Anna Shchetnikova

PAGAN SINNER OR IDEAL WIFE? LUCRETIA IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN CONTEXTS

MA Thesis in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies

Central European University Private University

Vienna

May 2024

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by

Anna Shchetnikova

(Russian Federation)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
Central European University Private University, Vienna, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts degree in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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External Reader

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Author's declaration

I, the undersigned, **Anna Shchetnikova**, candidate for the MA degree in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract

The story of the rape and suicide of Roman matron Lucretia attracted significant attention since its first appearance in the ancient literature. Different versions of the story have been analyzed by researchers for over a century; however, the lines of influence are often drawn directly between the Classical sources and the Church Fathers and Renaissance literature and art; her use in medieval literature, especially religious sources, has largely remained unnoticed. This paper argues that Lucretia's representations in medieval sources are indicative of larger trends in the thought on what constitutes a virtuous life; and that there exists a continuum, rather than a break, between earlier use of her story in the sermon context and the later versions of secular authors.

The first chapter overviews the classical and early Christian sources on Lucretia and the conflict between them that informed later versions of the story. The second chapter is dedicated to the revival of classical reading in the twelfth century and the subsequent re-emergence of that conflict. The third chapter covers the use of Lucretia's story as an *exemplum* in the context of preaching and didactic works created by clergymen, while the fourth chapter focuses on secular sources and the position of Lucretia as a model woman and wife in the late medieval period. Finally, the last chapter considers how vernacularization in the early Renaissance times led to a proliferation of increasingly different interpretations of the story.

Acknowledgments

This thesis would never be completed without the help and support of many people; it is impossible to name all of them within the space of a page. I would like to give special thanks:

To my supervisors, Eloïse Adde and Gerhard Jaritz, for their continuous support and understanding. Their commentary and advice helped to significantly enrich my understanding of the sources; the use of Old French texts would be impossible without Eloise's linguistic expertise, and Gerhard's perspective on the connections between the "normative" and the "daily" has proved especially valuable.

To the leader of the thesis research seminar, Baukje van den Berg, and to all its participants for their insightful commentary and ideas.

To my BA supervisors, Svetlana Yatsyk and Antonina Sharova. Many of the ideas and approaches I pursued in this paper are indebted to what they have taught me throughout the years.

To my Abbey girls – Ana, Celina, Chloe, Kai, and Zeynep. Their work has been a constant source of inspiration for me, and their friendship allowed me to pull through the worst days.

To Chaplain Eliza Zikmane and the congregation of St. Saviour's in Riga for the safe harbor and the nicest coffee hours.

And to my mother - a person without whom nothing would be possible and to whom each of my words in this paper is dedicated.

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Introduction

During the reign of the last Roman king, there was a nobleman and his wife, and she was beautiful and virtuous. There was another man who was stricken by her beauty - a son of the king, who waited for her husband to be safely away from home and came to her chamber in the night. After she did not succumb to his pleas, he took what he wanted by force and threats. In the morning, the lady called for her husband and father, told them what happened, and then, not listening to their words of consolation, pierced herself with a knife. Her family vowed to avenge her death, the outrage over her rape spread through the city, and before long, the royal family was exiled, and monarchy in Rome was no more.

The story of Lucretia, her husband Tarquinius Collatinus, and the vicious Sextus Tarquinius, was one of the foundational myths for Roman society;[1] and the heroine herself was lauded by the ancient Roman authors as the ideal of feminine virtue, her suicide exemplifying the Stoic ideal of glorious death in the name of chastity, the greatest value for a Roman woman.[2] But after the advent of Christianity, this ideal came under attack, especially from Augustine, who argued in great detail that Lucretia (as all other pagans) could not have possessed virtue at all, that her suicide was the sign of her sinfulness, and that it does not make sense for Christians to speak of her as a role model.[3] However, despite the authority of the Church Father, her story continued to appear in medieval sources as a story of virtuous behavior that could teach Christians something worthy, with authors balancing between "pagan" and "Christian" interpretations and simultaneously adding new layers to the story according to the views of their time and their own needs. Lucretia's example is indicative of a

[1] Melissa M. Matthes, *The Rape of Lucretia and the Founding of Republics: Readings in Livy, Machiavelli, and Rousseau* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007), 23-4.

[2] Alexander Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages: Volume 2: The Curse on Self-Murder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 110-1, 139-41.

[3] Ibid., 116-7.

contradictory position that "the ancients", pagan Greeks and Romans, could hold in medieval literature: they were talked about, as classical authors, such as Horace or Virgil, formed a basis for Latin learning, but they also remained "the Other," carriers of non-Christian ethical models.[4]

The central **research question** addressed in this thesis is thus why Christian authors continued to include Lucretia in didactic works despite the apparent conflict between her pagan background and Christian virtues. While much scholarship has focused on the direct influences of classical sources on Renaissance literature and art, this thesis posits that there is a continuum, rather than a stark divide, between the medieval religious and didactic texts and later secular appropriations of her story.

Previous research, such as the work of Lynn Shutters, has provided partial answers by highlighting the didactic utility of Lucretia's story. In her 2009 paper on Lucretia and the late medieval idea of *maritalis affectio*, Shutters traces the changes that Christine de Pizan and the anonymous author of *Le Ménagier de Paris*, a vernacular guidebook (c. 1393) purportedly compiled by a Parisian husband for his young wife, have made to their classical sources. Based on this analysis, she has been able to suggest that the reason why such a controversial story was employed by late medieval authors is the need to find an example of spousal life and wifely chastity unconstrained by purely religious considerations.[5] Despite the valuable findings, there remains the problem of an uninvestigated gap between ancient authors and analyzed texts, because of which the use of ancient *exempla* is made to seem like a radical step of "returning to the roots" made in the fourteenth century.

[4] In looking at the story of Lucretia in medieval sources, I employ a research paradigm formulated in 2015 by the British historian John Marenbon, which he called the "pagan problem" – a framework to look at a wide layer of discussions from the time of the Church Fathers to the eighteenth century, with three main questions: can pagans be virtuous; whether the philosophy and science of the pagans are worthy of study; is it possible for the pagans' souls to be saved? See John Marenbon, *Pagans and Philosophers: The Problem of Paganism from Augustine to Leibniz* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

[5] Lynn Shutters, 'Marital Affection and the Medieval Lucretia', *Medieval Feminist Forum: A Journal of Gender and Sexuality* 45, no. 2 (2009): 62–84.

Lucretia's story has attracted the attention of numerous influential authors throughout history and, consequently, many researchers who study these authors. Her appearances in works of such figures as Augustine, Chaucer, and Shakespeare, have been explored extensively, as the sheer volume of research dedicated to them means that every verse by these authors has been analyzed repeatedly, both in isolation and within the broader textual tradition. Consequently, I cannot claim to have read everything that has been published on such appearances; however, the extensive scholarship of Lucretia's treatment by specific authors enables the construction of an initial understanding of the various perspectives on her by classical Roman authors, early Christian writers, and scholars of the Renaissance and later periods.

Several studies have also been published on the historical evolution of Lucretia's representations. The earliest study of this kind dates back to 1932 when a study on Lucretia's image in the world literature by Hans Galinsky was published.[6] The social and political contexts of adaptations of Lucretia's story in different eras were later explored by Ian Donaldson.[7] A common issue in both of the cases is that lines of influence are often drawn directly between Classical sources, the Church Fathers, and secular late medieval and Renaissance literature and art, treating what happened in between as a separate story with no bearing on more "modern" representations.[8]

When pre-fourteenth-century authors are studied, the focus tends to be on "the big names," with few attempts to examine Lucretia in the broader context of mass sources. Notable exceptions are Wolfgang Müller's paper on Lucretia and the canonists, in which he investigated the issues that arose from Lucretia's story for legal consequences of rape and

[6] Hans Galinsky, *Der Lucretia-Stoff in Der Weltiliteratur* (Breslau: Priebatsch's Buchhandlung, 1932).

[7] Ian Donaldson, *The Rapes of Lucretia: A Myth and Its Transformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

[8] The same can be said about another study of Lucretia's narrative, in Rachel Margaret Goldman, 'The Lucretia Legend from Livy to Rojas Zorrilla' (Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, NY, City University of New York, 1976).

suicide;[9] and Andrew Galloway's work on Lucretia in the works of Oxford "classisizing friars" of the thirteenth century.[10]

To investigate the mentioned gap, the thesis charts the dissemination and adaptation of Lucretia's story across different periods, emphasizing how medieval authors addressed the "abnormality" of her actions and the ethical dichotomies between pagan and Christian values. The **primary sources** analyzed or mentioned in the paper do not cover all textual appearances of Lucretia between Livy and Shakespeare, as such a task would be impossible to achieve within the confines of an MA thesis. While charting the general dissemination of the story was one of the aims of the work, I have also magnified certain stories, striving to showcase different strategies for dealing with the questions above in the sources. I have also tried to give more space to less known sources, including religious didactic literature and sermon tradition, as I wanted to investigate not only interpretations by famous authors, such as Chaucer or Boccaccio, but broader dissemination of and interaction with the story.

During the preliminary gathering of the sources, I have not postulated specific geographical boundaries apart from the general intellectual space of Latin Europe. Within the monastic orders, standard texts and ideas on preaching could be relatively unified. However, the search for Lucretia's mentions in the high Middle Ages has yielded mostly sources from the "Romanesque" part of Europe, including the French-influenced British Isles. This issue requires additional research, but at this stage we can point to the reasoning of E.R. Curtius, highlighting the "Romanesque" part of Europe, where, earlier than beyond the Rhine, close relations with the ancient heritage developed as an independent value, and not as an

[9] Wolfgang P. Müller, 'Lucretia and the Medieval Canonists', *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 19 (1989): 13–32.

[10] Andrew Galloway, 'Chaucer's Legend of Lucrece and the Critique of Ideology in Fourteenth-Century England', *ELH* 60, no. 4 (1993): 813–32.

instrument for the knowledge of sacred texts through Latin learning.[11] In the end, when working with vernacular texts, I have decided to concentrate on French and English material to be able to look at the set of sources within a coherent textual culture.

Methodologically, after gathering the initial source base, I approached it primarily by establishing connections between the texts and analyzing authorial choices between existing versions of the story, and additions of new elements. I have aimed to examine the variations of Lucretia's story as a result of individual author strategies within the broader context of decisions made available by existing tradition. Following this approach, it is possible to trace both general trends and variations in of Lucretia's appearances.

The thesis is divided into five chapters in both chronological and thematic logic. In the first chapter, I overview the classical and early Christian sources on Lucretia and the conflict between them that informed later versions of the story. The second chapter is dedicated to the revival of classical reading in the twelfth century, the subsequent re-emergence of that conflict, and interactions of the educated audiences with Lucretia's story. The third chapter covers the use of the story as an *exemplum* in the context of preaching and didactic works created by clergymen, while the fourth chapter focuses on secular sources and the position of Lucretia as a model woman and wife in the late medieval period. Finally, the last chapter considers how vernacularization in the early Renaissance times led to a proliferation of increasingly different interpretations of the story.

[11] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 30-5.

Chapter 1. Lucretia in ancient sources and early Christian texts: establishing the problem

For medieval authors and readers, the story of Lucretia presented a challenge; the grounds for that were laid down back in the early centuries of Christianity when the boundaries between pagan and Christian cultures were only beginning to be established. To understand how the story developed in later periods, it is necessary to see how Lucretia was discussed in these earlier sources that would serve as the basis for new interpretations. As representations of Lucretia in ancient and early Christian sources have been studied quite deeply, this chapter will try to give only a brief overview, concentrating on the issues that are relevant for the comparison with the medieval versions, namely on the narrative elements present, on the reflections around suicide and female virtue, and, for Christians authors, on the reasons for the inclusion of the pagan story.

Lucretia in the pagan sources

The first written versions of the legend of Lucretia, like those of the earliest known Roman historian Fabius Pictor, did not survive.[12] The two most famous full versions of the story that were known in the medieval period date already to the late first century BCE - early first century CE, being those of Livy and Ovid.

Titus Livy's version of the story is told in the first book of the *Ab urbe condita*.[13] This tale starts with the siege of Ardua, where, during a feast in the quarters of the king's son, Sextus Tarquinius, a debate breaks out on whose wife is the most virtuous. Tarquinius Collatinus boasts that it is his wife Lucretia and suggests riding to their homes and seeing

[12] Dennis Trout, "Re-Textualizing Lucretia: Cultural Subversion in the City of God," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2, no. 1 (1994): 55.

[13] The quotes for Livy (both Latin and English) are given from the Loeb Classical Library edition: Livy, *History of Rome, Volume I: Books 1-2*, trans. B. O. Foster, Loeb Classical Library 114 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919).

what their wives are doing without them. In Rome, the king's daughters-in-law are found "at a luxurious banquet, whiling away the time with their young friends";[14] while in Collatia, Lucretia is working on wool in the company of her servant girls. (The woolwork would become a symbol of a *matrona*'s virtue due to Livy's account.)[15] Lucretia is declared the winner of "the contest of women";[16] and Collatinus invites the princes to dine, with Lucretia receiving them "graciously."[17] Sextus Tarquinius is then "seized with a wicked desire to debauch Lucretia by force; not only her beauty, but her proved chastity as well, provoked him."[18]

So, several days later, he returns, and is again "kindly welcomed"[19] as a guest - Lucretia is thus shown to fulfill all the duties of a matron, both by diligently running the household while her husband is away and by continuously welcoming the honored guests. In the night, Tarquinius comes to Lucretia's chamber, and several key story elements are mentioned: first, he is shown as drawing his sword and holding Lucretia "with his left hand on her breast"[20] to make her stay silent; then he tries to "declare his love, to plead, to mingle threats with prayers, to bring every resource to bear upon her woman's heart";[21] when she does not consent even after the threat of death, he says that after killing her, he will kill his slave and claim that he found them together in her bed. Livy writes that after being presented

[14] *in convivio luxuque cum aequalibus viderant tempus terentes*, Livy, *History* 1.57.
[15] Alison Waters, "The Ideal of Lucretia in Augustan Latin Poetry" (Ph.D. dissertation, Calgary, University of Calgary, 2013), 13.
[16] *muliebris certaminis*, Livy, *History* 1.57.
[17] *benigne*, ibid.
[18] *mala libido Lucretiae per vim stuprandae capit; cum forma tum spectata castitas incitat*, ibid.
[19] *exceptus benigne*, ibid., 1.58.
[20] *sinistraque manu mulieris pectore oppresso*, ibid.
[21] *fateri amorem, orare, miscere precibus minas, versare in omnes partes muliebrem animum*, ibid.

with this prospect, "her resolute modesty"[22] was overcome, as if with force, by his victorious lust."[23]

Lucretia then sends for her father and husband to come each with a trusted friend. They find her "sitting sadly in her chamber";[24] and to the question if she is well, she answers as follows:

> Far from it; for what can be well with a woman when she has lost her honor? The print of a strange man, Collatinus, is in your bed. Yet my body only has been violated; my heart is guiltless, as death shall be my witness. But pledge your right hands and your words that the adulterer shall not go unpunished.[25]

The men swear to this and try to console her, saying that "it is the mind that sins, not the body; and that where purpose has been wanting there is no guilt."[26] She answers famously, however, that "though I acquit myself of the sin, I do not absolve myself from punishment; nor in time to come shall ever unchaste woman live through the example of Lucretia."[27] She then takes a knife hidden in her dress and strikes herself in the heart. This is followed by the oath to avenge her blood, orchestrated by her in-law Lucius Junius Brutus, who had come with Collatinus; her body is further brought to the marketplace, from where the story is dispersed, leading to the rebellion against the king.

Even though it is said that Lucretia is taken "by force," it is unclear if Livy proposes that by agreeing not to fight Tarquinius, Lucretia becomes an accomplice to the crime of adultery. She certainly sees herself as tainted and having lost the main female virtues, *pudicitia*, and *castitas*, and she also does not want to serve as a pretext for other women who

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[22] No English word quite reflects the whole meaning of *pudicitia* as this is a rather gendered term, highly connected with the idea of chastity and female honour. I will use the term "modesty"; however, these connotations should be kept in mind.

[23] *vicisset obstinatam pudicitiam velut vi victrix libido*, Livy, *History* 1.58.

[24] *sedentem maestam in cubiculo,* ibid.

[25] *Minime, quid enim salvi est mulieri amissa pudicitia? Vestigia viri alieni, Collatine, in lecto sunt tuo; ceterum corpus est tantum violatum, animus insons; mors testis erit. Sed date dexteras fidemque haud inpune adultero fore,* ibid.

[26] *mentem peccare, non corpus, et unde consilium afuerit, culpam abesse*, ibid.

[27] *ego me etsi peccato absolvo, supplicio non libero; nec ulla deinde inpudica Lucretiae exemplo vivet*, ibid.

commit such crimes voluntarily to escape their punishment. This attitude is probably caused by Livy's concerns about the morals of his days, which formed the need to give a strict example of adherence to the female virtue and retribution for its loss.[28]

The second surviving detailed Latin version of the story is found in Ovid's *Fasti*.[29] In terms of the plot points, it does not deviate significantly from Livy's account, on which it was probably based directly.[30] However, there are significant differences in how the story is treated. First of all, the question that leads to the "contest of wives" is not simply one of virtue; the men besieging Ardea wonder if "we [are] as dear to our wives as they to us."[31] Accordingly, Lucretia wins not only because the king's daughters-in-law are found with "their necks draped with garlands, keeping their vigils over the wine,"[32] while she is sitting over the wool with her servants: she is also seen crying when thinking about the dangers her husband is experiencing at war. The final scene of her suicide also takes place only in the presence of her father and husband, thus allowing for a more intimate and emotional setting that shows the affectionate connection between the spouses.

Another difference in Ovid's version concerns the depiction of the rape itself: here, the poet highlights the use of force and the weakness of a female body, thus working against Livy's doubt around the possibly given consent:

> And when he touched the bed, "The steel is in my hand, Lucretia," said the king's son "and I that speak am a Tarquin." She answered never a word. Voice and power of speech and thought itself fled from her breast. But she trembled, as trembles a little lamb that, caught straying from the fold, lies low under a ravening wolf. What could she do? Should she struggle? In a struggle a woman will always be worsted. Should she cry out? But in his clutch was a

[28] Diana C. Moses, "Livy's Lucretia and the Validity of Coerced Consent in Roman Law," in *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1993), 39–80.

[29] The quotes for Ovid (both Latin and English) are given from the Loeb Classical Library edition: Ovid, *Fasti*, trans. James G. Frazer, Loeb Classical Library 253 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931).

[30] A. G. Lee, "Ovid's 'Lucretia,'" *Greece & Rome* 22, no. 66 (1953): 108.

[31] *ecquid / coniugibus nostris mutua cura sumus*, Ovid, *Fasti*, 2.729-30.

[32] *ecce nurus regis fusis per colla coronis / inveniunt posito pervigilare mero*, ibid., 2.739-40.

sword to silence her. Should she fly? His hands pressed heavy on her breast,
the breast that till then had never known the touch of stranger hand.[33]

As for the reasons for the suicide, they are also changed from Livy's account: there is no trace of her being concerned about the influence of her behavior on the mores of other Roman women; rather, she stabs herself in the moment of strong personal emotions, claiming that "the pardon that you [her husband and father] give, I do refuse myself."[34] In this act, she also seems to transcend her previous female weakness - she is now described as possessing "manly courage."[35] Overall, this is not as much a political and public story of the attack on female virtue and the consequences that it brought for the monarchy (and for other women), as it is a private tale of spousal love and personal tragedy: as Carole E. Newlands points out, Lucretia herself pronounces no calls for revenge here, and it is Brutus who politicizes her fate, a male voice giving his interpretation to female silence. Overall, the revolt is out of the spotlight when compared with Livy's account.[36]

While the versions of Livy and Ovid are certainly the two fullest and most famous of those that survived Antiquity and were known in the medieval period, not every medieval author would interact with them directly. For learning about history or gathering material for didactic works or sermons, one would often use shorter compilations; those versions might represent how the story was known to "less well-read" members of the clergy and educated circles.[37] One of such surviving shorter versions of Roman history, in the earliest part mostly

[33] *utque torum pressit, "ferrum, Lucretia, mecum est" / natus ait regis, "Tarquiniusque loquor!" / illa nihil: neque enim vocem viresque loquendi / aut aliquid toto pectore mentis habet, / sed tremit, ut quondam stabulis deprensa relictis / parva sub infesto cum iacet agna lupo. / quid faciat? pugnet? vincetur femina pugnans. / clamet? at in dextra, qui vetet, ensis erat. / effugiat? positis urgentur pectora palmis, / tunc primum externa pectora tacta manu*, ibid., 2.795-804.

[34] *"quam" dixit "veniam vos datis, ipsa nego,"* ibid., 2.830.

[35] *animi matrona virilis*, ibid., 2.847.

[36] Carole E. Newlands, "The Silence of Lucretia," in *Playing with Time: Ovid and the Fasti* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 151-3.

[37] Or even not to less "well-read": John of Salisbury, one of the most erudite men of the 12th century, did not know Titus Livy directly, being acquainted instead with Florus's *Epitome*: Laure Hermand-Schebat, "John of Salisbury and Classical Antiquity," in *A Companion to John of Salisbury*, ed. Christoph Grellard and Frédérique Lachaud (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 203.

based on Livy, is *De viris illustribus liber*, an anonymous work of the fourth century that seems to have been known at least by the tenth century and widely popular in Italy, and also in France, in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries.[38] In this version, the plot follows Livy, skipping the details: first, the feast at Ardea and the competition between the wives is mentioned, with Lucretia found spinning wool with her servants and thus proclaimed *pudicissima*; the story of the rape and consequences is described very briefly as follows:

> To corrupt her, Tarquin Sextus went to Collatia during the night, and by the right of kinship went to Collatin's house, intruded Lucretia's chamber, and took her chastity. The next day she called for her father and husband, exposed the deed, and killed herself with the knife that she covered with her gown.[39]

It is followed by the oath of revenge and the later exile of the Tarquins. What can be seen here, apart from the commonly known points of the plot, is, again, the complexity of the ideal of *pudicitia*, as the declaration of Lucretia as *pudicissima* does not relate to her sexual behavior, but rather to the fact that she spends the time working and not feasting, and in modesty, not luxury.

An even shorter version of the events is given in the *Epitome of Roman History*, a second-century abridgment[40] of Livy, attributed to a certain Florus: here, the focus is on the political history of Rome, so Lucretia is mentioned in passing as the victim of the rape that led to the abolishment of monarchy; notably, she is said to "atone" for her "dishonor,"[41] again showing the lack of a definitive position on her guilt even among the pagan authors. The

[38] R.J. Tarrant and M.D. Reeve, "De Viris Illustribus," in *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. L.D. Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 149–51.

[39] *Ad quam corrumpendam Tarquinius Sextus nocte Collatiam rediit et iure propinquitatis in domum Collatini venit et cubiculum Lucretiae irrupit, pudicitiam expugnavit. Illa postero die advocatis patre et coniuge rem exposuit et se cultro, quem veste texerat, occidit*, Franz Pichlmayr, ed., *De Viris Illustribus: Sexti Aurelii Victoris Liber de Caesaribus; Praecedunt Origo Gentis Romanae et Liber de Viris Illustribus Urbis Romae, Subsequitur Epitome de Caesaribus* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1911), 32. The translation is mine.

[40] At least in the part dedicated to the earlier periods of history; otherwise, it also draws on Sallust and Caesar; See Justin Lake, *Prologues to Ancient and Medieval History: A Reader*, Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures 17 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 61.

[41] *Quorum cum alter ornatissimae feminae Lucretiae stuprum intulisset, matrona dedecus ferro expiavit,* Florus, *Epitome of Roman History*, trans. E. S. Forster, Loeb Classical Library 231 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 1.2.7.

Epitome was rather popular in medieval times, as a history book on its own and as a source for Christian universal histories.[42]

Another possible source of Lucretia's story for medieval readers is the *Facta et dicta memorabilia* by Valerius Maximus, which would become important as an *exempla* source for didactic literature, as will be discussed in Chapter 3. The story itself is very brief here, with no background events such as the contest between the wives:

> Lucretia, model of Roman chastity, whose manly spirit by Fortune's malignant error was allotted a woman's body, was forcibly raped by Sex. Tarquinius, son of king Superbus. In a family council, after bitterly bemoaning her injury, she killed herself with a sword she had brought concealed in her clothing and by so courageous a death gave the Roman people reason to change the authority of kings for that of Consuls.[43]

Three elements are particularly worth of note here: that Lucretia is called "the model" (or, rather, the "commander" or the "prince") of Roman *pudicitia*; that Ovid's "manly courage" is developed into a declaration that her actions are such that would be worthy of a man and she was born a woman "by mistake"; and that no hesitation is present on whether she was complicit in her rape.

In later versions of the story, several peculiar elements emerge, with the earliest source I could establish for them being a commentary on Virgil by the fourth-century grammarian Servius.[44] Those elements are the fact that Tarquin's name is given as Arruns; the dispute on wives arising not between all men at the feast, but between him and Collatinus directly; "Arruns" not being in love with Lucretia, but envious and angry because he lost the argument; him falsifying a letter from Collatinus to be received by Lucretia; the slave that he

[42] Lake, *Prologues*, 61.

[43] *Dux Romanae pudicitiae Lucretia, cuius virilis animus maligno errore Fortunae muliebre corpus sortitus est, a <Sex.>1 Tarquinio, regis Superbi filio, per vim stuprum pati coacta, cum gravissimis verbis iniuriam suam in concilio necessariorum deplorasset, ferro se, quod veste tectum attulerat, interemit, causamque tam animoso interitu imperium consulare pro regio permutandi populo Romano praebuit*, Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings, Volume II: Books 6-9.*, ed. and trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb Classical Library 493 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 6.1.1.

[44] Servius, *Commentarius in Uergilii Aeneidos libros*, in *Library of Latin Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols), accessed May 19, 2022, http://clt.brepolis.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=PSERACOAE_.

threatened to kill together with Lucretia being an Ethiopian; Brutus being her uncle and a tribune, which allowed him to exile the Tarquins.[45] Servius's commentary would be based on an earlier tradition;[46] however, it is impossible to say, based on the known sources, whether these particular elements came from previous texts that did not survive or were introduced by the commentator himself, for a reason that I cannot provide at present. What we can learn from the source is that these elements were present in, and probably introduced by, the tradition of commentary on Virgil no later than the fourth century, and later formed a basis for some of the medieval versions of the story.

The texts above, that present the story, at least briefly, could be sources for later retellings. I would like to briefly consider other, passing mentions of Lucretia in the "pagan" Latin literature read in the medieval period; even though they do not contain many details about the story itself, they could still influence attitudes to Lucretia. The general understanding of Lucretia that one could get from surviving sources is one of a highly esteemed figure, supported by the Stoic understanding of virtue,[47] although the exact reason and context of that esteem could differ. For example, when Cicero mentions her in his ethic-political works, she, as in Livy, is important for her role in establishing the republic. Her death is the event that allows Lucius Brutus to start a fight for Roman freedom in the *De re publica*, where she is mentioned as a "chaste and noble woman."[48] Furthermore, in the *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, Lucretia herself is said - importantly, after undoubtedly having been "taken by force"[49] - to have "to call citizens as her witnesses"[50] before taking her life;

[45] Ibid., p. 291.
[46] Robert A. Kaster, 'The Grammarian's Authority', *Classical Philology* 75, no. 3 (1980): 217.
[47] Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, 110-1.
[48] *mulier pudens et nobilis*, Cicero, "On the Republic," in *On the Republic. On the Laws.*, trans. Clinton W. Keyes, Loeb Classical Library 213 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 2.25.
[49] *stuprata per vim*, Cicero, *On Ends*, trans. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library 40 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), 2.20.
[50] *testata cives*, ibid.

while in both Livy and Ovid, we see a private family gathering, Cicero makes her final speech a public affair.

The importance of Lucretia for the establishment of the republic is highlighted also by Seneca, who in the *De consolatione ad Marciam* phrases it as "to Brutus we owe liberty, to Lucretia we owe Brutus."[51] Oppositely to how her actions are evaluated by Valerius, she is also given here as proof that women have as much capacity for virtue as men. Similarly, she is brought up in a poem addressed to a young lady by the fourth-century poet Claudian as the epitome of both chastity and the Republican spirit (many years after the demise of the Republic), who "self-slain bore witness to the tyrant's crime, aroused to war her country's righteous wrath, drove Tarquin into exile and died gloriously."[52]

The story of Lucretia is also told in the Greek tradition - however, it would largely be unknown in Latin Europe for the greatest part of the medieval period. As such, their analysis is omitted in the present work; the most detailed ones[53] are the versions of Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the *Roman Antiquities* (only translated into Latin in 1480)[54] and Cassius Dio in the *Roman History* (before the sixteenth century, it is only really known in Byzantium).[55]

Lucretia in early Christian writings

With the advent of Christianity, the views on Lucretia were bound to change, together with a change in attitudes towards pagan philosophy and culture. However, there is no unity

[51] *Bruto libertatem debemus, Lucretiae Brutum*, Seneca, "De Consolatione ad Marciam," in *Moral Essays, Volume II: De Consolatione ad Marciam. De Vita Beata. De Otio. De Tranquillitate Animi. De Brevitate Vitae. De Consolatione ad Polybium. De Consolatione ad Helviam*, trans. John W. Basore, Loeb Classical Library 254 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 48-49.

[52] *vulnere quae proprio facinus testata tyranni / armavit patriae iustos in bella dolores / exule Tarquinio, memorandaque concidit*, Claudian, "XXX (XXIX). In Praise of Serena," in *On Stilicho's Consulship 2-3. Panegyric on the Sixth Consulship of Honorius. The Gothic War. Shorter Poems. Rape of Proserpina.*, trans. M. Platnauer, Loeb Classical Library 136 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1922), 250-1.

[53] She is also treated in brief by Plutarch, Diodorus Sicilius, and Theophrastus.

[54] For analysis and additional information, see Clemence Schultze, "Ways of Killing Women : Dionysius on the Deaths of Horatia and Lucretia," in *Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Augustan Rome : Rhetoric, Criticism and Historiography*, ed. Richard Hunter and Casper C. De Jonge, Greek Culture in the Roman World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 161–79.

[55] An analysis and additional information can be found in Christopher Mallan, "The Rape of Lucretia in Cassius Dio's 'Roman History,'" *The Classical Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2014): 758–71.

among the early Christian writers on how to treat pagan *exempla* in general and the story of Lucretia's suicide in particular. It is important to remember that in the early times, Christians still shared classical education and culture with pagans[56] - and Paulinus of Nola, for example, was not hesitant to compare his wife to Lucretia.[57]

Several early Christian authors freely employ *exempla* from Greek and Roman history and literature, including that of Lucretia. This is seen in *Ad martyres* by Tertullian (circa 155-220 CE), where he employs her story among other pagan *exempla* to prove that women are as capable of martyrdom as men: she is said to have "in the presence of her kinsfolk, plunged the knife into herself that she might have glory for her chastity."[58] There is certainly a hierarchy here between Christians and pagans, as Lucretia's actions were guided, in Tertullian's interpretation, by her wish for earthly glory, which is certainly not as good as what awaits the Christian martyrs. However, she is not condemned for her actions but praised.

Within Tertullian's writings, Lucretia also appears with other pagan women in works calling for restraint in sexual activities, *De exhortatione castitatis*[59] and *De monogamia*[60], as one of the heathen women who would rather die than have "a second man" (thus remaining

[56] Marenbon, *Pagans and Philosophers: The Problem of Paganism from Augustine to Leibniz*, 21-22.

[57] "Do not, then, chide me, my honoured father, as though I had turned to these pursuits perversely, and do not twit me with my wife or with defect of mind: mine is not the perturbed mind of Bellerophon, nor is my wife a Tanaquil but a Lucretia." *Ne me igitur, venerande parens, his ut male versum increpites studiis neque me vel coniuge carpas vel mentis vitio: non anxia Bellerophontis mens est nec Tanaquil mihi, sed Lucretia coniunx*, Paulinus of Nola, "Paulinus to Ausonius," in *Volume II: Books 18-20. Paulinus Pellaeus: Eucharisticus,* translated by Hugh G. Evelyn-White, Loeb Classical Library 115 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), 136-7.

[58] *Lucretia, quae vim stupri passa cultrum sibi adegit in conspectu propinquorum, ut gloriam castitati suae pareret,* Tertullian, "Ad Martyras," in *Tertulliani Opera Quae Supersunt,* ed. F. Oehler, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1851), 3–16. English text is quoted from Tertullian, "Ad Martyras," in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325,* ed. A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. Sydney Thelwall, vol. 3, 10 vols. (Buffalo: The Christian literature publishing company, 1885).

[59] Tertullian, *Exhortation a la Chasteté,* ed. Claudio Moreschini, trans. Jean-Claude Fredouille, Sources Chrétiennes 319 (Paris: Cerf, 1985).

[60] Tertullian, "De Monogamia," ed. V. Bulhart, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 76 (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1957), 44–78.

univira). In the former, there is a commentary that it is "better to live in chastity than to die for it,"[61] but, again, no explicit condemnation of the suicide.

The reason Tertullian decided to include pagans in the narratives of martyrdom and Christian family life is made clear by him in *Ad martyres* - he employs what Susan Glendinning[62] and Elizabeth Clark[63] call *rhetorics of shame*:

> But if so high a value is put on the earthly glory, won by mental and bodily vigor, that men, for the praise of their fellows, I may say, despise the sword, the fire, the cross, the wild beasts, the torture; these surely are but trifling sufferings to obtain a celestial glory and a divine reward.[64]

A similar rhetoric is used by Jerome in his *Adversus Jovinianum,* which importantly became a source of *exempla* for medieval writers, as will be additionally explored in the third chapter.[65] He provides a large list of pagan maidens, wives, and widows, who would do anything to protect their chastity, and among them is "Lucretia, who, not wishing to outlive the violation of her chastity, erased the stain on her body by blood"[66] - and later he even echoes Seneca, saying that she was greater than Brutus, as she taught him not to be a slave. The reasoning for the inclusion of the pagan *exempla* is also seemingly the rhetorics of shame: in a letter to a woman called Ageruchia, when explaining that one should not marry the second time, he says that even heathens observe that, and gives examples of those who killed themselves, like "Lucretia who having lost the prize of her chastity refused to survive the defilement of her soul."[67]

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[61] *Maius est uiuere in castitate quam pro ea mori*, Tertullian, *Exhortation a la Chasteté,* 13.

[62] Glendinning, "Reinventing Lucretia": 69.

[63] Elizabeth A. Clark, "1990 Presidential Address: Sex, Shame, and Rhetoric: En-Gendering Early Christian Ethics," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59, no. 2 (1991): 221–45.

[64] *Igitur si tantum terrenae gloriae licet de corporis et animae vigore, ut gladium, ignem, crucem, bestias, tormenta contemnat sub praemio laudis humanae, possum dicere, modicae sunt istae passiones ad consecutionem gloriae caelestis et divinae mercedis*, Tertullian, "Ad Martyras."

[65] John L. Grigsby, "Miroir Des Bonnes Femmes," *Romania* 82, no. 328 (1961): 468.

[66] *Lucretiam, quae violatae pudicitiae nolens supervivere, maculam corporis cruore delevit,* Jerome, "Adversus Jovinianum Libri Duo," in *Opera Omnia Hieronymi Stridonensis*, vol. 23, Patrologia Latina (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1845), 46. The translation is mine.

[67] Jerome, "Letter 123 - To Ageruchia," ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. W.H. Fremantle, G. Lewis, and W.G. Martley, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 6 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1893), 230–38.

Augustine, Lucretia, and suicidal saints

The break in the attitudes towards pagan virtue comes with Augustine.[68] In *De civitate Dei*, he argues that because of the fall of man, any virtue in a person is only possible through grace and *caritas*, which are only given to the believers – thus, the "virtues" of pagans are only lies.[69] Trying to prove his point, Augustine attacks two very specific figures – Cato the Younger and Lucretia, the symbols of Roman virtue – in the way they lived, but especially in the way they died by their own hands.[70]

For Lucretia, it comes in the context of the discussion of the fate of Christian women who were raped during the sack of Rome in 410.[71] Some people, says Augustine, claim that these women should follow the example of Lucretia and kill themselves. But for him, not only it is a sin, but the model is faulty: Augustine, quite interestingly, echoes the same arguments that were provided to Lucretia by her relatives in Livy's account – if a woman was coerced and had no will to sin, then it does not matter for her chastity that her body has been violated, as her soul is still pure.[72] Why then Lucretia thought it necessary to punish herself? Either she was, in fact, guilty, being a consensual party to the adultery, or, knowing herself to be innocent, she killed herself out of vanity, as "being a Roman lady, too greedy of praise, she feared that if she remained alive, she would be thought to have enjoyed suffering the violence that she had suffered while alive."[73] The same explanation of wanting praise, instead of following true virtue, is given to Cato the Younger's suicide. Thus, by one stone,

[68] Marenbon, *Pagans and Philosophers*, 23.

[69] Ibid., 32.

[70] Augustine, *City of God, Volume I: Books 1-3*, trans. George E. McCracken, Loeb Classical Library 411 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 1.23.

[71] Jennifer Barry, "So Easy to Forget: Augustine's Treatment of the Sexually Violated in the City of God," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 88, no. 1 (2020): 237.

[72] Augustine, *City of God*, 1.28. A new argument, of course, is that they are innocent in the eyes of God, who knows every thought: see ibid., 1.19.

[73] *Romana mulier, laudis avida nimium, verita est ne putaretur, quod violenter est passa cum viveret, libenter passa si viveret*, ibid., 1.29.

Augustine kills two birds: he provides reasoning against suicides, particularly for women, and explains why the two greatest figures of the Roman virtue were, in fact, wrong.[74]

The controversy, however, is aggravated by the fact that Augustine is reluctant to fully condemn early Christian women who killed themselves under the threat of rape and became venerated as martyrs. The permissibility of their actions was upheld by Ambrose of Milan in his treatise *De virginibus*.[75] Jerome also wrote that suicide is permissible in cases when chastity is concerned.[76] As for Augustine, he comes to contradict himself: he writes against suicides as violations of the "you shall not kill" commandment, but also says that he "dares not give any rash judgment" against many "saintly women" of early Christian times, who in this way were saving "their chastity" during the persecutions;[77] one cannot know if their actions were not guided by God and were not the same as those of Samson who killed himself when crushing the walls of the Philistine hall. It is possible that Augustine was cautious not to label those martyrs who had already been venerated by local communities as sinners – probably, under at least partial influence of the pagan Stoic ideal signified by Lucretia's suicide.[78] It is also possible, as John Bugbee points out, that Augustine's whole argument comes from a place of compassion toward rape victims, and thus he is not willing to fully condemn even those who made the error of suicide[79] (this compassion, in my mind, is nowhere to be seen in his commentary on Lucretia). Nevertheless, Jennifer Barry argues that he, while not directly condemning those martyrs and also later Christian women raped during his lifetime, practically destroys the image of their actions as a powerful sign of faith.[80]

[74] For a finer analysis of Augustine's rhetorical strategy in the case of Lucretia see Glendinning, "Reinventing Lucretia": 70-3.

[75] Barry, "So Easy to Forget": 246. See more in Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, 100.

[76] Trout, "Re-Textualizing Lucretia": 68.

[77] *sanctae feminae tempore persecutionis, ut insectatores suae pudicitiae devitarent*, Augustine, *City of God*, 1.26.

[78] Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, 110-1.

[79] John Bugbee, "Chaucer's Lucretia and What Augustine Really Said about Rape: Two Reconsiderations," *Traditio* 74 (2019): 352–3.

[80] Barry, "So Easy to Forget": 245-6.

Augustine's position defined the views on pagan virtue for the centuries to come until a new round of discussions came about in the twelfth century.[81] As Benedetto Croce put it, by the Church Father, "Lucretia came to be condemned in the name of the law that was not her own."[82] This possibility of different moral "laws" will appear in the discussions in the twelfth century.

Post-Augustine obscurity

Despite the condemnation by Augustine, Lucretia does not immediately disappear from the works of "classicizing Christians," such as Blossius Aemilius Dracontius with his grand poetic project *De laudibus Dei*.[83] Lucretia comes in a list of other ancient stories, after the suicide of Dido, and is said to have killed herself publicly after the "defilement of her marriage bed."[84] Here we can see the fusion of the Roman attitudes to Lucretia, as she is called "beautiful, chaste and pure"[85] and bears no guilt in the rape itself, with the Augustinian condemnation of suicide. "The love of glory" and "the false deity" are mentioned as the erroneous reasons for the pagans' actions.[86] Thus, while the ideal of Lucretia is preserved, she is used, together with other pagan women, to exemplify the point that the true teaching is found only in Christianity while following other "gods" leads to the wrong decisions.

Another strand of Christian writing where the story of Lucretia is preserved is the universal history. It finds its place there in the early fifth century, through the *Historiarum adversum Paganos* by Orosius. It is worth noting that the story of Lucretia herself is not interesting to the author, and it rather deserves mention in the context of Roman history and

[81] Marenbon, *Pagans and Philosophers*, 41.
[82] Rona Goffen, "Lotto's Lucretia," *Renaissance Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (1999): 745.
[83] Blossius Aemilius Dracontius, "De laudibus Dei Libri III," in *Poetae Latini Minores*, ed. Friedrich Karl Vollmer, vol. V (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1914), 1–94. The translation is mine.
[84] *maculam thalami.* ibid., 85.
[85] *Formosa <...> pudica <...> Lucretia <...> casta*, ibid.
[86] *laudis amore aut certe fecere pie pro numine vano,* ibid.

the fall of the monarchy.[87] Orosius himself was probably building on earlier epitomes and histories, and through his influence as a source for later histories, Lucretia reappears in such contexts throughout the medieval period: for example, in *Historia Romana* by the eighth-century Benedictine Paul the Deacon,[88] and its tenth-century extension by Langobard historian Landolfus Sagax, *Historia miscella*;[89] *Historiarum libri XII* by the ninth-century Frankish ecclesiastic Freculf;[90] *Chronicon* by his contemporary Ado of Vienne;[91] or *De temporum ratione liber* by the English Bede the Venerable.[92]

Between the sixth and eleventh century, other than from universal chronicles, Lucretia seemingly disappears from most of the surviving literature, which might be partially explained by the general lack of widespread reading of classical texts, and the Augustinian authority on her story and pagan *exempla* in general. Of course, classical knowledge does not disappear absolutely, but it is often impossible to say whether it comes directly from pagan texts. For example, in the early tenth century, Lucretia appears in *Occupatio*, a poem on Redemption by Odo of Cluny, where, while speaking of lust and adultery, he points to the figures of those who resisted them by the price of their freedom and life: those are the Biblical Joseph and Susanna, and Lucretia, who "preferred to avoid this dishonor through death."[93] No additional comments on her distinction from the two others are given, and otherwise, the poem is free from pagans, so it is possible that the reason for her inclusion was her mentions by the Church Fathers.

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[87] Orosius, *Historiarum adversus paganos Libri VII*, ed. Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, vol. 1 (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1990), 2.4.12.

[88] Landolfus Sagax, *Historia Miscella*, ed. Franciscus Eyssenhardt (Berlin: I. Guttentag, 1869), 9.

[89] Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana*, ed. Amedeo Crivellucci, Fonti per La Storia Dell'Italia Moderna e Contemporanea 51 (Torino: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1966), 1.9-10.

[90] Frechulfus Lexoviensis, "Historiarum Libri XII," in *Opera Omnia*, ed. Michael I. Allen, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 169A (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 212.

[91] Ado of Vienne, *Chronicon in aetates sex divisum*. Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina 123, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1852), col. 51A.

[92] Beda, *De temporum ratione*. Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina 90, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1850), col. 537C.

[93] *Maluit obprobrium hoc uitare Lucretia morte*, Odo of Cluny, *Occupatio*, ed. Anton Swoboda (Leipzig: Teubner, 1900), 73.

During the early Christian centuries, Lucretia made a way from a generally recognizable ideal of feminine virtue, to a condemned sinner, to a rather obscure figure whose name would tell nothing to most of the European population. However, conflicting narratives of her story continued to be preserved in transcribed texts, and they would clash again in the twelfth century.

Chapter 2. The twelfth-century revival and Lucretia in the "learned men's" world

The late eleventh and twelfth centuries were the period of a great revival of interest towards classical Greek and Latin heritage, a phenomenon which is sometimes seen as part of the so-called "Renaissance of the Twelfth Century."[94] This interest included the broader dissemination of the ethical works of Cicero, Seneca, and Aristotle, and thus the re-emergence of the issue of compatibility of pagan and Christian ethics and the old controversy of whether any pagans could be seen as truly virtuous.[95] The story of Lucretia returns to light together with these developments - but for now, it is mostly discussed in the world of "educated men," able to read and write in Latin. This chapter aims to consider how and why this educated elite interacted with earlier narratives, and how the conflict between the "Roman" and the "Augustinian" versions of the story was perceived and interacted with.

Lucretia in Latin education

By the twelfth century, the pagan authors, such as Virgil, Lucan, and Horace, came to hold an important place in the curriculum for the learning of Latin grammar; Ovid was treated with more suspicion but was also included when particular works were considered good for moral edification.[96] *Fasti*, where the story of Lucretia is told, was particularly tolerated for inclusion into the grammatical and literacy canon even by his harsher critics, such as Conrad of Hirsau,[97] and thus he could be a major source through which the story

[94] Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), 93-127.

[95] István P. Bejczy, "Introduction," in *Virtue and Ethics in the Twelfth Century*, ed. István P. Bejczy and Richard Newhauser (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 1–3.

[96] Suzanne Reynolds, *Medieval Reading: Grammar, Rhetoric and the Classical Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11-2.

[97] Mark Amsler, "Rape and Silence: Ovid's Mythography and Medieval Readers," in *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Robertson and Christine M. Rose (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 62.

would be known to educated audiences. As for Livy, the original *Ab urbe condita* was not a widely available text; however, its version of Lucretia's story could be distributed through epitomes and universal chronicles based on them.[98]

As was also discussed in the first chapter, the Roman authors could use the highly recognizable name of Lucretia as a symbol for an idea, be it female purity or republican liberty, without explaining all, or any, details of her story. But medieval students, only getting acquainted with the classical curriculum, would need help to understand such references. Special tools were created to ease the acquaintance with "the pagans," such as handbooks containing brief narrations of myths, legends, and historical narratives. These tools might represent what an average university student could learn about Lucretia, especially if Ovid was shunned by their teacher – and they show that different versions of the story were disseminated during this period. For example, the *Vatican Mythographers*, one of these learning tools made to ease the acquaintance with "the pagans,"[99] copy from Servius both the detailed "story of Tarquin and Lucretia" in the *First Mythographer*[100] and the short one in the *Second Mythographer.*[101]

Another similar tool is *Fabularius* by Conrad of Mure, rector of the diocesan school of Zurich Minster.[102] In this case, not much is said about Lucretia herself, as Conrad puts her in the background of the historical narrative – her story is only important as the reason for which the kings were expelled from Rome.[103] Still, the text leaves no doubt of whether the deed was consensual: Tarquin is said to have "violated" Lucretia, and a poem by Hildebert of

[98] Hermand-Schebat, "John of Salisbury and Classical Antiquity," 203.
[99] Ronald E. Pepin, *The Vatican Mythographers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 4.
[100] *Mythographi Vaticani i et ii*, in *Library of Latin Texts*, ed. by P. Kulcsar (Turnhout: Brepols), accessed April 25, 2022, http://clt.brepolis.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=MMYTH0849X, 1.73.
[101] Ibid., 2.238.
[102] Greti Dinkova-Bruun, "Review of Conradi de Mure Fabularius. CCCM 210, by T. van de Loo," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 20 (2010): 341.
[103] Conradus de Mure, *Fabularius*, ed. T. Van de Loo, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 210 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 188.

Lavardin (discussed in the next section) is quoted to the same idea;[104] moreover, Lucretia is said to have been acknowledged by contemporaries as one of the two most chaste women, herself of the pagans, and Judith of the Jews.[105]

Neither the *Mythographers* nor Conrad of Mure provide any sign that suicide is a sin, or that Lucretia was condemned by Augustine – however, such explanations could be seen as unnecessary, since the intended audience would know the "correct" position on suicide. It seems that the prevailing attitude, despite the existence of critics, was not to worry too much that simply learning about Classical legends would lead those educated men astray in a moral sense[106] - and, presumably, their teacher could provide further comments while giving a lecture. Thus, it cannot be seen as any sign of the ideas of their authors and audiences on female behavior – the only highlighted moral lessons are for men, as the example of Tarquin is supposed to illustrate how passions can ruin people in positions of power. It is quite possible, that, as Lucretia was only one of many pagan figures in texts like these, and a woman, no particular attention would be drawn to her until the students would encounter Augustine and his arguments.

Between classical ethics and Christian theology: the problem of pagan virtue in the twelfth century

The interest in the pagan Latin heritage also led to the popularity of classicizing poetry, in which the medieval authors tried to imitate the ancients both in content and form. Since Lucretia was a popular figure in classical literature, it makes sense that those wishing to look like Roman poets could pick this subject. A poem on Lucretia survives that was such a good imitation that it was sometimes mistaken for an ancient composition; in reality, it was a

[104] Ibid., 367.

[105] *Et nota, quod iste due castissime, scilicet gentilis Lucretia et Iudith Ebrea, contemporanee fuisse comprobantur*, ibid.

[106] Reynolds, *Medieval Reading*, 150-4.

work of a French ecclesiastic, Hildebert of Lavardin (1056-1133).[107] The poem (in a prosaic translation) reads as follows:

> When Lucretia buried a sword into the guiltless breast, and torrents of blood streamed, she said: Let my witnesses show that I made no favors to a tyrant; blood before husband, spirit before gods, so that well those brought forward will speak for me after death, one in the netherworld, the other among those on high.[108]

Hildebert absolves Lucretia of any guilt, at least by her own words; no Augustinian judgment is passed on the suicide, which is in line with his efforts to look like an ancient author.

The seeming ease of these classicizings should not be taken for granted: not everyone was happy with ancient authors' place in the education system and cultural sphere, and the polemics on the attitudes towards the pagans could be quite harsh. One of the grand authorities of the twelfth century, Bernard of Clairvaux, took an intransigent stance against such innovations, to the point of accusing readers of Aristotle of heresy, as the true knowledge should be received through divine revelation, which cannot come through the reading of pagans.[109]

The problem of contradictions between Christian and pagan ethical theories, and the conflict between the interest in "the ancient wisdom" and Augustinian rejection of non-Christian teachings is seen in the works of John of Salisbury. His *Policraticus*[110] is a *speculum principum* full of references to ancient authors and *exempla* about pagans. The clear awe and respect that John has for certain pagan figures, such as Cicero or Cato the Younger, and for ancient ethical theories, clashes with contemporary Christian interpretation of virtue as only achievable by Christians. On the one hand, he states that "without faith and love

[107] Wim Verbaal, "Loire Classics: Reviving Classicism in Some Loire Poets," *Interfaces* 3 (2016): 110.

[108] *Cum foderet gladio castum Lucretia pectus / Sanguinis et torrens egrederetur, ait: / Testes procedant me non favisse tyranno / Ante virum sanguis, spiritus ante deos, / Quam bene producti pro me post fata loquentur, / Alter apud manes, alter apud superos*, Hildebertus. *Opera*. Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina 171, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1854), col. 1447A. The translation is mine.

[109] Marenbon, *Pagans and Philosophers*, 99.

[110] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus sive De nugis curialium et vestigiis philosophorum*, ed. C. I. Webb, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909).

(dilectio) the essence of virtue is impossible" and that "no one can achieve glory other than through the faith in him who is the true light."[111] Furthermore, John points out that although pagans cannot have true virtue, they can behave according to its commands, having a "resemblance"[112] to it. Thus, their behavior is worthy of being studied and even revered, as "even the resemblance of virtue possesses the glory of attractiveness and beauty."[113] Moreover, this resemblance of true virtue, John says, could be so bright that some pagans were "as shining stars"[114] for their times, even if they were not granted salvation.

The question of pagan suicide and virtue is a strongly contentious point. John is not interested in the story of Lucretia or any other women *per se*, as his work provides edification for rulers (who, at this time, are generally supposed to be men). However, Lucretia is mentioned negatively in a list of famous pagan suicides, together with Cato the Younger, one of Caesar's soldiers, and Cleopatra. Even though it is said that "Lucretia condemned another's unchastity by the shedding of her own blood,"[115] from which we can understand that she was not guilty of adultery, John states that he "does not believe that it can happen to be permissible for a man by his own will to cause his own death, whatever the moment of difficulty, not even when chastity is endangered"; [116] as suicide is "altogether death of the desperate, and those who, though live in the body, are already dead through the death of the mind and have stopped to live in the soul."[117] John does mention, however, that an allowance for female suicides for the protection of chastity was made by Jerome, but he does not discuss this in detail – probably because it would make no difference to his intended male audience.

[111] *sine fide et dilectione substantia uirtutis esse non possit <…> nec potest quisquam clarescere nisi in fide illius qui lux uera est*, John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 3.IX.

[112] *imago*, ibid.

[113] *Et quidem etiam ipsa imago uirtutis suam quandam habet uenustatis decorisque claritatem*, ibid.

[114] *quasi <...> sidera*, ibid.

[115] *Lucretia alienam impudicitiam sanguinis sui effusione condempnet*, ibid., 2.XXVII.

[116] *Ego euenire posse non arbitror, ut cuiuscumque difficultatis articulo liceat propria auctoritate homini sibi mortem inferre, nec etiam ubi castitas periclitatur*, ibid.

[117] *Haec mors omnino desperatorum est, et eorum qui licet corpore uiuant, iam mentis morte praemortui animo uiuere desierunt*, ibid.

The problem of the pagan suicide for John is exemplified in Cato the Younger. In *Policraticus*, he is presented as one of the "nearly perfect pagans," or, rather, "perfect statesmen," who put virtue and *res publica* above their profit, according to the Ciceronian ideal that John presents to his readers.[118] The adoration is clear; but of course, for John, as a post-Augustinian Christian, Cato's death creates an unavoidable problem. Interestingly, to show that Cato and other pagans were wrong, John does not simply refer to Augustine: he says that suicides are "prohibited not only by the customs of the faithful but also by the laws of the pagans and the edicts of the wisest":[119] for example, he mentions that Pythagoras and Plotinus considered the rejection of the earthly life to be the same as the abandonment of the post by a soldier.[120] Even pagans, who do not know the true God, understand that choosing death in the face of loss is a sign of weakness and fear, says John, as it is "foolish and careless to choose indefinite instead of definite and for a worthless reason to reject the best that men possess."[121]

Conversely, in the 7th book, John gives examples of pagan suicides as "those illustrious deeds that were done for the love of liberty."[122] One of them is Cato's suicide;[123] two other examples are Caesar's murder by Brutus, and a story that is reminiscent of Lucretia's one. John tells of women from a conquered German tribe who were taken captive by Gaius Marius and strangled themselves when the Romans refused to gift them to the

[118] Nederman, Cary J. "The Aristotelian Doctrine of the Mean and John of Salisbury's 'Concept of Liberty.'" *Vivarium* 24, no. 2 (1986): 133–37.

[119] *quod non modo fidelium institutis sed constitutionibus gentium et sapientissimorum edictis constat esse prohibitum*, John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 2.XXVII.

[120] Ibid.

[121] *crassa est et supina quae certa postponit incertis, et quicquid habetur optimum ex causa inani abicit et expellit*, John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 5.XVII.

[122] *quae ob illius amorem magnifice gesta sunt*, John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 7.XXV.

[123] Described thus: "Cato drank poison, took the sword to himself, and, so as not to prolong the ignoble life by a delay, by his own hand parted the edges of the wound and bled the noble blood, so as not to see Caesar's rule." *Cato uenenum bibit, asciuit gladium, et, ne qua mora protenderet uitam ignobilem, iniecta manu dilatauit uulnus, sanguinem generosum effudit, ne regnantem uideret Cesarem*, ibid. Note the difference from the earlier suggestion that suicide is a refuge of the desperate.

vestals; the women did not want "to become slaves or suffer the loss of chastity."[124] Instead of condemning them, John glorifies their actions, without any mention of Christian religious norms. As he explains, "to be free is, without doubt, to denounce what is contrary to morality,"[125] and "the only thing that is more beautiful than liberty is virtue <…> but liberty without virtue is impossible."[126] So in this chapter, the pagan women, like Lucretia, who killed themselves to avoid rape, are virtuously protecting their morality - even though before John proclaimed that "there is no virtue without grace."

Policraticus's use of ancient *exempla* influenced later *specula principum*, and such authors as John of Wales, who, in his turn, propagated including the stories of pagans into sermons, as will be examined in the next chapter. Even though the authority of Augustine, who clearly stated that true virtue could only be achieved through grace (and thus only by Christians), could not be challenged directly and was still promoted by such figures as Bernard of Clairvaux, a new theory of "natural" virtues was developed, and appearances of classical pagans as positive role models in didactic works, especially so-called *mirrors for princes*, grew in numbers.[127]

That Augustinian evaluation was not forgotten, however, is seen in theological works: the name of Lucretia appears when the issue of suicide is discussed, as their authors usually turn to Augustine's authority, taking from him both judgments and examples. This is done, for example, by Albertus Magnus in his commentary on the *Books of the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, where the former explains that Lucretia took her own life "because of the dishonor done against her."[128] In such cases, there seems to be no duality or controversy on whether

[124] *ne seruirent aut pudicitiae dispendium paterentur*, ibid.

[125] *Libertas ergo de singulis pro arbitrio iudicat, et quae sanis uidet moribus obuiare, reprehendere non ueretur*, ibid.

[126] *Nichil autem gloriosius libertate praeter uirtutem, si tamen libertas recte a uirtute seiungitur*, ibid.

[127] Marenbon, *Pagans and Philosophers*, 95-109.

[128] *Ex turpitudine admittenda*, Albertus Magnus, *Commentarii in tertium librum Sententiarum*, in Library of Latin Texts, ed. by Auguste Borgnet (Turnhout: Brepols), accessed April 24, 2022, http://clt.brepolis.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=MALMASEN3_.

Lucretia's decision was virtuous, as Augustine's judgment is followed. It is done similarly by Alexander de Hales in *Summa theologica*.[129] The only reason Lucretia's story is even mentioned in both cases is because of the quotation of Augustine's argument, and not as an independent topic for discussion.

The ambiguity of conclusions drawn from the classical sources and the Church Fathers is also present in theological treatises. For instance, Peter Abelard, in his signature *Sic et Non*, explores the problem in *questio* 155 on whether it is permissible to kill oneself for certain reasons or not.[130] Abelard starts with two quotes that seem to suggest the answer is "yes": the first is from Jerome's commentary on the book of Jonah, where it is said that suicide is sinful "unless chastity is at stake";[131] the second is the story of an early Christian jumping into the fire to preserve both her virginity and faith, from the *Church History* of Eusebius. These quotes are contradicted by a variety of passages from Augustine, including those on Lucretia, and from Macrobius, who writes that such pagan philosophers as Plato and Plotinus also considered suicide to be a sign of spiritual weakness. As everywhere else in *Sic et non*, there is no resolution to the posited *questio*.

This contradiction and the ambiguity of Lucretia's story remain unresolved in Abelard's *Theologia christiana*. On the one hand, both Jerome and Augustine are quoted again in the discussion of suicide; again, Augustine's judgment of Lucretia is given quite clearly, this time without the juxtaposition with Eusebius's story of the Christian martyr, even though Jerome's exception for protection of chastity is not contradicted directly.[132] On the other hand, when exploring the virtue of chastity only several passages later, he provides the

[129] Alexander Halensis, *Summa Theologica*, in *Library of Latin Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols), accessed July 18, 2022, http://clt.brepolis.net/LLTA/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key=MAHALTHE3 , 694.

[130] Peter Abelard, *Sic et Non: A Critical Edition*, ed. Blanche B. Boyer and Richard McKeon (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1976), 518-22.

[131] *absque ubi castitas periclitatur*, ibid.

[132] Peter Abelard, 'Theologia Christiana', in *Opera Theologica*, ed. E. M. Buytaert, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 12 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969), 166-7.

example of Lucretia as representing chastity in marriage: her story is quoted from Valerius Maximus, although slight differences with the original text might signify that Abelard had lifted the quote from an intermediary source.[133]

The whole logic of the discussion of chastity and marriage in *Theologia christiana* has been shown to draw heavily on Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum*.[134] The same might also partly be true for Abelard's reliance on ancient philosophers – though, in this, he might have also looked to his contemporaries, such as John of Salisbury. The number of references to Jerome might point to the necessity to show that such use of ancient *exempla* in a *theological* work is not heretical but supported by the Church tradition.[135] Even though Abelard remained an *enfant terrible* of the century, his dialectical approach and selection of references influenced his contemporaries, such as Peter Lombard and Gratian;[136] as such, this and other such works were in part laying ground for the use of Lucretia's story in didactic literature of the next period.

Lucretia and the Canon law

That Augustine was remembered, even though not always correctly, is also shown by Lucretia's mentions in canon law. The story was first included in a compilation by Ivo of Chartres, and later Gratian overtook these canons from Ivo as part of a broader discussion of regulations on marriage.[137] The question discussed is that of chastity of rape victims: the canonists turn to the authority of Augustine, quoting his position from *De civitate Dei* that if there is no internal intent to sin, as in cases of rape, then the purity of the mind, and so the

[133] Ibid, 179-80.

[134] Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, 'Jean Le Fèvre's Livre de Leesce: Praise or Blame of Women?', *Speculum* 69, no. 3 (1994): 706.

[135] On the conflict between Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux, including the differences in their perception of pagan thinkers, and on the problem of paganism in Abelard's works see C. J. Mews, *Abelard and Heloise*, Great Medieval Thinkers (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[136] Constance Brittain Bouchard, *'Every Valley Shall Be Exalted': The Discourse of Opposites in Twelfth-Century Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 40.

[137] Müller, "Lucretia and the Medieval Canonists": 20.

real chastity, is upheld. This seems to be a straight representation of the Augustinian teaching; however, it is then followed by the beginning of Augustine's speech on Lucretia up until the declaration that "there were two and only one committed adultery." As the rest of the speech is omitted, Lucretia becomes a strong example of chastity that is preserved after rape, contrary to how her story is commented upon in *De civitate Dei*. This neglect of direct condemnation can be seen, as Corinne Saunders points out, as a sign of a positive attitude toward Lucretia's actions.[138] However, it is not necessarily so, as Gratian does not provide a clear absolution for her suicide either; Lucretia here exists fully within the Augustinian narrative, which a reader familiar with the original work (although, it seems, that the majority of canonists were not)[139] could extrapolate to recall his arguments against "a virtuous suicide"; however, the ending of the story is not a concern of this paragraph, which might be the reason for which its discussion is omitted. Early commentators of the *Decretum* follow Gratian in ignoring the question of the morality of her suicide altogether while keeping the view that she was not complicit in adultery.[140]

Among the canonists, the problems that arise with Lucretia's story were first considered by Huguccio in his *Summa*. He reinstated the original opinion of Augustine, and went even further, saying that Lucretia was forced not "absolutely" (*absoluta*), but "conditionally" (*conditionalis*), which means that it was possible for her not to submit to Tarquinius (if she would choose to die), and thus she made a willing decision to commit adultery.[141] Although it was not without its critics, Huguccio's position won in all new glosses to the *Decretum* by 1210.[142]

[138] Corinne Saunders, "Legendary History: Lucretia and Helen of Troy," in *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2001), 161.
[139] Müller, "Lucretia and the Medieval Canonists": 28-29.
[140] Ibid., 21.
[141] Ibid., 22-3.
[142] Ibid., 26.

Overall, Augustine's condemnation of Lucretia provides a strong influence on how her actions are evaluated by the twelfth-century authors; however, he does not hold an absolute right to interpretation, and different versions of the story co-exist in various contexts. Apart from Augustinian quotations, in the twelfth century, the story of Lucretia gains only a few in-depth treatments, even in didactic literature, like *Policraticus*, for which characters of men play a larger importance. The ethics of secular and/or female behavior will come into focus with the advent of the new mendicant orders, and the controversy around Lucretia will develop in didactic literature primarily meant for women; these phenomena form the main topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 3. “Role model for Christians”? The uneasy place of Lucretia in didactic works of the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries

In the previous chapter, it has been shown how the surge of interest in pagan literature both re-established the narrative of Lucretia as a symbol of female virtue and raised anew the old questions around her story, including her suicide. But her story was not confined to complex treatises written within the university and elite Church circles for peers or the better-educated lay people: as the thirteenth century saw the blossoming of didactic texts, especially created by the clergy for lay people,[143] the legend found its way into contexts that were more restricted by the earlier Church tradition. In this chapter, I would like to explore if and how Lucretia, a figure who was directly condemned by Augustine for her actions, could be employed in the context of high medieval preaching and broader didactic literature.

Preaching about pagans: was there a place for Lucretia in a medieval sermon?

Already beginning in the early twelfth century, but in particular, after the establishment of the new mendicant orders, whose primary objective was intensive and accessible preaching to lay people, a new standard for sermons was established, not in the least through the rigorous internal educational systems of Franciscans and Dominicans.[144] An important role in this new sermon was played by *exempla*, or different stories that would illustrate the ideas of a sermon and capture the attention of an audience through

[143] [A. Gurevich] А.Я. Гуревич, *Культура и общество средневековой Европы глазами современников. (Exempla XIII века)* [Culture and society of the medieval Europe through the eyes of its contemporaries. (Exempla of the 13th century)] (Moscow: Искусство, 1989), 58.

[144] Marianne G. Briscoe, “Artes Praedicandi,” in *Artes Praedicandi and Artes Orandi*, ed. Marianne G. Briscoe and Barbara H. Jaye, Typologie des sources du Moyen Äge Occidental (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), 17–20.

entertainment. These stories could be taken from the Bible or tell about the lives of saints, but more often they would talk about "a man" or "a woman," just like the ones in the audience, to whom something exciting happened; numerous collections of popular *exempla*, which would help a preacher prepare for his sermon, survive.[145] However, pagan exempla, including that of Lucretia, are extremely rare in them,[146] which seems to reflect the fact that they would be unsuitable for a general audience, as one of the main rules of employing *exempla* was making sure that they would be easily understood and relatable to the listeners.[147] This implies that if Lucretia could appear in a sermon, it would probably be the one that would be addressed to relatively educated, elite audiences, whether lay ones or clergy.

When preparing for a sermon, preachers would use model collections for particular topics, audiences, and occasions; such collections survive in significant numbers in the archives,[148] sometimes as appendixes to *artes praedicandi*, manuals explaining how to write and deliver a sermon. Unfortunately for this chapter, these model sermon collections usually would not include any *exempla*, exactly because preachers were supposed to choose them themselves in accordance with the audience.[149] *Artes praedicandi* also usually[150] treat *exempla* in general, so it is not possible to see from them how exactly a preacher would interact with Lucretia's story. However, these sources can provide an important understanding of the ideas that would be illustrated by such *exempla* and the context of their use.

[145] Jacques Berlioz, "Le Récit Efficace: L'exemplum au service de la prédication (XIIIe-XVe Siècles)," *Melanges de l'Ecole française de Rome* 92, no. 1 (1980): 113–46.

[146] For this chapter, I have consulted an index compiled on the basis of the most popular *exempla* collections: Frederic C. Tubach, *Index Exemplorum: A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales* (Helsinki: Akademia scientiarum fennica, 1969).

[147] Berlioz, "Le Récit Efficace," 118-129.

[148] See indexes in: Beverly Mayne Kienzle, ed., *The Sermon*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Äge Occidental (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000).

[149] Larissa Taylor, "French Sermons, 1215-1535," in *The Sermon*, ed. Beverly Mayne Kienzle, Typologie des sources du Moyen Äge Occidental (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 740.

[150] More than 300 of them are known, but the majority are unedited and unpublished.

Among the authors of such treatises, there was no clear agreement on whether the pagan *exempla* were appropriate for use in sermons. The Dominican Humbert of Romans, for example, taught that "the books of philosophers," the source for such stories, should not be used as they are untrustworthy.[151] Already in the twelfth century, Alan of Lille, however, explains that "it is possible to occasionally insert what was written by gentiles," as the Apostle Paul did himself;[152] Nicholas de Hanapes states as well that "profane" examples can be healthy but in decent measure.[153]

That Lucretia did find her way into preaching is certain, as there is a model sermon surviving with her story, namely in *Sermones aurei*, a model collection by Jacobus de Voragine. This sermon was supposed to be delivered on the first Sunday after Epiphany, which in the liturgical cycle fell on the story of the Wedding at Cana. This reading was traditionally seen as an opportunity to preach on marriage,[154] which is what is happening here. Jacobus is retelling Jerome's *Adversus Jovinianum* to explain why "a wise man should not marry," and quoting ancient philosophers who talked about the dangers of marriage. But if one is to find a wife, he writes, at least she should hold chastity as the most important thing – as examples, he gives a list of pagan women who refused to marry ever again; and together with them, those who killed themselves for chastity - an unnamed Theban woman and Lucretia. For Lucretia, however, he also provides a comment from Augustine that if she was innocent, she was wrong to kill herself. This kind of use of pagan *exempla* is possible because of the authority of Jerome; however, a caveat is given so as not to make listeners think that such a radical action as suicide is allowed.

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[151] Berlioz, "Le Récit Efficace," 119.

[152] *Poterit etiam ex occasione interserere dicta gentilium, sicut et Paulus apostolus aliquando in Epistolis suis philosophorum auctoritates interserit*, Alanus de Insulis, *Summa magistri Alani doctoris universalis de arte praedicatoria*. Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina 210, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1854), col. 114B.

[153] Berlioz, "Le Récit Efficace," 118.

[154] David D'Avray, 'The Gospel of the Marriage Feast of Cana and Marriage Preaching in France', *Studies in Church History. Subsidia* 4 (1985): 207–24.

The story is also present in *Gesta romanorum*, an extremely influential late thirteenth-early fourteenth-century collection of *exempla* with moralizing explanations. This *exemplum* (capitulum 135) is dedicated to "our conscience" (*consciencia nostra*) and the need for confession and penitence before God.[155] Even though the author references Augustine as the source for the story, the text itself mostly follows "Livian" tradition – Lucretia's speech before her relatives is quite close to the wordings in *Ab urbe condita*: one can note the "imprint of a strange man in your [her husband's] bed" – expression present nearly word-for-word in Livy, but not in Augustine.[156] The problems of suicide and paganism, and the related Augustinian condemnation, are completely omitted. Instead, the whole story is treated metaphorically: Lucretia is a soul, that is married not to an earthly husband, but to God; Tarquinius is the devil, who violates the soul by causing it to sin; the confession is made before the priest, Christ, and other believers, and the sword is penitence which cleanses the heart of sin. With such an explanation, no evaluation is needed for the morality or virtue of the "real-world" Lucretia, as the reader, or listener, is not expected to follow her literally. However, such metaphorical analysis is quite complex, and I am not sure it would be useful in an actual sermon to a "general" audience, who were not taught of allegorical and other modes of interpretation. As in the case of *Sermones aurei*, it is hard to tell from the texts themselves whether these particular variations were not initially intended for clerical or monastic audiences, and would be significantly adapted if one would prefer to relay them for lay audiences.[157]

[155] Hermann Oesterley, ed., *Gesta Romanorum* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1872), 489-90.

[156] Compare: *Scias tu, o Colatine, vestimenta viri alieni in lecto tuo fuisse* (*Gesta Romanorum*, 490), with *Vestigia viri alieni, Collatine, in lecto sunt tuo* (Livy, 1.58).

[157] It is clear that later *Gesta Romanorum* was transmitted, especially in translations, as an entertaining collection for broader (but able to read) audiences, sometimes with shortened moralizations; I will return to its influence in the next chapter. In this discussion, I am only concerned with its possible use by preachers. See Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment*, 161-2.

There is evidence that the story itself could also be used in preaching in other contexts, for example, when addressed to rulers, as proposed by its appearance in a Cistercian *exempla* collection where the story of the fall of the Roman kings is used as a warning against cruelty.[158] However, in these instances, there would be no focus on Lucretia herself, as female behavior would not be of much interest to an intended male audience.

How not to lead your flock to sin: adapting the story and answering hard questions

As painting a more generalized picture of Lucretia's place in preaching to lay audiences, including women, presents significant problems because of the outlined lacunae in surviving sources, the next part of this chapter will concentrate on a case study of a closely related set of sources in an attempt to reconstruct one of the possible ways in which her story could be used in sermons.

A work called *Communiloquium*, authored by the Franciscan theologian John of Wales (c. 1220-1285), is one of those manuals that does include a variety of *exempla*, including a significant number about pagan figures from the ancient past. Judging by the number of quotes from ancient authors in John's works, for him it was much more than an occasional thing: he was building on earlier "encyclopedic tradition," represented by John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, but repurposing the stories for the use of preachers.[159]

The story of Lucretia comes up in *Communiloquium* twice, both times in the chapters concerning preaching on specific topics.[160] The first passage is dedicated to preaching to

[158] *Collectio exemplorum cisterciensis in codice Parisiensi 15912 asseruata*, Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Mediaevalis 243 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 32.

[159] Charles F. Briggs, "Philosophi in Adiutorio Fidei: Pastoral Uses of Pagan Moral Teaching in the Later Middle Ages," *LATCH: A Journal for the Study of the Literary Artifact in Theory, Culture, or History* 1 (2008): 38–39.

[160] There exists no critical edition of *Communiloquium*; I have used a (not officially published) transcription of an early print version (published in Augsburg in 1475) made by Chris L. Nighman for his electronic Manipulus Florum project; this is a version that is referenced in the Bibliography (the references will

women about the importance of chastity and shamefacedness, or modesty (*castitas* and *pudicitia*).[161] John starts by establishing their foremost importance for every woman on the authority of the Bible and *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*,[162] showing by quotations that these attributes procure both a good reputation in this life and salvation in the next one. This is followed directly by quotations from Valerius Maximus's *Factorum ac dictorum memorabilium* concerning "many examples of women who were so passionately diligent in preserving their modesty or chastity that they preferred to lose their life rather than their modesty," and also those who did so out of "marital love." All of these examples are, of course, of pagan women, and one of them concerns Lucretia. The story itself is quoted from Valerius without any significant changes:

> [Valerius] also talks about Lucretia, who, because she was violently forced by the son of King Tarquinius Superbus to suffer dishonor, after lamenting this injustice before the gathering of her kinsman, killed herself by a knife that she brought hidden in her robes.[163]

While the story itself is presented, albeit briefly, in a "pagan" version that is complimentary toward Lucretia (notice the lack of any implications of her compliance in the rape), and other Greek and Roman women like her, who also committed suicide whether when met with a prospect of rape or after it, it is then followed by a "dispute" between the Church Fathers (Ambrosius, Augustine, and Jerome) on the permissibility of such an action. John does not specify his view, leaving the possibility for preachers to rely on the quotes more aligned with their position or a specific situation; however, he indicates how to moralize examples from Valerius if one is to use them in a sermon: "In pagan women, zeal

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be given as *Communiloquium* 1.1.1., where numbers indicate, correspondingly, parts, sections, and chapters). I have also compared this transcription of the relevant chapters with a print version from Ulm, which does not seem to have significant alterations.

[161] *Communiloquium* 3.1.3.

[162] A popular didactic treatise by an anonymous Irish author from 7th century; in the Middle Ages, it was often ascribed to Saint Cyprian, Saint Augustine, or other authorities; John of Wales does not name an author.

[163] *Ibidem narrat de Lucretia que quia a Torquinio regis superbi filio per uim stuprum pati coacta, cum iniuriam suam in concilio necessariorum deplorasset, ferro quod ueste tectum attulerat se interemit*, Communiloquium 3.1.3.

towards modesty should be commended, but the excess of their deeds of killing themselves is not to be imitated."[164] Thus, John implies that pagans, such as Lucretia, were able to commit deeds worthy of respect that can be used as guiding examples for Christian women, while at the same time not contradicting Augustine and the Church's teachings. This approach corresponds to the guidance on the use of *exempla* provided by another (anonymous) Franciscan author of the thirteenth century: in the so-called *Liber exemplorum*, he points out that when including a story that mentions something sinful, a preacher should be careful that his listeners do not misunderstand its purpose, and are not led into committing that sin themselves; no potential room for interpretation should be left.[165]

The second chapter where Lucretia appears is dedicated exactly to preaching on the impermissibility of suicide, and this is where only the "strong" Augustinian version of her story is present: if Lucretia chose to kill herself, it was because she committed a sin and was prideful, but those who are truly innocent will be rewarded accordingly by God and should not fear gossip.[166] The contradiction with the earlier chapter where it is advised to use her as an *exemplum* for Christian women is left undecided, as in the case of *Policraticus* which was discussed in the previous chapter.

During the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, *Communiloquium* became a very popular treatise,[167] copied for the use of preachers across Europe and surviving in at least 144 manuscripts and several early print editions.[168] But its influence must have started within the Franciscan Order from Paris, where it was produced c. 1265-1270 when John was teaching at

[164] *In mulieribus uero gentilibus zelus pudicicie commendandus, excessus uero in factis quia se necauerunt minime immitandus*, Communiloquium 3.1.3.

[165] Berlioz, "Le Récit Efficace," 131-133.

[166] Communiloquium 6.1.6.

[167] Evencio Beltrán, "Christine de Pizan, Jacques Legrand et le Communiloquium de Jean de Galles," *Romania* 104, no. 14 (1983): 212–221.

[168] Jenny Swanson, *John of Wales: A Study of the Works and Ideas of a Thirteenth-Century Friar*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought 4th (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 232-257.

the university there.[169] I have been able to identify two works that were created not too long after that in France by Franciscan monks who probably were aware of John's works and so can be treated as belonging to the same tradition and valid for comparison.

First of them is the *Mirror des bonnes femmes*, an Old French collection of *exempla* compiled by a Franciscan preacher in the second half of the thirteenth century, most probably about 1280-1290.[170] While the two later of the three surviving manuscripts were seemingly copied for independent reading for aristocratic and urban elite households,[171] the execution of the earliest one, as well as the fact that some stories are given only as outlines, suggests that this collection might have initially served as a supplement for sermon preparation, or as a book that a preacher could read out loud for a private gathering of elite ladies, providing his comments along the way.[172] Within this work, there are at least five direct references to Valerius Maximus, of which four are also present in *Communiloquium*; considering the dating and that *Factorum ac dictorum memorabilium* was only made popular as a didactic source by John of Wales,[173] it seems highly probable that this anonymous author was under the influence of the latter.

Miroir is divided into two parts, one on "bad women" and one on "good women," which in turn are divided into chapters, where every chapter is formed by a Biblical story of a certain woman followed by a moralization and other *exempla* on the same topic. The story of Lucretia appears in the part on "good women", in the chapter dedicated to Susanna; as in *Communiloquium*, the illustrated moral lesson here is the importance of protection of

[169] Ibid., 63-64.

[170] John L. Grigsby, "Miroir Des Bonnes Femmes," *Romania* 82, no. 328 (1961): 458–81.

[171] Kathleen Ashley, "The Miroir Des Bonnes Femmes: Not for Women Only?," in *Medieval Conduct*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Rober L. A. Clark (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 90-92.

[172] John L. Grigsby, "Miroir Des Bonnes Femmes": 465-466.

[173] Albrecht Diem, "A Classicising Friar at Work: John of Wales Breviloquium de virtutibus," in *Christian Humanism*, ed. Alasdair A. MacDonald, Z.R.W.M. von Martels, and Jan Veenstra, vol. 142, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 82.

chastity.[174] The story itself is told in more detail, starting with the contest between Roman *chevaliers* on whose wives lead the most honest life while they are at war, with Lucretia winning; then Tarquinius is presented as breaking into her chamber at night and using force; and then it is told, again, of how she admits everything before the gathering of her kinsmen and kills herself with a hidden knife. There are no untraditional elements here, but also no judgment is passed on whether Lucretia is in some way responsible for the crime against her. On the contrary, Lucretia is lauded as a positive role model like Susanna,[175] with the distinction that the former is one of "the pagan ladies who not for God, but from the nobility of heart preferred to die rather than to suffer dishonor"[176] (note how close this formulation is to the quote from Valerius in *Communiloquium*). The same reservation is made as recommended by John of Wales, with the author saying that he "does not want to say that this deed was a good one," although Lucretia did this "because her heart was noble"; the specific reasons for which it is not permissible to Christians are not quite explained, but they would probably be familiar to the audience.[177] It is worth noticing that while *Miroir* contains numerous stories of pagan women choosing to die out of love for their husbands, such as that of Dido,[178] it is not presented as a reason for Lucretia's actions; possibly because no such proposition was made in the sources available to the author.

The second identified work that is both written under the influence of John of Wales and contains the story of Lucretia is the *Speculum dominarum* by Durand de Champagne, also a Franciscan. This treatise is a variation on the "mirrors for princes" tradition, but addressed to a female audience, more specifically to the Queen of France Jeanne de Navarre,

[174] *Miroir des bonnes femmes*. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 2156, fols. 91r-93v. Out of three known manuscripts, I have been able to consult two; this part is extant only in one them, referenced in the Bibliography and here.

[175] The comparison goes back to at least the 10th century, when it was made by Odo of Cluny (see Chapter 1).

[176] *…dames paiennes qui non por Dieu mes par noblece de cuer voloient morrir que tel honte soffrir*, Miroir des bonnes femmes, fols. 92r.

[177] Ibid., fols. 92v-93r.

[178] Ibid., 96v.

the wife of Philip IV; Durand had been her confessor from 1298 until she died in 1305, which gives a rather slim window for the time of the mirror's composition.[179] Even though this text is not strictly a sermon, with the lack of other material, I believe it is worth using it for comparison here, as, first of all, one of the primary goals of its composition was pastoral care of a confessor for the salvation of his reader; secondly, the part where Lucretia is mentioned is directly (or through an intermediary that was quoting directly from John) based on *Communiloquium*, the work which in other contexts would serve for the creation of a sermon.

In *Speculum*, Lucretia appears in a part that is dedicated to different virtues that a lady should strive for; specifically, again, in the chapter on chastity.[180] As was just mentioned, this chapter is a developed version of the corresponding chapter from *Communiloquium*: Durand explains clearer what *castitas* is, and adds examples of Biblical women; but the part on pagan ladies is the same, with a reference to Valerius, and then abridged quotations from Ambrose and Augustine on the permissibility of suicide for protection of chastity; Augustine's direct condemnation of Lucretia does not appear. Some of the wordings are changed; however, the structure of *Communiloquium*'s sentences is recognizable. This is how the story of Lucretia goes:

> [Valerius] also talks about Lucretia, who, because she was violently forced by the son of King Tarquinius to suffer dishonor, having convoked her friends, after openly lamenting this injustice before everyone, killed herself by a knife that she brought hidden in her robes.[181]

Moreover, the resulting moralization seems to have been also lifted from *Communiloquium*, as we again have here an expression *zelus pudititie,* which I have not been able to locate in any other sources that Durand could use when compiling this chapter. The

[179] Constant J. Mews, "The Speculum Dominarum (Miroir Des Dames) and Transformations of the Literature of Instruction for Women in the Early Fourteenth Century," in *Virtue Ethics for Women 1250–1500*, ed. Karen Green and Constant J. Mews (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 21.

[180] Durand de Champagne, *Speculum dominarum*, ed. Anne Flottès-Dubrulle (Paris: École des chartes, 2018), 231-232. The text is quoted from the critical edition based on the only surviving Latin manuscript.

[181] *Idem eciam narrat de Lucrecia que, quia a Tarquinio regis filio per uim stuprum pati coacta est, convocatis amicis suis, cum injuriam suam factam coram ipsis omnibus deplorasset, ferro quod sub ueste tectum attulerat semeipsam occidit*, Durand de Champagne, *Speculum dominarum*, 232.

chapter ends with the following line: "In pagan women zeal towards modesty is commendable, but the excess in that they killed themselves is not to be imitated by the faithful."[182]

As can be seen, both the anonymous author of *Miroir des bonnes femmes* and Durand follow those recommendations for talking about Lucretia and other pagan women like her that were given by John of Wales; *Communiloquium*, of course, was not necessarily the only source where such recommendations were given, but it seems to be representative of at least some preachers' approach. Considering that the educational program and the principles of sermon creation within the Franciscan order were relatively unified,[183] and how popular John's works would become, it can be tentatively suggested that this way of treating Lucretia's story and including her when preaching on chastity, at least for relatively elite women, was not confined to these three authors. It should also be noted that the use of popular *artes praedicandi* usually was not restricted to a particular order, and there often is no clear boundary between Franciscan and Dominican sermons, so it is probable that this trend was not restricted to the former.[184]

It is interesting that, although the position of Augustine on her story was surely known to the educated Franciscan authors, they chose to only refer to the condemnation of suicide in general or for the "faithful," but not to tarnish her actions, saying that they should be "commended." Moreover, there is an element of ethical relativity here, as all three authors imply that pagans and Christians can be judged by different standards and that the "nobility of heart" is as valid a reason for lauded actions as "the love of God"; this is somewhat close

[182] *In mulieribus uero gentilibus zelus pudicicie laudandus est, sed excessus in facto que se interfecerunt non est a fidelibus imitandus*. Durand de Champagne, *Speculum dominarum*, 232.

[183] Bert Roest, *History of Franciscan Education (c. 1210-1517)* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 10-11.

[184] Larissa Taylor, "French Sermons, 1215-1535," 720.

to John of Salisbury's position.[185] Repeating after Augustine that no pagans, including Lucretia, were virtuous, would, perhaps, negate the moral effect that the preachers were hoping to achieve with these examples.

Lucretia as a Church-sanctified role model

To answer the question of why Lucretia was included in Christian sermons in this period as a positive example, we need to look at the contexts in which preachers would write their sermons. There is a stark difference in the volume of didactic works and sermons aimed at lay people in general and women in particular that survived before and after the thirteenth century. Although it might be partly attributed to the general improvement of conservation, it is also clear that the religious and moral behavior of the broad lay populace became of significantly more concern to the Church after the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, during which the issues of lack of pastoral care and the consequent spread of "heretical" ideas were raised, along with the discussion for the need of recognition of new mendicant movements of Franciscans and Dominicans.[186]

A good example of an earlier moral work for women is the twelfth-century *Speculum virginum*: however, it relates specifically to monastic life, calling the reader to a life of chastity in service to God, of which there were plenty of models from the biblical and early Church history; it also does not truly follow later[187] strategies of strengthening moral teachings with a variety of *exempla*.[188] While it is not possible to extrapolate just from this

[185] John Marenbon, "Relativism in the Long Middle Ages: Crossing the Ethical Border with Paganism," *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2, no. 2 (2015): 345–65.

[186] Salvador Ryan and Anthony Shanahan, 'How to Communicate Lateran IV in 13th Century Ireland: Lessons from the Liber Exemplorum (c.1275)', *Religions* 9, no. 3 (2018): 1–14.

[187] Berlioz, "Le Récit Efficace," 116.

[188] More on its rhetorical and pedagogical strategies can be found in Constant J. Mews, 'Virginity, Theology, and Pedagogy in the Speculum Virginum', in *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum Virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant J. Mews (NY: Palgrave, 2001), 15–40..

one source,[189] it is reasonable to assume that Lucretia would not make frequent appearances as a positive image, except in metaphorical sense, as the works of earlier monastic orders on piety and morals would in most cases comply with the Augustinian rejection of pagan virtue; there would be no need for writers such as John of Salisbury and John of Wales to justify themselves if the use of pagans as positive *exempla*, with a reference to Jerome and even St. Paul, had been more common.

In contrast, the preachers of the mendicant orders, such as the Franciscan author of *Miroir des bonnes femmes*, were concerned specifically with the day-to-day morality of lay audiences. Some of their listeners would enter a monastery, but the majority would stay and live "in the world." This must have created a challenge for the choice of sermon *exempla* since the traditional ideals of Christian female saints would show exactly the rejection of the lay life and marriage. It is possible, then, that some preachers turned to both radical and traditional ideas of using pagan women as *exempla*: radical, so far as it concerns the immediate tradition of the sixth to twelfth centuries, and traditional, as it was possible to support this decision by references to Jerome. However, if for Jerome the use of pagans *exempla* was about shaming Christians ("look, even *they* are better at virtue than you, who know Christ"), there is no such emphasis in the texts discussed in this chapter; probably, the sharpness of its sting would be lost on thirteenth-century Christians, for whom Roman pagans were characters of the long-lost ages, not the immediate Other. In this context, the story of Lucretia serves not to shame Christians for loving chastity less than pagans, but to extol actions that were prohibited to Christian women by the predominant Christian tradition. This allows to present the new as sanctified by tradition, which was in reality adapted to a new

[189] More information on similar literature of the period is found in Elizabeth Bos, 'The Literature of Spiritual Formation for Women in France and England, 1080 to 1180', in *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum Virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant J. Mews (NY: Palgrave, 2001), 201–20..

meaning for the audience that probably would not read the original Jerome but would have heard of him enough to understand the weight of his authority.

It is also interesting to note that both in the *Speculum* and the *Miroir*, pagans play predominantly positive roles – and the majority of the negative examples, except those taken from the Bible, are close by those people who commit sinful actions are often not even named, and the stories are said to have happened "not so long ago, in a town not so far away" - their "heroes" are "people just like *you*, the audience," so this temptation is something that could happen to *you*, be careful. This is in line with the general teaching of the time that *exempla* in preaching should be as relatable and accessible as possible, notwithstanding the use of saintly ideals of perfection in contrast to the sinfulness of the "usual" everyday life of the audience.[190] But if a preacher wanted to make such a strong argument for the preservation of chastity and marital fidelity, it is possible that choosing either the examples of early Christians killing themselves, or telling how "this happened to your neighbor," would be seen as more problematic, as it would be harder to explain why the contemporary Christians should not follow these *exempla* to the extreme; in the case of pagans, it is enough to imply that they just did not know better yet. In addition, if for Jerome and Augustine, pagan Roman ethics were a part of their world, and a threat to their worldview, it is possible to assume that Roman figures became "safer" by the thirteenth century, when the threat to lose your listeners to the ancient Roman believes was distant. (Interestingly, there do not seem to be examples of contemporary Jewish or Muslim women in either the *Speculum* or the *Miroir*.)

The question then is, why was there a need for such extreme examples for the protection of chastity, seeing that preachers continued to understand the possibility of their misinterpretation? David D'Avray, in his analysis of model sermons to married people in *ad status* sermon collections, notes that by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, they developed

[190] Berlioz, "Le Récit Efficace," 116-8.

attention for the theme of *dilectio*, or marital love.[191] This quality starts to become important in preaching to lay people, as the Church's concern for their morality grows: if before, the only positive model of living was to take a vow of celibacy, now the preachers develop an alternative – a life of marital fidelity.[192] Lynn Shutters has shown before how pagan *exempla* proved integral for the support of *maritalis affectio* in later, secular sources;[193] however, it seems that this tradition was initiated by the clergy in their search for new role models, and then was transmitted to secular authors.

It is also important to consider what kind of influence the use of this model could have on its intended audience. Returning to the *Miroir*, Lucretia's story is only one of a rather large number of *exempla* on chastity, which is presented as the main constituent of the female "honor" (*honor*) and means keeping either one's virginity for the unmarried or one's marital loyalty, including in cases of widowhood. Not only when women "lost their honor" willingly, but even in cases of rape, it is them who are presented as being at fault because of their unguarded or tempting behavior.[194] To preserve their chastity, women are advised to stay at home; to never stay alone with men except for one's husband or father, as even a brother can be a threat; not to wear dresses that are too revealing or luxurious or use cosmetics; not to dance or laugh too much in public; not to talk with men except one's relatives in general. In this, we can see a reflection of male concern, probably related to the need to have legal, and so one's own, heirs. As Merry E. Wiesner has noted when speaking about gendered norms,

[191] David D'Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[192] Michael Sheehan, 'Maritalis Affectio Revisited', in *The Olde Daunce: Love, Friendship, Sex, and Marriage in the Medieval World*, ed. Robert R. Edwards and Stephen Spector (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991), 32–43.

[193] Lynn Shutters, 'Griselda's Pagan Virtue', *The Chaucer Review* 44, no. 1 (2009): 61–83; Lynn Shutters, 'Marital Affection and the Medieval Lucretia': 62–84; Lynn Shutters, 'Confronting Venus: Classical Pagans and Their Christian Readers in John Gower's Confessio Amantis', *The Chaucer Review* 48, no. 1 (2013): 38–65.

[194] As in the cases of Dinah, who is said to be at fault for her own rape because of the way she was dressed (*Miroir* 11v-12r), and Bathsheba, who has not guarded herself well enough from David's gaze (*Miroir* 25v-26r). Note that the Bible versions of the stories, which the author is referencing, do not contain victim-blaming traits.

sources produced by men often "reflect male notions and worries more than real female actions."[195] However, it does not mean that the story would not influence the female audience. As the *Speculum* and *Miroir* partly represent sermon tradition, the same stories would be repeatedly told by preachers, at least in the context of a more privileged flock; and, as David D'Avray suggests, this repetition would be analogous to modern mass media that both reflect and impose societal values.[196] Many women who were subjected to such sermons or readings would probably strive for the prescribed norms in their everyday behavior; and if they did not share the same notions of good behavior, they still would know that this was expected from them by their community – in consequence, the created social pressure would influence at least the performative side of behavior.

In John of Salisbury's accounts aimed at other educated men, female actions to preserve *castitas* and evade rape, or to deal with its consequences as Lucretia had done, had no educational meaning for the private life, and sexual or marital behavior. Rhetorically, these actions were interpreted as public, rather than private, and equated with Cato's suicide and the murder of Caesar, pointing the male audience toward the political idea of liberty and the ideal figure of a statesman. Conversely, in the thirteenth-century sermons and didactic material aimed at women, Lucretia appears as a model for both private and female lives. In the next chapter, I will explore how this model transferred to secularized literature of the next two centuries.

[195] Merry E. Wiesner, 'Ideas and Laws Regarding Women', in *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 30.

[196] David D'Avray, *Medieval Marriage Sermons: Mass Communication in a Culture without Print* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 31.

Chapter 4. Lucretia as a gendered *exemplum* in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries

With the broader reading of the pagan works, and the development of the notion of the "natural virtues," it seems that by the late thirteenth century, the problem of Lucretia's non-Christian status and the incompatibility of her suicide with Christian ethics is no longer as explicit as it was for such authors as John of Salisbury and John of Wales, discussed in the previous chapters. Following the classicizing tradition of the twelfth-century authors, and with the spreading use of pagan works in education, it seems that Lucretia becomes *the* example of both female chastity in general and martial fidelity, with the name used to signify them without additional explanations. Part of this trend may have even been unwillingly initiated by Augustine himself, as there emerges a tradition of using the pair of Cato and Lucretia as the symbols of the ancient virtue – the same pair that the Church Father used to prove that this virtue was a false one.[197]

Even though the unease does not disappear completely, Lucretia takes her place as a recurring *exemplum* of the female virtue in literature for edifying entertainment. By looking into how her story functioned as a lesson for women in general and wives in particular, I hope to better understand the reasons why this legend, with all its controversial aspects, was embraced by those seeking to guide women – and, sometimes, men - in their moral betterment; and to show the connections between the development of her use in secularized contexts, and earlier sermon tradition.

[197] As found in one of the songs of *Carmina burana*. See Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 95.

Alternative sainthood model

In the previous chapter, I tried to show Lucretia's place in the creation of new models of lay behavior by the Church. In the fourteenth century, she continued on her way of being an integral part of these alternative sainthood models for laity, primarily for the aristocracy and urban elites. One of the signs of this is Lucretia finding a place in the "nine worthies" tradition. The Nine Worthies – or, as they are commonly called, *Neuf Preux* – are the Late Medieval tradition, mostly popular in France, the Netherlands, and Germany, of the nine heroes who were held to exemplify chivalry; there would be three heroes of Antiquity (most commonly, Hector, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar); three heroes of the Old Testament (Joshua, King David, and Judas Maccabeus); and three heroes of Christianity (King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon). A companion tradition of nine female worthies - *Neuf Preuses* – started to develop from the second half of the 14th century, though both the characters and the virtues they exemplified were less settled.[198] Lucretia does appear at least in some instances: she was present on the 15th century's Rouen pattern of the playing cards as a queen, though the logic of the choice of figures – the Amazon Penthesilea, Helen of Troy, and Bathsheba, remains unclear, except for the mashup of different traditions.[199] Often, the female worthies of the cards would be representative of the same chivalric qualities as their male counterparts, being female warriors, such as the Amazons, goddesses, such as Athena, or participators of conflicts, like Judith.[200]

An ideologically different variation appears in the series of engravings on Nine Worthies (both male and female) by Hans Burgkmair, created in the 1510s in Augsburg: here,

[198] [Veronika Voroshen] Вероника Ворошень, '«Девять доблестных мужей» и «Девять доблестных жен» в западноевропейском изобразительном искусстве XIV–XVI веков'. [Neuf Preux and Neuf Preuses in the fine arts of Western Europe of the 14th-16th centuries.] (Ph.D. in Art History, Moscow, Moscow State University, 2014), 4-5.

[199] Ibid., 203.

[200] Ibid, 200-2.

the pagan heroines are presented by Lucretia, Verginia,[201] and Veturia[202]; the Old Testament ones are Esther, Judith, and Jael; and the Christian ones are St. Helena of Constantinople; St. Bridget of Sweden; and St. Elizabeth of Hungary.[203] Together with Verginia, she can be interpreted as being "worthy" for her *castitas*; in a triumvirate with Veturia, all of their stories also bore significance for the idea of Roman liberty. This double meaning could also be inferred about three Jewish ladies, who were believed to have saved their people from foreign conquerors, apart from being virtuous and faithful servants of the Lord. The three Christian saints are also interesting in, certainly, being representations of the virtues of faith and service to God, but also belonging to royal and aristocratic circles, with all of them having lived more secular lives of rulers. This variation of the *Neuf Preuses* is not as directly "chivalric" as earlier selections of the Amazons – here, the represented virtues are more traditional *for women*;[204] however, the undertones of aristocracy, seen in the rich dresses of most of the figures, connect them with the origin of the theme. Interestingly, Lucretia is dressed rather plainly in contrast with other non-Christian figures, approaching the modesty of the rough clothing that covers the rich dresses of the Christian saints; perhaps, exactly, in the signification of her chastity.

It is unknown if Burgkmair combined this set himself or chose a previously existing one; but it is clear that his work enjoyed popularity, with copies by other masters.[205] Migrating further from the purely aristocratic to elite urban culture, the *Neuf Preuses* in the

[201] Her story is somewhat parallel with the story of Lucretia. According to Livy (3.44), she was a beautiful young girl in the fifth century BCE, who was killed by her father in order to protect her from rape by an unjust ruler. The event led to a popular revolt and the establishment of further protections for the Republic.

[202] Legendary mother of Coriolanus, who is credited with saving Rome from a sacking by her own son (Livy 2.39-40), one of the models of female Roman virtue and patriotism.

[203] [Voroshen] Ворошень, '«Девять доблестных мужей» и «Девять доблестных жен»', 204.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Ibid., 205.

same combination, including Lucretia, appeared on the façade of the Chamber of Commerce, built in Strasbourg from 1467 to 1589.[206]

The tradition of the Worthies represents a consolidation of the break from the Augustinian stance on the lack of virtue in non-Christians. But why would it be important to include pagans in the continuous row together with the Biblical and Christian figures? Frank Grady, based on analysis of late medieval English literature, has concluded that literary righteous heathens of the period functioned as a mirror for the aristocracy: they were made to look (as seen in Burgkmair's ladies) and behave as contemporary aristocrats, thus allowing the readers to relate to them, and providing authors with an opportunity for commentary on contemporary customs without "automatic and definitive solutions mandated by a resolutely Christian moral universe".[207] As will be shown below, this can apply to Lucretia as well, as was done by Geoffrey Chaucer in his *Legend of Good Women*; however, I would like to propose that in her case, as in the case of the idea of righteous heathens in general, this use is a re-adaptation from the earlier Church usage. Secular authors of the fourteenth and later centuries might have felt safe to use stories like Lucretia's without attracting allegations of heresy precisely since their re-telling in a positive light had already been "sanctified" by Church authors. Additionally, texts like *Gesta Romanorum* would be popular enough among elite readers, so at least part of the intended audience would be educated enough to know beforehand both Lucretia's story and its use in more clerical-approved contexts. In the case of Chaucer, for example, such a reader could be Queen Anne of Bohemia (the wife of Richard II), for whom the *Legend* could have been written.[208] The later copying of virtuous pagan

[206] Ibid., 236.

[207] Frank Grady, *Representing Righteous Heathens in Late Medieval England* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 14, 101-21.

[208] On Anne's education see Alfred Thomas, 'Margaret of Teschen's Czech Prayer: Transnationalism and Female Literacy in the Later Middle Ages', Huntington Library Quarterly 74, no. 2 (June 2011): 311. On her connection to Chaucer, Margaret Galway, 'Chaucer's Sovereign Lady: A Study of the Prologue to the "Legend" and Related Poems', *The Modern Language Review* 33, no. 2 (1938): 158.

imagery in an urban context, seen in Strasbourg, could be in part attributed to the gradual adoption of some aristocratic signifiers as signs of status by the upper middle bourgeoisie.

Continuing with possible connections between the sermon literature of the last chapter, I would like to explore an example of Lucretia's use in still moralistic, but vernacular French literature. *La complainte des neuf maleureux et des noef maleureuses* is, by surviving manuscripts, a courtly, Northern French poem of the fourteenth or fifteenth century.[209] As in the *Neuf Preuses*-themed works, it presents stories of Biblical and pagan characters from legends and history (though none from the "Christian era"); conversely, what connects them is not their virtue, but their misfortunes. The main image of the poem is the wheel of Fortune – your luck in this world comes and goes, so one should not get too proud when everything is going well but think of God. Lucretia's part goes as follows:

> It is a great pity when virtuous courage
> Is brought into tribulation by misfortune.
> I am Lucretia, a noble of high birth,
> Full of virtue in great perfection,
> Of a beautiful body without blemish or flaw,
> A true example of all Roman honor,
> Alas! Foolish desire wanted to do me wrong too much,
> which made me suffer being ravished by his lust.
> I go to death, it is a pitiful abode,
> I don't want to live at all after such ordeal [or defilement].[210]

This description does not explain much about the events surrounding Lucretia's rape and suicide to a reader or a listener: probably, the audience was expected to know the gist of the story, to which the poet would then provide a new angle within the context of the poem as a whole. Lucretia is presented as an unhappy figure, although in this part, no direct judgment

[209] Gianni Mombello, '"Les complaintes des .IX. malheureux et des .IX. malheureuses". Variations sur le thème des "neuf preux" et du « vado mori »', *Romania* 87, no. 347 (3) (1966): 361-3.

[210] *C'est grant pitié quant vertueux courage / Par infortune est en turbatïon. / Je suy Lucrece, noble de hault parage, / De vertus plaine en grant perfection, / Belle de corps sans tache ou lesïon, / De tout honneur rommain vray exemplaire, / Las! fol desir trop m'a voulu meffaire, / Quy m'a souffert rapvir par sa luxure. / A la mort vois, c'est ung piteux repaire, / Jamais ne veul vivre aprez tel ordure*, Mombello, '"Les Complaintes Des .IX. Malheureux et Des .IX. Malheureuses": 375. The translation is mine.

in the Augustinian vein is given on whether she is in part guilty of her unhappiness; however, again, it is unclear just from the passage if her praise for herself is fully shared by the author.

The moral lesson comes in the ending verse, given by *Le Philozophe*: one should strive not for high position, or power, as Fortune is changeable (*Fortune muable*); but, rather, "to be made known to God,"[211] who will help one keep their honor. This, perhaps, helps to explain a lack of Christian characters in this *Neuf Preuses* variation: lack of Christian faith and trust in God is exactly what causes these characters to be so unfortunate. Even of the Old Testament characters, only one – Samson – has a heroic ending (but only after being defeated by his unwise love); the other two, kings Saul and Rehoboam, are no Biblical heroes. The majority of the ladies are also not standard *exempla* of virtuous pagans, including Medea, Olympia (mother of Alexander the Great), and Agrippina – mother of Nero. What seems to connect all of them is high status and physical beauty, not their virtue: apart from Lucretia, only the Amazon Penthesilea is commended for her chastity. This context and the final auctorial statement shine a less favorable light on Lucretia's complaints and suicide.

However, she is still allowed to give herself the most substantial praise among the women of the poem. Lucretia is called "a true example of all Roman virtue" (*de tout honneur rommain vray exemplaire)* – connecting her description with the earlier tradition, going back to Valerius Maximus and other ancient authors. Being taken from a more positive tradition that would be recognizable to the audience, the story is put in a different light by the context, possibly creating a play on the listeners' expectations.

Interestingly, by combining male and female characters within one work and under a common idea akin to *vanitas vanitatum*, the stories become ungendered *exempla* – Lucretia, like everyone else, serves as a negative role model both to men and women.

[211] *tes fais estre connus A Dieu,* ibid.: 376.

But where would the audience have pre-existing knowledge of Lucretia from? It is quite probable that this court poet would not have a kind of education that involved extensive readings from original texts by Livy, although Ovid would not be out of the question. Not all people in his audience would enjoy that kind of upbringing either. What could be popular reading or listening material, however, are story collections like *Gesta romanorum*, or didactic books, like the *Miroir des bonnes femmes*. There would also exist popularizing adaptations of classical works, such as *L'Ovide moralisé*, which will be discussed further in the fifth chapter. The broader dissemination of classical literature would converge with didactic religious works discussed in the third chapter, giving a pagan story a definite Augustinian moralization flavor.

Contrary to what we have seen in twelfth-century literature, which was not overly interested in female classical characters, the early Renaissance brought more of them into "educated male"-oriented works. The important work to bring broader attention to biographies of legendary and historical women of Ancient Greece and Rome is, of course, Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris*. While it also presents a catalog of *exempla* (from the pagan literature, the Bible, and Christian history), as the didactic sources from the third chapter, it is strikingly new in the way that it focuses on the participation of women in politics and warfare, and has fame, and not virtue, as the main reasoning behind its choice of characters. Where virtue judgments are made, they are given within the cardinal virtues' model, and not about Christian faith.

Lucretia, though, can be counted among those of one hundred and six Boccaccio's heroines who are presented as both famous and virtuous. Overall, her story is quite close to Livy's version of the events, but it is not a simple copy of any previous source. Some

elements come from different traditions: for example, she is called *romane pudicitie dux*,[212] which is an expression that follows Valerius Maximus's tradition; the poetic idea that her "soul poured out together with her blood"[213] is reminiscent of Bernard of Lavardin's parallelization, though it could be an independent embellishment. Her explanation of her suicide is very close to the original Livy; nevertheless, she is given a new reason for giving in to the rape – she is not simply afraid of being thought of as an adulteress, but she is afraid that there will be no one to clear her name, while in Livy's narrative, her call for revenge appears only *post factum*. The narrative itself contains no references to Christianity, so the suicide is not explicitly problematized; moreover, Lucretia is specifically lauded for killing herself, as this action apparently "washed away" (*expiata*) her shame. This take is directly anti-Augustinian, commending one for an action to protect an "earthly" reputation.

However, to underline this positivity, Boccaccio introduced elements of Christian tradition: as Corine Saunders points out, he specifically describes her clothing as plain (*nullo exornatam cultu*), a traditional attribute of a saintly woman.[214] The plainness of dress is in accord with Lucretia's visual depiction by Burkhardt, and the sanctification of pagan figures continues the thirteenth-century Church trend of using them as models of behavior in lay life.

The "cross-pollination" between clerical, courtly, and humanistic traditions can be further illustrated by *The Legend of Good Women* by Geoffrey Chaucer. This is a Boccaccio-inspired catalog of legendary women, however, with probably a larger female share of the intended audience.[215] In the prologue, the narrator tells of a dream in which he meets the god of love and his queen, Alceste. They disparage his previous poem, *Troilus and Cressida*, as

[212] Giovanni Boccaccio, *De Mulieribus Claris*, ed. Virginia Brown (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 194.

[213] Boccaccio, *De Mulieribus Claris*, 198.

[214] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment*, 163.

[215] It is highly possible that it was commissioned by Joan of Plantagenet, and it is dedicated to Anne of Pragueб and the audience probably was female or mixed aristocracy. See further in: Margaret Galway, 'Chaucer's Sovereign Lady: A Study of the Prologue to the "Legend" and Related Poems', *The Modern Language Review* 33, no. 2 (1938): 149, 158; Nicola F. McDonald, 'Chaucer's "Legend of Good Women", Ladies at Court and the Female Reader', *The Chaucer Review* 35, no. 1 (2000): 22–5.

presenting women as unfaithful, and order him to tell the stories of "good women, maidens and wives, that were true in life all their lives, and of the false men who betrayed them".[216] Nine separate stories follow in the surviving versions, one of which concerns Lucretia.

While acquainted with Boccaccio, Chaucer names Titus Livius and Ovid as his sources for the Legend of Lucretia; he probably did read and use the original Ovid as the basis for his version.[217] The version itself is closet to Ovid's, but with a significant number of poetic embellishments and new accents: for example, the attention is drawn to the fact that she cries in fear for her husband's safety at war, as in *Fasti*, but a Christianised version is given - she is asking God to save him.[218] The structure itself, however, is the same: starting with the contest between the Romans at war, followed by them finding Lucretia working wool with her servants, and then going to the rape and its aftermath, complete with Brutus's vow and the king's downfall.[219]

What makes the "good women" of Chaucer, and Lucretia in particular, "good"? This status is quite clearly determined by their relationships with men, as reflected in their main virtues: fidelity, chastity or female honor, beauty, kindness, and compassion; only Dido has some kind of public role qualities. Thus, the qualities that Chaucer underlines in pagan women would be the same for an ideal court lady of his day: the only thing that sets them aside is their proneness to suicide as an expression of betrayed love, and the fact that for them there is no God, allegiance to whom would be higher than allegiance to their husband or lover. This is reflected even in the reasons that are given for Lucretia's suicide: as in Ovid, she is more concerned with her own feelings than with being an example for future

[216] *Of Gode Wommen, maidenes and wyves, / That weren trewe in lovinge al hir lyves; / And telle of false men that hem bitrayen*, Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Legend of Good Women*, ed. Walter W. Skeat (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), 36.

[217] E.B. Atwood, 'Two Alterations of Virgil in Chaucer's Dido', *Speculum* 13, no. 4 (1938): 454.

[218] *God save my lord, I preye him for his grace*, Chaucer, *The Legend of Good Women*, 85.

[219] As Chaucer is, arguably, the most studied pre-Shakesperean English author, a significant number of scholarly works have been written on his work with possible sources, and on his interpretation of Lucretia's character. A concise review of important points can be found in Glendinning, 'Reinventing Lucretia': 73-75.

generations, but more importantly, it is said that she could not suffer "her husband's name to be sullied"[220] (and not her own, how Livy and Augustine would have us believe). However, Lucretia still calls to a god to save her, and scholars noted how the *Legend* seems to parody hagiographical structures, only with pagans in the place of saints. Many of the ladies, including Lucretia, are called "martyrs"; in the conclusion of Lucretia's story, Chaucer even explicitly says that she was venerated as a saint by the Romans, complete with the celebration of her day as holy.[221] This statement seems to be Chaucer's poetic invention,[222] at least, neither I nor researchers known to me have not been able to locate it in his presumed sources, or other sources investigated for this thesis; however, J. Bugbee points out that the association of saint-like figures with certain calendar days would be a rather easy idea for Chaucer, as it would be supported both by *Legenda aurea*, one of his possible models, and *Fasti* themselves, which are written in a form of stories for different days of the calendar.[223] The parody of hagiographical form, of course, does not necessarily mean denigration of the subject, or the Christian canon; as in the case of Boccaccio, who also might have been an inspiration for it, it might serve to underscore the virtues of pagan ladies and their ability to be a model for contemporary Christians.[224] The use of pagans to remove the immediate Christian framework from characters' actions, while not implying that it does not apply to the audience, works just as well for the courtly romance as for the sermons.

Verses that draw particular attention in the context of Chaucer's take on pagan virtue are his reference to Augustine. At the very beginning of the tale, the narrator claims that "the

[220] *He husbond sholde nat have the foule name*, Chaucer, *The Legend of Good Women*, 88.
[221] Ibid., 89.
[222] Leah Schwebel, 'Livy and Augustine as Negative Models in the Legend of Lucrece', *The Chaucer Review* 52, no. 1 (2017): 31, 44-5.
[223] Bugbee, 'Chaucer's Lucretia and What Augustine Really Said about Rape': 362.
[224] Sheila Delany, *The Naked Text: Chaucer's 'Legend of Good Women'* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 66.

great Augustine had great compassion on this Lucretia".[225] This statement is, of course, not quite true, as was discussed in the first chapter. Several explanations for this peculiarity have been proposed by scholars: some of them are based on the idea that he was not familiar with the original *City of God*, but got a reference to Augustine through an intermediary text. It has been suggested that this intermediary source could be *Gesta Romanorum*, which, as discussed in the third chapter, refers to Augustine as the source of its retelling of Lucretia's story while completely omitting any Augustinian condemnation of the act.[226] Moreover, Andrew Galloway has suggested that Chaucer could have been familiar with Ranulf Higden's *Polycronichon*, in which Higden draws on the fourteenth-century "classicizing" English writers to point out in a commentary on Augustine that Lucretia acted in the framework of Roman ethics, in which she deserves praise, not condemnation.[227] This relativization, which draws back to the twelfth century, could indeed be in play here. However, as John Bugbee points out, it would be rather hard for a Higden reader to misinterpret this relativization and subsequent "compassion" for Lucretia as Augustinian; moreover, the idea that Lucretia operated in a non-Christian ethical system does not contradict Augustine himself, much as Higden does not contradict the final Augustinian statement on the preferability of Christian ethics.[228]

As does Corine Saunders, I believe that it is possible that Chaucer fully knew and understood Augustine's interpretation of Lucretia's story, but had made a deliberate choice to deviate from it.[229] Interestingly, the idea that a good name and reputation were very important for the Roman ladies could quite directly come from *The City of God*; only the verdict that this does not comply with the Christian way of thinking is omitted. If we interpret

[225] *The grete Austin, hath greet compassioun / Of this Lucresse*, Chaucer, *The Legend of Good Women*, 83.
[226] Bugbee, 'Chaucer's Lucretia and What Augustine Really Said about Rape': 338–9.
[227] Galloway, 'Chaucer's Legend of Lucrece': 822-8.
[228] Bugbee, 'Chaucer's Lucretia and What Augustine Really Said about Rape': 341-3.
[229] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment*, 268.

hagiographical structure as a parody, a joke, this willful misinterpretation could surely be part of it. On another side, the Franciscan authors we have discussed in the third chapter have also called on the authority of Jerome while making a different point, without attempting to make any kind of joke from it. If the author could assume that a significant part of the audience would not know what the original author said, it seems it could be possible to reference an authority just to support an expressed point of view. Chaucer could have been following the tradition of thinking, using Augustine's authority in creating a saintly version of Lucretia, though it is impossible to say for sure, how ironic it was on his part.

Lucretia is a rare example of an actual wife in the poem, who is done wrong not by her husband or consensual lover, as many of the other ladies, but by another man. It is possible that the poem actually provides a critique of the courtly love ideal based on illicit affairs, thus leading to violence and the need for women to be fearful and to not trust men;[230] the "good wife" qualities of Lucretia provide a counterpoint to that. Chaucer himself could be ironic in his representations of "ideal women" and spousal love,[231] but the audience might not have gotten it, judging by the manuscript tradition. In surviving manuscripts, *The Legend* is often grouped with genuine courtly love poetry; on the other hand, at least two of the surviving manuscripts (Bodleian, MS Fairfax 16 & Cambridge, Trinity College MS. r.3.19) combine entertaining texts with educatory one, the latter also including *The good wife taught her daughter*, a conduct poem for future wives;[232] it is possible that the good woman ideal was interpreted as genuine.

[230] [I. Starostina] И.Ю. Старостина, 'Дж. Чосер о гендерном поведении английского дворянства: (на материале "Легенды о хороших женщинах")'. [G. Chaucer on the gender behaviour of the English gentry: (through the lenses of the Legend of the Good Women)], *Известия Саратовского Университета. Новая серия. Серия История. Международные отношения*, no. 2 (2012): 9.

[231] M.W. Stearns, 'A Note on Chaucer's Attitude toward Love', *Speculum* 17, no. 4 (1942): 570–71.

[232] Michael Seymour, 'The Manuscripts of Chaucer's Legend of Good Women', *Scriptorium* 47, no. 1 (1993): 76–90.

The new, alternative model of ideal behavior for laypeople, based on the radicality of virtue protection, started to be established within preaching contexts but proved to be successful enough to travel to different contexts, from French courts to Italian humanists. Interestingly, the fact that the model figures were removed in time and religion from the contemporary audience seems to have played its part in a reignited "marriage" debate in new circles, to which I turn in the next section.

Lucretia and the *querelle des femmes*

Since the thirteenth century, Lucretia seems to take a stable position in the tradition of anti-marriage writings: polemical works arguing for a bachelor life. In these works, Lucretia appears as one of those "virtuous women of the past" who are lacking in the contemporary world, thus depriving men of worthy partners.

The appearance of Lucretia in this variation of "the grass was greener" dates at least to the twelfth century. In the late twelfth-century Latin poetic comedy *Comoedia Lydiae*, its author contrasts the title heroine, the unfaithful wife Lydia, with the perfect women of the past, such as Penelope and Lucretia.[233] Probably under its influence, the French Benedictine Bernard of Cluny complained not long after in *De contemptu mundi*, his poem on the decay of contemporary word, that now there are "many Lydias, few Lucretias, no Sabinas" – you can hardly find a woman who does good.[234] (Though you can hardly find a good man either if you believe Bernard.)

Despite certain earlier appearances, the trope was probably popularized by *Dissuasio Valerii ad Rufinum*, a popular and highly distributed treatise against marriage by a Welsh

[233] As quoted in Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium =: Courtiers' Trifles*, ed. Christopher Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors, trans. M. R. James, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 294-5.

[234] *Plurima Lydia, rara Lucretia, nulla Sabina; / Nulla fere bona, nullus Amazona nunc videt ullam*, Bernard le Clunisien, *De contemptu mundi: une vision du monde vers 1144*, ed. André Cresson, Témoins de notre histoire (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), v. 552-3.

cleric and courtier Walter Map.[235] The work is written in the form of a letter from one friend to another: the former is trying to persuade the letter not to marry, as it will be detrimental to his philosophical studies.[236] To prove his point, he provides stories of those men who decided against marrying and those who suffered because of women (starting from Adam). By its nature, this is a rather misogynistic text. However, as Bernard before him, Map finds some good words for the women of the past, but only to say that there is none like them left:

> The banner of chastity was won by Lucretia and Penelope and the Sabine women, and it was a very small troop that brought the trophy home. Friend, there is no Lucretia, no Penelope, no Sabine left: mistrust all.[237]

Such use of Lucretia as a shorthand for the lost faithfulness and chastity of women continues to become ubiquitous for several centuries: from the thirteenth-century French poet Matheolus[238] to the fifteenth-century Italian humanist Antonio Bonfini.[239]

But if Lucretia appeared so often in texts like these, was the use of her story an influential argument against marrying? Some scholars, like Neil Cartlidge, have suggested that *Dissuasio* by its form and execution is similar to rhetorical exercises on a set theme: the goal is not to prove that one should not marry, but to demonstrate your eloquence and ability to support your point with references to authorities.[240] As for earlier authors of the twelfth century, the abundance of classical references is exactly the proof of Map's education. It is also possible that the use of classical references serves exactly to underscore the less serious

[235] Dorothy M. Schullian, 'Valerius Maximus and Walter Map', *Speculum* 12, no. 4 (1937): 517.

[236] The bilingual edition used for this work is Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium =: Courtiers' Trifles*, ed. Christopher Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors, trans. M. R. James, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983). The *Dissuasio* is found on pp. 256-315.

[237] *Vexilla pudicicie tulerunt cum Sabinis Lucrecia et Penelope, et paucissimo comitatu trophea retulerunt. Amice, nulla est Lucrecia, nulla Penelope, nulla Sabina; time omnes*, Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, 294-5.

[238] Joy M. Young, 'Portraits of Woman: Virtue, Vice and Marriage in Christine de Pizan's "Cite Des Dames", Matheolus' "Lamentations" and LeFevre's "Livre de Leesce"' (Ph.D. dissertation, Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America, 1992), 114.

[239] In *Symposion de uirginitate et pudicitia coniugali*, Bonfini compares virginity to matrimonial purity, and comes to the conclusion that virginity is preferable: in a long list of examples to show how great the ancient wives were, Lucretia is held as superior in *anime integritatis*. She is also included in the list of women who were loyal to their husbands. See Antonio Bonfini, *Symposion de virginitate et pudicitia coniugali*, ed. Stephanus Apró, Bibliotheca scriptorum medii recentisque aevorum 30 (Budapest: K.M. Egyetemi Nyomda, 1943), 4, 174.

[240] Neil Cartlidge, 'Misogyny in a Medieval University? The "Hoc Contra Malos" Commentary on Walter Map's "Dissuasio Valerii"', *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 8 (1998): 157-8.

nature of the treaties. It would be possible to use, for example, the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which also calls the unmarried not to marry – but a reference to the sacred tradition would certainly invite a more serious tone.

Lucretia, and other pagan women, of course, have already appeared in such context back in the early Christian times: as was discussed in the first chapter, both Tertullian and Jerome used her story to show a pagan strive for chastity, and employing the *rhetoric of shame* to encourage Christians to stay out of sexual relations. Despite its possible playfulness, *Dissuasio* also directly employs a Tertullianian argument: it is important to treat the pagan *exempla* seriously, Map writes, because the Christians can't let the unbelievers outdo them in virtue. If even those who lived "without hope, faith, or charity"[241] strived for truth, what can be said about Christians who do not? And so Rufinus is called to be like "the resourceful bee which can draw honey from the nettle"[242] – to take a good lesson from the pagan *exempla*. In the context of anti-marriage arguments, this proposition is coherent with the tradition that Map would be familiar with – from the early Church authors to their medieval continuation, like *Sermons aurei*. Here, however, the catch is that the need to stay out of marriage is explained not by religious reasons, but because it would bring you unhappiness in a perfectly secular context. Christian women are not shamed into behaving better than pagans; at least on the surface, they are declared unable to do so. And so at the same time that pagan characters like Lucretia are used by medieval clerics to create alternative positive models for lay female behavior in marriage, they can be also ironically flipped to advocate against marriage to contemporary women. As Map would be trying to show off his skill, it is possible that this play with tradition was a conscious one on his part. Further investigation is needed on how seriously his arguments would be treated by different audiences.

[241] *sine spe sine fide sine caritate*, Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium,* 308-9.
[242] *argumentose api similis, que mel elicit ex urtica*, ibid.

In *Dissuasio*, Lucretia and other "good" women are just mentioned by name: the attention in detail is given to those stories that can support the author's claim of the bad influence of marriage on men. Interestingly, even with the existence of Augustine's condemnation, Map does not try to discuss Lucretia as a negative example. And even in perhaps the most famous "anti-female" work of the late medieval times, *Le Roman de la Rose*, Lucretia is presented sympathetically: Jean de Meun[243] does not take a chance to say that she might have been a willing party, and even recounts the Livian argument of her innocence, that "her body did not sin, because her heart did not consent."[244]

Le Roman de la Rose, and other misogynistic works, like the *Lamentations* by aforementioned Matheolus, famously contributed to a whole *querelle*, a little war of letters, on the virtuousness of women. Moreover, it started several responses, in which Lucretia appears again. Lucretia appeared in several responses to *Le Roman de la Rose*, again in the role of a virtuous woman of the past: however, in these works, the past virtues were argued to be imitable by the contemporary women, closer to the didactic Church tradition of the thirteenth century.

An interesting example of such appearance is *Le triomphe des dames* by the fifteenth-century Burgundy courtier and poet Olivier de la Marche. The introduction calls to "empresses, queens, and princesses, ladies and mademoiselles, servants, bourgeois women, and mistresses"[245] – women of all walks of life can learn virtues and thus triumph in both lives. The work is divided into sections of prosaic *exempla* that should be imitated by the listeners or readers, and poetic comments on the related virtues. Lucretia is the fourth

[243] The author of this section of the *Roman*; building off the earlier work by Guillaume de Lorris.

[244] *cors ne peut estre pechierres / Se li cueurs n'en est consentierres*, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Der Rosenroman*, ed. Karl August Ott, Klassische Texte des romanischen Mittelalters in zweisprachigen Ausgaben, 15 1-3 (München: W. Fink, 1976), 492.

[245] *Empereys, roynes et princesses, / entendes cy, dames et demoiselles! / femmes servans, bourgoises et maistresses*, Olivier de La Marche, *Le triumphe des dames*, ed. Julia Kalbfleisch (Rostock: Druck der Universitäts-Buchdruckerei von Adler's Erben, 1901), 4.

exemplary woman who appears in her own section: after the Virgin Mary, the Biblical Abigail, and Mary Magdalene. For a change, she is a model not of chastity, but of *ferme propos* - strong will, or ability to act with courage on one's intention; the strong will to do good is said to be "the lock that closes and keeps guarded all the good virtues of the person".[246] The story itself is not given much attention; what we get is that

> …noble lady Lucretia, <…> after she had been violated by Tarquin, the son of the king of Rome, decided not to live with this dishonor, and continuing in her strength of will, killed herself and brought upon herself by her own hands, without doubt or fear, the horror and agony of death.[247]

While the lesson that needs to be imitated – courageous execution of one's decision and steadfastness in one's morals – seems to be an original one, it comes with a caveat that was probably prescribed by earlier tradition: the audience is told that "Saint Augustine and other doctors reject and rebuke such a cursed death."[248] This framework for stories such as Lucretia's, when used in didactic works for contemporary women (and men), was prescribed by John of Wales in *Communiloquium* and followed by other clerics. I would suggest that its reappearance in *Le triomphe des dames* shows both the continuing influence of the earlier Church tradition in courtly texts and the continuing ambivalence regarding the use of such *exempla*: despite their potency for giving the lay audience a strong image of extreme actions for one's virtue, they were not to be followed to the end.

Another response to the Roman de la Rose, presented as a defense of women, is the *Livre de leesce* by the fourteenth-century lawyer and writer Jehan le Fèvre, which is the first time that those *preuses dames* seem to appear in writing.[249] Its short fragment on Lucretia puts focus on her relationship with her husband from the very first words: "Lucretia, who was

[246] *la serrure qui ferme et tient encloses toutes les bonnes vertus en la personne*, ibid., 13.

[247] *la noble dame Lucresse, <…> apres qu'elle fut vyollee par Tarquin, filz du roy de Romme, se ferma de non plus vivre en celle honte, et continuant en son ferme propos se occist et tua de ses propres mains sans doubter ou craindre l'orreur et angoisse de la mort*, ibid.

[248] *saint Augustin et autres docteurs reboutent et regestent teile mauldicte mort*, ibid.

[249] [Voroshen] Ворошень, '«Девять доблестных мужей» и «Девять доблестных жен»', 5.

in Rome, was married to a valiant man; she was faithful to him all her life."[250] After the rape, it is said that "she would like rather to be skinned alive";[251] in the following description of her confession and death, a significant part is dedicated, again, to the emotions and actions of her husband, with no reference to any political aspect of the story:

> Her good husband assuaged her and embraced her, and kissed her, and pardoned her the bad deed, as it was not done by her consent. Nothing could comfort her - not wishing to carry her shame any longer, despite [his] forgiveness and comforting, she killed herself with a knife.[252]

No judgment or comment is made on how this story might relate to contemporary or Christian women. As in Chaucer, in the *Livre de leesce* the measure of Lucretia as a "good woman" is in her relationship with men. There are other women in *Livre* who are active in their own right, like ancient women of science and arts,[253] but Lucretia falls into more traditional categories. Contrastingly, her own character gets praise, but also condemnation, in *Le triomphe des dames*, where she is put in the framework of one's relationship to virtue and God.

One medieval retelling of Lucretia's story is unique in being told by a woman: the version provided by Christine de Pizan[254] in *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames* (finished by 1405). In *Le Livre*, Christine attempts to defend women from *Le Roman*'s and Matheolus's "slander" by creating an allegorical city populated by virtuous ladies of different eras, both pagan and Christian. The story is split into two parts: one concerned with the rape and suicide themselves, and the second telling of the contest of the wives. Christine first references

[250] *Lucresse aussi, qui fu de Rome, Ot espousé un vaillant homme ; Loyauté luy fist en sa vie*, Jean Le Fèvre, *The Book of Gladness / Le Livre de Leesce: A 14th Century Defense of Women, in English and French*, ed. Linda Burke (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2013), v. 1459-61.

[251] *Si amast mieulx estre escorchie*, ibid., v. 1464.

[252] *Son bon mari la rapaisoit / Et l'embraçoit et la baisoit / Et lui pardonnoit le meffait / Que de son gré n'avoit pas fait. / Rien n'y valu le conforter, / Sa honte ne voult plus porter / Non obstant pardon ne confort ; / D'un coultel se feri a mort*, ibid., v. 1465-72.

[253] Blumenfeld-Kosinski, 'Jean Le Fèvre's Livre de Leesce': 720.

[254] A Venetian-born daughter of a court physician and astrologer, Christine de Pizan (1364-c.1430) married the French royal secretary Etienne du Castel after moving to Paris together with her father. After the death of her husband, she became a court writer in order to support herself and her daughters, and rose to prominence under the patronage of King Charles VI and several French dukes.

Lucretia in the section "against those who say that women want to be raped"[255]: the name of the chapter itself shows that this version of the story and Christine's work, in general, is set within contemporary polemics on female virtue. She further says that she wants to disprove "men [who] say so often that women want to be raped and that it does not displease them, even though they protest, to be raped by men".[256] Lucretia is introduced as "the noblest Roman woman, paramount in chastity between all the Roman females".[257] The story starts itself directly with the fact of Tarquin's love of Lucretia, and his deceptive plan to gain access to the household when her husband is away. It is underlined twice that before the threat of the rape, the matron withstands temptations offered by the prince: his "great promises, gifts and offers";[258] and when he threatens her with a sword, she directly tells Tarquin to kill her.[259] After the traditional threat to make it look like she slept with another man, "she finally suffered his force"[260] – Christine uses this expression to once again make clear that Lucretia was not a consenting party. Then the suicide itself is portrayed:

> Lucretia could not bear patiently this great sorrow, and so when the day came, she sent to find her husband, her father, and her closest relatives who were the greatest people in Rome, and told them with great tears and great laments what had happened to her. At which time, when her husband and relatives, who saw her overtaken with great pain, were comforting her, she took a knife that she had under her dress and said: "Here is how I absolve myself of the sin and how I show my innocence: however, I cannot deliver myself from the torment or pain, no from now on a shamed and disgraced woman will live through the example of Lucretia." And having said these things, she with great force stabbed her chest with the knife, and at the same moment fell dead, looking at her husband and her friends.[261]

[255] *Contre ceulx qui dient que femmes veullent estre efforciees,* Christine de Pizan, 'Le Livre de la Cité des Dames', in *The Livre de la Cité des Dames of Christine de Pizan: A Critical Edition.*, ed. Maureen Cheney Curnow (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1975), 885. The translation is mine.

[256] *hommes dient tant que femmes se veullent efforcier et qu'il ne leur desplait mie, quoyque elles escondissent de bouche, d'estre par hommes efforciees*, ibid.

[257] *la tres noble Rommaine, souveraine en chastete entre toutes les femmes Rommaines,* ibid.

[258] *grans promesses, dons et offres*, ibid, 886.

[259] *il tira son espee et la menaça d'occire sa elle disoit mot et se elle ne se consentoit a sa voulente. Et celle respondi que hardiement l'occist et que mieulx amoit mourir que s'i consenter*, ibid.

[260] *au paraler elle souffry sa force*, ibid.

[261] *Mais ne pot Lucresce porter pacientment ce grant desplaisir, dont quant vint au jour, elle envoya querre son mary et son pere et ses prouchains parens qui estoyent les plus grans de Romme, si leur regehy a grans pleurs et a grans gemissemens ce qui luy estoit advenu. Adonc comme son mary et parens, qui la veoyent oultree de granr douleur, la reconfortaccent, elle tira un coutel qu'elle avoit soubz sa robe en disant : « Se il est*

The rebellion starts directly after Lucretia's death: there is no Brutus to call for revenge. This could be a simplification for the purpose of space; however, I believe that in this instance this was done by Christine intentionally, as at the beginning of the chapter the narrator mentions "women who know how to defend themselves from the acts of deceivers."[262] The story of Lucretia is made to mirror the next example of "the noble queen of the Galatians, wife of King Orgiagon,"[263] who kills her rapist by her hand, and then tells her husband of what happened, rather than apply herself to his protection. The key difference between Christine's Lucretia and contemporary "male gaze" Lucretias of the time is in the fact that her place in the pantheon of the worthies is not dependent on her relationship to the masculine. There is no reference to the love of her husband as the reason for her actions, or to her having "male courage": she is a "good woman" not because of her place in a male-centered virtue system, but because of her actions. As Judith Laird noted while comparing Chaucer's and Christine's "good women", women in Christine's narrative are virtuous independent of their connection to men, while in Chaucer's one - through it.[264]

The second time Lucretia appears in *Le livre* is also in the polemical context: this time, Christine challenges the idea that women in general "delight in being pretty in their vestments and attire,"[265] while simultaneously proposing that "many women are loved for their virtues more than others for their prettiness."[266] Here, the story of the contest of wives is told in a generally traditional, Lyvian form; the focus is on the simple attire and manners of

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ainsi que je me absoille de pechie et que je monstre mon ingnocence ; toutesvoyes je ne me delivre pas de tourment, ne de paine, ne me mes hors, ne d'or en avant ne vivra femme hontoyee ne vergondee a l'exemple de Lucresce. » Et ses choses dites, elle par grant force se ficha le coustel en la poitrine, si cheut tantost en mourant, voyant son mary et ses amis, ibid, 886-7.

[262] *qui se scevent garder des agiz des decepveurs*, ibid, 885.

[263] *la noble royne des Gausgres, femme de Orgiagontes roy*, ibid, 887.

[264] Judith Laird, 'Good Women and Bonnes Dames: Virtuous Females in Chaucer and Christine de Pizan', *The Chaucer Review* 30, no. 1 (1995): 68.

[265] *se delittent en ester jolies en leurs vestements et attours*, Christine de Pizan, 'Le Livre de la Cité des Dames', 955.

[266] *plusieurs femmes sont amees pours leurs vertusplus ques autres pours leurs jolivites*. ibid, 958.

Lucretia when she is found among her servants. Christine chooses to say that it is because of this simpleness, mirroring her virtue, that Tarquin falls in love with her.

As Lynn Shutters points out, the division of the story into two parts allows it to transmit its lesson into practical action: as Lucretia does not commit suicide in the second part, it becomes possible to hold her behavior as an *exemplum* to Christian women.[267] In her second appearance, she is also put in one line with the traditional Biblical figures of chastity, such as Susanna and Ruth, which also helps to present her as an *exempla* for contemporary women. The refutation of the "male" interpretation of the first part of the story, I believe, also works precisely because Christine does not invent her own example, but carefully chooses elements from the existing tradition: she shows her withstanding "great promises, gifts, and offers", gives her a traditional Livian monologue, and also, unlike Boccaccio and Chaucer, but very much like Livy, states that not only her beauty but also her chastity provoked her rapist.

The only invention, it seems, is the Roman law that Christine mentions: "And from the reason of this outrageous thing done to Lucretia, how some say, there came a law that a man should be killed for taking a woman by force; and that law is necessary, just and holy".[268] The idea for it, however, may have come directly from the source she was trying to refute – the *Roman de la Rose*. In it, the example that Lucretia wanted to set for women of the future is not killing themselves like her:

> But before she [killed herself], she implored [her family] to avenge her death. By this example, she wanted to assure the women that nobody who took them by force would not have to die for it.[269]

[267] Shutters, 'Marital Affection and the Medieval Lucretia': 79.

[268] *Et a cause de cel outraige fait a Lucresce, comme dient aucuns, vint la loy que homme mourroit pour prendre femme a force ; laquelle loy est couvenable, juste et sainte*, Christine de Pizan, 'Le Livre de la Cité des Dames', 887.

[269] *Mais ainz pria qu'il travaillassent / Tant pour li que sa mort venchassent. / Cet essemple vost procurer / Pour les fames asseürer / Que nus par force nés eüst / Qui de mort mourir ne deüst*, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, *Der Rosenroman*, 494.

Only a slight emphasis on the legal side of the question was needed to change Jean's suggestion into a potent threat – and even in this, it would be possible for Christine to show that she is not inventing anything new, but just repeating the good things that men already know and say about women, but do not want to admit directly.

Christine's version of the story emphasis its relation to the narratives of weakness and strength, which is also often the debate of masculinity and femininity. The male-female dichotomy of virtue was already implicitly present in Livy, where she is given a traditionally male way of suicide - a knife or a sword, instead of a "more feminine" self-hanging.[270] Another ancient author, Valerius Maximus, directly writes that "[Lucretia's] manly spirit by Fortune's malignant error was allotted a woman's body".[271] The dichotomy persists well into the Renaissance: Berhardus Schöferlin's translation of *Ab urbe condita*, published in 1505, speaks of Lucretia having a "manly heart" (*manlich hertz*) in her "womanly breast" (*weipplich brust*).[272] In the visual arts, Rona Goffen suggests that when Lotto wants to present Lucretia as truly virtuous, he uses masculine significators.[273] "Masculine" here is connected with the idea of having force and resolve, of being an actor, not just a victim. Her virtue could also be proved by highlighting her non-participation by disattaching her from her physical form: Albrecht von Eyb, a German humanist, stresses that "she showed herself to him not as a woman of flesh and blood but as a marble statue".[274]

On the other side, Lucretia's femininity, and thus natural weakness, has also been highlighted by a number of authors in a "positive" way as an explanation of her inability to fight off her assailant. This reasoning comes up in John Gower's *Confessio,* with the mention

[270] Dennis Trout, 'Re-Textualizing Lucretia': 57.

[271] *cuius virilis animus maligno errore Fortunae muliebre corpus sortitus est,* Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Doings and Sayings,* 6.1.1.

[272] Linda C. Hults, 'Dürer's "Lucretia": Speaking the Silence of Women', *Signs* 16, no. 2 (1991): 219-21.

[273] Rita Goffen, 'Lotto's Lucretia', *Renaissance Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (1999): 761.

[274] Christiane Hertel, "Petrifaction and Melancholia in Dürer's Lucretia," *Word & Image* 24, no. 1 (2008): 31.

of the "tenderness of womanhood" (*tendresce of wommanhiede*), and in Chaucer's version: "It was no guilt, it [fighting off] did not lay in her might".[275]

Both feminine "weakness" and masculine strength could be used to construct Lucretia as "good". Within this dichotomy, it is remarkable that Christine chooses neither to masculinize Lucretia nor to specifically underline her weakness and victimhood, thus keeping her auctorialness without placing her into male-defined categories.

Lucretia as a medieval wife

As in the previous chapter, the important question to ask is if the use of Lucretia as an *exemplum* was supposed to influence actual female behavior. To attempt to answer it, I would like to turn to a version of the story in a female-oriented source, *Le Ménagier de Paris*, a vernacular French guidebook (c. 1393) purportedly compiled by a Parisian husband for his young wife.[276] Following earlier tradition, Lucretia appears in the part devoted to chastity, paired with Susanna.[277] Two thorough analyses of this story have been published by Lynn Shutters[278] and Bobbi S. Sutherland[279]; to not limit the following part to re-telling of their points, I would like to focus on the story through the way it divides public and private space.

The story starts, as in the classical sources, with the debate between Roman husbands away at war on whose wife is the most virtuous. They decide to ride home and see "whose wife is found in the most reputable and blameless circumstances."[280] These circumstances

[275] *Hit was no gilt, hit lay nat in her might*, both poets quoted and analyzed in Richard Hillman, 'Gower's Lucrece: A New Old Source for "The Rape of Lucrece"', *The Chaucer Review* 24, no. 3 (1990): 267-9.

[276] Bobbi Sue Sutherland, "Making a Home: The Menagier de Paris as Social and Cultural Document" (Ph.D. dissertation, New Haven, Yale University, 2009), 8-9, 21.

[277] The French text is quoted from Jérôme Pichon, ed., *Le Ménagier de Paris. Traité de Morale et d'économie Domestique, Composé En 1393 Par Un Bourgeois Parisien* (Paris: Imp. de Crapelet, 1846), 70-75; the English translation is from Gina L. Greco and Christine M. Rose, *The Good Wife's Guide: Le Ménagies de Paris, A Medieval Household Book* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 90-92.

[278] Shutters, 'Marital Affection and the Medieval Lucretia': 62–84.

[279] Sutherland, 'Making a Home', 56-80.

[280] *duquel sa femme seroit trouvée en meilleur convine*.

turned out to be the ones of Lucretia: while other wives are passing time with their neighbors or even "on the road,"[281] playing games and singing songs, she is seen "within the innermost chambers of her house, in a large room far from the road,"[282] reading the mentioned book of hours among her wool workers. This is a clear normative example of gendered space, with the divide between male and female simultaneously being the divide between public and private: while the place of men is where they serve the country, the place of good women is as private as possible, covered within the household. This example represents quite well the contemporary perceptions of an ideal situation (which not all families could allow themselves to follow).[283] Deviating from earlier accounts, however, it is mentioned that Lucretia would not always stay confined, going to dance and sing with other ladies when she got letters from her husband – so the boundary between "good" and "bad" places for women to be, and between good and bad activities to do, is not seen as absolute, as in Livy, but is dependent on circumstances related to a wife's affection towards her husband.

There is an even greater break of the boundary between the private and the public sphere later in the story. The rape of Lucretia itself takes place in her chamber – the most private part of the house, associated with sex, that is also supposed to be a private activity (at least for a richer household).[284] However, this "private" affair in this version of the story is turned into public by Lucretia herself, who calls for her relatives and friends to explain what happened; and later, by her in-law Brutus who carries her body through Rome, turning it into a public symbol of the rebellion against the monarchy. Thus, the divide between "male" and "female" space is allowed to be transgressed, though primarily by male, and not by female

[281] *en la rue*.

[282] *plus parfont de son hostel, en une grant chambre loing de la rue*.

[283] Catherine L. French, "Gender and Material Culture," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 205.

[284] David Austin, "Private and Public: An Archaeological Consideration of Things," in *Die Vielfalt Der Dinge. Neue Wege Zur Analyse Mittelalterlicher Sachkultur*, ed. Helmut Hundsbichler (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1998), 185.

actions. Lucretia herself in this version does not call for the kings to be overthrown, as she does in some other interpretations: while alive and controlling her actions, she does overstep the boundary, but not that greatly, staying as an ideal example of private bourgeois wifehood.[285]

The story seemingly contains several changes to make it comply with the general attitudes of the *Ménagier* and with expectations about female daily life not in Ancient Rome but in France of the fourteenth century. Unlike Boccaccio, who was classicizing in his depiction of the story, here it was used as an *exemplum* according to how the Church would teach preachers to use it, making it as relatable as possible to the intended audience. For example, the games in which other wives play are the ones that were popular in France of the period and would be easily recognizable.[286] There is even a detail of Lucretia crying out loud before the rape because it was needed for her to be considered innocent by contemporary law.[287] In a certain way, this adaptation means making the pagan figure less "Otherly," as Lucretia is depicted reading from a book of hours and going to Mass (the details which are certainly not present in the Roman sources).[288] What is of particular interest, then, is the interpretation of her suicide, which cannot be Christianized.

Overall, as Bobbi Sutherland points out, *Le Ménagier*'s "tale of Lucretia is more about her attitude of extreme love and devotion toward her husband and less about her physical chastity",[289] or, rather, as in the *Miroir des bonnes femmes*, chastity is viewed not as a virtue by its own, but as an extension of spousal fidelity. This seems to be corroborated by other stories in *Le Ménagier*, e.g. that of a wife who lays with another man to save her

[285] Judith Bennet and Ruth Karras, "Women, Gender, and Medieval Historians," in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennet and Ruth Karras (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 8-9.

[286] Sutherland, "Making a Home," 59.

[287] Ibid., 58.

[288] Shutters, "Marital Affection and the Medieval Lucretia": 73-4.

[289] Sutherland, "Making a Home", 64.

husband from execution with the consent and even by the command of her husband; this is not treated as an offense against chastity, as it is done from the loyalty to her spouse.[290]

The question of the applicability of this *exemplum* to lived behaviors has been answered differently in the past. Lynn Sutters suggests that in *Le Ménagier*'s treatment, **"**the example of Lucretia suggests that only the performance of taboo actions (suicide) can incontrovertibly establish a wife's internal fidelity", and thus the story is not an actual role model, but "a fantasy of a non-existent wife".[291] Bobbie S. Sutherland, however, by concentrating not only on the presentation of Lucretia's death, but on the whole story, concludes that it provides a narrative of an attainable good marriage, in which there are other ways of proving one's love: for example, good domestic management and expression of one's affection – not only by a wife, but also by a husband.[292] I would suggest that both interpretations could be possible depending on the audience. However, the earlier users of such *exempla*, such as John of Wales and his probable followers, certainly did not expect their listeners to kill themselves to prove anything; however, they still used these *exempla* as an imaginary model to illustrate the "zeal towards modesty". This zeal could still be realized, as the author of *Le Menagier* suggests, in less radical actions. The author of *Le Menagier* would be familiar with the tradition, since he seems to have used quite a broad array of reading material: from the Bible and early Church fathers, including Jerome, to *Legenda aurea* and vernacular sources, as *Moralitez sur le jeu des eschecs* and *Somme le Roi*.[293]

Shutters herself postulates that pagan women like Lucretia became *exempla* for wives with the increasing value of the emotional bond in marriage, as their spousal love was not constrained by religion.[294] An important point, however, is that the need for exempla not

[290] Ibid., 64-5.
[291] Shutters, "Marital Affection and the Medieval Lucretia": 64.
[292] Sutherland, "Making a Home", 58-63.
[293] Ibid., 27-41, 56-7.
[294] Shutters, "Marital Affection and the Medieval Lucretia": 63.

constrained by religion was born within the religious context to create a virtuous and Christian alternative to unmarried life: *Le Menagier*'s use of pagan wives was preceded, in the thirteenth century, by texts such as the *Miroir des bonnes femmes*, where Lucretia's story and stories of other ancient women were useful exactly because they were the "other" - they were allowed to do what medieval Christian women could not. However, for the sake of relatability, the characters were still brought into the world of the audience through adaptation of the environment in which the story takes place. This provides a distinction from the different kinds of use of ancient characters for the sake of showing off one's education, where the point would be in making the story as close to the classical sources as possible.

At the same time, as Saunders points out, in vernacular, courtly sources, "rape and ravishment are shown to be, above all, crimes that threaten the established social order, to such an extent that in these instances it is destroyed altogether."[295] The importance of social order can be seen through *Menagier*'s division of destined public and private spaces. In the earlier, Church sources, written with women in mind, such as *Miroir des bonnes femmes*, less emphasis was made on the social consequences of Lucretia's story, as the goal of its transmission was in helping the audience to reach personal salvation. The public - and male - side of the story becomes even more important with the progress of the Renaissance, to which I turn in the next chapter.

[295] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment*, 186.

Chapter 5. Vernacularization, polyphony, and old new contexts for the story of Lucretia

In the previous chapter, I have considered the diversification of narratives about Lucretia: their individualization and change according to the needs of an author, in comparison with preaching and Latin didactic literature that relied more on existing tradition. This chapter looks at the continuation of tradition, but also an intensification of variability in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the increasing number of people coming into direct touch with the story thanks to vernacularization – and the further attention to ancient versions of the story during the Renaissance. The growing number of surviving versions of Lucretia's story in this period does not allow for a detailed analysis of the majority of them in the present work; instead, I will try to outline the main tendencies of the period based on the existing research on her particular appearances.

The first important tendency of the Renaissance period is the heightening of importance for the knowledge of the Classics, and with it a continuing and increasing use of Lucretia's name as a way to show off one's education. Lucretia makes frequent appearances in Italian poetry – she is a subject of several of Petrarch's works, where she is variably presented as both deserving of praise and a figure who by suicide condemned herself to an eternity of hell.[296]

As the story is so famous, it becomes a part of an erudite game; for example, for Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (future Pope Pius II), who in 1444 composed *Eurialus and Lucretia*: a courtly romance, in which the title Eurialus successfully seduces a beautiful and chaste wife Lucretia, and then leaves her, after which she dies of a broken heart. While on the

[296] Judy Anne Ciccaglione, '"La Bella Romana": A Sixteenth-Century Parmesan Painting of "Lucretia Committing Suicide" and Its Literary and Visual Precedents.' (MA thesis, Kingston, Queen's University, 2006), 24-8.

surface, the story is not about *that* Lucretia, it nevertheless contains a plethora of parallels and quotes from the tradition, such as the discussed above idea of her having "a masculine spirit in a feminine breast."[297] This kind of play would allow an educated reader to decipher all the "easter eggs", while also proving the mastery of the author; it gives no serious consideration, however, to moral problems of suicide or virtue by simply skipping them – it is not the point of such work.

The direct dialogue with the tradition could also be done more seriously, as in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Despite a whole ring of the seventh circle being devoted to those who killed themselves, Lucretia appears to Dante in Limbo, together with other virtuous people who had no chance to know Christ. This is a triumph of the theory of "natural virtues," but also, as Leah Schwebel shows, a direct challenge to Augustine's position on ancient knowledge and virtue.[298] This is not an individual, exceptional decision: a similar refutation of Augustine's views is found in Coluccio Salutati's *Declamatio Lucretie*.[299]

The second important tendency of this period is vernacularization and translation drive, which, of course, started earlier, but now intensifies. One of the reasons Lucretia's story is transmitted widely is the rising popularity and accessibility – exactly because of vernacular translations - of the universal histories. As they were often based on Livy or Livy's epitomes, the story of the fall of Roman kings would just have to be included - without the needed interest of a particular writer. Sometimes, the story would get particular attention, as in Ranulph Higden's *Polycronichon*. As mentioned in the previous chapter, when discussing Lucretia's case, Higden puts forward the idea of "different laws for different peoples": as Lucretia was not driven by Christian ethics, in her world she deserved praise, not

[297] Goldman, 'The Lucretia Legend,' 33-4.

[298] Leah Schwebel, 'The Pagan Suicides: Augustine and Inferno 13', *Medium Ævum* 87, no. 1 (2018): 106-32.

[299] Paul Thoen and Gilbert Tournoy, '"Lucretia Lovaniensis". The Louvain Humanists and the Motif of Lucretia's Suicide', *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 56 (2007): 96-9.

condemnation.[300] The commentary in turn was probably based on the works of Oxford "classicizing friars," such as Franciscan John Ridevall. Their interest in ancient wisdom was thus further transferred to broader secular culture: more than a hundred Latin manuscripts of *Polycronichon* survive, along with more copies of its two translations into English in less than one hundred years.[301]

Adaptation of the original text for the reader is an important characteristic of late medieval translation. In Simon de Hesdin's translation of Valerius Maximus's *Facta et dicta memorabilia* into Middle French, known as *Faits et dits mémorables*, for example, Lucretia lives in her husband's castle, and Collatin himself is presented as a nobleman who relies on the patronage of Tarquin l'Orgueilleux. Moreover, Sextus Tarquinius, who assaults Lucretia, threatens to kill her and place a serf (instead of a slave) in her bed. As in *Le Menagier*, and as recommended back in the thirteenth century by mendicant preachers, such adjustments make the story more relatable to the medieval audience – Hesdin even writes himself that he is trying to make the story more accessible to the less educated (those who cannot read the original Latin).[302] If later, Renaissance translations do not make this kind of cultural adaptation, it does not mean that translators lose their auctorial qualities.

In some translations, the story could also be framed as a lesson for men specifically. A good example is *Ovide Moralisé*: here, the reader would get an abridged version, akin to Livy's epitome, with the emphasis on the kings' fall. Corinne Saunders points out that it precedes the story of Julius Caesar, and so provides another example of what can happen to a ruler if he abuses his authority.[303]

[300] Galloway, 'Chaucer's Legend of Lucrece and the Critique of Ideology in Fourteenth-Century England': 822-8.

[301] Ibid., 822.

[302] Catherine Léglu, 'Translating Lucretia: Word, Image and "Ethical Non-Indifference" in Simon de Hesdin's Translation of Valerius Maximus's Facta et Dicta Memorabilia', in *Rethinking Medieval Translation: Ethics, Politics, Theory*, ed. Emma Campbell and Robert Mills (Boydell & Brewer, 2012), 69–72.

[303] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment*, 162.

This kind of lesson for men gains special importance in the republican thought of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: she first becomes an important symbolical figure of anti-tyrannical writings in Italy, but then transfers to other regions, which is probably helped by the fact that having died a long time ago, she was a rather "anational" figure. As Stephanie Jed has suggested, in the early humanist writings, the chastity of Lucretia becomes symbolic of republican virtues[304] – this echoes how John of Salisbury equated female suicides in the name of protection of chastity with the Roman love of liberty. This image becomes so common that it also begets its own parodies and refutals, as was shown by Yves Winter in her analysis of Machiavelli's *Discourses*, in which he argues against the key role of Lucretia in the establishment of the republic. In his comedy *Mandragola*, Machiavelli also used parodying of traditional elements of the story, much like Piccolomini, although this time to underline a political point.[305]

The trend towards secularization and a diminishing need to reference Christian teachings, however, is not absolute. Retelling Livy for a German-speaking audience, Bernhardus Schoferlin includes a clear condemnation of Lucretia's suicide according to the Christian doctrine.[306] The unease of contradiction between Augustine's teachings and interest in ancient works resurfaces notably in Northern and Central Europe with the increase of attention to the Church Father, both before, and especially after Luther's rise to prominence.[307]

[304] See Stephanie H. Jed, *Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism*, Theories of Representation and Difference (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

[305] Yves Winter, 'Machiavelli and the Rape of Lucretia', *History of Political Thought* XL, no. 3 (2019): 405–32. Another parody of Lucretia's story is found in Ben Johnson's *Volpone*. On both Johnson and Machiavelli and their work with Livy see Frances Teague, "Rewriting Lucrece: Intertextuality and the Tale of Lucrece," in *Renaissance Papers 2017*, ed. Jim Pearce and Ward J. Risvold (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2018), 101–10.

[306] Hertel, 'Petrifaction and Melancholia in Dürer's Lucretia': 31.

[307] John Marenbon, *Pagans and Philosophers: The Problem of Paganism from Augustine to Leibniz* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 293-4.

The same ambiguity on Lucretia's virtue seems to be continuing in the Renaissance visual arts. In comparing Lucretia's portraits by Lucas Cranach and Albrecht Dürer, Christiane Hertel suggests that the former chose "precisely not to bring Lucretia into the harbor of a moralized, Christianized antiquity" – presenting her as a human in her own time and virtue system, and not an exemplary or cautionary tale; his "human" Lucretia is also more sexualized.[308] Similarly, Hertel finds in Dürer's works a tension between her traditional sanctified image and her status as a sinner by the action of the suicide: in the end, she becomes a tragic figure, devoid of Christian saintly iconography and condemned to pain and suffering, but without any overt moralizations.[309]

This period is also characterized by travel and exchange between different traditions of Lucretia's narrative and the ability of authors to choose and combine among variations. For example, John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* is partially based on the Middle English translation of Boccaccio and later becomes a poetic source for Chaucer (and even later, Shakespeare).[310] But Chaucer, as we discussed earlier, also engages with Augustinian ideas. This underscores an important point: there is no rigid barrier between "religious" and "secular" traditions. Similarly, in John Lydgate's *The Fall of Princes,* even though it retells Salutati and Boccaccio, Lydgate includes a comment indicative of an Augustinian/John of Salisbury stance to explain that suicide is wrong.[311]

A shift between traditions of Lucretia's narratives also happens with the German version of Coluccio Salutati's piece by a German humanist, Albrecht von Eyb. Himself a cleric, Albrecht von Eyb wrote several works on marriage, arguing for the benefits of the married state. As Hans Galinsky has shown, in translating Salutati, Eyb adapts the story

[308] Hertel, 'Petrifaction and Melancholia in Dürer's Lucretia': 23-6.
[309] Ibid., 31-4, 40-1.
[310] Richard Hillman, 'Gower's Lucrece: A New Old Source for "The Rape of Lucrece"', *The Chaucer Review* 24, no. 3 (1990): 263–70.
[311] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment*, 167-70.

according to his views on marriage, deemphasizing Lucretia's sensuality and underlining her chastity: to her rapist, "she showed herself not as a woman but as a marble statue".[312] The purpose of the story also changes with translation: Eyb is less concerned with entertainment and more with teaching virtuous behavior, so he edits out the sexual side of the story. The admonitory use of Lucretia's story in connection with marital behavior, explored in the 3rd and 4th chapters, is thus preserved when it suits the needs of an author.

Similarly, Lucretia continues to be used as an example of chastity in didactic works addressed to women. In *De institutione feminae christianae* (1523), the Spanish humanist Juan Vives portrays her as the ideal wife: both because of her care for the household and because of her chastity, but omitting a discussion of the suicide. In another work, he even compares to her his patron, Catherine of Aragon.[313] This showcases both the preservation of the earlier strategy of the use of pagan *exempla* and its full normalization, in which comparing a famously religious Christian monarch to a pagan self-killer was not seen as a scandal.

The development of print and vernacular translations of ancient and medieval sources in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries means that authors interested in Lucretia story are no longer limited to *florilegia* or few manuscripts. It means the growth of cross-exchange of various versions and elements of Lucretia's story, from which an author could choose what they want to emphasize, without fear of heresy accusations, unlike the situation faced by twelfth-century writers. (Although some authors remain cautious about not endorsing ideas contrary to doctrine.) This definitely marks the end of the medieval phase of the story, characterized by the "Latin" tradition with relatively limited variations even in vernacular sources. Medieval interpretations aimed at women quite often distilled the essence of the story to draw moral lessons for personal edification and salvation, in a vein of Valerius

[312] Galinsky, *Der Lucretia-Stoff in Der Weltiliteratur*, 55-8.
[313] Thoen and Tournoy, '"Lucretia Lovaniensis": 91.

Maximus. While this approach persists, it is less dominant. While later variations are created with the tradition in mind, they rather develop an "Ovidian" or a “Livyan” line: either emphasizing the internal feelings and psychology of the characters, as seen in Shakespeare's poem on Lucretia; or shifting from personal aspects to political implications, highlighting Brutus over Lucretia.

Conclusion

From the beginning of the common era to the sixteenth century, the way people wrote about Lucretia followed a common tradition while constantly changing. Already the ancient sources, such as Livy and Ovid, differed on the narrative elements surrounding Lucretia's virtue, the depiction of her rape, and her subsequent suicide: from Livy's emphasis on public virtue to Ovid's portrayal of intimate tragedy. Later, early Christian writers like Tertullian, Jerome, and Augustine, grappled with reconciling pagan *exempla* like that of Lucretia with the framework of Christian morality. Augustine's critique in *De civitate Dei* marked a turning point in the perception of Lucretia, challenging her status as a paragon of virtue and questioning the morality of her suicide.

Subsequently, Lucretia's presence in post-Augustine Christian literature faded, until a resurgence of interest in classical Greek and Latin heritage, including ethical works by Cicero, Seneca, and Aristotle. Against the backdrop of this "Renaissance", the story of Lucretia reemerged, primarily discussed among the educated elite proficient in Latin. Lucretia's narrative was integrated into Latin education through texts like *Fasti* and epitomes of Livy's, and thanks to the creation of educational tools, such as Conrad of Mure's *Fabularius*, to facilitate understanding of classical references. For some in this context, referencing Lucretia's story became a way to show off one's knowledge of classical texts; but this period also brought forth the tension between Christian theology and classical ethics. The conflict between Roman and Augustinian interpretations of Lucretia's story is representative of the broader discourse on pagan virtue in the twelfth century, and the gradual development of the concept of "natural virtues." The enduring influence of Augustine's condemnation is seen in theological treatises and canon law: but even their authors sometime acknowledged alternative interpretations of her actions.

Next step for Lucretia happens in the thirteenth century in the context of medieval preaching. Despite Augustine's condemnation of her actions, Lucretia's story found its way into sermons: though Lucretia's story was probably unsuitable as an *exemplum* for a general audience, some preachers did incorporate it, particularly when addressing educated or elite audiences. Some influential preachers, like John of Wales, recommended the use of Lucretia's story when preaching on the topics of chastity and suicide: and if in the latter case, the Augustinian condemnation is repeated, in the former, Lucretia is suggested as a possible model of chastity for medieval women, along with other pagan women who were ready to take drastic action for their own modesty and "marital love." Authors such as John if Wales supported this decision by references to the earlier tradition of Jerome using pagan *exempla*; however, they repurposed the tradition in their own social context. I have also tried to show how the popularity and dissemination of texts like *Communiloquium* in the Paris region reflected broader trends within the Franciscan Order, and the search for alternative role models to address the day-to-day challenges faced by lay audiences, particularly women.

By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the gendered *exemplum* of Lucretia as a symbol of female chastity and marital fidelity, which had already been partly established by the mendicant friars, had firmly entered secular sources, from didactic literature for women to entertaining court poetry, despite lingering unease. Lucretia is included in alternative models for the aristocratic laity, such as the tradition of the Nine Worthies, and becomes one of the figures that can serve as a "mirror" for aristocracy and urban elites, reflecting contemporary worries outside of the stricter framework of earlier Christian morality that emphasized virginal monastery life as the only preferrable state.

During the Renaissance, vernacularization, renewed interest to ancient heritage and the advent of print facilitate the intensification of variability in Lucretia's narrative, reflecting diverse authorial choices and a blend of religious and secular traditions. Lucretia's story could

still be used, as back in the twelfth century, to showcase erudition, as seen in Petrarch's works and Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini's courtly romance. Adaptations could also still serve didactic purposes, exemplified by Albrecht von Eyb and Juan Vives, who emphasize Lucretia's virtues. But the common ground of the ultimate agreement with Augustinian interpretation now was lost – some, like Dante, directly challenged his views, which was not really possible for the twelfth century authors. This possibility, however, was not a radical divide with the earlier tradition, but a logical step in cultivation of interest in ancient ethics.

John of Wales and other mendicant preachers proposed Lucretia as an *exemplum* of chastity and the strong protection of female virtue. John's use of Lucretia stemmed from the pastoral need to find alternative role models for lay women, but it was also made possible because of an earlier interest in the pagan culture of the twelfth-century thinkers who were not concerned with female virtue. The smooth permeation of this discourse into secular sources was also possible because the use of pagan *exempla* was already sanctioned by the Church in the women-oriented didactic context of private spousal relationships, but the secularization of the discourse has also meant that Lucretia could return to be a male-oriented symbol of public liberty.

One limitation of the approach taken in this paper, as with previous works on Lucretia that tried to embrace large periods of tradition, is that while it can be possible to trace overarching tendencies, one might not delve deeply enough to uncover the finer details and variations. Although I believe I have established some connections between the thirteenth-century didactic and sermon traditions and later sources, a more in-depth textual exploration is necessary. It would be particularly interesting to examine more surviving sermons that include *exempla*, as there is a wealth of archival material from that period in France.[314]

[314] See indexes in: Kienzle, ed., *The Sermon*.

Starting with sermons *ad status* directed at married people or those delivered on the topic of the Wedding at Cana could be promising.

Additionally, while Lucretia is a significant figure, there were other pagan women, like Penelope, and other notable suicides, like Dido, who appeared in medieval didactic literature. Comparative studies focusing on these figures could provide a richer context. Furthermore, it is important to consider audience interaction, specifically how women in the audience would relate to this and similar stories and apply it to their lives, rather than solely focusing on what the mostly male writers intended to convey.

Of course, it is also possible to expand the scope rather than just delve deeper. While I have stopped at the Renaissance, this does not mean that the medieval dichotomies and trends cease to exist beyond this period. It would be fascinating to extend the analysis to see how Lucretia's otherness continues to be portrayed in later works, as her story remained compelling well beyond the Renaissance. Tracing this trajectory to more contemporary interpretations, such as in Benjamin Britten’s opera, could provide valuable insights into (dis)continuation of medieval narratives.

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