

## NOTES

### How to Study Power and Saints

Note on the Sources and References: References to the revelations are given in form *Rev. I 12*; *Book I*, 71, meaning, for example, *Liber I* of the revelations, chapter 12, the corresponding page in the English translation. Passages from the *Revelaciones Extravagantes* are marked with *Ex*. The acts of Birgitta's canonization process are given as *Acta*. However, the following parts of *Acta*, Birgitta's life, the so-called process *Vita*, is referred to *PVita* and Prior Peter's testimony, *Deposicio copiosissima domini prioris de Aluastro*, is identified as *DCP*. The idea is to make it easier for the reader to follow which part of the acts is being referred. The page number that follows refers to Isak Collijn's edition, 1924–1931.

I have used existing translations from Latin into English, when possible. *Rev. I–VII* (*Books I–VII*) are translated by Denis Searby in *The Revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden: Volume 1–3*. *Rev. V* and *Rev. VII*. Translations of *PVita* are by Albert Kezel (*Birgitta of Sweden, Life and Selected Revelations*). Other translations are as indicated in the endnotes or, if there is no printed translation, the translations are mine. The translation of *The Life of Marie d'Oignies* by Jacques de Vitry is by Margot H. King and *Supplement to the Life* by Thomas de Cantimpré is by Hugh Feiss. Both can be found in *Two Lives of Marie d'Oignies*.

1. Heffernan (1988, 14).
2. Williams-Krapp (2002, 208–210).
3. Kleinberg (1989, 186).
4. In English, “Living Saints: A Typology of Female Sanctity in the Early Sixteenth Century,” see, Zarri (1996).
5. Zarri (1996, 221). Zarri has examined several Italian holy women in the sixteenth century who seemed to have made a career of being a saint (257).
6. Kleinberg (1992, 6). Barcellona suggests the term “self-construction of sanctity” meaning a person who is aware of her or his would-be sanctity and seeks to act accordingly. This term closely resembles the concept of the living saint (1999, 36–37).
7. Sources regarding Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179), the German abbess, contain many instances of the abbess in conflict with clerical or secular authorities (Salmesvuori 2000). I expected this to be the case with Birgitta of Sweden as well but soon realized that since she did not have

- any official position—as an abbess, for example—she did not find herself in a similar situation as Hildegard, whose disagreements with authorities often concerned administrative matters.
8. Mulder-Bakker (2005).
  9. For the most recent use of the concept of the living saint, see Heinonen (2007) and Herzig (2008).
  10. Riches and Salih (2002, 4). The classic texts among scholars for defining gender in historical analyses are the writings of Joan Wallach Scott (see, e.g., Scott 1988). Very few now deny the significance of gender or call it anachronistic. There are, however, a few who do. Dick Harrison interestingly discusses Hans-Werner Goetz's idea that gender should not be overemphasized (1998, 28–29). Useful collections, besides *Gender and Holiness. Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Samantha J. E. Riches and Sarah Salih, that apply the gender perspective are, e.g., *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane Weisl, and *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski.
  11. On widows and power in the Middle Ages, see Haluska-Rausch (2005, 153–168). On men and “maleness” in the Middle Ages, see *Medieval Masculinities. Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees, and *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler.
  12. See *The Prime of Their Lives: Wise Old Women in Pre-industrial Society*, ed. A. B. Mulder-Bakker and R. Nip.
  13. Mulder-Bakker (2004b, x).
  14. Mulder-Bakker (2004b, xx–xxii). Mulder-Bakker suggested that the menopause occurred earlier in the Middle Ages, when women were around 40. Both the earlier and more recent scholarship on menopause shows that 50 is the common age. It could occur between the age of 35 and 60 (Post 1971, 83–87; Youngs 2006, 172–173).
  15. Blumenfeld-Kosinski (2004, 7).
  16. Youngs (2006, 148–152).
  17. Mann (1986, 2).
  18. See, e.g., *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski, and by the same editors, *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*; Aers and Staley (1996); *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. Daniel E. Bornstein and Roberto Rusconi; *Gendering the Middle Ages*, ed. Pauline Stafford and Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker; *The Experience of Power in Medieval France, 950–1350*, ed. Robert F. Berkhofer, Alan Cooper, and Adam J. Kosto. Concerning authority, the works of Ronald Surtz and Alison Weber on women in Late Medieval Spain have been especially inspiring for me (Surtz 1990; 1995; Weber 1990).
  19. Aers and Staley (1996, 7).
  20. Bornstein (1996, 1–2).

21. Erler and Kowaleski (2003, 9).
22. Shifting the emphasis from “women” to “gender” brings a wider field of research to focus and is more inclusive than “women.”
23. Some of the most important studies are, *Medieval Women. Dedicated and Presented to Professor Rosalind M. T. Hill on the Occasion of Her Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Derek Baker; Dronke (1984); Bynum (1987); Ennen (1989); *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages*, ed. Judith M. Bennett et al.; *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin; *Creative Women in Medieval and Early Modern Italy: Religious and Artistic Renaissance*, ed. E. Ann Matter and John Coakley; Newman (1995; 2003); Ferrante (1997); *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*, ed. Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker; *Women and Faith. Catholic Religious Life in Italy from Late Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri; *Singlewomen in the European Past, 1250–1800*, ed. Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide; *New Trends in Feminine Spirituality. The Holy Women of Liège and Their Impact*, ed. Juliette Dor, Lesley Johnson, and Jocelyn Wogan Browne; Hollywood (2002); *Voices in Dialogue. Reading Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Olson and Kerby-Fulton.
24. Lukes (1986, 4–5); Allen (1999, 121).
25. Garrard (1983, 105–121, 107); Engelstad (2006).
26. Mann (1986, 6). McGuire’s definition of power and authority bears resemblance to this idea: power aims at influencing and changing a given condition and authority means right to exercise power (1991, 12).
27. “Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” (Weber 1968 I:53). Weber, despite being one of the most influential scholars in the field of sociology of religion, was operating under the assumption made in his *The Sociology of Religion* that women were receptive to religious but not political prophecy. As Diane Watt notes, this statement “does not bear scrutiny” (1997, 3). Regarding resistance in Foucault’s writings, see Foucault (1982; 1988). Concerning power and resistance, see also J. M. Barbalet, who raises the interesting point that even quite different approaches “share an implicit assumption that the concept of ‘resistance’ is axiomatic and requires no further specification” (1985, 536–537).
28. Foucault (1983, 208–210).
29. Foucault (1983, 214). Foucault saw that this kind of power is applied today as well, with certain modifications: for example, instead of desiring salvation in the next world, people are ensuring it in this world. For the notion of practice in Michel Foucault’s thinking, see Alhanen (2007).
30. Foucault (1988, 11–12); Deveaux (1994, 233).
31. Malina (1995, 170).
32. Weber already emphasized the importance of the power of the leader being recognized (1968 I:215–216).
33. Garrard (1983, 108–109).

34. Thompson (1991, 31).
35. Bourdieu (2001, 170; emphasis original).
36. *Ibid.*, 170. Bourdieu also adopted and developed many of Max Weber's theories. See, Verter (2004).
37. Bourdieu (2001, 12–14); Verter (2004, 188). Bourdieu's concept of habitus goes beyond the conventional dictionary definition.
38. Verter (2003, 153).
39. Verter (2003, 156). On applying Bourdieu's concepts to the research of medieval themes, see also Graves (1989, 297–301).
40. Allen (1999, 123–129).
41. Rapp (2005, 16–22).
42. Jantzen (1995, 169).
43. McGinn (1998, 17).
44. *Ibid.*, 21–22; Bériou (1998, 136–141); Lehmijoki-Gardner (1999); Kerby-Fulton (2005).
45. On the discerning of spirits, see Caciola (2003); Elliott (2004, 233, 300–302); Anderson (2011).
46. McGinn (2007, 17–18).
47. Newman (2005a, 7–9).
48. Allen (1999, 131–135).
49. Schechner (2000, 4).
50. For the history of performance studies, see Bell (1997, 73–79). The classic introduction to performance studies is Richard Schechner's *Performance Studies. An Introduction. Third Edition*, 2013.
51. Miller (1994, 137); Brakke (2003, 390). Mary Suydam and Beverly Kienzle have applied performance theory convincingly to the study of beguines and medieval sermons; Stavroula Constantinou has done the same to the lives of holy women in Late Antiquity (Suydam 1999b; 2004; 2007; Kienzle 2002; Constantinou 2005). In 2008, Elina Gertsman edited the fine volume *Visualizing Medieval Performance. Perspectives, Histories, Contexts*, which contains 16 articles exploring various medieval cases from the performance perspective.
52. Suydam (1999a, 5).
53. *Ibid.*, 11–12.
54. *Ibid.*, 19.
55. Suydam (2004, 144).
56. *Ibid.*, 152; emphasis original.
57. Suydam (1999a, 15–16).
58. *Ibid.*, 16.
59. On the textual history of Birgitta's writings, see the introductions to the editions of her revelations: Undhagen (1978); Jönsson (1998); Aili (1992; 2002); Bergh (1967; 1971; 1991; 2001); Hollman (1956); Eklund (1972; 1975; 1991). In fact, after the 46 years it took for the preparation of the scholarly editions, some of the older editions' introductions could benefit from rewriting. The same is true of Collijn's edition of the canonization proceedings. Now that all the revelations and other

- materials exist in modern editions, it would be interesting to write a single, up-to-date, investigation of the relations of different texts and editorial layers. There are many unanswered questions concerning the different versions of Birgitta's lives, for example. On the nature of the sources, see also Klockars (1966); Morris (1982; 1993a; 1993b; 1996; 1999a, 3–11; 2006); Sahlin (2001, 19–33).
60. "Home of literacy" means that the often-illiterate visionary woman needed the learned theologian to record her visions (Elliott 1999, 168). For the roles of a confessor and a visionary woman, see especially *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and their Interpretators*, ed. Catherine M. Mooney; Elliott (2004); Coakley (2006).
  61. The exact year when Peter of Alvastra became Prior of Alvastra is not known. This probably happened at the end of the 1340s. Therefore, I refer to him as Subprior Peter when alluding to the time before the end of the 1340s. Usually, when I designate him as Prior Peter, I am referring to him and his sayings in the canonization materials, which were produced after Birgitta's death.
  62. For Master Peter and *Cantus sororum*, see Servatius (1990; 2003); Nilsson (1990); Vuori (2011).
  63. Ex. 48.
  64. Ex. 49.
  65. Helge Nordahl's book in Norwegian, *Syv birgittinere* [*Seven Birgittines*], contains short biographies of Birgitta's four confessors: Master Mathias, Prior Peter of Alvastra, Master Peter of Skänninge, and Alfonso Pecha. In addition, there are biographies of Bishop Hemming of Åbo, Bishop Nils Hermansson of Linköping, and Birgitta's daughter Katarina. Nordahl's (2003) book is insightful and emphasizes the importance of Birgitta's friends during her life. It would have been even more valuable, had he made more use of the latest scholarship concerning Birgitta. For Alfonso Pecha, see Jönsson (1989) and Gilkær (1993).
  66. Rev. III contains 34 revelations of which at least 14 stem from Sweden of the 1340s. Rev. IV contains 144 revelations, 18 of which can be dated to Birgitta's Swedish years, 33 are difficult to date, and the rest stem from the years 1349–1373. Rev. VI contains 122 revelations of which 43 seem to stem from the 1340s and 31 are difficult to date. Rev. VIII was edited by Alfonso Pecha and 47 of its 58 revelations are most probably from the time before Birgitta left Sweden. The *Extravagantes* contains 116 revelations and approximately 78 of these stem from Birgitta's time in Sweden.
  67. Bergh (1971, 13–33); Nyberg (1990, 21–27).
  68. Rev. V is the most important source concerning Birgitta's views on learned men.
  69. For example, Rev. I 13, 17, 21, 23, 28, 32, 41, 52, and 60 are targeted at certain priests and noble men. Only in Rev. I 16, the protagonist is a woman. In the other revelation books, there are roughly over one hundred revelations aimed at specific individuals. For example, in Rev. III

- there are 13, in *Rev.* IV there are 8, and in *Rev.* VI there are 33 revelations, which seem to have been written with specific individuals in mind. In *Rev.* VIII, most of the revelations are directed at a king, usually Magnus Eriksson. *Ex.* has at least 26 revelations aimed at individual people. Many of the revelations are directed at Birgitta herself.
70. *Acta*, 84–85. According to her *Vita*, people asked Birgitta about some matter and after a few days she gave the answer in writing.
  71. Jan Öberg has shown that in the chronological order at least *Rev.* VI 63, VIII 47, IV 78, IV 33, 79–80, VII 5, VIII 51, IV 139–140, VII 18–19, VII 28–29, IV 142–143 seem to have been originally letters (1969, 12).
  72. Concerning the textual history of the canonization acts, see especially Collijn (1931, I–LV), and concerning the history of the canonization acts, see Nyberg (2004).
  73. On Birgitta as a channel, see Piltz (1993, 78–79). Piltz observed that Henry of Ghent (d. 1293) used “the image *canalis* of the human agent” in a very similar way as Birgitta saw her role as a recipient of divine messages. Diane Watt fittingly uses the term “secretary of God” for women prophets (1997).
  74. Schück (1901); Kraft (1929); Kezel (1990); Ellis (1993); Sahlin (2001, 25–26).
  75. Klockars (1966, 44–56). Tryggve Lundén published a translation of Birgitta’s revelations in 1956. He also dated most of the revelations and many of his recommendations still stand. In some cases, Birgit Klockars has suggested useful improvements for the dates and identifications of the persons whom the revelations concern (Lundén 1958; Klockars 1966, 54–56; 1976). In the recent translation of Birgitta’s seven revelation books, the dating mostly follows Lundén’s and Klockars’s suggestions. *The Revelations of St. Birgitta of Sweden. Vols. 1–3: Books I–III; IV–V; VI–VII*, trans. Denis Searby, introduction and notes by Bridget Morris.
  76. Bergh (2002, 121).
  77. Undhagen (1978, 28–29).
  78. Schmid (1940); Klockars (1966, 29–44); Piltz (1993); Sahlin (2001).
  79. Dinzelsbacher (1981, 78–89; 1991); Newman (2005a, 6–14).
  80. For the use of saints’ lives in historical research, see Goodich (1982); Weinstein and Bell (1982); Deloos (1983); Dinzelsbacher (1988); Heffernan (1988, 16–17); Kleinberg (1989; 1992); Lifshitz (1994); Vauchez (1997).
  81. My approach is quite similar to, for example, that of Aviad Kleinberg, who describes his approach as follows: “While I found many theoretical ‘systems’ useful, and have used them in my work, I have not become a devotee of any of them” Kleinberg (1992, ix–x). For a similar approach, see also Voaden (1999).
  82. Gallagher and Greenblatt (2001, 14–15). The “illuminating detail” closely resembles Carlo Ginzburg’s use of the “clue” Ginzburg (1989 [in Italian 1986]).
  83. Gallagher and Greenblatt (2001, 16–17).
  84. *Ibid.*

85. I borrow the phrase “the touch of the real” from Gallagher and Greenblatt (2001).
86. Ringle (1988, 178–200); Heinonen (2007, 9–11). In addition to Siegfried Ringle, Ursula Peters has argued for the literary nature of the mystical texts whereas Peter Dinzelbacher has argued for the more historical approach of visionary texts (Dinzelbacher 1988; Peters 1988a; 1988b). Werner Williams-Krapp emphasizes the literary genre but also sees the significance of the historical context (2004). In English-speaking scholarship, concerning women in Late Antiquity, Elisabeth A. Clark has argued interestingly for the linguistic turn and the “vanishing of the lady,” meaning that the sources do not reveal anything about the historical women (1998; 2004). Clark has evoked a vivid discussion concerning the relationship of the social reality and the textual sources. See, e.g., Matthews (2001) and Brakke (2003). This discussion is, in my view, applicable to medieval studies as well.
87. Spiegel (2005, 1–31).
88. *Ibid.*, 2–3.
89. Spiegel (1990, 73).
90. Spiegel (2005) introduces many of them in *Practicing History. New Directions in Historical Writing after the Linguistic Turn*, which she has edited and written the introduction for. Concerning linguistic turn, see also Spiegel (2009) and Surkis (2012).
91. Spiegel (2005, 25).
92. Spiegel (1990, 84); Heinonen (2007, 11–12).
93. Heinonen (2007, 12).
94. Spiegel (1990, 85).
95. On the ambiguous historicity of the visionary texts, see Newman (2003, 26–30, 299–304). About the historicity of the sources concerning medieval women, see also Bynum (1987, 7–9; 1992, 11–26).
96. Newman (2005a, 2–3).
97. Williams-Krapp (2002, 207).
98. Kleinberg (1989, 183–187). Susanne Bürkle discusses one typical feature for the new lives: a certain intimacy. The close relationship between the writer and the protagonist can be read in the *Vita*. One purpose of the emphasis on familiarity and intimacy was to guarantee the authenticity of the life (1999, 201–202). In Birgitta’s *Vita*, her confessors, especially Master Mathias and Alfonso Pecha, are present in the text as if to guarantee the *Vita*’s authenticity. The authors themselves, Prior Peter and Master Peter seem to be left in the background. The certain intimacy, which, for example, can be seen in the life of Marie d’Oignies between her and Jacques de Vitry is lacking in Birgitta’s *Vita*. However, the life of Marie d’Oignies and the life of Elizabeth of Hungary apparently had an impact on the writers of Birgitta’s *Vita*. Marie’s *Vita* had an even greater impact, since it became a prototype of the new sort of lives in the fourteenth century. For the new lives, see especially Deloos (1983); Kleinberg (1989); Bürkle (1999, 193–233); Klaniczay (2004); Coakley (2006, 68–88).

99. Kleinberg (1989, 187–188).
100. Delooz (1983, 191–193); Kleinberg (1989, 189–191). Concerning canonization policy in the thirteenth century, see also Goodich (1981; 1982, 21–68).
101. Delooz made the distinction between real and constructed saints. Real saints were often recent saints and there was a lot of historical data available about them. Constructed saints were remodeled saints, so that sometimes nothing of the real was left or there was no historical information about them. Delooz also emphasized that all saints are in a way constructed, because saints are saints for other people and “they are remodeled in the collective representation which is made of them” (1983, 195).
102. It would be interesting to investigate the *Vita*, *Revelations*, and the canonization acts from the point of view of the emerging Birgittine monastic organization. What significance did they have concerning the new cloister and its sister cloisters? The Birgittine *Rule* received its first papal approval in 1370, three years before Birgitta’s death. The preparations for the new community in Vadstena had begun around 1370 and it would certainly benefit from its founder’s sanctity. A fruitful approach to the question could be, for instance, to compare the emerging Birgittine communities with the Dominican communities in Central or Southern Europe in the fourteenth century. In the German context, for example, the question of the function of women’s mystical texts, especially *Gnadenviten* and *Nonnenbücher*, would be enlightening when investigating the role of Birgitta’s *Vita* and other writings in the new Birgittine communities of sisters and brothers. Especially Ursula Peters’s (1988a; 2000) and Susanne Bürkle’s (1999) works would illuminate the German situation. The comparison with the Dominican female cloisters would be interesting because Birgitta also inspired women in the Dominican communities as well (Williams and Williams-Krapp 2004, 211–212).
103. Morris (1999a). This work should replace the completely outdated biography of Birgitta by Johannes Jørgensen (1954), which was used in scholarly works until the 1990s, for example, in Elliott (1993).
104. Interesting dissertations about Birgitta’s theology are Fogelqvist (1993) and Stjerna (1994).
105. Important works on Birgitta in Swedish are, for example, Nina Sjöberg’s dissertation (2003), in which she investigated Birgitta’s view on marriage and sexuality and found it to be much more positive than had previously been thought. Carina Nynäs analyzed the images of Birgitta in twentieth-century Swedish biographies in her dissertation from 2006. Birger Bergh has been involved in the editing of Birgitta’s revelations for a long time and his vast expertise is obvious in his insightful biography of Birgitta (2002). In addition to these monographs, there are several article collections about Birgitta and her monastery. See, e.g., *Birgitta, hendes værk og hendes klostre i Norden*, *Heliga Birgitta—budskapet och förebilden*, *Studies in St Birgitta and the Brigittine Order 1*, *Birgitta av*



- Vadstena. Pilgrim och profet 1303–1373*, and both in Italian and English *Santa Brigida: Profeta dei tempi nuovi*. For full bibliographic information, see the Bibliography.
106. McGuire (1990; 2001; 2005); Elliott (1993); Morris (1993a; 1993b; 1996; 1999b); Sahlin (1993a; 1993b; 1999; 2001); Voaden (1999); Caciola (2003); Newman (2003); Williams and Williams-Krapp (2004).
  107. Sahlin (2001, 159–168). Sahlin offers an excellent account of the attacks against and defenses of Birgitta and her revelations.
  108. Few older studies about Birgitta deserve to be mentioned. Birgit Klockars wrote numerous books and articles about Birgitta and her historical context (1960; 1966; 1971; 1973; 1976). She mastered the Birgittine and other contemporary sources admirably and her works are still valuable. Another scholar whose works are still relevant is Bengt Strömberg. His research on Master Mathias is the best available so far. Although in some points out of date, some even older studies about Birgitta are worth mentioning. The studies by Salomon Kraft, Knut Westman, Henrik Schück, Emilia Fogelklou, and Toni Schmid contain important insights especially with regard to the historical settings of Birgitta's life. See Schück (1901); Westman (1911); Kraft (1929); Schmid (1940); Fogelklou (1941); Strömberg (1943; 1944).
  109. On the use of teleological terms in scholarship, see Freedman and Spiegel (1998, 693).

## 1 *Fama Sanctitatis in the 1340s*

1. I will touch upon certain themes more thoroughly in subsequent chapters. The most thorough studies about Birgitta's life are written in Swedish by Birgit Klockars (1966; 1971; 1973; 1976) and Birger Bergh (2002). In English the most important scholarly biography is by Bridget Morris (1999a). Claire Sahlin's investigation (2001) into Birgitta also constitutes a valuable English contribution to knowledge of Birgitta's life.
2. Regarding medieval Scandinavia in general, see Sawyer and Sawyer (1993). For the politics and administration of Sweden and Norway in the fourteenth century, see Blom (1992, I–II).
3. Turku is known also by its Swedish name, Åbo.
4. Nuorteva (1997, 36–65).
5. Nilsson (1998, 98–110); Morris (1999a, 26–28).
6. Klockars (1960, 94–96); Morris (1999a, 24); Pernler (1999, 92–93).
7. Morris (1999a, 24–25).
8. *Ibid.*, 26.
9. The sources from this period are far from complete. Therefore, it is not quite clear how the administration was organized during Magnus's minority (Blom 1992, 40–43).
10. Lawmen could also be called judges. They were experts in matters of jurisdiction and were supposed to memorize the law. They were also in charge of the codification of provincial laws, which began in the end of

the thirteenth century. Around 1347, during King Magnus Eriksson's reign, Sweden got its first *landslag* (state law) (Klockars 1976, 67–75).

11. Morris (1999a, 29).
12. *Ibid.*, 29–30; Pernler (1999, 95–96).
13. For example, Bishop Hemming of Åbo often acted also as a landowner and judge. He was also for some years a member of the king's court in Finland. The bishops were higher ranked than the highest knights; this can be seen, for example, in their right to equip more horsemen than the knights (Klockars 1960, 94–104).
14. For the political situation of Sweden after 1349, see especially Blom (1992) and Sawyer and Sawyer (1993). For the political ideals in Vadstena Abbey from 1370, see Berglund (2003). On women in old Norse society, see Jochens (1995).
15. Klockars (1976, 24–26); Morris (1999a, 32).
16. Klockars (1976, 25).
17. *PVita*, 75–77. See also Prior Peter's testimony *DCP*, 508–509. Morris provides a thorough analysis of the stories of Birgitta's childhood (1999a, 35–40). I will leave the childhood stories out of my investigation, since they were probably written around 1370, and they bear a strong hagiographic flavor of exaggeration and interpretation. What they certainly show is that Birgitta was held as a devout child. But there is no proof that the stories about Birgitta's childhood would have been circulated while she was still living in Sweden.
18. Klockars (1976, 29); Morris (1999a, 30).
19. Klockars (1976, 67–75).
20. *Ibid.*, 93–100.
21. On Scandinavian pilgrimages, see Krötzl (1994).
22. Klockars (1976, 85–89). The year of Ulf's death is debated, some scholars consider 1346 as the year of his death. I will return to this question in chapter 3.
23. Klockars (1976, 99); Morris (1999b, 160).
24. Zarri (1996, 219).
25. *Ibid.*, 220.
26. On religious life in Sweden during the fourteenth century, see Nilsson (1998) and Pernler (1999).
27. *DS* 3134, 3140, 3156–3157; Klockars (1976, 72–73).
28. *DCP*, 528; Klockars (1976, 73).
29. Sundén's idea that Birgitta left Ulvåsa in 1335 in order to punish her husband Ulf for agreeing to the marriage of their daughter Märta and Sigvid Ribbing is not convincing, since Birgitta and Ulf remained at court together (1973, 35). Klockars also finds Sundén's idea improbable (1976, 73).
30. E.g., Sundén (1973, 35); Klockars (1976, 86).
31. Klockars (1976, 80–82). According to Klockars, Cecilia's birth took place between 1334 and 1341, probably around 1337.
32. *Diarium Vadstenense*, 111; the idea that the child in question was Cecilia stems from the *Diarium Vadstenense*, which recalls the birth and death of

- Cecilia and notes that she was blessed with the best possible midwife, Mary, mother of Christ. The *Diarium* was written in 1399, which was also the year of Cecilia's death. Kezel (1990, 239 n. 26) assumes the child in question was Karl. I find in the note in the *Diarium Vadstenense* that the child was Cecilia more plausible (cf. Klockars 1976, 76; Morris 1999a, 48).
33. *PVita*, 79; *LOB*, 76.
  34. Some women who might have been present are, for example, Margareta (Märta) Thuresdotter and Ingeborg Eriksdotter. Margareta Thuresdotter became widow in the same year as Birgitta; she is also a witness in the canonization process as is Ingeborg Eriksdotter and Ingeborg Magnusdotter. Already, all knew Birgitta well in Sweden and witnessed her pious way of life while her husband still lived (*Acta*, 63). Ingeborg Laurensdotter accompanied Birgitta in 1349 to Rome but died in Milan before reaching Rome. Her daughter Juliana Nilsdotter gave a lively testimony about Birgitta's daily practices during her Swedish years. She also mentions that King Magnus Eriksson had heard about Birgitta's fame as a holy woman and invited her many times to get some advice. According to Juliana, this made his relatives and men close to him jealous. All women mentioned above testified that Birgitta had been very active in taking care of sick people, even before the death of her husband (*Acta*, 65–66; *DS* 9466). About the death of Juliana's mother, see *DCP*, 514–515.
  35. *PVita*, 78; *LOB*, 75.
  36. E.g., *Acta*, 63, 64, 66.
  37. *PVita*, 78; *LOB*, 75.
  38. Morris (1996, 178).
  39. Morris (1999a, 55; 1996). In the Latin corpus there are "The Four Prayers," *Quattuor Oraciones* (QO), which are more sophisticated and polished texts.
  40. QO, 99–100. Translation from Swedish by Morris (1999a, 55–56).
  41. See, e.g., Cooper (1996, 144–147).
  42. Morris (1999a, 53–56).
  43. Translation from old Swedish by Morris (1996, 183).
  44. Bynum (1992, 194–198); Morris (1996, 168); McNamer (2010, 43–57, 167–173).
  45. *Rev.* IV 94.
  46. *Ibid.*
  47. *Ibid.*
  48. *Ibid.* Lundén places this revelation in the category of undatable revelations (1958, 18). In my opinion this revelation could go back to Birgitta's life as a wife because of its simple and practical advice. It could also stem from her first years as a widow, as suggested by the emphasis on moderation.
  49. She appears as a witness in *Acta*, 64. According to the acts, in 1377 when she gave her testimony she was 50 years old and had been a widow for 30 years. She spoke in her statement about Birgitta's life before and after Ulf's death. She was about the same age as Birgitta's daughter Katarina.

50. *Ex.* 75; English trans. Morris (1999a, 45).
51. *Ibid.*
52. “Taking and retaining alienated property” is a theme that seems to recur in the revelations. According to Birgitta, if one knew that some property had been obtained unjustly it was one’s duty to see that it was given back to the former owner. See, e.g., *Ex.* 56.
53. *Ex.* 75; English trans. Morris (1999a, 45).
54. *Ex.* 75; English trans. Morris (1999a, 45–46).
55. Morris (1999a, 45–46).
56. See, e.g., *Rev.* IV 93, 113; VI 23–25.
57. Nevertheless, if the revelation was about Birgitta, I think that identifying the person as someone other than her probably saved the revelation from being expunged.
58. *PVita*, 80; *LOB*, 77.
59. Concerning celibacy in marriage, see Elliott (1993).
60. It is not clear who was serving as their confessor at this time.
61. Krötzl (1994, 99–102).
62. For details of the pilgrimage, see Salmesvuori (2014).
63. *PVita*, 80. For the concept and medieval representatives of chaste marriage, see especially Elliott (1993).
64. *Acta*, 305.
65. Klockars (1976, 91).
66. *DS* 3689; Klockars (1976, 91–92).
67. The editor of the *PVita*, Collijn, preferred the year 1344 for Ulf’s death. For references, see note 71.
68. Regarding medieval travelers’ final journey, see Labarge (1982, 195).
69. Kaelber (2006, 55–57).
70. Ekwall (1965; 1973; 1976); Liedgren (1974; 1996); Jönsson (1993).
71. *DS* 3778, 3822; Liedgren (1974, 51).
72. Liedgren and Ekwall engage in a lively debate about the year of Ulf Gudmarsson’s death (Ekwall 1973; 1976; Liedgren 1974; 1996). Liedgren also commented on Arne Jönsson’s notion that in the best manuscripts the confessors wrote 1346 as the year that Ulf died. According to Liedgren, Jönsson might be right but that does not mean that the year was historically the right one. He suggested that the two Peters gave the year 1346 perhaps because it was the first-known date in the history of Vadstena monastery (Liedgren 1996; Jönsson 1993). I would like to add that if the year 1346 was also the year in which Birgitta’s revelations were examined by the committee of theologians, it could have affected the date written in the *PVita* in the 1370s. It was the mark of official approval of Birgitta’s gift of receiving revelations. It would neatly fill the two-year gap between Birgitta’s calling vision and the public examination.
73. See also Morris (1999a, 61).
74. This latter conclusion is based on the assumption that Birgitta only started to write her revelations after her husband died. It is, naturally, also possible that Birgitta had already been writing her revelations during the

time Ulf was alive, or that there was a vast production machine behind her, but the sources do not provide anything to support this idea.

75. Klockars (1976, 101–102).

76. *Ex.* 56.

77. *PVita*, 80; *LOB*, 77. Alfonso Pecha stated in his testimony of 1379 that he had heard from Katarina, Birgitta and Ulf's daughter, that the couple's attitude to sexual matters had been very pure. He said that before Ulf's death they had lived in a celibate marriage for many years. His account seems to fit well with the *PVita's* description according to which the couple lived in a celibate marriage and planned to enter a monastery (*Acta*, 376–377).

## 2 Lost Virginity and the Power of Role Models

1. *Speculum virginum* I:1–15, trans. Newman (2001, 271–272).
2. Klockars (1966, 218–219, 234–235).
3. Mews (2001, 15); Power (2001, 87–91). See especially Seyfarth (1990) and *Listen Daughter. The Speculum Virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant J. Mews.
4. *DCP*, 491. Nearly the same text, with minor variations, is found in *Ex.* 96. Birgit Klockars's suggestion that Peter had read from the seventh chapter in which virginity was stressed as the highest state of woman seems plausible (Klockars 1966, 218; Sahlin 2001, 89; Powell 2001, 112).
5. *Speculum virginum*, VII:242.
6. *Speculum virginum*, VI:176–177, 183–184, trans. Mews (2001, 26).
7. Mews (2001, 27). Jerome in particular promoted this view, e.g., *Comm. in Mathaeum* 2 and letters 49.3, 123.8. *Adv. Iovin.* I, 3 (Jerome 1892). The idea appeared constantly in the writings of theologians from Late Antiquity to the High Middle Ages. Unlike many other theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries, Augustine of Hippo (d. 430) considered only the martyrs to be worthy of the hundredfold fruit, chastity brought the sixtyfold, and marriage the thirtyfold. His view was not widely followed (Bernards 1982 [1955], 40–45).
8. *Speculum virginum*, VII:858–862, trans. Mews (2001, 27).
9. Mews (2001, 27).
10. Wogan-Browne (1994, 26).
11. This book is now in the library of the University of Uppsala. It was produced in Spain but it is not possible to determine exactly when. Thus, it is also possible that Birgitta acquired the book first during her stay in Rome (Klockars 1966, 27–28). Morris thinks that Birgitta probably received the book as a gift from her Spanish confessor, Alfonso Pecha, in the 1360s (Morris 1999b, 162). The book dates from the early fourteenth century, thus both suggestions are possible.
12. *Liber de modo bene vivendi ad sororem*, *PL*, 184, 1199–1306; McGovern-Mouron (2000, 88–89). Regarding the meaning of the book to Birgitta, see Klockars (1966, 25–26, 217).

13. Klockars (1966, 25–26). Perhaps this was emphasized slightly more in the *Liber de modo bene vivendi*.
14. Bernards (1982, 43–44). Birgitta was familiar with the ideas of the fifth century’s most important theologians, such as Augustine and Jerome. She spoke especially warmly about Jerome (d. 420) whom she called “the friend of widows” (*Rev.* IV 21). But Jerome also considered virginity to be woman’s highest state and strongly influenced the Christian teaching on women. As the creation of new martyrs ceased in the fifth century, it was Jerome in particular who started to reward virgins, as “bloodless” martyrs, with the hundredfold fruit (Bernards 1982, 45).
15. Nina Sjöberg also found that Birgitta moderated *Speculum*’s views regarding the hierarchical relationship of the three states. This can be seen especially in Birgitta’s eagerness to stress the meaning of obedience instead of the meaning of virginity (2003, 73).
16. Mews (2001, 2).
17. See note 34 in chapter 1.
18. Bynum (1992, 194).
19. *PVita*, 75–77; see also Morris (1999a, 36–40). Scholars have sometimes taken these stories as historical facts, for example, Dyan Elliott, who writes, “She had an ardent desire to preserve her virginity by the time she was seven, but she was married against her will at thirteen” (1993, 210–211). I find that these childhood stories might reflect the adult Birgitta’s—or even more her supporters’—ideas about a saintly childhood, but to argue that a seven-year-old wishes to preserve her virginity is not plausible.
20. *PVita*, 79; *LOB*, 76.
21. Mulder-Bakker (2005, 37).
22. Concerning women and the conversion of Scandinavia, see Sawyer (1990, 263–281) and Karras (1997, 100–114).
23. See Klockars (1966); Piltz (2000, 39–47). Regarding positive role models for medieval women in general, see Blamires (1997), especially the chapter “Profeminine Role-Models.”
24. Westman (1911, 151–259); Klockars (1966, 227).
25. Klockars (1966, 226–228).
26. E.g., Strömberg (1944, 160); Klockars (1966, 17); Morris (1999a, 42, 174); Sahlin (2001, 42n).
27. In 1227, after a successful career in the church, Jacques de Vitry came to Oignies and consecrated Marie’s bones and placed her relics in a shrine. He also granted an indulgence to all who came to revere them (Bolton 1978, 271). At that time, this was considered equivalent to a local canonization (Mulder-Bakker 2006, 10).
28. Elliott (2004, 47–48).
29. Morris (1999b, 167).
30. *Acta*, 66.
31. Carlquist (1996, 61). On the influence of *Legenda Aurea* in the Middle Ages, see Kleinberg (2008, 239–277).

32. Klockars (1966, 165–176); see also Härdelin (2003, 34).
33. So called when named patrilinearly after her father, King Andrew II of Hungary, she is also known as Elizabeth of Thuringia, when named through her husband, the landgrave Ludwig of Thuringia.
34. Schmid (1940, 142); Morris (1999b, 163n).
35. Klockars (1966, 49). Aili (1986, 86–87) suspects that this might be only Alfonso Pecha's interpretation.
36. Petrakopoulos (1995, 264–265); Elliott (2004, 86–87).
37. Birgitta probably owned a copy of an early version of the so-called *Fornsvenska legendariet*, which was mainly composed on the basis of the *Legenda Aurea* and *Chronicon Pontificum et Imperatorum* by Martinus Oppaviensis (Klockars 1966, 166). For the composition and history of *Fornsvenska legendariet*, see Carlquist (1996), who also corrects some of Valter Jansson's (1934) conclusions. Since Latin versions of *Legenda Aurea* also existed in Sweden, Birgitta could also have known of Elizabeth's story directly translated from a Latin source. George Stephens (1847–1874) edited one version of the *Old Swedish Legendary*, which is based on manuscripts from thirteenth to sixteenth century. The life of Elizabeth is preserved in a manuscript written in 1502. It also contains revelations attributed to Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. Although the revelations are, from the beginning, often assigned to Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, they stem first from the beginning of the fourteenth century. The authorship of the revelations is most often attributed to her great-niece, Dominican nun Elizabeth of Töss (d. 1336), Switzerland (Barratt 1992; 1993; McNamer 1996, 14).
38. For early sources on Elizabeth of Hungary, see Petrakopoulos (1995, 286–287); Elliott (2004, 87n8).
39. I refer in the following to the English translation of the *Legenda Aurea*. *Golden Legend II* as *GL II*. *GL II*, 302.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Katarina revealed in her testimony that her mother had told her that she had not wanted to marry, she would rather have died. But her parents had forced her to marry. Her answer was apparently modeled on the *Life of Elizabeth* (*Acta*, 304–305). It is difficult to judge how much exaggeration Katarina, or even Birgitta, allowed to creep into this story. I would therefore be cautious about taking this as a reliable historical representation. Børresen (1991, 63) also finds that Birgitta's writings do not confirm her testimony. I find that where Katarina's testimony is concerned, another living saint was being set up, namely, Katarina herself. I would interpret the statements attributed to Birgitta within the context of her daughter's experiences in Rome in 1350. Katarina was newly married and Birgitta encouraged her to stay in Rome instead of traveling to her husband to Sweden. Eggard van Kyren, the husband, then died, and Katarina was free to stay with her mother. In Katarina's vita, despite her marriage, she is actually said to be a virgin. Whether this was true or not, this is the context where I would place Birgitta's stated childhood wish to not marry.

42. *GL II*, 304.
43. *DCP*, 475.
44. *GL II*, 304–305.
45. Bynum (1987, 88, 135–136); Elliott (2004, 94).
46. *PVita*, 78; see also *DCP*, 477, 486. Petrus of Alvastra said that he had heard this from Master Mathias.
47. *Acta*, 63–64.
48. *Ibid.*, 315.
49. *DCP*, 477.
50. *GL II*, 304.
51. Brown (1981, 227).
52. *GL II*, 308.
53. *Ibid.*, 309.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *DCP*, 479; trans. Sahlin (2001, 48).
56. Some other married saintly women had felt a similar desire, e.g., Marie d’Oignies (d. 1213) and Angela of Foligno (1248–1309).
57. As Atkinson states, Elizabeth “established a new model of sanctity for Christian women who were wives and mothers” (1991, 168).
58. *Rev. I 2*; *Book I*, 55; see also *Ex.* 95.
59. Newman (1995, 77).
60. Concerning Birgitta’s seemingly ambivalent relation to her children, see Fogelklou (1919; 1941); Atkinson (1985; 1991); Nieuwland (1991; 1995). *Ex.* 63 shows that Birgitta continued to worry about her children even in Rome. In this revelation Mary consoles her and assures that she herself will be the adoptive mother of Birgitta’s children. Thus, Birgitta could concentrate on her work without thinking too much about her children’s well-being.
61. Youngs (2006, 195).
62. *GL II*, 312.
63. *PVita*, 92; *LOB*, 89.
64. *PVita*, 92; *LOB*, 89. Anders Piltz interprets this passage as if Birgitta herself was wondering whether the stars had caused the Bengt’s illness (1986a, 147). Instead, I think that Birgitta had heard other people talk about the effect of the stars and used the revelation to show that according to her heavenly advisors, such notions were rubbish.
65. *PVita*, 92; *LOB*, 89.
66. *GL II*, 311.
67. *Rev. IV* 65. For the combination of the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa* in the lives of laypeople, see especially Constable (1995, 99–130); McGinn (1996, 197–219); Lehmijoki-Gardner (1999). An interesting parallel to Birgitta can be found in the teachings of Meister Eckhart (d. 1328). He reversed the paradigm about “Mary having chosen the best part” in his sermon 86. The Dominican praised Martha above Mary, challenging the conventional teaching about the active life and the contemplative life (McGinn 2006, 529). It is not known whether Birgitta knew about Eckhart’s teachings.



68. See, e.g., *PVita*, 79.
69. For authors of sacred biographies, see Heffernan (1988, 14–17). On recently deceased future saints and writing of their vitae, see Kleinberg (1989; 1992, 52–55). For the development of hagiographic writing, see Goodich (1981; 1982; 2007).
70. Concerning changes in the conditions of sanctity, see Weinstein and Bell (1982); Atkinson (1985); Vauchez (1993; 1997); Mulder-Bakker (1995); Kleinberg (2008).
71. Bynum (1992, 145–146).
72. Newman (1995, 87).
73. Elliott (2004, 102).
74. Both John Coakley and Bernard McGinn have emphasized the generally positive relationships between later medieval saintly women and their confessors. See Coakley (2006) and McGinn (1998).
75. *GL II*, 311–312.
76. E.g., *Rev.* V int. 12:1–2; *FBR*, 128; *Ex.* 20, 21, 37.
77. Atkinson (1983, 140). For more details on Marie, see especially *Mary of Oignies: Mother of Salvation*. Ed. Anneke Mulder-Bakker, which contains the two lives of Marie in English translation and Mulder-Bakker's introduction as well as Brenda Bolton's and Suzan Folkert's useful studies on Marie. John W. Coakley analyzes the relationship between Jacques de Vitry and Marie in his recent work on female saints and their male collaborators (2006, 68–88).
78. Marie d'Oignies in *Copia exemplorum* 35:4; 37:2; 151:6.
79. Marie's life was first translated into Swedish at the end of the fourteenth century. Thomas de Cantimpré wrote the *Supplement to the Life of Marie d'Oignies* in ca. 1230, some 15 years after Jacques had written the first *Life*. It is uncertain whether Master Mathias or the Swedish readers in Birgitta's time were familiar with this supplement. According to Suzan Folkerts the supplement did not enjoy as much success as Jacques de Vitry's version. On the Latin and vernacular versions of Marie's life, see Folkerts (2006, 221–241).
80. Bolton (1999, 137). Jacques de Vitry was commissioned by the papal legate to preach to the crusade against the Albigensians in France and in German-speaking Lothringia soon after Marie's death, in 1213. Iris Geyer (1991) has analyzed Marie's *Vita* as a demonstration of orthodoxy against heresy. For more about Marie and Jacques, see Ruh (1993, 85–87).
81. King (2003, 10).
82. McGinn (1996, 198).
83. McGinn (1998, 12).
84. *Ibid.*, 17.
85. Bynum (1982, 250); Jantzen (1995, 172).
86. Neel (1989, 246); Mulder-Bakker (2006, 10–11).
87. Bolton (1978, 80–81).
88. See note 92.
89. Suydam (1999b, 169–170).

90. *Ibid.*, 170.
91. Helborg, a beguine from the island of Gotland, wrote to Christina of Stommeln between 1280 and 1286 and asked her to join their community in Visby. The letter is translated to Swedish by Tryggve Lundén along with Petrus de Dacia's and Christina's correspondence (1965, 259).
92. See, Morris (1999b) on the surprising absence of beguines in Sweden.
93. McGinn (1998, 34–36).
94. Petroff (1986, 171–177); McGinn (1998, 36).
95. A parallel to this was the case of Petrus de Dacia and Christina of Stommeln. Petrus said that the reason he traveled to meet Christina was that from his childhood he had wanted to meet a real saint (Lundén 1965, 27–30). Another similar story can be found in the *Vita* of Elisabeth of Spalbeek. Abbot Philip of Clairvaux had heard about Elisabeth's extraordinary holy dance. In 1267 he traveled to a small village near Liège to see this dance with his own eyes. He stayed there almost half a year and wrote a report about Elisabeth's activities, which later comprised her *Vita* (Rodgers and Ziegler 1999, 299–301).
96. "Her parents were not of common stock but even though they abounded in riches and many temporal goods" (*VMO* I:11; *LOM*, 50). King and Marsolais correct *Acta Sanctorum's* (*AASS*) version of Marie's life against manuscripts and state that *AASS* has misleadingly stated that Marie was not noble by birth (King and Marsolais 2003, 151).
97. *VMO* I:13; *LOM*, 51.
98. *VMO* I:13–14; *LOM*, 52–53.
99. *VMO* I:13–14; *LOM*, 52–53.
100. *VMO* I:15; *LOM*, 54.
101. Petroff (1986, 175); Coakley (2006, 69).
102. Jacques was consecrated in 1216 as bishop of Acre; he resigned this post in 1226 and returned to Liège as an auxiliary bishop for three years. From Liège he went to Rome where he became cardinal and bishop of Tusculanum (modern Frascati) (Elliott 2004, 52–53).
103. Coakley (2006, 69–70). For more about the roles of holy women and their confessors, see *Gendered Voices. Medieval Saints and Their Interpretators*, ed. Catherine M. Mooney; Mulder-Bakker (2006).
104. King and Marsolais (2003, 165).
105. *VMO* I:35; *LOM*, 71. As King and Marsolais hint in the notes of the English translation, the reference to the abbot's authority in the Benedictine rule meant an unquestionable authority (2003, 160).
106. *VMO* Prologus:3; *LOM*, 39–40.
107. *VMO* I:9; *LOM*, 45.
108. Mulder-Bakker (2006, 27).
109. Bolton (2006, 201).
110. Coakley (2006, 72).
111. It was perhaps a complement to Mathias's manual for preachers, *Homo conditus* (Piltz 1986a, 138).
112. Strömberg (1944, 160–161).

113. *Ibid.*, 158–160.
114. *Ibid.*, 160–162; Klockars (1976, 165); Sahlin (2001, 88).
115. Neel (1989, 247).
116. Jacques de Vitry never describes Marie as a virgin. I find Dyan Elliott quite convincing when she assumes that had Jacques thought Marie to be virgin, he would have mentioned it in his writing (1993, 239).
117. See chapter 1 about how Ulf abstained from sexual intercourse as soon he found out that Birgitta was pregnant.
118. *VMO* I:11; *LOM*, 46–47.
119. *VMO* II:52; *LOM*, 87–88. Cf. *Rev.* I 8, 50; II 2; VI 16, 28, 31; *Ex.* 56.
120. *VMO* II:64; *LOM*, 98.
121. Mulder-Bakker (2006, 27–28).
122. Coakley (2006, 77).
123. *VMO* II:68; *LOM*, 102.
124. *VMO* II:72; *LOM*, 104.
125. *VMO* II:76, 77; *LOM*, 108. This was especially in accordance with the teachings of the Lateran Council’s decrees in 1215.
126. *PVita*, 84.
127. *Ibid.*, 85.
128. For Birgitta’s encouragement of Mathias, see *Rev.* VI 75. Mathias’s doubts and temptations are described in *Rev.* V, int. 16:36–37. For Hemming, see *PVita*, 83.
129. *VMO* I:22; *LOM*, 59.
130. *VMO* I:12; *LOM*, 52.
131. *Rev.* IV 21 discusses how Jerome “loved widows.” This might be a later revelation but I assume that in Sweden Birgitta was already quite familiar with Jerome’s ideas.
132. *Acta*, 63–66. For the sharing of books among devout laywomen and women in orders in late medieval England, see Riddy (1996); Woods (1999).
133. *Acta*, 66.
134. Riddy (1996, 112–113). Riddy describes how the texts of Julian of Norwich (d. ca. 1416) and Margery Kempe (d. after 1438) were a result of “talking about the things of God” with other people. Creating their texts was a result not only of interaction with vernacular texts and images but also of the interaction with other people. Riddy draws attention to Julian’s skill in finding meaning and power in the boundaries of the self and the external world. Julian accepts that according to the clerical definition an unlettered woman is weak and marginal. But that is not the whole picture, at the same time “she has an utter confidence in her own gender that presumably derives from her experience of women’s collective lives, of being her mother’s daughter, and from the sense of intellectual and emotional relationship with other women that is revealed in the passing on of books or in the shared talk that men habitually ridicule” (116). This kind of changing of the restrictions of women to a strength could be applied to Birgitta as well.

135. For shared beliefs and the exercise of symbolic power, see Bourdieu (2001, 125–126). Rosemary Drage Hale’s use of the concept is similar to mine, see Hale (2001, 168–169). Related to the concept of shared beliefs is the idea of collective memory. It is perhaps more suitable when applied to larger groups of people than I do here; therefore, I will not elaborate my arguments in that direction but keep to the term “shared beliefs.” For a useful introduction to the concept of collective memory, see Castelli (2004, 10–32).
136. Suydam (1999b, 170).

### 3 The Beginning—Birgitta as a Channel of God

1. Morris (1999a, 62).
2. Sahlin (2001, 45); Mulder-Bakker (2004b, xvi).
3. *Ex. 47*; trans. Sahlin (2001, 45).
4. *PVita*, 80–81; *LOB*, 77–78.
5. *PVita*, 80–81; *LOB*, 77–78.
6. Isa. 6; Jer. 1; Ezek 1–2; Dan. 10:9; Klockars (1966, 63).
7. About Birgitta as a channel, see Piltz (1993).
8. Hollman (1956, 90); also Westman (1911, 104).
9. Ekwall (1965, 43); Sundén (1973, 58–59).
10. Jönsson (1993, 38–41); Liedgren (1996, 152–154). Ekwall, for instance supposed that the *C 15 Vita* was not the version that was given in December 1373 to Bishop Galhard of Spoleto in Montefalco. Instead, Ekwall suggested that there existed a copy of Birgitta’s life and miracles that she called *Processvita X*. This version then disappeared, according to Ekwall (1965, 40–59). Tore Nyberg has pointed out one further problem concerning Ekwall’s hypothesis: how to explain that all the copies of the canonization acts, which were supposed to have been presented in Montefalco to the commissioners of bishop of Spoleto contain the so-called process *vita* and not the shorter version equivalent to *C 15*. According to Ekwall’s hypothesis the shorter version was presented in Montefalco (Nyberg 2004, 71).
11. Ekwall (1965, 47).
12. In the recent scholarship on Birgitta, there are many opinions regarding the calling vision. Sahlin implies this also by calling *Ex. 47* the original prophetic call by combining the *Vita*’s story with *Ex. 47* (Sahlin 2001, 45). Morris and Bergh prefer the longer version alone (Morris 1999a, 64; Bergh 2002, 43–44).
13. Sundén (1973, 56–58).
14. *Ex. 48*. Almost exactly the same description can be found in Prior Peter’s testimony, *DCP*, 510–511.
15. *Ex. 48*.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Voaden (1999, 60).
18. I will return to Mathias’s role in the next chapter.

19. *DCP*, 535–536. Almost the same story is found in *Ex.* 108.
20. *DCP*, 512.
21. *Ibid.*, 539.
22. McGinn (1998, 20–24); Newman (2003, 296–298).
23. Concerning visionaries and their scribes, see *Gendered Voices. Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters*, ed. Catherine M. Mooney; Coakley (2006).
24. Master Mathias was writing his *Copia exemplorum* around 1344 (Strömberg 1944, 163).
25. Børresen (1991, 21).
26. Sjöberg (2003, 76).
27. E.g., 1 Sam., Isa. 6, Jer. 1, Ezek. 1–2, and Dan. 10:9; Klockars (1966, 63); Sahlin (2001, 76).
28. *Vita Sanctae Hildegardis*, 24.
29. On women's prophetic roles within Christian history, see *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*, ed. Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker.
30. Bourdieu (2001 [first printing 1991], 109). Bourdieu wrote this text in 1975 as part of the debate dominated by more linguistically and sociohistorically oriented scholars such as Noam Chomsky and John L. Austin. The debate continues as shown by the writings of, for example, Gabrielle Spiegel (Spiegel 1990; 2005; 2009) and Surkis (2012).
31. Bourdieu (2001, 113).
32. McGinn (1996, 208–209).
33. Bourdieu (2001, 107–115).
34. Jantzen (1995, xii).
35. Surtz (1990, 2–3; 1995). A similar social need for lay saints was evident in the cities of Italy, the Low Countries, and Germany. See, e.g., Lehmijoki-Gardner (1999; 2005); Simons (2001); and Mulder-Bakker (2006).
36. *Ex.* 55 tells of lay brother Gerekinus, a visionary. Birgitta's confessor during the Santiago journey, later Abbot Svennung, is known to have had visions (*DCP*, 482, 503; *Rev.* VI 35).
37. *Speculum virginum*, II; Sjöberg (2003, 72).
38. *DCP*, 479.
39. *Ibid.*; trans. Sahlin (2001, 48–49).
40. *Rev.* I 2; *Book I*, 55.
41. *Rev.* I 1; *Book I*, 53–54.
42. *Rev.* I 1; *Book I*, 53–54.
43. One reason for the idea that these revelations were meant to convince other than Birgitta is that her view on sexuality in marriage was quite positive, as Nina Sjöberg (2003) has shown in her dissertation.
44. For Birgitta's views on asceticism, see, for example, *RS* 24. For a broad discussion of the role of asceticism in religious life, see the articles in *Asceticism*, ed. Vincent L. Wimbush and Richard Valantasis.
45. *DCP*, 490.
46. *Ibid.* *Ex.* 60 contains the same vision. In this passage Master Mathias's ability to discern spirits is mentioned as a further reason for Birgitta to

trust him. It sounds, of course, more like a hagiographic addition meant especially for the assumed readers of the text to show that Birgitta was under direction of a man of good judgment. This formulation, “expert in discerning two conflicting spirits, namely the spirit of truth and illusion,” seems to be attached to Master Mathias almost every time he is mentioned. I think it might go back to Alfonso Pecha and his emphasis on the discernment of the spirits, which in the 1370s was a major issue. Alfonso also greatly influenced Prior Peter and they both sought to make Master Mathias’s character in the canonization acts as the guarantor of Birgitta’s orthodoxy and authenticity during her time in Sweden. Still, I think that this passage reflects Birgitta’s thoughts about ascetic practices. This might also be a response to some of her critics, who accused her of fasting too much.

47. *DCP*, 491. Also in *Ex.* 61.
48. *DCP*, 479–480.
49. For example, in the *Rev.* VI 92 she is criticized because of her asceticism.
50. *VMO* I:23–25; *LOM*, 59–61.
51. *Magister Matthias: Copia Exemplorum*, 37:2.
52. For Birgitta’s knowledge of Jerome’s works, see Klockars (1966, 172, 177–179, 213–214).
53. Jerome, Letter CVII 403 to *Laeta*, trans. Fremantle.
54. Jerome, Letter CVIII ca. 404 to *Eustochium*.
55. This was quite common among late medieval religious people. The influence of early Christian writings, such as Jerome’s letters and the *Vitae patrum*, was strong. See, for example, Williams-Krapp (2004) and Heinonen (2007), about German mystics.
56. An almost contemporary parallel can be found in the Dominican friar Henry Suso’s (d. 1366) disapproval of the Swiss Dominican nun Elsbeth Stagel’s (d. ca. 1360) excessive asceticism. Suso sought to educate a female audience, mainly Dominican nuns, by exhorting them to read, among other things, the *Vitae patrum*. But this inspired some women to chastise their body in similar ascetic ways as the early ascetics. Suso saw such harsh ascetic practices as unsuitable for women because they were “the fragile sex.” He hastened to direct them to adopt more moderate religious practices (Williams-Krapp 2004, 39–42). Heinonen develops Williams-Krapp ideas further and shows that Suso’s idea of suitable asceticism for men and women was clearly gendered: men were fit for hard physical asceticism, whereas women were not (2007, 89–91). As Williams-Krapp and Heinonen show, this has to do with different understandings of what is suitable for women and men. But why is it not proper for women to imitate Christ’s suffering as it is proper for men? Does this simply go back to the same reason as why women were not allowed to be ordained? Just as the priesthood was a male privilege, so was the physical imitation of Christ. Perhaps the heroic female ascetics would have threatened the male priesthood.

57. *Rev.* III 34. *Rev.* VI 121–122 also reflects the idea of a more moderate asceticism.
58. Kay and Rubin (1994, 1–7). The body and the gendered body in particular are in focus in many modern scholarly works about medieval people. See, e.g., Bynum (1987; 1992; 1995); Elliott (1993; 2004); *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body*, ed. Peter Biller and Alastair Minnis; *Handling Sin. Confession in the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Biller and A. J. Minnis; Heinonen (2007).
59. Finke (1988, 446). Caroline Bynum has shown in her book, *The Resurrection of the Body*, that medieval authors perceived disciplined bodies, chastised by asceticism, as best suited for resurrected life (1995, 229–278).
60. Finke (1988, 447).
61. *Ibid.*
62. *VMO* I:22; *LOM*, 59.
63. Finke (1988, 447).
64. Hollywood (1995, 182).
65. For the paradoxes concerning the body in the late Middle Ages and what were considered as the proper masculine and feminine practices, see Heinonen (2007).
66. Marie was only 36 years old when she died after long fasting (*VMO* II:108; *LOM*, 137). For starving holy women and their influence, see especially Bell (1985); Bynum (1987); Lehmijoki-Gardner (1999).
67. Finke (1988, 448).
68. Kleinberg (1992, 149).
69. Heinonen makes the following observation about virginal ascetic women in the late medieval Germany: “If female virgins who could already be interpreted as honorary males furthermore practiced heroic and masculine acts of bodily torture, the privileged spiritual position of men was at stake” (2007, 91). This is, of course, not fully applicable to Birgitta who was no longer a virgin. But it is possible that her growing fame as a visionary and heroic ascetic made some men criticize her. Nevertheless, her confessors seemed not to fear for their own authority. The collaboration between them and Birgitta seemed to be mutually fruitful. They were probably genuinely concerned that Birgitta would die from her asceticism.
70. Klockars (1971, 165).
71. Jacques de Vitry said in the *Life of Marie* that during Christmastime Marie often had a vision of Jesus as a baby and, for example, at the feast of the purification, Marie saw Mary and Jesus in the temple. Jacques also said that Marie was often visited by saints whose feast days were approaching (*VMO* II:88–89; *LOM*, 118–119). The liturgical calendar had inspired living saints earlier as well, but in the age of new mysticism believers were more explicitly encouraged to follow the life of the holy family in accordance with the liturgical calendar. This was evident

- in, for example, the *Meditationes vitae Christi*. In this respect Marie d'Oignies's influence was notable also generally, not only to Birgitta (McGinn 1998, 38–39). Birgitta's contemporary, the Dominican nun Margaret Ebner (ca. 1291–1351), was also inspired in her mysticism by the liturgical cycle (Heinonen 2007, 108–109).
72. Lundén also assumes this took place in 1344 (1958, 17).
  73. *DCP*, 500.
  74. *Rev.* VI 88.
  75. Sahlin (2001, 78–107). See also Sahlin (1993b) for the mystical pregnancy and Birgitta's devotion to the heart of Mary. Sahlin looks at the phenomenon of mystical pregnancy in a broader context and gives its many examples in the history of Christianity.
  76. Bernardas (1982, 189–191); Sahlin (2001, 89).
  77. Mulder-Bakker (2004a, 198).
  78. Newman (2005a, 6, 25). Newman gives an illuminating description of how thoroughly people were introduced to receive heavenly visions. The earliest examples of this kind of literature are the writings of the Cistercian monk Aelred of Rievaulx in the twelfth century. *Meditationes vitae Christi* is a late thirteenth-century Franciscan work, which in the fourteenth century became a “blockbuster success,” as Newman puts it, among monastic as well as laypeople.
  79. *DCP*, 509. McGuire and Morris (following Edvard Ortved [1933]) assume that Birgitta was allowed to use the part of the church that was intended for the monastic laypeople (McGuire 1990, 302; Morris 1999a, 73). Concerning Birgitta's practices in Alvastra, see *Acta*, 65. Birgitta's daughter Katarina reveals in her testimony that her parents could not move to Alvastra since the buildings were not ready. The buildings might have been the same ones that Birgitta moved into after Ulf's death (*Acta*, 305). Klockars suggested that these buildings could have meant that Birgitta and Ulf were planning to establish a new monastery. I do not think this is probable; I think Katarina is referring to her parents' plan to live in a celibate marriage near Alvastra (Klockars 1976, 90).
  80. Master Mathias wrote his *Copia exemplorum* and commentary on the Apocalypse probably 1344 onward (Strömberg 1944, 163; Klockars 1966, 17). On the whole, in the Middle Ages in Sweden the monastic libraries were the most significant. Unfortunately, we do not know exactly what books were in the library of Alvastra because during the Reformation the books were “recycled” as covers of account books. Nevertheless, three books survive from the monastery of Alvastra: two Bibles and one thirteenth-century volume containing three parts: sermons, a Jewish novel from the Late Antiquity, and theological texts (Regner 2005, 61).
  81. *DCP*, 486. Strömberg discussed Prior Peter's testimony in which he said that Mathias had been Birgitta's first confessor some time after 1316, when Birgitta was first married. Although possible, I do not find this probable. Birgitta also had other confessors, for example, during the pilgrimage to



- Santiago de Compostela, Svennung, later abbot of Varnhem monastery, was her confessor (Strömberg 1944, 13–16). *Primus* confessor, perhaps, means only that Mathias was Birgitta's most important confessor and that is at least what Prior Peter wanted to stress in his testimony.
82. Strömberg (1944, 11–12); Carlsson (1948, 1–2).
  83. Klockars (1976, 66) assumes that this *magister* was Master Mathias who, thus, as a young priest would have been Ulf's confessor as well. This is one possibility but I do not find it plausible.
  84. *DCP*, 512–513; *PVita*, 83–84. Prior Peter said that Algot was master of theology and “familiarissimo ipsius domine Brigide” (knew this lady Birgitta very well).
  85. Børresen (1991, 38).
  86. Andræ (1926, 323–324); Rossing (1986, 167).
  87. Sahlin (2001, 84).
  88. E.g., *Rev.* III 8; *Sermo Angelicus (SA)*; Sahlin (2001, 96–97).
  89. *DCP*, 484, 500.
  90. Prior Peter's description of the event was known to Alfonso Pecha, who praised this experience in his *Epistola solitarii* IV 14–16. This shows how highly they both regarded this experience. Alfonso's admiration of the mystical pregnancy has led some scholars to the incorrect conclusion that he himself witnessed the event. This was, of course, impossible since he and Birgitta did not meet until the end of the 1360s. For this misunderstanding, see, e.g., Voaden (1999, 92) and Caciola (2003, 210).
  91. *Rev.* VI 88.
  92. Elliott (1997, 159). For women's diseases and concepts of the womb in early Christianity, see especially Shaw (1998, 76n192). On interpreting medieval women's symptoms as hysteria, see Newman (1998, 733–770).
  93. Newman (1998, 735).
  94. *Ibid.*, 735–736.
  95. *Ibid.*, 736.
  96. Blamires (1995, 135–152); Minnis (1997, 110–113). Concerning women and revelations, see also Piltz (1993, 67–88).
  97. It is perhaps appropriate to recollect that the second half of the fourteenth century marked a change in discussions. At that time the beginning of a new development could be seen, which exhibited more interest in witchcraft, demonic possession, and magic than earlier trends. Elliott (2004, 211) sums up as follows: “As the Middle Ages progressed, ecclesiastical authorities became increasingly sensitive to the dangers of physiologically induced pseudoraptures, and the fortunes of female spirituality would dwindle proportionately.”
  98. McGinn (1998, 37–38). For a useful analysis of this terminology, see Newman (2005a, 9–10).
  99. Elliott (1997, 142).
  100. Hollywood (2002, 244–245); Elliott (2004, 205). It was for the same reason, according to medieval thinkers, that women were not suitable to be ordained. In short, they were the image of God in soul but since God

- chose Christ to take the male rather than the female form, only men could naturally represent Christ. Women as priests would also present a sexual temptation for men. One further point was that women had weak minds in weak bodies, therefore they simply lacked the strength to speak at length and work in public (Blamires 1995, 138–143; Minnis 1997, 122–125).
101. Elliott (1997, 158).
  102. Hollywood (2002, 245).
  103. Commentator B, in *Women's Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus's "De Secretis Mulierum" with Commentaries*, ed. H. R. Lemay; cited in Elliott (1997, 160). Hollywood makes an important observation with this passage regarding women's own theological interpretations of their bodily experience. In this section, the male authority rejects the woman's interpretation as incorrect, offering an interpretation of his own (2002, 246).
  104. *Ibid.*
  105. Caciola (2003, 200).
  106. Strömberg (1944, 10).
  107. Strömberg (1943; 1944); see also Piltz (1986a; 1986b). For general features of the medieval church in Sweden, see Brilioth (1941) and Hårdelin (1998).
  108. *GL II*, 314.
  109. The time and place of this revelation is uncertain. Birgitta had revelations about demons in Sweden (e.g., *Rev.* I 34) and there are other stories about Birgitta and exorcisms (e.g., *Rev.* VI 78). I therefore assume that this undated revelation, like the others, reflects the thoughts Birgitta already held about demons during her time in Sweden. For more on Birgitta and demons, see Bergh (2002, 149–160).
  110. *Rev.* VI 80.
  111. *Rev.* I 16: "Ideo ego sedeo nunc in ventre eius et in natura eius" ("Now I dwell in her belly and in her nature" [*Book I*, 78]).
  112. *Rev.* I 16; *Book I*, 78–79.
  113. Carruthers (1998, 1, 23–24).
  114. Newman develops Carruthers's idea of the techniques of visualization and proposes aptly that when the medieval visionaries said, "I saw," they could mean, "I learned to see" (2005a, 22).
  115. *Ibid.*, 3.
  116. Sahlin (2001, 88).
  117. *VMO II*:88; *LOM*, 118–119.
  118. *VMO II*:88; *LOM*, 118–119.
  119. Strömberg (1944, 160). Marie d'Oignies in *Magister Matthias: Copia Exemplorum*, 35:4, 37:2, 151:6. Bernard McGinn shows that Marie is represented both as a preacher and a teacher (1998, 40).
  120. Sahlin (2001, 88–89).
  121. *VMO I*:20; *LOM*, 57.
  122. On Marie d'Oignies's pioneering role in the history of mysticism, see especially McGinn (1998, 32–41). Concerning the experiences of *iubilus* of Franciscan beguine Douceline of Digne (1214–1255) and Dominican

- nun Margaret Ebner (ca. 1291–1351) and for jubilation as a mystical genre, see McGinn (1998, 39–40, 129, 138–139). For Ebner, see also Heinonen (2007, 37–41).
123. Birgitta was much more successful with her audiences than, for example, her later admirer, Margery of Kempe. Denis Renevey wrote concerning Margery Kempe's unsuccessful attempts in the fifteenth century to gain saintly appreciation that her audience failed to read her performing body. They did not perceive the divine messages that Margery herself saw as encoded within her raptures and proclamations (2000, 208).
  124. About *discretio spirituum*, see especially Voaden (1999) and Caciola (2003).
  125. Hollywood (2002, 247; emphasis original). An interesting parallel is Clare of Montefalco (d. 1308), who many times said that she had Jesus crucified inside her heart. Her own interpretation was also convincing to her fellow sisters. As Warr writes, women's bodily experiences were often linked to their heart in order to promote their sanctity (2007, 221–222).
  126. See, e.g., Bynum (1987, 235).
  127. Klockars (1966, 170).
  128. The three heroic saints' lives were written in the first four Christian centuries and translated into English in the thirteenth century. Together with the *Ancrene Wisse*, *Holy Maidenhood*, and *Sawels Warde*, they were texts written especially for the use of anchoresses (Savage and Watson 1991, 7–8, 28–29).
  129. For the concept of “becoming male,” see, e.g., Cloke (1995, 57–60) and about the significance of virginity, see, e.g., Cooper (1996, 76–91).
  130. Thus, the female body was also seen as becoming drier and more closely resembling men's bodies (Shaw 1998, 235–239).
  131. Salih (1999, 99); Castelli (2004, 33).
  132. The early Christian mother and martyr Perpetua (d. 203) is perhaps one of the most famous examples of the case of “becoming male.” Although Perpetua's story contains the transformation to manhood in a dream vision, it does not represent a typical case of “becoming male” with the help of fierce asceticism. In Perpetua's last vision before her death, she becomes a gladiator who fights victoriously against the devil. The vision gives her power to heroically endure death in the arena and possibly empowered the readers of the story as well. *Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (*The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity*). Concerning authority and the interpretation of their own visions, Perpetua is an interesting parallel to Birgitta. For more on Perpetua, see Brown (1988, 74–75); Castelli (2004, 91); and Heffernan (2012).
  133. Bynum (1992, 194).
  134. Salih (1999, 98).
  135. The idea of redirecting the gaze comes from Carruthers (1998, 111) (with reference to Leclercq [1946]), who mentions Leclercq's notion that *concupiscentia* was most commonly used to refer to sexual desire. It was taken seriously in monastic circumstances, and its intensity was not supposed to be diminished by monastic life, but redirected like a gaze.

#### 4 Master Mathias's Role Reassessed

1. *PVita*, 81; *LOB*, 78.
2. Bergh (2002, 44).
3. Sahlin (2001, 117).
4. Strömberg (1944, 17).
5. Prior Peter mentions Mathias often in his testimony: *DCP*, 477, 479, 484–486, 488–491, 500, 508, 509, 530, 539. Mathias is also mentioned in the process *Vita: PVita*, 78, 81–83. Magnus Petri, later the general confessor of Vadstena, and Birgitta's daughter Katarina refer in their testimonies to Birgitta's time in Rome and how she miraculously knew the moment of Mathias's death: *Acta*, 267, 268, 324. In the *Revelations*, Mathias is mentioned only a few times: *Rev.* I 3, 52, 60 (if not Hemming of Åbo); V int. 16:3; VI 75, 89, 90, 110; *Ex.* 60, 61, 76; *RS* prol. 1.
6. There have been speculations that perhaps Birgitta knew Mathias since the year of her marriage, 1316. Or, they might have met in Paris when Birgitta traveled home from Santiago de Compostela. These suggestions are plausible but hard to prove (cf. Klockars 1971, 142).
7. Strömberg (1944, 163).
8. *DCP*, 477.
9. This was likely around the same time that Birgitta learnt through Mathias about Marie d'Oignies. See above, chapter 2. It is also possible that Birgitta already knew about Marie but Mathias could have increased her knowledge; Marie and Jacques de Vitry could have been an inspiration for both of them. About Mathias and Birgitta's encounters, see, e.g., *Rev.* VI 75, 89; *DCP*, 488, 530.
10. *DCP*, 488; *Rev.* VI 75; see also Bergh (2002, 50).
11. Mathias was the most prolific male theologian in Sweden at the time: *Testa nucis* was an early work about rhetoric and *Poetria* about poetics. His three major theological works are *Alphabetum distinctionum*, *Exposicio super Apocalipsim*, and *Homo conditus*. The first work is something between a concordance and an encyclopedia. It is meant to be a reference book for clerical use of the most important nouns, verbs, adverbs, and names mentioned in the Scriptures. It is preserved only in fragments. The second work is a commentary on the Apocalypse and the third is a manual for preachers. Perhaps as a kind of complement to the *Homo conditus* Mathias wrote *Copia exemplorum*, which was a collection of short stories for the use of preachers. These works and Birgitta's revelations have many similar themes (Strömberg 1944, 1–2, 163–178; Piltz 1986a, 138–139).
12. Strömberg (1943, 302).
13. Concerning Mathias generally, see Strömberg (1944), which still provides the best biography of him, and Piltz (1986a; 1986b).
14. Strömberg (1944, 160).
15. Coakley notes in his writings about visionary women and their mendicant confessors that friars had intense curiosity about things of apparently

- divine origin and they could also make their own use of the supernatural knowledge to which only women had privileged access. This seemed to be the case with Mathias as well (1991, 459). See also Coakley (2006, 211–227).
16. *DCP*, 482. See also *DCP*, 503. *Rev.* VI 36 also refers to Svennung.
  17. *DCP*, 477.
  18. The decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 gave people a certain freedom to choose the best suitable confessor for them. For the development of confession in the Middle Ages, see Lochrie (1999).
  19. *Rev.* II 27:32–33; *Book II*, 244. Through this revelation, Birgitta is teaching about the meaning of confession, thoughts, and pure desire for God.
  20. Strömberg (1943, 301).
  21. Piltz suggests that Mathias experienced the temptation probably during his time abroad before 1343 and that the temptation in question must therefore have been the “second Averroism” (1986a, 149).
  22. *DCP*, 530. The same story about Mathias’s temptation can be found in the *Vita Panisperna* in *Acta*, 620, and in a shorter version in *PVita*, 83.
  23. *Rev.* VI 75.
  24. *Rev.* V int. 16 question 3. I agree with Bridget Morris’s remark that this passage seems like a later editorial addition (1999a, 71). Of course, Mathias might have confronted temptations several times already, as Piltz (1986a) suggests, even before he came back to Sweden. Still, the sources, when read carefully, give the impression that Birgitta’s role was decisive in helping him overcome the tribulations.
  25. *Rev.* I 4:2; *Book I*, 58.
  26. *Rev.* I 4:2–6; *Book I*, 58–59.
  27. *Rev.* I 4:7, 9, 10; *Book I*, 58–59.
  28. *Rev.* I 54:23; *Book I*, 151. For more about the different spirits, see *Rev.* IV 23, 110.
  29. See chapter 3, the “mystical pregnancy.”
  30. Sundén (1973, 56–58).
  31. *VMO* II 42; *LOM*, 79: “The spirit of knowledge made her discerning.”
  32. Dillon (1996, 120). About confession in the Middle Ages, see *Handling Sin. Confession in the Middle Ages*, ed. Peter Biller and A. J. Minnis.
  33. Dillon (1996, 121).
  34. Voaden (1999, 61).
  35. Concerning hagiography, Leclercq wrote about literary exaggeration in the Middle Ages that it was “only a means, but it is a legitimate means. Exaggerating is not, in such cases, lying; it is using hyperbole to make what one wants to say more unmistakable” (1982, 133). Concerning hagiographic genres, see also Heffernan (1988).
  36. *Epistola solitarii* consists of eight long chapters in which Alfonso Pecha enthusiastically presents Birgitta’s revelations in the light of the Bible and earlier theological writings. For a detailed analysis of Alfonso’s *Epistola solitarii*, see Voaden (1999, 79–93) and Gilkær (1993).

37. *DCP*, 484: “Birgida...videbat et audiebat ymagines et similitudines corporales et in corde senciebat mirabiles illustraciones in intellectu suo” (Birgitta...saw and heard corporal images and similarities and sensed in her heart and intellect marvelous illustrations). The witness mixes corporal and intellectual visions together.
38. *Rev.* VI 75.
39. Strömberg (1943, 319).
40. In the declaration it is said that after the confrontation in the church, the knight killed his mistress. The knight himself died four days later. He was buried in a church of a monastery. Many nights, people had heard from the grave a voice shouting, “Oh! I am burning! I am burning!” This was told to the dead man’s wife and the grave was opened with her permission. It was almost empty, only a part of the burial shroud and the man’s shoes were left. The grave was refilled and after that, the voice was not heard again (*Rev.* VI 75, decl.). This confirmed what Master Mathias had taught about the *visio beatifica*. The story resembles an *exemplum* and although the historicity of it can be called into question, the teaching of it was clear: there was no doubt that souls entered hell immediately after death. This story also bears startling resemblance to an episode in Elizabeth of Hungary’s *Vita* where she is said to have prayed for a young man (who looked as if he lived a dissolute life). When she prayed, the man felt a fire inside him. He cried out many times that he was burning, just like the knight in the grave is said to have done in Birgitta’s story (*GL II*, 311). The existence of the story of the knight in the Birgittine sources confirms that *visio beatifica* was an important topic in the 1340s and the addition, which was added much later, shows that the issue was still relevant later. Schmid notes that in 1368 laypeople were prohibited from discussing matters of religion, either publicly or in secret. This implies that laypeople were, according to the magisterium, taking too great an interest in theological matters (1940, 54).
41. Ibn Rushd, also known as Averroes (d. 1198), was a Muslim philosopher who in spite of being a philosopher and theologian, contributed, among other things, to psychology, astronomy, medicine, and physics.
42. Strömberg (1943, 303). Often the views of Averroes and the Latin Averroists did not correspond (Leaman 1988, 167).
43. Strömberg (1943, 304); Leaman (1988, 167).
44. Leaman (1988, 164–165).
45. Strömberg (1943, 303); Leaman (1988, 172–173).
46. Leaman (1988, 172).
47. Strömberg (1943, 302–303); Piltz (1986a, 147). Illuminating articles about *visio beatifica* can be found in *Envisaging Heaven in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig and Ad Putter. For a general view on *visio beatifica*, see especially the articles by Muessig (2007), McGinn (2007), Dronke (2007), Easting (2007), and Rozenski (2007). For the history of the beatific vision see Bynum (1995); McGinn (2007).

48. Strömberg (1943, 303).
49. *Ibid.*, 318. Ödgisl became bishop of Västerås in 1329. He is probably one of the bishops in *Rev.* III 14–15. He died around 1352/3 (Schmid 1940, 54; Klockars 1966, 47). For his time in the papal curia in Avignon, see Brilioth (1915, 184–192). For the history of the beatific vision, see Russel (1997) and McGinn (2007).
50. *Rev.* IV 23.
51. Strömberg (1943, 305).
52. *Rev.* VI 75.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Bergh (2002, 49).
55. *VMO* II 68; 79; *LOM*, 102, 110.
56. Strömberg (1944, 160) also suggested this.
57. Jacques stressed that Marie and other holy women around her should be admired (*VMO* I 12; *LOM*, 52).
58. *DCP*, 488.
59. Bergh (2002, 50). Henrik Schück noted that this case shows how Mathias regarded Birgitta (1901, 8).
60. Regarding Birgitta's critics, see the section "Resistance toward Birgitta" in chapter 5.
61. Dillon (1996, 123).
62. Strömberg (1944, 174). *Acta* (460) in the testimony of priest Peter Johansson says, "ipse testis fuit presens in dicto regno Swecie et audiuit ab omnibus communiter tam clericis quam laicis, quod dicta domina Brigida fuit dotata supernaturali dono spiritus prophecie et habuit a Deo notabiles visiones diuinas . . . et specialiter audiuit dici, quod predicabatur coram populo in multis parrochialibus ecclesijs ante annum jubileum" (this witness was present in the said Kingdom of Sweden and heard from many people together, both from clerics and laymen, that this said lady Birgitta was given the supernatural gift of the spirit of prophecy and received significant divine visions from God . . . especially I heard to be said that they were proclaimed to people in many parish churches before year of jubilee [1350]). The same issue is related in priest Johan Petersson's testimony (*Acta*, 466).
63. Odelman (1993, 20). About Birgitta and rhetoric, see also Morris (2006, 25–31). For preaching in Sweden in the Middle Ages, in addition to Strömberg (1944), see Andersson (1993; 2001; 2003a; 2003b).
64. Undhagen (1978, 11).
65. *PVita*, 98; *LOB*, 95.
66. *PVita*, 98; *LOB*, 95..
67. Following the process *Vita*, Sahlin and Morris have suggested that generally, the revelations were not publicly known in Sweden and the addressees of Birgitta's revelations received the messages privately as letters (Sahlin 1999, 77–78; Morris 1999a, 5).
68. Undhagen (1978, 12).

69. Liedgren (1961, 101–116). See also Moberg’s analysis of the language of the leaflet, which further confirms its authenticity as an early revelation, written in Swedish (1980, 193–211).
70. I will return to the question of the publicity of Birgitta’s revelations in chapter 6.
71. *Rev.* VI 89.
72. Bergh (2002, 48). The mutual interests of a visionary and her confessor were evident in other medieval cases. This has already been noted in the relationship of Jacques de Vitry and Marie d’Oignies; for other similar cases, see especially Mulder–Bakker (2005) and Coakley (2006).
73. Morris (2006, 44); *Rev.* I 22.
74. *Rev.* I 22:6; *Book I*, 88.
75. Strömberg (1944, 174).
76. For example, *Rev.* I 55 contains a parable about judges, defenders, and laborers. The next revelation contains a warning of punishment for the same groups. These sound a lot like sermons, which are thought to have been preached to a wide audience. Many other revelations as well, for example, *Rev.* I 53, 55, 56; II 6, 14, contain phrases and passages that suggest they were meant to be used in sermons.
77. Strömberg (1944, 134–178).

## 5 Birgitta Encounters Her Critics

1. On the legitimization from the social identity perspective in the New Testament, see Hakola (2009). Also in Catherine of Siena’s (d. 1380) case there were hostile witnesses, some of whom became devoted followers (Gill 1994, 110). For the criticisms Birgitta received in Sweden and Rome, see also Schmid (1940, 7–11) and Sahlin (2001, 136–153). Both also extend their analysis to the criticism Birgitta received posthumously.
2. *DCP*, 477, 478. It is unclear exactly how long Birgitta lived at Alvastra. Peter’s descriptions are vague. Her stay was probably interrupted by her frequent travels around Sweden.
3. *PVita*, 82.
4. *DCP*, 539.
5. *PVita*, 82; *LOB*, 79.
6. *PVita*, 82; *LOB*, 79.
7. *PVita*, 82; *LOB*, 79.
8. *Ex.* 55 and *PVita*, 82 both describe the same incident.
9. Sahlin (2001, 143).
10. Gerekinus is called both brother and monk in the sources; it is therefore not clear whether he was a lay brother, as the translator of Birgitta’s *Vita*, Kezel, and Sahlin suggest (Sahlin 2001, 139). Gerekinus’s visionary gifts and especially theological knowledge of the rule would suggest that he was a monk. In the Birgittine sources Cistercian monks are often called “brother,” *frater*. In Prior Peter’s testimony, he at one point calls Gerekinus a monk (*DCP*, 545).



11. *Rev.* IV 121. In the *declaracio* of *Rev.* IV 121, the monk in question is identified as Gerekinus; I do not find any reason to doubt this identification.
12. *Rev.* VI 86.
13. For example, in *Rev.* VI 28, a nobleman is condemned to hell.
14. Collijn (1931, 658).
15. *Rev.* VI 114.
16. *PVita*, 82; *LOB*, 79.
17. Klockars assumes more cautiously that Birgitta had just had the same thought as Gerekinus (1966, 190).
18. *VMO* II 52; *LOM*, 88. See also Elliott (2004, 34); she notes that Marie and other beguine mystics were astonishingly aware of the unconfessed sins of others.
19. An example of its use can also be found in the twelfth-century *Life of Christina of Markyate*: “Hence you [God] gave her the power to know the secret thoughts of men and to see those that were far off and deliberately hidden as if they were present” (*LCM*, 87).
20. Also 1 John 1:8–10 might have influenced Birgitta: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” In spite of these biblical references, the idea of Gerekinus’s flying soul might also have been inspired by Marie d’Oignies’s *Life*, because there is one case of a gardener who had “flown to the Lord” in it (*VMO* II 53; *LOM*, 89). The same type of story is told about Francis of Assisi; Birgitta was acquainted with it probably through the *Old Swedish Legendary* (Klockars 1966, 175). The Franciscan influence on Master Mathias was remarkable (Piltz 1986b, 15–16).
21. Concerning the genre of revelations and Birgitta, see especially Piltz (1993, 67–84).
22. *DCP*, 488.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *DCP*, 503.
25. Sahlin (2001, 143).
26. McGuire (1990, 305–306).
27. *Ibid.*, 310.
28. *Ibid.*, 313.
29. The stories about the critics are mostly based on Prior Peter’s testimony. They are well suited to the hagiographic style, but I presume that Peter wrote down the core of the stories as well as Birgitta’s visions concerning these brothers in the 1340s and consulted these texts when composing his testimony in 1380.
30. Klockars (1966, 191).
31. *Rev.* VI 92.
32. The monk’s response to Birgitta’s revelation is not known.
33. *Rev.* VI 90.
34. *Rev.* IV 23, decl.

35. Schmid (1940, 9, 130–131).
36. Strömberg (1943, 308).
37. *Rev.* IV 23, decl.
38. *Rev.* IV 113. Prior Peter said in his testimony that this happened in Arboga, at a big banquet (*DCP*, 493).
39. *Rev.* IV 113.
40. *Ibid.*
41. Nils died in 1351, apparently after a pilgrimage to Rome (*DCP*, 493).
42. *DCP*, 492.
43. Bergh (2002, 37–38).
44. *Rev.* IV 122 addicio; *DCP*, 492–493.
45. *Rev.* IV 122.
46. *Rev.* VI 75.
47. Collijn (1931, 665).
48. *DCP*, 493. The information about the knight's death might be hagiographic exaggeration, since according to the sources Karl died before 1358, but how much before is not known (Collijn 1931, 666).
49. *Acta*, 63–67.
50. McGuire (2001, 103–104, 107).
51. *Ibid.*
52. See chapter 3, 55n. See also, Wulff (1914) and the classic essays of Ruether (1974) and McLaughlin (1974). More recent works include Bloch (1987; 1991) and Blamires (1997).
53. Muessig (1998, 146).
54. See, e.g., Voaden (1999).
55. Voaden (1999, 37–40); McAvoy (2004, 20–21).
56. Aquinas (1970, 134–135); McAvoy (2004, 21).
57. McAvoy (2004, 21).
58. Blamires (1997, 234; emphasis original).
59. As Richard Woods has noted, the medieval, or even older, views about gender relationships, marital bonds, or clerical misogyny, for example, still have persistent influence on the underlying current conflicts between the sexes (Woods 1994, 147).
60. Bartlett (1995, 144–146).
61. *Rev.* II 16:7; see also Sahlin (2001, 144).
62. *Rev.* II 16:1; *Book* II, 216.
63. *Rev.* II 16:6–9; *Book* II, 216.
64. *Rev.* II 16:16–17; *Book* II, 217.
65. E.g., *Rev.* I 2, 38, 44; II 18; IV 77; VI 52.
66. As usual, I follow Searby in this translation; only here I would choose the words “are just” for the Latin “iustus es” instead of Searby’s “deal straightly.”
67. *Rev.* I 34:17; *Book* I, 110.
68. *Rev.* I 34:18–20; *Book* I, 110–111.
69. *Rev.* I 34:21–23; *Book* I, 111.
70. *Rev.* I 34:28.

71. Klockars (1973, 19).
72. Undhagen (1978, 45–46).
73. *Ibid.*, 47–48. Klockars’s view about the criticism Birgitta received and Undhagen’s introduction have been influential in the scholarship on Birgitta. For example, Sahlin follows Undhagen’s interpretations and observes that to “gain hearing and to dispel opposition, she [Birgitta] required the approval and protection of the most powerful clerics of Sweden” (2001, 119).
74. Undhagen (1978, 47).
75. *Ibid.*, 18.
76. *RS* 1.
77. *Rev.* I 52:7; *Book* I, 145.
78. *Rev.* I 52:8; *Book* I, 146.
79. *Rev.* I 52:9–10; *Book* I, 146.
80. *Rev.* I 52:16; *Book* I, 146.
81. Undhagen maintained that the meeting took place before King Magnus Eriksson and Queen Blanche had established their will of May 1, 1346, in which they donated estates to Vadstena for a future monastery. Undhagen’s idea was that the royal couple would not have made their will unless Birgitta’s revelations were officially approved. Undhagen thought that the *Regula Salvatoris* existed then at least as a draft (1978, 47). Birgitta Fritz has shown that the royal couple’s will and Birgitta’s ideas in the *Rule* are so far away from each other that Undhagen’s reasoning is not plausible (1992, 115–129). See also Klockars (1960, 170; 1976, 114). It would be more plausible that Birgitta composed the *Rule* after the will of the king and the queen was drawn up. This means that the *terminus ante quem* for the meeting of the theologians was not dependant on the will. Instead, the determining date would be the time before Hemming of Åbo’s journey to France. This happened during the fall of 1348, hence the meeting of the theologians happened probably closer to 1348 than 1346. See Stolpe (1972, 359–373) for the dating of the journey; for Hemming’s journey, see (Klockars 1960, 151–166; Bergh 2002, 63–65).
82. *Ex.* 51.
83. Sundén (1973, 61).
84. *Ex.* 51.
85. On the relationship of Bishop Hemming of Åbo and Birgitta, see especially Klockars (1960; 1976).
86. On crusades, see Lind (1991; 2001).
87. *Ex.* 51.
88. *Rev.* VI 81 and I 16. Also described in Prior Peter’s testimony (*DCP*, 540–542).
89. Undhagen (1978, 39–40, 50). For revelations about the journey to France, see foremost *Rev.* VI 63; IV 103–105, and for the crusade, see *Ex.* 26, *Rev.* VIII 39, 40, 43, 44, 46, 47.
90. See Klockars (1960, 151–166).

91. Klockars (1966, 35); Undhagen (1978, 39). Undhagen provides a useful summary of the discussions of former scholars.
92. *Prol. Mathie* 6; *PMM*, 48.
93. *Prol. Mathie* 16; *PMM*, 49.
94. *Prol. Mathie* 18; *PMM*, 49.
95. *Prol. Mathie* 22–23; *PMM*, 50.
96. *Prol. Mathie* 25; *PMM*, 50.
97. *Prol. Mathie* 32–40; *PMM*, 51–52.
98. Liedgren (1961,109). Concerning the Swedish text of the prologue, see also Moberg (1980, 193–211).
99. *DCP*, 539.
100. *Prol. Mathie* 41–46; *PMM*, 52.
101. *Prol. Mathie* 21; *PMM*, 50.
102. This was quite unusual in the history of visionary women. Usually it was somebody near the visionary woman—often her confessor—who arranged a wider investigation. Hildegard of Bingen’s abbot Cuno took her texts to the Archbishop of Mainz and eventually to the synod held in Trier in 1147–1148 (*Vita Hildegardis*, 23–24; Salmesvuori 2000, 68).
103. *Rev.* I 20:9; *Book I*, 84. Again Birgitta resembles Marie d’Oignies, namely, “a familiar angel was assigned to watch over her whom she had to obey as if he were her own abbot” (*VMOI* 35; *LOM*, 71). Like Marie, Birgitta had a divine authority to whom she owed obedience above her confessor.
104. This was evident in many cases in which Birgitta interpreted her own revelations, examples of which include her calling vision and mystical pregnancy. In this respect, Julian of Norwich (ca. 1343–d. after 1416) resembled Birgitta. She also interpreted her own visions. One difference between these two women was that Birgitta did not speak as herself but always used her divine locutor but Julian spoke as herself (Staley 1996, 107–108; Watson and Jenkins 2006, 2–3).
105. *Ex.* 49.
106. *DCP*, 485.
107. Alfonso emphasized in his *Episola solitarii ad reges* the many passages in which Birgitta spoke about the *discretio spirituum*. He also said that Mary and Christ instructed Birgitta constantly in this matter. See *Epistola solitarii* especially cap. II and III.

## 6 Holiness in Action

1. E.g., *Rev.* I 13, 16, 32, 60; II 10; IV 115; VI 80, 81, 97; *Ex.* 51; *Prol. Mathie* 44; *Acta*, 537–539. Prior Peter described in *Acta* (537) how Birgitta commanded a demon to be silent and cured a possessed man. Usually the authors of Birgittine sources were careful not to have Birgitta perform too many priestly tasks; therefore, this case is an interesting lapse, which, I think, speaks for the historicity of the incident.
2. Suydam (2007, 94–95).
3. Easting (2007, 75–90).

4. *Rev.* I 44:8; *Book I*, 127.
5. E.g., *Rev.* I 13, 50, 85; III 4; VI 2, 28, 31; *Ex.* 56.
6. *PVita*, 87; *LOB*, 84.
7. The woman is identified in the *PVita* as Birgitta's sister-in-law. An interesting point in Katarina's case is that she said that her husband is no longer her husband. This implies that a marriage dissolves with the death of one of the parties. This would connect with Birgitta's struggles to erase her married past.
8. Katarina's exact time of death is not known. Gustaf Tunesson and Katarina Gudmarsdotter did not have children, and on May 1, 1344, Gustaf made a contract with Katarina's brother Magnus Gudmarsson about Katarina's inheritance in case he survived her (Liedgren 1974, 51; *DS* 3778). This might mean that Katarina had fallen ill and her death seemed possible.
9. *PVita*, 87; *LOB*, 84.
10. *PVita*, 87; *LOB*, 84.
11. *PVita*, 87; *LOB*, 84–85.
12. Newman (1995, 118).
13. *VMO* II 52; *LOM*, 88.
14. Klockars (1966, 234–235). Regarding Birgitta's use of images, see also Malm (1997, 74–75).
15. E.g., *VMO* I 27. Newman notes that this passage was widely disseminated through exemplum literature (1995, 280n56).
16. The most interesting of them was perhaps Christina Mirabilis (d. 1224), also known as Christina of Trond and Christina the Astonishing (Newman 1998, 733–770; Hollywood 2002, 241–247). Concerning purgatory, see especially Le Goff (1984); McGuire (1989); Geary (1994); Newman (1995). McGuire and Newman correct and enhance the interpretations of Le Goff.
17. Newman (1995, 112).
18. *VMO* I 27.
19. Bynum (1987, 125–127, 179–186, 235, 418n54); McNamara (1991, 213–221); Newman (1995, 119–122); Elliott (2004, 74–84).
20. McNamara (1991, 216).
21. Newman (1995, 109).
22. *Ibid.*, 111. Men had more options to help the dead, for example, celebrating masses—it was seen as the most effective way—and going to war although crusade indulgences remained controversial (112–113).
23. *Ibid.*, 112.
24. *Ibid.*, 119; Elliott (2004, 79). As Newman points out, the idea of core-demptive suffering justified physical pain, and what is more, transformed it into a blessing. This could even be seen as a kind of solution to the problem of theodicy (1995, 122).
25. *Ex.* 56, see above chapter 1.
26. There seemed to be a pattern where the deceased appeared several times to the living, the last time often being a kind of farewell because the soul was then moving on from purgatory (Newman 1995, 114, 117).

27. *PVita*, 88; *LOB*, 85.
28. Klockars (1976, 88). Katarina Ulfsdotter's testimony contains support to this idea; she said that a large crowd of friends traveled with her parents (*Acta*, 305).
29. *DS* 4518. The new wife was Mektild Lydersdotter.
30. *PVita*, 85.
31. Already Gregory the Great (d. 604) emphasized in *Dialogues* that prayers do not have effect if the dead are damned (McGuire 1989, 71).
32. Aili (1992, 19).
33. Van Engen (2000, 375–377).
34. *Rev.* VI 10.
35. *Rev.* VI 21. According to Birgitta, demons were allowed to torment people in purgatory. Angels would comfort people only after some time of purification. For Birgitta's concepts about demons and angels, see Klockars (1971, 21–31) and Bergh (2002, 149–159).
36. Suydam (2007, 94, 97).
37. Claire Waters suggests convincingly that all medieval interpretations of the Bible needed “citational authority.” With this, she means the authority to both cite and be cited. For citational authority, see especially Waters (2004) and Suydam (2007, 97–99).
38. Bynum (1987, 27).
39. *Acta*, 63–67. The Swedish women were Margareta of Broby; Ingeborg Bosdotter; Ingeborg Eriksdotter; Ingeborg Magnusdotter, who also was Birgitta's niece; her younger sister Katarina's daughter, Juliana Nilsson; Kristina Bosdotter; and Helena Lydersdotter. Many of these ladies or their husbands donated goods to the Vadstena abbey in the 1370s (Collijn 1931, 661, 665, 667).
40. Ten persons testified about all 51 articles concerning Birgitta's holiness and 3 of these were women: Birgitta's daughter, Katarina; Francisca Papazzura, Birgitta's friend in Italy who also donated her palace in Rome to the monastery of Vadstena; and Golicia, wife of Latino Orsini. Many Roman noble women testified about single articles, mostly relating to miraculous healings. They were Ocilenda, widow of chancellor Nicolaus de Montenegro; Lucia, wife of Nicolaus de Tartaris; Angela, widow of Lellus Petri; Jacoba, widow of Cechus de Salvo; Cecha, wife of Johannes Sarracenus; Angela, widow of Matheucius Orsini; and Margareta, widow of Paulus Branche (Collijn 1931, xxxix–xl).
41. *Rev.* VI 52. The beginning of the revelation is almost the same as *Rev.* IV 77.
42. *Rev.* VI 52:10.
43. *Rev.* VI 52:1, 15.
44. *Rev.* VI 52:19–27.
45. *Rev.* VI 52:43.
46. *Rev.* VI 52:42.
47. This revelation especially, with its detailed and colorful descriptions of a woman's rotting body, is an example of what has been called “Birgitta's

- realism” among scholars. For example, she vividly described details of human bodies (Lindgren 1991; 1993; Piltz 1993; Malm 1997).
48. Birgitta often talked about the gift of tears. See, e.g., *Rev.* I 53; IV 13, 54, 55, 81, 108; V int. 4:2; VI 66, 75, 97, 98. On gift of tears, see McGinn (1998, 34, 36).
  49. *Rev.* VI 52:112.
  50. *Rev.* I 44.
  51. Muessig (2007, 11).
  52. *Rev.* VI 52.
  53. At any rate, *Rev.* VI 52 seems to contain some editing, since the first part is nearly identical to *Rev.* IV 77. It would not be surprising if *Ex.* 75 had been cut.
  54. Kieckhefer (1984, 172); Rozenski (2007, 109). Concerning Suso and the dating of his books, see also Heinonen (2007, 42–50).
  55. Klockars (1966, 228–232). As Klockars noted, already in 1862 Hammerich had demonstrated Birgitta’s dependence on Suso’s book.
  56. This despite Suso’s struggle to follow his teacher Meister Eckhart’s (d. ca. 1328) views about “the importance of spiritual, disembodied visions of a hidden Godhead” (Rozenski 2007, 111). See, e.g., Suso (1989, 205–304).
  57. Although Suso has become famous for his description of excessive asceticism in his later *Vita*, he did not see voluntary suffering as suitable for pious women, since they are the fragile sex. To mortify one’s flesh was, according to him, only the initial step on the road of *gelazenheit*, which meant “letting be” or “submitting one’s will to God’s will” (Williams-Krapp 2004, 44–47). For bodily suffering as a masculine virtue, see Heinonen (2007, especially 133–142). Birgit Klockars noted that most of Birgitta’s revelations concerning purgatory or hell occurred in Sweden (1966, 232). This perhaps also argues for Suso’s influence on Birgitta particularly in the 1340s.
  58. In Birgitta’s *Revelations*, the suffering of the friends of God was commonplace, but not coredeemptive as among some thirteenth-century beguines. Also, penitential acts were useful, but Christ’s passion was the most important. See, e.g., *Rev.* I 11, 20; VI 93.
  59. E.g., Mechthild of Magdeburg (d. 1282 or 1294), Hadewijch of Brabant, Christina Mirabilis, and Margery Kempe (Newman 1995, 121–122).
  60. *Ibid.*, 118, 134.
  61. See Master Mathias and the Averroist knight, in chapter 4.
  62. This can also be seen in the powerful revelations about Christ’s passion, recorded by Birgitta on numerous occasions. See *Rev.* I 10, 11, 27, 35; IV 70, and the most famous *Rev.* VII 15.
  63. Newman (1995, 121).
  64. Muessig (2007, 57). See also Hanska (1997, 11–12).
  65. McGuire (1989, 84).
  66. Apparently the editors of the revelations did not raise the question of *discretio spirituum* here. Perhaps they thought that it had been sufficiently dealt with earlier.

67. Strömberg (1944, 134–135).
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Ibid.*, 136–137.
70. Strömberg suggested that the sermons were Birgitta's main source (1944, 176). But perhaps it would not be too far fetched to suppose that Birgitta had access to Mathias's or Alvastra's books and would have been able to enhance her knowledge by reading also.
71. Zarri (1996, 240–242).
72. See also Klockars (1976, 120).
73. There is surprisingly little literature on the royal couple. Mostly they are studied in separate articles. See, e.g., Blom (1985; 1992); Fritz (1985; 1992; 1997); Lind (1991; 2001); Morris (1993b). Birgitta and King Magnus's relationship in the 1350s and 1360s, when Birgitta lived in Rome, is studied by Hjalmar Sundén (1973), Olle Ferm (1993), and Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller (2003). Michael Nordberg published a nonfiction book about Magnus in 1995. He pays attention to Birgitta's heated writings about the king and seeks to clear Magnus's reputation. Nordberg's book is a good general introduction to the time of King Magnus although his interpretation of the meager sources does not always convince the reader. Therefore, more useful for scholars is Birgitta Fritz's (1997) review of Nordberg's book in which she assesses the author's use of the sources.
74. *PVita*, 98; *LOB*, 95; *Ex.* 49.
75. Concerning the textual history of *Rev.* VIII, see Aili (1986, 75–91; 2002, 17–46).
76. Aili (2002, 21).
77. Klockars (1976, 69).
78. *Ibid.*, 73.
79. Klockars (1960, 94–95; 1976, 69–75).
80. *DCP*, 528; *Ex.* 59.
81. Klockars (1966, 14); Morris (1999a, 58).
82. Evidently Birgitta also came to know that kind of lighter literature. This can be seen in one of her revelations, which concerns the usefulness of nonreligious literature. In *Rev.* VI 27, she sees the worldly stories and entertainment as empty and hollow. She exhorts people to concentrate on more important matters such as the salvation of souls (Klockars 1966, 15–16; Morris 1999a, 57–58).
83. Klockars (1973, 15). Klockars did not give the reference for this observation, therefore it is hard to determine if it is plausible or not.
84. Klockars (1976, 120).
85. More about the journey of Bishop Hemming of Åbo and Prior Peter of Alvastra in Klockars (1960, 151–178). Klockars estimated that the journey took place some time between spring 1348 and winter 1349. This was confirmed in 1972, when Sven Stolpe discovered a document in Cambridge, which confirmed that the journey took place around October 1348 (1972, 364).



86. *Rev.* I 52; *Book* I, 145–146.
87. Cambridge manuscript 404 in Corpus Christi College, fol. 102v–103r (Stolpe 1972, 371–373). The edition of the manuscript was made by Birger Bergh (2002, 228).
88. Cambridge manuscript 404, fol. 102v. The manuscript contains some surprising parts, for example, in the beginning Magnus asks England’s king for one of his daughters in marriage. The petition makes no sense, because Magnus was married to Blanche who was alive and well. A plausible explanation is that the proposal concerned one of Magnus’s sons. This shows that the copyist of the document was not too careful in his work. See also Morris (1999a, 82).
89. Stolpe (1972); Morris (1999a, 82).
90. Sundberg (1997, 61, 63).
91. Stolpe (1972, 365).
92. The Swedish envoys and Birgitta’s revelations seemed not to have had much effect on the rulers of France and England or on the pope. The war continued until 1453. Bishop Hemming’s reaction was depression; he felt he had failed (*DCP*, 512). More about the end of the mission in Klockars (1960, 177–178); Morris (1999a, 82). It is quite interesting that to end the war between France and England, Pope Clement also suggested a marriage proposal between the heirs of the rulers. Birgitta’s idea was quite in line with the pope’s solution (Stolpe 1972, 365–366).
93. *Rev.* I 52:16.
94. *Ex.* 74:4.
95. *Ex.* 74:6–7.
96. For a thorough investigation about Birgitta as a prophet, see Sahlin (2001).
97. Fitzgerald (1996, vii); Konstan (1996, 13–14); Engberg–Pedersen (1996, 79). Birgitta mentions the danger of flattering advisors, for example, in *Rev.* VIII 4, 16.
98. How Birgitta obtained knowledge about rhetoric is dealt with in Bergh (1976, 5–25; 2002, 47–54); Odelman (1993, 15–21); Piltz (1993, 78–84); Malm (1997, 61–76).
99. Malm (1997, 71).
100. *Ibid.*, 75. See also Morris (2006).
101. “Uppenbarelserna är bara medvetna om sitt ändamål, språkligt arbetar de på ett intuitivt plan” (my trans.; Norén 1993, 124; Malm 1997, 75).
102. The classical rhetoric had an influence on both secular and religious literature in the Middle Ages. It can be seen in the use of formulas of submission and protestations of incapacity. In this way the writers underline their humility (Petroff 1986, 24–25).
103. *Ex.* 74:7.
104. *Ex.* 74:8.
105. *Ex.* 73:4–5.
106. See the previous note.
107. *DS* 4069.

108. The list of names brings forth the idea that the theological committee's meeting coincides with the presentation of the will of the royal couple on May 1, 1346. But the sources are too scanty to confirm this.
109. *Ex.* 24:1.
110. *Ex.* 24:2–4.
111. This is also what Birgit Klockars ponders. She suggests that Birgitta traveled with the court around February 1345 and stayed in Vadstena for some time (1976, 110).
112. *Ex.* 24:11.
113. *Ex.* 24:14.
114. Klockars and later Fritz argue convincingly for this (Klockars 1976, 112–115); Fritz (1985, 13–14; 1992). About the *Rule* and the influence of already existing rules, see Fogelqvist (1991, 203–244).
115. Klockars (1966, 49, 170). In Aili's view it is not clear to whom the revelation is directed but he does not have any other suggestions (1986, 85).
116. Birgit Klockars suggests a later date, since she interpreted the passage "quam benigne in hac mortalite est seruata" in *Rev.* IV 4 to refer to the plague that came to Sweden around 1349. She concluded that *Rev.* IV 4, therefore, is a letter that Birgitta sent to the queen from Rome (1966, 49). I think that this is a possible interpretation, but first, as Klockars also noted elsewhere (1976, 128), it is possible that the plague appeared in Sweden before Birgitta left for Rome, she could have seen it already herself, and second, that the passage might refer to human beings' liability to die in general and the queen should be grateful that she is still alive. Even in the case that the revelation is of a later date, it shows the kind of relationship the two women had. For the plague in Sweden, see Myrdal (2003). In September 1349, King Magnus Eriksson exhorted the citizens of Sweden to repent and perform penance since the terrifying plague was approaching (*DS* 4515; Myrdal 2003, 86).
117. Alfonso Pecha used this revelation in *Rev.* VIII 13 and named the person as Queen Blanche.
118. *Rev.* IV 4:4–10.
119. *Rev.* IV 4:15–16, 24–25.
120. *Rev.* IV 4:4–6.
121. *Rev.* IV 4:21–22, 26, 30, 35–36.
122. *Rev.* IV 4:23.
123. *Rev.* IV 4:37.
124. *Rev.* IV 4:38–39.
125. *Rev.* IV 4:40–43.
126. Hungarian royal saints, especially Elizabeth of Hungary, was introduced as a model for royal sanctity in Central Europe in the fourteenth century (see Klaniczay 2002).
127. Aili (1986, 85–86).
128. *DCP*, 528; *Ex.* 59.
129. Birgitta presented Elizabeth of Hungary to Blanche as a role model. It is also probable that Blanche knew Marie d'Oignies's *Life* as well: the

- beguine came from the same area as she. Therefore, Blanche was able to recognize the marks of a living saint in Birgitta. Birgitta directed Blanche to identify herself with Elizabeth of Hungary whereas she identified herself with both and gradually more with Marie d'Oignies.
130. *Rev.* VIII 14 follows *Rev.* VIII 13, which Alfonso put together exactly on the basis of *Rev.* IV 4. According to him, these two revelations are about the same incident.
  131. *Rev.* VIII 14:1.
  132. *Rev.* VIII 14:4.
  133. *Rev.* VIII 5:1–2.
  134. Birgit Klockars noted that the council of state had considerable power even after Magnus Eriksson attained his majority (1976).
  135. *Rev.* VIII 5:4–6.
  136. For example, sections 23–24 of *Rev.* VIII 1 are from *Rev.* II 7; *Rev.* VIII 13 is based on *Rev.* IV 4. See the table of the geminated revelations in Aili (2002, 46).
  137. *Rev.* VIII 2:6–7. The last accusation rises from Amos 5:7–12.
  138. *Rev.* VIII 4:4–5.
  139. *Rev.* VIII 2:11–12, 14–15.
  140. Klockars (1976, 120). An example of this kind of case is reported in *Rev.* VI 9. A priest, who was also a tax collector, had been sacked and he asked Birgitta what good that did anybody, now that he had lost his income. Birgitta answered that the king had dismissed him because Birgitta had advised him to do so. It had been done for the sake of the man's salvation. The priest had asked Birgitta to leave his soul in peace. It would answer for itself in the afterlife. Birgitta had answered that "if you are not going to repent, you will, as my name is Birgitta, not escape God's special judgment and die an unusual death." Not long after this, the addition recalls, the man died under the molten metal from which a bell was being made. The end of the story is written in a dramatic hagiographic mode but the beginning, the priest who accused Birgitta of costing him his job, might go back to a historical situation.
  141. *Rev.* VIII 4:3, 16.
  142. *Rev.* VIII 3:1–4.
  143. Birgitta's view on kingship was traditional: the king received his power from God. She did not question the different social classes but thought that different people were needed in their rightful places. The rulers of the country, the king and his knights were supposed to act lawfully and always for the good of the citizens. They had greater rights than other people but they also had greater responsibility (Klockars 1971, 86–87). See also Gilkær (1993); Morris (1999a, 85).
  144. Magnus Eriksson had according to the Russian chronicles done exactly as Birgitta had told him to do. Concerning the crusade and the Russian chronicles, see especially Lind (1991; 2001).
  145. *Rev.* VIII 47:14, 24, 29, 37–38, 47.
  146. *Rev.* VIII 47:34.

147. *Rev.* VIII 47:40–41, 46.
148. This also supports Birgit Klockars's argument that there was no rift between Birgitta and the royal couple until the end of 1350s (1976, 126–129).
149. Morris (1999a, 85).
150. *Rev.* VIII 2: "Secundum est, quod volo quod ipse rex adiuuet suo subsidio ad edificacionem monasterii tui, cuius regulam ego ipse dictaui." For the history of Vadstena, see Höjer (1905); Cnattingius (1963); Nyberg (1965); Andersson (2001).
151. For the early dating of Birgitta's rule, see, e.g., Kraft (1929, 190–191) and Sundén (1973, 68). Cf. Klockars (1976, 115–116) and Fritz (1985, 13–14; 1992). Bridget Morris suggests that it was possible but not certain that the rule already existed in 1346 (1999a, 86).
152. *RS* 29. The earliest version of the text does not exist anymore. Already in medieval documents there is a distinction between *regula in prima persona* and *regula in tercia persona*. In the first version Christ appears to be speaking in the first person and in the latter Christ is referred to in the third person. Scholars have distinguished seven early text versions of the *Regula Salvatoris*. The three most important ones are as follows:
1. the so-called early version, "die Frühfassung," Birgitta's own text ( $\Omega$ ,  $\Pi$ );
  2. the authorised version, "die approbierte Fassung," the bull of 1378 (=  $\Sigma$ ); and
  3. the adapted version, "die adaptierte Fassung," which was a mixture of Birgitta's own text and the bull of 1378 (termed  $\Phi$ ) (Eklund 1975, 21).
153. *RS* 1; Eklund (1975, 105); Morris (1999a, 162).
154. Nyberg (1968, 22–37); Morris (1999a, 162).
155. *RS* 14:167–170.
156. *RS* 26.
157. *RS* 28.
158. *RS* Introduction 3. It is not possible to distinguish the editorial work of Alfonso Pecha and other editors. Therefore, the issues especially in the introduction might reflect Alfonso's interpretation of Birgitta's precise idea.
159. *RS* 1.
160. Fogelqvist (1991, 207–217); Morris (1999a, 166).
161. Klockars (1966, 180–186); Fogelqvist (1991, 243).
162. Lawrence (1989, 168).
163. For example, Hildegard of Bingen had considerable difficulties in finding a new confessor for her nuns after the confessor Volmar's death in 1173. *Hildegard Bingensis. Epistolarium*, CCCM 91, 23–25.
164. Mews (2005, 157–159). There are many examples of women's interest in religious rules that take the female sex and gender into account. Maiju Lehmijoki-Gardner shows that the role of women in the production of religious rules has often been disregarded and women have been interested in creating rules for their communities more than the scholarly

- activity on the issue indicates. For recent studies on women and religious rules, see especially Lehmijoki-Gardner (2004, 79n1; 2005, 5).
165. See, for example, the testimonies of some Swedish women (*Acta*, 63–66).
  166. On widowhood and female networks, see Carlson and Weisl (1999, 4–5).
  167. *Rev.* IV 84. This revelation is undated. I presume that the attitude represents Birgitta's thinking from both her Swedish and Italian periods.
  168. *Ex.* 19:1–3.
  169. Birgitta's concern in *Ex.* 19 about the decisive role of the abbess was debated in the Vadstena Abbey and also in other Birgittine abbeys in the fifteenth century. Not only was the idea of a woman as leader of men problematic but practical difficulties also arose: the nuns were in strict *clausura*. Therefore, the contacts between Vadstena and its daughter abbeys was the brothers' responsibility (Gejrot 1990, 195–196).
  170. See previously, chapter 4, 103–104.
  171. 1 Cor. 14:1–5. See previously, chapter 3, 65, 69.
  172. This number includes all the *Revelations*.
  173. *PVita*, 84–85.
  174. Andersson (2003a, 317). There has been extensive research on the Vadstena sermons since the 1990s. See, e.g., Borgehammar (1990; 2003); Fogelqvist (1990); Nordstrandh (1990); Andersson (1993; 2001; 2003a; 2003b); Härdelin (1998; 2003). The situation before the founding of Vadstena abbey is much less researched. The reason is evidently the lack of sources, for example, there is very little information about mendicant sermons (Andersson 1993, 185). Bengt Strömberg's work from 1944 and Jarl Gallén's research from 1946 and 1950 (reprinted 1998) are still valuable contributions to the research concerning the preaching of the revelations before Birgitta's death.
  175. *Ex.* 23.
  176. Andersson (2001, 124, 177–182).
  177. *Rev.* II 14:74; *Book* II, 213.
  178. *Rev.* II 14:75; *Book* II, 213.
  179. *Rev.* II 14:77–78; *Book* II, 213.
  180. *Rev.* II 17:47–48; *Book* II, 220.
  181. *Rev.* II 17:53; *Book* II, 220.
  182. *Rev.* III 6–7; Jönsson (1998, 33–34).
  183. *Rev.* III 5:7–8; *Book* III, 269.

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