

## Introduction



THE LATE ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES saw the rise of the age of Mary. It was during this period that scholars have consistently pointed to the emergence of the Virgin Mary as a figure central to medieval religious culture in western Europe. These centuries saw theological, artistic, literary, and musical manifestations of Mary's growing importance as saintly intercessor, heavenly patron, and queen. It was here that Mary rapidly became a dominant figure sculpted in wood and painted on the page. New theological ideas about Mary blossomed, treating her as second only to God, special and distinct from all other human beings. Mary began to appear increasingly as merciful mother in stories of miracles, which described how her mercy won the day over the forces of evil. Churches were dedicated to her, relics of her hair and gown were circulated, and pilgrimages were made to visit the objects and the institutions that housed them. But above all, Mary became the subject of devotion performed in the liturgy. In the chants, readings, prayers, and sermons of the Divine Office and mass, Mary was increasingly commemorated as the universal Christian mother. The liturgical calendar came to mark more moments of her life with special feast days, just as she was accorded an ever more prominent place in the weekly and daily cycles of liturgical prayer and praise. This period saw Mary become the most celebrated figure in the Christian rite, outside of Christ himself, remembered in frequent and regular rituals developed to honor her role as mother of God and protector of Christians. Never, perhaps, since the early centuries of Christianity in the East was Mary such a source of devotional energy and innovation.

As much as Mary was cast as the mother of mercy for her devoted followers, she was also given another, more sinister side. To those who turned their backs on her, she could exercise a cruel vengeance. Again and again in religious sources, from stories to chants to sermons, those who most opposed her were Jews.<sup>1</sup> Jews featured as Mary's prototypical enemies, doubting her virginity, and challenging her status as saint and mother of God. This was nothing new. Throughout Christian history, discussions about Mary had addressed the Jews. Christian theologians consistently cited the Jewish refusal of the virgin birth

and the Incarnation in bitter invectives that condemned the Jewish position as they sought to defend Mary as *Theotokos*, mother of the human and divine Christ.<sup>2</sup> Christians sought proof of their belief in the prophecies of the Hebrew Bible, pointing out to the Jews that Christ's birth of a virgin was to be found there in plain sight. Christian theological apologetics pitted their allegorical reading of the scriptures against the Jewish interpretation, which held that God could never have taken human form and been born of a woman, as this would have been too great a debasement for an ineffable deity.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, sermons, hymns, and stories were composed to establish that Mary was in fact worthy of veneration for her instrumental role in the history of salvation, for how could Christ have redeemed humanity had he not taken on the flesh of the Virgin then to be crucified and resurrected? The battle around Mary even brought in the Jews when various Christian groups were actually the target, which was often the case. So-called heretics—Arians, Nestorians, and iconoclasts—became tarred with the Jewish brush, accused of siding with the Jews in their contempt for the Theotokos.<sup>4</sup> This imagined antagonism—between Mary and the Jews—traveled wherever Mary was especially venerated, as the sources designed in the fraught early centuries of Christianity were reused in other contexts. The sermons were incorporated into the liturgy for Marian feasts, treatises recycled for their relevance to Christological and Mariological questions, and accounts of miracles repeated in works of history. The Jews became part of the Marian story, and the conflicts of the past were remembered in the intervening centuries.

This book is about the sources developed to perform and justify devotion to Mary, many of which called on the figure of the Jew to illustrate proper Christian approaches to her. The Marian movement was not the same in all places, however. Even with a cult as widespread and seemingly universal as that of the Virgin mother of God, it is possible and even necessary to locate trends in particular places. Anglo-Norman England is one such place. The monasteries of England in the century following the Norman Conquest of 1066 created some of the most original displays of Marian devotion—ones that had a considerable legacy throughout the rest of the Middle Ages and beyond. This is not to say that none of the same or similar manifestations can be seen in other areas, or that other places lacked originality when it came to venerating Mary. There were plenty of local virgins throughout the European continent, some with highly developed cults as well as their own special forms of literature, music, and artwork. Margot Fassler has highlighted one such cult at Chartres Cathedral that underwent considerable expansion starting in the early eleventh century.<sup>5</sup> Mary also became a standard-bearer for Christian orthodoxy in Iberia, as illustrated by Amy Remensnyder, particularly beginning in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> Other scholars, especially Rachel Fulton and Miri Rubin, have brought together many diverse works by theologians, artists, and compos-

ers from across western Europe to reveal a general shift in devotion to Mary over this period, explaining it as part of the wider changes in devotional culture that encouraged greater identification with Christ and Mary.<sup>7</sup> But some of the most groundbreaking and influential expressions of devotion to Mary can be located in late eleventh- and early twelfth-century England. Here we find the first ever articulation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, the celebration of the feast of Mary's Conception, the first commemoration of Anne, Mary's mother, the earliest evidence of the daily Little Office performed in Mary's honor, and the origins of the Marian miracle collections, which went on to become one of the most popular devotional literary genres. It is only by considering these elements together in their context that we can begin to understand how and why Mary was the center of so much activity.

This study seeks to trace the development of the Marian cult over this crucial period in England, between 1066 and 1154, uncovering the connections between the different sources to reveal a general underlying desire and considerable effort toward increasing devotion to Mary. As a result, it will inevitably draw comparisons with Mary Clayton's instrumental study of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>8</sup> I owe a great debt to her thorough and painstaking research, but I do not have the same aim of producing an exhaustive catalog of every source connected to the Virgin, specifically because sheer numbers would make this an unmanageable task. What I seek to do is to place religious practice, especially through the liturgy, at the heart of the story, and illustrate how liturgical innovation sparked creativity in other spheres: artistic, theological, and literary. A caveat is required here, however, because for a book so interested in the liturgy, it will seem unnervingly silent to many. As a historian who acknowledges how important music is to understanding the history of the liturgy, I am currently working in collaboration with musicologists.<sup>9</sup> The music associated with the texts discussed in this book would no doubt help to shed considerable light on their meaning. In anticipation of such additional insight, the chapters here focus on the connection between the different manifestations of Marian devotion: how liturgy shaped theology, and how theology justified liturgy; how literature was inspired by liturgical practice and went on to inspire people to perform the liturgy in particular ways; and how the performance of veneration to Mary as mother of mercy was reinforced through various means in different media. This is a cultural study with an eye toward exploring how these seemingly diverse expressions of devotion to Mary—liturgical, theological, and literary—were actually profoundly intertwined, each influencing the other, and all produced in a common monastic milieu.

The monastic setting is key. In addition to localizing the cultural products associated with Marian devotion and considering the echoes between them, this book helps to overturn a misconception about the rise of Mary's cult.<sup>10</sup> In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, it was not strictly speaking a popu-

lar cult. It was not a question of catering to a lay population eager for a kindlier, more merciful mother figure to counterbalance the fear elicited by Christ in judgment. Rather, as James Clarke has suggested, “the monks of this period were not in thrall to but in advance of the preoccupations of their secular counterparts,” and Nigel Morgan went on to show that this statement aptly describes the cult of Mary.<sup>11</sup> Those who were spearheading the growth of Marian devotion in this period were monks, specifically the Benedictine monks of England’s large and ancient monasteries.<sup>12</sup> Monastic houses had a long history of importance and influence over religious culture in the kingdom, especially after the late tenth century, when monastic reformers sought to reform the clergy, and replaced numerous communities of canons with monks vowed to chastity, poverty, and obedience. Many bishops came from a monastic background and ran their cathedrals like monasteries; Christ Church, Worcester, Winchester, and Exeter thus joined the many important monasteries, like Glastonbury, Malmesbury, Evesham, and Peterborough, among others.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, English Benedictines held an unusually prominent role, and contrary to the cathedral schools on the Continent, Benedictine monks became the main purveyors and preservers of religious cultural materials throughout which their ethos permeated.<sup>14</sup> They also exercised an important function in the provision of pastoral care, particularly in the cathedrals, which served as religious centers in the towns.<sup>15</sup> It may not be too much of an exaggeration to repeat David Knowles’s words that “[monasteries] were the cultural heart of England.”<sup>16</sup>

The Benedictine identity of these monks is significant. We are used to thinking of the Cistercians, that order universally dedicated to Mary, as the most ardent defenders and supporters of their patron, with Bernard of Clairvaux a forerunner of Marian devotion such that he was attributed one of the most famous Marian miracles: a stream of milk direct from her breast.<sup>17</sup> But Bernard was fairly conservative on the issue of Mary compared to the English monks we will encounter in this book. Nor was Cistercian commemoration of Mary especially extreme or inventive, and drew largely from the precedent set by the abbey of Molesmes from which the first monks left for Cîteaux.<sup>18</sup> As Chrysogonus Waddel has explained, the earliest Marian material in the Cistercian liturgy was actually pruned under the reforming impulse of the abbot Stephen Harding in the early twelfth century.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, well before the Cistercians established themselves as the Marian order par excellence, the Benedictines in England had already made considerable headway in promoting Marian veneration and proved far more creative in their liturgical commemoration. In fact, their Benedictine affiliation per se allowed greater room for liturgical novelty. Not restricted by the specific requirements of a shared practice imposed by a motherhouse, the Benedictines were at liberty to adopt more feasts and religious practices as well as honor the saints with greater freedom, with practices that

varied from house to house.<sup>20</sup> As a result, their forms of devotional expression were manifold and elaborate, not least when it came to Mary.

In order to highlight the full diversity of sources produced to venerate Mary, and the ways in which they were connected, the first three chapters will explore each source type in turn. Chapter 1 will examine the liturgy and prayer, laying out the most important innovations in the liturgical celebration of Mary, both communal and private. Chapter 2 will deal with the theological expressions that used new scholarly methods to help justify liturgical practices, focusing especially on the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and bodily Assumption. Chapter 3 will turn to the collections of miracle stories, which featured particular religious practices in an attempt to illustrate just how to receive Mary's mercy and narrated the rewards for the proper expressions of devotion. These were the primary but linked forms in which devotion to Mary was developed and fostered in Anglo-Norman England. Some of these sources have been the subject of previous study. For the liturgical material, the crucial work undertaken by Sally Roper, Richard Pfaff, and especially Nigel Morgan has been formative, as have individual studies by Antonia Gransden and T. A. Heslop, providing me with a wealth of examples from which to build a picture of practice in this period.<sup>21</sup> In terms of prayer and theology, Fulton's foundational study *From Judgment to Passion* takes in numerous theologians, with more pointed studies by Marielle Lamy on the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and Henry Mayr-Harting on the bodily Assumption.<sup>22</sup> The Latin miracle stories have been less covered, despite Richard Southern's seminal article that located their origins in England; even his student Benedicta Ward only briefly touched on them in her *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, and many studies concentrate only on their later vernacular versions.<sup>23</sup> Despite many excellent studies of isolated sources, my goal is to understand them in function of each other. Only by considering these diverse sources together can we see them as part of an elaborate matrix of performative action—rituals of devotion that best express how Mary was understood and approached.

In the move to create elaborate and innovative modes of venerating Mary in Anglo-Norman England, the Jews once more made an appearance. Mary's saintly identity was shaped as two sides of one coin: she was the all-merciful mother, listening to the pleas of her followers in prayer and praise in the liturgy; she was also the resistant opponent of the Jews, withstanding their attacks and proving them wrong in their rejection of her role in human redemption. Benedictine monks in England incorporated the sources of the past into their own works to enhance Mary's role, pitting her against the Jews in sermons, liturgy, and miracle stories. Throughout the chapters of this book, therefore, the introduction of Jews into diverse sources designed for the exaltation of Mary will be highlighted as a key way in which monks developed her cult. In many cases, they drew from previous examples, but made them relevant and new as the

sources were updated and changed. This is perhaps nowhere more obvious than in the miracle stories that contain enough material to this effect to receive their own study in chapter 4. Many of the tales that appear in the new collections of Marian miracles produced in English monasteries were ancient—some originated in the first centuries of Christianity. But in rewriting them, English monks fashioned them anew, heightening the Jews' hostility just as they enhanced Mary's mercy and power.<sup>24</sup> The image given of the Jews in these stories became one of considerable evil; they were depicted as murderers, blasphemers, necromancers, cheats, and liars. Such antagonists were contrasted with the understanding of Mary as heavenly queen, merciful and generous, and a staunch protector of her followers. To cite Rubin, who has also noted the prevalence of Jews in medieval Marian sources, "If Mary defended the faith and protected each monk against sin, then she was also the bulwark against heretics and Jews."<sup>25</sup>

Imagined as violently anti-Christian, the Jews in materials created for the cult of Mary did not just serve to highlight Mary's mercy and love for her devotees. The figure of the Jew also provided Christians with a model *not* to follow in terms of performing devotion to Mary: whenever a Jew was shown to desecrate an image instead of venerate it, blaspheme against Christ and his mother instead of singing their praises, and choose to ally himself with the devil instead of praying to Mary, Christians were taught how important it was to do exactly the opposite. The Jews thus served to dramatize the contrast between proper versus improper behavior. The idea of the Jew as a theoretical construct, the so-called 'hermeneutic Jew' who helped to define Christianity by supplying a contrary belief against which to argue, has been well discussed in the scholarship.<sup>26</sup> Here, quite apart from defining what it meant to believe like a Christian, Jews in the Marian sources helped to exemplify what it meant to act like one.

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Why devotion to Mary developed in these particular ways specifically around the turn of the twelfth century is a complex question, and one that will be touched on throughout this work but deserves summarizing here. To begin with, Mary had been a potent symbol of monastic values since early in the medieval period. From the time of the early ascetic writers—Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome—Mary was presented as an example of virginity, especially for women.<sup>27</sup> Mary was the mother of virgins; she had made the pursuit of virginity not only legitimate but also desirable, for she had been chosen and blessed by God with the conception and birth of the Messiah all the while maintaining her purity intact. Virginity was nevertheless a virtue for men, too, and while they had Christ to look to, Mary provided an entirely human precedent. Bede had centuries before cast Mary as an appropriate example for monks, the *ancilla Domini* who bent her will to God in an example of monastic

obedience.<sup>28</sup> As a result, Mary's virginity appealed to the monks who sought to reform the clergy along monastic lines in late tenth-century England. Helen Scheck has argued that "the Virgin Mary is probably the most influential hagiographical model adopted for reform objectives in Anglo-Saxon England. It is certainly no accident that the Benedictine reform movement coincides with the blossoming cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England."<sup>29</sup> Mary's potential for offering a template to those devoted to a life of chastity was recognized not just in England but by monastic reformers elsewhere as well, particularly by the Cluniacs Odo (d. 942) and Odilo (d. 1049) of Cluny and William of Volpiano (d. 1031), and the Italian Peter Damian (d. 1072), all of whose devotion to Mary has been noted.<sup>30</sup> But despite Mary's significance for reform movements elsewhere in Europe, Clayton has argued that Anglo-Saxon religious culture gave Mary an especially prominent place. In art, liturgy, poetry, and sermons, Anglo-Saxon monks demonstrated a will to make her a patron most fitting of their profession.<sup>31</sup>

The Norman Conquest of 1066 marked a turning point. While debate continues about the consequences of Duke William's invasion of England, it can hardly be disputed that change was in the air.<sup>32</sup> New ecclesiastical leaders were brought in from abroad, and placed in charge of churches and monasteries, until by 1095, there was no bishop of Anglo-Saxon origin left. Indigenous traditions such as the monk-bishop slowly diminished, although others, like the monastic cathedral, clearly appealed to the newcomers and drew new members in their thousands.<sup>33</sup> Frank Barlow has summarized the paradox: "The initial effect of the Norman conquest was greatly to disturb the monasteries. New direction, new constitutions, reorganization, and rebuilding at their worst upset monastic life, [and] at their best gave renewed purpose and interest."<sup>34</sup> Some of the growing numbers of monks and nuns may have been attracted to the profession by the active new church leaders, such as Lanfranc (d. 1089) and Anselm (d. 1109), the influential abbots of Bec in Normandy before becoming successive archbishops of Canterbury.<sup>35</sup> This was a golden age of history writing undertaken primarily by monks.<sup>36</sup> Many volumes of local hagiography and miracles of the Anglo-Saxon saints were recorded, and liturgies were composed to go along with them.<sup>37</sup> Far from dismissing local saints, as has been argued, ecclesiastical leaders saw the usefulness in having powerful saintly allies, both as symbols of their houses' prestige and miraculous avengers of injustices done to the community.<sup>38</sup> Despite such a flurry of activity, the monastic reaction to the Norman Conquest was complex, and not all monks felt entirely favorable toward the changes they saw.<sup>39</sup> But what cannot be disputed is that the Norman Conquest marked the beginning of a period of cultural flourishing in the monasteries of England.<sup>40</sup>

Apart from the national narratives that tend to enter into any discussion of England in the late eleventh century, we can view the changes that affected reli-



gious culture in this period as the result of wider currents.<sup>41</sup> Crucially, the Norman Conquest coincided with the religious reform movement since associated with Pope Gregory VII. As Giles Constable has described, in the period of religious reformation of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the general aim was to monasticize the clergy by imposing the monastic way of life on all clerics, and thereby elevate monasticism to the highest form of Christian existence.<sup>42</sup> The abbot of Westminster, Gilbert Crispin (d. 1117), expressed this explicitly when he wrote that “no one can finally be saved unless he follows the life of a monk as much as he can.”<sup>43</sup> The monk-archbishops Lanfranc and Anselm were steeped in the reforming ethos.<sup>44</sup> Anselm especially sought to disentangle the English church from the involvement of secular authority and took a tough stance on simony.<sup>45</sup> Clerical celibacy was equally on the table, as council after council met and legislated on the subject, in what appears to have been a more pressing issue in England than elsewhere in Europe.<sup>46</sup> Monastic involvement in the priesthood, particularly through pastoral care, became the subject of considerable debate in this period, with monks such as Anselm and his student Honorius Augustodunensis (d. ca. 1154) composing heartfelt apologia for the right of monks to exercise priestly duties, particularly preaching, leading up to official discussion of the matter at the First Lateran Council in 1123.<sup>47</sup> Liturgical reform was an extension of these efforts, with a tendency to reduce the liturgy but also to stress its more sincere performance.<sup>48</sup> An underlying general desire for monastic values to become universal serves as a backdrop for much of the material examined in this book.

The cult of the Virgin Mary has not been incorporated into this story of conquest and reform, despite the important place of Mary in Anglo-Saxon culture. In many ways, the growth of Mary’s cult mirrors that of other saints’ cults in England. Because so many of the houses reformed in the late tenth century had Mary as their patron saint, and others saw her as a crucial auxiliary saint, it was only natural that many of these institutions produced for Mary the same kinds of materials—miracles and liturgies—they did for other saints. The fact that the same individual, the precentor or cantor, was increasingly taking responsibility for both the library and liturgy of an institution meant that hagiography, history, and liturgy were all the more intimately connected, as different forms of expressing allegiance to a saint and commemorating their significance for the community.<sup>49</sup> We can see conflicting forces at work here, too, though. Some of the unique and especially elaborate practices for celebrating Mary in the Anglo-Saxon tradition were challenged or simply disappeared. There were virulent debates about the cancellation of the feast of Mary’s Conception, and the daily Little Office seems likewise to have disappeared after the Norman Conquest. At the same time, new feasts appeared, such as that of Mary’s mother, Anne. Theological treatises claimed glorious things for Mary: that she had been conceived without original sin; that she had risen to heaven in body and soul at



her death. Biblical commentaries read Mary into books that had never traditionally been applied to her, such as the Song of Songs, and this creative reading made its way into aural and visual media, sermons, illuminations, and wall paintings. Like other saints, Mary became the subject of volumes of miracle stories that featured her intercessory actions on earth for a host of different beneficiaries. Whatever resistance there may have been to the veneration of Mary in the period immediately following the Norman Conquest quickly dissolved, as this became one of the periods of most marked development for the Marian cult in its history.

There was a key difference between Mary and the other saints, however; it lay in her status as universal saint. No one monastery or church could claim her uniquely for their own, because she was the patron of many. Nor were there relics that became the special focus of a Marian cult in England the way they were in some continental churches, such as Chartres. Of course, if one followed the doctrine of Mary's bodily Assumption, she left no bodily remains at all, but even secondary relics—of hair, milk, and clothing—do not seem to have attracted special attention in England in this period. Although ownership of items connected to the Virgin are listed in earlier relic inventories that include pieces of clothing, strands of hair, and even remnants of her milk, no accounts of miracles performed by these items exist, suggesting that they were ubiquitous and not recognized as particularly worthy sites of pilgrimage.<sup>50</sup> Nor do carved statues, such as those in France, seem to have gained traction as significant cult sites.<sup>51</sup> As far as is possible to ascertain, the first properly Marian shrine appeared in the mid-twelfth century, when a reconstruction of Mary's house in Nazareth was first founded at Walsingham as an Augustinian priory, circa 1153.<sup>52</sup> Because it marks the start of a new phase in the development of the Marian cult, and coincides with the beginning of the Angevin realm, the establishment of the shrine at Walsingham thus serves as a convenient end point to the period discussed in this book and so will fall outside its scope. In the century that this book covers, devotion to Mary does not appear to have been connected to particular relic sites, and her role as universal queen of Christendom was one of the major distinguishing features of the Marian cult as developed in Anglo-Norman England.

Mary's universality made her especially useful in this new age of monastic reform. While Lanfranc seems to have viewed Christ as the primary unifying figure, other individuals in Anglo-Norman England saw in Mary an opportunity to bind Christians together, particularly under the banner of monastic ideals.<sup>53</sup> As we have seen, Mary had been a potent symbol of monastic reform in the past. With the general inward turn toward penitence that was a feature of the twelfth-century religious reform movement, her role as intercessor with Christ as judge came to appear all the more essential.<sup>54</sup> The effusive prayers composed in her honor are a testament to the faith placed in her powers of

mediation for the sinful, who were more aware of their own sin and feared for the harshness of Christ's judgment.<sup>55</sup> These sources also encouraged empathy with Mary in her suffering and love for Christ as a means for monks and nuns to identify with Mary and her son, as illustrated by Fulton.<sup>56</sup> Mary was not just a figure of succor, however, for she was presented as an example to follow in the campaign for clerical celibacy.<sup>57</sup> She took on this role in ascetic works and sermons, where she acts as a role model for men and women in their pursuit of the religious life, as well as in miracle stories, where she comes to the rescue of monks and nuns struggling with their vows. Wider interests in chastity as a necessary quality for religious professionals—be they secular or regular—is certainly reflected in the contemporary interest in virgin saints such as Edmund and Edward, not to mention the many Anglo-Saxon female saints.<sup>58</sup> We can therefore see devotion to Mary as the queen of virgins in the context of a more general trend that involved glorifying the monastic life of chastity and virginity.

A word must be said here about gender. There has been a tendency to consider Mary as the natural model for women and hence a saint who mattered most to the female population of medieval Europe. In Anglo-Norman England, this is reflected in the fact that all female monastic houses were dedicated to the Virgin, generally in addition to another local saint. Educational literature written for women, such as *De arma castitatis* by Osbert of Clare (d. ca. 1158) for Adelidis (d. ca. 1166), abbess of Barking Abbey, presented Mary as a good example and motivational prompt for fighting the sin of lust in the female pursuit of absolute physical purity.<sup>59</sup> Prayers and hymns to Mary and her mother, Anne, are found in the female voice, and collections of prayers were composed for high-profile women including Matilda of Tuscany (d. 1115) and Adeliza (d. ca. 1113), the daughter of William the Conqueror.<sup>60</sup> Images of Mary in books created for women's houses contain images of female penitents praying to Mary, such as the large-scale illumination of Mary in the Shaftesbury Psalter, which shows a woman kneeling at her feet.<sup>61</sup> In the St. Albans Psalter, commissioned for the mystic Christina of Markyate, Mary plays a key role in the prefatory cycles of images and the calendar.<sup>62</sup> Scholars have argued that Mary's protagonism in these manuscripts catered to their female owners. The lack of surviving manuscripts from female religious houses of the period nonetheless makes it difficult to conclude generally about the prevalence of Mary in female religious culture.<sup>63</sup> From what we do have in liturgical, artistic, and most important, pedagogical terms, however, Mary does seem to have been recognized as a significant saint among nuns.

Still, limiting Mary to the female sphere would do injustice to her prominence in works written by monks for other monks. The vast majority of the sources cited in this book were produced by men, and there is little evidence that they were intended specifically for female audiences; for this reason, I refer

throughout to the contribution mostly of *monks* to the cult of Mary in Anglo-Norman England, since the evidence for female authorship, even of the manuscripts found at female institutions, is as yet unclear.<sup>64</sup> This is not to say that the liturgical practices, prayers, images, devotional literature, and theological texts explored here were inaccessible or foreign to women. On the contrary, similar trends seem to have affected men and women equally. Women celebrated the same feast days as men, embraced the same daily and weekly liturgies, prayed similarly, and perhaps read the same literature to fire up their commitment to the religious life.<sup>65</sup> In the same way, men seem to have been as taken with images of Mary as were women; they imagined her as a useful model for men pursuing a life of virginity, and described her appearing as often, if not more so, to men than to women in the miracle stories that depicted Mary's intervention in the world. Women may not have been considered equal to the men writing the texts; William of Malmesbury (d. ca. 1143) pointedly placed his stories about women toward the end of his hierarchically arranged miracle collection, after those featuring popes, bishops, monks, priests, and laymen. Still, women and men largely shared the same culture in which Mary was to be praised as a saint beloved by both sexes. In response to an old argument by Marina Warner, this book shows that Mary was not explicitly designed by men to impose impossible ideals of purity on women but rather as a universal mother figure cherished by her children, female and male alike.<sup>66</sup> If ever there was a need for an integrated history that treated male and female spheres as part of the same wider culture, devotion to Mary in Anglo-Norman monasteries certainly seems to call for it.

Having established the social context in which devotion to Mary grew so markedly, we must address the contemporary forces that may have created additional interest in the Jews as a counterweight to Mary as merciful queen. England saw fundamental changes in relations between Christians and Jews, not the least of which was the first immigration of Jews to the island after 1066. There was no known Jewish settlement in England prior to the conquest, and the first mention of Jews settling in the kingdom attributes their arrival to William the Conqueror, thought to have brought "his" Norman Jews over with him.<sup>67</sup> These early immigrants constituted a small community, restricted almost entirely to London at first. But the violent persecution of Jews in Normandy following the call to the First Crusade by Urban II in 1095 may have encouraged growing numbers to emigrate and establish themselves in the major market towns of the kingdom.<sup>68</sup> In the century that followed the conquest, the evidence for Jewish life and activity is still limited, with only glimpses caught in the chancery records and histories. From what these reveal, Jews were important contributors to royal coffers in the form of taxes and fines, were lending money to both individuals and religious institutions, and were under the sole protection of the king, who provided the muscle to enforce the collec-

tion of debts.<sup>69</sup> Granted privileges on account of the king's direct overlordship, some Jews became heavily involved in the financial sector, more so, it seems, than on the other side of the English Channel.<sup>70</sup> Such heavy reliance on royal authority and favor meant their position could either be advantageous or precarious, depending on the circumstances, as later centuries would attest.<sup>71</sup> For some monastic authors, this particular configuration seems to have been regarded with skepticism and unease, although Jews do not enter into histories with nearly as much frequency or derision as they do later on in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>72</sup> Concern about the arrival of Jews to England is sporadic and muted in the Anglo-Norman period, but it is there among the criticisms of the new regime.

Given the context of recent immigration, we might think that English monks were inspired to incorporate Jews into their sources about Mary not just because they were concerned about the new social reality but also specifically because they came into contact with Jewish skepticism of Mary. After all, there was a Jewish literary tradition—referred to collectively as the *Toledot Yeshu*—that described Mary as an adulterous woman and Jesus as a bastard born of menstruation. Peter Schäfer has explored this tradition and highlighted its popularity as a counternarrative to the Christian Gospels.<sup>73</sup> In the thirteenth century, the traces of the *Toledot* tradition found in the Talmud may have created such horror among the Christian authorities in Paris that they placed the book on trial and had it condemned as the vilest blasphemy.<sup>74</sup> It is possible, though, that more than a century before these events took place, Christians had already come to know Jewish opinions of Mary. During the persecution of Norman and Rhenish Jews following the call to the First Crusades in 1095, the victims are said to have cursed Mary in terms reminiscent of the *Toledot* legends when confronted by would-be crusaders. Chronicles and liturgical poetry (*piyyutim*) that memorialize these reactions mention verbal attacks on Jesus as the “son of a menstruating woman,” “son of lechery,” and “son of whoredom,” “conceived by a menstruating and wanton woman,” all implicit blasphemies against Mary.<sup>75</sup> A polemical dialogue written by Odo, bishop of Tournai has Odo's potentially real-life interlocutor, Leo, express profound disgust at the idea that God was born of a woman.<sup>76</sup> Contrary to what Israel Yuval has argued about Christian exposure to Jewish invective, whatever knowledge there was of the satiric tradition or the curses against Mary, we find no explicit comments made about them in the contemporary sources in England.<sup>77</sup> We must be wary of concluding that Christians came to know of the Jews' rejection of Mary directly from Jews themselves, although the heightened interest in formulating arguments against Jews among twelfth-century monastic writers allows us to assume basic familiarity with the Jewish position.<sup>78</sup>

Can we assume, therefore, that the Jews found in the sources that are discussed in this book are meant as a reflection of those who had so recently ar-

rived on English shores? During the Anglo-Saxon period, as Andrew Scheil has contended, Jews could only be “imaginative, textual constructs, manifest only in the distorted shadow cast by the Christian tradition,” just as they would be again after their expulsion from the kingdom in 1290, as explored by Anthony Bale.<sup>79</sup> During the period in between, we might wonder whether interaction with Jews changed the perception of the monks recording stories, histories, and sermons. But looking for the “real Jews” behind their fictional counterparts is a trap, for the sources examined in this book are not historical records but instead tools for religious practice. Liturgy, sermons, and miracle stories sought to transmit a devotional message rather than an accurate record of Jewish presence and activity in Anglo-Norman England. In fact, they often cast Jews in the biblical past or eschatological future, alluding to Jewish cruelty to Christ and Synagoga’s conversion at the end of time in order to highlight Mary’s eternal struggle to bring Jews on side. Those who produced these sources were perhaps not totally immune to their environments, and introduced subtle—and not so subtle—commentaries into their works about the evils of Jewish-Christian co-existence, including accusations of magic, corruption, and greed, all reflective of contemporary social concerns, as we will see. Yet this appeal to lived experience would only have served to increase the sense of Mary’s victory over the forces of evil by bringing it into the present. If these sources depicted Jews in particular ways, it was to reinforce shared Christian values, particularly monastic ones.<sup>80</sup> Dominique Iogna-Prat has remarked on this same dynamic at twelfth-century Cluny, where an attempt to establish the abbey’s role as a microcosm of universal Christendom led to its condemnation of outside groups such as Jews and Muslims.<sup>81</sup> In a similar way among English Benedictines, the figure of the Jew helped monks to establish Mary as a figurehead for the way of life they sought to promote—one aligned with their own ideals for a Christian society.

We should remember that these sources did not ultimately stay within the confines of the monastic world. Because of the inherent communicability of liturgy, homilies, and miracles to wide audiences, some of them engineered specifically for transmission to the general lay public, there remained a strong possibility that their message about Jewish evil and Mary’s virtue could be received in largely unintended ways. Suddenly a message about the danger of Jews meant to highlight Mary’s triumph over her doubters could result in a warning about Jewish-Christian interaction more generally. This in turn might lead those experiencing these practices, clerical and lay, to associate theoretical violence against Mary with real violence against Mary’s followers. Enough repetition of a particular image of a Jew as the avaricious enemy of Mary in a sermon heard every year on the feast of the Assumption or every Saturday as part of the Marian commemorative office or every day in a Marian votive office could lead people to form a vision of the Jews in their midst based on the mes-

sage they were hearing; it was not a necessary but certainly a possible consequence.<sup>82</sup> After all, as one scholar recently summarized it, “an increasing number of scholars now subscribe to the notion that public behaviour [i.e. ritual practice] exteriorized certain ideas on how society should be organized and that, through the ‘performance’ of encoded gestures and rituals, these ideas could become part of a social *habitus*.”<sup>83</sup> Sermons have started to receive attention as vehicles for images of Jews that had the potential to inform opinions about Jews living in Christian society, although largely in the context of mendicant preaching.<sup>84</sup> Much of the scholarship on the development of medieval Christian ideas about Jews in the twelfth century has focused on theological ideas formulated in explicitly polemical treatises and dialogues, without fully clarifying how and if such ideas came to inform social behaviour.<sup>85</sup> Emphasis on these theological works also fails to account in meaningful ways for the emergence of accusations of violent behaviour in Jews: ritual murder, blood libel, host desecration. Miri Rubin has shed considerable light on the host desecration charge by placing it in the context of rising Eucharistic devotion, particularly with the establishment of the Corpus Christi feast in the thirteenth century.<sup>86</sup> This study seeks to examine another devotional dimension, one that emerged over a century earlier, by exploring how Marian liturgy, theology and legend entwined to produce potentially powerful new understandings of Jews in Christian society.

Despite the instinct to treat liturgical sources as inherently communicable and therefore natural conduits for ideas and images between clerical and lay spheres, any attempt to establish with any certainty their effects on twelfth century society is bound to be fraught. The problem of language (the main one of liturgical communication being Latin), the diversity of congregations, and the multiplicity of potential meanings of these practices, would have deeply affected any experience of the texts discussed here, even assuming they were performed as written in manuscripts.<sup>87</sup> What relation these textual traces have to actual performance is often impossible to establish, particularly given the scarcity of additional sources to confirm how they were used or interpreted at specific institutions.<sup>88</sup> We therefore have to be wary about concluding anything about the direct social impact of the texts I explore in this book, and I do not venture to do so, except for some brief suggestions in the conclusion. These difficulties do not reduce the value of the sources, however. There was an intention in writing them down, a desire to record a script that tells us a great deal about the aims and assumptions of those doing the recording; liturgical rites are “valuable for understanding the initiatives of particular individuals, for regional traditions, for institutional history, for ideas and ideals and—sometimes—for practice.”<sup>89</sup> It is also important to remember that the liturgy was intended to be participatory, to bring together the Christian community in the celebration and affirmation of their shared beliefs and “to establish a connec-

tion between the faithful and their biblical models.<sup>90</sup> We cannot know how these events were carried out or experienced, perhaps, but we can assume that the liturgy was designed as an expression of Christian identity, and in this way, sought to communicate a clear message about belonging—and did so also by excluding.

If anything, then, this book concludes by opening up bigger questions, about the importance of performative sources in the transmission and experience of religious culture, for understanding both how Mary was conceived as a universal saint and how ideas about Jews were communicated in medieval Christian culture. Current trends in liturgical history have moved well past representations of the liturgy as an unchanging monolith, and as such, uninteresting to the study of religious change or the transmission of ideas.<sup>91</sup> Liturgical historians are reminding us increasingly that liturgy was constantly evolving, differed from place to place, and reflected the carefully constructed identities of the institutions for which they were produced and at which they were to be performed.<sup>92</sup> The rich variety of materials produced to celebrate Mary in English Benedictine culture thus provides fertile ground for understanding the development of the Marian cult, and what message monks wanted to transmit about her, in relation to themselves, their values, their institutions, and Christian identity more widely. The general message that emerges is one of Mary's pre-eminence as mediator between Christ and as example for Christian living. The Jews were equally part of this construction, highlighting her glory with their vices, and bringing the Christian community together under her protection at their expense. This study illustrates how understanding the ways in which Mary became the foremost saint and primary intercessor, and Jews were envisaged increasingly as her enemies, can best be grasped through the study of diverse sources and their relation to each other—liturgical, homiletic, and literary—as all part of a complex web of devotion with Mary at its center and in which the Jews unwittingly became caught.