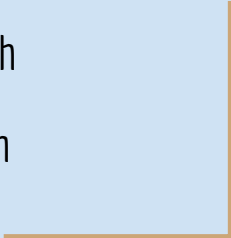


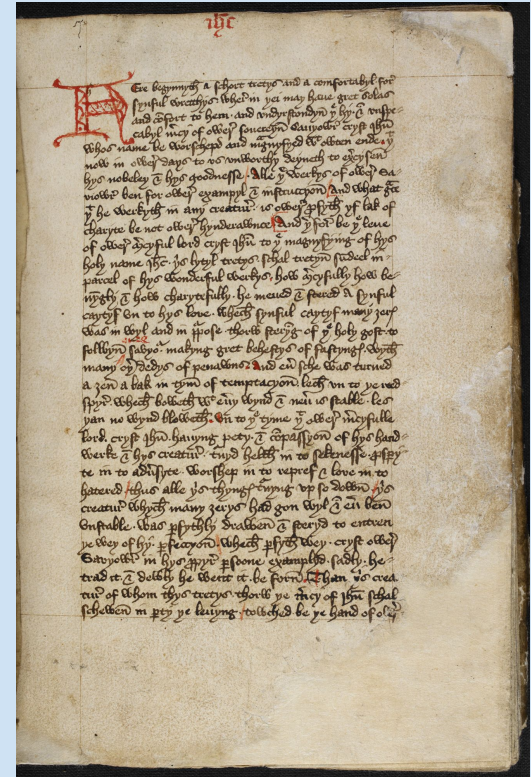
Margery Kempe's Attitudes About Sexual Intimacy

Erika Morrill
Department of English
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eri.morrill@gmail.com



Intro

- Evolution of sexual relationship with husband
- Relationship with Christ
- Desire to be a saint like Saint Cecilia



Pictured: *The Book of Margery Kempe*

Relationship with Husband, John

- At first views sex as “had very many delectable thoughts, fleshly lust, and inordinate love to his person” (Kempe 76.4288-89)
 - Middle English: “had ful many delectabyll thowtys, fleschly lustys, and iordinat lovys to hys persone”
- Evolves to being “so abominable to her that she might not endure it” (Kempe 4.338-39)
 - Middle English: “so abhomynabyll onto hir that sche mygth not duren it”

Relationship with Christ

- “her renouncement of the marriage bed is...a decision which, she believes, will put her in the embraces of her spiritual lover”, also known as Christ (Witalisz 65)
- “worthy to hear you speak, and still make love with my husband. Nevertheless it is to me great pain and great distress” (Kempe 11.1110-11)
 - Middle English: “worthy to heryn the spekyn and thus to comown wyth myn husband. Nerthelesse it is to me gret peyn and gret dysese”
- “it is no sin for you daughter...I wish you to bring me forth more fruit...I love wives also, and specially those wives which would live chaste if they might have her will” (Kempe 11.1111-16)
 - “is it no synne to the, dowtyr, for it is to the rathyr mede and meryte, and thow schalt have nevyrthelesse grace, for I wyl that thow bryng me forth more frwte...I lofe wyfes also, and specyal tho wyfys wech woldyn levyn chast, yyf thei mygtyn have her wyl”

Saint Cecilia

- Was able to convert her husband to Christianity before they consummated their marriage-therefore remained a virgin within marriage
- Married Saint, but was able to remain virtuous
- It is likely that Margery looked up to her and tried her best to emulate the lifestyle of a married saint.



Pictured: Saint Cecilia

Margery's Desire for Sainthood

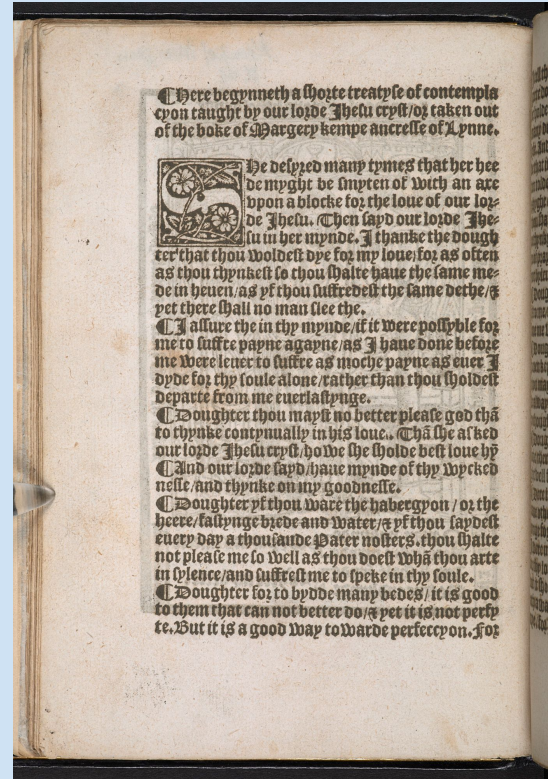
- Her vision of Christ telling her “of all the saints in heaven/ that I love thee with all my heart”, implying that Christ has put her on the same spiritual level as other saints. (Kempe 21.1135-36)
 - Middle English: “of alle the seyntyngs in hevyn/ that I love the wyth all myn hert”
- “Margery’s spiritual life begins too late for her to be a holy virgin and too early for her to be a chaste widow” (Williams 530)
- “desire for sainthood outstrips her qualifications” (Williams 529)



Pictured: The Saints in Heaven

Kempe's legacy

- Kempe's biography was largely lost to history.
- Only one manuscript survived, and was only mentioned in one other pamphlet



Pictured: Early Extracts From
The Book of Margery Kempe

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