

monde

And so depoy she wept that it semyd  
lyke the spring wellys wuyng as a flode  
In hyr hede & the which withoute sepyng stremyd  
In to the cap off godel and also off blode  
Wemyd with the a boure the heat stode  
The sprenting of the salt teus to the bone  
Fracting the chetys so was hyr was bygone  
Byssing the heat tyme mo then 3 leu nounde  
Withoute cepe making but with epy voyce  
Thought dyd hyr heat pease & so encounte  
That she no pouste had to make noyse  
But en aftir dett she cam rejoyse  
Hyr gentylsome gretly medaled  
That was hyr aboute what that she ayled  
For they off the aventure no thing knelle  
What was the cause of hyr sorow but helpe  
They wept all for piete & on hyr hede zelle  
Wapuyng hain gretly hyr spiritys to rehyde  
But anon the porte of dyspae to aryde  
She profest so they with joy nor gladnesse  
No boude hyr here so tyme was hyr helynesse  
Such gentylsome as was moste pryde  
With hyr axed the cause of hyr defeas  
But she stonnyd the speche & then cam sepe  
I pray you be pease gretly the me defeas  
So de it lenth nat in pou to appeas  
My sorow nor in hope me to delyte  
For I ne peny by all the worlde nat a myte

# Legendys of Holy Wommen

BY  
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EDITED FROM MS. ARUNDEL 327

BY  
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LONDON

PUBLISHED FOR THE EARLY ENGLISH TEXT SOCIETY  
BY HUMPHREY MILFORD, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

AMEN HOUSE, E.C. 4

1938

many consented as  
consequence of her death

*Legendys of Hooly Wummen*

- Alle þat cyte both more & lesse 4955  
 To cryst wer turnyd wythowte lettyng.  
 But Fabrycius, alle þese þingys seyng,  
 So sore astoynyd was in þis caas,  
 That vnnethe he wyst where þat he was.<sup>1</sup>  
 And specyally whan he Theophyl sey f. 91<sup>r</sup>  
 Conuertyd & prechyn so feythfully,  
 Hys hert from hym was nere a-wey ;  
 But aftyr he hym wyth more tormentrye  
 Assaylyd þan euere he dyde dorothye,  
 For on many smal pecys hys body he hew 4965  
 And to bestys & fowlys þe gobettys he threw.  
 But fyrst þis Theophyl was baptysyd  
 And howsyld also ful deuouthly,  
 And so wyth peynys aftyrward supprysyd  
 Lych as I seyde erst, & þat cruellye, 4970<sup>r</sup>  
 And so folwyd hys mastryssse dorothye,  
 And cam to cryst in blysse regnynge,  
 Whedyr thorgh hyr merytys he mote us bryng. Amen.  
 Now blyssyd uyr gyn, o Dorothye,  
 Wych gloryfyd art in heuene aboue, 4975  
 Graunt Ioon hunt, or þan he dye,  
 Aftyr hys desyre þe frensshepe to proue,  
 And Isabel, hys wyf, wych the both loue ;  
 At whos request & humble supplycacyoun  
 Was of thi<sup>2</sup> lyf made þis translacyoun, 4980  
 Amen mercy ihesu an gramercy.

[The rest of this page is blank.]

*The prolocutorye in-to Marye Mawdelyns lyf.*<sup>3</sup> f. 11<sup>v</sup>

- T**he yer of grace, pleynly to descrye,  
 A thowsand, fourhundryd, forty & fyue, 1445.  
 Aftyr þe cherche of Romys computacyoun  
 Wych wyth Iane chaungyth hyr calculacyoun,  
 Whan phebus (wych nowher is mansonnarye 4985

<sup>1</sup> And specyally as catchword at foot of page.

<sup>2</sup> MS. this, with s erased.

<sup>3</sup> Title in red.

A prayer to St.  
Dorothy for  
John and Isabel  
Hunt.  
Jhon = Elizabetha  
Hunt = uxor eius

On Twelfth  
Night, 1445,

*Prolocutorye in-to Marye Mawdelyns lyf*

- Stedefastly, but ych day doth varye  
 Hys herberwe among þe syngnys twelue,  
 As þe fyrste meuer ordeynyd hym-selue)  
 Descendyd was in hys cours adoun 4990  
 To þe lowest part by cyrcumuolucyoun  
 Of þe Zodyac cercle, Caprycorn I mene,  
 Wher of heythe degrees he hath but fyftene,  
 And<sup>1</sup> hys retur had sumwhat bygunne.  
 By wych oo degre oonly he had wunne  
 In clymbyng, & drow towerd Agnarye— 4995  
 But in þis mater what shuld I lenger tarye ?  
 I mene pleynly up-on þat festful eue  
 In wych, as alle crystene men byleue,  
 Thre kyngys her dylygence dede applye  
 Wyth thre yiftys newe-born to gloryfye 5000  
 Cryst, aftyr hys byrthe þe threttende day,  
 Comyng from þe est in ful royal aray,  
 By conduct of a sterre wych shone clere :  
 In præsence I was of þe lady bowsere,<sup>2</sup>  
 Wych is also clepyd þe countesse of hu,<sup>3</sup> 5005  
 Doun conueyd by þe same pedegru  
 That þe duk of york<sup>4</sup> is come, for she  
 Hys sustyr is in egal degre,  
 Aftyr þe dochesse of york clepyd Isabel,<sup>5</sup> f. 92<sup>r</sup> Isabella  
 Hyr fadrys graunhtdam, [wych, soth to tel,]<sup>6</sup> 5010  
 In spayn kyng Petrys<sup>7</sup> dowtyr was,  
 Wych wyll a-nopir sustyr, so stood þe caas,  
 The royal tytyle of spayne to englund broht,  
 And, for þe fyrste sustyr yssud noht  
 But deyid baren, al stood in þe topir, 5015  
 By whom þe ryht now to þe broþir  
 Of seyde da[me]<sup>8</sup> Isabelle,<sup>9</sup> to seyn al and sum,  
 The duk of york, syr Rychard,<sup>10</sup> is come,  
 Wych god hym send, yf it be hys wyl.  
 Richardus dux  
Eborum

<sup>1</sup> nd cancelled after And. <sup>2</sup> bowsere underlined in black.

<sup>3</sup> countesse of hu underlined in black.

<sup>4</sup> duk of york underlined in black. <sup>5</sup> Isabel underlined in black.

<sup>6</sup> Words in square brackets not in MS. <sup>7</sup> Petrys underlined in black.

<sup>8</sup> MS. da. Horstmann da(me). <sup>9</sup> da Isabelle underlined in black.

<sup>10</sup> york, syr Rychard underlined in black.

the author was  
in the presence  
of the Countess  
of Eu.  
(This lady's  
pedigree.)

While the Lady Isabel's sons were dancing in gay array,

she herself talked to the author of certain legends which he had turned into English,

including that of St. Elizabeth, which he had lately begun at the request of the Countess of Oxford.

But of pis mater no more now spekyng I wyl, 5020  
 But returnyn ageyn to seyde dame Isabelle,<sup>1</sup>  
 And of my purpos þe remnanth furth telle.  
 I saye, whyl pis ladyis foure sonys ying  
 Besy were wyth reuel & wyth daunsyng,  
 And opere mo in þere most fressh aray 5025  
 Dysgysyd, for in þe moneth of may  
 Was neuyr [wyth] flouris [whyt],<sup>2</sup> blewe & grene,  
 Medewe motleyid freshlyere, I wene,  
 Than were her garnementys; for as it semyd me  
 Mynerue hyr-self, wych hath þe souereynte 5030  
 Of gay texture, as declaryth Ouyde,  
 Wyth al hire wyt ne coude prouyde  
 More goodly aray þow she dede en[cl]os  
 Wyth-ynne oo web al methamorphosyos.  
 I seye, whyl þei þus daunsyng dede walke 5035  
 Aboute þe chaumbyr, wyth me to talke  
 It lykyd my lady of hyr ientylnesse f. 92v  
 Of dyuers legendys, wych my rudnesse  
 From latyn had turnyd in-to our language,  
 Of hooly wummen,<sup>3</sup> now in my last age, 5040  
 As of seynt Anne, to blyssyd Marye  
 The modyr, of Margrete & of Dorothee,  
 Of Feyth & Crystyne, & of Anneys þer-to,  
 And of þo Eleuene thowsend uirgyns al-so,  
 And of þat holy & blyssyd matrone 5045  
 Seynt Elyzabeth, whos lyf alone  
 To alle wyuys myht a merour be  
 Of uery perfeccyon in sundry degre,  
 Whos holy legend as at þat tyme  
 I newly had begunne to ryme, 5050  
 At request of hyr to whom sey nay  
 I nethyr kan, ne wyl, ne may,  
 So mych am I boundon to hyr goodnesse,  
 I mene of Oxenforthe þe countesse,<sup>4</sup> Elizabetha  
 ver comitissa  
 Oxenfordiae

<sup>1</sup> dame Isabelle *underlined in black*.

<sup>2</sup> MS. whyt flouris wyth. *Horstmann keeps this reading.*

<sup>3</sup> Corrected from wummon.

<sup>4</sup> Oxenforthe þe countesse *underlined in black*.

Dame Elyzabeth ver<sup>1</sup> by hyr ryht name, 5055  
 Whom god euere kepe from syn & shame,  
 And of good lyf so hyr auaunce  
 Here in pis werd wyth perseueraunce,  
 That, whan she chaungyth hir mortal fate,  
 Of lyf eterne she may entryn þe gate, 5060  
 Ther-ynne to dwellyn wythowten endyng.  
 And whyl [we]<sup>2</sup> were besy in pis talkyng,  
 My lady hyr hooly & blyssyd purpoos  
 To me þis wyse þer dede oncloos:  
 'I haue,' quod she, 'of pure affeccyon  
 Ful longe tym had a synguler deuocyon  
 To þat holy wumman, wych, as I gesse,  
 Is clepyd of apostyls þe apostyllesse;  
 Blyssyd Mary mawdelyn y mene,  
 Whom cryste from syn made pure & clene, 5070  
 As þe clerkys seyn, ful mercyfully,  
 Whos lyf in englysshe I desyre sothly  
 To han maad, & for my sake  
 If ye lykyd þe labour to take,  
 & for reuerence of hyr, I wold you preye.'  
 At wych wurde, what I myht seye  
 I stood in doute, for on þe to part  
 My lytyl experyence in rymy[n]gs<sup>3</sup> art,  
 My labyll mynde, & þe dulnesse  
 Of my wyt & þe greth rudnesse 5080  
 I wele remembryd, & on þe topir partye  
 I thowt how hard it is to denye  
 A-statys preyer, wych aftyr þe entent  
 Of þe poete is a myhty comaundement;  
 Wherefore me thoht, as in pis caas, 5085  
 That my wyt wer lakkyd bettyr it was  
 Than my wyl, & þerfore to do  
 My ladyis preyere I assentyd to,  
 Of my sympyl cunnyng aftyr þe myht,  
 Vp condycyon þat she me wolde respyt  
 Of hir ientyllnesse tyl I acomplysyd

The Countess of Eu asks him to write the life of Mary Magdalene in English.

f. 93r

5070

5075

He hesitates, but consents,

5080

5085

5090 if he may be given respite until he has performed his pilgrimage to St. James's shrine.

<sup>1</sup> Elyzabeth ver *underlined in black*.

<sup>2</sup> So H. MS. whyl were. <sup>3</sup> MS. rymygs.

*Legendys of Hooly Wummen*

My pylgramage hade, wych promysyd  
 I to seynt Iamys wyth hert entere f. 93<sup>v</sup>  
 Had to performe þe same yere,  
 Þere to purchase thorgh penytence 5095  
 Of myn oolde synnys newe indulgence ;  
 Where men contryth thorgh clere confessyoun  
 Mown of her synnys han plener remyssyoun  
 From þe fyrst day, as I kan remembre,  
 Of Ianuarye to þe last of Decembre 5100  
 Next folwyng al þe yerys space,  
 Wych clepyd is þere 'þe yere of grace',  
 Grauntyd, as men mown vndyrgrope,  
 Ful longe agoon of Calyxt þe pope  
 Euere to endure, whan seynt Iamys day 5105  
 On þe sunday fallyth, þis is no nay.  
 And whan my lady herd had myn entent,  
 Ful ientlylly þer-to she dede assent  
 Aftyr my desyr, & sothly to seyn  
 She me pardonyd tyl I come ageyn 5110  
 From seynt Iamys, yf god wold so.  
 And I now haue performyd & do  
 Aftyr myn entent myn pylgrimage,  
 Applyn I wyl al þe corage  
 Of my wyt & of my kunnyng 5115  
 To performen wyth-oute taryng  
 My ladyis wyl & hir comaundement.  
 But fyrst I wyl wyth an humble entent  
 Me conform to þe sage counsel  
 Of a phylosofyr, wych, as Austyn doth tel, 5120  
 The prynce is of phylosofyrs alle, f. 94<sup>r</sup>  
 Wurthyly whom men Plate calle,  
 Wych in hys book of hy Phylosofye  
 That he entyt[lyt] <sup>1</sup> vn-to Thymye,  
 Hys dyscyple, seyis on þis wyse : 5125  
 'To al men,' quod he, 'it is a guyse,  
 A cerymonye aryit,<sup>2</sup> & a custom  
 Obseruyd & kept as a relygyoun,  
 In alle her werkys both more & lesse,

<sup>1</sup> So H. MS. entythyt.

<sup>2</sup> H. suggests arrayit.

Now that his  
 pilgrimage is  
 over, he will  
 perform his  
 task.

He will first  
 conform to the  
 advice of Plato,

to seek the help  
 of the Sovereign  
 Divinity in his  
 task.

*Prolocutorye in-to Marye Mawdelyns lyf*

At þe begynnyng wyth humbylnesse 5130  
 To beseche þe souereyn dyuynyte  
 In here werk begunne here help to be,  
 That þei not erre ner do amys.  
 Syth þan paynys obseruyd þis,  
 Mych more me pinkyth awt we 5135  
 It to perform wych crystyn be,  
 And of owr-self mowe no þing do,  
 In alle oure werkys recours haue to  
 Our souereyn god wyth humble preyere ;  
 Wherefore, er ferther in þis matere 5140  
 I do procede, wyth hert & thought  
 To hym I þus preye þat me made of nought.  
 O souereyn & most blyssyd trynyte,  
 O god in substaunce, in personys thre,  
 Fadyr & sone & þe holy gost wyth-al, 5145  
 Whos myht, wyt & goodnesse is egal,  
 Al-be-it þat yche of pese thyngys thre  
 To a dystynit <sup>1</sup> persone appropryat be  
 For dyuers causys, as clerkys preue, f. 94<sup>v</sup>  
 But yet alle thre, as we bele[u]e,<sup>2</sup> 5150  
 In uery beyng arn but o thyng  
 Wych neythyr hath end no begynny[n]g,<sup>3</sup>  
 Whos mesur noon opir þan eternyte  
 May be clepyd, wych in meruelous degre  
 Both heuene & erthe hast made of nouht, 5155  
 And alle þe conteyntys in hem hast wrouht,  
 And aungels in þe emperyal heuene on hy,  
 Sumne, mone & <sup>4</sup> sterrys þer-vndyr, & sky,  
 Herbys, trees, stonys & gresse al-so,  
 Fyssshys & foullys, & al þat longyth to 5160  
 Eyr, erthe & watyr in hys propyr sper,  
 The fourt element wych clepyd is fer ;  
 And aftyr al þis, þorgh þi goodnesse,  
 Man pou formydyst to þi lyknesse,  
 Indewyng hym wyth natural yiftys thre, 5165  
 As Mynd, Resoun, Wyl, in swych degre

The author's  
 prayer to the  
 creator of the  
 four elements,  
 of animals, and  
 of man.

<sup>1</sup> H. emends to dystynct.

<sup>2</sup> So H. MS. belene.

<sup>3</sup> MS. begynnyng; retained by H.

<sup>4</sup> & above the line.

## Legendys of Hooly Wummen

Pat noon is opir but dystynctly  
 They han her operacyouns, & yet essencyally  
 But oon soule þei ben al thre ;  
 And þis is þe uery ymage of þe ; 5170  
 And moreouyr, pleynty to conclude,  
 In hym pou prenyddyst þi symylytude  
 Wyth þo fre yiftys clene & pure,  
 Wych pou addyddyst to þe yiftys of nature,  
 In hys creacyoun whan þorgh þi grace 5175  
 A spyryth of lyf pou brethyddyst in hys face.  
 And aftyr þat, as testyfyth þe prophete, f. 95<sup>r</sup>  
 Alle þingys pou kest vndyr hys fete,  
 Sheep, oxyn, & eek þe bestys alle  
 Of þe felde, what-euere men hem calle, 5180  
 Bryddys of heuene & fysshys of þe se.  
 But whan he lost had þis greth dygnyte,  
 An hym-self deformyd abhomynablyly,  
 By þe enuye deceyuyd<sup>1</sup> of hys enmy  
 Clepyd serpent, behemot, or leuyathan, 5185  
 And many mo wysys þan I now rehers kan,  
 Thorgh þi greth grace & þi mercy  
 Thow hym reformyddyst more meruelously  
 Than in þe begynnynge he formyd fyrst was ;  
 For wych reformyng, so stode þe caas, 5190  
 The secunde persone euynd of you thre  
 By your comoun assent took oure freelte,  
 Here in erthe in a madyns bour,  
 And mannys aduocat becam & medyatour  
 Twyn þe fadyr of heuene & mankende ; 5195  
 And so aftyr thre & thretty wintris ende,  
 By suffraunce of ryht greuous passyoun,  
 He of mankende maad þe reparacyoun  
 Suffycyently, for wyth-owtyn doute  
 The leest drop of blood þa[t]<sup>2</sup> yssuyd oute 5200  
 Of hys blyssyd body, & hys circumcysyoun,  
 [F]or<sup>3</sup> euere aftyr suffycyent raunsoun  
 Had been for al þe werdys wo,  
 And þow þer were werldys a þousend mo.

<sup>1</sup> So H. MS. deceyuyuyd.    <sup>2</sup> So H. MS. þa.    <sup>3</sup> So H. MS.

The Fall and  
Redemption.

repeating classical motifs

## Prolocutorye in-to Marye Mawdelyns lyf

But not-for-þan yet wold not he, f. 95<sup>v</sup>  
 So greth to man was hys cheryte,  
 Wyth lesse raunsoun mankynd by  
 Than wyth al þe blood of hys body,  
 And wyth al þe blood of hys hert eek, wh[e]rfore<sup>1</sup>  
 Al mannys loue þou askyst & no more, 5210  
 Wyth hertly laude & wyth meke preysyng,  
 For of our goodys þou nedyst no thyng,  
 As Dauid seyth in hys professye.  
 Where-fore, lord, to þe alone I crye  
 Wych welle art of mercy & of pyte, 5215  
 And neythyr to Clys ner to Melpomene,  
 Nere to noon opir of þe musys nyne,  
 Ner to Pallas Mynerue, ner Lucyne,  
 Ner to Apollo, wych, as old poetys seye,  
 Of wysdam beryth both lok & keye, 5220  
 Of gay speche eek & of eloquencye ;  
 But alle þem wyttyrly I denye,  
 As euere crystene man owyth to do,  
 And þe oonly, lord, I fle on-to ;  
 Not desyryng to haue swych eloquence 5225  
 As sum curyals han, ner swych asperence  
 In vtryng of here subtyl conceytys,  
 In wych oft tyme ful greth dysceyt is,  
 And specyally for þere ladyis sake  
 They baladys or amalettys lyst to make, 5230  
 In wych to sorwyn & wepyn þei feyn  
 As þow þe prongys of deth dede streyn  
 Here hert-root, al-be þei fer þens ; f. 96<sup>r</sup>  
 Yet not-for-þan is here centens  
 So craftyd up, & wyth langwage so gay 5235  
 Uttryd, þat I trowe þe moneth of may  
 Neuere fresshere enbe[l]shyd<sup>2</sup> þe soyl wyth flours  
 Than is her wrytyng wyth colours  
 Of rethorycal speche both to & fro ;  
 Was neuere þe tayl gayere of a po, 5240  
 Wych þan enherytd alle Argus eyne  
 Whan Marcuryis whystyl hym dede streyne  
<sup>1</sup> So H. MS. whrfore.    <sup>2</sup> So H. MS. enbeshyd.

The author  
craves the help  
of Christ, not of  
the Muses.

The elaborate  
eloquence of  
some writers.

repeating love poetry

He is too old  
learn this craft.

To hys deed slepe ; of wych language  
The craft to coueyte where grete dotage  
In m[yn]<sup>1</sup> oold dayis & in þat degre 5245  
That I am in ; wher-fore, lord, to þe  
Wyt humble entent & hert entere  
In þis conclude I my long preyere :  
That I kunnyng may han suffycyently  
To seruyn þe deuocoun of my lady 5250  
Aftyr hyr entent, þat is [to]<sup>2</sup> seyne,  
That I may translate in wurdys pleyne  
In-to oure langwage oute of latyn  
The lyf of blyssyd Mare Mawdelyn,  
To hyr goostly confourth in especial, 5255  
And of them generally wych it redyn shal ;  
By wych redyng þat þai may wynne  
Fyrst remyssoun here of al here synne,  
Lych as Mary Mawdelyn dede purchase,  
And þat aftyr þis lyf þey may [þorgh grace]<sup>3</sup> 5260  
To þat blys comyn wher-yn is she. f. 97<sup>v</sup>  
Sey ych man Amen, pur cheryte.  
Amen mercy ihesu & gramercy.

*The prologe of marie maudelynys lyf.*<sup>4</sup>

**O**f a mary to wrytyn I wyl begynne  
The lyf, as god we yeuyn wyl grace.  
I mene not mary wyth-owtyn synne, 5265  
Wych of al mankynde bare þe solace,  
But hyr I mene wych of hyr trespace  
In symondys hous whan she cam yn  
Padone<sup>5</sup> thorgh penaunce dede purchase,  
And<sup>6</sup> clepyd is Marye Mawdelyn. 5270  
And wurthyly þis name Marye  
To hyr pertenyth, as it semyth me,  
For as legenda aurea doth specyfyte,

Signification of  
the name  
'Mary':

<sup>1</sup> So H. MS. many.

<sup>2</sup> So H. MS. is seyne.

<sup>3</sup> Suggested by H. in note. MS. purchase.

<sup>4</sup> Title in red.

<sup>5</sup> H. emends to pa(r)done.

<sup>6</sup> And on erasure.

*Prologe of Marie Maudelynys lyf*

Maria hath þese interpretacyouns thre :  
Fyrst it betoknyth 'a byttyr se', 5275  
'An illumynere', or ellys 'maad lyht' ;  
And þese thre thyngys in excellent degre  
Thys blyssyd Mary maudelyn had ful ryht.  
And by þese thre þingys we vnderstond moun  
þe thre best þingys wych þis mary ches, 5280  
As outward penaunce & inward contemplacyoun,  
And vpward blys wych neuyr shal ses ;  
Of wych god seyde wyth-owtyn lees f. 97<sup>r</sup>  
That þe beeste part to hir ches mary,  
Wych euere shal endure & neuere dyscrees, 5285  
But wyth hyr abydyn eternally.  
The fyrst part wych þat hycht penytence  
Be-cause of þe synne, wych is getyng of blys,  
Shal hyr be byrefth by no vyolence ;  
Ner þe secunde, of contemplacyoun, for þat is 5290  
Contunyd wyth heuenely [ioy]<sup>1</sup> wych neuere shal mys,  
Where fore it may not fayl in no degre ;  
Nere þe thrydde, of heuene, may sece I-wys,  
For þe mesure þere-of is eternyte.  
For-as-mych þan as þis mary 5295  
The best part chees of penaunce doyng,  
'A byttyr se' be clepyd ryht conuenyently  
She may, me semyth, for in þat thyng  
Greth byttyrnesse she felt whan repentyng  
Be-hynde cryst she stood shamefastly, 5300  
And wyth þe terys shed in hyr wepyng  
Hys feet she wessh ful deuouthly.  
In þat also þat of inwarde contemplacyoun  
The best part she ches in þis lyf here,  
To hyr longyth þe secunde interpretacyoun, 5305  
Wych is to seyn 'an illumynere',  
Or 'a yeuere of lyht', in wurdys more clere ;  
For in hyr contemplacyoun she took swych lyht  
Wyth wych<sup>2</sup> many oon, as ye aftyr shul here,  
In goostly goodnesse she maad shyn bryht. 5310

<sup>1</sup> So H. MS. heuenely wych.

<sup>2</sup> wych in left margin ; position marked in line.