

# Perfect Bishop, Perfect Man?

## Masculinity, Restraint and the Episcopal Body in the Life of St Richard of Chichester

Katherine Harvey

In the mid-thirteenth century, Chichester Cathedral finally acquired an attribute which every major medieval place of worship longed to possess: a saint of its own. The focus of the new cult was Richard Wyche, a recently deceased bishop of Chichester. Immediately after his death in 1253, pilgrims began to visit his tomb, in order to venerate his remains and to seek the intercession of St Richard of Chichester. Then, in 1262 (a mere nine years after his death), Wyche was canonised by Pope Urban IV. Such a glorious fate must have seemed unlikely in 1244, when Wyche's appointment as bishop was strongly opposed by king Henry III; for nearly two years the future saint was not even allowed to enter his diocese. However, once in possession of his see, Richard proved to be an effective reforming bishop, notable for his commitment both to his cathedral (where he undertook substantial building work and reinvigorated the chapter) and his diocese (in which he carried out a perpetual round of visitations and pastoral work). He quickly gained a reputation for sanctity, and even before his death was reported to have performed a number of miracles.<sup>1</sup> Following his death, his tomb at Chichester Cathedral and the Dover chapel where his

1 Previous studies of Richard Wyche have tended to focus on his episcopal career. See, for example, E.F. Jacob, 'St Richard of Chichester', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 7 (1956), 174–88; C.H. Lawrence, 'St Richard of Chichester' in M.J. Kitch (ed.), *Studies in Sussex Church History* (London, 1981), pp. 35–55; 'Richard of Wyche' in H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter ODNB], 60 vols (Oxford, 2004), LX, pp. 604–6 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23522?docPos=7>].

entrails were buried became popular sites of pilgrimage, and numerous healing miracles were reported to have occurred due to his intercession. In June 1276, the bishop's remains were translated from their original resting place in the cathedral to a new and more prominent shrine at a ceremony which was attended by king Edward I. The cult of St Richard of Chichester flourished right up until the Reformation, and even enjoyed a brief resurgence during the reign of Mary I. The veneration of the saint was particularly popular in the south of England, and especially in Sussex, and there is ample evidence for devotion within this region. Relics (from ribs to hats) became scattered across Southern England, and were greatly prized by the institutions which owned them; laymen and women went on pilgrimage to Chichester, prayed for the intercession of St Richard when in need of a miracle, and left bequests to his shrine.<sup>2</sup>

An important element in the early development of the cult of St Richard of Chichester was the account of his life which was completed around the year 1270 by Ralph Bocking. Although this *vita* cannot be exactly dated, internal evidence suggests that it was completed between January 1268 and November 1272, so after Wyche's canonisation but before his remains were placed in the new shrine in Chichester cathedral.<sup>3</sup> The *Vita Sancti Ricardi episcopi Cycestrensis* (*Life of St Richard, Bishop of Chichester*) was a hagiographical text that intended to demonstrate the sanctity of the bishop, encourage devotion to the saint and thereby bolster the popular cult which had developed in the years after his death. At around the time of the translation of the saint's relics in 1276, a canon of Chichester commissioned Pierre d'Abernon

- 2 Some of his miracles are recorded in the *Vita*, for those which took place during his lifetime see *Saint Richard of Chichester: The Sources for His life*, edited by D. Jones (Sussex Record Society, 79, 1995) [hereafter *Saint Richard*], pp. 125–32, 201–8, and the posthumous miracles at pp. 140–50, 215–25. On the development of the cult, see D. Jones, 'The Cult of St. Richard of Chichester in the Middle Ages', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 121 (1983), 79–86. Pierre d'Abernon's translation adds further miracles, at Guildford and Dorking (Surrey); see *La Vie Seint Richard Evesque de Cycestre*, edited by D.W.R. Russell (London, 1995), pp. 112–15. Wyche was also adopted as the patron saint of the Montfortian rebellion against Henry III during the 1260s: P. Hoskin, 'Holy Bishops and Political Exiles: St Richard's Cult and Political Protest in the Late Thirteenth Century' in *Richard of Chichester* (Chichester, 2009), pp. 1–13; J. Creamer, 'In The Footsteps of Becket: Episcopal Sanctity in England, 1170–1270', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Washington (2011), pp. 206–59.
- 3 *Saint Richard*, p. 8. Jones' edition includes the Latin text of the life at pp. 83–159, and an English translation at pp. 161–234. In what follows, references to the *Vita* are given first to the Latin and then English text in the volume.

of Fetcham (Surrey) to translate Bocking's life into Anglo-Norman French, so that it might be more accessible to lay people. These lives of St Richard of Chichester were therefore an important element in the encouragement and shaping of the popular cult and his veneration.

Saint-bishops were a relatively familiar phenomenon in thirteenth-century England.<sup>4</sup> Richard Wyche was one of four thirteenth-century English prelates to achieve formal canonisation, and several others became the focus of popular cults, whilst the shadow of Thomas Becket still loomed large.<sup>5</sup> The *Vita* was thus part of a broader tradition of hagiographical literature celebrating the virtues of the saint-bishop; Ralph Bocking would have been well aware of the need to demonstrate Wyche's adherence to a well-developed ideal. In large part, he achieved this by including three standard features of the genre: a detailed examination of Richard's qualities as a bishop; a series of set-pieces which highlighted particular virtues; and accounts of well over a dozen miracles attributed to the late bishop. Yet, the *Vita* went beyond an account of Wyche's time as bishop of Chichester, since exemplary public conduct alone was not enough; Bocking also had to prove that Richard's private behaviour was suitably saintly. In order to do so, it was necessary to include another standard feature of English episcopal *vita* of this period: an intimate account of the bishop's physical body. To demonstrate that his subject had complete mastery over his body, the hagiographer deployed his medical knowledge, and thus wrote a life which proved that Richard Wyche was not just the perfect bishop, but also a perfect man.

In order to fully appreciate the subtleties and complexities of the *Vita*, it is necessary to understand the intellectual and cultural environment in which it was produced. Whilst the text most directly reflects the beliefs and concerns of its author, it is likely that his preoccupations were, in large part, shared by both his subject and his intended audience. The composition of the *Vita* provides insights into the careers of three men: the subject, Richard Wyche, the author, Ralph Bocking, and

4 For the thirteenth century as a golden age of episcopal sainthood, especially in England, see A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 257–60. Vauchez also provides a useful overview of the characteristics of the saint-bishop, at pp. 292–310.

5 These were St Hugh, bishop of Lincoln (1186–1200), St Edmund of Abingdon, archbishop of Canterbury (1233–40), and St Thomas Cantilupe, bishop of Hereford (1275–82). Popular cults also venerated Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln (1235–53); William Bitton of Wells (1267–74) and Robert Winchelsey of Canterbury (1293–1313). See ODNB, I, pp. 103–6, IX, pp. 275, 955–59, XXIV, pp. 79–86, XXVIII, pp. 621–24, LIX, pp. 683–88.

Robert Kilwardby, who instructed Bocking to write it. The three men were linked by the Order of Friars Preachers; each of them had close ties to this new, dynamic mendicant order.<sup>6</sup> Ralph Bocking is the most obscure of the trio; indeed, the *Vita* is our sole source of information about his life, and the details included are sparse. We know only that he was a Dominican theologian and friar, and that he was both personal confessor and friend to Bishop Richard.<sup>7</sup> The careers of the two prelates are rather better documented. Born into a struggling gentry family, Wyche served briefly as chancellor of Oxford University before becoming a prominent member of the household of Archbishop Edmund of Canterbury. After the death of his master in October 1240, he studied theology at the Dominican house in Orléans. Here he was ordained priest, and pledged to become a friar, but received papal absolution from this promise after he was elected bishop of Chichester in 1244. He nevertheless retained a fondness for the friars, employing them within his diocese as confessors and preachers, and bequeathing them both books and money in his will.<sup>8</sup> Robert Kilwardby (c. 1215–79) was a theologian and philosopher, educated at Oxford and Paris. He entered the Dominican order in the late 1240s and rose to become its provincial in England, a position he held from 1261 until 1272, in which year he was provided to the archbishopric of Canterbury.<sup>9</sup>

The *Vita* must, therefore, be considered within the context of the Dominican milieu; it was written by, about and for men who were well-educated and intellectually engaged. As an order, the Dominicans placed great stead on education. The training of the mind was a crucial part of the Dominican novitiate, and it was expected that intellectual endeavour would play an ongoing role in the life of a friar. Many members of the order studied at university level, and were actively engaged in the major debates of the day; indeed, amongst their number were two of the greatest thinkers of the thirteenth century: Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus. Inevitably, greatest emphasis was placed on theological studies, which would bring the student closer to God. Nevertheless, there was a clear awareness that wider studies

6 The best introduction to the rise of the mendicant orders remains C. H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Mendicant Orders on Medieval Society* (London, 1994).

7 'Ralph Bocking', ODNB, VI, p. 390 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2747?docPos=2>]; *Saint Richard*, p. 8.

8 *Saint Richard*, pp. 11–21; Richard's will is printed at pp. 67–9.

9 'Robert Kilwardby', ODNB, XXXI, pp. 580–84 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15546?docPos=1>]; E. Sommer-Seckendorff, *Studies in the Life of Robert Kilwardby O.P.* (Rome, 1937).

would enhance the friar's ability to act as a confessor and preacher for, as Humbert of Romans wrote in his *Treatise on the Formation of Preachers*, 'anyone who is engaged in building collects things from all over the place which may be useful for him to build with'.<sup>10</sup>

Amongst those things with which a friar might build was a knowledge of medical practice and of the human body. The Dominican attitude to medicine was perhaps best summarised by Humbert of Romans, who served as Master General of the Order of Preachers (1254–63) and was also a prolific author whose works included influential tracts on the training of novices and on preaching.<sup>11</sup> In a model sermon directed at students of medicine, he explained that medicine, like the liberal arts and law, emerged as a result of the deterioration of the human condition due to Adam's sin. Nevertheless, medicine was the most valuable of these sciences, being more useful than the liberal arts and having, in the body, a more valuable focus than the law.<sup>12</sup> In common with many of his contemporaries (both Dominicans and non-Dominicans), he made comparisons between the work of physicians, the 'doctors of the body' and of priests, the 'doctors of the soul'.<sup>13</sup>

Recent research has demonstrated that many friars had a good knowledge of classical medical and physiological theory.<sup>14</sup> In the early days of the order, some brothers even practised as physicians; such activities were soon restricted, with the General Chapter of Metz (1251) forbidding 'medical brothers' to treat those outside the order, but medical knowledge remained important to the friars, not least as a source of morals and allegories for use in sermons.<sup>15</sup> Although

10 M. Mulchahey, 'First the Bow is Bent in Study...': Dominican Education before 1350 (Toronto, 1998); Lawrence, *The Friars*, pp. 127–51; *Early Dominicans: Selected Writings*, edited by S. Tugwell (New York, 1982), p. 251.

11 For his career, see E. Brett, *Humbert of Romans: His Life and Views of Thirteenth-Century Society* (Toronto, 1984).

12 J. Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion, c.1300: The Case of Arnau of Vilanova* (Oxford, 1998), p. 1; the sermon is printed as Appendix III, at pp. 314–15.

13 *Early Dominicans*, pp. 290–1. This parallel was also drawn in clauses 21 and 22 of the Fourth Lateran Council: *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. by N. P. Tanner, 2 vols (London, 1990), II, pp. 245–46. For similar comparisons in the writings of one of Wyche's fellow bishops, see *The Letters of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln*, edited by F.A.C. Mantello and J. Goering (Toronto, 2010), pp. 202, 411, 427–8.

14 F.-M. Getz, 'Charity, Translation and the Language of Medical Learning in Medieval England', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 64 (1990), 1–27; Ziegler, *Religion and Medicine*.

15 Angela Montford has shed a great deal of light on this topic, in a series of works on friars and medicine: 'Dangers and Disorders: The Decline of the Dominican *Frater Medicus*', *Social History of Medicine* 16 (2003), 169–91; *Health, Sickness, Medicine*

there is no evidence that medicine was studied within the Dominican *studia generalia*, medical theory formed a substantial component in the university natural philosophy curriculum, which many friars would have studied before progressing to theology.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, every friar would have needed at least a basic knowledge of contemporary medical theory in order to perform his role as confessor effectively. Medieval theologians linked complexion (that is, the humoural composition of the body) with sin; the confessor therefore needed to understand the workings of the body in order to administer the appropriate medicine for the soul. Alain of Lille, writing in the late twelfth century, stated that 'the complexion of the sinner must be considered, as far as can be assessed by external signs, because a person is more impelled to one sin than another owing to the variety of complexions'.<sup>17</sup> Such sentiments were frequently echoed by members of the English episcopate. Robert Grosseteste thought that a priest should identify the penitent's complexion (as choleric, sanguine, or melancholic) before assigning a penance.<sup>18</sup> The *Summula*, written by Walter Cantilupe of Worcester in 1240 and reissued by Peter Quinel of Exeter in 1287, similarly enjoined the priest to consider the penitent's complexion, as well as his general state of health. The confessor 'should consider these things and, using his discretion, adjust the quality or quantity of the prescribed penance based on them'.<sup>19</sup> In the mid-fourteenth century, Bishop Hamo of Rochester assigned a set of books for the use of those who heard confessions within his diocese, including parish priests and those who held the office of Penitentiary. One of the volumes in this collection was 'Avicenna on the counsel

---

and the Friars in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries (Aldershot, 2004); 'Brothers who have Studied Medicine: Dominican Friars in Thirteenth Century Paris', *Social History of Medicine* 24 (2011), 535–53.

- 16 Mulchahey, 'First the Bow is Bent in Study...': Dominican Education; Montford, 'Dangers and Disorders: The Decline of the Dominican *Frater Medicus*', 171; N. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago, 1990), pp. 2–3, 66–7, 84–5; R. French, 'Where the Philosopher Finishes, the Physician Begins: Medicine and the Arts Course in Thirteenth-Century Oxford', *Dynamis* 20 (2000), 75–106.
- 17 *Liber Poenitentialis*, edited by J. Longère, 2 vols (Louvain, 1965), I, p. 31.
- 18 *Templum dei*, edited by J. Goering and F.A.C. Mantello (Toronto, 1984), p. 64.
- 19 *Councils and Synods, with Other Documents Relating to the English Church* (II: A.D. 1205–1313), edited by F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney, 2 vols (Oxford, 1964), II, p. 1075. The *Summula* are translated in *Pastors and the Care of Souls in Medieval England*, edited by J. Shinnars and W. J. Dohar (Notre Dame, 1998), pp. 183–4. On their authorship, see J. Goering and D. Taylor, 'The *Summulae* of Bishops Walter de Cantilupe (1240) and Peter Quinel (1287)', *Speculum* 67 (1992), 576–94.

of medicine'.<sup>20</sup> Given that sex was 'an over-riding preoccupation' of thirteenth-century confessional literature, much of this priestly medical knowledge would have been applied to the interpretation and punishment of sexual sins.<sup>21</sup>

It is therefore possible to assume that Bocking, Wyche and Kilwardby would all have had at least a basic understanding of key medical concepts, including an awareness of humoral theory and its relationship to human sexuality. The primary function of this knowledge was to aid them in their pastoral duties, but it would also have played an important part in their own lives. One of the greatest challenges facing any late medieval priest was the need for complete sexual continence, since, from the twelfth century onwards, celibacy was required of all priests. This shift brought clerical concerns about the temptations posed by women to the fore. Humbert of Romans, for example, was obsessed 'with sexual temptation and the possible resulting scandal'.<sup>22</sup> He recommended that Dominican novices read texts such as St Augustine's *Confessions* and Cassian's *Collationes*, which had much to say about the dangers of sexuality, and cautioned his fellow Dominicans against using the confessional to form inappropriate relationships with women.<sup>23</sup> Such concerns may also have been behind the decline in Dominican medical practice.<sup>24</sup>

However, women were not the only problem, for the male body was an unruly thing, and thus even the holiest man might find himself polluted by his bodily functions. Medieval theologians were particularly exercised by the problem of the potential pollution of the priestly bodily by involuntary nocturnal emissions of semen. Whilst, on one level, such emissions were no more than a necessary rebalancing of the humours, they were also a reminder of man's fallen state, and his constant vulnerability to the temptations of the flesh.<sup>25</sup> A few holy

20 Shinnars and Dohar, *Pastors*, pp. 47–48.

21 P. Payer, *Sex and the New Medieval Literature of Confession, 1150–1300* (Toronto, 2009), p. 4. See, for example, Robert Grosseteste's discussion of the factors to be taken into account when considering sins against continence. S. Wenzel (ed.), 'Robert Grosseteste's Treatise on Confession, "Deus Est"', *Franciscan Studies* 30 (1970), 281–86.

22 Brett, *Humbert of Romans*, p. 67.

23 Mulchahey, 'First the Bow is Bent in Study...': *Dominican Education*, pp. 109–10; Brett, *Humbert of Romans*, p. 140; *Early Dominicans*, p. 317.

24 Montford, 'Dangers and Disorders: The Decline of the Dominican *Frater Medicus*', 179.

25 J. Murray, 'Men's Bodies, Men's Minds: Seminal Emissions and Sexual Anxiety in the Middle Ages', *Annual Review of Sex Research* 8 (1997), 1–26; D. Elliott, *Fallen*

men were fortunate enough to receive a solution to this problem in the form of spiritual castration. Hugh of Lincoln was one of them; tormented by 'the law of sin and death which is in my members', he had a dream in which his former prior extracted 'something resembling red hot cinders' from his lower body, and after this he was freed from temptation.<sup>26</sup>

Such divine intervention was, however, rather uncommon, and most priests were forced to rely on earthly remedies. Two of the most common remedies were immersion in cold water, and routine blood-letting; both were firmly rooted in contemporary medical theory. The former was favoured by holy men such as Aelred of Rievaulx, and was thought to quell the flesh by cooling the body and thus rebalancing the humours.<sup>27</sup> Regular phlebotomy was far more widespread, being practised in the majority of religious houses, and was prescribed by physicians as a means to reduce the amount of semen produced.<sup>28</sup> Not until the late fourteenth-century do we have direct proof of an English

---

*Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Pennsylvania, 1999), pp. 14–34; C. Leyser, 'Masculinity in Flux: Nocturnal Emission and the Limits of Celibacy in the Early Middle Ages' in D. Hadley (ed.), *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (London, 1999), pp. 103–20.

- 26 *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*, ed. D.L. Douie and H. Farmer, 2 vols (London, 1961), I, pp. 49–52. On mystical castration, see J. Murray, 'Mystical castration: some reflections on Peter Abelard, Hugh of Lincoln and Sexual Control', in J. Murray (ed.), *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West* (New York, 1999), pp. 73–91; J.H. Arnold, 'The Labour of Continence: Masculinity and Clerical Virginity', in A. Bernau, R. Evans and S. Salih (eds), *Medieval Virginites* (Cardiff, 2003), pp. 107–9; M.S. Kuefler, 'Castration and Eunuchism in the Middle Ages', in V. Bullough and J.A. Brundage (eds), *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality* (New York, 1996), pp. 279–306.
- 27 *Walter Daniel: The Life of Aelred of Rievaulx*, edited by M. Dutton and F. M. Powicke (Kalamazoo, 1994), p. 108; J. Murray, 'The law of sin that is in my members: The problem of male embodiment' in S. Riches and S. Salih (eds), *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval England* (London, 2002), p. 15.
- 28 The literature on phlebotomy and the religious orders is substantial. See, for example: Ziegler, *Medicine and Religion*, p. 263; Montford, *Health, Sickness and the Friars*, pp. 232–38; B. Harvey, *Living and Dying in England 1100–1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 96–9; M. Cassidy-Welch, *Monastic Spaces and their Meanings: Thirteenth-Century English Cistercian Monasteries* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 133–65; M. Yearl, 'Medieval Monastic Customaries on *Minuti* and *Infirmi*' in B. Bowers (ed.), *The Medieval Hospital and Medical Practice* (Farnham, 2007), pp. 175–94. For a comprehensive overview of the theory and practice of bloodletting, see P. Gil-Sotres, 'Derivation and revulsion: the theory and practice of medieval phlebotomy' in L. Garcia-Ballester (ed.), *Practical Medicine from Salerno to the Black Death* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 110–55.

bishop arranging to be bled.<sup>29</sup> There is plentiful evidence, however, that thirteenth-century bishops engaged the services of a range of medical practitioners.<sup>30</sup> Although we know very little about the medical provision made for Richard Wyche and his household, he was certainly attended by physicians on his deathbed. It is therefore perfectly plausible that Richard Wyche (and, indeed, both Ralph Bocking and Robert Kilwardby) could have undergone such treatments; they would certainly have been accustomed to the notion that medical knowledge could be of use in the ongoing quest to subdue the flesh.

Given the extent to which the problem of clerical celibacy preoccupied the thirteenth-century clerical elites, it is unsurprising that Ralph Bocking chose to consider his subject not only as a bishop but also as a man; indeed, as the hagiographer of a saint-bishop, he was effectively obliged to address the tensions, and potential contradictions, between the saint's masculinity and his priestly office. His examination of this theme was surely calculated to appeal to Robert Kilwardby, who had commended the virginity and chastity of another future saint-bishop, Thomas Cantilupe.<sup>31</sup> Through a combination of explicit statements about Wyche's masculinity and sexuality, and a subtext which implied (at least to a medically-informed clergyman such as Kilwardby) that he had complete mastery over his body, Bocking could present his subject as a positive model of conduct for the future archbishop.

Bocking is forthright in his claims that Richard led a chaste life, and states that 'he so preserved the purity of the flesh that he could fittingly be counted amongst those who are not defiled with women'.<sup>32</sup> Even before he became a bishop, 'he strove after continence ... and so adhered to an uncorrupted path that his reputation was kept free

29 Thomas Arundel, bishop of Ely, made several payments for blood-letting in 1383–84. See C. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (London, 1999), p. 105.

30 See *Saint Richard*, pp. 135, 212. His predecessor as bishop of Chichester, Ralph Neville, probably retained a physician called Master Herveus; C.H. Talbot, *The Medical Practitioners in Medieval England: A Biographical Register* (London, 1965), pp. 88–89. Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln is known to have employed at least four different physicians during the course of his episcopate, including John of St Giles, a Dominican friar who attended him on his deathbed. He also corresponded with a number of medical men. See Talbot, *Medical Practitioners*, pp. 4–5, 179–81, 223–25, 244–45, 269–70, 309.

31 His remarks were recorded in an early fourteenth-century report on the life and miracles of Thomas Cantilupe: Vauchez, *Sainthood*, p. 541.

32 *Saint Richard*, pp. 89, 167.

from any imputation of defiling contact with the flesh'.<sup>33</sup> In order to 'imitate the pure and celibate life of the angels, he spurned the offer of lawful marriage with an heiress'.<sup>34</sup> The implication is that he not only lived a chaste life, but had achieved something worthy of even greater admiration: the preservation of his virginity.<sup>35</sup> His love for chastity was not only applied to his own life, but influenced his dealings with others: he supported two young women who chose virginity over marriage, dealt harshly with those who were guilty of sexual sins, and reacted with horror to claims that St Edmund indulged in improper relations with certain holy women.<sup>36</sup>

Richard's virtue may have been exemplary, but it was not easily achieved. Jacqueline Murray has suggested that clerical masculinity was upheld through 'careful deployment of the myth of uncontrollable male lust'. This lust was a sign of manhood, but also a threat to it; real men (i.e. clergymen) were not dominated by desire, but overcame it. Furthermore, the chaste life was transformed into a 'battle for chastity', allowing religious men to overcome an enemy, and to display military prowess without actually going into battle and shedding blood.<sup>37</sup> Like his fellow English bishops, St Hugh of Lincoln and St Edmund of Canterbury,<sup>38</sup> Richard is depicted as engaging in night-time struggles against the temptations of the flesh, couched in the language of warfare and weaponry:

He compelled his body to serve the spirit; he overcame the body and its desires, by subjecting them to all-night vigils during which he took no rest...He wore down his flesh with the arms he placed on it, so that the spirit could be armed with the weapons of fortitude; he

33 *Saint Richard*, pp. 101, 178.

34 *Saint Richard*, pp. 89, 102–3, 167, 179.

35 On the significance of episcopal virginity, see P. Cullum, 'Virginitas and Virilitas: Richard Scrope and his Fellow Bishops' in P.J.P. Goldberg (ed.), *Richard Scrope: Archbishop, Rebel, Martyr* (Donington, 2007), pp. 86–99. In contrast, several mid-thirteenth century English bishops married and fathered children before taking holy orders, see K. Harvey, 'Objections to Episcopal Elections in England, 1216–1272', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 55 (2011), 131–32.

36 *Saint Richard*, pp. 102, 107–8, 112–13, 178–79, 184, 189.

37 J. Murray, 'Masculinizing Religious Life: Sexual Prowess, the Battle for Chastity and Monastic Identity' in P. Cullum and K. Lewis (eds), *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages* (Cardiff, 2005), pp. 24–37.

38 *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*, I, pp. 29, 50; *The Life of St Edmund*, by Matthew Paris, edited and translated by C.H. Lawrence (Stroud, 1996), p. 138.

inflicted on his flesh the arms of this world, so that his spirit would more easily bear the arms of Heaven.<sup>39</sup>

He is also said to have subdued his body by treating it like a horse. 'For what else', asks Bocking, 'were the girdles, the spurs which were attached to the girdles, the iron fastenings, unless they indicated a similarity to a horse under a painful saddle?'<sup>40</sup>

The bishop's struggle with his body was multi-faceted, and he was also obliged to confront other bodily temptations. Food and drink were a potential source of danger, particularly for a wealthy bishop whose tables were often 'weighed down with the most magnificent dishes'. Richard, however, was careful to avoid the sin of gluttony, and Bocking recalls that he would often reject the 'richer dishes' in favour of 'bread dipped in wine or beer'. On fast days, those around him would be obliged to drink, but he would engage in useful conversation or labour in order to 'strengthen his resolve'. When meat was served at his table, he bitterly lamented the greed which led animals to be slaughtered for human consumption.<sup>41</sup> Even on his deathbed, when his attendants encouraged him to take some nourishment, he refused to eat more than one dish.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Richard allowed himself only limited sleep. His nights were taken up primarily by prayers and vigils, and he would 'rest against rather than lie in his bed and allow his exhausted body some rest, snatching sleep as nature demands rather than that which brings pleasure to the flesh'.<sup>43</sup> In the morning he would rise before daybreak, and before his clerks, in order to engage in private devotions before celebrating matins.<sup>44</sup>

Such physical deprivations were characteristic of virtually all medieval saints; depriving oneself of food, drink and sleep were standard methods of mortifying the flesh.<sup>45</sup> Amongst the qualities which the Rule of St Benedict required of a monk were that he was not 'overly fond of wine, nor a glutton, a sluggard [or] slothful'.<sup>46</sup> For the male cleric, however,

39 *Saint Richard*, pp. 108–9, 185.

40 *Saint Richard*, pp. 87, 165.

41 *Saint Richard*, pp. 103–4, 179–80.

42 *Saint Richard*, pp. 136, 213.

43 *Saint Richard*, pp. 109–10, 186.

44 *Saint Richard*, pp. 122–23, 199.

45 The literature on this topic is vast. See, for examples, C. Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (London, 1987) and R. Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (London, 1984).

46 *The Rule of St Benedict*, edited and translated by B. Venarde (London, 2011), pp. 34–5 (c. 4).

they had particular significance, for such practices would aid him in the battle for chastity. Modern definitions of gluttony focus on overeating and the resultant weight gain, but medieval interpretations focused on the misuse and abuse of both food and drink.<sup>47</sup> According to the *Summula* of Bishop Walter Cantilupe, there were five types of gluttony:

Eagerly means when someone is preoccupied by or always waiting for dinnertime. Lavishly means one is too opulent in preparing one's meals. Too much means when one eats more than is called for. Too fondly means when one eats food voraciously. Meticulously means when someone is too painstaking over the delectable foods and drink he has prepared for him.<sup>48</sup>

Each form of gluttony was considered sinful and therefore it is unsurprising that Richard avoided them all: he only ate at meal times, ate sparingly, and rejected luxurious dishes in favour of simple fare.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, the medieval mind perceived a clear link between gluttony and lust. In theological terms, the connection was rooted in the events which took place in the Garden of Eden. Thomas Aquinas argued that 'by the belly's incontinence was Adam expelled from paradise'.<sup>50</sup> Prior to the Fall, the bodies of Adam and Eve existed in their original form, as God created them; Eve would not have menstruated, and Adam would have produced semen only when it was required for sexual intercourse, which would have occurred solely for reproductive purposes, and in response to divine intervention. It was only once they had consumed the forbidden fruit, and thus committed the sin of gluttony, that they began to experience sexual urges, and thus fell prey to the even greater sin of lust.<sup>51</sup>

Medical theory supported the notion that gluttony led to sexual sin. In his *The Jewel of the Church*, a work which discusses the problem of

47 S. Hill, 'The Ooze of Gluttony: Attitudes Towards Food, Eating and Excess in the Middle Ages', in R. Newhauser (ed.), *The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 57–70; M. Vincent-Cassy, 'Between Sin and Pleasure: Drunkenness in France at the End of the Middle Ages' in R. Newhauser (ed.), *In the Garden of Evil: The Vices and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Toronto, 2005), pp. 393–430.

48 *Councils and Synods*, II, p. 177; Dohar and Shinnars, *Pastors*, p. 177. The idea that gluttony was a multifaceted sin was an old one; see, for example, John Cassian, *The Institutes*, translated by Boniface Ramsey (New York, 2000), pp. 131–32.

49 *Saint Richard*, pp. 103–4, 179–80.

50 Quoted in Hill, 'Ooze of Gluttony', p. 60.

51 P. Payer, *The Bridling of Desire: Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1993), pp. 18–41.

clerical sexuality at length, Gerald of Wales reminded his readers that 'since the stomach and the genitals are so close together, we ought to mortify the one in order that the other may not become wanton'.<sup>52</sup> The proximity of the genitals to the stomach meant that the former would be warmed by the food or wine contained in the former, providing the heat which was the defining characteristic of the male body, and necessary for the production of semen.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, semen was thought to be the product of completely digested food, with particularly nourishing foods such as meat and eggs being especially conducive to its production.<sup>54</sup> Both monastic and medical writers recounted tales of monks who ate too well, and consequently experienced a violent desire for sex, along with almost continuous emissions of semen.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, by eating sparingly and favouring the cold foods which 'impede, repress and thicken semen and extinguish lust', the saint could hope to reduce his sexual urges.<sup>56</sup>

Sleep also posed a threat to the holy man's chastity, not only because of the risk of improper dreams, but also because of its links to digestion. Regimens stressed the importance of setting aside sufficient time for sleep, in order to allow the food to be properly processed.<sup>57</sup> Men were exhorted not to have intercourse before fully digesting a meal; if this advice was not heeded, it was thought that any child conceived would be 'mentally defective ... or otherwise deformed'.<sup>58</sup> Well-regulated sleep, along with a meat-based diet, was a common prescription for couples who were struggling to conceive.<sup>59</sup> Insufficient sleep would leave food only partially processed; as a result, only a small amount of poor quality sperm would be produced. For laymen hoping to father a child this might be a matter of concern, but for the cleric, it offered

52 Gerald of Wales, *The Jewel of the Church*, translated by J. Hagen (Leiden, 1979), p. 199.

53 Vincent-Cassy, 'Between Sin and Pleasure', pp. 417–18; J. Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science and Culture* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 23, 156.

54 Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, p. 121; P. Delany, 'Constantinus Africanus' *De Coitu*: A Translation', *The Chaucer Review* 4 (1969), 62–63; D. Jacquart and C. Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 148–49.

55 Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality*, 146–55; Zieger, *Religion and Medicine*, pp. 263–66.

56 Delany, 'Constantinus Africanus' *De Coitu*', p. 63.

57 P. Sotres, 'The Regimens of Health' in M. Grmek (ed.), *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London, 1998), pp. 310–11.

58 Delany, 'Constantinus Africanus' *De Coitu*', p. 59.

59 Zieger, *Religion and Medicine*, p. 260.

another opportunity to limit the amount of semen produced by his body.

Bocking, then, was clearly concerned to demonstrate that his subject's treatment of his body was designed to limit the production of semen, but why was it necessary to do so? The roots of his concern are to be found in contemporary understandings of the body, which were based on the system of the four humours (blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile), as devised by the Hippocratic School and developed by Galen. At the heart of this system was the notion that health was based on the equilibrium of the humours, and illness the product of imbalance.<sup>60</sup> In order for health to be maintained, the humours needed to be kept in balance, and this was achieved through the expulsion of various bodily fluids, including blood, phlegm and semen. The retention of excess fluids would cause ill health. It was argued, therefore, that continence was potentially dangerous to health, particularly for young men and those with a hot and moist complexion. Any matter not expelled would affect the heart, leading to anxiety and depression, which in turn damaged other parts of the body.<sup>61</sup>

Richard, like any good bishop, was prepared to risk his physical health in order to ensure the well-being of his soul, but the male body was an unruly thing and even the holiest man might find himself polluted by his bodily functions. Thus hagiographers, Bocking amongst them, were obliged to emphasise lifestyle choices which would imply (at least to any reader with a reasonable understanding of the workings of the human body) that their subject had treated his body in a manner which reduced his production of semen, and thus protected his chastity.

In refraining not only from sexual activity, but also from the temptations of food, drink and sleep, Richard was also demonstrating a specifically masculine virtue: self-restraint. The belief that self-control was a specifically masculine virtue, differentiating men from women and an essential attribute of the perfect man, had a long history, and was frequently reiterated throughout late antiquity and the middle ages.<sup>62</sup> Thus if a saint could display a remarkable degree of self-control,

60 V. Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (Abingdon, 2004), pp. 72–86; C. Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society in Later Medieval England* (Stroud, 1995), pp. 29–54.

61 Jacquot and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, p. 149.

62 The literature on this topic is vast; amongst the recent works of medieval masculinity which consider this topic in detail are R. Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, 2003); K. Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest in the Works of William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge, 2008); D. Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England*, (Chicago, 2008).

resisting temptations to which lesser men would succumb, he would have demonstrated that, despite his celibacy, he was actually a better man than the majority of his contemporaries. Unlike a monk, whose cloister-bound life protected him from most forms of temptation, a saint-bishop was obliged to live in the world, in close contact with the very things which threatened his salvation the most. Bocking deliberately recounts tales from Richard's life in which he was exposed to temptation, but behaved in an exemplary fashion. Rich dishes were placed before him, but he set them aside.<sup>63</sup> Like his mentor, St Edmund, Richard came into close contact with women, but behaved in a decorous fashion;<sup>64</sup> these women were recipients of either religious instruction or healing miracles.<sup>65</sup> He could have dressed luxuriously, but instead favoured clothes and shoes which 'were simple and adequate'; he could have slept in his bed, but preferred to rest on the floor.<sup>66</sup>

Furthermore, his body is not naturally given to asceticism; Bocking makes clear that Richard has to control his flesh, and refuse to accede to its demands. This point is illustrated by his aforementioned night-time vigils, and also by two references to the bishop being overcome by sleep. On one occasion he was delivering religious instruction to a noblewoman 'when sleep came over him', and he was rewarded with a vision which solved the spiritual problem which had been troubling him.<sup>67</sup> His nocturnal prayers sometimes came to an end because 'the sleep which he did not seek would creep over him and ... he would place his face in the dust and sleep in the dust like Job'.<sup>68</sup> In order for the true significance of the bishop's masculine self-restraint to be appreciated, his body had to be allowed some small, harmless victories.<sup>69</sup>

63 *Saint Richard*, pp. 103–4, 180.

64 *Saint Richard*, pp. 102, 178; *Life of St Edmund*, p. 150. Most of the English saint-bishops approached the woman problem in a similar fashion, but Thomas Cantilupe of Hereford was an anomaly: he refused to make eye-contact with women, and upset his sisters by refusing to kiss them and asking them to leave his household. See C.M. Woolgar, *The Senses in Late Medieval England* (London, 2006), p. 203.

65 *Saint Richard*, pp. 122–24, 130–31, 199–200, 206–7.

66 *Saint Richard*, pp. 109–10, 185–86.

67 *Saint Richard*, pp. 123, 199.

68 *Saint Richard*, pp. 109–10, 186.

69 For parallel incidents in the life of St Edmund of Canterbury, see D. Jones, *Friars' Tales: Thirteenth Century Exempla from the British Isles* (Manchester, 2011), pp. 166–7, 183–4. Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln once fell asleep whilst waiting to conduct ordinations: *Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272–1346*, edited by H. Maxwell (Glasgow, 1913), pp. 159–60.

Depictions of episcopal emotions provided the hagiographer with another opportunity to demonstrate the bishop's manliness, and his mastery of his body. Medieval narrative sources are full of angry individuals, amongst them angry bishops, and Bocking's Richard is no exception.<sup>70</sup> As bishop of Chichester he acted forcefully when confronted with unchristian behaviour; the recipients of his harsh justice included a clerk accused of seducing a nun, a vicar who lived openly with his concubine, and some citizens of Lewes who had forced a thief from sanctuary in order to hang him.<sup>71</sup> Most striking was his response to a vicar from the diocese of Norwich. Richard was present when this man approached his bishop on a matter of business, whilst 'wearing a costume unbecoming to a clerk.' Bocking continues:

The holy man saw the bishop repress his feelings, but his own zeal for justice compelled him to do otherwise and he rose up and upbraided the clerk, saying, 'Is it fitting that you should appear before your bishop attired thus? I tell you that, if you belonged to my diocese, I would punish you severely'.<sup>72</sup>

Yet whilst Richard's anger is forceful, it is also infrequent. Indeed, much emphasis is placed on the fact that he responds with patience to situations which would provoke fury in lesser men. For example, he bore his long persecution at the hands of Henry III with exemplary tolerance: when insulted by the king's representatives, he left the palace 'not cursing or grumbling, but thanking God and praying for those who persecuted and reviled him'.<sup>73</sup> The nobleman John FitzAlan, wondering at Richard's tolerance, remarked that 'Never have I seen or met such a man, who loves his enemies and opponents and repays with kindness those who cause him injury'.<sup>74</sup> The bishop is rarely angry, and when he is his actions and words are always both controlled and justified; he can only be roused in anger in extreme circumstances.

Anger was a somewhat ambiguous emotion. It was conventionally regarded as a vice, and some medieval theologians even argued that it was a sin.<sup>75</sup> However, the problem of divine anger had necessitated

70 For a useful collection of essays, see B. Rosenwein (ed.), *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1998).

71 *Saint Richard*, pp. 112–16, 189–92.

72 *Saint Richard*, pp. 113–14, 189–90.

73 *Saint Richard*, pp. 100, 176.

74 *Saint Richard*, pp. 112, 188.

75 R. Barton, 'Gendering Anger: *Ira*, *Furor*, and Discourses of Power and Masculinity in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries' in Newhauser (ed.), *Garden of Evil*, p. 371.

the development of a theory of legitimate anger, motivated by zeal and modelled on God's righteous wrath.<sup>76</sup> There thus emerged two distinct types of anger. The first, *furor*, had strongly negative connotations; it was a violent, irrational, raging anger, almost a form of madness.<sup>77</sup> *Ira*, on the other hand, was 'the proper response to an unjust challenge to legitimate authority'.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, when attributing either of these forms of anger to their subject, a biographer was making a statement about his masculinity, or lack thereof. The man of *ira* possessed qualities which were widely thought of as desirable in a man: he was potent, active and rational. In contrast, the man of *furor* was less masculine, and defined by characteristics which were conventionally attributed to women: madness, irrationality, ineffectiveness and deceit.<sup>79</sup>

For the bishop (and his hagiographer) anger had a further dimension, for this was an emotion which, especially in its fiercest form, was strongly associated with the heat of the male body.<sup>80</sup> Given that heat was also associated with lust, a bishop who gave way to *furor* would be displaying not only a worrying lack of self-control, but also a natural tendency towards uncontrollable sexuality. It is therefore unsurprising that Bocking is careful to place Richard's anger within clear limits. The chief examples of his anger are included in a section entitled 'Of the fervour of his zeal', and the preceding section, 'That he was not quarrelsome' concludes with the claim that, faced with Richard's 'great modesty and kindness', 'all impetuous argument and stormy rancour [rancoris] must give way'.<sup>81</sup>

Tears were another important manifestation of episcopal emotion.<sup>82</sup> The copious tears which accompanied the religious devotions of holy men (especially their celebration of mass and their private prayers) were widely admired, for such individuals were thought to have received the 'gift of tears' from God. Their tears thus served as proof as God's love for the saint, and had the ability to wash away

76 Barton, 'Gendering Anger', p. 373; L.K. Little, 'Anger in Monastic Curses', pp. 12–27 and R. Barton, '"Zealous Anger" and the Renegotiation of Aristocratic Relationships in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century France', pp. 156–58, both in Rosenwein (ed.), *Anger's Past*.

77 Barton, 'Gendering Anger', pp. 382–83, 387.

78 Barton, 'Gendering Anger', p. 387.

79 Barton, 'Gendering Anger', p. 389.

80 Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, pp. 189–90.

81 *Saint Richard*, pp. 111–12, 187–89.

82 For a fuller consideration of episcopal weeping, see K. Harvey, 'Episcopal Emotions: Tears in the Life of the Medieval Bishop', (Forthcoming).

tears.<sup>83</sup> By the time that Bocking wrote the *Vita*, devotional weeping had gained such significance that 'the reputation for sanctity of a servant of God could not flourish if the gift of tears was lacking'.<sup>84</sup> This explains in part why he drew attention to 'the tearful imprecations' of Richard's 'prayers and vigils'.<sup>85</sup> He also described the role played by tears in the bishop's care for his flock:

He cleaned them with the tearful compunction of his holy prayers. For tears wash the sin and therefore wash the sinner, that is they wash not only him who weeps but also him for whom the tears of piety are shed.<sup>86</sup>

However, the bishop's tears were about more than piety; this is yet another bodily function with wider significance for the reader's understanding of his masculinity. Tearful prayer would ward off the Devil and ensure that the episcopal mind remained focused on spiritual matters, but the shedding of tears also had physical consequences which would help the bishop in his battle for chastity. Men needed to expel semen because their natural complexion was much hotter than that of the female.<sup>87</sup> Consequently, many holy men had used cold water to cool the body and subdue the flesh, and tears may have served a similar function.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, it is necessary to consider medieval notions about the nature of bodily fluids: it was commonly held that all bodily fluids (including semen) were formed from processed blood, and were thus interchangeable. Tears were thought to be produced when heat caused the moisture of the brain to dissolve, and semen was thought to have its origins in the same organ. If too much semen was expelled from the body, then the eyes and brain would dry out and eventually be destroyed; if one accepts this as true, then the logical conclusion is that copious weeping could prevent the over-production of semen.<sup>89</sup>

Nevertheless, it was not appropriate for the bishop to shed tears indiscriminately, and thus he could also display restraint in his weeping. There were many occasions on which a good bishop should

83 The best modern work on the subject is P. Nagy, *Le Don des Larmes au Moyen Age* (Paris, 2002).

84 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, pp. 438–39.

85 *Saint Richard*, pp. 109, 186.

86 *Saint Richard*, pp. 121, 197–8.

87 Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, pp. 170–2.

88 Amongst them Aelfred of Rievaulx, who immersed himself in a small tank of icy water hidden beneath the novice house whenever he felt the stirrings of lust. See *The Life of Aelfred of Rievaulx*, p. 108.

89 Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, pp. 55–56.

not shed tears, with tears of self-pity being particularly unacceptable. That Richard had control over his tear-ducts was demonstrated by his response to personal misfortune:

When they told him that a fire had caused great destruction to his houses and property, his household grieved and wept, but he wore a serene expression and cheerful aspect and thanked God and comforted those in distress saying 'Do not be sad. We still have sufficient to provide you with clothing and other necessities.' And he added, 'These things have happened because we have not given alms as generously as we should. Therefore we wish and command that we provide more lavish alms in future'.

Whilst his household was overwhelmed by fear and loss, the saint knew that it was not appropriate to weep.<sup>90</sup>

It was not only the negative emotions which had to be kept in check. Although Bocking was keen that his readers should understand the meaning of Richard's name (Richard [Ricardus] is broken down as 'laughing' [*ridens*] 'dear' [*carus*] and 'sweet' [*dulcis*]), he followed this etymological lesson with the claim that the bishop:

rarely if ever permitted himself the hearty laughter of the outer man, although he did display a certain cheerfulness of countenance out of his love for those in his presence.<sup>91</sup>

Laughter had often been criticised as a non-Christian behaviour; it was thought to be antithetical to the penitential spirit of a true believer, and was associated with buffoonery and obscenity.<sup>92</sup> The monastic orders were especially hostile to laughter, which was widely condemned in their rules.<sup>93</sup> The need to avoid laughter was often coupled with exhortations to silence, and for Richard, obliged by his office to live in the world, the avoidance of laughter may have been a way of respecting a silent ideal.<sup>94</sup> Like excessive anger, hysterical laughter was usually associated with women, and with unruly female sexuality; it

90 *Saint Richard*, pp. 115, 191.

91 *Saint Richard*, pp. 88, 166.

92 S.G. Bruce, *Silence and Sign Language in Medieval Monasticism: The Cluniac Tradition, c.900–1200* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 32–33.

93 J. Le Goff, 'Le Rire dans les Règles Monastiques du Haut Moyen Age' in C. Lepelley (ed.), *Haut Moyen-Age: Culture, Éducation et Société* (La Garenne-Colombes, 1990), pp. 93–103; I. M. Resnick, 'Risus Monasticus: Laughter and Medieval Monastic Culture', *Revue Bénédictine* 97 (1987), 90–100.

94 *Rule of St Benedict*, pp. 42–55 (ch. 6–7). See also Bruce, *Silence*, pp. 13–52.

thus needed to be avoided by a holy man.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, although the connections between laughter and male chastity are not immediately apparent to the modern mind, at least one medieval medical writer found disturbing parallels:

The wind ... which unleashes laughter in humans by shaking his crotch and his organs is the same as that which provokes ejaculation, and the tears which often accompany laughter gush from the eyes like semen which is ejected when the blood is shaken by the heat of pleasure.<sup>96</sup>

Thus even Bocking's comments on laughter may be underpinned by his desire to demonstrate Richard's unimpeachable adherence to the ideal of chastity.

However, Richard's reluctance to laugh was almost certainly motivated by a further factor: his desire to imitate the models of masculine bodily perfection offered by Adam (prior to the Fall) and, to an even greater extent, by Christ. According to Hildegard of Bingen, laughter was the product of 'Adam's transgression', as a result of which 'some sort of wind intruded into his marrow and loins'. From this wind, 'inappropriate cheerfulness, laughter and jeering are caused in human beings'.<sup>97</sup> According to medieval tradition, Christ was untroubled by such troublesome behaviours, and it was widely believed that He never laughed.<sup>98</sup> By claiming that Richard followed this example, Bocking was deliberately associating his subject with the ultimate incarnation of human perfection. This comparison would have had great appeal to Robert Kilwardby, whose *Letter to Dominican Novices* (c.1270) claimed that the Dominican way of life was closest to that of the apostles and of Christ himself.<sup>99</sup>

95 L. Perfetti, *Women and Laughter in Medieval Comic Literature* (Ann Arbor, 2003), pp. 4–10; O. Trokhimenko, 'Women's Laughter and Gender Politics in Medieval Conduct Discourse' in A. Classen (ed.), *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 243–64.

96 Hildegardis *Causae et Curae*, edited by P. Kaiser (Leipzig, 1903), p.148. The translation is mine. Laughter and ejaculation have continued to be the subject of comparisons: there were numerous Renaissance jokes which drew this parallel, and Freud also linked these two bodily phenomena. See P. Simmons, *The Sex of Men in Premodern Europe: A Cultural History* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 76.

97 Hildegard of Bingen, *On Natural Philosophy and Medicine*, edited by M. Berger (Cambridge, 1999), p. 43.

98 Le Goff, 'Le Rire', p. 93.

99 S. Tugwell, 'Christ as Model of Sanctity in Humbert of Romans', in K. Emery and J. Wawrykow (eds), *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans* (Notre Dame, 1998),

Nor is this the only example of Richard's behaviour being presented in terms which deliberately recalled the life of Christ. Bocking describes Richard's early morning devotions:

He was a man of such gentleness that if, when rising for matins before the sun came up or day broke, he found his clerks – as often happened – still dozing or heavy with sleep, he would betake himself to his private devotions and let them sleep on in peace, as if gently repeating the Lord's saying, 'Sleep ye now and take your rest'.

This Richard is gentle, but also Christ-like. His conduct echoes Jesus' behaviour in the Garden of Gethsemane, where He prayed as the disciples slept, and spoke the words which Bocking quotes on finding them asleep for the third and final time.<sup>100</sup>

One of Richard's chief aims (at least in the version of his life presented to us by Bocking) was to gain sufficient mastery of his body to ensure that it would not be polluted by seminal emissions, either voluntary or involuntary.<sup>101</sup> If he could achieve such mastery, then he was well on his way to achieving the bodily perfection of the prelapsarian Adam; he was believed to have been without lust, to have produced semen solely for the purpose of reproduction, and thus to have been untroubled by spontaneous seminal emissions.<sup>102</sup> Christ was a second Adam, 'without the contagion of this passion, having had no experience whatsoever of the pricks of fleshly lust by which we are inevitably stung'.<sup>103</sup> Unlike Adam, however, Christ had overcome lust through his resistance to gluttony during the forty days and night which He spent in the wilderness. Since gluttony was the catalyst for lust, his victory over the former entailed a victory over the latter; by implication, it was clear that he was untroubled by the nocturnal pollutions which plagued lesser men.<sup>104</sup> Given the importance of the

---

pp. 93–94. Kilwardby's letter does not survive, and is known only from the reply written by John Pecham, a leading English Franciscan, who ridiculed his claims. See 'Tractatus Contra Fratrem Robertum Kilwardby, O. P.' in *Fratris Johannis Pecham: Tractatus Tres de paupertate*, edited by C. L. Kingsford, A. G. Little and F. Tocco (Aberdeen, 1910), pp. 91–147, especially pp. 122–28, 131–40.

100 The story, and quotation are found in both Mark 14. 32–42 (with the quotation at 14. 41), and Matthew 26. 36–46 (with the quotation at 14. 45).

101 For male (and especially clerical) anxiety about such emissions, see Murray, 'Men's Bodies, Men's Minds', 1–26.

102 Payer, *Bridling of Desire*, p. 40.

103 John Cassian, *The Conferences*, translated by B. Ramsey (New York, 1997), p. 185.

104 J. Kitchen, 'Cassian, Nocturnal Emissions and the Sexuality of Jesus' in Newhauser (ed.), *Seven Deadly Sins*, pp. 74–94.

imitation of Christ in late medieval piety, it is unsurprising that late medieval saints sought to emulate His behaviours and bodily features, and that their biographers stressed their achievements in this field.<sup>105</sup>

Ultimately, the chief function of medieval hagiography was to initiate or (as in the case of the *Vita*) to perpetuate the cult of a holy man or woman, by presenting its subject as a model of Christian conduct. In recording the life of a saint-bishop such as Richard of Chichester, Bocking was obliged to emphasise his subject's exemplary exercise of his episcopal office, but being a good bishop – even a perfect bishop – was not on its own sufficiently admirable to ensure that the prelate in question would be revered as a saint. By (literally) fleshing out his portrait of Richard, by emphasising his mastery of his body and sexuality, and by drawing on contemporary medical theory, Bocking deftly handled contemporary concerns about the masculinity of the holy man. Richard was both humanised and set apart; all medieval Christians could identify with the bishop's struggles with the flesh, but very few could claim to have enjoyed similar success in the battle for chastity. Bocking thus made clear to his readers that this was an individual worthy of admiration, imitation, and devotion: a perfect bishop, a perfect man, and a perfect saint.

105 G. Constable, 'The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ' in his *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 143–248, with a section on 'The Imitation of the Body of Christ' (focusing primarily on stigmata) at pp. 194–218.