Stumbling Blocks Before the Blind

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Notes

Chapter 1


6. In an important review essay on disability history for the American Historical Review in June 2003, Catherine J. Kudlick listed well over 100 academic articles, books, and other publications relating to disability, but in 2003 she found only 3 books and 3 articles dealing with disability in the premodern West (“Why We Need Another ‘Other,’” American Historical Review 108, no. 3 [June 2003]: 793, n. 101).


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16. See “Lenses and Eyeglasses,” in *The Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph R. Strayer (New York: Scribner, 1982–89), 7:538–41. Of course glasses would have been unavailable to the majority of visually impaired people in the Middle Ages, because of both expense and, in certain geographical areas, lack of knowledge about production.


19. Ibid., 2.

20. *Holy Bible* (Douay-Rheims Translation; Rockford, Ill.: Tan Books, 1899). Less socially and theologically complex episodes of Jesus curing blind men are recounted in Matthew 9:27–31 and 20:30–34, Mark 8:22–26 and 10:46–52. The blind are also mentioned in groups of people with a variety of disabilities whom Jesus cures; see, for example, Matthew 11:5 and 15:30 and Luke 7:21.


22. The *Golden Legend* survives in about 1,000 manuscripts, and after 1450 nu-

23. For a list of saints renowned in France for their ability to cure blindness, see Zina Weygand, *Vivre sans Voir: Les aveugles dans la société française du Moyen Age au siècle de Louis Braille* (Paris: Créaphis, 2003), 25.


31. Ibid., 85


33. G. J. C. Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 55–56. During the course of the thirteenth century, most masses also added the elevation of the chalice, but it always remained both liturgically and symbolically less significant than showing the Host.

34. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 96. Snoek echoes this assertion almost verbatim, calling the “elevatio” “the indispensable high point of the Mass” (56).


36. Ibid., 59.

37. Ibid., 59.

38. Ibid., 60.

39. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 97. Duffy also includes photographs of squints that are still extant in churches in Ipswich and Lavenham (figs. 46, 53).


41. Ibid., 293.

42. Ibid., 59.

46. *Poésies de Gilles li Muisis*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (Louvain: J. LeFever, 1882), 2:234. In a literary-biographical sketch of Gilles’ life, Albert de Haenens also suggests that this moment was part of the celebration of the mass rather than contemplation of an artistic representation of Jesus (VOIR barré 20 [May 2000]: 12).
48. Agnés de Pontoise, a woman cured of blindness by the relics of Saint Louis in the church of Saint Denis during a mass, demonstrates an equally ardent desire to see the elevation. She can make out the priest going through the motions of the elevation, but because her cure is not instantaneous, “she did not perceive well the body of our savior, because she still had weak eyesight.” Guillaume de Saint Pathus, *Les Miracles de Saint Louis* (Paris: Champion, 1931), 182.
50. Ibid., 256.
52. Ibid., 77.
53. It is significant that the Greek verb used here and translated as “scandalize” is based on the word ὀκάνδαλος, a object that causes one to stumble—or literally a stumbling block. This irony could be intentional, since in this instance sight rather than blindness causes the stumbling.
Chapter 2


2. Ibid., 48.

3. Alexis’ father, who fails to recognize his son, says he was blinded (“avoglez,” l. 394) by his own sinfulness, and the narrator later states that mortals are blinded (“avoglet,” l. 618) for the same reason. The plural noun *aveugles* appears in a list of disabled people who are cured by Alexis’s relic (l. 551). For an overview of poem in the context of this manuscript, see Rachel Bullington, *The “Alexis” in the Saint Albans Psalter: A Look into the Heart of the Matter* (New York: Garland, 1991), 47–104.


6. The noun *blindness* is used figuratively to represent spiritual sightlessness in the *Blickling Homilies* 23, ca. 971 (“Þæt we onyʒton þa blindnesse ure ælþeodi Zenesse”), and literally in Aelfric’s Deuteronomy 28:28 (“Sende þe Drihten on . . . blindynysse, þet þu gropie on midne dæʒ.”). The adjective *blind* is used to describe Bartimaeus in the *Anglo-Saxon Gospels*, Mark 10:46.

8. 62 fn: “Beo ho iblind, ho is eað falle.”

9. OED: Cursor Mundi, I. 7246: “Pai blinded him and prisund bath.” The verb blinded actually appears in only two of the four fourteenth-century manuscripts reproduced by Richard Morris in his Early English Text Society edition of the poem, MS BL Cotton Vespassian A.III and Bodleian MS Fairfax 14. The word is absent from the other two manuscripts, Göttingen University MS Theol. 107 and Trinity College Cambridge MS R.3.8, which say that Samson was beaten (Cursor Mundi, vol. 2. Early English Text Society. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1875, repr. 1966). The absence of the word from two manuscripts suggests that it may not have been universally known.


11. Ibid., 133.

12. Ibid., 134–35.


15. Ibid., 213.

16. Ibid., 218.

17. Ibid., 423.

18. Ibid., 423.

19. In her article “Body and Law in Late Anglo-Saxon England,” Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe mentions the role of the English Archbishop Wulfstan in the writing of these and other laws, but it is unclear why she asserts that the “mitigated sentence as alternative to death” is “called for by Wulfstan in Cnut’s voice.” See Anglo-Saxon England 27 (1998): 217.


21. Ibid., 217.


25. History of English Law 2:461, n. 3. The English legal writer Bracton (d. 1268) recommended this pair of punishments only for the rape of virgins. See Bracton on


28. Ibid., 159.


30. Ibid., 6:353.

31. Ibid., 355.


34. Ibid., 124.


36. Liam Mac Mathúna, “On the Expression and Concept of Blindness in Irish,” Studia Hibernica 19 (1979): 50–51. While the Normans may have introduced this double punishment, Mathúna notes that there was a well-documented tradition of blinding as punishment among indigenous Irish rulers earlier; this practice sets them apart from the Anglo-Saxons.

It is ironic that Dudon of Saint-Quentin, the late tenth-century chronicler of the first three dukes of Normandy, said that in his day blindness was one of the infirmities that always earned the compassion of the men about whom he wrote; see De Moribus et actis primorum normanniae ducum, ed. Edouard Lair (Caen: Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie, XXIII, 1865), 262.


38. Strickland, War and Chivalry, 52. Strickland mentions another incident in which Richard blinded three prisoners, but because this event is recorded in William le Breton’s Philippidos, a chronicle strongly supportive of Phillip II of France (1180–1223), Strickland questions the reliability of the report (202, n. 128).

39. Roger of Howden, Gesta Henrici II [Rerum Britannica Medii Aevi Scriptores (Rolls Series) 49.2], 34; quoted in van Eickels, “Gendered Violence,” 593.


43. In this case, Thomas de Bestenoure was attacked by a group of men who beat him, broke his bones, stabbed him repeatedly, and left him for dead; however, he survived and brought them to trial. Two of the men, Roger and Aylwin, were sentenced to be blinded and castrated. See Curia Regis Rolls of the Reign of Henry III: 7 to 9 Henry III (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1955), 219–20.

44. Mary Bateson, Borough Customs (London: Quaritch, 1904), 1:77.

45. Ibid., xlvi.


47. “No Man from henceforth shall lose either Life, or Member, for Killing of [the King’s] Deer,” Magna Charta de Foresta, The Great Charter of Forests (London: Kidgell, 1680), 28.

48. Horn, Mirror of Justices (Selden Society, London: Bernard Quaritch, 1895), 141. An odd rape case tried in 1314 attests to the validity of Horn’s text. In the Eyre of Kent, a certain Alice brought charges of rape against a certain John, and the inquest found that he was guilty. The rape had taken place before 1285—nearly thirty years earlier, before the Second Statutes of Westminster—and if Alice had not withdrawn her appeal, “the judgment of the Court would have been that Alice should tear out John’s eyes and cut off his testicles” (F. W. Maitland, ed., Year Books of Edward II, vol. 5, The Eyre of Kent 6 & 7 Edward II, vol. 1 [Selden Society, London: Bernard Quaritch, 1910], 134–35).


51. Ibid., 69–70.

52. Ibid., 79.

53. Ibid., appendix C, 297.


55. Ibid., fig. 11, p. 161.

56. Ibid., 137–38.

57. Susan L’Engle, who has studied the illustrations in MS Lat 9187, is uncertain of whether the one under discussion represents blinding or branding, which was also used as a punishment in medieval France. However, she is apparently unaware of any uses of blinding in the area of Toulouse in the century preceding the illustrations; she states (but offers no evidence) that it “became more common in the fifteenth century” for such crimes as theft of animals (144). Nor does she take into account blinding anywhere else in France earlier in the Middle Ages.

Aside from this historical evidence, the illustration itself, crude though it may be, does not suggest branding. The artist could easily have drawn the rod so as to make
visible the iron shape that was to be branded into the victim’s face (a shape that would presumably have been recognizable to the manuscript’s original viewers), and the artist would also have probably included a representation of the executioner’s other tool necessary for branding: fire.


59. Ibid., 148.

60. Ibid., 148–49. Although I have not systematically sought out late examples of blinding as juridical punishment in countries beyond France and England, I have found several surprisingly late instances. The latest occurred in Amsterdam in 1617; see Pieter Spijerenburg, _The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the Evolution of Repression; From a Preindustrial Metropolis to the European Experience_ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 75.


64. Two chronicles, _L’Histoire des ducs de Normandie_ and the work of an anonymous chronicler of Béthune, mention the conflict between Eustache and the Count Renaud of Boulogne, but they offer few descriptions of specific events and make no mention of the blinding episode. See Glyn S. Burgess, _Two Medieval Outlaws: Eustace the Monk and Fouke Fitz Waryn_ (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 14.


68. Ibid., 100–103.

69. _Vie de Saint Louis_, 80.


71. Louis’ goal of disciplining particular groups of the urban poor is also evident in a slightly later foundation, the Maison des Filles-Dieu, which opened in 1260. According to Louis’ chronicler Joinville, it served “a great number of women . . . who, because of poverty, had committed the sin of lechery” (quoted in Louis Guillaumat and Jean-Pierre Baillart, _Les Quinze-Vingts de Paris: Echos Historiques du XIIe au XXe Siècle_ [n.p.: Société Francophone d’Histoire de l’Ophtalmologie, 1998], 7). The Quinze-Vingts and the Filles-Dieu were seen as comparable institutions by at least one medieval artist, who depicted Louis founding both of them in a stained glass


73. In a number of medieval European cities, licensed beggars wore identifying badges to differentiate them from unlicensed (and possible fully able-bodied) beggars; see Michel Mollat, The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 152. In the fifteenth century Charles VII again expelled beggars from Paris, and the decree mentioned specifically the simulation of corporeal infirmities as one of the reasons; see Jean Dufournet, intro. to Le Garçon et l’Aveugle, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Champion, 1989), 67.


77. Guillaumat and Bailliart, Les Quinze-Vingts de Paris, 12.

78. Ibid., 7.

79. Ibid., 17–21.

80. Ibid., 19.

81. Ibid., 20–21.

82. Ibid., 138, 147.

83. Ibid., 140.

84. Ibid., 141.


87. Ibid., 143–44.


90. Guillaumat and Bailliart, Les Quinze-Vingts de Paris, 25; this source does not include earlier records of the number of residents.

In his dissertation, O’Tool describes the considerable ambiguities in the terminology used in archival documents to describe the residents of the hospice, ambiguities that call into question the number of blind people living there at any given time. Our knowledge of the size of the institution’s population is further compli-


92. Doc. 388.

93. Doc. 390.

94. Doc. 391.

95. Doc. 393.

96. Doc. 395.

97. Doc. 392.

98. Doc. 404.

99. Doc. 408.

100. Doc. 409.

101. Docs. 410, 411.


103. Ibid., 37.

104. Quoted in le Grand, 117.

105. Ibid., 118.

106. Pierre Desrey, *La généalogie auecques les gestes et nobles faitz darnes du trespreux et renomme prince Godeffroy de boulion . . .* (Paris: Jehan Petit, 1504), pp. η.ii.v and η.iii.r. (This signature, which is designated by a symbol that resembles the Greek η, follows the signature designated by “z.”)


109. Ibid., 165; quoted from doc. 6386, Archives des Quinze-Vingts.

110. In Poincelot’s list of seventeen paintings, number 8 is “Un tableau, repré- sentant Solimans, qui fait crever les yeut aux captifs Français . . . de Person,” and number 14 describes “Un tableau représantant saint Louy paifiant la rançon des captifs de Saladins.” Doc. 5565, quoted in de Montaiglon, 166–67.

111. Ibid., 164.


115. Ibid., 123.


120. Inasmuch as a number of modern sources have fully debunked the myth of the three hundred crusaders, it is distressing to see it resurface in the writings of contemporary scholars attempting to retrieve aspects of the history of disability. See, for example, Margaret A. Winzer, “Disability and Society before the Eighteenth Century: Dread and Despair,” in Lennard J. Davis, ed., *The Disability Studies Reader* 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 92.


122. In relation to the history of the French language, it is interesting that Villon here expresses impatience with the construction “quinze-vingts” instead of the more common “trois cents.” This numerical designation, already archaic when Villon wrote *Le Testament* in the early 1460s, was distant enough from common usage to serve roughly twenty years later as inspiration for the structure of the legend of the crusaders, supposedly blinded in groups of twenty over a period of fifteen days.


130. Ibid., 116.
131. Ibid., 117.
132. Ibid., 115–17.
133. Ibid., 117.

134. The “backlash” against the 1990 “Americans With Disabilities Act” is beginning to receive some scholarly attention. See, for example, Mary Johnson, *Make Them Go Away: Clint Eastwood, Christopher Reeve, and the Case Against Disability Rights* (Louisville, Ky.: Avocado Press, 2003).

135. Orme and Webster, *The English Hospital, 1070–1570*, 121.


137. Ibid., 536.
138. Orme and Webster, *The English Hospital, 1070–1570*, 121.

139. In the case of Elsingspital, the institution’s debts may have been caused by
the church associated with it. A 1448 inventory shows that it possessed three relics, furniture, ornaments, and some fine vestments, and the building itself was so large that “after the Dissolution, when the principal aisle had been pulled down, the remaining part sufficed for a parish church.” The Victoria History of the Counties of England: London (London: Constable, 1909), 536.


141. Ibid., 67, 71.

142. Inasmuch as medieval Christians generally associated usury with Jews, the foundational legend represents an interesting conflation of Muslims with them. Stories of Jews demanding Christian flesh as payment for debts, an obvious variant of the blood libel myth, were in circulation when the Quinze-Vingts legend appeared; one of those stories, from Ser Giovanni’s late fourteenth-century Il Pecorene, was the likely source for Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice (The Riverside Shakespeare [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974], 250).


147. Geremek, The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris, 204.


149. See also A.VII.90–94 and C.IX.169–74.

Chapter 3


2. Ibid., 60–65. This ceremony was instituted at the Third Lateran Council of 1179.

3. Ibid., 58–59.


5. For example, the bull Sicut Judeis non, which forbids forced baptism, vio-
lence against Jews, desecration of Jewish cemeteries, and other anti-Semitic activities, was issued “by six popes during the twelfth century . . . , by ten popes during the thirteenth, by four popes during the fourteenth (including an anti-pope), and by three during the fifteenth century”; Solomon Grayzel, “The Papal Bull Sicut Judeis,” in Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict: From Late Antiquity to the Reformation, ed. Jeremy Cohen (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 231–59; the quotation is from 231–32. For other protective measures, see Edward M. Synan, The Pope and the Jews in the Middle Ages (New York: Macmillan, 1965).


9. When deafness is mentioned, it is generally associated with blindness. See, for example, Matthew 13:10–17 and Mark 8:17–18, in which Jesus rebukes those who do not follow him for having neither eyes to see nor ears to hear. In his vitriolic Adversus Judaeorum, Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny, said that Jews’ “willful hardness of heart made them blind, deaf, and insane” (quoted in Karl Morrison, Understanding Conversion [Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992], 45–46).


14. Ibid., Tractate 44, 2; 177.


16. Ibid., 43.

17. Ibid., 46.


20. The edited Latin text of the Tobias appears in Mathei Vindocinensis, Opera,


24. In this context it should be noted that within a century after John’s death (ca. 407), drama was banned in the Roman empire because of the disorderly, immoral nature of public performances. See David Bevington, *Medieval Drama* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 3.

25. Quoted in Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories*, 198.


28. Ibid., 97.


32. Ibid., 225–26.


34. For a more detailed examination of the royal protection of Jews, or *tuitio*, see Stow, 273–74.


36. In the case of the Hospice des Quinze-Vingts, this resemblance would have been strengthened by the fact that the walled institution grew as donors provided funds for building and as residents built their own houses close to the original communal buildings. By the fifteenth century it had become “a veritable small city with residences, churches, a bell tower, a cemetery, a mill, a well, a bakery, a tavern, an infirmary . . ., schools for girls and for boys, a prison, and three courtyards” (Louis


38. Ibid., 290–91.


40. Quoted in Gauthier, 109.


42. Ibid., 105.


44. Thomas of Chobham, *Summa de arte praedicandi*, ed. Franco Morenzoni (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1988); for biographical information, see xxxi–xxxvii.

45. “Sepe colligunt elemosinas in magnam quantitatem pecunie, nec utuntur argento collecto, sed reseruant illud usque ad mortem cum magna auaritia.” Ibid., 88.


47. Stow, 299.

48. Ibid., 295.

49. Mollat, 291.


51. Ibid., 67.


53. Ibid., 183.


56. The connection between the Jews of the Croxton play and the Lollards was first made by Cecilia Cutts in “The Croxton Play: An Anti-Lollard Piece” (*Modern Language Quarterly* 5 [1944]: 45–60), but she is so intent upon drawing this parallel that she denies the play’s basic anti-Judaism.
57. In “Ritual, Church, and Theatre: Medieval Dramas of the Sacred Body,” Sarah Beckwith stresses the importance of the reintegration of the body of Christ, i.e., the Christian community, at the end of the Croxton play (65–89, in *Culture and History, 1350–1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities, and Writing*, ed. David Aers [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992]).


60. The image of the monkey dangling from a coffin is reproduced in Herbert Read et al., *English Stained Glass* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, n.d.), black-and-white plate 41.

61. *Sensuyl lassumption de la glorieuse Vierge Marie* (Paris: “la rue Neufve Nostre Dame” [Alain Lotrian], n.d.), n.p. This play has not been printed in a modern edition, but it is dated as a fifteenth-century text and partially summarized by L. Petit de Julleville in *Les Mystères*, vol. 2 (Paris: Hachette, 1880), 470–71. The online catalogue entry for this book at the Bibliothèque Nationale states that Alain Lotrian can be identified as the printer because of the address cited in the text; he operated there from 1525 to 1547.

62. See, for example, the Ironmongers’ Play in *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, vol. 1, ed. R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills (Early English Text Society, s.s. 3; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 303–14. In this play the materialistic crucifiers crave disorder to the extent that they gamble for Jesus’s clothing before crucifying him.


64. Ibid., 298.

65. Several examples appear in *The York Plays* (ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885]); see, for example, 338, l. 34; 346, l. 277; 351, l. 61; 353, l. 129.


70. Ibid.; for the Anglo-Norman text and translation of the Lamech story in the Holkham Bible, see 37–38, where the blind man’s guide is repeatedly called *garcioun* and *valet* rather than any nomenclature representing kinship. The less developed text of the Egerton Genesis is legible in the reproduction of the Lamech/Noah folio in fol. 4, where the boy is called a child (*un enfant, l’enfant*) of undetermined parentage, with no possessive adjective indicating that he is Lamech’s son.
72. Ibid., 121, ll. 1439–57.
74. Ibid., 173.
75. In her commentary on the Lamech episode in the Holkham Bible, Michelle Brown seems to assume that the poet responsible for the text was making a mistake in his identification of the blind man’s guide. She writes, “Lamech is blind and needs the assistance of his son, who is here described as his servant boy,” and she entitles her description of folio 7r, “Lamech kills his son; Noah warned of the flood.” As my discussion of both the Ludus Coventriæ and the Egerton Genesis demonstrate, in England a version of the Lamech story (that probably had more than only these three witnesses) did not identify the boy as related to Lamech, sparing the blind man the addition of infanticide to his impressive list of sins. Brown may thus have conflated identifiably English and French traditions of the story in her assumption that the version appearing in the French drama was necessarily “correct.”
76. Ibid., 176–77.
77. Ibid., 182.
78. Ibid., 189.
79. Ibid., 190.
82. Ibid., 110.
83. Piers Plowman: The B Version, ed. George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson (London: Athlone Press, 1975), 2:611, l. 82. Kane and Donaldson note a number of manuscripts of Piers that do not call Longinus a Jew; see the textual note for this line.
84. Ibid., ll. 81, 83–84.
85. Ibid., ll. 88–89.
86. Ludus Coventriæ, or the Plaie called Corpus Christi, ed. K. S. Block, Early English Text Society, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922), 310.
88. Quoted in Peebles, 141.
Chapter 4


3. Ibid., 48–49. Von Kraemer identifies the blind man’s sexual proclivities, along with his greed, drunkenness, and cynicism, as his most significant sins.


6. Ibid., 112.

7. Ibid., 117–18.


12. The basic plot of *Les Trois Aveugles de Compiègne* achieved some popularity. It was translated into German prose as one of the trickster Till Eulenspiegel’s adventures, with a few variants from the French original, i.e., Till pretends to give twelve guilders to twelve blind men, and when the innkeeper learns that they have no money, he locks them in a pigsty until Till sets in motion the trick with the priest. This tale was rewritten as a play by Hans Sachs (*Till Eulenspiegel: His Adventures*, trans Paul Oppenheimer [New York: Routledge, 1991], 146–49).


14. The opening of this fabliau, lengthier than most in the collection, states that its author was Phillip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. The Old French text is taken

15. In critical examinations of this tale I have not seen any suggestion that an otherwise inexplicably bizarre metaphor relating to the girl’s hemorrhoids may rely on a rather weak pun. The writer says that the girl’s disease is commonly called “broches” (which is the disease’s only nomenclature in the text), and the next sentence reads, “La douce maison fut treslargement troublée quand en la garenne que plus chere tenoient lesdictz parens, avoient osé lascher les levriers at limiers ce deploissant mal, et que plus est, touché sa proye en dangereux et dommageable lieu” (Les Cents Nouvelles Nouvelles, 32) [This worthy family was most perturbed when this most unpleasant malady dared unleash its greyhounds and bloodhounds on her privileged hunting reserve, attacking its prey in a dangerous part of her body, to her great detriment. (The Hundred New Tales [Les Cents Nouvelles Nouvelles], 22)]. It seems very likely that the ground for the canine metaphor is the similarity between “broches” and “braches,” which in both Old French and modern French mean “hunting dogs;” see Dictionnaire de l’ancien français: Le Moyen Âge (Paris: Larousse, 1992), 75. The pun satirizes middle-class pretensions to the aristocratic pastime of hunting, a satirical position that would have been appropriate to the aristocratic Phillip the Good, and it also demeans the girl by associating her rectum with a game preserve.


17. Ibid., 22.

18. Ibid., 22.

19. Ibid., 23.

20. Ibid., 23.


23. For a summary of the church’s concerns about friars becoming too closely involved with women that they were treating, see Angela Montford, Health, Sickness, Medicine, and the Friars in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 123.


27. Ibid., 122.

Although *Bérinus* has no direct source, the episode of the lying Blandiens has several analogues that are related to the “Seven Sages” tradition. See *The Tale of Beryn*, ed. F. J. Furnivall and W. G. Stone (Early English Text Society, E.S. 105; Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus Reprints, 1973), 141–59. These analogues all feature a one-eyed man rather than a blind man. The French writer’s choice to make his visually impaired lying accuser completely blind allows him to draw upon some of the stereotypes discussed in earlier chapters.

30. Ibid., 83.
31. Ibid., 98.
32. Ibid., 98.
33. Ibid., 117.
34. Ibid., 123.
35. Ibid., 126–27.
36. See chap. 2, n. 42.
37. *Bérinus*, 130.
38. Ibid., 133. The subterranean flood is the subject of yet another tangential narrative: An Egyptian named Altercans has an incestuous relationship with his sister, who becomes pregnant. The devil (here called “li Ennemis”) persuades Altercans to take her out to sea, murder her, and throw her body in the water. God sends the flood as punishment for this crime, but it simultaneously punishes Agriano. The paired narratives reflect the conjoined stories in Genesis 19, the destruction of the Sodomites and Lot’s incest with his daughters. Centering on two kinds of unnatural sexuality that bring about the wrath of God, homosexuality and incest, the narratives also serve as mirror images of each other since Agriano rejects women that he should love, including his own mother and sister, while Altercans loves his sister “contre Dieu et contre droit” [against God and against the law] (131). For a more complete examination of this episode in its context, see Edward Wheatley, “A River Runs Through It: Disability, Homosexuality, Queered/Disabled Discourse, and the Isle of Blandie in *Bérinus*,” *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 19, no. 3 (2007): 386–401.
41. Ibid., 129, n. 148.1.
43. *Bérinus*, 63.
44. Ibid., 135.
46. Bérinus, 64.
48. For Gieffroy’s initial description of the tree, see Bérinus, 69; for the narrator’s description of it as the Romans file past it, see 134–35.
49. Bérinus, 64–65.
51. Ibid., ll. 2045–48, 2061–62.
52. Ibid., ll. 2077–80.
53. Ibid., ll. 2378–81.
54. Ibid., ll. 2510–16.
55. Line 3262 states that the citizens “had ful litill knowlech he was Geffrey the lame.”
56. Ibid., ll. 2915–3004.
57. Ibid., ll. 2964–68.
58. Ibid., l. 3082. See also ll. 3052, 3117, 3160, 3200.
59. Ibid., ll. 3176–77, 3180.
60. Ibid., ll. 3181–82.
62. Ibid., 128.
64. Ibid., l. 3694.
65. Ibid., ll. 3705.
66. Ibid., ll. 3716–20.
68. Ibid., ll. 3739–41.
69. Ibid., ll. 3759–60.
70. Ibid., ll. 3869–74.
71. Ibid., ll. 3877–80.
72. Geoffrey is not the only character to feign disability in *Beryn*. Macaigne, the catchpoll who accuses Beryn of having murdered his father, dresses himself as a “man of contemplicioun” and carries a walking stick “as though he febill were” (ll. 2215–17). Presumably this disguise is meant to inspire both respect and pity in those who hear Macaigne’s accusation.
77. Ibid., 228–29.
79. Ibid., 246, ll. 4008–4313.
80. Ibid., 256, ll. 4350–55.
81. Ibid., 278–79, ll. 4813–17.
83. Toward the end of the second day of the play, the messenger reappears, again swigging from a bottle (Latin stage directions indicate thrice in just over 100 lines; ll. 12595–698) and singing (ll. 12685–93, 12761–72).
84. *Le Mystère de la Résurrection, Angers (1456)*, 294, ll. 5159–64.
85. For a discussion of the bowels in Rabelais, see Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 148–54 et passim.
86. In Servet’s B manuscript of the Angers *Résurrection*, it is Fictus who proposes playing “Broche en Cul” (919, ll. 3–6).
87. The scene plays somewhat differently in Servet’s B manuscript of the Angers *Résurrection*. A boy working for the shopkeeper wants them to pay for what they have eaten, but the shopkeeper scolds him roundly for asking money of people who have nothing. Instead, the man asks for payment with a song, and the pair obliges (924–25). As in the scene in its other version, the tone of the dialogue between the beggars and their host is respectful and apparently genuinely charitable.
88. An analogous incident symbolizing spiritual filthiness occurs in the English morality play *Mankind*, which is roughly contemporaneous with the Angers *Résurrection*. At the climactic moment of the play when the vice figures have so thoroughly corrupted Mankind that he is ready to hang himself, the vice Nought defecates on his own foot (“Fy, fy, fy! I have fowl arayde my fote....My fote is fowly over-schett”; Bevington, *Medieval Drama*, 933, ll. 784, 786)
89. Emile Mabille, ed., *Choix de Farces, Soties, et Moralités des XVé et XVIe Siècles*, vol. 1 (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970), 103–12, ll. 1–2. Further references to the farce will be made by line number in the body of the text.
91. Cohen was unable to translate the word *duquoys*, which the blind man supposedly has a thousand of (367, n., l. 483). The *Oxford English Dictionary* states that the English word descended from the French word *ducat*, the first surviving usage
92. The Medieval Theater of Cruelty: Rhetoric, Memory, Violence (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 148. Enders’s reading of the play is compromised by the fact that she does not take into account the chambermaid giving piss to her master to drink; she therefore sees the woman as “the real victim of unjustified violence from her socioeconomic superior” (148), though actually none of the three morally questionable characters in this play is blameless.

Chapter 5


2. In his study of the Oedipus legend in the Middle Ages, Lowell Edmunds has explored some of the medieval variants of the narrative, especially those relating to incest; among the central figures in these versions are Judas Iscariot and St. Gregory. However, self-blinding does not appear in these texts. See “Oedipus in the Middle Ages,” Antike und Abendland 22 (1976): 140–55.


9. The biblical figure of Samson may seem appropriate for inclusion among those blinded for sexual transgressions, but the narrative does not closely tie his affair with Delilah to his blinding by the Philistines. Rather, the Philistines and Samson are enemies before Delilah is introduced, and she agrees to help the Philistines trap Samson. The blinding and his prison labor of grinding corn are basically political punishment, similar to Norman blinding of their enemies. Medieval commentators apparently understood the disjuncture between blinding and sexuality in the Samson story, because in medieval commentaries he generally represented the folly of suicide rather than sexual sin. In De casibus virorum illustrium, for example, Boccaccio closes the narrative of Samson by saying that he “inflicted on


11. Among these is Bib Nat MS Lat 13418, which provides a lengthy commentary on the story of Lot and the destruction of the cities but does not specifically mention the blinding.


13. The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript, ed. Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 148. The translation of the first two lines of the excerpt are taken from this edition; the remainder is my own.

14. See chap. 4, n. 61.


16. Ibid., 33.

17. Ibid., 31.


19. Ibid., 32.

20. Ibid., 34–35.

21. Ibid., 35.


23. Ibid., 142–43.

24. Blair’s Saint Frideswide, Patron of Oxford reproduces both the Latin and a translation (43).

25. When the knave Robin reports to John that the clerk Nicholas is locked in his bedroom in a trance, John responds, “Help us, Seinte Frydeswyde!” (Riverside Chaucer, “The Miller’s Tale,” 3448).


27. The knight lusts after Custance because of the temptation of the devil (“temptacion del diable . . .”) , and he commits the murder because he is “caught in the devil’s grip” (“tut . . . [pris] en la main al diable”); ibid., 309.

28. “Puis le roi, pur le grant amour q’il avoit a la pucele, et purlez miracles par Dieux moustrez, le roi Alla lui fist baptizer”; ibid., 311.
29. Ibid., 335–36, ll. 874–85.
30. The Riverside Chaucer, ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). Further references to this text will be made by line number in the body of the chapter.
33. Ibid., 346.
35. The Riverside Chaucer, 320.
37. In a more recent article, James M. Palmer, who was apparently unaware of Everest’s work, discusses January’s blindness in specific relation to Benvenutus Grassus’s medical treatise De probatissima arte oculorum; Palmer echoes Everest’s assertion that sex complicated by January’s age leads to his visual impairment, but he adds that Grassus also believed blindness could be caused by overeating and excessive drinking, sins of which January is also guilty. See “Your Malady Is No ‘Sodeyn Hap’: Ophthalmology, Benvenutus Grassus, and January’s Blindness,” Chaucer Review 41, no. 2 (2006), 197–205.
41. Ibid., 61–62.
42. “Sir Launfal,” 201–62 in The Middle English Breton Lays, ed. Anne Laskaya and Eve Salisbury (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001). References to the poem will be made by line number in the text.
43. See, for example, ll. 848, 883, 891, 926, 929, 945, 954; these instances of verbs of looking and seeing all occur before the final judgment of Tryamour’s surpassing beauty.
45. Numerous Web sites list the symptoms of leprosy; for a reliable one that
mentions the possibility of blindness, see http://www.merck.com/mrkshared/mmanual_home/sec17/182.jsp

46. For Criseyde’s loving gaze upon Troilus, see Troilus and Criseye, book II, 610–65 (The Riverside Chaucer, 497–98).

Chapter 6


2. Serm. 87.11.14 (PL 38.5380, quoted in Arbesmann, 17.


7. Although miraculous chastisement by blinding was rare in Anglo-Saxon texts, it was deployed occasionally. See, for example, the martyrdom of St. Alban in Bede’s History of the English Church and People (trans. Leo Sherley-Price; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955), where, “as the martyr’s head fell, the executioner’s eyes dropped out on the ground” (I.7; p. 47). This miracle appears in later vernacular versions of the saint’s life, including the thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman La Vie de Seint Auban, ed. A. R. Harden (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), 25, and John Lydgate’s Saint Albon and Saint Amphibalus, ed. George F. Reinecke (New York: Garland, 1985), 122. Reinecke’s edition of Lydgate’s hagiographic poem provides a comprehensive history of the St. Alban legend (xviii–xxiv). I am grateful to Christopher Baswell for the reference to Bede.


10. Ibid., 50.

11. Ibid., 50.

12. Ibid., 54.

13. Ibid., 55.


15. In the four books of miracles of St. Foy, nearly one-sixth—sixteen of ninety-seven—are miracles of chastisement.

16. Ibid., 162–63. Miracle 3.10 presents another incident in which Robert, an enemy of St. Foy’s monks, is blinded for attacking them. He is cured after his men keep candlelight vigils by him for a week (158–59).
A miracle of chastisement structured very similarly to Renfroi’s appears in the section of the multiauthored miracles of St. Benoît that was written by André, one of the monks of Fleury, in the mid–eleventh century. André tells of a certain nobleman Gaufridus who enters into a dispute with the monks of Fleury over ownership of a wooded area that they rightfully own; when Gaufridus declares the land his, he is struck blind by a very dense mist over his eyes (“densissima . . . caligine”), and his right eye is gouged out by a tree branch as he leaves the area. Although his men learn a lesson from his mistakes, the text does not indicate that Gaufridus himself is cured of his blindness (Les Miracles de St. Benoît, ed. E. de Certain [Paris: Société de l’Histoire de France, 1858], 204–6).

18. Ibid., 184.
21. Ibid., 205.
23. Ibid., 63–64.
24. Ibid., 73.
25. Ibid., 77.
26. Ibid., 79.
27. Ibid., 85.

While Modwenna is alive, a curious incident occurs in which it is possible that she miraculously blinds a nun in her convent, though the narrative is clouded by ambiguities. Brigna, who spends her nights in wakeful prayer, is led one night by “divinely sustained daring” (“diuine confidentie”) to look into Modwenna’s apartment, where she sees two angels who have been talking to the saint, “like the most beautiful swans leaving the apartment by the roof and flying to the highest heaven with great brightness.” After spending the rest of the night in fearful contemplation of her unworthiness to see such a vision, Brigna tells Modwenna of her misbehavior. The saint, speaking “most graciously,” prophesies the young woman’s future, which will include founding a monastery and converting many people. Modwenna also says that because Brigna has seen the secrets of God when gazing on the angels, she will “remain (manebis) deprived of the light of the eyes of the flesh” but will see with spiritual eyes (132–37). The incongruous use of the verb maneo (“to remain, to
paired with the description of Modwenna’s gracious speech as prophetic rather than punitive suggest the possibility that Brigna was blinded by the angelic vision itself, which she had no right to see. Furthermore, the text does not mention that Brigna goes blind because of Modwenna’s words, though generally such miraculous moments are very precisely described (see, for example, Modwenna’s instantaneous transformation of a beautiful young nun into a “grave and venerable old woman” in order to avoid the attentions of young men; 30–33). So in recounting the miracle of Brigna’s blinding Geoffrey may have used sources that were themselves unclear, or he simply forgot or failed to mention that Brigna’s espionage blinded her.

29. Ibid., 191–93.
30. Ibid., 204–6.
33. Ibid., 479, 480–81.
35. Ibid., 207.
37. Ibid., miracle 17, 82–83.
40. MED, pité, definitions 1 and 3.
41. Off all yvces and foly, pryde ys the roote;
   Humylyte may not rayn ner yet indure.
   Pyte, alak, that ys flower and boot,
   Ys exylyd wher pryde hath socour. (516–19)
43. Ibid., 173, ll. 252–53.


48. In Jacques de Vitry’s early thirteenth-century exemplum, the men are made healthy against their will (“sanati sunt contra voluntatem suam”), and Jacobus uses only slightly more elaborate language (“ambo contra eorum voluntatem continuo sunt curati”). Quoted in Cohen, “Le Thème de l’Aveugle et du Paralytique dans la Littérature Française,” 401.


53. Ibid., 202.

54. Bernard rarely used verse in books 1 and 2, but the writer of book 4 has recourse to it more frequently. Even so, the alternating verse-prose-verse form of the miracle of the blind widow remains unique even in book 4.

55. Ibid., 203.

56. Ibid., 151–52.

57. Ibid., 99.


64. Two of the three cures of blindness in *Les Miracles de Saint Louis* by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus involve blameless people who both bleed and experience pain: Thomas de Voudai, who went blind when he was twelve (27–30), and Agnés de Pontoise, who went blind around age fifteen (179–84).
68. Thomas of Monmouth, The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich, 208.
71. All information about Thomas of Elderfield comes from the online Medieval Sourcebook. Translations of the plea roll and the so-called Worcester Story of the miraculous cure are by Paul Hyams.
72. Metzler, Disability in Medieval Europe, 175–76.
80. Quoted in Metzler, Disability in Medieval Europe, 56. Metzler traces the genealogy of this idea through later patristic writers as well.

Chapter 7

1. Metzler, Disability in Medieval Europe, 140–41.
2. Michael R. McVaugh, Medicine Before the Plague: Practitioners and Their Patients in the Crown of Aragon, 1285–1345 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 3. Although Aragon is beyond the scope of this study, McVaugh’s generalizations about trends in medicine in medieval Europe are applicable to France and, perhaps to a lesser extent, England.
4. Ibid., 16.
5. Ibid., 64.
6. Ibid., 74.
7. Ibid., 67, 69.
8. Ibid., 99.
9. Ibid., 251, n. 1.
14. Ibid., 118.
17. See Lindberg, ibid., for diagrams of the eye that appeared in Arabic and Latin manuscripts of Alhazen (fig. 7, p. 68; fig. 8, p. 70; fig. 9, p. 72); for a diagram of the eye in Roger Bacon’s *Opus majus*, see Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages*, fig. 3.1, p. 80.
26. All of the medieval surgeons quoted in this chapter delineate the anatomy of the eye in terms of the number of its tunics or layers, but surgeons evidently made no use of this information. McVaugh says of medieval writers of surgical treatises, “Their accounts of the eye’s structure say nothing about its pathology, and their accounts of cataract are not related to their anatomical descriptions” (“Cataracts and Hernias,” 334).


28. Ibid., 49.


31. Missing from this catalogue of important authors of surgical treatises is Henri de Mondeville, who may have been a student of Lanfranco and who later became surgeon to Philippe le Bel of France. De Mondeville’s *Chirurgie*, written within the first fifteen years of the fourteenth century, would have described cataract surgery in its final book, but he died before completing it. See *La chirurgie de maître Henri de Mondeville*, vol. 1, trans. Alphonse Bos (Paris: Frimin Didot, 1897–98), iv–x.


34. *Inventarium sive Chirurgia Magna*, 338; *The Cyrurgie of Guy de Chauliac*, 459.


42. Quoted in Michael McVaugh, *The Rational Surgery of the Middle Ages* (Florence: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2006), 154. McVaugh also quotes from the writings of other surgeons such as Saliceto (164–65) and Arnau de Vilanova (165), who express similar skepticism about attempting such a dangerous operation.

43. Raymond Cazelles, *Jean L’Aveugle, Comte de Luxembourg, Roi de Bohême* (Bourges: Tardy, 1947), 243. For some of the historical references to Jean L’Aveugle,
I am indebted to Julie Singer, “Lines of Sight: Love Lyric, Science, and Authority in Late Medieval and Early Modern French and Italian Culture” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2006), 120–42.


45. Ibid., 339, n. 64, quoted from Kronika Beneše z Weitmile in Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum, ed. J. Emler (Prague: Nakl. N. F. Palackého, 1884), 4:488.


49. Margue, ed., Un itinéraire européen, 158.

50. Ibid., 160.


53. Ibid., xiv; ll. 3083–86.

54. Ibid., xiv.


58. Ibid., 27.

59. For the most popular version of the Chronicles, see Chroniques de J. Froissart, ed. Siméon Luce (Paris: Renouard, 1872), 3:178–79. For a different version that exists in only one manuscript, see Chroniques: Début du livre 1. Éd. du manuscrit de Rome Reg. lat. 869, ed. George T. Diller (Geneva: Droz, 1972), 730.

60. Jean de Venette, Chronique Latine de Guillaume de Nangis de 1113 à 1300, avec les Continuations de cette Chronique de 1300 à 1368, ed. H. Géraud (Paris: Renouard, 1843), 1:xix–xxiii.

61. Ibid., 2:200–201.

62. Ibid., 203.

63. Kervyn de Lettenhove, ed., Istore et Chroniques de Flandres, vol. 2 (Brussels: Hayez, 1880), 44.


65. The separation of Jean’s blindness from his generosity saves the representations of the king from challenging the stereotype of the avaricious blind man that
we have seen in numerous French texts, though this is surely a historical accident rather than an intentional decision on the part of these writers.


69. Although Gilles’ nineteenth-century editors and some more recent scholars generally spell his name “li Muisis,” the spelling “le Muisit” appears more frequently in contemporary documents, including his poetry manuscripts; see G. Caullet, “Les manuscrits de Gilles le Muisit et l’art de la miniature au XIVe siècle. Le relieur tour-naisien Janvier,” Bulletin de Cercle historique et archéologique de Courtrai 5 (1907–8): 200–225. This is also the spelling used in the Library of Congress catalogue.


71. For a discussion of le Muisit’s skills as a chronicler, see Albert d’Haenens, “Gilles li Muisis Historien,” Revue Bénédictine 69 (1959), especially 266–67. If, as Bernard Guenée asserts, Gilles admired Jean so intensely that he wanted to be a “Benedictine avatar” of the king, the absence of Jean’s blindness from the chronicle becomes even more curious (Between Church and State: The Lives of Four French Prelates in the Late Middle Ages, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991], 77). Guenée’s chapter on Gilles currently provides the best overview of his life.

72. Chronique et Annales de Gilles le Muisit, xxii.


75. Ibid., 13.

76. The rambling, segmented nature of Lamentationes, which reaches 67 pages in the nineteenth-century edition, suggests either that Gilles created it intermittently over a considerable period of time, or that the monks who served as his literary executors, so to speak, collated disparate shorter works under a single title.

77. Poésies de Gilles li Muisis, 1:14, 65.

78. Ibid., 15.

79. Ibid., 65.


81. Gilles reiterates his friends’ doubts about the cataract operation in Li Cure Gillion le Mysiit, which is largely a description of how to achieve a pure spiritual state that will bring about God’s gift of good health. There he writes of his friends’ reaction, “Moult de gens à che temps le tienrent à folage / Qu’îl ot de chou souffrir et dou faire corage” (Poésies de Gilles li Muisis, 2:257) [Many people at that time thought it folly that he would suffer that and have the spirit].


85. Ibid., 2:232.

86. Ibid., 2:234.

87. Historian Albert d’Haenens also reads this line as a reference to the mass. See “Li Muisis, Gilles (1272–1353),” VOIR barré 20 (May 2000), 12, n. 28.


89. Ibid., 2:234.

90. See the discussions of Le Garçon et L’Aveugle, Le Mystère de la Résurrection, and La Farce de Goguelu in chapter 4.


92. “Dou boin vin le milleur moult liement tantoit”; “Se donnoit de tel vin qu’il avoit cler sans lie” (ibid., 259).

93. “Boins vins, boine viande, compagnies apaise” (ibid., 262).

94. Ibid., 262.

95. Ibid., 2:264.

96. Ibid., 265. Gilles gives a more honest, detail appraisal of his limited vision in the Annales: “Visum recuperavi et vidi, non sicut in etate juvenili, sed sicut etas mea requirebat, quia jam eram octogenarius, et videbam celum, solem, lunam, stellas, non perfecte cognoscens gentes, et in omnibus michi bene providemab, excepto quod scribere aut legere non valebam” (307) [I recovered my sight and I saw not as in my young age but as my age demanded, because I was already an octogenarian, and I saw the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars, though not perfectly recognizing people, and I saw everything at a distance from me very well, but I was not able to write or read].

97. “Neuerþelatter Rasis saith in speciall þat scharpe þinges forsoþe, as oynouns and garlik, mustarde and eruca (i. white piper) and lekes leden noyenge to the hede, and þay make þe eyen derke for a smeky hete þat þai haue, as Avenzoar saith. Ab-stynence forsothe helpeþ soche men, and namely at nyte, and sobrenesse in drynke and vse of fenel” (The Cyrurgie of Guy de Chauliac, 464). For the Latin original, which is identical in its advice, see Inventarium sive Chirurgia Magna, 342.

Although Gilles does not mention onions in the two stanzas quoted here, in the previous fully quoted stanza he places them among the noxious foods that he ate unguardedly before being struck by cataracts.


100. Ibid., 39.

101. Albert D’Haenens quotes several passages in which Gilles gives this reason for writing. See “Li Muisis, Gilles,” 13–14.


105. The Poems of John Audelay, ed. Ella Keats Whiting (London: Oxford University Press, Early English Text Society, 1931), 55.40–43. In Audelay scholarship, references to Audelay’s poetry are generally made by poem number in Whiting’s edition, followed by line numbers. I have employed that form.

106. The locations of the instances of self-naming are listed in The Poems of John Audelay, xv, n. 5.


108. Ibid., 15.27–32, 36.

109. Ibid., 12.64–66.

110. Ibid., 19.500–507. See also ll. 383–90 (where Christ rather than God chastises the poet; this is the penultimate stanza in the section), 15.201–8, and 16.358–65. In the passages analogous to the eight lines quoted here, Audelay changes the fourth through seventh lines to reflect the subject matter of the section that the stanza concludes, but the divine chastisement, self-naming, and the mention of blindness are identically positioned in all four examples.

111. James Simpson has discussed the paucity of scriptural translations in Audelay’s works, ostensibly in response to Archbishop Arundel’s anti-Lollard Constitutions of 1409, but in this instance, Audelay is not simply avoiding direct translation. He could have found a way to mention God’s love—in English—if he had believed it integral to the chastisement, or he could have quoted the Bible verse in Latin, as he does in section headings in “The Counsel of Conscience.” See “Saving Satire after Arundel’s Constitutions: John Audelay’s ‘Marcol and Solomon,’” 388, 396.

Audelay fully translates Apocalypse 3:19 in the third person elsewhere in The Counsel of Conscience (“Fore wom He louys He chastest wele”; 11.111); however, he puts the words in the voice of St. Anselm, and he does not mention his own blindness.

112. Ibid., 4.91–96.

113. Ibid., 2.952–53.
114. Ibid., 42.993.
115. Ibid., 18.378–81.
120. Jeremy J. Citrome, *The Surgeon in Medieval English Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 91. In his “Salutations to the Virgin Mary,” Audelay shows a knowledge of the medical advances made in optics when he praises her as “berel þe blynd to lyzt” (“beryl to light the blind”; 20.59). In the Middle Ages spectacles were made of either glass or the semiprecious stone beryl, and among other writers to recommend these materials was Guy de Chauliac. See Edward J. Rosen, “The Invention of Eyeglasses, Part II,” *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 11 (1956): 203.
122. See, for example, Chaucer’s *House of Fame*, l.1466, where Homer is named but not described as blind; *The Riverside Chaucer*, 365.

### Afterword

1. In *Vivre sans Voir: Les Aveugles dans la Société Française du Moyen Age au Siècle de Louis Braille*, Zina Weygand sketches the history of the Hospice des Quinze-Vingts within a larger framework which it serves as an indicator of slowly changing attitudes toward blind people. The evolution of royal patronage features prominently in the centuries before the Revolution. At the time of this writing, Weygand’s book has recently been translated into English under the title *The Blind in French Society from the Middle Ages to the Century of Louis Braille* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).
2. One example will have to suffice here: Valentin Haüy opened the first school for blind children in Paris in 1785 (Weygand, *Vivre sans Voir*, 120–21), and Edward Rushton opened the Royal School for the Blind in Liverpool in 1791 (Ishbel Ross, *Journey Into the Light: The Story of the Education of the Blind* [New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1950], 138).