

The Scourge and the Cross

Ascetic Mentalities of the Later Middle Ages

BY

David F. Tinsley

PEETERS
PARIS – LEUVEN – WALPOLE, MA
2010

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| The Study of Ascetic Mentalities | 1 |
|----------------------------------|---|

CHAPTER 1

| | |
|--|----|
| The Healing Power of Self-Mortification in Dominican Convent Culture | 13 |
|--|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>The Genealogical Trees of Gérard de Frachet and Elsbeth Stagel</i> | 15 |
| <i>The Suffering Soul's Journey to God</i> | 18 |
| <i>The Therapeutic Connotations of Suffering</i> | 21 |
| <i>Exemplars of Asceticism: St. Dominic</i> | 32 |
| <i>Other Exemplars: Peter the Martyr and Thomas Aquinas</i> | 39 |
| <i>Gender and the Scourge</i> | 43 |

CHAPTER 2

| | |
|---|----|
| Dying with Christ in the Revelations of Elsbeth von Oye | 49 |
|---|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>Elsbeth von Oye and her Cross</i> | 49 |
| <i>The Sources of Elsbeth's Blood Mysticism</i> | 53 |
| <i>The Medieval and Modern Reception of Extreme Asceticism</i> | 60 |
| <i>John the Evangelist as a Model of 'unio' and 'compassio'</i> | 64 |
| <i>Ritual Self Mortification in the Sisterbooks</i> | 69 |
| <i>Blood Mysticism in Catherine of Siena and Elsbeth von Oye</i> | 79 |
| <i>The New Martyrdom</i> | 85 |

CHAPTER 3

| | |
|--|----|
| Exemplary Women in the <i>Alemannische Vitaspatrum</i> | 87 |
|--|----|

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>The Sisterbooks as a Response to the Misogyny of the Desert Fathers</i> | 89 |
| <i>The Code of the Cell</i> | 91 |
| <i>Desert Misogyny</i> | 95 |
| <i>Exemplary Desert Mothers</i> | 98 |
| <i>Penitent Saints and the Medieval Reception of Mary Magdalen</i> | 103 |
| <i>The Desert and the Convent</i> | 114 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| CHAPTER 4 | |
| The Spiritual Journeys of Henry Suso and Elsbeth Stigel | 117 |
| <i>The Marginalization of Elsbeth Stigel</i> | 119 |
| <i>Gender and 'Auctoritas'</i> | 121 |
| <i>Gender and Conversion</i> | 125 |
| <i>Gender and Suffering</i> | 131 |
| <i>Gender and Discernment</i> | 144 |
| <i>Gender and Revelation</i> | 147 |
| <i>Gender and Discipleship</i> | 150 |
| CHAPTER 5 | |
| Asceticism and the Problem of Evil | 153 |
| <i>Elsbeth von Oye's Greater Agony</i> | 153 |
| <i>The Devil's Role in Satisfaction Theory</i> | 155 |
| <i>The Devil and Elsbeth Schefflin</i> | 159 |
| <i>The Suffering Bride of Christ: Christina von Stommeln</i> | 161 |
| <i>Life as a Demon: Ita von Hohenfels</i> | 170 |
| <i>Suffering as a Gift: The Theodicy of Julian of Norwich</i> | 173 |
| <i>The Enemy Within</i> | 178 |
| <i>Julian's Gift of Suffering</i> | 180 |
| <i>Sin, Death and Deliverance</i> | 182 |
| <i>Two Visions of Evil</i> | 185 |
| <i>Asceticism and Consolation</i> | 187 |
| CONCLUSION | |
| Asceticism and the Study of Medieval Mentalities | 189 |
| LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS | 197 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LITERATURE | 199 |
| INDEX | 213 |

Illustrations

1. Figure 1: The pelican ripping open its breast to feed its young.
Heinrich Seuse, *Schriften*, Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek,
710 (322), color initial 61vb 13
2. Figure 2.1: Christ administers *disciplina* to the loving soul.
Heinrich Seuse, *Schriften*, Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek,
710 (322), color illumination 6ra 49
3. Figure 2.2: Blood mysticism in Elsbeth and Catherine
Explanatory diagram 84
4. Figure 4: Henry Suso greeted by Eternal Wisdom
and surrounded by his brothers.
Heinrich Seuse, *Schriften*, Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek,
710 (322), full-page color illumination 48r 117
5. Figure 5: The loving soul takes up Christ's cross
and is plagued by the devil.
Heinrich Seuse, *Schriften*, Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek,
710 (322), full-page color illumination 22v 153