CHAPTER 4

Naming the Children of Jacob

The Shape of Negative Theology in the Benjamin Minor

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The Middle English *Benjamin Minor*—a late fourteenth-century adaptation of a twelfth-century Latin work by Richard of St. Victor—yokes an explicit commitment to affective piety to a highly formal diagrammatic structure that provides a template for devotional practice. That structure emerges from the list of the children of the patriarch Jacob that appears in Genesis 35:23–26: each of these four verses names in order of birth the offspring from one of the four mothers—Jacob's two wives, Leah ("Lya") and Rachel, and the wives' handmaids, Zilpah ("Zelpha") and Bilhah ("Bala"). The family of Jacob is elaborately allegorized, with several of his children being expounded as emotional states: these include fear, sorrow, hope, love, joy, hate, and, finally, shame. The apparently simple list of children, and its corresponding list of emotional states, proves to be a dynamic machine of memory and devotion, a conceptual scaffolding that enables spiritual movement and—ultimately—the annihilation of apophatic fulfillment.

When we think of the visual stimuli that served the purposes of affective piety, we might first come up with images of the enfleshed Christ, the Virgin, or the saints. We expect images that invite empathetic engagement. The *Benjamin Minor,* by contrast, gives us diagrams—literal diagrams, in the case of several of the manuscripts, and an underlying diagrammatic structure that is implicit in the list of names, and the relationships of the people they name—and the affective states they represent—detailed in the prose. Linear

forms, like number, are abstract, rational, and cold; here, however, they are in the service of a practice of contemplation that seeks to raise the devout soul to a state of ecstasy. The list of Jacob's offspring found in the *Benjamin Minor* can be read in the context of genealogical diagrams of the late Middle Ages, ranging from the ubiquitous Tree of Jesse, expressing in visual form the human lineage of Christ, to the historical genealogies laid out in overlapping timelines in universal histories by Peter of Poitiers (ca. 1130–1205) and Matthew Paris (ca. 1200–1259). Yet the familial list of the *Benjamin Minor* is, strikingly, bidirectional: it combines the upward flow of the Tree of Jesse, which culminates in the fruit of the Incarnation, with the "descending structure" of the historical genealogy, which conveys "the implicit metaphor of a stream—of blood, of wealth, of values—flowing from the same source situated on high, down to a group of individuals placed much lower."[1] The sequence of the list moves sequentially forward in time, from progenitor to descendent, in keeping with the conventional flow of the historical genealogy; but through devotional practice, the reader moves upward through the list, back toward the source of all things.

By using symbolic forms, especially the bidirectional sequence of the list, elaborately structured by the geometrical relationships that both link and cut across branches of genealogical trees, the *Benjamin Minor* generates an elaborate system for religious practice, one that assists the reader in the effort to grow spiritually, to have a fruitful devotional life, and to ultimately reach the ecstatic state of "rauesching of mynde" (*in mentis excessu*) that is embodied in the figure of Benjamin, youngest child of the patriarch Jacob. This chapter begins by sketching out the context of the *Benjamin Minor* in late medieval England and its place in the tradition of contemplative literature, before turning to a close examination of the work's structure and the organizational principle of the list of Jacob's offspring. The *Benjamin Minor* is at once a genealogical list and a highly structured treatise on contemplation, a work whose sequential mnemonic structure simultaneously offers up a dynamic, generative environment for spiritual growth.

I will then put the *Benjamin Minor* in the context of another insular devotional text that also refers to the genealogy of the family of Jacob, especially as presented in the form of the family tree: namely, the *Reule of Crysten Religioun* by the fifteenth-century writer Reginald Pecock. I will treat Pecock's *Reule* much more briefly than the *Benjamin Minor,* with the goal of illustrating the ways that, in both works, the family tree is used in a devotional context both

1. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "The Genesis of the Family Tree," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 4 (1991): 105–29, here 112. On Peter of Poitiers' *Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi* and English royal genealogies, see Klapisch-Zuber, "Family Tree," 116–17.

to organize knowledge and to facilitate the process of the reader's intellectual and spiritual growth. As a simple list of words, the genealogical sequence appears to be whole, contained, and closed; as a list of names of living beings, however—and, implicitly, of the abstract qualities they represent—the genealogical sequence is also dynamic and generative, sometimes in very unexpected ways. The closed nature of the list thus emerges as the paradoxical site of reproduction and multiplication, yielding spiritual fruits.

CONTEMPLATIVE LITERATURE AND NEGATIVE THEOLOGY IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

The devotional literature of medieval England is heterogeneous, including a wide range of works informed by different theological perspectives. Among these is a strand described by modern scholars as "mysticism"; this is not an inaccurate term, but it is a somewhat anachronistic one, emerging from the late seventeenth-century effort to systematize various contemplative theologies in the context of the Counter-Reformation. Commentaries on figures such as Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross were at that time integrated into a set of practices that were united in the service of an explicitly mystical theology. Yet even though the codification of these practices was relatively late, the underlying concept of the "mystical" was there from the very outset of the tradition, in the fifth-century treatise by pseudo-Dionysius, the *De mystica theologia*.[2] This work of apophatic or "negative theology," like other works in the Dionysian corpus, elaborates the nature of God by defining that which He is not; and it outlines the means for the individual soul to meet the divine in Neoplatonic terms, identifying not only a processual chain of being but also a hierarchy through which the human comes into contact—in a highly mediated way—with the divine. Pseudo-Dionysius's works were translated from Greek into Latin several times, each time having a significant impact on the development of both philosophy and contemplative literature, beginning with Eriugena in the ninth century and continuing with Robert Grosseteste in the thirteenth century.

I will not attempt to give an account of the impact of pseudo-Dionysius's writings on medieval philosophy, which was significant; but I will address the impact of his work on the literature of contemplation, which was pro-

2. On the history of "mystical theology" and its key texts, see the useful overview by Nicholas Watson ("Introduction") in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism*, ed. Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1–28, esp. 4–7.

found. This is apparent, for example, in Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (dated in the prologue to 1259), where he writes, concerning the work of contemplation:

> If you want to know how these things may come about, ask grace, not learning; desire, not understanding; the groaning of prayer, not diligence in reading; the Bridegroom, not the teacher; God, not man; darkness, not clarity; not light, but the fire that wholly inflames and carries one into God.[3]

Both the apophatic quality of pseudo-Dionysius and the habit of speaking in paired opposites can be seen in Bonaventure's words: "darkness, not clarity; not light, but the fire." In addition, the effect of pseudo-Dionysius was felt in the work of the twelfth-century Victorines, the theologians attached to the Abbey of St. Victor, who taught in the schools and ultimately in the University of Paris. The Victorines developed a richly elaborated sense of the "mystical": that is, a systematic way of expounding the apparent paradoxes found in scripture into an intricate allegorical account oriented toward contemplative practice.[4] Among the most influential of these were two works by Richard of St. Victor, the *Benjamin Major* and the *Benjamin Minor,* both of these grounded in Psalm 67's reference to the last son of Jacob, "Benjamin adolescentulus in mentis excessu" ("the young Benjamin, lifted up in the mind"; Psalm 67:28). Both works are guides to contemplative practice, and the latter—the *Benjamin Minor*—does this through an elaborate exposition of the family of Jacob, naming each member in a sequential list.[5] Figure 4.1 shows the family of Jacob: the patriarch, who is both father and husband, stands at the top, with his two wives, Rachel and Leah ("Lya"), below. Each wife is accompanied by her handmaid, Zilpah and Bilhah (here "Zelfa" and "Bala"). The children of Jacob are shown below, each descending from their mother. This diagram comes from

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3. Bonaventure, *The Mind's Road to God,* trans. George Boas (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), VII.6; quoted in the preface to Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), ix–xiv, here xi.

4. On the use of "architectural . . . symbols" to support "mystical teaching," including "the ark of Noah, the ark of Moses, the temple of Solomon, and the City of Jerusalem," see Patrice Sicard, "Mystical Experience According to Hugh of Saint Victor: Principles, Foundations, and Types," in *A Companion to the Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris,* ed. Hugh Feiss and Juliet Mousseau (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 469–515, esp. 483–90, here 483; on the "tree in the center," see 500–1).

5. For an overview of the Victorines, see Brian McGuire, "c.1080–1215: Culture and History," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism,* ed. Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 29–47, esp. 38–9. A detailed study of the *Benjamin Minor* (82–133) and the *Benjamin Major* (134–78) can be found in Ritva Palmén, *Richard of St. Victor's Theory of the Imagination* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

FIGURE 4.1. British Library, Harley MS 674, fol. 112r. By permission of the British Library.

British Library, Harley MS 674, fol. 112r, one of the manuscripts of the Middle English adaptation of Richard of St. Victor's Latin text, several of which include some version of this diagram. One of the manuscript diagrams also includes numbers to indicate the birth order of the children, which corresponds to the order in which they are described in the *Benjamin Minor,* as we will see in more detail below.

The late fourteenth-century Middle English adaptation of the *Benjamin Minor* is shorter than the Latin text; the version that is the focus of this chapter survives in six fifteenth-century manuscripts, and is found in compilations containing what is sometimes called "the Cloud group"—that is, a cluster of texts that travel with the late fourteenth-century *Cloud of Unknowing,* a deeply moving work that seeks to bring its reader to a deeper knowledge of God.[6] What these texts share is a common basis in negative theology, along with a richly affective discourse harnessed in the service of contemplation. While the *Cloud* is an original work, the others are adaptations of earlier Latin works: *Deonise Hid Divinite* is a short translation of pseudo-Dionysius's *De mystica theologia,* for example, while the *Benjamin Minor* (also called *A Tretyse of the Stodye of Wysdome that Men Clepen Beniamyn*) adapts Richard of St. Victor's twelfth-century work. The relationship of the texts in the *Cloud* group, especially in terms of their affective vocabulary, has been well studied by Cheryl Taylor, who highlights three aspects of the Middle English adaptations: 1) the emphasis on "affection"; 2) the enhancement of pronoun usage, to suggest the presence of a speaker and a listener; and 3) the abundance of binary oppositions, including paradoxes, along with associated vivid physical imagery.[7]

Let me return briefly to the first of the three points, "affection." The Middle English term *affectyon,* sometimes modernized as "love," is actually something a bit different—for example, as seen in Figure 4.1, Lya represents "affection," while one of her sons represents "love of good God," so clearly these are different things. Affection, in Middle English usage, refers to longing or yearning, here as a means to spiritual union. The use of the Middle English term *affectyon* in the *Benjamin Minor* follows Richard of St. Victor's use of the compa-

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6. The edited text of the Middle English *Benjamin Minor* (under the title "A Tretyse of the Stodye of Wysdome that Men Clepen Beniamin") appears at pp. 11–46 in Phyllis Hodgson, ed., *Deonise Hid Diuinite and Other Treatises on Contemplative Prayer Related to The Cloud of Unknowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955, rpt. 1958). The text appearing in Hodgson's edition is based on the early fifteenth-century British Library, Harley MS 674; five additional witnesses to this version date from the same century. In addition to the six manuscripts of this version, an additional five (also from the fifteenth century) are extant. A summary can be found at https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/bibliography/BIB285?rid=hyp.386.19990513t124835.

7. Cheryl Taylor, "The *Cloud*-Author's Remaking of the pseudo-Dionysius' *Mystical Theology,*" *Medium Aevum* 75, no. 2 (2006): 202–18, esp. 204–8.

rable Latin term, *affectio,* to describe Lya; the Middle English text elaborates the term, however, sharing with the other works in the *Cloud* group a special emphasis on affective engagement in the spiritual labor of the contemplative. The affective yearning of Lya gives rise, as we will see, to multiple emotional offspring—fear, sorrow, hope, love—while the rational power of Rachel gives birth to very different qualities.

THE *BENJAMIN MINOR*: BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

Having provided some background on the work, let us turn to the genealogical structure and the ways in which the basic diagrammatic relations seen in Figure 4.1 are further elaborated within the text. First, one is struck by the extent to which this genealogy privileges pairs: there are two wives, served by two handmaids; each handmaid has two children, as does one of the wives; only one of the women here—Lya—gives birth to a larger number of children. Beyond this, additional pairings emerge based on the allegorical meanings attributed to each of the children. In some cases, this pairing emphasizes an existing pair, as when the two sons of Rachel's handmaid, Dan and Neptalym, represent two aspects of "sight"—"sight of pains to come," and "sight of joys to come." In other cases, the pairing cuts across maternal genealogies, as when Gad is matched with Dan, and Asser with Neptalym. These pairings affirm the implicit claim to completeness provided by the list, with each additional couple providing a symmetry, either of resemblance or opposition, that further adds to the list's capaciousness.

Before unpacking the genealogical relations before us, it is worth putting this practice of pairing into context, particularly with regard to the maternal genealogies recounted here. The pairing of Rachel and Leah was used in medieval culture in two distinct (though interrelated) ways: 1) as the maternal figures in a foundational national genealogy, the people of Israel, who would themselves become a template for medieval conceptions of the nation; 2) as a complementary yet opposed pair of sisters, who are similar (because they are sisters) but are simultaneously diametrically opposed on some fundamental level. In this latter respect, Leah and Rachel were frequently coupled with other pairs of sisters, especially Martha and Mary. In each of these pairings, one sister represented the active life, one the contemplative.[8] We can see this well illustrated in the life of Hugh of Avalon, Bishop of Lincoln in the late

8. On Rachel and Leah in association with other pairings in Christian exegesis, especially Mary and Martha, see Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought:*

twelfth century, who, according to his biographer, would sometimes leave his episcopal duties to go on a retreat with his Carthusian brothers: his biographer writes, "Here . . . he could freely enjoy the embraces and feast fully on the beauty of his lovely Rachel, and get away completely from the dreariness of blear-eyed Leah."[9] Rachel and Leah were also expounded allegorically in a number of other ways, perhaps most importantly as Ecclesia and Synagoga: here, Rachel's beauty and desirability associated her with the Church, while the "blear-eyed" quality of Leah associated her with the blindness of the Jews.[10]

In the *Benjamin Minor,* however, the active and contemplative template is at the fore, elaborated by Richard of St. Victor in terms of affect (*affectio*), embodied in Leah, and reason (*ratio*), embodied in Rachel. Studies of the *Benjamin Minor*—whether the Latin original or the Middle English adaptation—tend to focus on the figure of Rachel and her offspring, especially her younger son, Benjamin, who represents contemplation itself. The work closes with a meditation on how Rachel is both fulfilled and consumed by giving birth to Benjamin, just as the devout soul is both fulfilled and consumed by the apophatic experience of the divine:

> No man may take soche grace wythoutyn greet study and brennyng desires comyng before. And that wote Rachel ful wel. And for-thi sche multyplieth hir study, and whetteth hir desires, iche desire on desire, so that at the laste, in greet habundaunce of brennyng desires and sorrow of the delaiing of hir desire, Beniamyn is borne, and his moder Rachel diyeth. For whi in what tyme that a soule is rauischid abouen himself by habundaunce of desires and a greet multytude of loue, so that it is enflawmyd with the liȝt of the Godheed, sekerly than dyȝth al mans reson.[11]

In this passage, we see the emergence of perfect contemplation in the moment that reason surrenders, in an ecstasy mediated through apophasis.

The Interpretation of Mary and Martha, the Ideal of the Imitation of Christ, the Orders of Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 10–11; 18–19.

9. Decima L. Douie and Hugh Farmer, eds. and trans., *The Life of St. Hugh of Lincoln* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 2.44 (ch. 9). Quoted in McGuire, "c.1080–1215," 29–47, here 37.

10. On the opposition of Ecclesia and Synagoga, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 121–2. On the depiction of Synagoga with regard to the gaze, see Sara Lipton, *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography* (New York: Metropolitan Books / Henry Holt and Company, 2014), 42–5; 61–3; 120–2.

11. Hodgson, *Benjamin Minor,* 45.

Yet while this aspect of the *Benjamin Minor* has been well analyzed by scholars such as Michelle Karnes and Ritva Palmén, the earlier parts of the text have been neglected, particularly with regard to the formal structures that cut across the lines of the diagram, complicating the austere simplicity of the list.[12] We can see clearly here in the diagram the orderly hierarchy of the family, as the patriarch Jacob sits at the top, with a pair of wives, and their pair of handmaids, followed by the rows of children arranged in vertical rows. Yet there is a second ordering sequence as well: that of birth order, which skips around. One of the manuscripts, Cambridge University Library MS Kk.vi.26, actually includes this sequential numbering of children. The birth order sequence is also deployed in the narrative, as we move from an account of the wives of Jacob to the series of offspring, each of which is allegorically expounded both in terms of the quality that appears in the diagram—for example, Ruben is "drede" (or fear) of God, while Symeon is "sorrow of sin"—and also in terms of a secondary quality. An interesting case appears with the sons of Zelfa, the handmaid of Lya: in the diagram and in the text, they are said to represent abstinence (Gad) and patience (Asser). Yet they are also said to have another allegorical signification, where Gad represents "happynes or selynes," while Asser represents "blissidheed," or the state of being blessed (27). A similar double level of meaning is associated with the sons of Rachel's handmaid, Bala: Dan and Neptalym represent "the sight of pains to come" and "the sight of joys to come," respectively; but they also represent "doom" (or judgement), in the case of Dan, and "likeness" (25). In each case, the additional quality is based on a scriptural reference, as each mother names her child based on her state of mind or the condition she experiences. For the author, however, each moment of naming provides another opportunity to expound the allegorical significance of the children of Jacob, and to provide the contemplative matrix for spiritual growth.

Beyond these, additional structures are created within the text based on interrelations that link the sons of Jacob across matrilineal lines. This takes place, for example, when lines are (figuratively) drawn connecting the two sons of Lya's handmaid, Gad and Asser, with the two sons of Rachel's handmaid, Dan and Neptalym. The text states that "thees foure sones of thes two maydens" can be understood allegorically as "the cite of our concyence" which is tempted from within, by "thouȝtes," and from without, by "our fyue wittys." Dan—the son of Bala—protects us, however, by "deme" or judgement of those "yuel thouȝtes," while Gad—the son of Zelfa—protects us from "fals delices by

12. Michelle Karnes, *Imagination, Meditation, and Cognition in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 28–31; Palmén, *Theory of the Imagination,* 82–133.

vse of abstinence." Each of them is supported by his full brother, Dan by Neptalym and Gad by Asser. A whole series of relations linking the four sons of Jacob is laid out, in a kind of matrix, so that they together form a fortification so that "the cytee walles"—that is, the united soul and body of the individual person—"ben not brokyn."[13]

Another set of parallel structures is established that links not the offspring of the handmaidens, but the offspring of the wives. This is carried out by a set of parallels that juxtapose the last child born to Lya—that is, Dinah ("Dyna")—with the last child born to Rachel, Benjamin. Readers tend to simply focus on the climactic function of Benjamin at the end of the narrative, but it is important to notice the ways in which the author highlights the birth of Dyna both as a new beginning—with a new chapter break, and a recapitulation of some of the material that opened the work—and a secondary ending, with her birth repeatedly described as being "last." Just before the first child born to the patriarch Jacob, Ruben, is introduced early in the text, the author pauses to explain how each of the children born to Lya represents a quality; each of them, he emphasizes, is "ordained" or ordered, so that it is in the right measure:

> Also the seuen children of Lya ben seuen vertewes, for vertewe is not ells bot an ordeynd and a mesurid felyng of a mans soule. Than is mans feling in soule ordeynd when it is that thing that it schuld be. Than is it mesurid when it is as moche as it schuld be. Thees felynges in a mans soule mowen be now ordeind and mesurid, and now vnordeind and vnmsurid. Bot when thei ben ordeynd and mesurid, than ben thei acomptyd amonges the sones of Jacob.[14]

This concept of "ordained"—orderly, measured—qualities in the soul returns late in the text, with the introduction of Dyna in a new chapter heading on "Ordeinde Schame" that includes a long account of how the shame related to sin depends upon and follows hatred of sin, just as Dyna is born after Zabulon. The account of how Dyna's quality of shame is "ordained" is then expanded

13. "Bot here it is to witen how that with thees foure sones of thees two maydens, the cite of our concyence is kept wonderfuly from alle temptaciouns. For alle temptacyon outher it riseth withinne by thouȝt, or ells withouten by somme of oure fyue wittys. Bot withinne schal Dan deme and dampen yuel thouȝtes by siȝt of pyne, and withouten schal Gad put aȝeyn fals delices by vse of abstinence. Dan wakith withinne, and Gad withouten. And also thees other two brethren helpen hem ful mochel. Neptalym makith pees withinne with Dan, and Asser biddeth Gad haue no drede of his enmyes. . . . Also Asser helpith his brother withouten, so that thorow hem bothe the cytee walls ben not brokyn. Gad holdeth out ese, and Asser pursueth disease" (Hodgson, *Benjamin Minor,* 29).

14. Hodgson, *Benjamin Minor,* 16.

into an account of how all the qualities of Lya's children are "ordained"—if they were unordained, says the author, "than ben thei vices," but if they are ordained, "than ben thei vertewes."[15]

Dyna's role as the last of Lya's children is emphasized by the author, who explains that "therfore it is that after hem alle, and last, is Dyna borne, for after a foule fal and a faylyng cometh sone schame. And thus after many fallynges and faylynges, and schame folowyng, a man lerneth by the proef that there is nothing / betyr than to be rewyld afer counsel, the whiche is the rediest getyng of discrecioun."[16] Joseph—who signifies discretion—follows Dyna, just as discretion follows shame. This allegoresis of Dinah is a fundamentally positive one, where she represents the shame that paves the way for discretion and, ultimately, the contemplation embodied in Benjamin that will ravish and consume the rational soul. Here, shame is instrumental, the gateway to salvation. This interpretation of Dinah is very unusual in the medieval exegetical tradition, which more often interpreted her story in negative terms, focusing particularly on an episode in Genesis that, interestingly, is entirely omitted from the *Benjamin Minor.* This is the story of Dinah's rape by Shechem and the subsequent revenge taken on him and his entire tribe by her brothers Simeon and Levi.[17]

15. Hodgson, *Benjamin Minor,* 38.

16. Hodgson, *Benjamin Minor,* 40–1.

17. An overview of the exegesis of Dinah can be found in Joy A. Schroeder, *Dinah's Lament: The Biblical Legacy of Sexual Violence in Christian Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), building on the work of Barbara J. Newman in "Flaws in the Golden Bowl: Gender and Spiritual Formation in the Twelfth Century," in *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 19–45. The three main interpretations of Dinah, according to Schroeder and Newman, are: 1) Dinah represents ordinary Christians, Shechem is heresy, and the brothers are the Church hierarchy. This shows up in: Bede, *In Genesim commentarium,* c. 34 (PL 91.261–2); Hrabanus Maurus, *Commentariorum in Genesim libri quatuor,* c. 34 (PL 107.615); Bruno d'Asti, *Expositio in Genesim,* c. 34 (PL 164.215–16); Peter Riga, *Aurora: Petri Rigae Biblia Versificata, A Verse Commentary on the Bible,* vol. 1, ed. Paul E. Beichner (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), 67.1023–8. 2) Dinah as a figure for the vice of *curiositas.* The most famous instance is Bernard of Clairvaux, *S. Bernardi opera omnia,* vol. 3, *Liber de gradibus humilitatis et superbiae,* ed. Jean Leclercq, C. H. Talbot, and H. M. Rochais (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1963), 13–59, here 13–15. 3) Schroeder and Newman also argue that Dinah was interpreted for female monastic audiences as a literal warning about the need for strict enclosure. I am very grateful to Tristan Sharp for the above summary, and for the following two supplemental interpretations based on his own research: 4) Dinah used as a warning to male monastics against entanglement in worldly affairs and *vagatio* (not the same as *curiositas*): see Peter Damian, *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani,* vol. 3, *Die Briefe d. dt. Kaiserzeit,* ed. Kurt Reindel (München: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1993), 202; and Peter of Celle, *De disciplina claustrali,* in Petrus Cellensis, *L'école du cloître,* ed. and trans. Gérard de Martel (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1977), 146. The *Speculum novitii* sometimes attributed to the Cistercian Stephen of Sawley is arguably in this category as well. See Edmond Mikkers, "Un 'Speculum Novitii' inédit d'Étienne de Salley,"

The Dyna of the *Benjamin Minor* is anomalous, in part because of the omission of the rape and revenge narrative, and in part because of how elaborately her position among the siblings is articulated within the overall genealogical patterning of the text. Dyna stands out among the children of Lya as a kind of remainder: if we look at the list of the sons of Lya, we see that the six sons form pairs of conventional contraries in a way that is familiar in personification allegory, such as the evenly matched battles found in Prudentius's *Psychomachia* or the paired figures found in the Garden of Deduit in Guillaume de Lorris's opening section of the *Roman de la Rose*. Dread (or fear) is paired with hope, Ruben with Levy; sorrow is paired with joy, Symeon with Isachar; love is paired with hate, Judas with Zabulon. Shame is left over, leaving Dyna out of the paired sequence of the children of Lya; but this quality of being the remainder is precisely what generates the juxtaposition of Dyna, last-born of Lya, with Benjamin, last-born of Rachel. The list of siblings provides a sense of completeness, a sense that is amplified by the symmetrical pairings of the six sons of Lya: Dyna stands apart from these, being a kind of remainder or superfluity. Yet in serving as a counterpart to Benjamin, who himself stands apart from his older brothers, Dyna holds the promise of offering something more, of being not just that which is left over.

These two remainders or surplus children are further contrasted in the language of vision that is applied to each of them. Benjamin is seen to be ravished by the sight of the divine, while Dyna is said to be exposed bodily to the sight of others. Of Benjamin, the author says:

> Bot longe aftyr Joseph is Beniamin borne; for whi trewly bot ȝif it so be that we vse us besyly and longe in goostly trauayles, with the whiche we ben lernid to knowe oure-self, we mowen not be reisyd to the knowing and contemplacioun of God. He doth for nouȝt that liftyth up his iȝe to the siȝt of God, that is not ȝit able to see himself. . . . And wite it wel that he that desireth to se God, hym behoueth to clense his soule, the whiche is a mirour in the whiche alle thing is cleerly seen when it is clene. And when the mirour is foule, then maist thou see nothing cleerly therin. And riȝt so it is of thi soule. When it is foule, neither thou knowest thiself, ne God.[18]

Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium Reformatorum 8 (1946): 17–68, here 66. 5) Another Cistercian, Baldwin of Forde, focuses on Shechem's desire for Dinah as an instance of disordered love: see Baldwin of Forde, *Opera* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), 331. This seems to be related to Abelard's *Planctus Dinae,* in which Dinah and Shechem are portrayed as tragic lovers separated by her no-good family. On the *Planctus,* see Gilbert Dahan, "La Matière biblique dans le *Planctus* de Dina de Pierre Abélard," in *Hortus troporum: Florilegium in honorem Gunillae Iverson,* ed. Alexander Andrée and Erika Kihlman (Stockholm: Stockhoms Universitet, 2008), 255–67.

18. Hodgson, *Benjamin Minor,* 42–3.

And of Dyna, he says:

> Bot whatso thou be that wenyst that thou haste getyn Dyna, think whether thee wolde schame as moche and a foule thouȝt were in thin herte, as thee wold and thou were mad stonde nakid bifore the kyng and alle the rewme. And sekirly ellys wite thou riȝt wel that thou hast not getyn ȝit ordeinde schame in thi felyng, ȝif it so be that thou haue lesse schame with thi foule herte than with thi foule body; and ȝif thou more schame with thi foule body in the siȝt of men than with thi foule herte in the siȝte of the kyng of heuen and of all his aungelles and holy seyntes in heuen.[19]

Like Leah and Rachel, Dinah and Benjamin are both similitudes and opposites: they are both described as coming "last," and both are defined in terms of vision. Yet they differ not only in their maternal descent, but in terms of the visual experience: Benjamin is the one who sees, while Dinah is the one who is seen, as she undergoes the salvific experience of shame. This shame, however, is a fruitful one—or at least, it was perceived that way by medieval readers. This is vividly illustrated in another manuscript of the *Benjamin Minor,* this one in the Houghton Library at Harvard (MS Richardson 22, ca. 1425).[20] It includes a version of the diagram we have seen already in the Harley manuscript, but not a very interesting one. What *is* striking about this manuscript, however, is its fascinating decorative program. The opening page is ornamented, followed by a series of ordinary pages featuring only decorated capitals. Then the diagrammatic list of the children of Jacob appears (Figure 4.2), not nearly as ornate a schematic as in the Harley manuscript (Figure 4.1); then, suddenly, on the page immediately after the diagram, which expounds its content, we have a wonderful profusion of ornament, at least as lavish—perhaps a little more so—than the opening page (Figure 4.3). It seems as though the text has begun again, with an abundance of efflorescence. We then go back into the usual page format, until we suddenly get another flowering, smaller than the others. This is the section on Dyna, which returns to the theme of "ordained" virtues that appeared on the earlier ornate page, after the diagram. The decorative program here, in other words, brings out more fully the internal logic of the text, highlighting the importance of the Dyna narrative to the overall structure of the work, and bubbling forth in exuberant color detail at moments where the diagrammatic intensity of the

19. Hodgson, *Benjamin Minor,* 37.

20. A description of Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Richardson 22 can be found online at: https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/medieval-renaissance-manuscripts/catalog/34–990098807420203941.

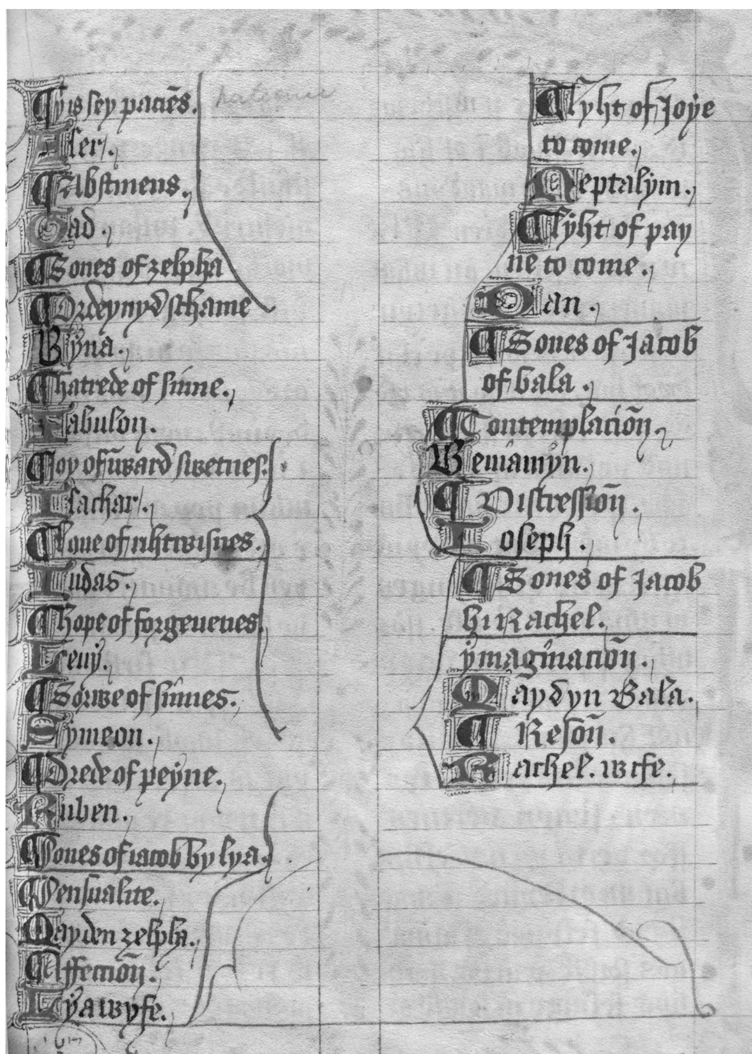

FIGURE 4.2. Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Richardson 22, fol. 54r.

allegory is at its highest. In the genealogical diagram, the red and blue capitals pick out the names of the children of Jacob; only two are picked out in black letters instead—Benjamin and Dyna, the last-born children of the wives of Jacob (Figure 4.2).

The last lines of the text, too, provide a visual, formal counterpart to the prose narrative. The final folio concludes with the end of the *Benjamin Minor* in the left column and some shorter prayers on the right. The last vestiges of

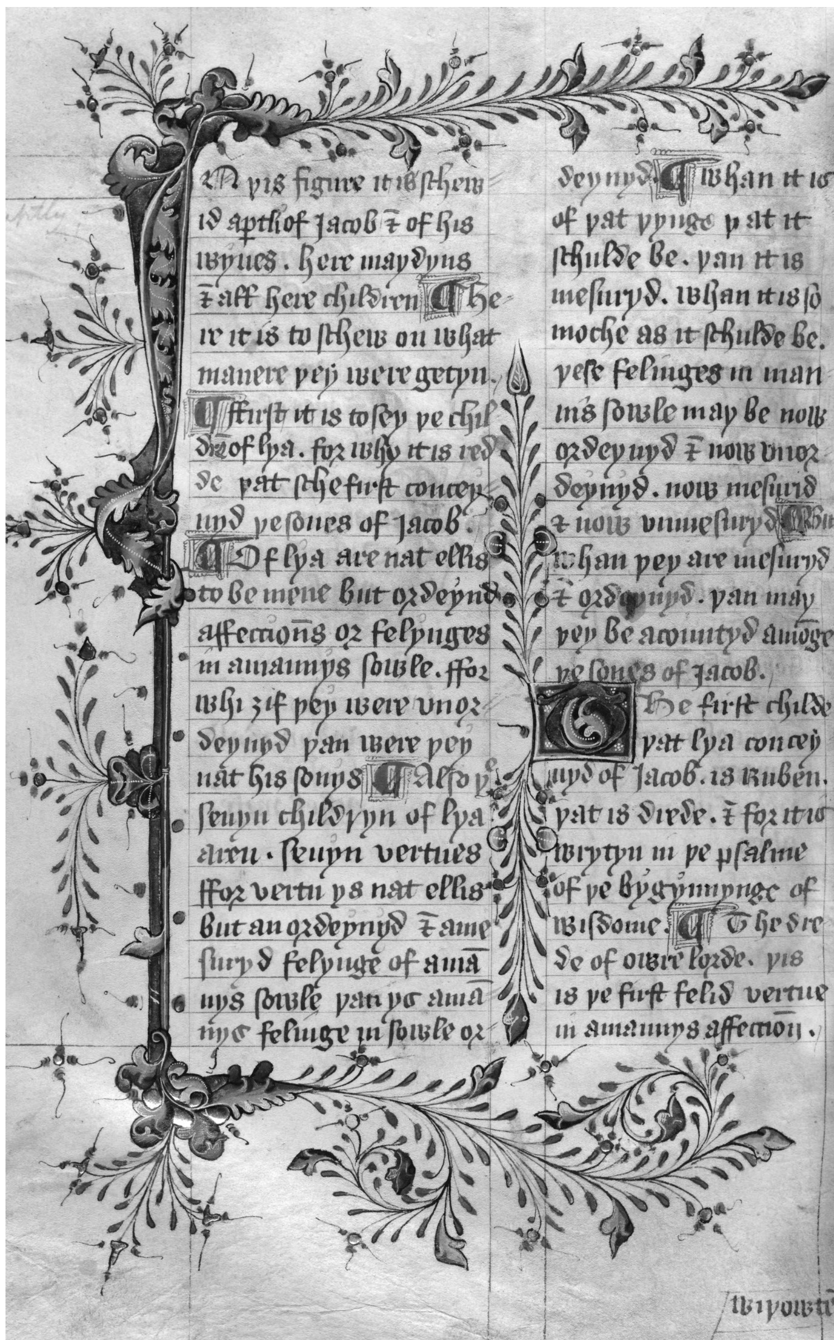
[I]N þis figure it is schew
id aptli of Jacob & of his
wyues. here maydyns
& all here children ¶ The
r it is to schew on what
manere þey were getyn.
¶ ffirst it is to sey þe chil
dre of lya. for why it is red
de þat sche first concey
nyd þe sones of Jacob.
¶ Of lya are nat ellis
to be mene but ordeynd
affeccions or felynges
in a mannys soule. ffor
whi 3if þey were unor
deynyd þan were þey
nat his sonys ¶ Also þ
seuyn childryn of lya
aren. seuyn vertues
ffor vertu ys nat ellis
but an ordeynyd & ame
suryd felynge of a ma
nys soule þan yt a ma
nys felinge in soule or
deynyd ¶ whan it is
of þat þynge þat it
schulde be. þan it is
mesuryd. whan it is so
moche as it schulde be.
þese felinges in man
nis soule may be now
ordeynyd & now unor
deynyd. now mesurid
& now unmesuryd ¶ But
whan þey are mesuryd
& ordeynyd. þan may
þey be acountyd amonge
þe sones of Jacob.
¶ The first childe
þat lya concey
nyd of Jacob. is Ruben.
þat is drede. & for it is
wrytyn in þe psalme
of þe bygynnynge of
wisdome. ¶ The dre
de of oure lorde. þis
is þe first felid vertue
in a mannys affeccion.
wiþoute

FIGURE 4.3. Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Richardson 22, fol. 54v.

ornament appear here, with two capitals marking out two lines of Latin, followed by three lines of English translation:

> So that it be fulfillid in the that that is iwretyn in the psalme.
> Ibi beniamyn adolescentulus in mentis excessu.
> That is / There ys beniamyn the ȝonge childe in rauisschinge of mynde.[21]

By closing with the biblical passage, the *Benjamin Minor* makes a kind of circle. The work as a whole is an elaborate exposition of this very biblical passage (Psalm 67:28), which itself becomes the climax of the text. The reader is brought face to face with the fact of Benjamin's ecstatic contemplation, raised up step by step through the genealogical hierarchy of the family of Jacob. In other words, the genealogical ladder flows in two directions: downward, in the fecund reproduction of the family tree; and upward, as the individual soul in contemplation is raised up, step by step, to the sight of God. The list of the names of the children of Jacob makes up the rungs of that ladder.

The literary form of the Middle English *Benjamin Minor* is thus both linear and cyclical, ordered by the list of Jacob's children, which proceed from the patriarch and yet also lead back to him. In this way, the reader is interpellated into a spiritual journey which is as much affective as intellective, and which uses an elaborately intertwined and symmetrical formal structure to enable the soul's ascent. The *Benjamin Minor* serves as a handbook that seeks to provide the reader with the directions needed in order to become the soul that is united with God, inhabiting in turn the roles of Lya (in its affection), Zelfa (in its sensuality), Bala (through the faculty of imagination), and Rachel (through the faculty of reason). Through enacting each of these receptive roles, the soul seeks to bear the offspring of Jacob, hoping to achieve that perfect, fecund moment of utter annihilation.

REGINALD PECOCK'S FAMILY TREES

While the Houghton manuscript (Figures 4.2 and 4.3) appears to have been commissioned for a community of female religious, as noted on fol. 51v, the *Benjamin Minor* also circulated among lay readers, in compilations of short devotional texts. It appears, for example, in Westminster School MS 3, a carefully composed collection of items that Amanda Moss has described as typical of "the fashion for devotional miscellanies and common-profit books

21. Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Richardson 22, fol. 68v.

circulating among London merchant families from the early fifteenth century onwards."[22] This audience is the same reading community targeted by the fifteenth-century writer and bishop Reginald Pecock in the pedagogical program outlined and carried out in his major works; the mode of spiritual education, however, especially with regard to the role of reason and the way in which knowledge is acquired, is substantially different in Pecock's work from what we have seen in the *Benjamin Minor.*[23] The genealogy of the family tree, in both cases, plays a key role in structuring the acquisition of knowledge and spiritual growth: the *Benjamin Minor* and Pecock's devotional works, however, differ sharply with regard to how that takes place. In the *Benjamin Minor,* knowledge is achieved through divinely inspired illumination, as the soul is drawn upward through affective engagement, yoked to the faculties of the mind; in Pecock's works, knowledge—including spiritual knowledge—is achieved primarily through human intellectual effort, with little attention to affect. In both cases, the polyvalent metaphor of the tree, including the family tree, illuminates late medieval attitudes toward knowledge: it is, on the one hand, infinitely generative and all-consuming, and, on the other hand, limited and in need of careful husbandry.

Although his writings are generally didactic and programmatic, Pecock sometimes adds color to his texts by including vivid descriptions and figurative language to illustrate his rational arguments. A good example of this appears in Pecock's *Reule of Crysten Religioun* (c. 1443), where the prologue includes an elaborate description of how the mournful narrator of the work found himself unexpectedly visited by "a multitude of persoonys ful comely and faire"—that is, personifications in the form of beautiful women.[24] This passage recalls similar scenes in some of the most famous dream visions of the Middle Ages, including Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* and Alanus de Insulis's *Plaint of Nature.* Mishtooni Bose has also suggested that this scene may owe something to the opening of Christine de Pizan's *Cité des dames.*[25]

22. Amanda Moss, "A Merchant's Tales: A London Fifteenth-Century Household Miscellany," *Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003): 156–69, here 158.

23. On Pecock's educational program, see Kirsty Campbell, *The Call to Read: Reginald Pecock's Books and Textual Communities* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

24. Reginald Pecock, *The Reule of Crysten Religioun, now first edited from Pierpont Morgan ms. 519,* ed. William Cabell Greet (London: Oxford University Press, 1927 [for 1926]; rpt. New York: Kraus Reprint, 1971), 31. An overview of Pecock's works and their chronology can be found in James Simpson, "Reginald Pecock and John Fortescue," in *A Companion to Middle English Prose,* ed. A. S. G. Edwards (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 271–87, see esp. 272–7.

25. Mishtooni Bose, "Vernacular Opinions," in *Uncertain Knowledge: Scepticism, Relativism, and Doubt in the Middle Ages,* ed. Dallas G. Denery II, Kantik Ghosh, and Nicolette Zeeman (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 239–59.

Pecock's scene differs from its Boethian model—and resembles Christine's—in the presence of multiple personifications instead of just one. Another key difference, however, that separates Pecock's text from all of the others is that these personifications are explicitly said to be generative.

Pecock uses biblical genealogies twice in the *Reule,* first in an allusion to the fallen angels or "sons of God" who mated with "the daughters of man" to produce giants, recounted in Genesis, chapter 6 ("gigantes autem erant super terram in diebus illis . . . ingressi sunt filii Dei ad filias hominum illaeque genuerunt"; "There were giants in the earth in those days . . . the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them" [Genesis 6:4]), and second in an allusion to the wives and children of Jacob. In the first case, Pecock opens the *Reule* by stating that clerks are "sones of God" who, like the fallen angels, seek out not spouses like themselves, but instead "the doughtris of men." These daughters, in Pecock's allegory, are "worldly trouthis, oolde rehercellis, strange stories, fablis of poetis, newe invenciouns." In other words, these daughters represent figurative writing that does not refer to a higher truth, enabling intellectual ascent through the exercise of reason, but which serves instead only to titillate the imaginative faculty of the mind. The progeny of these "doughtris of men," like that spawned by the fallen angels of Genesis, are said to be "giauntis manye and stronge"; allegorically, they are the "manye grete volumes and bookis" that are "myghti and famose," like the monstrous offspring of Genesis ("isti sunt potentes a saeculo viri famosi"; "these ones became mighty men which were of old, men of renown" [Genesis 6:4]).[26]

This first genealogical reference in Pecock's *Reule* is followed by a second one that refers to the sons of Jacob who would father the Tribes of Israel. The personified truths who address Pecock's narrator go on to suggest an alternative genealogy that should take place: they say that clerks, the "sones of God," should direct their affections not toward the unworthy "doughtris of men" or literary fictions, but rather toward the personified "treuthis" themselves. Because of that unnatural union, say the "treuthis," "we doughtris of god lacken oure religiose and goostlie progenye" (33). They invite Pecock's narrator to remedy the omission: "But thou man to whom this grace is youen to haue oure profre . . . forsake not the yifte which is to thee presentid" (34). After fathering the longed-for "goostlie progenye," begotten by "sones of God" (clerks) upon the "doughtris of God" (the "treuthis"), the narrator has another task before him: namely, to take up with the "daughters of men." Pecock writes, "After whanne thou art with vs and oure progenye thus plenteuousely bigoon,

26. Pecock, *Reule,* 32–3.

we wole fuche saaf that thou in secundarie maner attende to the doughtris of men, but oonly as to oure seruantis and not our ladies." The offspring of this secondary union will be "children of good werkis," receiving "her herytage and her right names" not from the low-born handmaidens who physically give birth to them, but from the "treuthis" who stand in the legal position of mother: "thei schulen be to vs children of purchace legal and leful and no bastard braunchis."[27]

This family tree, including both wives and handmaidens who bear additional children, is based on the lineage of Jacob described in Genesis 29 and 30, just as we saw in the *Benjamin Minor.* Like the sons of Noah, the progeny of Jacob multiply and fill the earth. While Jacob's sons are literally the fathers of the Tribes of Israel, for Pecock, they represent not only the chosen people of the New Covenant of Christ, but the virtues and vices encountered and expressed by the individual soul. Just as we saw in the *Benjamin Minor,* the progeny of Jacob's wives is clearly set apart from the progeny of the two handmaidens. The projected children begotten by the "sones of God" upon the "doughtris of men"—that is, the offspring who are generated by the union of clerics and allegorical figures—will be included within the legitimate family structure in which the "doughtris of God," the "treuthis" who address Pecock's narrator, function as matriarchs, in the same way that the offspring of the two handmaidens are included within the family tree structured by the two wives of Jacob, Rachel and Lya. For Pecock, only through this properly ordered family relationship can figurative writing be confined to its proper place both within the discursive realm, and within the operation of the individual soul.

It is striking, in this passage, to observe the level of interpretive ability that Pecock expects his reader to possess. These include not only familiarity with the operation of allegorical language, but also the ability to correlate the text with appropriate biblical analogues as well as the interpretive traditions associated with those analogues. In other words, this text requires a sophisticated and knowledgeable reader, one who is ready to participate in the process of their own education. In his wide range of writings, Pecock expects very different levels of interpretive ability from his readers: in the *Donet* (c. 1443–9) and the *Folower to the Donet* (c. 1453–4), he expects a relatively uneducated reader, while in the *Reule* (c. 1443) and the *Repressor* (c. 1449), he expects a more sophisticated one. Pecock himself remarks that the dialogue form of the *Donet* is meant to make the book easier to understand, and that the doctrine contained in it is "a fore taast, a fore assaie, and a fore general and a confuse

27. Pecock, *Reule,* 35–6.

knowing of the ful draught and of the ful feeding" found in the more substantial (and difficult) *Reule of Cristen Religioun.*[28] In the latter book, Pecock's *Reule,* the reader is expected to know how to feed himself.

I will not discuss Pecock's use of figurative language in any more detail, though it is rich and elaborate. For our purposes, what is useful to note in Pecock is his use of the family tree of Jacob as a template for mapping out how the individual soul might approach God. Unlike the author of the *Benjamin Minor,* who uses the family tree to account for and to improve the state of the individual soul, Pecock is deeply concerned not only with the individual but also with the welfare of the community. In this context, one might compare the genealogical structures produced within the mendicant orders during the fifteenth century, which feature not only significant Dominican and Franciscan figures but also allegorical figures such as Obedience, Poverty, and Chastity, all of whom serve as guides on the path to spiritual salvation even as they are also presented as roots, trunk, and branches of a figurative tree.[29] Pecock's use of the family tree in the context of the spiritual formation of the community thus appears as a secular counterpart to similar practices within the mendicant orders.

While the systematic approach to theological doctrine and practice found in Pecock's works is distinctive, he can also be seen as one in a long genealogy of devotional writers who use highly schematic, even diagrammatic materials to spell out how the worshiper should approach God. This genealogy includes not only the anonymous author of the *Benjamin Minor* but also the thirteenth-century scientist and theologian Robert Grosseteste. In his *Chastel d'amur,* Grosseteste uses spatial optical metaphors to describe the Incarnation, explaining how the single colorless white ray of light is refracted into the full spectrum as it passes through the "castle of love" that is the body of the Virgin, in the moment when she conceives the Word made flesh. In his *Templum Dei,* the architectural allegory is more universal than that of the *Chastel d'amur*: there, only the body of Mary was the allegorized edifice; in the *Templum Dei,* each one of us. Finally, the spatial organization of knowledge is also fundamental to Grosseteste's *Tabula* (ca. 1230): this is an unprecedented cross-

28. Reginald Pecock, *The Donet, now first edited from MS. Bodl. 916 and collated with The poore mennis myrrour (British Museum, Addl. 37788),* ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), 2.

29. Christian Nikolaus Opitz, "Genealogical Representations of Monastic Communities in Late Medieval Art," in *Meanings of Community Across Medieval Eurasia: Comparative Approaches,* ed. Eirik Hovden, Christina Lutter, and Walter Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 183–202, see esp. 191–8.

indexing system organized by logographs that functions as a kind of machine for the synthesis of scriptural and natural information.[30]

Like Grosseteste, Pecock uses tables to facilitate the reader's understanding and retention of lists pertaining to the Christian religion. Although none of the few surviving manuscripts of Pecock's works contains diagrams, it is easy to imagine an enthusiastic reader including them in the margin or adding them to his own copy of Pecock's text, much as at least one reader of the *Benjamin Minor* did in adding numbers to the listing of Jacob's children in order to facilitate the Christian exegesis of the family tree of Israel (Cambridge University Library MS Kk.vi.26). It is unsurprising that Pecock's tables are largely unstudied, since diagrams and tables in medieval texts have until recently tended to be ignored by textual scholars, who consider them to be images, and by art historians, who consider them to be text. In a sense, the fact that Pecock's tables exist only in textual form, rather than as drawn diagrams, is totally appropriate to the learning process he lays out: Pecock continually invites the reader to participate in the process of acquiring knowledge. The reader is not to be a passive recipient but an active gardener, working with the author in the cultivation of truth. The tables function in just this way: although Pecock does not hesitate to defend the structure of his tables, arguing that they represent the best-reasoned and most efficient means of conveying doctrine and preserving it in memory, he acknowledges explicitly that a better composition of the tables might well be possible, and encourages his readers to try to do so.[31]

30. On Grosseteste's *Chastel d'amur,* see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Seeing through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 43. For a comparative study of the *Chastel,* the *Templum Dei,* and the *Tabula,* focusing on architectural allegory, see Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "Diagramming Devotion: The Place of Grosseteste in English Affective Piety" [forthcoming]. For the text of Grosseteste's *Tabula* (completed ca. 1230), see Philipp W. Rosemann, ed., *Tabula magistri Roberti Lincolniensis episcopi cum addicione fratris Ade de Marisco,* in *Roberti Grosseteste Expositio in epistolam sancti Pauli ad Galatas; Glossarum in sancti Pauli epistolas fragmenta; Tabula,* ed. James McEvoy, Richard C. Dales, and Philipp W. Rosemann (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995).

31. In his *Folower to the Donet,* for example, Pecock remarks that "y myghte haue disposid the v e poynt of the ii e table and the v e poynt to the iiij e table. . . . Also y myght haue smyte awey the viij e poynt of the first table" (224–5). Yet Pecock does not reserve the possibility of revising the composition of the tables only to himself; on the contrary, even though Pecock has done his best to compose his materials in the manner most conducive to understanding and retaining in memory, "y wole that men chese whiche of these disposicions [that is, arrangements of the tables] schulen to hem plese; for litil fors it is, as anentis the mater and the trouth of vertuose lyuyng, whethir the oon or the othir be holde. . . . Y wole therfore lete men chese and take these bothe weies, as foryeuen to hem of me, vndir choice" (226). Here, the reader is explicitly invited to participate fully in the cultivation of his own garden—that is, the fruitful garden of his soul. While this terrain will never return to a state of Edenic, prelapsarian grace, it can be a paradise that bears fruits, and that sends up flowering branches

What the authors of these texts have in common is a deep commitment to the generative nature of the reading process. For Grosseteste, in his *Tabula,* the reader manipulates the logographs across the nine *distinctiones* or subject headings in order to cross-reference a range of passages—secular and sacred, written in Latin, Greek, and Arabic—to generate new knowledge, which is at once the product of human ingenuity and divinely revealed to mankind through the ladder of intellectual ascent. For Pecock, the reader is even more explicitly in charge of their own salvation, working with his tables in order to assimilate—and teach—Christian theological truths. Yet for Pecock, intellectual knowledge of those truths is not enough: those truths are also, allegorically, the wives of the rightly guided clerks, who—like the wives of Jacob—are both the wellspring of a maternal genealogy of virtues and also the matriarchal heads of a large progeny, which includes the offspring of their handmaids. There is a generative process at work in the acquisition of knowledge. This same genealogy, as we have seen, underlies the *Benjamin Minor,* where the family of Jacob is both a structure that makes intelligible the relationship of the various faculties of the mind and affects of the soul, and also a kind of ladder by means of which the worshipper can ascend. The list of names, in the *Benjamin Minor,* makes up the rungs of that ladder of ascent. Dinah—and in particular, the shame of Dinah—marks the threshold of this mystical ascent, where the various affects of the spirit that inhabits the body give way to the purely incorporeal features of the eternal soul—discretion and contemplation—that are embodied as the sons of Rachel. For the devout reader who studies this genealogy, the children of Jacob are both a manifestation of the divine and the pathway that leads to sweet and eternal annihilation. The names of his children, lovingly listed—and even numbered—in the manuscript diagrams of the Middle English *Benjamin Minor,* are the waypoints in this journey to God.

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of truths to nourish not only the individual soul, but also those who participate in his community of fellow gardeners. Reginald Pecock, *The Folewer to the Donet, now first edited from Brit. Mus. Roy. Ms. 17D. ix,* ed. Elsie Vaughan Hitchcock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924, rpt. New York: Kraus Reprints, 1971).