, for

\[20\] See Gilles de Corbeil, *De urinis et pulsibus* (Venetijs : Mandato [et] impensis heredum ... Octauiani Scoti ... [et] sociorum munera summa diligentia impressi ... per Georgium Arriabenum[m], 1414 [i.e. 1514]), 7r.
Daniel, is thus physical and spiritual in the sense that it only begins when the growing embryo receives a soul. The problem with this theory is that nobody seems to know exactly when this ensoulment occurs.\footnote{The problem is addressed and taken up in detail in E. Ruth Harvey, *The Inward Wits: Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1975. Also, cf. p. 74 of the present chapter.) Daniel insists that the soul is integral to human life even though he cannot explain it in precise detail. The inclusion of this detail speaks to its importance because Daniel clearly feels it must be incorporated regardless of whether or not he is able to provide a singular authoritative account of it. He presents his readers with all of the information he has and leaves the issue of ensoulment open-ended: the soul confirms human life, but medical authorities have not yet figured out when this confirmation occurs. This open-endedness is in stark contrast to Daniel’s treatment of Galenic and Aristotelian ideas of conception, where he clearly knew both theories but chose to write down only one. Here, the reading Daniel has done has proved insufficient. He cannot choose one source as an authority because there is too much disagreement and he cannot determine which, if any, offers the correct explanation. Leaving this idea open-ended suggests that Daniel himself was not quite finished with it, and still had plans to revise this part once he found the answer he was looking for.\footnote{E. Ruth Harvey has made the salient observation that Daniel’s tendency toward self-revision is strikingly similar to that of Langland. In the previous chapter, I discuss more fully the extent to which this also points to a relationship with Chaucer, as Ralph Hanna III suggested in *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and Their Texts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 175-6.} This detail is thus a clear example of Daniel’s impulse toward constant revision, an impulse which demonstrates his distinct style.

Another particular problem with the soul in the medieval imagination is observed by Bynum. As non-material, she explains, the soul could not have a single physical location in the body, and yet it had to exist within the body. It thus had to exist “whole in every part, by
a kind of concomitance.” Despite this quasi-concomitance and the impossibility of confining the soul to a physical location, Bynum continues, medieval theological writers like Bonaventure, Gabriel Biel, and Thomas Aquinas considered blood to either carry the soul or be the seat of the soul. This characterization of the soul extends to medieval medical writers as well; Daniel maintains that the *spiritus* is carried by blood and is not synonymous with the soul. For him, the principal location of the soul is not the blood, but the brain. Daniel states:

> Of the membris of lyf, the cerebre is ferst and principal, and for this skyl: for thowgh it so be that the sowle, qwiche is lyf and myght and vertu of alle the body, and be overal the body, in every party of the body aliche and at onys--for as wel is thi sowle in thi too <A: litel fyngere end> as in ony other party of thi body--and notforthan for as mekyl as thi sowle hath more and hauntith more his principal myghtes and vertu and werkynges more in sum place than in sum: ymaginacioun and resoun <and> mynde in the cerebre, therfore we seyn that the sowle is principali in the cerebre.

(2.41. fol.103r)

Daniel confirms Bynum’s statement that the soul had to be present in every part of the body all at once (“the sowle… be overal the body, in every party of the body aliche and at onys”), but complicates it by insisting that the soul’s impact on imagination and reason means that, at the same time that it is present throughout the body, its principal location must be the brain.

Daniel joins the tradition of medical, rather than theological writers, in having blood carry only *spiritus*, and in carefully distinguishing *spiritus*, the corporeal matter that is fueled by air within the body, the air that is needed to motivate breath, to establish the pulse, and to confirm life, from the soul. Writing about these two separate elements of the body—

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23 See Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 162. This problem is also noted by Harvey. See *The Inward Wits*, 31. I consider this problem in more detail in Chapter Three, “Anim a carnis in sanguine est: Blood, Life, and The King of Tars.”
the material *spiritus* and the non-material soul—Daniel draws upon the theories first outlined by Costa ben Luca (Quasta ibn Luqa) of Baalbek, a ninth-century physician whose treatise on the distinction between the spirit and the soul was translated by Johannes Hispalensis into Latin in the twelfth century. E. Ruth Harvey states that this treatise was “used frequently” by medical writers in the medieval west, in part because it was often attributed—erroneously—to Constantine the African, one of the most prolific and influential medical writers of the Middle Ages. Whether the treatise circulated widely because of this misattribution or not, it was nevertheless a very influential text. The main difference between the spirit and the soul, in Costa ben Luca’s formulation, is that the spirit is a substance while the soul is incorporeal. Daniel’s vernacular version of this thus holds that the spirit can be carried throughout the body, but the soul cannot. Moreover, since the spirit is corporeal, it dies when the body dies, while the soul, as incorporeal, cannot die. The soul is the “first and most distant cause” of sense and motion within the body; it creates sense and motion only through the spirit, which acts as a mediator between body and soul. Although Bynum is quite right to point out that the soul, as non-material, could not have a precise physical location within the body, her study covers only theological writers and conflates the spirit and the soul, a distinction about which medieval medical writers cared deeply.

Daniel’s ideas about the workings of the soul are also influenced by Avicenna who, like Costa ben Luca, was following Galen and Aristotle. As Harvey explains, Avicenna

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25 The work of Costa ben Luca was erroneously attributed to Constantine the African because, Harvey explains, the name “Costa” was misread as an abbreviation for ‘Consta[ntinus].’ See Harvey, *The Inward Wits*, 70, n. 120.

26 These distinctions are all explained in greater detail by Harvey, *The Inward Wits*, 37-39.
builds on Aristotle’s theory of the soul by rejecting the idea that the sensitive faculties are located in the heart. And, whereas Costa ben Luca believed that the soul consisted of the five external senses, voluntary motion, and phantasia, Avicenna insists that it comprises both the five internal senses and the five external senses.⁷ Daniel, while clearly indebted to both Costa ben Luca and Avicenna for his conceptualization of the soul and the distinction between the spirit and the soul, is more focused on explaining precisely how the spirit and soul operate, as opposed to what they are. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Daniel’s intellectual priorities centre on these kinds of pragmatic, operative details, ensuring that his readers understand not just a definition of a particular organ or concept, but also its function and means of operation. He only determines that the primary location of the soul, if it is to have one, must be in the brain because of his knowledge of how the soul works. Although the soul must be everywhere in the body, Daniel explains that, “ymaginacioun and resoun <and> mynde in the cerebre, therfore we seyn that the sowle is principali in the cerebre” (2.41. fol.103r).²⁸ He explains further the operation of the brain and its three cells:

alther first is the ymaginatyf, that perseyvith and takith thinges from withowteward be the instrumentes of the 5 wittes, i. be the eynen, be the eres, nase, swalwgh, and be felyng; and anon in a thowt he berith tho þinges so perseyvyd and consevyyd fro withowteward be certeyn senewys that arn callid nervy sensibles (of qwich I spak of in blo colour 9 co) to the sowle, and tellith and schewith to the sowle tho maner thinges, and than anon the sowle throwith hem {116: drawith him} to his principal see and place, and to the racionatyf, for ther is his principal see and dwellyng place of the hed; and he is as kyng, or a mayster, or a justise, or a domysman, in his see of dom, studieth and avysith and demith of tho þinges, and of tho poyntes that beforn were fantasied and ymaginyd and cast, and that fantasyk so bringith to him

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²⁸ Daniel, following Galen and quoting him as his source, attests that there are three compartments of the brain, “The 1 is callis ‘ymaginatife,’ the 2 <‘rationatyf’>, and the 3. ‘memoratyf’ (2.41. fol.103r-v).
for to demyn and for to yevyn disposition of qwether it be onest, good or
wikke to don or to levyn, or to qwat ende; and thus demith and juggith the
sowle, resoun beande his assensour, fantastik purposing the cause and the
thinges. Than after al this, quan the sowle hath thus juggid and dempt tho
thinges and the poynites that arn for to kepyn and to don, the sowle sendith
hem forth to the memoratyf, and ther he put hem up and leyth hem up as in
stor, and than if it so be that that party of the hed be wel proporciounyd in his
forseyd qualites, tho thinges arn wel kepid an long tyme, as in good stor, and
thei comyn at nede quan on wele, and elles not.

(2.41. fol.104r)

The three cells of the brain all work with the soul to perceive and store sensory experience, a
symbiotic relationship that causes Daniel to locate the soul in the brain even though the soul
lacks material body.

The soul thus operates very differently from the spirit. The spirit travels throughout
the body to establish and confirm breathing and the pulse, and, as Daniel says, the \textit{spiritus} is
the matter \textit{“qwos myght and vertu is caused the mevyng and stering and the lyghtsumnesse
and the myght of alle the membris and places and lymes in the body”} (2.21. fol.80v). The
incorporeal soul dictates how the spirit can operate in the first place, how this moving and
stirring will occur. Through the mediation of the spirit, the soul affects the senses and
motions of the body. It also works with the spirit to affect the passions:

Be this woord \textquoteleft ire\textquoteright understood every maner of passioun in sowle, as wrathe,
hate, sorwe, care, noye, tene, thowt, stodie, dred, and swich othere thingis; for in every swich passioun kynde hethe and the spiritus in the blood arn
calefact \textit{(i. chawfid)}, or fro withinneforth or fro withoutward or ellis bothen.
And also the herte is calefact, and than is al the blood in the body mevyd and
chaungyd and distempered; and because therof alle the humouris in the body,
and so the uryn latchith a depheed in colour.

(1.12. fol.22r)

Daniel is writing uroscopy, after all, and so he gives this description of the passions of the
soul, the spirit, and blood only because it is a necessary step toward understanding how
urine attains a deep colour. Daniel’s need to provide such detailed explanations offers, in
turn, the opportunity to clarify the workings of the soul. All of the passions of the soul are affected by the *spiritus* and by blood: each passion is established through the heat and enflaming of the *spiritus*, the blood, and the heart. Similarly, Daniel continues, “Be this woord ‘care’ understond travayle and besines in sowle, as I seide in this woord ire, for besinesse and travayle sterin the blood, and the humouris in the body arn alle disturbelyd withinne; and because therof the body takyth (*i.* the mor hygh in colour)” (1.14. fol.25r).

The soul can move the blood and the *spiritus*, which govern the state of the body as a whole. As Daniel had suggested earlier, the state of the blood is the state of life principally. The soul thus affects the entire body by first moving the blood and *spiritus*.

For Daniel, there is a clear relationship, if not an identity, among the spirit, soul, and blood. The soul, which indirectly dictates how the body will respond to sensory experience, motion, and the passions, can only act on the body by means of moving the *spiritus* and the blood, but it is the *spiritus* and the blood that act on the body directly. The soul may not have a physical existence, but it influences the physiological makeup of the body through the *spiritus* and blood. In this sense, blood is indeed the seat of the soul: it is the means through which the non-physical soul can affect the physical body.

III: Blood, Soul, Life

The following chapters show that medieval literary texts conceive of physical and spiritual life as inextricable. For Daniel, who shares this mindset, an embryo does not become a living human until it receives a soul: physical life cannot actually be created until spiritual life has also begun. The relationship between physical and spiritual life is properly reciprocal: physical life relies on spiritual life, but the soul can only affect a human being
through the physical body of *spiritus* and blood. The problem articulated by Bynum that the soul, lacking materiality, must be present throughout the entire body all at once, is only part of the problem with the relationship between body and soul.  

How can the soul, which does not have a corporeal existence, exert force on the physical body? The necessary link between the body and the soul is provided by the *spiritus*—fuelled by the air within the body that confirms breathing and the pulse—and the blood—the substance which determines the state of life principally. When Daniel refers to “the stat of lyf prinspally,” he thus refers to a life that is both physical and spiritual, both body and soul: the body can only be animated when it possesses a soul, and the soul can only affect the body through a corporeal mediator. The blood, often with the *spiritus*, is the means through which the body and soul become linked; it is the vital connection between the two facets of life, and it determines the state of human life, physical and spiritual.

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29 There are, of course, numerous issues related to the relationship between body and soul in medieval thought that are not addressed in this chapter. For an overview of some of these issues, see Danijela Kambaskovic, ed. *Conjunctions of Mind, Soul, and Body from Plato to the Enlightenment* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2014); for an overview of the physiological aspects of these issues, see Manfred Horstmannhoff, Helen King, and Claus Zittel, ed. *Blood, Sweat, and Tears: Changing Concepts of Physiology from Antiquity into Early Modern Europe* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012); and, for an outline of the different attitudes of medieval authorities toward the soul, see Harvey, *The Inward Wits*. 
Chapter Three

Anima carnis in sanguine est: Blood, Life, and The King of Tars

After witnessing the baptism of his son, in which the boy miraculously metamorphoses from a formless lump of flesh into a living child, the Sultan in the Middle English romance *The King of Tars* (ca. 1333) decides that his wife’s Christian God is the true Father of all; spurred by this revelatory perception, the formerly Saracen Sultan is, in turn, baptized. Now that he is also a devout Christian, this Sultan, the ruler of Damascus, rushes to tell his father-in-law, the titular king, the entire case of his conversion. As the narrator reports, the Sultan plans to inform the king:

Hou þe child ded born was  
A misforschapen þing;  
& þurth þe preier of his wiif  
Hou God hadde sent it leme & liif  
In water ate cristening;  
& hou þat heþen soudan  
Was bicone a Cristen man.  

(977-983)\(^1\)

In the narrator’s account, Christianity, which sends “liif” to the Sultan’s son, is a metamorphic force that plays a vital role in determining the categorization of the living and the dead. Like the son, the Sultan is equally given new life through Christian baptism, metamorphosing from “heþen” to Christian. With these dual (re)vitalizations, the narrator demonstrates a link between what we might call religious and biological categorization, which the poem identifies and develops through representations of transformative miracles.

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\(^1\) This and all subsequent quotations are from *The King of Tars*, ed. Judith Perryman (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1980) for Middle English Texts, gen. ed. M. Görlach, hereafter cited parenthetically by line number.
In this chapter I elucidate the implications of this link and these transformations in relation to medical discourse and the question of individual identity.

For the author of *The King of Tars*, religion is figured chiefly in terms of presence and absence, and is determined according to either the belief in, or ignorance of, Christ. Within this framework the Sultan is thus a “Sarazin” not because he follows any written doctrine, but because he lacks knowledge of Christ. What I will call biology is figured in terms of what medieval medical authors would call “properties.” This term is famously used, for instance, by John Trevisa in his translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus’s *De proprietatibus rerum*, the fourth book of which, as Trevisa explains, contains information on the body’s internal composition: “To trete of þe propirtees of mannes body and of þe parties þeroft, we schul first biginne to trete of þe qualitees of þe elementis and of þe humoures of whiche þe body is maad” (4.129).2 These elements and the humours are only a starting point for understanding the body’s properties: Trevisa introduces book five by turning from the body’s inner composition to its outer features. “For we haue ispoken of þe propirtees of humoures,” Bartholomaeus explains, “now it falliþ to speke somwhat of þe disposicioun of membres þat ben imaad and componed of þe forseid humours” (5.163). The role of the humours can only be fully understood once one also learns what they comprise; and, consequently, the “propertees” of the body can only be fully understood once one considers its members in addition to its humoural composition. For Trevisa in particular and the body of medieval knowledge he represents, the properties of the human body—what we now call biology—are both internal and external.

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These internal and external qualities are depicted in *The King of Tars* through the poem’s focus on fleshly form. As I will argue in greater detail below, the form of the body is conceived in the poem in terms of inner and outer attributes: of blood and bone as well as facial features and limbs. The poem thus imagines the concept of bodily “form” in the same way that Trevisa imagines the composition and role of bodily “properties.” In addition to this focus on form, the poem also describes the body through sensory experience. When the Princess leaves Tars to marry the Sultan of Damascus, for example, her parents, the King and Queen of Tars, “chaunged boþe hide & hewe/ For sorwe & reweli chere” (371-2). This change indicates that the properties of the physical body, its form, are subject to alteration. Other bodily metamorphoses—most notably, of the lump from “flesche” to boy and of the Sultan from black to white—permeate the poem. I demonstrate that these changes inform the poem’s conceptualization of the body and its “propertees,” and argue that experience in *The King of Tars* has a direct influence on fleshly, material being: bodily metamorphoses comprise the poem’s discourse of “biology.” My understanding of what constitutes “biological” registers the body’s inner and outer form as well as its relation and susceptibility to metamorphosis.

The few scholars who have worked on *The King of Tars* have provided compelling analyses of the poem’s portrayal of identity, both physical and religious. Siobhain Bly Calkin, for example, has persuasively argued that the lump evades cultural and religious categorization even as it displays the monstrous consequence of accomplishing such an evasion.\(^3\) The lump’s formlessness, for Calkin, means that it can be identified neither as

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Saracen nor Christian. Following the critical prompt of Jane Gilbert, Calkin and others have accordingly and rightly noted a connection in the poem between religion and biology: both are factors in the generation of life. If the poem encodes these discourses of religion and biology, the formless lump of flesh is the figure through which these discourses—seemingly divergent from the perspective of modern scholars, but linked in medieval thought—merge.

I argue in this chapter that the link between biology and religion is articulated by a vocabulary of blood that the poem shares with medieval medical discourse. My argument is divided into four sections. In the first, I develop a clear relationship between The King of Tars and the late fourteenth-century Liber Uricrisiarum by Dominican friar, Henry Daniel. The King of Tars predates Daniel’s work, but the two writers are connected in their shared discussion of a particular bodily phenomenon: the mola, also called, according to Daniel, a wunderlumpe or an elvysch cake, which are dense pieces of flesh that can sometimes be formed in a woman’s uterus, causing her to think and feel that she is pregnant. Daniel’s naming of this “elvish” phenomenon, I argue, establishes a discursive framework through which to reconsider the symbolic valences of the “misforschapen þing” in The King of Tars.

In the subsequent section, I show that the discourse shared between the poem and medicine is, specifically, a discourse of blood. The third part then develops the religious ramifications of the poem’s sanguine vocabulary, explaining its connection to the Eucharist and ultimately contending that blood is not only the nexus of physical and spiritual life in

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the poem, but also of medical and religious discourse. In the final section, I position *The King of Tars* within its manuscript context to argue that the specialized language in the poem is significant to the poem’s representations of biology and religion, and also to medieval English vernacularity more broadly. These arguments have a twofold significance for contemporary scholarship: in showing the confluence of medical and literary discourses, this chapter elucidates both an overlooked medical pioneer and an under-examined medieval poem. My point is not that the author of *The King of Tars* was an accomplished reader of medicine, but rather that the specialized, medical vocabulary of blood is germane to representations of blood in the poem. The language in *The King of Tars* is not especially sophisticated; instead, the poem demonstrates the ways in which a conventionally erudite vocabulary is rendered plainly.

I. Medical Discourses of Blood: Henry Daniel

The formless piece of flesh that is born of the Christian Princess of Tars evades religious categorization because it is entirely unidentifiable as a living being. Likened to “þe ston” three times in the poem (“ded as þe ston” (585); “stille as ston” (639); “stille so ston” (662)), the lump of flesh is both formless and lifeless. The notion of giving birth to an inanimate lump of flesh finds its biological corollary in medieval medical treatises, such as Aristotle’s *Generation of Animals*, as well as specifically gynaecological treatises, such as pseudo-Albertus Magnus’s *De secretis mulierum* and Soranus of Ephesus’s *Gynaecology*. These treatises all call such lumps *mola*, or “moles,” dense pieces of flesh that can be formed in the place of a foetus, causing a woman to think and feel that she is pregnant. In his exposition on identifying and treating female bodily ailments, *De secretis mulierum*, pseudo-Albertus
Magnus explains that these masses of flesh are formed in a woman’s body when she is unable to conceive. When her own seed cannot be emitted from her womb either because she has not been sexually active as frequently as she desires or because her womb has a small opening, the seed builds up inside her and forms a corrupt mass of flesh.\(^5\) Soranus of Ephesus, by contrast, explains *mola* in the context of pains women can experience that are related to, but not necessarily products of, pregnancy. These kinds of false pregnancies at first appear, Soranus maintains, just like a normal prenatal period: the woman’s breasts swell and her menses stop. These routine experiences are then followed by uncontrollable swelling and sharp, stabbing pains in the uterus that occur even when the woman is not in motion. Finally, in some cases, a “dense piece of flesh about the size of a nut grows through the vagina,” usually after one, two, or three months of this painful labour.\(^6\)

For Aristotle, *mola* are caused generally by a weakness of heat, creating an undercooked mass. Women suffering from this condition, *mola uteri*, may endure it and believe they are pregnant for three to four years, or even well into old age. When *mola* are finally discharged, they are “so hard that it is difficult to cut them in two even by means of an iron edge.” A *mole*, then, never develops into a full foetus: “in its nature,” Aristotle explains, “it is neither a finished product nor yet something wholly alien.” It borders on the human, Aristotle here suggests, but never fully becomes human. Although a woman carrying a *mole* “thinks she has conceived,” conception has not actually occurred. Unlike other

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gestational problems, such as miscarriages or premature births, *mola* are not the result of a pregnancy gone wrong; they are not even the result of pregnancy at all.

This medical explanation of *mola* is codified and complicated by Henry Daniel in book two of the *Liber Uricrisiarum*. As the first medical figure to write encyclopaedic medicine in English, Daniel is representative of both the authoritative medieval medical tradition and of a developing, specifically vernacular medical discourse. Daniel participates in the existing, authoritative medical tradition as he, citing Aristotle as his source, describes a malady called “*mola matricis* or *molos matricis*, the ‘moderis bagge,’” also called, he states, “*frustrum monstruosum*, ‘the wunder gubbe’, ‘the wunder gobet’, ‘the wunderlumpe’.”

Daniel’s explication of this malady recapitulates and diverges from the account of his source. Like Aristotle (and, indeed, like pseudo-Albertus and Soranus), Daniel asserts that all the usual signs of pregnancy, such as the increased size of the womb, are also shown in the body of a woman carrying a *wunderlumpe* in her womb. Unlike his source, however, Daniel explains in more specific detail the conditions through which a *wunderlumpe* can be created. First, he states that the *wunderlumpe* can be generated when the woman does not emit seed at the same time as the man during intercourse. Second, and more significantly, Daniel explains that a *wunderlumpe* can still be the product of sexual intercourse involving both the female and male seed. A *wunderlumpe* can be created, he argues, when conception does in fact occur, but the woman is driven to such sorrow or anger that she loses her disposition, causing “it” to be “disposyd to” (2.14.fol. 64v). In either case, a great gob of flesh, a *wunderlumpe*, may grow inside women’s bodies, “and thanne thei wexen grete as thei wern with childe, and many wenyn it wern so” (2.14.fol. 64v).

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thus connects himself to and extends the existing medical tradition by presenting a shared idea that a *mole* or, in English, a *wunderlumpe*, is not quite a botched birth. He amplifies this tradition by arguing that conception might have occurred initially, but a foetus was never actually formed. Women who generate a *frustrum monstruosum*, a *wunderlumpe*, are never truly pregnant with a growing, living body.

Daniel exemplifies his point about pregnancy and a *wunderlumpe* with two case studies. The first, Daniel explains, he initially learned from Aristotle. This authoritative source, according to Daniel, heard of a woman in his own day who:

> wende a ben with childe be a man; here wombe wix and alle the toknys that shulde ben; at tyme not childid ne wombe lessid, but sche was so 3 yere, and at the laste sche was delyvered of a gobet of flesch so sad that anethis it myghte be brokyn with an instrument of iren; and that was *mola matricis* and *frustrum monstruosum*.

(2.14. fol. 64v-65r)

Thinking that she was pregnant since her uterus expanded and all other signs (whatever they may be) were also apparent, this unfortunate woman went on for three years in a state of supposed pregnancy. When she finally did “give birth,” however, all she produced was a *mole*, a *wunderlumpe*. The other woman Daniel cites as having carried such a lump was sixty years old and experienced an alleged twenty-three year gestation period. According to Daniel, both women believed, and indeed had good reason to believe, that they were pregnant; neither one, however, gave birth to a living child. Instead, they were both only pregnant with an inanimate *wunderlumpe*.

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8 Daniel’s account of this second case is confusing. It is appended to the end of the first case history, suggesting that it is another example of the same condition; but, the wording is difficult to follow. He claims that, in an accident, “here body overqwalmyd and overturmyd and nerhande in a swonyng” so violently that, “yit sche told non hurte ne non harme to the syght, wel sche knew that sche hadde consevyd ful late beforn” (2.14. fol. 65v). Daniel seems to say that the outer signs on the woman’s body indicate that she was in fact suffering labour induced by a *wunderlumpe*. 

Daniel’s translation of *frustrum monstruosum* merits detailed analysis: his vernacular rendering of this Latin phrase assigns a wondrous significance to an inanimate thing. The literal translation of *frustrum monstruosum*—that is, *frustum monstruosum*, as Daniel had likely intended—is a “monstrous piece” or a “monstrous bit.” *Monstruosum* translates from Latin simply as “monstrous” or “strange.” Rather than providing this literal meaning, however, Daniel teaches his readers that the hard, inanimate lump that can sometimes be born of a woman is a sign of wonder. Daniel develops this element of wonder by explicitly evoking the supernatural quality of this fleshly lump. In addition to calling this gob of flesh a *wunderlumpe*, Daniel also claims that it is “callyn the elvysch kechil or the elvysch cake” (2.14. fol. 60v). “Elf” can refer to a growth in or on the body, and so a *mole* might indeed have been called *elvysch* in Middle English. But the earliest noted uses of the phrase “elf cake” or “elf kechel” in the *MED* are recorded as “euyll cake” (which looks suspiciously like “evil cake”) and “vluekecche,” respectively, both from medical recipe books written ca. 1450. Both citations seem to acknowledge the *elvysch cake* as a medical concept, but in neither text is it entirely clear whether or not the precise phrase is actually used. The *OED* dates the phrase “elf-cake” to the sixteenth century, defining it as an “enlargement of the

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9 Daniel’s “frustrum” is likely a scribal error caused by the confusion of minims.

10 C.f. Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998). According to these scholars, objects of wonder and wondrous passions marked the limits of both the natural and the known in premodern Europe. To be sure, their trajectory of changing notions of wonder from the High Middle Ages to the Enlightenment necessarily draws inaccurate historical assumptions. Nevertheless, I share their idea that an object of wonder marked the boundary between what is known and unknown in the European premodern world.

11 *MED* sv. “cake”: 3. (b) a pathological mass or growth within the body [cp. elf], “For the moder of the euyll cake, take an onyon and kytt owt the myddyll” (188/588) “Medical Recipes,” c. 1450; “kechel”: 2. (b)? elve kechel, an enlargement of the spleen [cp. elf cake], “Oyle benoyt… is good for þepostem in þe mylte, þat men clepyn vluekecche [read: ?kecchel]” (89/11) “Medical Recipes in Stockholm, Royal Library 10.90,” ?c.1450. *OED* sv. “elf-cake”: Lupton, “The hardnes of the syde, called the Elfe cake.”
spleen attributed to the agency of elves.”

Writing nearly one hundred years prior to the composition of these medical recipe books and two hundred prior to this sixteenth-century text, Daniel may be the first to write this phrase down in English. For Daniel, moreover, *elvysch cake* is synonymous with *wunderlumpe* and thus has meaning beyond that provided by the MED of a bodily mass. If this *wunderlumpe* is *elvysch*, it is *elvysch* not just because it takes the form of a bodily growth, but because—like an elf—it is supernatural, capable of inspiring wonder. More elf-like than human-like, this kind of flesh is a specifically *elvysch* mass, and as such, it transcends signification in the natural world.

The argument that a *wunderlumpe* is beyond earthly signification is supported by the lexicographic work of Richard Firth Green, who has persuasively argued that, when Chaucer uses the term *elvysch* in the *Thopas*-prologue and *The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale*, the poet really does mean “elf-like.” Although most editions of Chaucer’s works gloss the term as “strange” or “weird,” Green attests that Chaucer explicitly evokes fairyland when he says *elvysch* and thus conjures up an entirely different semantic range. Chaucer is not talking about a strange craft, but a supernatural craft, a distinction that, as Green demonstrates and Elizabeth Robertson affirms, indicates that *elvysch*-ness is also associated with transformation. If the discourse of fairyland and the discourse of alchemy can be compared.

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12 MED sv. ‘cake’ 3b; ‘elve(n)’ 2b. See also OED sv. ‘elf-cake’: an enlargement of the spleen, attributed to the agency of elves. ‘The hardnes of the syde, called the Elfe cake,’ Thomas Lupton, *A Thousand Notable Things, of Sundry Sortes*, ca. 1579.


14 Green: “Changing Chaucer,” pp. 41-42. For Robertson, the “elvyssh” power of Chaucer’s Constance is both her ineffability and her power to convert others without violence, transforming them from one kind of person to another. See: “The ‘Elvyssh’ Power of Constance: Christian Feminism in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Man of
for their “shared marginality, their obsession with secrecy, and the nature of the rewards they dangle before their initiates,” Green states, “their most obvious point of resemblance is, of course, their concern with transformation.” Alchemy is, after all, a craft whose entire purpose is to transform metals into the more valuable material of gold. It is thus an “elvysch craft,” in Chaucer’s terms, for its concern with transformation that tries to exceed the norms of the natural world. Aside from the apparent, superficial interpretation of fairyland’s association with transformation, Green further explains that there is evidence, though it is “scanty,” of a belief in the discourse of fairyland that fairies could change humans into animals or inanimate objects. To demonstrate this point Green cites, for example, The Second Shepherd’s Play and the tale of Adrian and Bardus from the fifth book of Gower’s Confessio Amantis, in which characters believe elvysch creatures have transformed human children into animals.\(^1\) In some rare cases, the transformative power associated with fairyland is the supernatural power to transform one kind of living being into another, or even into an inanimate object.

For Chaucer, in short, elvysch connotes transformation and the supernatural and the term can, additionally, signify a transformation that is itself supernatural. Indeed, as Lee Patterson skilfully argued, Chaucer’s use of elvyssh in The Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale shows that, to convey his meaning, the poet must adopt a specialized vocabulary that exceeds conventional poetic diction.\(^2\) Like Chaucer’s discourse of alchemy, Daniel’s discourse of

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1 Green: “Changing Chaucer:” 41-42.

the *wunderlumpe* is *elvysch* because it, too, transcends expression in the language of the natural world and interpretation by the usual laws of nature. Although a *wunderlumpe* might have been generated by the natural process of conception, it no longer registers in ordinary, natural discourse once it gains a physical presence outside of the womb.

When Henry Daniel, Chaucer’s contemporary, uses the term *elvysch* to describe a bodily mass, his appeal to the supernatural is doubly transformative. The *elvysch cake* originated naturally and transformed into a supernatural lump, but Daniel’s appeal to the supernatural itself occurs in a transformative process. He claims, after all, to be here engaged in an act of translation, transforming the Latin *frust(r)um monstruosum* into English. Daniel’s vernacular rendering of this bodily mass appends, in turn, a supernatural element: it is not a strange piece of flesh, but a *wunderlumpe*, an *elvysch cake*. Daniel thus employs the term *elvysch* not only in an act of signification, indicating that what he calls a *wunderlumpe* is indeed a bodily lump that inspires wonder, but also in an act of translation, introducing the new terms *elvysch cake* and *wunderlumpe* to the English language as a means to define the concept of the *mola*. In doing so, Daniel parallels the Chaucerian expression of *elvysch* by referring explicitly to the supernatural and by creating a vocabulary that exceeds ordinary language. Like Daniel’s *wunderlumpe*, the “misforschapen þing” of *The King of Tars* eludes discursive classification. Their elusive statuses are registered by the hapax legomena used to describe them: the words *wunderlumpe* and *misforschapen* are extant only in the *Liber Uricrisiarum* and *The King of Tars*, respectively.17 Both texts thus

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17 *MED* sv. “misforschapen”: misshapen, deformed. “ðe child ded born was, A mis-forschapen þing” (972), *The King of Tars*, ca. 1333.
reach beyond ordinary language to describe a lump that evades, in turn, discursive, religious, and cultural classification.

The resistance of the “misforschapen þing” to easy categorization is emblematic of the poem as a whole. In typical romance fashion, the poem approaches, only to swerve away from, existing generic patterns.¹⁸ The poem at first seems to participate in the Constance tradition—a tradition to which Chaucer and Gower later contributed and which describes a sultan who, hearing rumours of Constance’s beauty, becomes overwhelmed with desire to possess her. Similarly, in *The King of Tars* a Saracen Sultan hears news of a Christian Princess’s unparalleled beauty and seeks her hand in marriage.¹⁹ Unlike the other sultans from the Constance tradition, who convert to Christianity prior to their marriage, this Sultan insists that his bride renounce her Christian faith. The Princess pretends to fulfil the Sultan’s demand, but in fact maintains her Christian faith and identity. Delighted with the Princess’s apparent renunciation, the Sultan marries the object of his desire and, soon after, the ill-fitted pair conceives. When the time comes for the child to be born, however, “as a rond of flesche yschore / In chaumber it lay hem bifeore / Wiþouten blod & bon” (580-582). In the place of a fully-formed, living child is a lump of flesh that appears to be “ded as þe ston” (585). The

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¹⁹ The resemblance of *The King of Tars* to narratives from the Constance tradition was first observed by Margaret Schlauch in *Chaucer’s Constance and Accused Queens* (The New York University Press: 1927), 125, n.14 and has been noted most recently by Geraldine Heng in “Beauty and the East, a Modern Love Story: Women, Children, and Imagined Communities in *The Man of Law’s Tale* and its Others” from her influential *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (Columbia University Press: 2007), 181-238.
poem here ceases to resemble a Constance narrative and, in presenting the monstrous potential of interfaith marriage, instead verges into a tradition of folklore.\textsuperscript{20}

The lump of flesh resembles numerous other monstrous births from medieval literature, including folklore, as Lillian Herlands Hornstein asserted in her foundational research on the poem in its historical and literary contexts. In these other narratives, Hornstein explains, a woman will give birth to a spotted child, a hairy child, or an animal; \textit{The King of Tars} is unique in its representation of a lifeless lump of flesh.\textsuperscript{21} This distinctive image is where the poem positions itself in relation to and swerves away from traditional narratives found in medieval folklore. Folklore is, like romance, a tradition that includes numerous seemingly separate genres such as fable, myth, legend, romance, religious narrative, magical tale, and jest.\textsuperscript{22} \textit{The King of Tars} participates in this same culture of shared literary elements, then, not simply by virtue of its classification as a romance, but also in evoking the folkloric tradition with the lump of flesh. In evoking the latter tradition, the poem necessarily evokes multiple other literary discourses embedded within it. The

\textsuperscript{20} Interestingly, in Chaucer’s \textit{Man of Law’s Tale}, Donegild writes in her counterfeit letter that Constance delivered a “feendly creature” (II.751). Donegild herself is also called an “elf” (II.754, glossed as ‘evil spirit’) by the narrator. One could argue, then, that \textit{The Man of Law’s Tale} also swerves into folktale at this moment. It does not, however, actually contain the same physical phenomena seen in \textit{The King of Tars}.


\textsuperscript{22} In the Introduction to \textit{A Guide to Folktales in the English Language} (New York” Greenwood Press, 1987), D. L. Ashliman outlines the various “kinds” of folktales, originally posited by Antti Aarne and translated and developed by Stith Thompson. See \textit{The Types of Folktale, a Classification and Bibliography}. Antti Aarne’s \textit{Verzeichnis der Märchentypen} (transl. and enl. by Stith Thompson) (Helsinki Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1961), 2\textsuperscript{nd} revision. For the relationship of folklore to other forms of medieval literature, see Bruce A. Rosenberg’s influential study: \textit{Folklore and Literature: Rival Siblings} (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); and, for a more recent account of folk practices in medieval literature and culture, see Corinne Saunders, \textit{Magic and the Supernatural in Medieval Romance} (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), 87-99.
practice of blending discourses evinced by *The King of Tars* is also shared by Henry Daniel in the *Liber Uricrisiarum*. As Daniel’s treatise evokes a discourse other than the purely medical to identify and describe the wunderlumpe, *The King of Tars* evokes literary discourses other than the homiletic romance to identify and describe the birth and metamorphosis of the “misforschaped þing.”

If a *mole*, in Daniel’s treatise, is a wunderlumpe—a specifically elvysch piece of flesh whose description requires participation in a discourse beyond the purely medical—a *mole* in *The King of Tars* is decidedly, in plain language, “ded as þe ston.” If a *mole* in medieval medical discourse is generated by a woman who may not actually be pregnant, a “rond of flesche yschore” (580) in the poem is produced by a woman who clearly is “wiþ child” (571). The circumstance of the generation of the lump in the poem is a topic to which I return and discuss in detail below. I raise the subject here to show that the “misforschaped” lump of *The King of Tars* finds its medical corollary in Daniel’s *Liber Uricrisiarum*: both texts describe the production of a peculiar, inanimate lump of flesh, but they also present such lumps in a discourse of miscarried, failed categorization. Just as Daniel develops existing medical vocabulary to describe the wunderlumpe, the poem extends medical language to exploit the symbolic and religious valences of this supernatural lump of flesh. Whereas Daniel’s term elvysch denotes the supernatural without added religious connotations, the wondrous lump in *The King of Tars* can only be interpreted by its parents in religious terms. Incapable of identifying either as Saracen or Christian, the “misforschaped” lump is also, I argue below, the image through which the poem explores the role of blood in biological and religious categorization.
II. Medical Discourses of Blood: *The King of Tars*

When the Christian Princess gives birth to a formless, lifeless lump of flesh, neither she nor the Saracen Sultan of Damascus wants to claim generative responsibility for it. This biological accountability is figured in the poem as inextricable from the Sultan’s and the Princess’s spiritual identity. Upon first seeing that the child he had expected is in fact a lifeless lump of flesh, the Sultan exclaims to his wife:

‘Oȝain mi godes þou art forsworn,  
Wiþ riȝt resound y preue:  
Þe childe þat is here of þe born  
Boþe lim & liþ it is forlorn  
Alle þurth þi fals bileue,  
Þou leuest nouȝt wele affine  
On Iubiter no in Apoline,  
Amorwe na an eue;  
No in Mahoun no in Teruagant,  
Þerfore is lorn þis litel faunt.’

(590-599)

The Princess, in turn, retorts: “‘Þe child was ȝeten bitven ous to; / For þi bileue it farþ so’” (604-5). While the Sultan, first, refers to the lump as having been born “of þe” (592) the Princess, subsequently, insists that the lump was “ȝeten bitven ous to” (604). For Siobhain Bly Calkin and Geraldine Heng these attempts to assign blame for the formlessness of the lump demonstrate the idea that religion can “shape and instruct” biology.\(^{23}\) For the Sultan, the lump’s formlessness is visible proof that his wife has not, in fact, renounced Christianity as she had promised; for her part, the Princess maintains that the lump’s formlessness has instead been caused by her husband’s lack of knowledge of Christ. Put another way, the

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\(^{23}\) This point is made by Geraldine Heng in “Beauty and the East,” 181-238, esp. 228. For an account of the relationship between religion and biology that focuses more on religion as faith than religion as race, see Calkin: “Marking Religion on the Body”: 221.
formless progeny is created by the presence of Christianity in the Sultan’s view and the absence of Christianity in the Princess’s.

For scholars who have discussed the lump’s formlessness, namely Jane Gilbert and Suzanne Conklin Akbari, the biological failure to produce a properly formed child, and the discourse surrounding this failure, draw upon the Aristotelian theory of generation. In this theory, the mother provides the matter and the father provides the form of the foetus.²⁴ Although the Sultan blames his wife’s Christianity for the biological monstrosity born of her, the Princess makes it clear that the fault is actually his after the lump is miraculously metamorphosed into a real boy. When the Sultan tells his wife that he is “glad afin” (806) to see the lump thus enlivened, the Princess responds: “‘3a, sir, bi seyn Martin, / 3if þe haluendel wer þin / Wel glad miȝt þou be’” (808-810). She initially understood conception as shared between herself and the Sultan, but once the lump is baptized, she excludes the Sultan’s influence altogether. The poem ultimately bears out this latter understanding: the lump’s miraculous metamorphosis shows that it previously lacked form because the Sultan failed to provide it.

Both the Princess and the Sultan ask their gods to make the lump “fourmed after a man” (614; 668; 692). The vocabulary the poem employs to explain the concept of “form” is more precise than scholars have previously acknowledged. Like its variation of what Daniel would call a *wunderlumpe*, the poem’s language of form and formlessness also has a medical valence. When the lump is born, for example, we learn that the women attending the Princess are “Wel sori” (578) because “lim no hadde it non. / Bot as a rond of flesche

yschore / In chaumber it lay hem bifoer / Wiþouten blod & bon” (579-582). The Princess, too, is full of sorrow, for her child “hadde noþer nose no eye, / Bot lay ded as þe ston” (584-585). Lacking limbs, eyes, nose, blood, and bone, the lump is not “fourmed after a man,” but rather a “rond of flesche yschore.” Form seems to consist of outer and inner qualities: it comprises both the external characteristics of the face and limbs and the internal features of blood and bone. The lump’s body, if it can be so called, is undeveloped and unanimated. But these external and internal conditions are not comparably influential: rather, the external is dictated by the internal.

These discourses of form and formlessness, of internal and external features, are shaped by discourses about the role of blood in generation. Conception was, in the medieval period, theorized as a mingling of bloods since semen was considered to be blood in its most purified state.\(^2\) Generation was thus believed to be contingent on the successful mixture of male and female blood inside the woman’s body. The discourse of form and formlessness discussed by Gilbert is also, I argue, a discourse of animation and of blood. The poem cultivates and complicates its vocabulary of blood with the creation of the formless lump: the failure to give form to the Princess’s matter during conception is not a failure of the Sultan in general, but of his blood in particular.

This influence of blood on outer appearance is first manifested on the body of the Princess. The Princess is described as having skin that is “white as feþer of swan” (12). For Heng, this brilliant whiteness marks the Princess as distinctly “European” and thus Christian

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\(^2\) Calkin: “Marking Religion on the Body”: 226; Gilbert: “Putting the Pulp into Fiction,” 117. For detailed accounts of the medieval idea that all bodily fluids were some form of blood, see Caroline Walker Bynum’s highly influential Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 158 and Joan Cadden’s Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1993), 184. I discuss this idea in Chapter Two, “The stat of lyf prinspally,” pp. 70-74.
as opposed to “Oriental” and thus Saracen.\textsuperscript{26} Her analysis of what she calls “race-religion” in the poem is based, in part, on the physical transformation that the Princess does not undergo: although she appears to be a Saracen once she learns how to properly praise her husband’s idols, the Princess’s skin remains as white as a swan’s feather. This non-transformation, Heng contends, is the only evidence the reader actually has to believe in the Princess’s sustained Christianity, since she makes such a convincing Saracen.\textsuperscript{27} Although her conflation of “European,” “white,” and “Christian” is not in keeping with medieval ideas of nationhood and identity or indeed with the poem’s depiction of the Christian Princess, Heng is right to point out that the Princess’s skin does not change colour when she learns, and claims to accept, her husband’s Saracen lore. But Heng’s analysis overlooks another moment in the poem at which the Princess’s physical appearance does change: when the lump is “geten sche chaunged ble; / þe soudan himself þat gan se” (568-569). She changes “ble,” that is, skin colour—as her parents had changed their “hide & hewe” (371)—when the lump is conceived. This alteration of colour may at first appear to signify that the Princess’s passions (\textit{i.e.} her blood) flow to her cheeks in a display of bashfulness. In the first depiction of her outward appearance, however, we are told that her brilliant whiteness is complemented “Wiþ rode red so blosme on brere” (14). Her cheeks are already as red as brier blossoms, and it is thus this rosy “ble” that is changed once she conceives. Rather than a simple blush, her changed “ble” signifies a much deeper change, tied specifically to her pregnancy.

\textsuperscript{26} Heng: “Beauty and the East,” 231.

If the Princess’s skin turned from white to black, the poem would most certainly have made this change explicit. The marvelous metamorphosis of the Sultan after his conversion is, after all, portrayed as a change from “blac & loþely” (928) to “Al white” (929), “& clere wiþouten blame” (930). The reverse does not happen to the Princess because, unlike the Sultan, she does not convert; her skin is never described as black. Her outward change is caused, instead, through the mixing of blood that occurred during intercourse with her husband. The emergence of the Sultan’s blood within the Princess’s body causes a change in her skin colour, as her changed inner features influence her outer appearance. The Sultan’s blood effects a notable change on the Princess’s outer body, and it has a foul influence on her inner features, her blood. His blood cannot provide proper form to her matter and his failure results in her facial change along with the generative anomaly attendant on it: the bloodless lump of *flesche*.

Previous criticism on the term *flesche* in *The King of Tars* has explained the significance of this word by examining the stark contrast between the formless lump as *flesche* and the metamorphosed lump as “child.” Critics have analyzed the language used to describe the lump before and after its metamorphosis, noting the lexical shift from *flesche* to *child* that corresponds to this transformation. Gilbert is particularly invested in this shift, stating that in the Auchinleck manuscript’s version of the poem, the Sultan is the only one to call the lump a child before it is baptized. By calling the lump a child before it actually appears to be one, Gilbert argues, the Sultan exhibits his paternal failure because he does not comprehend the lump’s biological or religious status. At the same time, Gilbert contends, this terminology makes the Sultan a pathetic figure.²⁸ While this analysis of the Sultan is

²⁸ Gilbert: “Putting the Pulp into Fiction,” 112.
certainly convincing given the widespread use of the term *flesche* before and *child* after the lump’s baptism, Gilbert’s argument overlooks the fact that the Princess and the narrator also use the word *child* in reference to the formless lump (604, 577, respectively). This is not meant to diminish the significance of the term *flesche*, for the word is tremendously important to the poem’s description of the lump. But we would do well to focus less on the contrast between *flesche* and *child* than on the medical and symbolic registers of the *flesche* itself.

The connection between biology and religion finds its lexical and physical corollary in the formless *flesche*. The medical valence of this *flesche* is helpfully elucidated by Henry Daniel in his *Liber Uricrisiarum*. While the complexion of flesh differs in various parts of the body, its typical, overall complexion, Daniel explains, is cold and moist. This usual complexion notwithstanding, Daniel suggests that his readers should still consider the general complexion of the person to accurately determine the specific complexion of the individual’s *flesche*. For Daniel, and medieval medical discourse more broadly, the inner flesh and outer body are thus mutually influencing qualities: a person’s body is composed of various kinds of flesh, but the outer body can itself help determine the particular nature of that inner material. For the Princess and the lump in *The King of Tars*, by contrast, the external body is dictated by its inner features. The formless *flesche* is denied a mutually influential relationship between inside and outside since its entire being is just the inner flesh.

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29 The term that is actually used by the Sultan alone to describe the lump before its metamorphosis is “faunt,” a French loanword meaning: “a young child of either sex, an infant, babe” (*MED*). Since this term shares the same meaning as “child,” it is useful to point out only for its French inheritance, and not for any significance to the current argument. For a detailed analysis of the significance of loanwords in *The King of Tars* see Gilbert: “Putting the Pulp into Fiction,” 112.

30 “Caro, flesch, is frigidum & humidum, notforthan tak the complexioun of flesch uppyn the complexioun of man, and of age” *Liber Uricrisiarum*, 2.41. fol. 105r.
“flesche yschore.” It is thus impossible, in turn, to determine the specific nature of the pitiful, lifeless lump; it has no outer shell, no bodily form, to help give definition to its inner features.

After explaining this relationship between flesche and the body, Daniel states that flesh is white in colour. It seems red to us, he says, because blood is dispersed throughout pores in the flesh. Blood also exists before flesh is formed: Daniel outlines the Augustinian theory of embryology, in which the waxing foetus, first, is “lyk swete mylk cruddyd; 9 days after that it is blood; than 12 after it is flesch withowte bon and forme, i. 18 after is taketh forme and bon and membris and lemys” (3.18. fol. 158r). Daniel’s explanations of blood and Augustinian embryology illuminate two crucial aspects of flesh: blood is important to the body because it makes flesh recognizable as flesh, and flesh cannot even be formed without the previous existence of blood. For the lump of flesche in The King of Tars to be without either outer form or blood thus positions it as an indecipherable piece of flesche: it transcends not only cultural, but also medical categorization. As a bloodless piece of flesche, the lump is more than unanimated flesche: it is unreadable flesche.

The widespread use of the term flesche in The King of Tars thus goes beyond the medical discourse with which the poem is coterminous: if the word flesche evokes a medical discourse with a precise bodily meaning, the poem’s use of this word ultimately transcends

31 “[A]lle the membris in man are qwyte <naturaliter, i> be weyye of kynde, al be it so that the flesche is red to the syth, notforthan that is not hys kynde colour for it is but colour accidental <i.e. unpropurly, for it hath that colour of other cause than of hys owne kynde; for it is red because of blod> that is disparplyd be the pores of the flesch; for yif <flesche be perboylid and leppte and> the blod be wel wrongyn out, <as thes Yrysh> men don to the flesch that thei etyn, ells if it be sod, <on as we do it, blechys and> it turnyth toward qwyte that xulde ben hys <kynde colour” Liber Uricrisiarum, 3.20. fol. 164r.

32 Calkin argues that the formless lump allows The King of Tars to explore the possibility of “an existence that eludes religious categorization and identification altogether,” adding that the physical form of such an existence is, however, “disconcerting” in “Marking Religion on the Body”: 226. For a detailed analysis of the broader implications of cultural, religious, and ethnic categorization in the poem, see Lampert: “Race, Periodicity, and the (Neo-) Middle Ages”: 391-421.
the kind of categorization that medical discourse affords. As an unclassifiable piece of
*flesche*, the formless lump is biologically unreadable. Just as the *wunderlumpe* transcends medical discourse in Daniel’s treatise, the formless, bloodless *flesche* of the poem exceeds biological categorization. This physical indeterminacy is framed in medical, but also in spiritual terms. When the Sultan submits to the Princess’s request that she have a turn testing the healing power of her God, he agrees only out of sorrow for the “*selcouþe siȝt*” (687) of the lump. A compound word with *seli*, meaning “holy,” “innocent,” or “pitiable” at its root, *selcouþe* can mean “marvelous” or “miraculous” and, at the same time, “unusual” or “monstrous.”\(^3^3\) This kind of *flesche*, in Daniel’s treatise, was rendered monstrous in Latin and wondrous in English; here, the Sultan positions his “*litel faunt*” as both monstrous and wondrous at once. Unlike the explicitly pagan *elvysch*, the term *selcouþe*, as its aforementioned definitions reveal, has religious implications. Although it appears “*yschore,*” evoking pity and fear in those who look on it, the *flesche* is also a wondrous marvel even before the transformative miracle occurs.

This wondrous word appears in the poem twice.\(^3^4\) It is used, first, to describe the Princess’s dream in which Jesus promises to protect her from the hundred black hounds and three devils charging her (421-456). Immediately before Jesus appears before her as a man all in white, we are told that the Princess lies in her dreaming, “*þat selcouþe was to rede*” (447). That the dream is “*selcouþe*” to interpret does not mean merely that such

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\(^{33}\) *MED* sv. “*seli*”: 1.(a) holy, bringing blessing 2.(a) innocent, harmless 3.(a) pitiable; sv. “*selcouþe*”: 1.(a) marvellous, miraculous, preternatural 2.(a) unusual, strange, peculiar (b) uncanny, weird, monstrous.

\(^{34}\) In the version of the poem that appears in the Vernon Manuscript, the word appears a third time: the Princess asks the priest to baptize “*a child selcouþe descriif*” (748). This is doubtlessly important, considering especially that the *MED* entry for “*selcouþe*” notes this as the only appearance of the word in the poem; and, it is the only time at which the term is used by Princess. For an account of the various ways in which the poem in Vernon is lexically inferior, effectively emptying many key terms (like “*flesche*”) of their importance, however, see Gilbert: “Putting the Pulp into Fiction,” 112-119.
interpretative work is difficult; on the contrary, scholars who explore what they call racial
relations in the poem have noted the simplicity of the black hound imagery to symbolize the
Sultan. Instead, the poem positions the Princess’s dream as at once marvelous and unusual.
The dream is frightening and jarring for the Princess, but it is more than just unusual to
interpret; it is also, as the term *selcoupe* signifies, miraculous, beyond earthly exegesis. This
simultaneously unusual and marvelous signification is given, in turn, to the *flesche*. The
second instance of the word *selcoupe*, as noted above, occurs immediately before the Sultan
agrees to let his wife test the power of the Christian God and of baptism. Although deeply
angered by the failure of his own gods to give his child form, the Sultan is grieved in his
heart to “*sen þat selcoupe siȝt*” (687). The sight of the *flesche*, like the vision of the
Princess’s dream, is more than pitiful and unfamiliar. Just as it positions the Princess’s
dream as marvelous or unusual to interpret, so too does the poem position the formless lump
as monstrous, yet marvelous to behold. To put it another way, although it appears “yschore,”
evoking pity and fear in those who look on it, the *flesche* is also a wondrous marvel even
before the transformative miracle occurs. The connection between religion and biology
noted previously by scholars is thus less a matter of cause-and-effect, or of religion
determining biology; instead, this connection involves religion finding its physical corollary
in the body. The *flesche* is, simultaneously, both physically and spiritually wondrous.

When the lump holds this status as both physically and spiritually marvelous, it is
also bloodless. If the poem establishes its connection between biology and religion through a
vocabulary of blood, it would thus seem as if that vocabulary is here abandoned. In a lexical
and symbolic system that associates biology with religion through blood, a bloodless object

could not be granted this latter, spiritual significance. Yet the *flesche* is only elevated to this additional level of signification by the Sultan: he alone who looks on the *flesche* as a “selcouþe siȝt.” The physical and spiritual status of the bloodless *flesche*, as opposed to indicating the poem’s relinquishment of its precise vocabulary, instead extends the Sultan’s paternal failure. The Sultan, initially, fails to provide proper form to the Princess’s matter, and then he fails to assign appropriate significance to the formless *flesche* they create. Like his initial failure, the Sultan’s additional misinterpretation is also one of blood. He cannot see that this bloodless thing cannot be “selcouþe”: without blood, the formless *flesche* cannot hold the spiritual significance that the Sultan sees in it. Unlike the Princess, whose dream is *selcouþe* insofar as it transcends her interpretive capacity, the Sultan misinterprets the *flesche* as *selcouþe*. This inability to fully understand the signification of the lump has been noted by scholars, as mentioned above, as a failure to see that the *flesche* is not a child. The problem with the Sultan’s reading of the *flesche*, however, is not that he calls it a child but rather that he sees it as a marvel.

The Sultan’s misidentification of the *flesche* has clear religious implications because he positions as marvelous something that is in fact “ded as þe ston.” By seeing this lifeless *flesche* as spiritually wondrous, the Sultan sets it as an idol. The Sultan’s interpretation of the bloodless *flesche* reflects the poem’s characterization of Saracen lack: both the Sultan’s inability to provide form to the *flesche* he helps create and his inability to recognize the existence of Christ are described as failings and absences of blood. In a Christian symbolic discourse, blood accounts for material, fleshly reality as well as spiritual being. Such a symbolic discourse, the poem suggests, is absent from Saracen lore. The fundamental characteristic of a Saracen here is the worship of inanimate idols. The first act that the Sultan
demands of the Princess after she promises to renounce Christianity is that she kiss “Alle þine godes on rawe” (498). After performing this task, the Princess learns the Saracen lore only to give further praise to her newly accepted gods. When she feigns belief, the Princess is surprisingly convincing: “þe soudan wende nijt & day / þat sche hadde leued opon his lay” (511-512). All that is required in order to appear to be Saracen is to speak praise to idols “openliche” (506). We are assured that the inner parts of the Princess—her mind, her flesh, her blood, and her spirit—remain devoutly Christian: although the Sultan thinks she has converted “al he was bicouȝt. / For when sche was bi herselue on / To Ihesu sche made hir mon” (513-515). The Princess’s Christian identity remains a secret because that faith is internal. The Saracen “lay” that the Princess simulates outwardly, in contrast to the Christian law she keeps inwardly, lacks the symbolic discourse in which blood contains both fleshly and spiritual being. Within the poem’s theological framework, to be Saracen is thus to see only the most superficial of outward signs and to fail to see anything on the inside—what matters is only what is done “openliche.” The empty, inanimate idols of Saracen worship are emblematic of the body of the Saracen himself: he fails to recognize their own inner composition, their lack of flesh and blood.

36 In “Marking Religion on the Body,” Calkin argues that the poem insists on two paradoxical facts at once: that the Princess only appears to be Saracen, and that internal character and external appearance are inextricable. For Calkin, thus, the poem does not entirely support the idea that Princess can feign conversion; instead, the poem’s affirmation that the Princess is only pretending to be Saracen indicates that religious identity cannot be easily discerned (222-224). In making this argument, Calkin certainly points to an important paradox. Rather than displaying the problem with religious categorization, however, the current essay argues that the Princess is able to feign the Saracen belief precisely because the relationship between inner and outer features is one that, in the poem’s theological framework, cannot be recognized or interpreted by Saracens. The Princess can pretend to be Saracen, that is, because her true Christian identity remains outside the Sultan’s interpretive gaze.
III. Religious Discourses of Blood

By depicting Saracens as lacking awareness of the spiritual significance of blood, *The King of Tars* participates in an existing symbolic tradition prominent in Middle English religious literature. Chaucer’s St. Cecilia of the *Second Nun’s Tale* and the Katherine Group’s Saint Margaret, for example, both chastise their Saracen counterparts for worshipping bloodless objects. These Roman Saracens are characterized in the same way as the Sultan—through lack, both of Christian revelation and of knowledge of the physical and symbolic significance of blood. Despite its connection to this tradition, *The King of Tars* distinguishes itself by extending its vocabulary of blood to incorporate the Christian conversion of a Saracen villain. Unlike the Saracen lore, Christianity is depicted in the poem as a belief system that is explicitly founded on and expressed through a vocabulary of blood. When the Sultan beholds his metamorphosed child and asks the Princess to teach him Christian law, for example, she explains that he must, first, believe that God is the Trinity. Specifically, the Sultan must believe that Jesus “nam flesche &bl[o]d” (847) from Mary’s body. The Sultan must accept, additionally, that three days after he was killed on the cross, Jesus rose from the dead and subsequently ascended into heaven “Boþe wiþ flesche &blod” (858). Finally, the Princess concludes, he must believe that Jesus will come to earth again and “Schewe his blodi woundes fiue, / þat he for ous gan fond” (869-870). The Sultan must adopt a Christian belief system characterized by flesh and blood: the Princess defines Christian law as a belief both in the generative and nutritive blood of Mary, in the truth of Christ’s physical blood,

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and in the spiritual comfort of his bloody wounds. In short, the Christian law demands a focus on flesh and blood.

This Christian doctrine is evinced when the formless *flesche* received its animating blood. As Gilbert has demonstrated, the lump miraculously comes to life through baptism because it receives the form that it previously lacked from its new Father.\(^{38}\) God does what the Sultan has failed to do by providing paternal form. For the lump, now alive and named Jon, Christianity pours life into his body in the form of blood. In her recent study of baptism in *The King of Tars*, Calkin contends that the baptism depicted in the poem demands a focus on physicality in addition to spirituality.\(^{39}\) To this argument, I would add that the poem’s religious miracle is expressed both in spiritual and medical terms. This medical discourse comes into the poem through the word *flesche*, but also through the role of blood to animate the body physically and spiritually. Henry Daniel defines blood as a life fluid in more than one way. He explains that blood, on one hand, transforms into semen and breast milk to generate and nourish the foetus, providing physical life. On the other, blood also flows throughout the body via the arteries, which begin at the heart and also draw in air and *spiritus*. Combined with the *spiritus* in the arteries, blood moves the soul (2.1. fol. 33r; 2.7. fol. 45v). When Daniel declares that the state of “lyf prinspally” is dictated by “the helthe of the blood,” “lyf” thus includes a person’s physical and spiritual existence (2.1. fol. 33v). For

\(^{38}\) Gilbert: “Putting the Pulp into Fiction,” 106-109. While Gilbert makes the crucial point that God ultimately provides form and becomes the Sultan’s own father later in the poem, much of her analysis is based on a Lacanian framework. Her important observations about paternal roles in the poem are still convincing, but the current essay eschews Lacanian notions of the Law of the Father to privilege the vocabulary provided by the poem.

\(^{39}\) Calkin’s study is grounded firmly in religious discourse. Her argument for the significance of the physical is certainly effective; my purpose here, however, is to highlight the ways in which various medieval discourses merge in the poem. See “Romance Baptisms and Theological Contexts in *The King of Tars* and *Sir Ferumbras*” in *Medieval Romance, Medieval Contexts*, Rhiannon Purdie and Michael Cichon, eds. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), 105-120.
the lump in *The King of Tars*, blood is likewise the nexus of physical and spiritual life: the Christian ritual of baptism pours symbolic, religious life into its body. This symbolic life is given a physical manifestation in the blood that now animates the beautiful baby Jon.

The relationship between religion and biology described by Heng and Calkin, in which religion shapes biology, is here more complex than they allow.\(^4^0\) The Sultan’s interpretation of the bloodless lump was incorrect in the poem’s theological framework, but the underlying idea that the lump had a simultaneous physical and spiritual significance is ultimately warranted by the depiction of the newly metamorphosed Jon. Although this dual significance could not be assigned to the bloodless *flesche*, the miraculous metamorphosis from bloodless lump to living Jon illustrates that biology determines religion at the same time that religion determines biology. To put it another way, just as Daniel explains that the inner material of *flesche* influences the overall body even as the overall body influences the inner *flesche*, the miracle of Jon’s metamorphosis shows that religion and biology equally comprise and influence blood and life.

If Jon’s metamorphosis displays the connection between religion and biology by illuminating the role of blood to generate and sustain Christian life, the Sultan’s metamorphosis confirms that connection by revealing the role of blood to distinguish between Saracens and Christians. Believing in Christianity, a faith that is expressed through a vocabulary of blood, gives that faith a physical manifestation in the Sultan’s own blood as his skin becomes white. This metamorphosis is an external manifestation of the Sultan’s inner change from Saracen to Christian, a change that has occurred in his blood. His conversion, after all, is the only way that the Sultan can claim Jon as “part” of him. Until he

converts, the Princess insists, not even “haluendel” (809) of the child is his. The Sultan accepts the Christian faith, believes in the spiritual value of blood, and then receives new Christian life in his own—a newly animated blood that affirms his newly acquired generative capacity, as he can now justly claim his paternal role. Christian conversion is thus figured as a physical, biological metamorphosis that occurs both in and on the body.

Whereas Heng and Lampert think that the Sultan’s outer transformation makes religion a matter of race, we may do better to say something else: that the Sultan’s inner and outer metamorphoses participate in a broader discourse of bodily and spiritual identity. The Sultan’s earlier blackness, at least insofar as the poem implies, was an external manifestation of his inner corruption. In his work on medieval physiognomies, Joseph Ziegler has referred to the skin as “a surface on which the inside revealed itself.” Blood, Ziegler continues, is the means through which “the inside” can reveal itself on the skin. The colour of the body was often considered a reflection of the inner blood on one hand, and an indication of an individual’s characteristics on the other. The Sultan’s outer blackness was “loþely” because it signaled his spiritual immorality, but also because it pointed toward an internal lack. The Sultan was, like Jon, formless before he experienced Christian revelation.

The influence of inner features on outer characteristics displayed by the miraculous conversions of the Sultan and the lump is demonstrated not only by their new physical

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42 See Joseph Ziegler, “Skin and Character in Medieval and Early Renaissance Physiognomy,” *Micrologus: Natura, Scienze e Società Medievali; Nature, Science and Medieval Studies* 13 (2005): 511-35. Although skin colour was thought to reflect inner characteristics, medieval physiognomies cannot, Ziegler argues, be used to reconstruct “medieval attitudes toward black people” (533-34). Blackness in physiognomy texts, he explains, typically denotes a melancholic complexion or a person who lives in a particularly hot area of the world as opposed to specifically black skin. Despite this lack of attention toward ethnicity, however, it is clear that learned physiognomies recognized a link between blood and skin, and between skin and a person’s particular temperament.
identities, but also by their new cultural identities. Both the Sultan and the lump are
named—Cleopas and Jon, respectively—once they have been filled with new life. The
names of Jon and Cleopas, as Akbari explains, are particularly significant in early
Christianity. The lump is named Jon after Saint John the Baptist, and the Sultan is named
Cleopas after one of the two disciples who encountered Jesus on the road to Emmaus on the
day he rose from the dead. Thus, while Jon is named after the person who performs the
miracle that causes physical and spiritual metamorphosis, Cleopas is named after one whose
eyes were first opened to the truth that Jesus rose, in flesh and blood. Both figures are
important in early Christianity because they affirm the spiritual significance of flesh and
blood as explained in the poem by the Princess. The process of naming, thus, is more than
just another way to represent the influence of inner features on the whole person; this
naming is also a way to explicitly bring Jon and Cleopas into the realm of cultural
classification. Before his conversion, Cleopas could be classified as physically and
spiritually loathly; before his baptism, by contrast, Jon transcended cultural or religious
categorization altogether because he was physically unclassifiable. Now that both have been
animated anew by Christian blood, their inner features can dictate their outer characteristics
in bodily and spiritual terms. With their new Christian names they can now be properly
identified as Christians in flesh and blood.

Being Christian in flesh and blood is not, as I have attempted to argue, distinct from
being Christian in spirit, as the Apostle Paul would advise. The Bible imagines faith in the
law as internal. Paul tells the Romans: *Non enim qui in manifesto Iudaeus est, neque quae in
manifesto in carne est circumcisio. Sed qui in abscondito Iudaeus est, et circumcisio cordis*

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43 Akbari explains the significance of these names within the interpretive framework of the role of sight in Christianity in “The Saracen Body: The Hybrid,” 197-198. See also Luke 24:13-32.
in spiritu, non littera, cuius laus non ex hominibus, sed ex Deo est (“For it is not he is a Jew that is so outwardly, nor is it that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew that is one inwardly, and the circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God”). 44 The poem thus participates in the same discourse of internal faith as that preached by Paul: the Princess appeared to be Saracen outwardly, but remained Christian internally; Jon and Cleopas only attained their internal form when they received Christian revelation. As Paul writes to the Corinthians: Si est corpus animale, est et spiritale (“If there be a natural body, there is also a spiritual body”). 45 The natural, material body can be fully realized only if it also has a spiritual existence. The human body is only a body insofar as it is both fleshly and spiritual at once. For the Princess, Jon, and Cleopas of The King of Tars, the spiritual existence of the body resides in the material blood.

Giving Christianity a physical locus in the blood is indeed an idea that registers in medieval literary, medical, and religious discourse. The vocabulary of blood in The King of Tars, in which blood provides the physical locus for Christianity, is shared by medical writers like Henry Daniel, but also (and predictably) by religious writers as well. It is still standard practice in many sects of Christianity, as it was in the English Middle Ages, to eat and drink the symbolic or literal flesh and blood of Christ every week. Christians express their belief in the flesh and blood of Christ by filling themselves with that flesh and blood, receiving material to animate their bodies both physically and spiritually. Read in this context, the miraculous metamorphoses of Jon and Cleopas appear to be literary retellings or reappropriations of the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist. Such a retelling would be


thoroughly in keeping with other medieval literary traditions such as host desecration stories, in which the Eucharist is tortured and bleeds. As James J. Megivern has shown in his table charting the extant records of such stories from the tenth through seventeenth centuries, the fourteenth century saw a particular abundance of bleeding host stories.46

This literary trend also registers in medieval Christian practice. As Miri Rubin and Eamon Duffy have demonstrated in their seminal works on the history of Eucharistic symbolism, the sight and consumption of the Eucharist was a constant reminder of Christ’s real flesh and blood and was, as such, central to a medieval Christian notion of existing with God: the blood of Christ united the human soul with Him.47 As Augustine puts it in Sermon 227 about Paul and the Eucharist, *Si bene accepi stis, vos estis quod accepistis* (“If you receive them [*i.e.* the body and blood of Christ] well, you are yourselves what you have received”).48 Devotees receive Christ to be physically and spiritually bound with their God, and the Christian doctrine of concomitance reminds them that Christ’s blood flowed in the

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47 Miri Rubin is particularly concerned with the real presence of Christ’s body, and traces the emergence of the Eucharist as a symbol and the ways in which it was interpreted through the twelfth to sixteenth centuries. See *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For Eamon Duffy, the sight of the Eucharist in the Middle Ages formed a “community of humanity.” See *Stripping the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005). Quoted from p. 90. See also Akbari, “Incorporation in the *Siege of Melayne*, 34-35.

Host. Eucharistic symbolism is thus not separate from, but an integral component of, the Christian symbolic discourse of blood. The metamorphoses of Jon and Cleopas in *The King of Tars* may well evoke Eucharistic symbolism, but this symbolism is evoked as a means to display the role of blood to create and sustain the physical and spiritual life of Christians. Jon and Cleopas become what they receive when they receive Christian revelation and are granted, in turn, physical and spiritual form.

Imagining the Christian soul as located physically in the blood is a convention of medieval devotional and preaching language, as Caroline Walker Bynum explains in her study of blood and Christianity in the Middle Ages. Bynum argues that for Christian writers in the Middle Ages, the soul could not have a physical location because it was considered nonmaterial; it would instead have to be present in every part of the body. Despite this conceptualization, Bynum continues, much devotional and preaching language from the High Middle Ages suggests either that blood carries the seat of life or that blood is itself the seat of life. She names Thomas Aquinas, Saint Bonaventure, Robert Grosseteste, and Gabriel Biel as some examples of medieval Christian writers who held this idea. These four writers, Bynum states, all cite as the basis for their contention Leviticus 17:11: *anima carnis in sanguine est* (“the life of the flesh is in the blood”), a Biblical precept that they combine with ideas from medical authorities such as Albertus Magnus and Aristotle. This combination of religious and medical influences can, in turn, shed light on the vocabulary of blood in *The King of Tars*. More than representing the sacrament of the Eucharist in

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49 For a comprehensive history of concomitance, see Megivern, *Concomitance and Communion*. For an analysis of how the doctrine works in medieval romance, see Akbari, “Incorporation in the *Siege of Melayne*,” 32-35.

50 Bynum’s full account of blood as the seat of life can be found in: “Blood as *Sedes Animae*,” 161-168 of chapter seven: “Living Blood Poured Out” from *Wonderful Blood*, esp. 162.
miracles of blood, *The King of Tars* participates in a discourse shared by religious and medical authorities. In this discourse, blood is not only the nexus of physical and spiritual life, but also of religious and medical language.

This conceptualization of blood as the link between two kinds of life and two types of languages can be productively shown through an examination of Henry Daniel and his treatise, for he engages in a simultaneously medical and religious discourse of blood. He transcends medical discourse in his discussion of the *elvysch cake*, and he also avers, as I explained above, that blood is “the stat of lyf prinspally,” a statement on spiritual as well as physical “lyf” since the blood moves and affects the soul.\(^5^1\) Like devotional writers, who look to both scripture and science in explaining blood for Christianity, Daniel combines religious and scientific material to conceptualize the blood in the Christian body. With this confluence of discourses, Daniel represents a wide tradition of learned writing, while rendering it in a new vernacular medium. Blood, Daniel and earlier Latin writers suggest, did not belong exclusively to religious or medical writing in the Middle Ages; instead, its significance to the Christian body is explained in an overlapping medical and religious discourse. The vocabulary that *The King of Tars* shares with the medical tradition elucidated by Daniel is thus a vocabulary that is already part of a collective language. The poem does not appropriate a medical discourse into a religious context by employing a vocabulary of blood to explain Jon and Cleopas’s physical and religious metamorphoses; rather, it expands an intersecting medical and religious vocabulary by presenting the symbolic valences of animating blood.

\(^{51}\) For Daniel’s theorization of blood as a carrier of *spiritus* and mover of the soul, see *Liber Uricrisiarum* 2.1. fol. 33r and 2.12. fol. 54v; p. 115 of the present chapter; and, Chapter Two: “‘The stat of lyf prinspally’: Blood and Medieval English Medicine,” p. 78.
IV. English Discourses of Blood

Representations of blood and the Christian body in *The King of Tars* are important to the poem’s collective vocabulary and are thus important to its place in a broader vernacular tradition. Much of the earliest scholarship on the poem aims to position it within an even larger context by situating the poem in its general historical moment as an attempt to show its latent English nationalism. Hornstein studies eight literary and historical analogues, and in doing so she traces the conversion legend back to its possible, distant source in the conversion of Ghazan Khan; Robert J. Geist contends that the French *Florence de Rome* and English *Otuel and Roland* are, instead, more directly influential on the poem’s plot. But whatever source they identify, both scholars think that the conversion legend has direct relevance in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century England, and treat the poem as an important piece of English didacticism and patriotism. It does not occur geographically within England, but its representations of successful conversion, and of the influence of Western Christianity on the East, Hornstein and Geist aver, indicate a deep engagement with contemporary English nationalistic concerns. Judith Perryman suggests that particular historical and literary sources are nonmaterial to the poem’s ideological import. For her, *The King of Tars* works on a purely symbolic and archetypal level, portraying the dynamic between Christian West and Muslim East. But she ultimately bears out the conclusion of the source-hunting Hornstein and Geist: the poem is about England’s most pressing nationalist concern, conversion.

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Calkin suggests that the poem’s nationalistic connections are also attested by its presence in the Auchinleck Manuscript (National Library of Scotland MS Advocates 19.2.1). Like the manuscript as a whole, which seems to be a collection of English vernacular poetry in its nascent stage, *The King of Tars* may well help develop a new English literary tradition. *The King of Tars* is not one of the nineteen Auchinleck works that refers to England by name, which seems to challenge arguments about its apparent nationalism. Following Andrew Taylor’s idea of medieval reading, Calkin maintains, however, that the poem would still have been “read and re-read in conjunction with texts noted for their explicit evocation of the English community,” and would thus cause readers to associate it with their own English situation. Calkin supports this ambitious argument about English literature before Chaucer by simply pointing out that Thorlac Turville-Petre devotes an entire chapter to Auchinleck in his influential *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340.* The concept of a national English literature, in this case, seems to be created less by *The King of Tars* in its contemporary moment, than by Turville-Petre in the twentieth century.

Hornstein, Geist, and Calkin all end up bypassing specific lexical details from the poem itself. They allow, for example, that the poem neither occurs in England nor mentions it by name, and yet they all push for a nationalistic reading. What is overlooked as a result, I have argued here, is the poem’s contribution to the vernacular vocabulary of late medieval England: the poem crafts a language of blood shared with medieval medicine. This is no

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small thing: Turville-Petre suggests that *The King of Tars* is typical of the Auchinleck manuscript with its “melding of history, romance, and piety,” as well as its “use of a simple vocabulary” and its “trite rhyme tags.” But as I have demonstrated here, this lexically plain and formally uncomplicated poem also intersects with what would typically be called a more specialized, learned discourse. To be sure, the author of *The King of Tars* was probably not a learned reader of medical treatises, but this is exactly the significance of my argument. *The King of Tars*, even if it does not have a medical source, develops a language of blood coterminous with specialized medical writing: erudite discourse is here rendered plainly.

The poem is thus about “Englishness,” I argue, only insofar as it is rooted in fourteenth-century developments in the English language: the poem is English less on account of its representation of Christian conversion than on the precise language situation it imagines and calls into being. *The King of Tars* contributes to the development of English literature in Auchinleck because it brings specialized discourse into a vernacular medium and introduces new English terms to do so. Its vocabulary of blood, which differentiates between Saracens and Christians, may also be a site at which Auchinleck’s preoccupations with Englishness coalesce: the English language here becomes the vehicle through which specialized knowledge can be, as Henry Daniel says, “more openly taghte” (Pro. fol.4v).

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Chapter Four

“The precious plenty of his dereworthy blode”: Visions of Blood and Soul in Julian of Norwich’s Revelation of Love

Beholde and see the vertu of this precious plenty of his dereworthy blode! It descended downe into helle and brak her bondes and deliverd them, all that were there which belong to the courte of heven. The precious plenty of his dereworthy blode overfloweth all erth, and is redy to wash all creatures of sinne which be of good will, have ben, and shall be. The precious plenty of his dereworthy blode ascendeth up into heven in the blessed body of oure lorde Jesu Crist, and ther is in him, bleding, preying for us to the father, and is and shall be as long as us nedeth. And evermore it floweth in all heaven, enjoying the salvation of all mankind that be ther and shall be, fulfilling the number that faileth.

(Julian of Norwich, Revelation of Love, 167-9)

After receiving and interpreting her fourth vision, in which she sees the body of Christ “plentuously bleding,” Julian of Norwich exhorts her readers to behold and see “the vertu of this precious plenty of his dereworthy blode.” She goes on to explain, as the anaphoric sequence in my epigraph attests, many of the wondrous deeds that his “dereworthy blode” has performed: it delivered from hell those who belong to the court of heaven; it flows over the entire earth, cleansing all of the creatures who inhabit it; it ascended into heaven inside the body of Jesus and continues to bleed within him, praying for all Christians; and, finally, it flows past the bounds of the earth and into heaven, there rejoicing in the salvation that Christ has awarded to humankind. Asking her readers to see these salvational and cleansing accomplishments, inviting everyone to marvel at Christ’s “dereworthy” blood, Julian identifies various forms of blood’s “plentuousnesse.” The “precious plenty” is the plenteous

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1 This and all subsequent quotations are from The Writings of Julian of Norwich: A Vision Shown to a Devout Woman and A Revelation of Love, ed. Nicholas Watson and Jacqueline Jenkins (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006) and are hereafter cited parenthetically by chapter and page number.
physical blood Christ sheds, but it is also, more importantly, the manifold ways through which that blood has cleansed and saved, continues to cleanse and save, and will forever cleanse and save. The “dereworthy” blood is both physically and spiritually plenteous: it is bounteous in terms of its abundance as it pours out of Christ and in terms of its multiple wondrous deeds as it brings the salvation of all Christians.

This twofold abundance is the subject of this chapter. I argued in my previous chapter on *The King of Tars* that blood is the nexus of medical and religious discourse because of its dual role to create and sustain both physical and spiritual life. The present chapter takes up this argument in relation to Julian of Norwich’s *Revelation of Love*, a text whose author explicitly examines the extent to which blood—Christ’s blood, in particular—has both a material presence and a spiritual influence. This convergence of the bodily and the spiritual has, in a broader sense, already been discussed widely in scholarship on Julian’s text and theology. After all, she receives her visions in three manners: bodily sight, ghostly sight, and words formed in her understanding. The distinction between what Julian calls bodily sight and ghostly sight is, as Nicholas Watson has rightly suggested, profoundly unclear. For Watson, the markers of “bodily” and “ghostly” visions are rendered useless by Julian herself, whose bodily visions contain spiritual understandings, and whose ghostly visions contain physical bodies.² The present chapter extends Watson’s argument, which concentrates on the simultaneously bodily and spiritual visions in the abstract, by locating Julian’s revelations around a more specific and tangible locus: blood. In doing so, I offer a

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new perspective on the ways in which Julian constructs her idea of life and reconceptualize her depiction of her own relationship to Christ.

My focus on Julian’s descriptions of the “precious plenty” of Christ’s “dereworthy blode” is designed to recuperate the admirable efforts of two scholars who have previously attempted to argue for the importance of such a focus; namely, Elizabeth Robertson in her essay on medieval medical views of women in the *Revelation* and *Ancrene Wisse* and Alexandra Barratt in her essay on Julian and fifteenth-century gynaecology. They both contend that an analysis of medieval medical discourse can help illuminate Julian’s descriptions of blood and the body, but in both analyses, the connection between Julian’s *Revelation of Love* and medical discourse remains unclear and underdeveloped. Robertson states that the blood of Christ in Julian’s text “evokes” menstrual blood. Barratt pairs Julian’s text with a fifteenth-century gynaecology treatise because, she claims, by virtue of its time and language of composition, it is a treatise with which Julian might have “been familiar.” Although neither argument is fully carried out, both scholars are right to notice a connection between Julian’s language of blood and medieval medical discourse. More recent efforts to elaborate on this connection have been more successful. In her book on the female authority of Julian and Margery Kempe, for example, Liz Herbert McAvoy uncovers

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4 The shortcomings of Robertson’s essay have been extensively noted by David Aers. See Aers and Lynn Staley, *Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996). I do not share Aers’s contention that Julian “sets aside the idea of the ‘feminine’ body entirely” (92 and passim); but he is right to point out the unconvincing nature of Robertson’s argument. As I demonstrated in Chapter Two, menstrual blood was, for medieval medical writers, corrupt and filthy. Although female blood has other good qualities, menstrual blood itself was considered utterly disgusting and potentially dangerous. Robertson’s idea that menstrual blood could be associated with Jesus seems to overlook this crucial medical idea.
the medical implications of Julian’s Jesus-as-mother image. Still more recently, Sarah Allison Miller studies Julian’s Jesus-as-mother motif and the medical language of pseudo-Albertus Magnus in his *De secretis mulierum* within the critical framework of medieval monstrosity.\(^5\) My chapter develops all of these previous arguments by directing attention to Julian’s underexamined depiction of Christ’s bleeding body on the cross. While Julian’s representation of Jesus-as-mother has received much scholarly focus, as Caroline Walker Bynum predicted it would over thirty years ago, it provides, as I show here, only a partial picture of Julian’s conceptualization of Jesus’s body and blood.\(^6\)

I also adopt a more inclusive perspective on medieval medical theories than previous Julian scholars have allowed: I turn not to a gynaecological treatise, but to encyclopaedic treatises, and look not for a medical background, but for a shared medical language. I do not wish to argue, in other words, that Julian might have known a particular Latin treatise despite her (questionable) claim to be “unlettered,” nor do I wish to suggest that her knowledge is restricted to the female body. Julian, as I argue in this chapter, participates in a broader vernacular culture, familiar with both male and female bodies, through her vocabulary of blood. This vocabulary is most notably shared with Henry Daniel in his late fourteenth-century English treatise, the *Liber Uricrisiarum* and with Bartholomaeus Anglicus, whose influential *De proprietatibus rerum* was translated into English by John Trevisa at the end of the fourteenth century. Julian both shares in this vocabulary and

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\(^6\) See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 168. Bynum states that the Jesus-as-mother image, which has been “too long neglected or even repressed by editors and translators” may now be “in danger of receiving more emphasis than it deserves.”
expands it, theorizing blood’s material and spiritual existence and positioning it as the site of bodily and devotional interpretation.

I relate Julian and her work to the works of Henry Daniel and Bartholomaeus Anglicus in what I hope will be a less arbitrary fashion than that employed by Barratt. On one hand, I turn to Daniel and Bartholomaeus because both treatises were available in English and because both are encyclopaedic texts, as opposed to short, specialized pieces. Even more significantly, Daniel and, to some extent, Trevisa are self-conscious vernacular authorities. Like Daniel, as I argued in Chapter One, Trevisa is acutely aware of the potential for translation to shift the locus of intellectual power. These English texts are thus especially relevant points of comparison because they cultivate a similar cultural role as Julian, who will herself claim the status of vernacular authority. Scholars have referred to Julian’s “vernacular theology” since Nicholas Watson’s foundational research. Watson defines vernacular theology as a “catchall” phrase, meant to encompass many different kinds of writing without denying the “intellectual content” of vernacular texts that are habitually considered crude and simple in relation to Latin learning. The sophistication of Julian’s theological and philosophical reflections in her vernacular theology is noted and praised by many scholars. Her authority, Lynn Staley has suggested, is derived from Julian’s ability to “explicate her own vision.” Julian is not only the writer of this text, Staley contends; she

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also “characteriz[es] herself as the exegete,”\textsuperscript{9} the authority who controls her vernacular theology. Like Daniel, Julian, then, gains authority by explaining and interpreting her own ideas, and this chapter shows that these two vernacular authorities—Julian and Daniel—are tied together by their language of blood.

This argument is divided into three sections. In the first, I analyze both the “bodily” and “ghostly” aspects of Julian’s first revelation, arguing that she establishes material blood as the means through which both bodily and spiritual interpretation occur. The second section elucidates the vocabulary of blood shared by Julian’s description of Christ and Henry Daniel’s and Bartholomaeus Anglicus’s descriptions of blood and the body in general. The third section unpacks Julian’s complex conceptualization of the soul and human life, and considers its implications for the physical body. These sections cumulatively suggest the need to reinvestigate a commonplace of Julian scholarship: that she combines an interest in the simultaneously physical and spiritual life of the body. I show that this combination is rooted in the previously unexamined language of blood and medieval medical discourse.

I. Blood and Visions

Julian classifies her first revelation, Christ’s bleeding head, as a bodily sight. At the same time that she endures this bodily sight, Julian also receives the following six ghostly sights: Mary and her wisdom in beholding Jesus; the blissful godhead everlasting; all things made in the quantity of a hazelnut; that all things are made by God for love; that God is all that is

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good; and the “tokens of the blisseful passion and the plentuous shedding of his precious
blode” (8.149). Julian is careful to state that God showed her these additional ghostly sights
“in this sight” (5.141). Julian frequently uses the phrase “in this” to indicate that she has
seen or interpreted something beyond the particular vision she is given. When she later sees
the drying of Christ’s body, for example, she states that “in this drying” she heard the words
“I thirst” and saw in Christ his twofold dryness (17.181). In this vision of physical dryness,
she interprets the second, spiritual dryness of Christ. When Julian says that she saw six
ghostly sights in her first bodily vision, then, she experiences these visions as one,
multifaceted vision: the ghostly sights do not occur at the same time as, but in the bodily.  

If Julian sees these ghostly sights in her initial bodily sight, she sees them not within
a physical body in general, but in Christ’s blood in particular. The bodily vision is Christ’s
bleeding head: she sees the “red bloud trekile down from under the garlande, hote and
freshely, plentuously and lively, right as it was in the time that the garland of thornes was
pressed on his blessed head” (4.135). This trickling enables her six additional visions.
Julian’s distinction between bodily and ghostly visions here is indeed, as Watson has argued,
useless. This distinction is useless not in the sense that it lacks meaning, but rather in the
sense that Julian distinguishes these visions only to ultimately insist that they are all one. As
Staley has stated, Julian demonstrates a rejection of “binary terminology to explain her
spiritual experience,” and her revelations “constantly negotiate the interdependence of the
two realms.”  

Bodily visions, for Julian, are not a means through which she achieves

10 Indeed, Nicholas Watson has perceptively stated that Julian came to see all of her visions as “a single and
teologically integrated revelation.” See Watson: “The Composition of Julian of Norwich’s Revelation of
Love” Speculum 68.3 (1993): 637-83.

11 See Lynn Staley, “Julian of Norwich,” Larry Scanlon, ed. The Cambridge Companion to Middle English
spiritual revelation. Instead, the ghostly occur within the bodily; the spiritual revelations are seen within the physical blood. The sight of Christ’s bleeding head initiates Julian’s interpretive process. It is the physical site at which spiritual interpretation can occur, and the generator of every kind of revelation.

Among the many understandings Julian reaches during this multifaceted vision is, as quoted above, the “tokens of the blisseful passion and the plentuous shedinge of his precious blode” (8.149). In saying that she came to understand the “tokens,” the symbolic signs of the blood she sees in bodily sight, Julian already implies that this seemingly singular vision in fact has multiple significations. She goes on to interpret these tokens, explaining that Christ’s blood is like all the waters that flow over the earth. He has provided these waters to satiate and cleanse all people, but, Julian asserts, he prefers that people satisfy their thirst and cleanse themselves in his blood rather than in water. In the bodily sight of physical blood, Julian thus sees the spiritual significance of that blood, not just for Jesus, but for herself and all her “even Christians.”

Julian’s interpretation comprises only part of the symbolic valences for her bodily vision. The blood she sees signifies Christ’s salvific power and his desire that people cleanse themselves continuously with his blood, and his blood also initiates Julian’s six ghostly understandings outlined at the beginning of this section. The multifaceted nature of the blood Julian sees is thus emblematic of the multifaceted nature of her vision as a whole. In her bodily vision of Christ’s bleeding head, Julian also sees several ghostly visions; and in

12 In prioritizing Julian’s own interpretive process, I am following the critical prompt of Michelle Karnes, who has recently explored the hermeneutical tools employed by Julian in the long text, with a particular focus on what she sees as discord between vision and interpretation. Although I do not share Karnes’s view that Julian’s interpretations do not seem to stem “intuitively” from her visions, I am indebted to her claim that Julian dramatizes the process of interpretation, thus making visible not just the “lesson” of her interpretation, but also the “path.” See Karnes: “Julian of Norwich’s Art of Interpretation,” JMEMS 42.2 (2012): 333-364.
the physical significance of Christ’s blood, Julian also perceives the spiritual significance of that blood. Just as her bodily sight has meaning beyond the realm of the physical, making it difficult to determine what is “bodily” and what is “ghostly,” the blood she sees contains symbolic signification beyond the substance of Christ’s physical blood. The blood of Julian’s first revelation, in other words, functions in the same way as that revelation in and of itself. Blood is the site at which Julian’s spiritual interpretation can occur, the generator of bodily and spiritual revelations, because it provides a hermeneutical model for that very kind of twofold interpretation.

This idea that Christ’s blood has both a physical and spiritual significance is, on one hand, quite commonplace. As I mentioned in my previous chapter, the Christian ritual of communion relies on this twofold signification of blood. People who receive the host receive, in turn, the body and blood of Christ; as they receive the body and blood of Christ, they are physically imbued with Christian revelation. On the other hand, however, this dual role of blood requires further examination in an argument about Julian of Norwich. Vincent Gillespie has argued that in Revelation of Love, blood in fact denies its own materiality: blood “effaces its own physicality” in Julian’s description of Christ’s body becoming covered entirely in blood, appearing as though his body “were all blode” (12.167). Since this image vanishes nearly as soon as it appears, Gillespie argues, it is an apophatic surface to which Julian retrospectively assigns a physical meaning that was never really there. We do not see the consequences of this image (i.e. there is no blood on her bed) in the same way that we do not receive the expected linear Passion narrative. The blood denies its materiality, Gillespie maintains, as it disrupts the linear and the temporal.13

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It is not my intention to invert Gillespie’s claim and argue that blood is figured only as material in *Revelation of Love*, nor do I want to challenge Staley’s claim that Julian’s categorization of the bodily does not make physical reality a stepping stone toward spiritual significance. But I do argue that blood does not deny its materiality; rather, it insists upon its simultaneous existence in both the material and spiritual realm of signification. The moment to which Gillespie refers is the fourth revelation, described in chapter twelve. Julian explains:

And after this I saw, beholding, the body plentuously bleding in seming of the scorging, as thus: the fair skinne was broken full depe into the tender flesh, with sharpe smitinges all about the sweete body. The hote blode ranne out so plentuously that ther was neither seen skinne ne wounde, but as it were all blode. And when it cam wher it shuld have falle downe, ther it vanished. Notwithstanding, the bleding continued a while till it might be seen with avisement. And this was so plentuous to my sight that methought, if it had ben so in kinde and in substance for that time, it shulde have made the bedde all on bloude, and have passed over all about.

(12.167)

It is difficult to determine how Christ’s blood, flowing out of his body to make it appear as though it is “all blode” – that is, made entirely of blood—here denies its materiality. By contrast, Julian seems to relegate Christ’s blood, in this passage, to the realm of the physical. The body bleeds profusely from the scourging Christ endured, his skin is torn deeply into his flesh, there are sharp smitings all over his body; the blood is hot and flows so copiously that Christ’s wounds are no longer visible, only blood.

To be sure, Julian explains that her bed would have been covered in blood “if it had ben so in kinde and in substance,” suggesting that this plenteous blood does not actually exist in such a form. This is a spiritual vision, not a bodily one. But just because a vision is

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experienced by Julian in her ghostly sight does not mean that the content of that vision exists solely in the spiritual realm. This vision presents a case where the division between the bodily and the spiritual is indeed useless, because it is signified in both realms. Although the blood does not exist “in substance” for Julian, it has a purely material existence within the vision itself. This is a vision in which Julian understands the salvific power of the precious plenty of Christ’s dereworthy blood; before she reaches this understanding, however, this vision is an image of that blood in its material form as it flows out of Christ’s tortured body. Even the spiritual truth of this vision relies on an understanding of the material truth of Christ’s blood. When outlining her interpretation, Julian, as shown in the epigraph to this chapter, says that it is the blood that descends into hell and delivers those who rightfully belong in heaven. It is the blood that flows over all the earth to wash creatures clean of their sins. It is the blood that ascends into heaven inside of Christ’s body and continues to flow within him. It is the blood that flows throughout heaven, and enjoys the salvation of mankind. This metonymy may be sustained only if one accepts the actual, physical reality of Christ’s blood.

Julian presents her second revelation in a similar way. Here, she sees in her bodily sight the face of Christ changing colour with pain and with blood. Like the blood she saw flowing from his head in her earlier showing, the vision of Christ’s bloodied face “vanished in this party, even as it cam” (7.159). The sudden, or immediate, disappearance of this image takes nothing away from the materiality of the blood within it, for this vision causes Julian to recall the vernacle of Rome: the veil with which Veronica wiped sweat from Christ’s visage, and which was thought to be imprinted with an image of his face.14 The bodily sight

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14 For Katie L. Walter, this interpretation is signified in layers of physicality. She writes of this vision in the introduction to her edited collection, Reading Skin in Medieval Literature and Culture (New York: Palgrave
might have faded away, but it brings to Julian’s mind another image of a physical object that serves as a constant reminder of Christ’s material existence, preserving the image of his human face. In her interpretation of this vision, moreover, Julian interprets this vision with an emphatically physical language as she describes in detail the changing colours of Christ’s face. Shifting the focus from the sweat that Veronica was thought to wipe off to the constant presence of blood on his face, Julian muses about how people marveled at “the brownhead and the blackhead, rewlyhead and leenhead of this image,” wondering how Christ’s face could be “so discolourede and so farre from fairhead” (7.159). The image disappeared as quickly as it came, but Julian returns to its physical aspects in her interpretation, adding details about colouration that she had not provided in her initial description of it. Christ’s face is not an apophatic vision for Julian because her interpretation, far from being spiritual alone, is instead grounded in physical terms.

The language Julian uses to describe the image of Jesus’s face is reminiscent of the language used by Henry Daniel both in terms of substance and in terms of style. As I have argued elsewhere, words with the suffix, “-head” appear with particular profusion in Daniel’s treatise.15 Many of the words ending in this suffix—including, significantly, “blackhead” and “leenhead”—seem to have their first recorded occurrence in the Liber Uricrisiarum.16 Julian’s list of terms is stylistically similar to Daniel’s writing in other ways

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16 There is no entry in the MED or OED for “leenhead,” or, as Daniel spells it, “lenehed.” MED, sv. “blahed,” c. 1425. See also Sarah Star, “MS HM 505: Henry Daniel, Medieval English Medicine and Linguistic
as well. In Chapter One I demonstrated how Daniel’s synonym lists and doublets signal his
distinct vernacular style.¹⁷ Emily Steiner has argued that John Trevisa’s doublets in his
translation of Ranulf Higden’s *Polychronicon* demonstrate his vernacular aesthetic, and
scholars since at least J. D. Burnley have associated doublets with the curial style of English
translators.¹⁸ Here, Julian seems to be doing something similar. Though not exact synonyms,
she too provides doublets of descriptive words (“brownhead and blackhead,” “rewlyhead
and leenhead”) in order to paint the clearest possible picture of the image before her. The
physicality of Julian’s language is thus twofold: it is grounded in physical concepts and
descriptions, and it is linked stylistically to Henry Daniel along with the broader culture of
medieval English translation. The physicality of the image of Jesus is not effaced—rather it
is affirmed—in Julian’s language.

If Jesus is the Word made flesh, Julian carries this fleshly manifestation of the Word
into her descriptions and interpretations of these two visions. She gives the Christian Word a
physical locus in Christ’s blood. Blood cannot efface its own physicality because for Julian,
and the Christian tradition she represents, the material blood carries the spiritual truth of
Christian revelation. Her visions as a whole and the blood she sees within them have an
existence that is simultaneously material and spiritual. Like *The King of Tars*, in which Jon
and Cleopas receive new physical forms as they receive Christian revelation, Julian’s
*Revelation of Love* locates spiritual life in physical blood. Christ’s blood signifies in the

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¹⁷ See Chapter One, “Writing not ‘newe þinges,’ but ‘newely’: Henry Daniel and Medieval English Literary
Culture,” 38-39.

¹⁸ Emily Steiner, “Encyclopedic Style: Trevisa’s Literary Prose,” plenary talk at the Canada Chaucer Seminar
held at the University of Toronto in 2015. See also J. D. Burnley, “Curial Prose in England,” *Speculum* 61.3
realm of both the physical and the spiritual and, like the visions themselves, cannot be categorized as belonging solely to one realm or the other; its physical and spiritual existence is inextricable.

II. Medical Vocabulary

Julian’s descriptions of blood operate in a similar manner to those of her visions themselves: they render blood’s physical and spiritual existence inseparable. This inextricability is registered on the linguistic level: a vision is labelled “bodily” or “ghostely” while the vision itself constantly negotiates both realms. It becomes difficult to tell what is in fact experienced in bodily sight and in ghostly sight, what Julian believes to be “bodily” experience and “ghostely” experience.\(^{19}\) Blood, like these visions, has both a physical and spiritual presence. But the language used to describe material blood is profoundly physical. She describes blood in terms of its temperature, its location in the body, its colour, and its complexion. It may signify in both interpretive realms, but blood is described by a vocabulary that is shared with medieval medical discourse.

In the fourth revelation outlined above, Julian claims that she sees the “hote blode” (12.167) run out of Jesus’s body, just as she had earlier stated in the first revelation that the blood flowing from his head was “hote and freshely” (4.137). She only sees this blood in her spiritual and bodily sight, and yet she knows that it is hot, a detail that implies such hotness

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\(^{19}\) Many scholars have discussed Julian’s debt to and adaptation of St. Augustine’s conceptualization of bodily and spiritual sense. Most recently, for example, Michael Raby has considered the relationship between Julian and Augustine in his discussion of the “phenomenology of attention.” For Raby’s argument and a useful bibliography concerning other studies of Julian and Augustine, see Raby, “The Phenomenology of Attention in Julian of Norwich’s Revelation of Love,” *Exemplaria* 26.4 (2014): 347-67. I do not mean to dismiss Julian’s connection to Augustine in this paper; rather, I aim to focus on how her own theories work within her text and within the broader vernacular culture that includes English medicine.
is an inherent quality of blood. She does not have to feel it to know that it is hot; she knows it is hot because it is blood. Julian’s descriptions of this “hote” blood are coterminous with the characterization of blood in humoural theory: blood is the humour that is hot and moist. The humoural definition is a medieval commonplace: Julian does not need to explain to her readers why this blood is hot, nor does she justify this description. She knows blood is inherently hot, and she implies that her readers will likewise recognize this humoural definition. In revealing part of blood’s physical properties, Julian simultaneously emphasizes Christ’s physical existence and the physicality of her visions. This is not a symbol of blood but a real, material presence of the hot humour.

Julian wrote of blood’s material presence more explicitly in the first revelation, assigning Christ’s blood a specific physical locus. After she describes the “gostely” sights she here received, Julian returns to the image of Christ’s bleeding head, and insists that this bodily sight lasted throughout the entire duration of her several ghostly ones. “The gret droppes of blode felle downe fro under the garlonde like pelottes,” she explains, “seming as it had comen oute of the veines” (7.147). Julian, who specifically connects Christ’s blood to his veins as opposed to, say, his arteries, applies a familiar, late medieval understanding of the internal workings of the body: veins carry blood throughout the body to the head (as opposed to the heart, as we now know), and blood of the vein is distinct from the blood elsewhere in the body. In doing so, she suggests that there are particular, distinguishing features attributed to blood of the vein.

This idea that blood of the vein has particular features intersects with medieval medical discourse. In the *Liber Uricrisiarum*, for example, Henry Daniel explains to his readers:

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20 This is an opinion commonly held by medieval medical writers, including Henry Daniel and Bartholomaeus Anglicus, since Galen. Blood is hot and moist; phlegm is cold and moist; bile is hot and dry; and melancholy is cold and dry.
readers that there is a crucial distinction between veins and arteries. Although both veins and arteries carry blood, Daniel states, “every arterie is a veyne but not ayenward” (2.9. fol. 49v). Arteries are special veins that tie the heart to the liver (2.1. fol. 33r), while veins “arn weyres of blood and the places of blood, and the goteres of blood, and the vesselis of blood” (2.9. fol. 49v). For Daniel, it is important that his readers learn this distinction because veins and arteries have very different functions and work with different parts of the body. For Bartholomaeus Anglicus, whose encyclopaedia, *On the Properties of Things*, was translated into English by Daniel’s contemporary, John Trevisa, it is important to learn the distinction between arteries and veins because the blood carried in each vessel is different. Blood in the arteries, Bartholomaeus explains, is hotter because of its proximity to the heart, thinner, and clearer than other blood; it is sweet, but sharper than other blood. The blood of the veins, he continues, is also hot, medium thin, and “ful swete in savour” (4.150). This discourse overlaps with Julian who claims, with similar precision, that Christ’s blood seems to come from a specific type of vessel: it “comen oute of the veins,” and nowhere else. Rather than an innocuous observation, as medieval English medicine helps us see, Julian’s detail about the vein is deliberately offered, and it unearths her place in another, and not strictly devotional, tradition of bodily signification.

Julian’s suggestion about Christ’s blood is borne out by her descriptions of its physical appearance. Like all blood, Christ’s is hot, but it also seems to be particularly sweet. Julian describes the sweetness of various parts of Christ’s body only after they have been covered in, or touched by, his blood. In the fourth revelation, for instance, Julian beholds the “body plentuously bleding” as his skin is torn to the flesh; Christ’s body is now

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21 The difference between veins and arteries is outlined in Chapter Two, “‘The stat of lyf prinspally’: Blood and Medieval English Medicine,” pp. 76-77.
his “swete body” as it appears to be neither “skinne ne wounde, but as it were all blode” (12.167). In the eighth revelation, she gazes as the wounds grow wide on Christ’s “swete handes” and “swete feet” (17.181), and she suffers as she sees the “persing and rasing of the heed, and binding of the crowne, alle baken with drye blode, with the swete heer clinging the drye flesh to the thornes” (17.181). Even more than this, Julian exclaims, she saw the “swete skinne” with the hair and “with the blode,” torn apart on his body (17.181). The blood has left Christ’s body, leaving it dry and in pain, but as it flows over his hands, feet, hair, and skin these external parts of him become sweet. This sweetness applies both to particular parts of Christ, and to his body as a whole. Earlier in the eighth revelation, Julian refers to the “swete body” of Christ four times and his “swete flesh” three times as she describes his slow drying (16.179). She observes how this drying changes the outer appearance of Christ’s body, which begins to change colour. Here, Christ is actually losing—if not entirely drained of—his blood. As it flows out of his body and prompts his drying, it touches these various parts, even, at times, drying on them. The contact these external parts have with blood seems to make them, in turn, sweet.

Julian’s descriptions of Christ’s “sweet” blood can be considered affective, of course. But this term also figures in the encyclopaedias of Bartholomaeus Anglicus and Henry Daniel: there is a medical valence to this typically affective sentiment. According to Bartholomaeus, as noted above, blood of the veins is known to be especially sweet. Daniel, like Julian, gestures toward blood’s sweetness while explaining other concepts. He states, for example, that there is such a thing as sweet phlegm (“fleuma dulce, the swet Flem”), which is so called “becawse that it is mixt with the blood” (2.23. fol. 82v). Similarly, Daniel explains that gout caused by blood can be recognized by a sense of sweetness in the mouth
Blood of the vein and sweet blood are as much the province of late medieval encyclopaedists as of a late medieval mystic. Just as the symptoms in a patient’s body can be known by vein blood and its sweetness, so too does Christ’s body become “sweet” once it has been touched by his blood.

Despite this shared terrain, Julian’s language of blood’s colour and consistency moves beyond the language of her medical contemporaries. Bartholomaeus Anglicus explains that blood often “changþ kinde and colour” (4.149) when it combines with other humours. Blood of the arteries and blood of the veins, more specifically, differ slightly in colour and consistency: blood of the arteries tends to be thin and clear, and “more red” than other blood. He does not name the exact colour of blood of the veins, but does explain that it is of medium consistency, “mene bitwene boistous and sotile,” but “anon as it is out of þe body, anon it renneþ and turneþ it cloddes” (4.150). Julian develops this language of colour and consistency in chapter seven, when she reminds her readers that she beheld Christ’s bleeding head while experiencing several other ghostly sights. His blood seemed as though it had come from the veins, “And in the coming oute they [i.e. the drops of blood] were browne rede, for the blode was full thicke. And in the spredinge abrode they were bright rede” (7.147). As the blood flows out of Christ’s body, it is brown red, and not bright red, because it is thick, and not thin; it is not the thin, clear, “more red” blood of the arteries. The more it flows out of his body, the more it turns into a red that is bright, not brown, and not “clodded.” For Bartholomaeus Anglicus, this blood should turn into “cloddes,” and, indeed, Julian does later describe Christ’s hair as “alle baken with drye blode” (17.181). At this point, however, the blood continues to flow rather than drying and turning to “cloddes”; it
becomes more bright and lively rather than dark and dry. This blood, as Julian describes it, does not—or indeed *cannot*—decay or die: it lives on in order to provide life for others.

Caroline Walker Bynum has argued that Julian’s description of Christ’s shed blood as bright red “underlines the paradox of ‘issued’ yet ‘living’.” This paradox—that blood signifies both life and death—is one that Bynum considers central to medieval blood piety. Whereas *sanguis* denotes blood within the body and is the “seat of life,” *cruor* is blood that flows out and becomes separate from the body, and indicates life’s end.22 Christ’s blood is both *sanguis* and *cruor*, at once alive and dying, a signal for the continuation of life even as its shedding indicates bodily death. The terms Julian uses to describe Christ’s blood (hot, fresh, lively, and red) are, Bynum explains, crucial components of much medieval devotional theology. In the Middle English *Prickynge of Love* (also cited by Bynum), the bloodshed at Christ’s crucifixion is described as “als hot… als fresch.” In this sense, then, Julian’s description of Christ’s hot, flowing, living blood joins a larger medieval theological tradition in which Christ’s blood symbolizes both his human death and his continued, or recommenced, life.

Julian’s place in this larger theological tradition dovetails with her relationship to medical treatises like the *Liber Uricrisiarum* or *De proprietatibus rerum*. As Joan Cadden demonstrates in *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages*, medicine and religion were not competing fields; rather, they existed simultaneously and alongside each other, as “distinct yet overlapping” discourses.23 Julian’s *Revelation of Love*, I argue, exemplifies this

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dynamic at work. Her descriptions of sweet blood from the vein share a vocabulary with her vernacular medical contemporaries, while her comments about Christ’s blood as a signal of life and death intersect with a tradition of theological interpretation. Medical discourse is not simply a stepping stone to theological discourse, nor was Julian just as familiar with medical traditions as she was with theological ones.\(^2\) Instead, Julian’s descriptions of Christ’s blood demonstrate Cadden’s salient—yet often ignored—point from more than twenty years ago, that medicine was not at war with other discourses in the Middle Ages. Julian shows that the vocabulary for blood’s appearance and functions in medical treatises is not relegated to them: it spread throughout medieval English writings, and was not confined to a necessarily ‘elite’ and ‘learned’ Latinate culture.

Julian’s relation to medical and theological representations of blood and her engagement with the important paradox of blood as both dying and vivifying are registered in the relationship between her descriptions of Christ’s blood and her interpretation of what that blood signifies. She notes in chapter twelve that Christ appears to be “all blode,” for example, and then subjects this statement to her exegesis:

> Than cam to my minde that God hath made waters plentuous in erth to our servys, and to our bodely eese, for tender love that he hath to us. But yet liketh him better that we take full holsomly his blessed blode to wash us of sinne, for ther is no licour that is made that liketh him so wele to geve us. For it is most plentuous, as it is most precious, and that by the vertu of the blessed godhead. And it is our owne kinde, and alle blissefully overfloweth us by the vertu of his precious love. The dereworthy bloude of our Lord Jhesu Crist, also verely as it is most precious, as verely as it is most plenteous.  
> (12.167)

\(^2\) Here I am in line with the methodology employed by Vincent Gillespie in “The Colours of Contemplation: Less Light on Julian of Norwich,” E.A. Jones, ed. *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England (VIII)* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013), 7-28. Gillespie explores the ways in which Julian seems indebted to medieval theories of vision and light. He also contends that this comparison does not necessarily mean that Julian knew these theories; by contrast, he claims that this new approach to reading Julian may in fact show that “there is less light on Julian than we might expect” (9).
She moves from the realm of the symbolic (blood represents the waters flowing on the earth) back to the realm of the physical (but Christ really wants us to wash our sins with his blood). Her interpretation of the symbolic valence of Christ’s physical blood ultimately considers blood-as-blood and not just blood-as-water. God takes the greatest delight in giving people cleansing blood, not in giving people cleansing water. Blood, Julian explains, is the most plenteous and precious fluid there is.

The simultaneously physical and spiritual nature of the blood that God delights to bestow is captured by Julian’s term “vertu.” Blood is most plenteous and precious because of the “vertu” of the blessed godhead, and it overflows in us by way of the “vertu” of God’s love. In the Liber Uricrisiarum, Daniel uses the term “vertu” frequently, usually synonymously with “myght,” and most often in reference to the strength of “kynde” in the body. Rather than denoting virtue in our contemporary sense, the word signifies a physical and physiological vitality. For Daniel, it applies to the connection between the liver and the blood. In the first book of the treatise, Daniel explains that it is through the “vertu” of the liver that the humours are “caused and wroght,” and, accordingly, it is through the “vertu” of the liver that the health of the blood and the body can be determined. Daniel’s focus on the liver in particular and of our “kynde” in general here insists that “vertu” has a physical existence that is intimately connected to blood and its bodily functions. He does not

25 Daniel typically pairs these words together. See, for example, in the Liber Uricrisiarum: 1.2. fol. 1v; 1.4. fol. 4r; 1.7. fol. 12v; 1.10. fol. 18r; 1.14. fol. 30v; 2.9. fol. 51r (x2); 2.23. fol. 80v; 2.41. fol. 103r (x2); 2.41. fol. 103v; 2.49. fol. 106r; 3.4. fol. 137v; 3.18. fol. 154r.

26 See Daniel, Liber Uricrisiarum, 1.2. fol. 1v.

27 The physical nature of “vertu” as described by Bartholomaeus Anglicus and present in the writing of Christine de Pizan has been explored by Suzanne Conklin Akbari, “Death as Metamorphosis in the Devotional and Political Allegory of Christine de Pizan,” Jill Ross and Suzanne Conklin Akbari, ed. The Ends of the Body: Identity and Community in Medieval Culture (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 283-314.
explicitly assign a spiritual valence to “vertu” here, but as we will recall from Chapter Two, this valence is always already implicit in his descriptions of blood.

The *MED* entry for the term shows that, as well as its connection to divine power, “vertu” refers to physical power, and relates to the functioning of the body. Julian’s use of the term to describe Christ’s plenteous and precious blood, shares a language with Daniel, making explicit the spiritual significance of “vertu” that was for him only implicit. In Daniel’s treatise, “vertu” describes our “kynde,” which is for Julian a “kynde” that all people share with Christ. For Julian, however, the “vertu” of God’s love and of the precious godhead allows us to share this “kynde” with Christ and makes Christ’s blood plenteous. Instead of describing the physical “vertu” of Christ’s blood, she pronounces the divine “vertu” that gave Christ’s blood its material existence. Her use of the term still evokes its physiological implications: the “vertu” of God’s love and of the godhead in general makes Christ’s blood recognizable as “our owne kinde.” Julian connects Christ’s physical blood and its spiritual role in God’s “vertu.” It is in this “vertu” that Julian—and, in turn, all her “even Christians”—can see the material reality of Christ’s blood and experience God’s love. When Julian exhorts her readers to “behold and see the vertu of this precious plenty of his dereworthy blode” (12.167), she thus encourages them to perceive its simultaneously physical and spiritual vitality. She is asking people to witness the most plenteous and precious of God’s material creations: they should behold God’s love for humankind as they behold the “vertu” of Christ’s blood.

Julian reminds her readers that this blood, which has cleansing power and exists as a precious plenty, is “our owne kinde”: it is the same substance in “our” bodies, the same

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28 *MED* sv. “vertu, n.”
substance that gives life. Julian’s connection between the physical and spiritual presence of blood offers a potential resolution to the paradox outlined by Bynum, in which Christ’s blood indicates his dying and is yet, somehow, “lively.” Christ’s blood, that is, still has the capacity to sustain the lives of his followers even as it causes his own death. Julian is here working with the ideas of blood as kinship and blood as sacrifice: in Christ, these two ideas of blood meet. At the same time that it has a material existence in Christ’s human body and shows the gradual decay of that body, his blood is also “lively” because it serves to cleanse Christians of their sins, thus preserving and restoring their spiritual lives. Christ’s blood represents death and life: his life continues even after he dies, and the vivifying blood that flows from his body will live on in all his Christian followers. The fluid that runs through Christian veins is the same fluid that continually flows out of Christ’s body, the same fluid that washes and nourishes “our” spiritual life. For Julian, physical blood does not symbolize spiritual blood; it is spiritual blood.29

The importance of physical language in Revelation of Love has been considered by previous scholars. Both Robertson and Barratt have, for example, thought of Julian’s visions of Christ in relation to the female body and medieval gynaecology. For Robertson, Julian’s description of Christ’s blood as a purge aligns it with menstrual blood and blood shed in the loss of virginity, which gives, in turn, a physical reality to his ‘femaleness’ as a mother. Barratt, who arrives at a similar conclusion about Christ’s physical maternity by a different route, suggests that Julian could have known the gynaecological Knowing of Woman’s Kind

29 This reasoning is not unusual to Julian, who also insists, as Brant Pelphrey has shown, that Jesus’s face does not symbolize the Trinity; rather, the entire Trinity is present when Jesus is present. Likewise, I argue, the spiritual significance of Christ’s blood is not symbolized in his physical blood; rather, it is present in it. See Pelphrey: “Leaving the Womb of Christ: Love, Doomsday, and Space/Time in Julian of Norwich and Eastern Orthodox Mysticism,” Julian of Norwich: A Book of Essays, 291-320.
in Childing, a treatise that for Barratt chimes with Julian’s corporeal representation of Jesus-as-mother. Both arguments about the body (and blood) of Christ resonate with a point made by Bynum. For Bynum, Christ’s “gushing” blood, though not necessarily reminiscent of the loss of virginity or of menstruation, is “clearly related” to the image of Jesus-as-mother because it is analogous to the blood shed during childbirth. Extending the arguments of Robertson and Bynum, McAvoy suggests that Julian draws a connection between Christ’s bleeding and her sickbed, which creates a connection, in turn, between Christ’s blood and female blood-loss, “whether ruptured hymen, menstrual flow, or blood-loss associated with childbirth.” For McAvoy, it is the sickbed that then allows for Julian to present Christ as “subtly feminised.”

Such scholarly focus on the physicality of Christ’s maternity usually supports arguments that blood, whether of Christ specifically or of people in general, is gendered. Whereas Robertson and McAvoy think that women like Julian may identify Christ in their own bodies, Bynum suggests that Julian allows all humanity to lie inside God’s womb. The difference for Bynum is that these details of Christ’s body and blood, rather than rendering him physically feminine or relatable to female devotees, operate on a purely symbolic level, and lead Julian toward her ultimate conceptualization of Jesus-as-mother. Instead of being explicitly gendered feminine, Bynum argues, Christ’s blood implicitly analogizes women’s blood in its cleansing, nourishing, and generative functions.

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30 For Robertson’s argument, see “Medieval Medical Views of Women and Female Spirituality,” 154-5; for Barratt’s, see “In the Lowest Part of Our Need,” 239-56.


Julian’s descriptions of Christ’s blood, I have argued, are indeed registered in physical and not just in purely symbolic terms, but my position is still closer to Bynum’s than to Robertson’s or to Barratt’s. The physiological language of Christ’s blood, and its physical reality to Julian is, I think, quite clear, but this does not mean that Christ’s life-giving body is necessarily gendered ‘feminine’. My argument, which thinks through Jesus’s bleeding on the cross, opens up a more bifurcated response to gender than the traditional concentration on Jesus-as-mother has allowed.\(^\text{33}\) Bynum treats the connection between Christ’s blood and motherhood as purely symbolic in the anthropological sense of a cultural symbol that represents a particular concept in late medieval society. But Christ’s blood and motherhood, I argue, is also symbolic in a literary sense. Julian applies two interpretations to Christ’s gushing blood, suggesting first that it resembles all the water on earth and is meant for people to wash themselves clean of sin and, second, that it is of “our owne kinde,” or physiologically equal to ours. Christ’s gushing blood cleans sin and proves his common, and not specifically gendered, humanity. Rather than indicating his maternity alone, Christ’s blood, as Julian’s interpretation has it, shows that he is like everyone in the flesh.

Bynum has argued that the symbolic significance of this episode resonates with Julian’s later image of all people resting in God’s womb. In this case, Christ’s bloodshed does not indicate his potential ‘femininity,’ but rather his humanity more generally; it does not indicate his relationship with women in particular, but with all people, all of Julian’s “even Christians.” The power of his blood to create and sustain life in other people has a clear symbolic connection to motherhood, and yet Julian seems to resist this connection here. Although she describes the spiritual power of his blood as a life-giving fluid, she

\(^{33}\) Tarjei Park also focuses on this first revelation in “Reflecting Christ: The Role of the Flesh in Walter Hilton and Julian of Norwich,” _The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England_ (V), 17-37. Park’s aim is to demonstrate key differences between Hilton and Julian. Although our focus is similar, our arguments are unrelated.
insists that his blood establishes a link between Christ and everyone, not between Christ and women. The description of Christ’s flowing blood bears out significance in its own textual moment—on its own terms—and its local importance should not be effaced for its later connection to the more famous image of Jesus-as-mother. Christ can be physiologically feminine, but Julian also makes him, perhaps more importantly, physiologically human, and thus connects him to all people, male and female. Julian’s Jesus-as-mother image is certainly important to her conception of her own relationship to Christ, but her other descriptions of his body can also produce new insights into her visions and interpretations. The blood that flows from Christ’s body, in short, bears significance in its own textual moment, beyond its possible relation to a later image.

Christ’s blood, which links him to and benefits all people, has an emphatically material presence for Julian: it is “our owne kinde.” This blood that she sees flow from Christ’s body is real, and its physical existence is something that Christ shares with everyone: the fluid courses through everyone’s veins, and redeems all of their sins. Rather than symbolizing something else in a strictly spiritual realm of signification, this blood is at once material and spiritual—a simultaneity that marks an important facet of Julian’s piety, and that emblematizes her visions as a whole. Just as Julian renders her bodily visions inextricable from her ghostly ones, so too does she render the physical blood of the human Christ inextricable from its spiritual power. As with her visions, Julian insists on the materiality—here the physical presence of blood in Christ’s body—only to then suggest that it also performs a spiritual function.

The vocabulary Julian shares with Daniel and Bartholomaeus is an integral part of her spiritual revelation. Rather than having physical blood give way to its spiritual
significance in cleansing sin, Julian shows that the spiritual significance of Christ’s blood is always already in its material existence. For her, Christ’s blood represents and sustains physical life at the same time that it preserves spiritual life: his physical blood leads Julian toward its spiritual function only insofar as the spiritual does not exist without the physical. More than exhibiting a symbolic relationship to her images of Jesus-as-mother, Julian’s representation of Christ’s blood encapsulates her entire revelatory experience.

Julian’s representation of blood is not identical to the representation of blood in The King of Tars. Her focus is entirely different: whereas The King of Tars uses blood to characterize the distinction between Christians and ‘Saracens,’ Julian uses blood to capture one commonality between Christ and his followers. In The King of Tars, Christian revelation provides formerly Saracen bodies with blood, which then nourishes physical and spiritual life, and provides the new devotee with bodily form. In Revelation of Love, by contrast, the blood, along with its physical and spiritual significance, belongs to Jesus himself whose human form is the model for all people. But if Christ’s material blood, for Julian, unites him with everyone through shared bodily experience, it also represents the Christian dependence on him: his fresh and lively blood, at once dying and giving life, is what his devotees need to sustain their own lives and gain redemption for their sins. These spiritual functions are unique to Christ: the physical existence of his blood attests the bodily form that relates him to humankind, while his spiritual blood uniquely saves all humans and gives them life. Christ’s blood is vital to Julian’s revelation: it generates her revelatory experience, and provides the site at which her interpretation can occur. It may well be a synecdoche for Revelation of Love. Like all Julian’s visions and her interpretations of them, Christ’s blood is not just for her physical and spiritual life alone: it is for all her even Christians.
III. The Soul

Christ’s humanity and his divinity are one, and as I have suggested, this inextricably physical and spiritual being is located in his blood. In her seminal study of Julian’s work, Denise Nowakowski Baker similarly links the bodily and the spiritual, and argues that Julian “regards the human person as a union of body and soul.”34 This idea has since been recapitulated and extended in different ways, most notably by Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt and Denys Turner.35 I share Baker’s position that Julian portrays Jesus as everyone, not just as a singular mother or woman, and that she thereby “reconceives the essential self as the complete humanity of male and female, body and soul.”36

But I have echoed this scholarly tradition to develop a novel variation on it. None of these previous scholars has rooted such physical and spiritual simultaneity specifically in Christ’s blood, nor have they shown the relationship between Julian’s representation of blood and those found in contemporary medical treatises. The exegetical and linguistic practices in Revelation of Love, I have argued, are even more capacious than we have previously recognized: Julian’s vocabulary of physical blood intersects with and builds on that of vernacular medical writing; such medical terminology permeates the intellectual culture of late medieval England. Blood is Julian’s revelation: it propels and contains her


35 See Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt, Julian of Norwich and the Mystical Body Politic of Christ (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), esp. 145-53, 108-13; see also Denys Turner: Julian of Norwich: Theologian (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), esp. 167-204. The idea that a person is the union of body and soul is a fundamentally Aristotelian position, as all these scholars point out. It became standard in medieval theological writings, as Bynum suggests in Wonderful Blood, 161-168.

36 Baker, Julian of Norwich’s Showings, 134.
visions, it enables her exegesis, and it distills the dual nature of her entire revelatory experience.

These arguments can, at least at first glance, seem paradoxical. The idea that physicality is at all important to Julian seems in tension with her conceptualization of the soul. Unlike the un-created God himself, the soul is, for Julian, a created thing: it is made, but it is also “made of nought” (53.295). Julian may here provide her variation on a commonplace of medieval theology that stretches at least as far back as Augustine: the soul creates the life of the body but is itself not a body. As we saw in Chapter Two, this is the medical definition of the soul as well: it is incorporeal and thus cannot have a singular physical location within the body. The soul, Julian insists also, lacks materiality: it does not have a physical existence, and yet it is God’s wish that we know the soul is itself “a life” (53.295). How can a soul, without material being, also be rightly called a “life,” a word that for Julian signifies the amalgamation of soul and body? The final section of this chapter unpacks this apparent paradox, which scholarship has yet to make sufficiently intelligible. Julian’s complex theories of life and the soul, I argue, suggests that spiritual life can only be understood, and can only be signified, in conjunction with its physical counterpart.

Julian prevents us from tracing a clear outline of the soul both with the intricacies of her meditations on it and with her declaration on the limitations of self-knowledge: she

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37 As Edmund Colledge and James Walsh note in their commentary on the long text, Julian here seems to echo the construction in John 1.3: Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est (All things were made by him, and without him was made nothing that was made). See Colledge and Walsh, ed. A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich, vol. ii (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978), 558. Bible quotations are from Angela M. Kinney, ed. The Vulgate Bible, vol. vi, The New Testament. Douay-Rheims translation (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013).

38 Colledge and Walsh suggest that this sentiment derives from Augustine’s Enarrationes in Psalmos, 74. 9 or, more appropriately to my mind, Confessions III 7. See A Book of Showings, ed. Colledge and Walsh, p. 571.

39 The definition of the soul, and its distinction from the spirit, are outlined in Chapter Two, “‘The stat of lyf prinspally,’” pp. 78-85.
states that people cannot know their own souls until they first come to know God. Knowledge of the human, she suggests, is as equally “endlessly tresored” (56.301) as the soul itself. These epistemological hindrances notwithstanding, Julian devotes several chapters to the composition of the soul and its role in human existence. Grace Jantzen, and, following her lead, Baker, Bauerschmidt, and Turner have all explored various aspects of Julian’s description of the soul, paying particular attention to her explanation of substance and sensuality.40 The soul is comprised, Julian states, of a “higher” and a “lower” part, of substance and of sensuality; substance is grounded in God and sensuality is grounded in the physical body. There seems to be an obvious hierarchy here, but Julian still insists that both our substance and our sensuality can rightly be called the soul.41 In making this argument, Julian states that these two components of the soul are not separate, divisible parts. Instead, she contends, they both are the soul in its entirety.

Here Julian follows the same logic that she used to explain the simultaneously physical and spiritual elements of Christ’s blood: one does not symbolize or lead to the other; the physical and spiritual are the same blood, and substance and sensuality are the same soul. The terms “sensuality” and “substance” do not map onto “physical” and “spiritual.” The soul is not comprised of sensuality in the sense that it has a material existence—it is, after all, made of “nought”—but rather in the sense that it gives a material existence to humans. As Baker puts it, Julian signifies the sensual as the “nexus between the spiritual and the corporeal.” When I say that Julian’s rhetorical logic of the composition of


41 Revelation of Love 56.301.
the soul mirrors that of Christ’s blood, then, I mean only that the soul is another example of something that, for Julian, has two parts at the same time that it is whole. Without a body, the soul is not a person, even in death. The soul, Julian suggests, is like Christ’s blood insofar as it contains more than one part, and yet those components are inextricable.

Sensuality, substance, and their relation to the body and soul are central components of Julian’s theology. The “time oure soule is enspired in oure body,” Julian declares, is the time “in which we be made sensual” (55.299). As I demonstrated in Chapter Two, much medical discourse in the Middle Ages is unclear about the time at which the soul entered the body of a developing foetus, and Henry Daniel will only explain existing theories without taking a clear stance.\(^{42}\) For Julian, the precise time—at conception, after a certain number of days or weeks, etc.—does not matter. All that does matter in her theory is that when the soul is inspired by the body, the body is made sensual, receiving its spiritual and its physical form. Paradoxically, the human body cannot have a material existence until it gains the immaterial soul. Death renders humans “noughted” (27.209) in that the physical body ceases to exist while the soul lives on, but physical life is not possible at all without the soul. Instead of signifying physicality, sensuality is for Julian the body as a whole, in both its material and spiritual facets: the soul is thus comprised of sensuality at the same time that it provides sensuality to the body. Further, the soul is also made of substance, and Julian sees this “full sekerly… in God” (55.299) and believes that, unlike sensuality, it is grounded in God. With its combination of sensuality and substance, the soul becomes “Goddes wonning” (54.297). God dwells in the entire soul, in the convergence of substance and sensuality, in the spiritual and material form of the human.

\(^{42}\) See *Liber Uricrisiarum* 2.14. fols. 61v-62r and Chapter Two, “‘The stat of lyf prinspally,’” p. 74.
Julian’s interpretation of the soul—the connection between human and God, the amalgamation of physical and spiritual form—finds its hermeneutic corollary in Christ’s blood. This blood shed from Christ’s dying body, linking God and all humans in a physical chain of love, signifying in both the material and spiritual realms, is the same blood that descended into hell to deliver those who belong rightfully to heaven. It is the same blood that flows throughout the entire earth to wash creatures of sin. It is the same blood that ascends into heaven in Jesus and continues to flow in Him for the salvation of humankind. The material and spiritual aspects of Christ’s blood, I have shown, cannot exist without the other. Like Christ’s blood, as I am now suggesting, the human soul enables a connection with the divine, and empowers humans to attain a physical and spiritual form. Julian finds great plenty in Christ’s blood: here she finds in it an interpretive framework through which to theorize the soul.

The relationship between Julian’s expositions on Christ’s blood and her notion of the human soul is registered on a linguistic level in the word “vertu.” “Oure faith is a vertu that cometh of oure kinde substance into oure sensual soule by the holy gost, in which vertu alle oure vertues comen to us” (54.297), Julian explains, fashioning her declaration of Christian faith by playing with the multiple meanings of the term “vertu.” Faith is not likely to be considered a “vertu” in anything other than a spiritual sense—it is a spiritual power, not a physical one. And yet, Julian traces the movement of faith from substance to sensuality, and declares that all “oure vertues comen to us” by way of this path. The Holy Ghost, and not the individual human, is the agent of this movement.

On one hand, then, faith is a virtue that is governed by the Holy Ghost. On the other hand, however, faith is a “vertu”—a power that has both a spiritual and a physical valence in
that it moves from substance to sensuality, from the purely spiritual to the nexus of the
spiritual and the material. Julian stated earlier that Christ’s blood was created for humans by
the “vertu” of God’s love; Christ’s blood, in turn, establishes the “vertu” that is human faith.
She has already explained that his blood was made for Christians to wash clean of sin, and
she now considers the broader implications involved: Christ’s cleansing blood establishes a
connection between the “vertu” of Christian faith and the “vertu” of God’s love, between the
individual Christian being and God. Julian accordingly suggests that he is like everyone,
male and female, body and soul. For in Christ’s blood, Julian comes to understand not only
her own relationship with God, but also comes to understand God’s relationship with all her
“even Christians.”

Julian received six ghostly sights embedded in her initial bodily sight of Christ’s
bleeding head: she saw not one thing at the same time as, but in, another. Christ’s blood
once generated her embedded visions and opened up the locus for her authoritative
interpretations. Now Julian, in Christ’s blood, sees and comes to understand the human soul.
The soul itself is made of “nought,” but Julian’s descriptions of substance and sensuality
imply that purely spiritual life is always already embedded in the language of a material life.
The language of physical and spiritual existence in general, like the vocabulary of physical
and spiritual blood in particular, is inextricable. Such is the revelation of the “precious
plenty” of Christ’s “dereworthy blode”: in it, Julian sees and understands human life, both
for herself and for all her “even Christians.”
Chapter Five

*Palpat Beatam Virginem*: Doubt and Physiology in the N-Town Nativity Play

“Maria: I am cleene mayde and pure virgyn; / Tast with ȝoure hand ȝoureself alon. [Hic palpat Zelomye Beatam Virginem.”

(The Nativity Play of the N-Town cycle, 224-5)

“All four of the extant English biblical cycles play Joseph’s doubt at Mary’s pregnancy. Two of them play the apocryphal New Testament story of the midwives’ doubt at the Virgin Birth. But it is the East Anglian compilation of religious drama known as the N-Town cycle that most insistently makes the theological gynecology of Mary recurrent spectacle.”

(Gail McMurray Gibson, “Scene and Obscene: Seeing and Performing Late Medieval Childbirth” *JMEMS*, 16-17)

In the previous two chapters, my discussion of blood has centred on representations of the body and blood of Christ. My final chapter develops these earlier discussions by focusing instead on the body and blood of Jesus’s virgin mother, Mary, as depicted in the Nativity play of the N-Town compilation (c. 1450). In one way, this is not really a shift in focus at all—Jesus only attains flesh and blood through Mary, and so his flesh and blood is his mother’s flesh and blood. To analyze Mary’s flesh and blood, then, is not entirely distinct from analyzing her son’s. In another way, however, this is indeed a shift, and a productive

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1 This and all subsequent quotations are from Stephen Spector, ed. The N-Town Play: Cotton MS Vespasian D.8 (Oxford and New York: published for EETS by Oxford University Press, 1991), cited hereafter by line number and, where appropriate, play number.


3 This point has been explained most extensively by Caroline Walker Bynum in Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), but has also been made by others, such as Matthew J. Kinservik, “The Struggle over Mary’s Body: Theological and Dramatic Revolution in the N-Town Assumption Play,” *JEGP* 95.2 (1996): 190-203.
one, since Mary had a Christian following of her own due to her integral role in giving Jesus corporeal life. As scholars have long recognized, Marian devotion was never as prominent in England as it was in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{4} The emphasis of this devotion in visual art was on her often-exposed body, sometimes shown breast-feeding a baby Jesus. It is not my intention to provide another account of Mary’s historical or representational trajectory; Miri Rubin and Gary Waller, among others, have already written extensively on these topics.\textsuperscript{5} Instead, I want to narrow in on one dramatic, literary depiction of Mary as virgin and mother. In lieu of a broad trajectory, I offer a philological and symbolic study of the details surrounding the representation on the medieval page and stage in the N-Town Nativity play.

As Gail McMurray Gibson contends in the article quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, no other medieval cycle devotes such attention to Mary, and more specifically, to her body, than N-Town. I develop this argument here by showing that this focus on Mary’s body relies on a vocabulary of blood. In my previous two chapters, I argued that blood was the nexus of physical and spiritual life and of medical and religious discourse, and I examined the literary and symbolic implications of that statement. In the N-Town Nativity play, I argue in this chapter, the relationship between physical and spiritual life is articulated through the midwives, Zelomy and Salomé, who palpate Mary’s exposed, open body, as well as through the miraculous restoration of Salomé’s withered hand.

\textsuperscript{4} See, for example, Gibson, \textit{The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages} (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 138; and, Margaret M. Miles, \textit{Complex Delight: The Secularization of the Breast, 1350-1750} (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 39.

My study of this play contributes significantly to current scholarship, first, by performing a detailed close reading of an individual play. Most of the scholarship that has been done on N-Town discusses the compilation as a whole, comparing it to one or all of the other cycles in structural and historical terms. By maintaining a focus on one play, this chapter enters into and expands a relatively recent scholarly trend that reads these plays as individual units within their larger context. The more specific nature of my analysis is potentially better attuned to the precise vocabulary used by the Nativity, and thereby uncovers its connection to medieval medical discourse. Accordingly, my larger metacritical intervention involves introducing medical writing to the scholarship on medieval drama.

While there have been studies that consider the play in relation to the history of midwives, there has yet to be a study that places the language of the play in conversation with medieval medicine. By introducing this discursive intersection, I offer a new reading both of the play and of the relationship between Middle English medicine and Middle English drama. Just as I argued that the connection to medical discourse does not necessarily render the language of The King of Tars erudite, so too I argue here that the language of the Nativity is not necessarily learned each time it mentions Mary’s flesh and blood. Instead, my point is to

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show how the play both adopts and exceeds medical descriptions of blood, rendering medical concepts plainly as it describes and displays its version of Mary.

I pursue this argument over five sections. In the first, I show that the N-Town Nativity play is singular in its representations of the miraculous birth of Jesus. In the second, I argue that Mary’s un-penetrated, nourishing body is articulated through a vocabulary of blood, which Zelomy uses to express her doubt and subsequent belief in Mary’s virginal and maternal body. The third section builds on the second through an analysis of the physiological implications of Salomé’s doubt in Mary’s simultaneous virginity and maternity. The fourth section then focuses on the other miraculous bodily transformation, Salomé’s restored hand. Here, I argue that this miracle intersects with the Nativity in bodily and spiritual terms and, in particular, through this shared vocabulary of blood. I conclude by situating my study in relation to religion and the vernacular, and demonstrate that the play’s medical discourse overlaps with the histories of devotion and literature as well.

I. The N-Town Nativity Play and its Singularity

N-Town is not the only medieval English play compilation to include the midwives’ doubt at Mary’s virginity and motherhood: this episode also appears in the Chester cycle. In Chester, the midwives are not Zelomy and Salomé, but Tebell and Salomé, and Tebell, unlike her N-Town counterpart, believes in the miracle of the Nativity without inspecting or probing Mary’s body. Salomé, in Chester as in N-Town, endures the withering and subsequent restoration of her hand. But this episode in Chester occurs much more quickly: as soon as Mary reveals Jesus’s birth and her virginity, Tebell responds by professing her faith in this miracle; as soon as Tebell makes this response, Salomé announces her doubt and
approaches Mary’s body; as soon as she approaches Mary’s body, her hand withers. There is no direct interaction between Mary and Salomé at all: in Chester, Salomé is given instructions from an angel to touch Jesus’s clothes if she wants her hand to be healed, but in N-Town, this angelic instruction is repeated and explained further by Mary.\(^8\) I do not intend to provide an exhaustive list of differences between these two renditions of the midwives’ doubt, but I do want to draw attention to the events and dialogue that are unique to N-Town; that is, the incessant mention, description, and surveying of Mary’s body.

Mary’s body has been increasingly scrutinized throughout The Mary Play—the name modern editors assign to the group of five plays that recount stories from Mary’s life, based on apocryphal accounts.\(^9\) It is already clear from The Mary Play that N-Town will have a special focus on the Virgin. The plays within The Mary Play do not exhibit Mary’s body to the extent that the Nativity does; but they do include references to the spiritual value of her physical, material existence in a way that anticipates the big event of the Nativity. In Joachim and Anna, the angel who announces to the eponymous husband that he and his wife will produce a daughter named Mary explains that Mary “xal be blyssyd in here body” (8.191). The Presentation of Mary in the Temple conceives of Mary’s devotion as an appetite: an angel descends, declaring his role to feed Mary eternally, offering her angel’s food for sustenance, and she “to receyve it for natural myght” (9.249). The Marriage of Mary of Joseph is concerned entirely with finding a way for Mary to both wed a husband and maintain her virginity, to keep her bodily integrity. In The Parliament of Heaven; The

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\(^9\) As several scholars have noted, episodes in The Mary Play, and indeed in the Nativity, appear to have the apocryphal accounts of Pseudo-Matthew and the Protoevangelium of James as sources, in addition to the history of Mary provided in the Legenda Aurea.
Salutation and Conception, Spiritus Sanctus tells Gabriel that Mary will not doubt the signs of her pregnancy because “Here body xal be so fulfylt w blys” (11.211), and after the three beams of light enter “to her bosom,” Mary declares: “A, now I fele in my body be / Parfyte God and parfyte man, / Havyng al schapp of chylcly carnalyté; / Evyn al at onys þus God began” (11.293-6). She goes on to explain how Jesus takes form not limb by limb but entirely and immediately, transforming her from handmaid to mother. Finally, in The Visit to Elizabeth, Mary and Elizabeth swap conception stories, telling each other how their bodies felt at the moment of conception and after. The Mary Play demonstrates particular attention to Mary’s spiritually healthy body—an attention that is absent from Chester and the other cycles—anticipating and progressing toward what will be the high-point of that attention: the Nativity.

When Joseph announces to the midwives that Mary has already given birth without any assistance, Zelomy responds with doubt: “In byrth trauaylle muste sche nedys haue,” she protests, “Or ellys no chylde of here is born” (15.206-7). Once she sees that there is indeed a newborn baby with Mary, Zelomy abandons her earlier skepticism and instead offers her services: “With honde lete me now towch and fele / Yf ȝe haue need of medycyn. / I xal ȝow conforte and helpe ryght wele / As other women yf ȝe haue pyn” (15.218-21). Zelomy no longer doubts Mary’s status as a mother, but according to the play’s theological framework, she still makes two crucial errors: first, as we will see later, she believes that she is herself the source and provider of medicine; and, second, she thinks that Mary is just like “other women” and will thus have the same needs. Mary corrects this latter mistake immediately, professing that she felt no “Peyne nere grevynge” (223), and she is most certainly not just any woman: “I am clene mayde and pure virgyn; / Tast with ȝoure hand
youreself alon” (224-5). Mary shifts the focus of Zelomy’s attention from her status as mother to her status as virgin. As a mother, Mary has absolutely no use for a midwife, but she still wants Zelomy to touch her, thereby offering physical proof of the miracle of the Nativity.

Mary’s use of the term “tast” suggests that she respects Zelomy’s profession although she has no use for it. This word, signifying an examination conducted through touch, has a specifically medical valence in Middle English. In the Middle English adaptation of Fierabras and in Amis and Amiloun, for instance, “tast” refers to the examination performed by a doctor on a wounded body. When the titular character in Fierabras is wounded in battle by his opponent Oliver, doctors come to “taste” his wound and conclude that he is “hol & sounde” (1094-95), a judgment that seems to apply to his physical as well as his spiritual health: he has just been baptized as a Christian. Mary expects this same conclusion from Zelomy—she wants her to “tast” her body, to examine it through touch as medical professionals do, and deem that she is whole and sound not just in body but also in soul.

Mary’s invitation—or perhaps challenge—to Zelomy has sparked disagreement among critics who discuss the history of medicine, midwives, and/or sexuality regarding

10 See Fierabras “At is heste they went ether-to and softe gone taste is wounde, / His lyure, ys lung & is guttes al-so, & found hem hol & sounde” (1094-1095); and, Amis and Amiloun, Edward E. Foster, ed. Amis and Amiloun, Robert of Cisyle, and Sir Amadace (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), 1400: “Leches…gun to tasty his wounde.” This term is also used in the Middle English translation of Lanfranc of Milan’s Science of Cirurgie and in Lydgate’s translation of Guillaume de Deguileville’s Pilgrimage of the Life of Man to refer to checking the pulse. See R. V. Fleischhaker, ed. Lanfrank’s ‘Science of Cirurgie’ (London: EETS, 1894), pp. 221 and 227; and, F. J. Furnivall and K. B. Lockcock, ed. The Pilgrimage of the Life of Man (London: EETS, 1899, re-printed as one volume in 1973), 9877: “I wente for to se Wher the body slepte or nouht And…Tastyd hys pows.”

both the role of the midwife and the idea of the virginity test. Denise Ryan argues that N-Town portrays the midwives in terms of their role as witnesses to the Incarnation. Touching Mary’s body, at least insofar as Ryan suggests, is not an out of the ordinary sort of request, since “touching her patient’s genitals was a culturally legitimized act for a midwife.” According to Ryan, a midwife is precisely the person who would have that kind of intimate access to a patient’s body. But Cindy L. Carlson argues that there are few records of midwives testing for virginity in the Middle Ages, with the exception of “notorious cases,” like Joan of Arc. Sara Ritchey argues that virginity tests are not to be taken as serious tests or as bodily invasions, since the tests were “inferred from, as well as performed through, outward signs of modesty.” There was no real way to test virginity in physical terms, Ritchey explains: virginity was merely inferred and performed. ¹² These otherwise wide-ranging perspectives produce one consensus: that in order to shift Zelomy’s focus to the matter of Mary’s bodily integrity and simultaneous motherhood, the play at this point evokes medical concepts and medical discourse, whether real or imagined. I develop this body of criticism by directing attention to a previously overlooked theological and physiological language: Mary’s physical status as virgin and mother, I argue, is determined through a vocabulary of blood that the play shares with Middle English medicine. Salomé’s medical knowledge causes her to doubt Mary’s unique bodily status, and the collective focus on Mary’s physiology incorporates her into the play’s miracles to an extent unprecedented in its textual sources and under-recognized by recent scholarship.

II. Doubt

Zelomy follows Mary’s instructions. The stage directions reveal that upon Mary’s invitation, “Hic palpat Zelomye Beatam Virginem,” and as she palpates Mary’s exposed genitals she exclaims:

O myghtfull God, haue mercy on me!
A merveyle þat nevyr was herd beforne
Here opynly I fele and se:
A fayr chylde of a maydon is born,

And nedyth no waschynge as other don:
Ful clene and pure forsooth is he,
Withoutyn spott or ony polucyon,
His modyr nott hurte of virgynité!

Coom nere, gode systyr Salomé.
Beholde þe brystys of þis clene mayd,
Ful of fayr mylke how þat þei be,
And hyre chylde clene, as I fyrst sayd.

As other ben nowth fowle arayd,
But clene and pure bothe modyr and chylde.
Of þis matyr I am dysmayd,
To se them both thus vndefyled!

(226-241)

Regardless of whether or not midwives in the Middle Ages were accustomed to feeling their patients’ genitals, the play represents it happening. Regardless of whether or not virginity tests were performed on physical bodies, one is here performed on stage. Zelomy is “dysmayd” because Mary is not “dis-mayd”: she is still a “maydon.” This is a “merveyle,” Zelomy proclaims, that “opynly I fele and se.” In feeling Mary’s body, Zelomy apparently locates her virginal seal, or some physical evidence of an un-ruptured hymen, but she describes this proof in terms of absence rather than presence. Jesus is “clene and pure,” without “spott or ony polucyon,” so he “nedyth no waschynge as other don.” They are
“clene and pure,” Zelomy adds, “bothe modyr and chylde,” unlike “other ben.” Zelomy has clearly learned her lesson: she now knows that Mary is not like other women, stating twice how unlike others are both mother and son. The physical cleanness of mother and child reflects Mary’s spiritual cleanness: there is not one spot on the baby, neither he nor his mother need to be washed, because, Zelomy declares, “His modyr nott hurte of virgynité!”

Zelomy has, she explains, two types of proof for this claim: what she feels and what she sees. What she feels remains a secret, but the audience is made privy to what she sees from Zelomy’s description or, indeed, from viewing the figures onstage. Mary and Jesus need no washing; their bodies lack any spot or pollution. Zelomy is describing the absence of blood.

There are three explanations for this absence: the scriptural, the natural, and the spiritual. In the first explanation, Mary’s purity results in her physical cleanness; she is not covered in blood, like other women, because she is sacredly clean. This reference to Mary’s purity is evocative of the New Testament account of the purification ritual performed by Mary and Joseph. In Luke 2: 21-24, Mary and Joseph wait eight days after Jesus’ birth to have him circumcised, a waiting period proscribed by the law of Leviticus 12.¹³ There, God says to Moses:

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\text{Loquere filiis Israhel et dices ad eos: mulier si suscepto semine pepererit masculum inmunda erit septem diebus iuxta diebus separationis menstruae. Et die octavo circumcidetur infantulus: ipsa vero triginta tribus diebus manebit in sanguine purificationis suae omne sanctum non tanget nec ingredietur sanctuarium donec impleantur dies purificationis eius.}
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(Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them: if a woman having received seed shall bear a man child, she shall be unclean seven days, according to the days of separation of her flowers. And on the eighth day the infant shall be circumcised: But she shall remain three and thirty days in the blood of her purification. She shall touch no holy thing: neither shall she enter into the sanctuary, until the days of her purification be fulfilled.)

According to God’s law, all women require a period of purification after giving birth. This purification is necessary because women must not have any trace of menstrual blood in them; only once the mother is purified can the son be circumcised, itself an act that purifies the body and soul of the child. Although Mary performs this ritual in the biblical account of Jesus’s birth, the play shows that she never needed to be purified in the first place. The play calls attention to the absence of blood on Mary’s body after giving birth, and so suggests that this purification ritual is unnecessary. She is so pure on the inside that her body is never contaminated by the kind of blood that corrupts other women. Mary’s body does not work the same way as other women’s bodies; she does not need to be purified because she is already pure.

In the natural explanation, Zelomy’s testimony that there is no need for “waschynge” may allude to the afterbirth, secunda. In the second book of his Liber Uricrisiarum, Henry Daniel describes secunda as a “thyn skyn, a rymme, a hame” in which “is the child wrapped” (2.14. fol. 57r). As the child grows inside its mother’s womb, the secunda grows with it and “cumeth out with þe child at the wombe gate” (2.14. fol. 57r). In a broader sense, Zelomy’s testimony also evokes an image of blood, for secunda is accompanied in the womb by another supportive and encapsulating substance. Following authorities like Galen and Aristotle, Daniel explains that the “embrio, i the childe… is norished and kyndely foded with the blod of the matrice. Wherfor the matrice, ne the womans body, hath not so mikil nede of purgacion as it had befornhand” (2.14. fols. 55v-56r), that is, the mother’s menstruation stops. The blood that gathers in the womb and nourishes the foetus is

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14 All citations from the Liber Uricrisiarum, unless noted otherwise, are from E. Ruth Harvey’s transcription of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1404.
specifically menstrual blood, *sanguis menstruus*. Some types of blood can be considered pure, as we have seen in earlier chapters and will see again, but menstrual blood is emphatically filthy. Women call menstruation “the floures,” Daniel tells us, for “the vilest matter that is, they yeven the feyrest name” (2.14. fol. 54v). Daniel also repeats some infamous cautionary anecdotes: that a man who has sex with a menstruating woman will either die or contract leprosy; that if a dog should taste a drop of menstrual blood it will go mad; and that if any bit of menstruation should touch a tree it will rot, never to grow again—all because this blood is “corrosyf and so venymous” (2.14. fol. 55r). The matter that gathers in the womb and feeds the child, Daniel seems to stress and repeat when given the chance, is disgusting and dangerous; it is the vilest matter there is. The N-Town *Nativity* play depicts Jesus attaining corporeal existence through Mary’s flesh and blood, but Zelomy realizes and insists to her colleague that there is nothing so polluting about Mary as in other women.\textsuperscript{15}

Finally, Mary and Jesus are not only physically clean: Zelomy has also discovered that Mary is spiritually pure, both a mother and a virgin. There is, then, yet another lack of blood noticed by Zelomy: she knows that Mary has not lost any blood through the loss of virginity. Mary has remained intact, keeping her pure blood inside her body. The idea that one kind of blood can point figuratively toward another is often applied not to Mary, but to Jesus. In the *Life of Our Lady*, for instance, Lydgate, paraphrasing Alcuin, describes Jesus’s four circumcisions, of which the fourth is the crucifixion: “For vs he suffrede circumcision / Vpon the crosse duryng his passion” (IV. 76-77).\textsuperscript{16} The blood shed at the circumcision,

\textsuperscript{15} I do not wish to enter into theological debate over whether or not Mary menstruated. Instead, I aim merely to focus on descriptions and explanations of her body and blood that are offered by the play. For a useful overview of this debate in medieval theological writing, see Charles T. Wood, “The Doctor’s Dilemma: Sin, Salvation, and the Menstrual Cycle in Medieval Thought,” *Speculum* 56.4 (1981): 710-727.

Lydgate avers, foreshadows the blood shed at the crucifixion. By calling the crucifixion a fourth circumcision, moreover, Lydgate demonstrates that the blood of circumcision is not merely ‘like’ the blood of crucifixion but identical to it. In the Nativity play, Zelomy discovers that Mary’s blood also has this figurative power: if Mary loses no blood during childbirth, she necessarily loses no blood during sexual intercourse. Her clean motherhood denotes her clean virginity.

Zelomy extends the idea that Mary’s blood remains pure and within by inviting her colleague, Salomé, to behold Mary’s breasts, “Ful of fayr mylke.” As I have already discussed in earlier chapters, all bodily fluids were, in the Middle Ages, considered to be some form of blood. The process by which blood travels to a woman’s breasts is described by Daniel in the following way:

Also yif sche have conceyvyd, here pappis wexe gretre, and that is cause of plente of blood comen fro the matrice and fellynge the pappis. Understand that the pappis of woman are spongeous, lych a cowys uddre, and ther are serteyn veynys comyngge fro the matrice to the pappis, be qweche weys the blood is dyrived fro the matrice to the pappis, and quan it comyth ther it engrosith and bobbyth the pappis of woman.

(3.18. fol. 159r)

Just as sperm is blood that is purified and white, breast milk is also a form of purified blood. And just as the absence of polluting blood helped prove Mary’s virginity, the presence of purified blood in her breasts proves her maternity. Her simultaneous status as

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17 This concept is explained by Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 184; and, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 158.

18 London, British Library, MS Sloane 1101.

19 Kinservik also observed that there is a connection between blood and milk, though the connection he draws between Mary’s milk and Jesus’s blood is in medieval iconography. See “The Struggle over Mary’s Body”: 197.
virgin and mother is articulated through and determined by a vocabulary of blood. Mary’s blood makes her both the site of the miracle of the Nativity and a miraculous body, a “merveyle,” in and of herself.

Salomé’s doubt at Mary’s simultaneously virginal and maternal status is not entirely surprising. For a medieval Christian audience who knew that Mary would ultimately prove to be the Virgin Mother, this doubt only anticipates the eventual triumph of the miraculous Nativity. On a theological level, however, the proof of virginity and maternity offered by Zelomy and Mary is troubling: why is it that flesh provides a spiritual truth? Should this miracle not be made clear through some divine sign? The physical cleanness of Jesus and Mary can reflect and metaphorize Mary’s spiritual purity, but in this case, the reverse happens as well: physical cleanness verifies spiritual cleanness. In this sense, Salomé’s doubt is unremarkable. I argued in my previous chapter that Julian of Norwich conceives of spiritual life as existing on conjunction with its physical counterpart, and something similar seems to underlie the descriptions of Mary in this play. The answer, here as with Julian, lies in blood, “the stat of lyf princpally.” Since Zelomy’s descriptions of Mary’s flesh and cleanness rely on a vocabulary of blood, she is never really speaking of Mary’s body in a purely physical sense. Mary’s flesh and blood has the spiritual power to enable and activate the Incarnation, and medieval medical discourse theorized blood as the carrier of *spiritus* throughout the body.

Daniel outlines this idea in his treatise and Bynum summarizes it like this: “[T]he soul or spirit, as nonmaterial, could not have a physical location. It had to be present throughout the whole body—whole in every part, by a kind of concomitance. Nonetheless a good deal of devotional and preaching language from the High Middle Ages implies that
blood carries life or is the seat of life.” The soul and the spirit are not, as Bynum implies, identical in medieval medical discourse, but her overall point still holds: blood is inherently linked to the soul, connecting spiritual life to bodily life. It carries with it the corporeal spirit throughout the body, and together they move the incorporeal soul. Zelomy arrives at her revelation that Mary is a “clene mayd” by feeling and seeing her flesh, and the vocabulary she uses to describe what she sees evokes medical conceptions of blood. For Zelomy, Mary’s blood verifies the miracles of the Nativity and the virginal body. This is wonderful blood indeed.

III. Salomé

The majority of scholarship on the N-Town Nativity play has focused on Mary in terms of Salomé and her doubt and subsequent revelation. Gary Waller and Denise Ryan, for example, both examine Salomé’s encounter with Mary to make their arguments about Mary’s spiritually healthy body. Other studies of the play and of the compilation as a whole unpack the relationship between theatre and worship—Penny Granger and Victor Scherb, for example, write extensively on this topic—or with illuminating the various ways in which this play, and N-Town as a whole, is unique. Barbara D. Palmer points out, for example, that only the N-Town account of the Nativity points to Mary’s breasts; Scherb

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20 Daniel, 2.1.3; Bynum, Wonderful Blood, 161.

21 Daniel certainly considers the soul to be distinct from the spirit, following the example of Costa ben Luca in his De discriminae spiritus et animae. See Chapter Two, “‘The stat of lyf prinspally’: Blood and Medieval English Medicine,” pp. 78-85 for a detailed account of this distinction.

22 See Waller, The Virgin Mary in Medieval and Early Modern Visual and Pop Culture, 78; Denise Ryan, “Performing the Midwife’s Part”: 441-2.

23 Granger, The N-Town Play, esp. 1-28; Scherb, Staging Faith, esp. 44.
notes that N-Town is the only cycle to include the Veronica story, and Kinservik observes that only N-Town shows Jesus visiting his mother before anyone else once he has been resurrected. What nearly all of these studies have in common is the point that Marian devotion was particularly prominent, and particularly graphic, in England—and in East Anglia in particular—during the late Middle Ages. This is a salient point indeed, but it invites development. In this particular play, I would add, the graphic nature of Marian devotion is articulated through a specific and previously unacknowledged language of blood which, I argue, links the play’s two miracles.

From Zelomy’s perspective, Mary’s blood has proven her identity as Virgin Mother, but Salomé remains unconvinced: “Þat bothe be clene I cannot beleve!” (243) she exclaims, for “A mayd mylke haue nevyr man dyde se, / Ne woman bere chylde withowte grett greve” (244-5). Whereas blood served as proof of Mary’s spiritual purity and bodily maternity for Zelomy, it is for Salomé the very thing that causes her resistance to belief. All childbearing women endure great pain, she insists, and Mary claims to have suffered none; and, more importantly, a virgin cannot produce breast milk—that’s just not how the female body works. Salomé’s qualm alludes to a medical view of the female virgin body and blood common in the Middle Ages. As scholars such as Bettina Bildhauer and Kathleen Coyne Kelly have pointed out, female virgins were sometimes described as not menstruating: the blood emitted by the female body through the loss of virginity was often considered to coincide with a woman’s first menstruation. Following this logic, a “mayd” cannot


produce breast milk, a substance formed from *menstruum*, a kind of blood that her body did not yet have. Henry Daniel makes no comment on whether or not virgins menstruated, but when he explains the process whereby blood turns into breast milk, he states that he is explaining what happens to a woman’s breasts, “yif sche have conceyvyd” (3.18. fol. 159r). Menstruum flows through the “*kineris*” vein toward the breasts only in order to become food for a woman’s child. This process is restricted to childbearing women, and it thus necessarily excludes female virgins. Salomé’s scruple with Mary’s professed virginity and motherhood is therefore a problem that is grounded in her intimate knowledge of the workings of the female body, and of female blood in particular.

Salomé’s doubt is rooted in her understanding of physiology. As the play represents it, however, such a physiological understanding is incompatible with the miracle of the Nativity. Salomé is a skilled midwife: “all men” know her, “For a mydwyff of worthy fame” (150-1). She shows her familiarity with female physiology and care during childbirth, but she still cannot comprehend Mary’s body. At once virginal and maternal, “clene” and nourishing, and filled with pure, un-polluting blood, this is a body that for Salomé defies medical categorization. The play thus introduces medieval medical discourse in order to transcend it: Salomé’s doubt is caused by her knowledge of physiology, and Mary’s body cannot be accurately defined in physiological terms. Medical discourse is evoked to show its insufficiency to interpret and represent Mary’s miraculous body. Just as the play brings in

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26 Sloane 1101.

27 See Henry Daniel’s *Liber Uricrisiarum*: “Also in women begynneth at the liuer, as all veynes don, a veyn that is called *kyneris*, the kynyr, & partyth him into two branches; oon of the branches goeth to the lyft syde of her and the toder to the ryght syde. And oder of hem is diuised into branches, diuers of which branches sum goeth to the matrice berand with him blod to the 41v norishing of the matrice & also to gendryng of the floures, and the remanant of the branches goeth to the pappys berand also with hem blod there for to make it white & so turneth it in to mylke & to the fode of the chyld” (2.8. fols. 41r-v).
the midwives only to demonstrate that Mary does not need them, so does the play bring in medical discourse only to demonstrate that Mary’s body transcends it.

Salomé’s interpretation of Mary is a failure because it is too literal. Her medical knowledge, though expansive, limits her ability to look beyond the surface meaning of the female body. Salomé cannot distinguish between Mary and other women—she cannot see the signification assigned to Mary’s body because all she sees is the literal, medicalized female body. This failure thus creates a parallel between Salomé and the medieval Christian perspective of Jews. As Jeremy Cohen explains, one common strand of anti-Judaic rhetoric in the Middle Ages held that Jews ‘failed’ to recognize Jesus as Christ.\textsuperscript{28} Christian writers chastised Jews for killing their saviour, but also for failing to recognize that Jesus indeed was a saviour in the first place. Salomé’s inability to recognize Mary as virgin and mother is the same kind of limitation: she sees the literal human body, but cannot interpret a spiritual significance beyond it. Like Jews in much medieval Christian thought, Salomé reads only the letter and not the spirit. Her individual doubt comes to represent a large collective of people whose doubt is caused by their apparent inability to interpret both letter and sign.\textsuperscript{29}

The play does not explicitly identify Salomé as a Jew, but the parallel is bolstered by her role as a medical professional. As Joseph Schatzmiller and Carmen Caballero-Navas have explained, there was an illustrious tradition of medical writing in Hebrew starting in the twelfth century, and the reputation of Jewish medical writers grew rapidly from the


\textsuperscript{29} The evolution of Christian attitudes, influenced specifically by Augustine, toward Jewish interpretation is outlined in detail by Jeremy Cohen., \textit{Living Letters of the Law}, esp. 44-51.
Mediterranean throughout the medieval West. Henry Daniel’s Liber Uricrisiarum, which was widely circulated in England, is often considered to be a translation of a text by a renowned ninth-century Jewish writer, Isaac Judaeus (Isaac Israeli ben Solomon), and Daniel even includes a translation of the “Rules of Isaac” at the end of his own work. Salomé is doubly linked to medieval Jews: she reads only literally, and she is famous for her prowess in the medical world, a world in which Christians acquired knowledge from non-Christian Others, including Jews. The play represents and criticizes Jewish exegesis through the learning and hermeneutic failure of the not-necessarily Jewish Salomé.

Salomé is so sure of her own understanding that she insists on touching Mary as her colleague, Zelomy, had done: “With hand towchynge but I assay, / In my conscience it may nevyr cleue / Þat sche hath chylde and is a may” (247-9). Gibson has noted a connection between this passage and Thomas’s doubt at Jesus’s resurrection. When the other disciples tell Thomas of Christ’s resurrection, he responds: Nisi videro in manibus eius figuram clavorum et mittam digitum meum in locum clavorum et mittam manum meam in latus eius, non credam (“Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” John 20: 24-29). Like Thomas, who needs to touch Christ’s latus, or vulnus, as Gibson calls it, Salomé needs to touch Mary’s open body. This comparison, for Gibson, is exemplary of the play’s


31 As I demonstrated in Chapter One, “Writing not ‘newe þinges,’ but ‘newely’: Henry Daniel and Medieval English Literary Culture,” pp. 29-32, Daniel’s treatise is in fact a translation of his own Latin work.
violatation of decorum and transgression of physical and social boundaries. But the comparison is also connected to the play’s representation of medical knowledge. Salomé’s medical expertise turns her into a parallel for Thomas. Like him, she habours a spiritual doubt expressed in physical terms, which in her case depends upon a specifically medical vocabulary of testing (“assay”) and of blood. The play thus adds this other layer of language to Salomé’s doubt, suggesting that her spiritual revelation both relies on and exceeds this language.

The ramifications of this connection between physiology and Salomé’s spiritual doubt are played out on her own body. Mary accepts Salomé’s request to “assay” her open body, saying: “Yeow for to putt clene out of dowth, / Towch with ȝoure hand and wele assay. / Wysely ransake and trye þe trewthe owth / Whethyr I be fowlyd or a clene may” (250-3). Mary matches the terms of Salomé’s request, recycling her demand to touch with her “hand” and to “assay”—test—Mary’s flesh. Mary welcomes the midwife’s demand with a pun that links the virginal body to epistemological certainty; she knows that her true status as a “clene may” will put Salomé “clene out of dowth.” But Salomé’s effort to assay Mary’s open flesh is thwarted, as the stage directions reveal: Hic tangit Salomee Mari[am] et, cum arescerit manus eius, vlulando et quasi flendo. What was meant to be a virginity test transforms into a test of faith. Salomé does touch the virgin body (Hic tangit Salomee Mari[am]), but she is the one being tested; and since her doubt was grounded in physiology, the consequence of that doubt is manifested on her physical body. Distraught at her physical transformation and repentant of her spiritual doubt, Salomé exclaims:

Alas, alas, and weleawaye!
For my grett dowth and fals beleve

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Myne hand is ded and drye as claye – 
My fals vntrost hath wrought myscheve!

Alas þe tyme þat I was born,
Thus to offende ægens Goddys myght!
Myn handys power is now all lorn,
Styff as a stykke, and may nowth plight.
For I dede tempte þis mayde so bryght
Ande helde ægens here pure clennes,
In grett myscheff now am I pyght.
Alas, alas for my lewdness!

O Lord of Myght, þu knowyst þe trowth,
Þat I haue evyr had dred of þe.
On every power whyght evyr I haue rowthe,
And þove hem almes for loue of þe.
Both wyff and wedowe þat askyght, for the,
And frendles chylderyn þat haddyn grett nede,
I dude them cure, and all for the,
And toke no rewarde of them, nor mede.

Now as a wrecch for fals beleve 
Þat I shewyd in temptynge þis mayde,
My hand is ded and doth me greve.
Alas, þat evyr I here assayde!

(254-77)

Upon probing Mary’s body, the offending hand withers and becomes “ded and drye as claye,” a punishment that Salomé, in repetitive vocabulary, attributes to a host of personal shortcomings: her “dowth and fals beleve” (255), her “fals vntrost” (257), her “lewdness” (265) in trying to “tempte þe mayde so bryght” (262), and finally, again, her “fals beleve” (274). Salomé replays in a different key the debate between the Princess of Tars and the Sultan of Damascus in The King of Tars. When the Princess gives birth to the lifeless lump of flesh, her husband declares that it lacks form and life “Alle þurth þi fals bileue” (595). The Princess retorts that he has it backwards: “For þi bileue it farþ so” (605). The formlessness and lifelessness of the lump in The King of Tars hinges on “bileue,” and the same is true of Salomé’s withered hand: it loses form and life (it is, after all, “ded and drye
as claye”) on account of her own “fals beleve.” In both cases, a lack of spiritual revelation is manifested on the physical body as bloodlessness, causing a physical deadness to represent the absence of spiritual life.

In both cases, too, this physical and spiritual dryness is articulated through a vocabulary of blood. The Christian law that the Sultan ultimately accepts in *The King of Tars* is described by the Princess in terms of blood: Jesus “nam flesche bl[o]d” (847) from Mary, ascended into heaven “Boþe wiþ flesche &bloð” (858), and will come to earth again and “Schewe his blodi woundes fiue” (869). The Sultan, who must finally accept this belief system in order to gain his new Christian blood, prefigures in his initial skepticism the N-Town Nativity: where he at first doubts the salvific blood of Jesus, Salomé doubts the pure and miraculous blood of Mary.

Up to this point in the play, Salomé says nothing of the baby Jesus; her doubt is, instead, rooted in the simultaneously virginal and maternal flesh and blood of Mary. Salomé positions her “fals beleve” in direct opposition to her professional experience and physiological expertise. She laments that she tested Mary, “Ande helde aȝens here pure clennes” (263), recounts her previous devotion to God and professional achievements, and then declares that when she encountered “wyff,” “wedowe,” and “chylderyn” in need, “I dude them cure” (272). Through experience, Salomé has learned that women and children need to be helped and washed after the birth. Mary and Jesus contradict that knowledge: Mary’s blood is pure and nourishing, as opposed to polluting, and it is intact within her body, as opposed to poured outside of it. Turning from her past professional success toward her current physical grief, Salomé exclaims, “Now as a wrecch for fals beleve / ṭat I shewyd in temptynge þis mayde, / My hand is ded and doth me greve” (274-6). Like Zelomy,
Salomé now knows that Mary is not like other women: she is not a “wyff” or a “wedowe” in need of washing but a clean “mayde,” a distinct category of women with which Salomé suggests she has no experience. She knows how to treat wives and widows, and realizes through the withering of her hand that Mary is neither. She now admits that she should have trusted the truth of Mary’s integral body over her physiological knowledge; the hand that once cured women and children is now “lorn” of its “power” (260).

Salomé’s hand is powerless because it is bloodless: it is “ded and drye as claye.” The punishment, as Salomé herself seems to realize, fits the crime in two ways. First, as explained above, the very member that once cured women and children during childbirth is rendered powerless by Salomé’s adamant belief that her knowledge of the female body and blood undercuts Mary’s proclaimed bodily status. Second, the blood in her hand disappears instantly as Salomé performs the ultimate act of doubt in Mary’s pure blood. Salomé draws a direct connection between her doubt and her powerless, bloodless hand, and the play makes that connection explicit through a discourse of blood. Indeed, Salomé acknowledges her fault as soon as her hand withers. Rather than interpreting this drying as an injustice, she recognizes it as a punishment. Seeing that the blood has vanished from her hand points Salomé directly and instantly toward the cause of this physical grief: her doubt in Mary’s pure, un-polluting blood. Her inability to comprehend Mary’s blood results in her own blood loss, and in witnessing her hand wither, Salomé sees first hand that blood can transcend physiological explanation.

N-Town develops the emphasis on blood in its source texts. In the *Protoevangelium* of James, for instance, this focus appears to be absent entirely: before finding the midwives, Joseph already knows that Mary has given birth with the help of the Holy Spirit; there is
little attention paid to Mary’s breasts except to mention that Jesus was being nursed, but this is not addressed by either midwife; and when Salomé inserts her finger in Mary’s body, her hand does not wither—it burns. The account in N-Town resembles more closely that found in the *Infancy Narrative of Pseudo-Matthew*. Zahel, who corresponds to Zelomy in N-Town, here makes note of Mary’s full breasts (*mamillae plenaec sint lactis*) and says specifically that there is no blood stain on the baby (*Nulla pollutio sanguinis facta est in nascente*); and Salomé’s hand withers without burning (*aruit manus*). N-Town extends the emphasis on blood in Pseudo-Matthew by staging interactions among Zelomy, Salomé, and Mary: the midwives have time to meditate on their experiential knowledge and, in Salomé’s case, to defend her argument.

In neither the *Protoevangelium* of James nor the *Infancy Narrative of Pseudo-Matthew* does Mary even speak. She is observed and she submits to physical testing (*permisisset Maria conspectum suum*), but she does not engage either midwife in conversation about her body. She does not state that her body is clean in virginity and in motherhood. She does not challenge Salomé to probe her. In N-Town, by contrast, Mary’s description of her own body initiates extended consideration of her purity, maternity, and their physiological implications. Blood here assumes newfound importance, which complicates Salomé’s conception of physical care and spiritual life, and which links her medically-legitimated doubt with bodily punishment. In extending Pseudo-Matthew and the

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34 Pseudo-Matthew, 100.
Protoevangelium, the Nativity play thus offers a culminating affirmation of the entire compilation and its chief thematic concern: the importance of Mary’s flesh and blood. Whereas The King of Tars and Revelation of Love treated blood as the nexus of physical and spiritual life, N-Town uses Mary’s blood as to interrogate, reconceptualize, and represent that relationship.

IV. Another Miracle

The compilation’s concern with Mary, along with the link between physical and spiritual life that she facilitates, reaches its climax when Salomé’s hand is restored. Following her dolorous speech, an angel appears and reveals that Jesus can restore the health of her hand: “Wurchepe þat childe þat þer is born; / Towch þe clothis þer he is leyde, / For he xal saue all þat is lorn” (279-81). Salomé obeys the angel’s instruction to worship Jesus and prays to him for mercy. Before turning toward the second instruction and touching Jesus’s clothes, however, Salomé instead turns to Mary, “Moste holy mayde,” and asks her for “solace” (288). This moment is vital for two reasons. First, “solace” is a word with medical connotations: it can refer to spiritual consolation as well as to recreation, a means of maintaining bodily health.35 Salomé’s diction implicitly performs her newfound intellectual inferiority; there was a time when she could cure women and children, but it is Mary who can offer such comfort to her. Second, and even more importantly, in asking Mary for solace Salomé creates the opportunity for Mary to speak again. She tells Salomé: “As Goddys aungel to ȝow dede telle, / My chylde is medycyn for every sor. / Towch his clothis be my cowncelle, / ȝowre hand ful sone he wyl restor” (290-3). In this speech, Mary does indeed

35 See Glending Olson, Literature as Recreation in the Later Middle Ages (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982).
provide both spiritual and physical comfort to Salomé, explaining how she can regain the health of her withered hand. By referring to Jesus as medicine, Mary positions both herself and Jesus in a place of intellectual superiority over the midwife. Their roles are reversed: the one who typically cures is now in need of curing. Salomé came to Mary with the intent of giving medicine to her and the newborn child, but Mary here insists that it is in fact Salomé who is in need of medicine, and the newborn who will provide it.

Strikingly, Mary’s “cowncelle” seems to surpass that of God’s angel; only after hearing the very same instructions from Mary does Salomé actually approach Jesus’s body. The angel retains some importance, but N-Town endows Mary with agency that inserts her more fully into each of the play’s two miracles: the Nativity and the restoration of the hand. Salomé has already learned what to do from the angel, but in the N-Town representation of this moment, Mary becomes an integral step toward Salomé’s physical renewal. As noted above, Mary’s involvement in this miracle is absent from the Nativity play in the Chester cycle, and neither of the play’s two apocryphal sources have Mary speaking at any time at all. N-Town veers away from its precedents to stress Mary’s connection with the physical body, the degree to which her corporeal knowledge surpasses that of the midwife, and the necessity of Mary’s involvement in the restoration of Salomé’s withered hand.

Mary’s role in Salomé’s physical renewal stretches beyond her “cowncelle” in the Nativity play. In both the Protoevangelium of James and the Infancy Narrative of Pseudo-Matthew, Salomé is told by the angel to worship Jesus and to touch him (adora eum et continge de manu tua). But N-Town is substantially more specific than this: she is instructed by both the angel and Mary to touch not Jesus in general but his “clothis” in

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36 Pseudo-Matthew, 100.
particular, a precise command that she dutifully follows (*Hic Salomee tangit fimbriam Christi*). In changing this instruction, N-Town draws a parallel between Salomé and the woman in the gospels who touches Jesus’s garments:

> Et mulier quaedam erat in fluxu sanguinis ab annis duodecim, quae in medicos erogaverat omnem substantiam suam nec ab ullo potuit curari; accessit retro et tetigit fimbriam vestimenti eius, et confestim stetit fluxus sanguinis eius

[And there was a certain woman having an issue of blood twelve years, who had bestowed all her substance on physicians and could not be healed by any; she came behind him and touched the hem of his garment, and immediately the issue of her blood stopped]

Luke 8: 43-44

Like this unnamed woman, Salomé touches Christ’s *fimbriam* in order to be healed. By aligning itself with this non-apocryphal episode from the Bible, N-Town reminds us that Salomé’s shriveled hand is a blood-based injury. The physical ailment the woman in Luke (and, indeed, in Matthew and Mark) suffers is *fluxu sanguinis*, an issue (or a flow) of blood. The play inverts this issue of blood: rather than flowing out uncontrollably, Salomé’s blood has vanished; her problem is not excess but lack. Touching Jesus’s *fimbriam*, this passage suggests, is a way to control the blood so that it stays inside the body. For Salomé, the *fimbriam* restores her own blood and confirms her faith in the pure, intact blood of Mary.

This request to touch Jesus’s “clothis” seems to take attention away from his flesh, but it in fact achieves the opposite effect: it alludes specifically to the flesh of both son and mother, for clothing metaphors featured prominently in narratives of the Incarnation. According to Hannah Hunt, writing about several hymns and homilies on the Nativity, Mary had “an especial role to play” in the metaphor since “[h]er womb clothes Christ in his

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physical form… in her, the light-bearing Christ is ‘woven,’ like a garment.”\(^38\) The “clothis” Salomé touch are thus the literal *fimbriam* as well as the figurative flesh, Jesus’s physical form. By telling Salomé to touch Jesus’s clothes, Mary and the angel use integumental language to refer implicitly to Jesus’s flesh; and, in doing so, they also refer to Mary’s—his clothing is her flesh and blood. Gibson has argued that the N-Town cycle celebrates Mary’s “clothing of Christ in her womb” through visual and iconographic means, rather than through verbal pattern (through words like “clad,” for example).\(^39\) But I would suggest that Mary’s role in clothing Christ in his flesh is actually celebrated both visually and verbally: the audience is presented with the Nativity scene, and the actors perform verbally a metaphor of clothing as flesh.

Mary’s instructions recall Salomé’s earlier inability to interpret her virginity, in which the play had aligned ‘failed’ literal interpretation with the body and figurative interpretation with the soul. Here, Mary employs the clothing metaphor to instruct Salomé how to read the body properly. Rather than an exclusive literalness, such right reading demands a simultaneously literal and figurative approach: Salomé’s new Christian interpretation will distinguish her from her previously limited Jewish hermeneutic. What is perhaps most interesting about this metaphor is that both the angel and Mary speak it. N-Town places Mary in a unique position to reveal the inextricability of her son’s flesh and her own. Her body is linked to Jesus’s body throughout his entire physical life.

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\(^{38}\) See Hannah Hunt, *Clothed in the Body: Asceticism, the Body, and the Spiritual in the Late Antique Era* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 148-9. As Hunt explains, this metaphor extends far beyond the Incarnation. In Romans 13:14, for example, people are told to clothe themselves in Christ: “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Here, people are instructed to metaphorically wrap themselves in Jesus, just as Jesus had been metaphorically clothed in Mary’s flesh.

\(^{39}\) Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion*, 159.
Salomé’s final speech implies the centrality of Mary and her flesh to both of the play’s miracles. As soon as her hand is restored, Salomé repents her “fals beleve” one more time and exclaims:

In every place I xal telle þis:
Of a clene mayde þat God is born,
And in oure lyknes God now clad is,
Mankend to saue þat was forlorn;
His modyr a mayde as sche was beforne,
Natt fowle polutyd as other women be,
But fayr and fresch as rose on thorn,
Lely-wyte, clene with pure virginyté.

(298-305)

Before she even identifies the baby as God incarnate, Salomé recounts that he is born of “a clene mayde.” The first detail she promises to share with others is not that the Incarnation has occurred but that Mary is a clean virgin. It is perhaps too much to say that Mary’s virginity is privileged over God’s incarnation in N-Town, but it is clear that Mary’s body is fully integrated into the narrative of the miracle and granted a privileged role within it.

Throughout the remainder of the speech, Salomé continues her focus on Mary. First, she notes that through Mary, God is now “clad” in “oure lyknes.” Salomé here makes explicit the flesh as clothing metaphor that had been implicit until this moment in the play. Jesus is indeed “clad” in human flesh, and it was Mary who clothed him. Salomé then repeats that Mary is a “mayde”; “Natt fowle polutyd as other women be,” Mary is instead “fayr and fresch as rose on thorn, / Lely-wyte, clene with pure virginyté.” Although significant, to say the least, that God now wears human flesh, the focus of the miracle, for Salomé, is Mary. Salomé will tell people in “every place” all that she now knows about Mary’s body, promising to spread her message in a vocabulary familiar in late medieval literature: the role and the lily, which Salomé here invoke, are similarly paired in Lydgate’s Life of Our Lady.
as well as in many of the Middle English Marian lyrics, and there also represent Mary’s purity and beauty.\(^40\)

In evoking images of the lily and the rose, Salomé also achieves a didactic effect; the floral imagery teaches that Mary’s body is clean and unpolluted. But in this didacticism, metaphors are not enough. She supplements conventional poetic language, here represented by the lily and the rose, with the corporeal and pragmatic language of “clene” and “polutyd.” Medical terminology cements the point made by literary terminology to show Mary’s spiritual fecundity. Unlike the “flowers” of menstruation—“flowers” is the English translation of *menstruae* in the Douay-Rheims Vulgate and also in Daniel’s treatise—these flowers are emphatically pure,\(^41\) and Mary is associated only with them. Salomé’s repetition of the term “polutyd” also harkens back to her former doubt, which was characterized by her intimate knowledge of blood. When the term is used now, it brings with it this earlier medical connotation. Salomé’s focus on Mary’s body in this speech thus merges literary and medical discourse: she introduces the floral imagery that permeated medieval Marian literature, and she re-integrates the vocabulary of blood that characterized her own earlier doubt. The version of the Nativity that Salomé promises to disseminate—a miracle which will illuminate Mary’s virginal body and pure blood—relies on a narrative that is equally theological, medical, and literary.

A similar fusion occurs in *The Croxton Play of the Sacrament* when Jonathas, attempting to destroy the host he has received from Aristorius, also loses the power of his

\(^{40}\) This imagery permeates the entire tradition; poems with particular attention toward it include: “20. Ther is no rose of swych vertu,” “72. Be glad, of al maydens flourre,” “78. Nou skrinke ant lylie flour,” and “89. Ros Mary, most of vertewe virginall.” See Karen Saupe, ed. *Middle English Marian Lyrics* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998).

hand. In this play, too, blood acts as the central image through which Christianity is understood and the central vocabulary through which it is articulated. When stabbed, the host bleeds; when thrown into a boiling cauldron, the water turns all red to signify more blood. The lesson for Jonathas echoes the lesson for the Sultan of Damascus in *The King of Tars*: he must believe both in God’s spirituality and his humanity. The miraculous appearance of blood in *The Croxton Play of the Sacrament* demonstrates God’s spiritual power, while the blood itself is meant to signify his material existence. Only through the realization of this simultaneously spiritual and physical presence can Jonathas recover his hand. The N-Town *Nativity* play extends this idea in its depiction of Salomé and her similarly shriveled hand. She too must believe that the baby in front of her is God incarnate, but more importantly, she must believe and relate that this baby is clothed in Mary’s flesh, unstained and unpolluted.

Mary’s bodily role in the miracle of the Nativity dovetails with the N-Town *Assumption of Mary*, the penultimate play in the compilation. In it, Jesus sends an angel to tell Mary that she will die and ascend to heaven within three days. The entire play revolves around her fleshly body: she asks John the Baptist and Jesus’s disciples to look after her burial, and they endeavour to accomplish this task in a way that will give the most reverence to the “gloryous body” (357) of Christ’s “moder terestyall” (492). To that end, they protect her body from the “schame” that others want to do to it, bury it in the grave that Jesus told them about, and ultimately present it to Jesus. John says, “Lord, as thou rese from deth and regnyst in thyn empere, / So reyse thou this body to thy blysse that lyth is. / Vs semyth this ryth is” (502–4). The angel Michael agrees with John, adding that “Hefne and erthe wold

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thynke this best now / Inasmyche as sche bare you” (507-8). For John and Michael alike, Mary’s body should undergo the same process of assumption experienced by Jesus’s flesh. Jesus agrees, and orders Mary’s soul to return to her body. Mary thus ascends as her son did, in flesh and in spirit, and Jesus assigns a crucial role to her in heaven: “Yow to worchepe, moder, it likyth the hol Trinyté. / Wherfore I crowne you here in this kyndam of glory. / Of alle mychosyn, thus schul ye clepyd be: / Qwen of Hefne and Moder of Mercy” (523-6). Now that the soul is reconnected to Mary’s “blissid body” (506), she can assume her new role in heaven. Kinservik argues that in this play, N-Town suggests that, contrary to Orthodox thought, salvation is guaranteed only after both Jesus and Mary are assumed in body and in spirit. For Kinservik, Mary’s assumption functions in concert with Jesus’s by contributing to the same divine goal. In this way, Jesus’s assumption is not complete until Mary has joined him in spirit and in flesh.

Like the Nativity, The Assumption of Mary is a play that centres on Mary’s miraculous body, and like the Nativity, The Assumption of Mary is also a play that incorporates Mary’s body into a miracle of Jesus’s flesh. If Jesus’s assumption in N-Town is not complete until Mary undergoes the same process, this combined assumption is enabled by the presentation of Mary’s flesh and blood in the Nativity play. Kinservik asserts that the Mary Play, and especially Joachim and Anna (which presents Mary’s conception), prepares the audience for this focus on Mary’s body in the Assumption. This focus is then briefly interrupted, Kinservik states, by the Nativity play, in which Christ’s body becomes the focus, although Mary’s still “continues to figure prominently in the intervening plays.”

43 See Kinservik, “The Struggle over Mary’s Body”: 192.
44 Kinservik, “The Struggle over Mary’s Body”: 190-6. Peter Meredith has pointed out that The Assumption of Mary is the only play in the N-Town cycle that is written in a different hand. An argument could be made that
chapter suggests differently: Mary’s flesh and blood there dictate her own life cycle as well as her son’s. Since the flesh in which Jesus is clothed at birth is Mary’s, he is not fully assumed until all of his flesh—including that which he shares with his mother—is also assumed. Kinservik observes that Mary’s assumption allows N-Town to achieve theological and dramatic closure, but I would add that such theological and dramatic closure relies on Mary’s physiology in the Nativity. The Assumption of Mary retroactively affirms the idea that Mary’s flesh and blood is integrated into the miracle of the Nativity: Mary’s assumption completes and confirms the assumption of her son, and ensures the end of the compilation as a whole. N-Town may be the only play compilation to include the Mary Play, but the Nativity is the play that illuminates how this compilation’s particular investment in Marian devotion is especially rooted in Mary’s miraculous flesh and blood.

V: N-Town’s “Language Situation”

The ways in which N-Town incorporates Mary’s flesh and blood into the miracles of the Nativity and Assumption may not be entirely surprising, since Marian devotion is habitually linked with medieval East Anglia and since N-Town has been established as the compilation that demonstrates Marian devotion most vividly. Explaining the Marian fervour that came to characterize late medieval East Anglia, Gibson states that, “Christ might be approached and invoked as the babe in Mary’s arms or as the suffering, bleeding Lord upon the cross, but it was Mary who had contained the whole awe of his godhead in the tabernacle of her womb,

the play cannot be placed in such a firm relationship with another from the same cycle. To my knowledge, however, there has not been a comprehensive study of the place and status of the play in Cotton Vespasian D.8 since Meredith made his point. See Meredith, “A Reconsideration of some Textual Problems in the N-Town Manuscript (BL MS Cotton Vespasian D VIII),” Leeds Studies in English 9 (1977): 35-50.
Mary who had been God’s bride and his mother, Mary whose image figured that union sought by all Christian souls and whose body hallowed by Christ’s presence was both type and model for the Church itself and for its holy sanctuaries.”

The N-Town plays, more than the other cycles, exhibit the zeal to praise Mary, and as Emma Solberg puts it, N-Town “might very well represent the zenith of late medieval English Mariolatry.”

Zenith or not, it may also seem to some readers that I am arguing for a reading of N-Town, and of the Nativity play in particular, as heterodoxy. The point I am making is not simply that Mary is the focus of the cycle, but that the cycle uses a vocabulary of blood to manipulate its sources toward a new representation of the centrality of Mary’s flesh and blood to the material and spiritual life of Jesus. In making my argument, however, I do not mean to enter into a debate on the orthodoxy or heterodoxy of N-Town, nor do I think such a debate could be productive.

The critical consensus is, after all, that these plays were performed during a time of religious instability in East Anglia in which the idea of ‘orthodoxy’ could not be defined accurately, and that N-Town represents this instability in numerous ways. Solberg states, for instance, that “N-Town stages Christianity as a promiscuously multivalent hermeneutical game.” In her study of N-Town’s depiction of marriage, Emma Lipton argues that it can only be understood in the context of East Anglian religious politics, with the growth of lay piety pressuring clerical authority and the growth of Lollard heretics making direct challenges to clerical authority. Frank Napolitano extends Lipton’s point, stating that an N-Town playwright cannot be pigeonholed into a single category of ‘orthodox’ or ‘heterodox’:

45 Gibson, The Theater of Devotion, 138.

“I see him negotiating all of these sympathies,” Napolitano writes, since this was a period “rife with exegetical controversy, [but] also a time in which privileged lay people increasingly sought resources to help them to explore a variety of ways to participate personally with their faith. Marian devotion was at the heart of these efforts.”⁴⁷ All of these scholars suggest that what constituted orthodoxy was likely unclear to N-Town’s playwright and audience. What was clear was the malleability and utility of Marian piety, and as I have suggested, her medicalized body played a central role in it: this, Mary’s flesh and blood, was the locus for what Napolitano would call spiritual exploration, a devotion that works between diverse ideological positions.

In his examination of this compilation, William Fitzhenry suggests that “the N-Town plays imagine an idealized audience,” capable of “thoughtfully evaluat[ing] the political and religious implications of their speech and actions” and able to contemplate theatrical and cultural authority.⁴⁸ His discussion of the audience is germane to the work of Granger, for whom the overarching theme of the compilation is learning. N-Town’s use of Latin and of typology, she argues, makes it more learned than other cycles and interpellates a relatively learned audience for it.⁴⁹ But whether or not that ideal audience ever actually existed, the

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⁴⁷ Solberg, “Madonna, Whore”: 212; Emma Lipton, Affections of the Mind: The Politics of Sacramental Marriage in Late Medieval English Literature (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 92; and, Frank M. Napolitano, “The N-Town Presentation of Mary in the Temple and the Production of Rhetorical Knowledge,” Studies in Philology 110:1 (2013): 1-17, quoted from 16. The religious implications of N-Town’s representation of Mary is also discussed by Charles T. Wood, “The Doctor’s Dilemma: Sin, Salvation, and the Menstrual Cycle in Medieval Thought,” Speculum 56.4 (1981): 710-27. According to Wood, representing Mary necessarily motivated numerous theological questions and problems. In order to fulfil her role, she had to be fully human in flesh; but, if she was fully human in the flesh, then she must also experience the same polluting bodily phenomena that other women endure. In this chapter, I elucidate how the Nativity play negotiates these problems.


⁴⁹ Granger, The N-Town Play, 44-52.
purpose of performing and experiencing these plays was not to bestow straightforward religious instruction: there would not even have been a clear idea of what “straightforward religious instruction” would entail. As Scherb explains, if plays in East Anglia were ever considered to be acts of “worship,” they were “worship” only insofar as they were “analogous to the painting or sculpture of religious or moral subjects.” These plays were not worship in the same way that prayer or pilgrimage is; instead, they were mimetic, and “hence essentially similar,” Scherb argues, to religious experience. In her examination of the compilation, Granger also contends that performing these plays was not equivalent to liturgy. But N-Town still invited reflection and contemplation: it encouraged an inquisitive approach to Christian devotion, and it did so primarily through its representation of Mary. Salomé’s skepticism about the Marian body is, I suggest here, the necessary prelude to her theological revelation.

This question of audience cannot be fully answered. It is not entirely clear, first of all, whereabouts in East Anglia the N-Town plays were performed. The general consensus is that the “N” of N-Town suggests that the play moved around quite a bit, since many towns could become the “N”; Stephen Spector has argued, however, that the “N” could equally refer to one, specific town that was just not copied out fully. Granger even postulates that the plays were perhaps never performed in the way that we think of performance today, on a stage before an audience, because there is no evidence to suggest that they were. Regardless

50 Scherb, Staging Faith, 43-44; Granger, The N-Town Play, 5-7. Neither of these scholars discusses A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge in any detail. It is certainly worth mentioning in a study of the religious implications of plays, but does not have a direct correlation to the present work. Interested readers may wish to consult Clifford Davidson, ed. A Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge (rev.ed. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2011) and Lawrence M. Clopper, Drama, Play and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

of whether or not there was an audience, let alone an ideal audience, Granger asserts, the medieval practice of reading is itself a performance. In this chapter, I have used the term “audience” in Granger’s sense of the word, to refer to people who would have heard the words of the plays read aloud, regardless of whether or not they were recited on a stage.

Conceptualizing the audience in this way helps to focus my analysis on the language in the play itself. It is of course important to remember that these plays were written to be performed, but the language of the plays is the closest thing we have to a concrete idea of what they were meant to be like. Rather than speculate about the kind of impact such performances would have had on an audience, then, this chapter has focused instead on the linguistic intricacies of the Nativity play to suggest that it merges medical, theological, and literary discourses together. In doing so, I participate in a parallel methodology to Emma Lipton, who examines the legal language in N-Town as a means to argue that it is informed by both legal and sacerdotal rituals. There is, as we have seen here, substantial value to reading the N-Town plays as literary texts: their vocabulary integrates medieval drama with medieval medicine and inserts them into a cultural context stretching beyond their local audiences and our scholarly speculations about them. The play belongs in a medieval literary tradition, and is alongside medieval medical discourse as well.

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The linguistic subtleties of the N-Town Nativity also reveal aspects of its vernacularity. Unlike Julian of Norwich’s *Revelation of Love*, the *Nativity* play is not particularly erudite in language or style. Though slightly more complex than *The King of Tars* in its use of rhyming a-b-a-b-c-b-c stanzas, it cannot be called an exemplary work of literary art. Like both the *Revelation of Love* and *The King of Tars*, however, the N-Town *Nativity* play uses a vocabulary of blood that is shared with medieval medical discourse, and medieval English medical discourse in particular. In these literary works, the vocabulary of blood transcends its medical background: blood pours into bodies to animate them both physically and spiritually, distinguishes Christian bodies from non-Christian bodies, reveals Jesus’s likeness to all humans, cleanses and saves humankind, propels the miracle of the Nativity, and causes and cures physical and spiritual injuries. All of these texts draw on medical ideas of blood as a foundation from which to begin their own literary depictions, which extend beyond the definitions provided by medical discourse. In N-Town, as in *The King of Tars*, this is not necessarily indicative of a level of sophistication heretofore unearthed. I do not mean to suggest that the language of the play comprises a high, elite style that scholarship has previously failed to acknowledge. Instead, I mean that the play demonstrates how medieval medical discourse circulated in other non-elite forms. Knowledge about blood, its properties, and roles in the physical and spiritual body was not exclusively reserved for a select few, accessed and possessed only by Latinate audiences. This is common knowledge, available to and used by the English-speaking, English-writing, and English-reading lay people of late medieval England.
Conclusion:

Medieval Blood and Vernacular Authority

Reading Middle English literature alongside Middle English medicine can illuminate literary representations of physical and spiritual life. Such reading, I have shown, reveals that blood is the nexus of physical and spiritual life and of literary, medical, and religious discourses. Literature shares a language of blood with medical writing and complicates it to mark religious identity and religious difference on the physical body. The texts analyzed in this dissertation all express matters of faith in terms of blood: in *The King of Tars*, the “misforschapen þing” and Sultan of Damascus lack blood and form until receiving Christian revelation through baptism and conversion, respectively; in Julian of Norwich’s *Revelation of Love*, the relationship between Jesus and Christians is described through visions and metaphors of blood; in the N-Town *Nativity* play, Christian belief is figured as belief in Mary’s pure blood, and doubt results in blood loss. All of these texts present blood as integral to religious identity—it creates and sustains spiritual life as well as physical life. Each text intersects with and expands Henry Daniel’s medical ideas of blood in different ways: with the *mola* or *wunderlumpe*, with the distinction between veins and arteries and the qualities of blood, with blood as breast milk, and, in all cases, with the role of blood to move the soul. But, like Alisoun of Bath, all ultimately expand specialized knowledge by distinctively adding to blood’s signification—to make their own meaning of blood. In the cases of the texts studied here, specialized knowledge is extended to include specific religious valences.
These texts recall Alisoun in another way as well. She transposes Latin learning into a vernacular conversation, and these texts share a specialized language that they all transpose into English. Henry Daniel’s treatise, I argued in Chapter One, is a compilation comprised of material from Daniel’s learned predecessors and his own experience. He establishes himself as the first vernacular authority on the diagnostic science of uroscopy. Sharing a vocabulary with Daniel thus means that these texts all share a vocabulary that is at once specialized and vernacular. The language of blood in these texts is clearly rooted in specialized medical discourse, but is not relegated to it. Medical discourse, I have argued, stretches beyond its professional context and moves from one language situation to another as early as the fourteenth century.

I have drawn on three literary texts that, in their diverse genres, styles, and composition dates, do not have a readily apparent connection, at least in the terms of conventional literary historiography. But their seeming distinctness is actually the best reason to discuss them in tandem. For, as this dissertation has argued, these otherwise unconnected works are connected by their common engagement with medical discourse. These romantic, visionary, devotional, and dramatic texts come together through their shared extension of the medical language of blood.

There still remains much work to be done both on blood in medieval English literature and on late medieval English vernacularity. In this dissertation I aim to introduce Henry Daniel’s text to discussions of medieval intellectual history and late medieval English vernacular culture, and to introduce English medical writing to literary analyses of blood. The project can still be taken further in both of these directions. To that end, it seems appropriate to pursue these directions in two new, yet overlapping, projects: one, on blood
and blood symbolism in medieval English literature, and another, on vernacular authority in late medieval England.

In the first project, I will develop my coverage of romance, devotional literature, and religious drama to offer a more comprehensive account of blood and blood symbolism in those genres, considering, for example, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, *Cleanness*, and *The Croxton Play of the Sacrament*. I will also branch out into other genres that inform the canon of medieval English literature, such as hagiography, dream vision, and complaint, considering *The Life of Saint Margaret* and *The Life of Saint Juliana* from Osbern Bokenham’s *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, as well as *Piers Plowman* and *Pearl*. Previous scholarship has treated blood in medieval literature within strictly military or genealogical contexts: as the typical result of armed combat, or as the metonymy of familial bloodlines. But I will show that this blood has a specifically medical connection, bringing in a new perspective to analyze these bloody images. By discussing texts from a variety of genres that make up the vibrant vernacular literary culture of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England, this book will demonstrate the numerous ways that blood is used to establish individual bodily and spiritual identity, and how that identity constructs, in turn, a clear divide between Christian and non-Christian bodies. And it will illuminate the extent to which genre affects these vernacular representations of physical and spiritual identity.

One example from *Piers Plowman* shows some of the directions this research can take, and can also encapsulate many of the ideas put forth in this dissertation. In Passus XIX, Will awakes, writes down his dream about the harrowing of hell, goes to church to take communion, and there falls asleep again. He receives another vision immediately, in which he sees Piers Plowman covered in blood, carrying a cross, “And riȝt lik in alle lymes to Oure
Lord Iesu” (XIX.8). Conscience, Will’s familiar interlocutor, explains that this bloody figure is actually Christ himself wearing the “armes,” “colours,” and “cote armure” of Piers (XIX. 12-13). This vision enables an epitome of biblical history in which Conscience explains the sin of Adam and Eve, Christ’s birth in Bethlehem, and the “herte blood he shade” (XIX. 57) to redeem the original sin. As part of this history, Conscience describes Christ’s role as a physician who “grauntede heele” to “Lif and lyme” (XIX. 104-105), an account that derives from Matthew 5. 25-26, and one with which we are already familiar from Chapter Five, “Palpat Beatam Virginem.” The context of this scriptural passage, in which Jesus heals a woman’s issue of blood, invites a retroactive reading of the start of Passus XIX, where Christ’s voluminous blood betokens Christian salvation. Christ the physician heals one of his devotees by stopping her blood, and saves all of them by shedding his. The “lymes” that Will sees at the start of the Passus thereby gain a specifically medical connection as those that will heal “Lif and lyme.”

Piers Plowman provides a way to extend my existing discussion because of its self-conscious fusion of literary genres: the romance, represented by the jousting Christ and Piers’s bloody armour; the vision, represented by the marvelous showings that Will receives; the devotional, represented by the vernacular rendering of scriptural history and its dramatic presentation before the “comune peple” (XIX.7). The poem shows that all of these seemingly separate modes of writing are part of a shared medical and salvific discourse: if Christ shows that knight, king, conqueror, saviour, and physician “may be o persone,” Piers Plowman shows that romance, vision, and devotion may form one literature.

In the second project, I will build on the work I have already done on Henry Daniel to query vernacular authority in late medieval England, focusing on Daniel, Geoffrey
Chaucer, John Trevisa, and Osbern Bokenham. This project takes up the confluence of epistemology, translation, and Englishness in a way neatly encapsulated by Chaucer in his *Treatise on the Astrolabe*. In explaining his method to his little son Lowys, Chaucer suggests that his Englishing of astrological conclusions follows the model of Greek, Arabic, Jewish, and Latin writers in presenting specialized knowledge in their native tongue: “And God woot that in alle these langages and in many moo han these conclusions ben suffisantly lerned and taught, and yit by diverse reules; right as diverse pathes leden diverse folk the righte way to Rome” (Pro. 36-40). The proverbial commonplace about the paths to Rome takes on an uncommon significance for Chaucer, who elsewhere in this treatise reminds his son that Rome is an origin for knowledge. The months of July and August, he tells Lowys, are “liked to Julius Cesar and Cesar Augustus,” and that “Julius Cesar toke 2 daies out of Feverer and putte hem in his month of Juyll, and Augustus Cesar clepid the month of August after his name and oderneid it of 31 daies” (I. 9-10; 16-20).

Chaucer’s proverb suggests an eastward movement toward Rome, but the substance of his treatise actually bears out a westward movement away from it: “therefore have I yeeven the a suffisant Astrolabie as for oure orizonte, compowned after the latitude of Oxenforde” (Pro.8-10), “In which fifthe partie shalt thou fynden tables of equacions of houses after the latitude of Oxenforde” (Pro.104-106), “To knowe in speciall the latitude of oure countre, I mene after the latitude of Oxenforde, and the height of oure pool”(II. 22 rubric). An astrological world oriented by the names of Roman emperors now also becomes a world oriented according to “oure countre,” England. My project as a whole will be concerned with similar acts of translation, whereby specialized Latin knowledge is extended by a new voice in the English vernacular. When we pay attention to vernacular authority, I
will argue, we gain a new way of reading texts like Chaucer’s *Treatise on the Astrolabe* and Daniel’s *Liber Uricrisiarum* that have most frequently been considered for their functional utility rather than their creative potential.
Appendix A:

Daniel’s Words

These terms have been compiled from San Marino, Henry E. Huntington Library, MS HM 505. There are likely others to be found in different manuscripts, and so this list is not meant to represent a finished analysis of all of Daniel’s words; rather, it is one step in what I hope will be an ongoing investigation of Daniel and the English language.

I have classified Daniel’s terms alphabetically into three categories: “Medical Terms,” “Specialist Terms, Non-Medical” and “Non-Specialist Terms.” “Medical Terms” includes parts of the body, colours and contents of urine, bodily functions and processes, and ailments. “Specialist Terms, Non-Medical” includes titles of medical and scientific texts, words that have particular signification in a scientific context that differs from their meaning in other contexts (e.g. “actif”), terms denoting measurement, names of winds, terms that are linguistically or orthographically specialized, and astrological terms. “Non-Specialist Terms” includes all of the other words Daniel writes down that either predate or are contemporary with the earliest citation in the MED and OED and that are more a part of everyday speech than specialized discourse (e.g. “chiuering,” shivering). The terms are listed alphabetically and cited by book, chapter, and folio number according to their first appearance in the manuscript. I certainly could have chosen another means of classification. In his classification of Chaucer’s terms, for instance, Christopher Cannon categorizes words

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1 Astrological terms would, for Daniel, be considered part of a medical vocabulary. For Daniel and his contemporaries, the human body was a microcosm of the universe, and as such it was part of a much larger system. Astrology helped to explain the mysteries of the human body. Since I have created a modern classification system, however, they are here considered to be “Specialist Terms, Non-Medical.”
stylistically, as either “high” or “low” speech.\(^2\) My system is more conceptual. A specialist term is not necessarily polysyllabic, nor is it necessarily a Latin or French loanword. Instead, it is one that articulates a concept particular to a specific type of knowledge, ranging from medical (“diabetes”) to astrological (“Capricorn”) to orthographic (“diffiniciown”) and beyond. The terms “specialist” and “non-specialist” may not have been available to Daniel, but the potential anachronism is worthwhile since it captures the wide variety of discourses to which Daniel contributed.

In preparing this chart, I have checked all terms in the Middle English Dictionary (MED), Oxford English Dictionary Online (OED), and the Chaucer Concordance.\(^3\) Many of the following words will be followed by symbols that indicate the details of their significance. Below is a legend explaining these symbols:

\(^*\) term predates the earliest citation in sense only
\(^h\) term is also noted by Hanna
\(^c\) term is either first recorded in Chaucer or rare before Chaucer
\(^*\) term is contemporary with the earliest citations (\textit{i.e.} the earliest citation dates to 1375-1379)
\(^\sim\) term for which Daniel is cited by the \textit{OED} or \textit{MED} as the earliest or only instance
\(^\ast\) term for which Daniel is cited, but not considered the earliest by the \textit{OED} or \textit{MED}
\(^\prime\) term has only one or two citations that predate Daniel
\(^\$\) term is anglicized Latin, or Latin used as English

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\(^3\) This wonderful online resource is hosted by the University of Maine at Machias: http://ummutility.umm.maine.edu/necastro/chaucer/concordance/
term does not appear in *OED* or *MED*, or appears under a different form (e.g. many words with the suffixes “end/and,” “-hed” and “-ish” are not in the *OED* or *MED*, but one or both search engines often has a version of the word ending in “-ing,” “-ness” or “-y,” respectively).

term has no entry in either the *OED* nor *MED*, but appears in passages cited from Daniel’s treatise for another word

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Medical Terms</th>
<th>Specialist Terms, Non-Medical</th>
<th>Non-specialist Terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>acanyet⁺ (error for “alkannet,” 2.7.fol.67v)⁴</td>
<td>acces⁺ (2.2.fol.28v)</td>
<td>abilhed⁺ (3.5.fol.110r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acetows (2.5.fol.53v)</td>
<td>accidentalite⁺ (2.7.fol.74v)</td>
<td>absence⁺ (1.4.fol.18r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acue (2.2.fol.26r)</td>
<td>accidentalall (1.4.fol.21r)</td>
<td>abstinence⁺ (1.4.fol.12v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acute (2.4.fol.50r)</td>
<td>actif⁺ (1.4.fol.7v)</td>
<td>abundance⁺ (3.27.fol.129r)</td>
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<tr>
<td>adort⁺- anglicization of adortus, the aorta (2.3.fol.32r)</td>
<td>actiown (2.4.fol.47r)</td>
<td>acowntid⁺ (2.3.fol.33v)</td>
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<tr>
<td>adust(e) (2.8.fol.77v)</td>
<td>admixtiown (2.9.fol.86r)</td>
<td>acownting⁺ (2.6.fol.59v)</td>
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<td>adustiown (2.1.fol.22r)</td>
<td>Afforismis⁺ (of Hippocrates, 2.3.fol.38r)</td>
<td>agid (1.4.fol.11r)</td>
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<td>albus, albo, alba⁺ (2.1.fol.21v)</td>
<td>affricus⁺ (1.4.fol.16v)</td>
<td>agitacoun (3.8.fol.112v)</td>
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<tr>
<td>alchites, alchita⁺ (2.3.fol.45v)</td>
<td>affrymatyfe (3.24.fol.127r)</td>
<td>agit (2.8.fol.81v)</td>
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<td>ampullows⁺ (2.9.fol.89r)⁶</td>
<td>Almagestris⁺ (of Ptolemy, 2.6.fol.57r)</td>
<td>agreggith (2.8.fol.79r)</td>
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<td>anticiput⁺ (3.2.fol.107r)</td>
<td>alteracion⁺ (3.1.fol.106r)</td>
<td>alleggawnce (2.2.fol.29r)</td>
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<td>Anathomyis (of Galen, 1.3.fol.4r)</td>
<td>alleggeth⁺ (3.8.fol.112v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apoplexia, apoplexy⁺</td>
<td>annunciaciown⁺ (2.6.fol.59v)</td>
<td>anentysshing⁺-“diminishing,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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⁴ If this is the term Daniel had intended, he has confused its sense. “Alkannet” refers to the root of a plant, used as red dye; but Daniel uses the term to describe a colour that is “sumtyme whight-yelowgh and sumtyme yelow, & sumtyme eveene betwene bothin.”

⁵ This term appears in the *MED* as “aschites, n.: a collection of serous fluid in the peritoneal cavity; dropsy of the abdomen; ascites” and predates the earliest entry, John Trevisa’s Middle English translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus’s *De proprietatibus rerum*. Juhani Norri notes this spelling and dates the term to a.1400. See Norri, *Names of Sicknesses in English, 1400-1550: An Exploration of the Lexical Field* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1992), 301.

⁶ *MED* records “ampulle, n.: a dilation or swelling” but Daniel predates the entry and neither dictionary includes the adjectival form. Juhani Norri dates “ampulle, -ula” to c. 1400. See Norri, *Names of Sicknesses*, 298.
| (3.3.fol.108r) | Aquosite (1.4.fol.20v) | Antidotary (of Constantine the African, 3.20.fol.124r) | Ger.” (2.3.fol.38v) |
| (2.3.fol.30v) | Agows (1.4.fol.20r) | Apothecarius (1.4.fol.16r) | Answering* (1.3.fol.3v) |
| (3.3.fol.108r) | Arsatuby (1.3.fol.4v) | Appetite* (1.4.fol.16r) | Arayns (3.7.fol.112r) |
| (3.3.fol.108r) | Ars Gutta (2.3.fol.37r) | Aquarius (1.4.fol.16v) | Antonyng (2.3.37r) |
| (2.3.fol.49r) | Arterius (2.1.fol.22v) | Arage (1.4.fol.19v) | Autentuke (2.1.21v) |
| (2.3.fol.32r) | Artesia (2.4.fol.39r) | Argument* (2.3.39r) | Avisements (2.7.fol.7r) |
| (3.9.fol.113r) | Atter (2.6.fol.57v) | Aspect (2.8.80v) | Bakwarte (2.3.33r) |
| (3.28.fol.130r) | Attrices (2.6.58r) | Assimilacoun (3.30.131v) | Barke* (1.3.6r) |
| (2.79.fol.104v) | Augues (2.6.58r) | Astronomers (2.6.58r) | Barowfull (2.7.68r) |
| (2.74.fol.93v) | Augmastick (2.4.fol.16v) | Auctores (1.2.2.2v) | Bathynge (1.4.18v) |
| (2.3.fol.42v) | Baloke Codder (3.30.131v) | Betaryng* (3.9.113v) | Benefyse* (2.7.7v) |
| (2.7.fol.75r) | Baloke Codde (2.7.68r) | Bleyydhedo (of the eyes, 1.3.5v) | Blyshede (2.3.35r) |
| (2.3.fol.22r) | Blakhed (1.3.115v) | Bodyed (3.11.115v) | Blawnche (2.9.86r) |
| (1.4.fol.8v) | Bleyshing, blemish (drye~) | Boron, Borea (1.4.16v) | Bloyshed° (2.8.81r) |
| (3.9.fol.114r) | Blodysh (2.3.30r) | Boystows (1.3.4r) | Bolte (3.6.11r) |
| (1.2.2v) | Blodysh (2.9.19v) | Boystowstring (1.4.9v) | Bosinyg (2.7.69r) |
| (2.3.30r) | Bloshed (2.1.2v) | Bullid* (1.1.2v) | Bosinytheo (2.4.52r) |

7. This is an illness similar to epilepsy, but with different symptoms. See MED, “apoplexie, n.: apoplexy; litel~lesse~ epilepsy” and Norri, Names of Sicknesses, 300.

8. The terms “ars bubbe,” “ars gutte,” and “ars rope” are all synonymous, referring to the “longaon,” the rectum. The MED records “rope, n.” meaning “guts, bowels, the small intestines” as early as a. 1333 in Glosses in Walter de Bibbesworth’s Treatise (London, British Library, MS Additional 46919) and “gut, n.” as early as 1300 in The South English Legendary (Oxford: Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108).

9. Norri dates this term, meaning “numbness in an organ,” to a. 1425. Norri, Names of Sicknesses, 301.

10. This refers to one of the three types of sinochus fever, along with “epamastyk” (p.21) and “hometeyn” (p.24). There is no record of this term in either the MED or OED, but Norri records it and dates it to c. 1450-1547. Norri: Names of Sicknesses, 302.

11. Daniel uses this term in the sense of a “throbbing wound,” dated by Norri to a.1400. See Names of Sicknesses, 302.

12. “blerednes(s)e, blerydnesse,” a. 1413. See Norri, Names of Sicknesses, 303.
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<td>brestincoddid° - plectoricus (2.7.fol.75r)</td>
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<td>Capricornus (2.6.fol.57r)</td>
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<td>bony</td>
<td>(2.8.fol.82r)</td>
<td>charnowse- “carnous, adj.”</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.74v)</td>
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<td>botem*</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.3v)</td>
<td>casting* (~imaginaciown, 2.7.fol.71r)</td>
<td>budden (3.28.fol.129v)</td>
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<td>brakyng- vomiting (1.3.fol.6v)</td>
<td>centorie°</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.67v)</td>
<td>buds (3.29.fol.131r)</td>
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<td>(2.3.fol.31r)</td>
<td>centre° (the north-west wind, 2.6.fol.62r)</td>
<td>candillyght° (1.4.fol.10.v)</td>
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<td>(2.4.fol.52r)</td>
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<td>(2.76.fol.98v)</td>
<td>cicle</td>
<td>(2.6.fol.61r)</td>
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<td>brusowre°</td>
<td>(2.2.fol.24r)</td>
<td>circius° (the wind on the “right side” of borea, 1.4.fol.16v)</td>
<td>certeynly**</td>
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<tr>
<td>buddy flesh°</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.4r)</td>
<td>collect° (i.e. collected, ppl. 1.4.fol.9r)</td>
<td>cessing°</td>
</tr>
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<td>burblis°</td>
<td>(2.9.fol.84v)</td>
<td>collectiownb</td>
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<td>byndende*</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.20r)</td>
<td>comentowre</td>
<td>(1.1.fol.2v)</td>
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<td>canals, canallis- windpipe or any tubular passage in the body (2.3.fol.34v)</td>
<td>compressyth</td>
<td>(3.14.fol.119r)</td>
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<td>(3.30.fol.133r)</td>
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<td>carbunculosi*</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.7r)</td>
<td>constreyneth</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.4v)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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13 Neither “bosinythe” nor “bosinyng” are recorded by the MED or OED, but “bosining,” Norri notes, is likely an error for “bosyng,” meaning “bulge, puff up,” and dates it so a. 1425-c. 1450. See Norri, _Names of Sicknesses_, 305.

14 In physiological sense of “a) Disturbance of bodily humors caused by excess heat in the body, b) Heated condition of an organ,” a. 1425. See Norri, _Names of Sicknesses_, 305.

15 Three citations predate Daniel. Two are from the 12th century and use centorie as a Latin word referring to either the “common centaury” or the “yellow centaury.” The third is John Lelamour’s Middle English Translation of Macer’s _De Viribus Herbarum_, c. 1373.

16 Could refer to Caecias, defined in the _OED_ as “the north-east wind, personified,” and dated to 1653.

17 A hapax legomenon, referring to flesh with ‘buds,’ or knots in it.
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Definition/Notes</th>
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18 Only the *OED* records the proper sense: “the action of incorporating.”

19 Neither the *MED* nor *OED* records this term, but it is recorded in Norri’s *Names of Sicknesses*, 311, and is dated to c.1450.

20 “This vena ramose is also kallid *porta lactis* or ellis *lactea porta*, ‘melke yate,’ ffor hit receuyith & vnderfongith fro þe stomac a mater as white as melke, which mater is kallyd *cisaniana*, the ‘cisaniane.'”

21 *MED* s.v. “conformen, v.” is contemporary with Daniel, as used in *Piers Plowman B*.

22 Not in *MED*, but predates *OED*, “crinkling, n2,” which is likely Daniel’s meaning. He writes: “and þan yf þu þowre the vrin on a stone hit makeþe a cricelynge noyse lyke oyle whan hit is powrid on a stone.”
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²³ *i.e.* Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologies*; *MED* and *OED* record the word but lack this sense.


²⁵ “deepness, n.” does appear in *MED* and *OED*, but both lack Daniel’s sense, referring to the deepness of a colour.

²⁶ “The corrosye ys a rewme in the hede passing oute by the nosseþrylles.” This term is not recorded in the *MED* or *OED*, but is recorded by Norri and dated to a. 1425. See Norri, *Names of Sicknesses*, 315.

²⁷ Both the *MED* and *OED* record “coxe, n.” referring to the thigh or femur, but Daniel uses the term (possibly mistakenly) to refer to an ailment, with signs similar to those of sciatica, that can affect that area of the body.

²⁸ *MED* and *OED* lack Daniel’s sense, which is “farting.” As Hanna states in his explanatory notes, “crakkyng” is here synonymous with “wlisping benethin,” and the use of “benethin” indicates that Daniel has transferred
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the usual meaning of “lisp” downward on the body. These terms are also contained in a list that includes “shityng,” which further reveals this particular meaning of “crakkyng.”

29 Daniel is not referring to the first book of the Bible, but rather trying to denote a general beginning. See *OED* sense 4, “origin or mode of formation of something,” 1604: Robert Cawdrey, *A Table Alphabetical*.

30 The term appears in the *MED* and *OED*, but both lack Daniel’s sense, synonymous with “perbrakith.” Daniel uses the term as the verb for of “discrasie, n.” defined by the *MED* as “a diseased condition of the body, or its parts, caused by an unfavorable combination of the humors.”

31 This term is recorded by Norri, defined as “Morbid thickening of bodily humors,” and dated to c. 1450. See *Names of Sicknesses*, 343.

32 The gerund is not recorded by the *MED* or *OED*, but is recorded by Norri and dates to c. 1450-1496. See Norri, *Names of Sicknesses*, 317.

33 Daniel is referring to Albertus Magnus’ work, “and also the coment vppon lapidarie.” For Albertus, see *Opera Omnia* ed. A. Borgnet, 5 vols. (Paris: Vivès, 1890).

34 Not in *MED* or *OED*; possibly comes from Latin “eiulatus,” *wailing, lamentation.*
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35 The MED has no entry for this term, but Daniel is cited as the only occurrence of “unpurenes, n.”

36 This kind of fever is not recorded by the MED or OED, but is recorded by Norri and dated to a. 1413. See Norri, Names of Sicknesses, 321.
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<tr>
<td>eucrioun- form of eucrasia, “a favorable combination of”</td>
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37 Similar to “ypostasis”: “This worde ‘ypostasis’ is sumtyme takyn in speciall and sumtyme in generall. Whan it is takyn in speciall hit is only in the botme, in the ground, of vrin, and euermore whan it is soo than is hit proprely ‘ypostasis.’ But, whan hit is in the meddis of þe vrin hit is proprely kalled ‘eneorima.’”

38 “Particules,” above, refers to a section or chapter of a text; “particlys,” here, refers to bodily particles.

39 Hanna notes that the term is rare before Chaucer and points readers to the MED in sense e (“the discipline dealing with rational speculation or contemplation”), but Daniel uses the term synonymously with the Middle English “skil.” For example: “‘Jeun,’ as sume seyn, is kallid porta lactis or lactea porta (Anglice: melke yate), and this is þe philosophie…” (1.3.fol. 4r). This sense is not recorded in the MED.

40 This term is recorded by Norri and dated to c. 1450. See Names of Sicknesses, 324.

41 “Item ther is a webbe, a ryme, in whiche all the yliowns & all the guttis saue longaon arn beclosed in, and Galienus in his boke of Anathomys kalleth hit ‘Epygoʒɔntaymenon.’”
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42 This word is not recorded by MED or OED, but is recorded by Norri who defines it as an “obstruction preventing free passage of bodily humors” and dates it to c. 1450. Other witnesses, including London, British Library MS Royal 17.D.1, read “emfraxis.”

43 This form is an anglicization of Latin “exinaniciione,” purging.

44 “But proprely intestina are every manner guts of man & beste while they are in the body: exta when hit are out of the body.”

45 Hanna uses MED sense 1.a and notes that Daniel is preceded only by Piers Plowman A (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.14, c.1376). Daniel may also use the term in sense 2.d: physiol. “what is superfluous, the excess,” the earliest entry for which he predates (Surgical Treatises in Wellcome 564).
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<td>kypielles- “cupules,” n.: “acorn cupules, cups”</td>
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46 Possibly an error for “saying, n.”: “If humor in the vrin in þe begynynge of maladye holde him in þe over partye of þe vrihte seythe subtillite, and that gode token. Iff hit be in the grownde, grossehede and heuyhede and euyll token, for hit is harde to digestioun. Iff in the myddes, menesthes the schechinge seiþe.”

47 This term is recorded by Norri and dated to c. 1450- a. 1475. See Names of Sicknesses, 340.
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48 This term appears in a passage cited from Daniel in the MED entry for “stif, adj.” as the only occurrence; the OED cites one occurrence of “moistness, n.” that predates Daniel’s treatise: Proprium Sanctorum (Archiv fur das Studium der Neueren Sprachen), c.1350.

49 See “interpolat,” an intermittent fever.

50 This is Daniel’s term for the “medyll parte” of the head.
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<td>mystravalying* (2.4.fol.48r)</td>
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<td>mendely* - total*</td>
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<td>narwin* (2.2.fol.24v)</td>
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<td>naselyngs (2.76.fol.99r)</td>
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<td>trowbylt* - necessarie (1.3.fol.4r)</td>
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<td>trowbylt* (2.7.4.fol.93r)</td>
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<td>turbaciown* (2.3.fol.30v)</td>
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<td>kykyr- clitoris (2.7.fol.75v)</td>
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<td>twching** - “touching, ger.” (2.3.fol.33v)</td>
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<td>kylysi- inferior vena cava (2.3.fol.31v)</td>
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<td>kyneris, kyniri* (2.3.fol.32v)</td>
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<td>verges* - streaks or rays (2.4.5.45v)</td>
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</table>

51 In terms of “kende hete,” as used in this passage, Daniel predates the earliest entry in the MED, which is Trivisa’s translation of Ranulf Higden’s Polychronicon, c.1387. To denote the term “natural” more broadly, there are other citations from earlier in the 14th century (e.g. Chaucer’s Troilus and Criseyde), and the earliest record of the term itself is Homilies in MS Bodley 343, c. 1175.

52 Daniel is using a Latin word as an English word here. MED lacks his sense (“shadow”).

53 “Item in woman is a veyn that is kallid ‘kyneris,’ the kyniri, and hit begynyth at the lyuer as all veynys don and diuisith him into two braunches: the tone gothe to the lyft side and þe toþer to þe right side and eiþer of hem arn diuidid in diuerse brawnches.”

54 “Item anoþer fever that is kallid ‘lipparia,’ the hote fever.” Term is defined by Norri as “fever caused by mixture of choler and rotten phlegm, making inner parts of the body cold and exterior hot” and dated to c. 1450. See Norri, Names of Sicknesses, 347.

55 Daniel is cited in the MED entry for “unmightines(se, n.” but there is one text (Herbarium Apuleii, London, British Library, MS Harley 6258B, c.1150) that predates his.

56 This term is used synonymously with “cell” to refer to a particular compartment within the brain.
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<td>malancolye©</td>
<td>1.3.fol.5r</td>
<td>vertue*</td>
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<td>male</td>
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<tr>
<td>manye©</td>
<td>“mania, n.”</td>
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<td>morphe®</td>
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<td>ymagynid©</td>
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<tr>
<td>mundyfieth®</td>
<td>1.3.fol.5r</td>
<td>þephrous®°</td>
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<td>pressed*</td>
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<td>mydryme°</td>
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<td>myschef*</td>
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<td>mysdietynge</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

57 No entry for gerundive.

58 Daniel is cited in the MED entry for “watery, adj.,” but is predated by Ancrene Riwle, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 402, c.1200.

59 This is possibly an error for “poubli, adj.,” plump. The MED only cites the term in reference to cherries, but Daniel is here using it to describe the conditions of the complexions in a verse, with the English terms written first and their Latin meanings in the line below. The Latin written below “poubli” is “carnosus,” fleshy. It thus seems that “poubli” was likely intended here.

60 Daniel is cited in the MED, but is predated by Homilies in Lambeth MS 487, c.1225.
<table>
<thead>
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<td>a colour of urine</td>
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<td>rachching°</td>
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<td>nunciatyf° (2.2.fol.26v)</td>
<td>rayed° - “ray, n.” used as an adjective (2.4.fol.46r)</td>
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<td>oppilaciown- obstruction in an organ (2.3.fol.41r)</td>
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<td>scaldith* (2.2.fol.23v)</td>
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</tbody>
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61 This is Daniel’s term for the “hyndere parte” of the head.

62 “Vndir cephalica vena lythe a veyn pat is called mediana, the myd veyne. Blod last in this veyne agayne dissuria & asma & octomia & peripalmonia, & principali agayne all maladyis of þe spiritalis.”
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<td>rare fitus°</td>
<td>2.76.fol.98v</td>
<td>“rarefact,” predates “rarefactive, adj.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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63 This term is also recorded by Norri and dated to a. 1400. See Names of Sicknesses, 356-7.

64 Daniel is cited by the MED, but his text is predated by the Northern Homily Cycle: The Northern Passion, Expanded Version, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. poet. 175, c.1350.

65 This term is also recorded by Norri and dated to c. 1450. See Names of Sicknesses, 359.

66 This word does appear in the MED and OED, but not in Daniel’s sense of “skinnish.”

67 “Colera viridis is also in 2 wyse. The fyrste is kallid colera passina (Anglice: a colore prassin) & hit is seyd so of an herbe pat is kallis [sic] prassinus & also marubius (Anglice: prassyn), or ellis horhowne, ffor a colore prassyn is grene & bittre as that herbe.”
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<td>region</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.70v)</td>
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<td>remission*</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.11r)</td>
<td>spatelynge* (2.76.fol.101r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remys (2.8.fol.77v)</td>
<td></td>
<td>spece*- the sensible aspect of an object or odor (1.4.fol.8r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repiciown</td>
<td>(2.3.fol.39v)</td>
<td>specis*- kinds, types (2.3.fol.41r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>replete*</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.18v)</td>
<td>spisse°- thick (2.7.f70r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resolciowns</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.10v)</td>
<td>spisshed° (2.10.fol.88r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retenciown</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.74r)</td>
<td>spitting*(1..3.fol.5v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retentyf</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.71v)</td>
<td>spolyid* (2.4.fol.47r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rewmatyk</td>
<td>(2.4.fol.47v)</td>
<td>spottyshe° (3.14.fol.119r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rewme</td>
<td>(2.3.fol.30v)</td>
<td>stalysh (3.14.fol.118v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rigbon°</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.5v)</td>
<td>stefhed° (2.3.fol.37r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rigowre</td>
<td>(2.6.fol.66r)</td>
<td>sterkhed° (2.3.fol.37r)68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rosping°</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.6v)</td>
<td>stonyed° (2.2.fol.27v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rotelith</td>
<td>(2.3.fol.34v)</td>
<td>stregny (3.19.fol.123r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rotynhed°</td>
<td>(3.1.fol.106v)</td>
<td>streye (3.13.fol.118r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rubeus°- a colour of urine (2.1.fol.21v)</td>
<td></td>
<td>streythed° (1.4.fol.11r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rufus°- a colour of urine (2.1.fol.1v)</td>
<td></td>
<td>styend° (2.4.fol.47v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rudihed°</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.5r)</td>
<td>sufficient*° (1.3.fol.6r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanatiown</td>
<td>(2.2.fol.28r)</td>
<td>sufficit*° (2.1.fol.21v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sangwyne°</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.12r)</td>
<td>suffring° (1.4.fol.8r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanies</td>
<td>(3.9.fol.113v)</td>
<td>suspect* (2.2.fol.25v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sansugium°</td>
<td>(2.3.fol.34v)</td>
<td>suspeciowshed° (3.2.fol.108r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sappe*- earwax (1.3.f5v)</td>
<td></td>
<td>swarthede° (1.4.fol.20v)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

68 Although there is no entry for “sterkhed, n.,” Daniel is cited as the earliest occurrence of “starknes, n.” in the MED.

69 Recorded in Norri, and defined as “putrefaction, suppuration,” a. 1413. See Names of Sicknesses, 366.

70 The term “rubi(e, n.” does appear in the MED, but only to refer to the precious stone or the colour of it. Entries for the stone date back to Saint Patrick’s Purgatory (Auchinleck, c. 1330), but Daniel predates the entries for the colour of a ruby, which is first recorded in Thomas Norton, Ordinal of Alchemy (London, British Library, MS Additional 10302), c. 1477.

71 This term was already in circulation to refer to a specific colour of cloth, as used in Wardrobe Accounts of Edward III, but not to refer to a sanguine complexion of the body. The earliest records of this sense in the MED are from Surgical Treatises in Wellcome 564, c. 1392 and Gower’s Confessio Amantis, c. 1393.

72 “Take hede þat ‘sansugium’ is whan þe onde is large inward & streyte owtwarde.” The term is recorded by Norri, defined as a “respiratory disorder thought to stem from unhealthy humors gathering in the lungs, causing compulsive inhalation and arduous exhalation,” and dated to a. 1425- c. 1450. See Names of Sicknesses, 367.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saws flewme, sawcfeuleme - a skin disease characterized by scabs, spots and swelling (2.5.fol.53v)</td>
<td>swartishe~ (1.4.fol.14v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scabbe~ (1.1.fol.2v)</td>
<td>sweltith~* (1.3.fol.4r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scabbed~ (3.14.fol.119v)</td>
<td>swetehede~* (1.4.fol.20r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scabbihede° (1.4.fol.9v)</td>
<td>swymmyng (2.3.fol.41r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scabies (3.9.fol.113v)</td>
<td>swolwyng~* (2.7.fol.73r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scalys* (on the skin, 3.9.fol.113v)</td>
<td>swong~* (1.4.fol.18r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schote* (2.81.fol.105r)</td>
<td>sykyrhed~ (2.2.fol.29v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schrynkyng (2.81.fol.105r)</td>
<td>syruid~* (2.76.fol.103v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciatica (3.6.fol.111r)</td>
<td>sytere (1.4.fol.20r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotomie~ dizziness and dimness of sight (2.4.fol.50r)</td>
<td>taryinge (3.29.fol.131r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scouby (3.19.fol.122v) (error for “scabby”)</td>
<td>temptynge~ (3.27.fol.129r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrophula~ (1.3.fol.7r)</td>
<td>teynid~ (2.7.fol.67r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scuddis (1.4.fol.8v)</td>
<td>thennyshe~ (1.4.fol.11r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secundyn (2.3.fol.43v)</td>
<td>therlyth~* (1.4.fol.21r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedimen (3.1.fol.106v)</td>
<td>thinehede~ (1.4.fol.8r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senewe-stone° (2.3.fol.133r)</td>
<td>thikhed~ (1.4.fol.9v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentinel° (1.4.fol.15r)</td>
<td>thikkysh~ (2.2.fol.24v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrewyd* (2.74.fol.97r)</td>
<td>tholyng~* (1.4.fol.8r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siccite~ (1.4.fol.7v)</td>
<td>threstynge (1.2.fol.3r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sifac - the peritoneum (2.4.fol.46r)</td>
<td>tikelyng~, tekelyn~* (1.4.fol.9r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sighyng~ (2.3.fol.39r)</td>
<td>tremblande~ (3.4.fol.108v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinochus - an intermittent fever (2.74.fol.93r)</td>
<td>trowbelows (3.14.fol.118v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincopis~ - loss of consciousness, weakening of pulse (2.4.fol.51r)</td>
<td>uncouenawnt - inappropriate (1.2.fol.3r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soden° (1.1.fol.2r)</td>
<td>vnproprely~ (2.2.fol.24v)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

73 This term is recorded by Norri and dated to c. 1450.

74 As with “strop,” above, Daniel is cited but is predated by just one entry: *La Estorie del Evangelie* (London, Dulwich College, MS 22), c.1300.

75 Daniel is cited here by the MED, but his text is predated by the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, London, British Library, MS Arundel 57, c.1340.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sophene- saphenous veins</td>
<td>(2.3.fol.31v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spasm*</td>
<td>(2.8.fol.80v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spawde* - shoulder</td>
<td>(2.3.fol.39r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sperme*</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.12v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spirituall</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.5r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>splene*</td>
<td>(1.1.fol.2r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spleneticus*</td>
<td>(1.1.fol.2v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spume*</td>
<td>(3.6.fol.111r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spumows*</td>
<td>(2.8.fol.81v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>squamows*</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.19v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stawnci , stancus, stancitarye*</td>
<td>- a stammer or stutter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.3.fol.34r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stiptik*</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.19v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ston-bon*</td>
<td>(2.3.fol.33r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stranguiriel*</td>
<td>(2.3.fol.37v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strowp, strop*</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.72r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stuffith*</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.68r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stynke*</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.10v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subcitrinel* - a colour of urine</td>
<td>(2.1.fol.21v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subcitrinshil*</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.11v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subpallidus*</td>
<td>(2.1.fol.21v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subrufus* - a colour of urine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

76 “But in the reyns it is decocte & digested, that is for to seyne soden and defyid.” Compare with Chaucer’s Parson’s Tale: “They ne helde hem nat apayd, as seith the book, of sodden flessh that was to hem offred, but they tooke by force the flessh that is rawe” (X. 900).

77 In the MED, Daniel is cited as the only occurrence of this term used as a noun. His text also predates the earliest record of the term as an adjective, from Richard of Wallingford’s Exafrenon Prognosticorum Temporis (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 67), c. 1388; his text does not, however, predate the term when used as an adverb, which appears in, for example, Ancrene Riwle (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 402), c. 1200.

78 See MED, s.v. “spelentik, n.”

79 This is a late spelling of “unethes, adv.,” hardly, and Daniel is cited among the entries.

80 Daniel is cited in the MED, but is preceded by Robert Mannyng’s Chronicle Part 2, London, Inner Temple Library, MS Petyt 511, c.1338.

81 Daniel is cited in the MED, but is predated by Glosses in Walter de Bibbesworth’s Treatise (Cambridge, University Library, MS Gg.1.1), c.1325 and Nominale in Cambridge University Library Ee.4.20, c.1350.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition/Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>subrubeus°</td>
<td>a colour of urine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subrubigundusǂ</td>
<td>- a colour of urine (1.4.fol.11v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subtemus°</td>
<td>(2.6.fol.55r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>succosite°</td>
<td>- a nutritive, digestive juice (2.7.fol.70r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suffocacioun*</td>
<td>(of the womb, 2.3.fol.44r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suppaleî°</td>
<td>“subpale, adj.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surgeryˆ</td>
<td>(3.20.fol.123r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syche°</td>
<td>(error for “skyz”? 3.1.fol.106v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sinochides°</td>
<td>(2.74.fol.94v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taile-endë</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.6r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talowgh*</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.75v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temperure*</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.12r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synewyshe°</td>
<td>(3.16.fol.121v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tempes</td>
<td>(2.2.fol.29r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temprith*</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.19r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tercien</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.18r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tetanus°</td>
<td>(2.81.fol.105r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thenasmon</td>
<td>(3.13.fol.117v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thisicam, tisykkeˆ</td>
<td>(2.8.fol.81r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tole*</td>
<td>(3.26.fol.128r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trachearterie*</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.72v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trumbous</td>
<td>(3.14.fol.119v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tympanides°</td>
<td>“timpanites, n.” (2.4.fol.46v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>typiki°</td>
<td>(2.6.fol.56r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vlcera†</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.7r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ulceracoun*</td>
<td>(3.9.fol.113r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vnbyndend°</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.20r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undefyid*</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.6v)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

82 “Than yf an vrin shewe him lactea and subtemus, as I seid ryght nowe, in the begynyng of an acue with wykke toknis hit seyth deth.”

83 This term is recorded by Norri, defined as a “prolonged fever thought to result from choler and blood putrefying in the body, blood predominating,” and dated to a. 1425- c. 1450. See *Names of Sicknesses*, 377.

84 “Litargia, the litarge, is a stonyng of þe cerebre with rauyng for yetilhed & with grete exces of sleping.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>undisposiciown</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.12r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vndoing*</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.70v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vnhelthe†</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.12r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unstalid°</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.20r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vrichides*</td>
<td>(2.3.fol.31v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>urine*</td>
<td>(1.1.fol.2r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vritife th</td>
<td>(1.1.fol.2r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>value* - vulva or vagina</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.15r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ventisid°</td>
<td>(3.12.fol.117r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vertebrum†</td>
<td>(3.21.fol.124v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vertigo</td>
<td>(2.4.fol.50r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vesica*</td>
<td>(2.70.fol.75v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veseel†</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.5v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veynisˆ</td>
<td>(1.2.fol.2v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viridis° - a colour of urine</td>
<td>(2.1.fol.21v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vitellina, vitellinus, vitellyn† -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choler mixed with phlegm resulting in a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fluid with the same colour and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consistency as egg yolk</td>
<td>(2.8.fol.78r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vitre, vitren†</td>
<td>(2.4.fol.51v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>walmyng†</td>
<td>(2.2.fol.24v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warme*</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.14r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warmehed**</td>
<td>(2.3.fol.34r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wesend* - esophagus</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.72v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wete*</td>
<td>(1.4.fol.14r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whit-gray²</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.67r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>white-yelowe°</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.67r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whyrlebonys* - hip, hip joint, thighbone,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>femur</td>
<td>(3.6.fol.111r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wodehede*</td>
<td>(2.6.fol.66r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wombide*</td>
<td>(3.15.fol.120r)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MED** lacks Daniel’s sense, which is simply the opposite of one’s physiological disposition.

Although Daniel is the only citation for this term in the **MED**, the term “unhole, adj.” existed since the 12th century.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wynde*</td>
<td>(2.2.fol.29v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ychche-</td>
<td>“itch, n.” (1.1.fol.2v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yerdis*</td>
<td>(1.1.fol.2v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yliacus</td>
<td>(2.74.fol.96r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yliones*</td>
<td>(1.3.fol.4v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ymaginacioun*</td>
<td>(2.3.fol.30r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ymginatif*</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.71r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ypocondris</td>
<td>lateral regions above the abdomen, the hypochondria (2.3.fol.41r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ypostasis</td>
<td>sediments in urine (1.3.fol.6r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ysimon</td>
<td>thin tissue between larynx and esophagus (2.7.fol.73r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ysophagus</td>
<td>(2.7.fol.69v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zirbus</td>
<td>the greater omentum (2.4.fol.46r)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

87 Daniel is cited as the only occurrence of this term in his sense, “drye-wombide,” but there is one entry for “gret-wombede” dating back to c.1300 (Robert of Gloucester, *Chronicle*, Version A, London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.11).

88 Daniel is cited among the entries for “wind” in sense 5 (gas or air within the body), but is preceded by the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, London, British Library, MS Arundel 57, c.1340.
Works Consulted


does not have a works consulted section.

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Gilles de Corbeil. De Vrinis et Pulsibus. Venetijs: Mandato [et] impensis heredu[m] ... Octauiani Scoti ... [et] socioru[m] summa diligentia impressi ... per Georgium Arriuabenu[m], 1414 [i.e. 1514]


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