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# Protestant Nuns as Depictions of Piety in Lutheran Funeral Sermons

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PROTESTANT NUNS AS DEPICTIONS OF PIETY IN LUTHERAN FUNERAL  
SERMONS

A Thesis  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Department of History  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

By  
Kathryn Dillinger

December 2011

PROTESTANT NUNS AS DEPICTIONS OF PIETY IN LUTHERAN FUNERAL  
SERMONS

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I dedicate this thesis to the *Stiftsdamen* at Kloster Lüne; “Wir sind Nonnen, aber ganz anders.” I also dedicate this thesis to female religious of past, present, and future; your personal stories of piety should be told.

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Protestant nuns, *Stiftsdamen*, fulfilled a unique role in early modern Lutheran society. This paper focuses on the implied social roles and expected virtues of Protestant nuns [*Stiftsdamen*] in the works of male Lutheran pastors who supported Protestant theological positions that promoted marriage as the proper place for women, and yet who also praised unmarried female monastics in funeral sermons [*Leichenpredigten*].

Lutheran pastors wrote funeral sermons for both *Stiftsdamen* and married women, funeral sermons display similarities or differences between what virtues, characteristics, and displays of piety for women. A comparison will also be made between funeral sermons for *Stiftsdamen* and those written for Catholic nuns by Catholic clergy. Convent necrologies, written by Catholic abbesses will also be used to compare what virtues were expected of female religious. Also included is an examination of nuns' writings about theology, their doctrinal reasons for remaining Catholic, leaving the cloister, and adapting their convent life to fit Lutheran teachings.

*Damenstiften* preserved access for women to positions of authority and self-empowerment. These women were, however, different from earlier female religious communities and from Catholic nuns living in other Lutheran areas. Protestant *Stiftsdamen* had more contact with outside society than cloistered Catholic nuns due to the desire of Lutherans to incorporate these women into their communities. An analysis

of the perception of *Stiftsdamen* by Lutheran pastors and the nuns' consciousness of their own position, duties, and piety is the cornerstone of this new research on gender and religion in early modern Germany. The perpetuation of Protestant convents into the seventeenth century is only briefly documented by historians who focus instead on the religious experience of women in Germany during and directly following the Reformation. Catholic examples of female piety will contribute to the understanding of female religious and their role in society at large. In conclusion, this research displays how *Stiftsdamen* were praised for the same virtues as early modern married Protestant women and Catholic nuns in funeral sermons, but were not specifically praised as female religious by male Lutheran pastors.

## Introduction

In 1647, at the parish of Osteroda, the Lutheran pastor Georg Trautmann exclaimed his reaction to Maria Sophia von Dannenberg's death: "Oh Pain! Oh bitter grief! From this ripening wretchedness."<sup>1</sup> Instead of dwelling on death or grief, Trautmann encouraged his congregation to emulate her life, lauding Dannenberg's charitable donations to church and school as securing the faith and education of the following generation, while also comparing her to natural images and virtuous female biblical and classical figures.<sup>2</sup> In doing so, Trautmann's printed sermon immortalized Dannenberg's pious life, exhibited the superiority of a Christian life over earthly riches, presented a model of preparation for a joyful death, and ensured the perpetuation of her righteous deeds by commemorating them to a broad listening and reading audience. Thirty-six years prior, Andreas Leopold delivered a funeral sermon for the Duchess Maria Sophia of Saxony. Drawing on Maria Sophia's life as a pious example, he emphasized the vanity of collecting worldly goods and the importance of remaining spiritually pure.<sup>3</sup> Leopold's public recitation of her spiritual qualities emphasized Maria Sophia's religious godliness and her role in relationship to her community through her monetary endowments of charity. In the two funeral sermons, pastors highlighted the virtues of loyalty, charity, devotion, and chaste living. Yet, the two women exemplified two categories: Maria Sophia von Dannenberg was a married Lutheran laywoman and Maria Sophia of Saxony was the abbess of the Lutheran convent [*Damenstift*] in Quedlinburg.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "O Pein! O bitter schmerz! Auss dieser Jammer-Reife." Georg Trautmann, *Bildniss, Der wahren Kirchen Gottes* (Osteroda: Sr. Aegidy, 1647), A2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> "O Zeit in dieser Welt! O Fresserin der Dinge! Du reissest alles umb auff deiner Renne-bahn." Trautmann, *Bildniss*, A2<sup>v</sup>, A3<sup>r</sup>, A4<sup>r</sup>, B1<sup>r</sup>, B2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> "Von dem Rock Lolliae/ welcher gar köstlich mit Perlen und Edelsteinen/...Aber für Gott gelten sie wenig." Andreas Leopold, *Christliche Leichpredigt gehalten* (Jena: Johan Weidnern, 1611), B3<sup>v</sup>, B4<sup>r</sup>, C4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> The women who served under Duchess Maria Sophia were evangelical nuns [*Stiftsdamen*].

The similarity in depictions of all Lutheran women is particularly striking in the analysis of depictions of evangelical nuns [*Stiftsdamen*] by Lutheran pastors in funeral sermons and shows that single monastic women had a greater position in Protestant society than previously perceived.<sup>5</sup> The uniformity in the funeral sermons of Lutheran pastors like Leonard and Trautmann, as well as the rhetorical consistency of these sermons with eulogies for Catholic women from the same period, suggests that all early modern women were expected to exhibit Christian piety, even when their practices were in contradiction to the theological dogmas that allowed the survival of female monasticism in Catholic and Lutheran Germany.

The comparison between the depiction of women in Lutheran funeral sermons and the depictions of virtuous nuns by Catholic abbesses—who composed necrologies for their fellow sisters—differentiates this study from previous research on female religious and gender roles. Previous studies have focused on the Catholic female resistance to the Reformation in the south. This study uncovers a unique dynamic in female monasticism that did not exist elsewhere in Europe, changing our understanding of the Reformation’s impact on gender ideologies and roles for women like the *Stiftsdamen* in seventeenth-century Germany. Joan Kelly asked the question: “Did Women Have a Renaissance?” other scholars have pondered, “Did Women have a Reformation?”<sup>6</sup>

Lutheran pastors used the lives of both *Stiftsdamen* and married women as models of piety in funeral sermons, admonishing their audiences to follow the examples they set

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<sup>5</sup> Jill Bepler, “Women in German Funeral Sermons: Models of Virtue or Slice of Life?” *German Life and Letters* 44, no. 5 (1991): 394. Here Bepler discusses the depiction of married women as pious Christian examples and their roles within the family. Her study does not delve into the comparison between those written for *Stiftsdamen* and those for married women.

<sup>6</sup> Joan Kelly, “Did Women Have a Renaissance?” in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, eds. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston, 1977), 137-164; Marshall, *Women in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe*, 26.

forth of Christian faith.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the lives of *Stiftsdamen* as depicted publicly in funeral sermons rebut prior scholarly findings that women were not involved in the implementation of Lutheran theology in seventeenth-century Europe. Through funeral sermons, *Stiftsdamen*, entered the public arena of Lutheran society. Their depictions of piety by male pastors gives evidence for the presence of accepted single women in Lutheran society, a position not endorsed by Lutheran theological beliefs or the propaganda of Lutheran pastors through sermons and pamphlets that preached the necessity of marriage for women.

The apparent deviation of *Stiftsdamen* from Lutheran expectations of women becomes evident not only when one observes how Lutheran pastors wrote about them in funeral sermons, but also in Lutheran women's writings about their determination to remain in separate religious communities.<sup>8</sup> However, records written by Protestant women about other women, particularly about *Stiftsdamen*, are rare. Unlike Catholic abbesses, Lutheran women did not participate in writing eulogies. Catholic *memorias* and necrologies, usually one to two pages in length, composed by nuns and priests, were bound into lengthy pamphlets and recorded factual information about nuns who had died. Necrologies, though different from Lutheran funeral sermons, treat women's commemorations with similar language especially in relation to the consolation of their audiences.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For a detailed analysis on the depiction of married women in funeral sermons; Jill Bepler, "Practicing Piety: Representations of Women's Dying in German Funeral Sermons of the Early Modern Period," in *Women's Representations of Death in German Culture Since 1500*, eds. Clare Bielby and Anna Richards (New York: Camden House, 2010), 12-30.

<sup>8</sup> Merry Wiesner-Hanks, ed., *Convents Confront the Reformation: Catholic and Protestant Nuns in Germany*, translated by Merry Wiesner-Hanks and Joan Skocir (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Most works on religious women and gender focus on the analysis of necrologies for Catholic convents throughout Europe, See, for example, Andreas Rutz, "Bildungsanspruch und Unterrichtspraxis Religiöser

The familial roles of women in European society changed with the Protestant and Catholic Reformations and influenced how single women were able to express themselves in relation to their prescribed roles.<sup>10</sup> Lutheran theology heralded marriage as the “Blessed Sacrament,” replacing the revered position of monasticism present in the Catholic tradition.<sup>11</sup> Lutheran beliefs emphasized the role of women in the household as caregiver and keeper of the hearth. Luther’s writings against monasticism resulted in the disbanding of many male and female monastic houses during this time. This position created one mainstream option for women that provided little opportunity to live outside the patriarchal structure of the household.

Yet, there were factors outside of this theological framework that created the option for the maintenance of female monastic houses. For the laity, the marriage of sons and daughters provided worthwhile alliances that benefited both pocketbook and societal status, but dowries for the marriage of daughters strained the resources of less affluent families and many influential families, especially the elite and nobility, pressured religious leaders to allow monastic houses for women to remain open.<sup>12</sup>

The emerging family values and marriage patterns can be found in funeral sermons along with the lay-reception and implementation of Lutheran social theology. Funeral sermons displayed the religious and familial virtues expected of women and how these were to be fostered by their education.<sup>13</sup> Most Lutheran pastors did not overtly praise the

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Frauengemeinschaften im Frühenzeitlichen Rheinland am Beispiel der Bonner Congregation de Notre-Dame,” in *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 67 (2003): 212-63.

<sup>10</sup> Sherrin Marshall, ed., *Women in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe, Public and Private Worlds* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 26.

<sup>11</sup> C. Scott Dixon, *The Reformation in Germany* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 172-173.

<sup>12</sup> Judith J. Hurwich, *Noble Strategies: Marriage and Sexuality in the Zimmern Chronicle*, *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies* 75 (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2006), 27.

<sup>13</sup> Eileen Dugan, “The Funeral Sermon as a Key to Familial Values in Early Modern Nördlingen,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 20, no. 4 (1989): 631-644.

monastic aspect of *Stiftsdamen*'s lives, but frequently mentioned their skills, knowledge, and strength of their Christian faith.<sup>14</sup> The poetic presentation in sermons encouraged audiences to participate in commemoration and imitation of these women's lives. Although funeral sermons depict the lives and virtues of these women from their male spiritual director's perspectives, they provide a place for the exploration of single women's position in society during this religious transition in Germany.

Some funeral sermons praised women for their leadership roles, political and economic duties in their husbands' absence and intellectual abilities and used using language usually reserved for the description of men, which suggests that there were possible exceptions to gender norms.<sup>15</sup> Lutheran pastors who ostensibly condemned monastic life and advocated marriage as the proper realm for women also praised unmarried female monastics in funeral sermons.

Lutheran theologians expected women to fulfill their spiritual and societal roles through marriage, childrearing, and economic functions within the home. Although family life was advocated as the sole occupation for women, Lutheran pastors nonetheless praised *Stiftsdamen* in funeral sermons for their religious piety and holiness outside of the household structure. Rather than raising children or running households, *Stiftsdamen* devoted their time to charitable causes in their parishes; running schools, orphanages, and providing services for the poor. These activities of celibate, cenobitic Lutheran women were undertaken despite the Lutheran theological discrediting of monastic life, and point to a measure of choice for women who desired to remain single, and their families who supported these monastic houses for their dynastic policies.

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<sup>14</sup> This is discussed in Merry Wiesner, "Nuns, Wives, and Mothers: Women and the Reformation in Germany," in Marshall, *Women in Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe*, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Bepler, "German Funeral Sermons," 399-400.

Ultimately, both pastors and the laity in the duchies of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Braunschweig-Lüneberg, and Electoral Saxony supported the proliferation and preservation of *Damenstifte* or religious houses for *Stiftsdamen*. Though the Reformation universally altered ideas, religious beliefs, and practices, both Catholic and Protestant leaders expected their female religious to maintain chaste, faithful lives while also remaining connected to communities inside and outside the convent. Despite Martin Luther's call for an end to female monasticism and his writings against monastic life, a new form of devotional community emerged for single women in northern Germany: the *Damenstift*. Although *Stiftsdamen* were not included in the Lutheran theological social framework, their very existence created a place for single religious women in Protestant society. *Stiftsdamen*, expressed their piety even under the constraints of Lutheran theological practices and beliefs about women and religion, therefore practicing their own ideal of female religious in Lutheran society.

## Lutheran Expectations of Piety

During the early Reformation, evangelical theologians and pastors printed pamphlets and gave sermons instructing their parishioners to reject the tradition of monasticism. This included the closure of both male and female monastic houses. The concern for women forced to live in cloisters by their families became the focus of evangelical rhetoric. For these authors, the cloister became a symbol of spiritual and physical captivity that jeopardized salvation, whereas marriage became the pinnacle of Christian freedom in service to God. In 1523, Martin Luther responded to families concerned about the well being of their cloistered female relatives with his publication of *Why Nuns May Leave Cloisters with God's Blessing*. In this work, Luther urged marriage over monasticism for all women, arguing that the convent was not scripturally justified and that God created women for married life and motherhood, a position that he advocated for all women.<sup>16</sup> Women had various reactions to these assertions on monasticism, piety, and marriage ranging from full agreement to complete rejection of Luther's teachings. Perhaps the most complex responses were from *Stiftsdamen* who continued to maintain lives devoted to monastic principles under the auspices of Lutheran doctrines.

Historians have argued that Catholic nuns fought changes during the Reformation more ardently than their male monastic counterparts because of the limited options for women outside of the convent.<sup>17</sup> Analyses about gender expectations of nuns found in

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<sup>16</sup> Steven E. Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 30.

<sup>17</sup> Wiesner, "Nuns, Wives, and Mothers," 10; Ulrike Strasser *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 83; Amy Leonard, *Nails in the Wall: Catholic Nuns in Reformation Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 216-221; Merry E. Wiesner, "Gender and Power in Early Modern Europe: The Empire Strikes Back," in *The Graph of Sex and the German Text: Gendered Culture in Early Modern Germany 1500-1700*, ed. Lynne Tatlock (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 207-208.

scholarly writings on convents in southern Catholic urban regions have not addressed the complex reaction of *Stiftsdamen* to the closure of convents or regional adaptations to Lutheran religious beliefs.<sup>18</sup> These religious communities of women, which existed outside of the mandated Lutheran gender roles, deserve further study in order to give single women in early modern society a more complete voice. Yet, historians have currently remained silent about the gender and religious significance that the presence of these *Damenstifte* in Northern Germany represent for single women in early modern Lutheran society.

For Lutherans, the closure of male and female monastic houses changed the expression of religious piety and gender roles. In response to questions about the position of celibate monks and nuns, Luther wrote, “it is holy and precious when a man and a woman live peacefully with each other in marriage, even if God does not grant them children or if the woman has some other sort of infirmity.”<sup>19</sup> Luther instructed his students and parishioners that marriage took precedence over celibacy, thus elevating Christian households over monasteries. Male monastics became pastors and leaders of their individual families. Women became guardians of family and hearth, adopting a family centered cloister, replacing the option of professing their faith within a convent.

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<sup>18</sup> Lynne Tatlock, ed., *The Graph of Sex and The German Text: Gendered Culture in Early Modern Germany 1500-1700* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994); Merry E. Wiesner, “Beyond Women and the Family: Towards a Gender Analysis of the Reformation,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18, no. 3 (Autumn 1987): 311-321; Merry Wiesner, *Gender, Church, and State in Early Modern Germany* (New York: Longman, 1998); Merry Wiesner, “Studies of Women, The Family, and Gender,” *Reformation Europe: A Guide to Research II* (St. Louis: Center for Reformation Research, 1992), 159-187; Bernard Theil, “Das Damenstift Buchau am Dedersee zwischen Kirche und Reich im 17. Und 18. Jahrhundert,” *Blätter für Deutsche Landesgeschichte*, 125, (1989): 189-210; Silvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life, 1450-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Ute Braun, “Frauentestamente: Stiftsdamen, Fürstinnen-Äbtissinen und ihre Schwestern in Selbstzeugnissen des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts,” in *Essener Beiträge* 104 (1992): 11-99.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Luther, “WA TR VI, no. 6941,” in *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook*, eds. Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 170.

This introduced a distinct dichotomy in religion and society with a lay priesthood including those to care for the church (male) and the home (female).

Luther set forth what would become the standard Lutheran interpretation of women's roles and demonstration of religious piety. He taught that a wife "should be subordinate and obedient to her husband and not undertake or do anything without his consent."<sup>20</sup> Luther determined that women were spiritually inferior to men based upon the biblical temptation of Eve, the fall of man, and the subsequent subjugation of Eve to Adam.<sup>21</sup> He argued that women were easily distracted from virtue by temptation and that the ideal environment for women was under the leadership of a husband. For Luther, women could not live piously or in accordance to the Lutheran responsibilities of mothers to their families outside of marriage. This limited women's options of displaying their spirituality within the bounds of marriage, although women found ways to create their own avenues of pious living.

Luther supported his convictions about women and marriage by quoting examples of biblical women in their role as pious mothers.<sup>22</sup> He taught that proper female expressions of piety should occur within the bounds of marriage just as the Virgin Mary, as the earthly mother of Christ, was under the leadership of Joseph, her husband.<sup>23</sup> Luther depicted the life of the Virgin Mary as one centered in "faith, obedience, and humility." He described appropriate female behavior as being submissive to God through the instruction of male authorities. Luther utilized the Old Testament women Ester, Judith,

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<sup>20</sup> Luther, "A Sermon on Marriage, 15 January 1525," in Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther*, 95.

<sup>21</sup> Luther, "Sermons on Genesis," in Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther*, 23.

<sup>22</sup> Luther, "Sermons on Genesis, chapter one, 1527," in Karant-Nunn and Wiesner, *Luther*, 95-96 and Luther, "WA TR II, no. 2764a, also 2764b," in Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther*, 183.

<sup>23</sup> Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther*, 33; Luther, "Lectures on Genesis, 1544," in Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther*, 50-51.

Susanna, and Sarah as examples of virtuous behavior for Christian women.<sup>24</sup> He established a rubric for devout female behavior, based upon the framework of faithful wife and mother. Women articulated a different perspective from Lutheran men on their roles and responsibilities to God.

Women also incorporated biblical women in their writings, but used them to display piety in ways that differed from Luther and Lutheran theologians. Women validated their religious and personal identities through biblical examples and utilized religious writings as an excepted outlet for their expressions of internal piety. Abbess Anna Sophia von Quedlinburg of the Protestant *Damenstift* in Quedlinburg presented the pious examples of Eve, Debora, Hanna, Judith, and the Virgin Mary for other women to emulate.<sup>25</sup> She used these examples of piety from the scriptures to display the personal female expression of religious devotion, not as depictions of holy mothers and wives. Former Catholic nun, Ursula von Münsterberg set forth the Virgin Mary as a model for women not as the mother of Christ, but because Elizabeth praised her in the scriptures as holy and blessed.<sup>26</sup> Though Ursula von Münsterberg left the convent, she agreed with other women that biblical examples, even those that were theologically contentious, like the Virgin Mary, were models of female virtue. Some women even adopted the rhetoric of Lutheran pastors in their pamphlets by speaking with authority and used examples other than the traditional female examples of piety to encourage others to virtuous behavior.

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<sup>24</sup> Athalya Brenner, ed., *A Feminist Companion to Esther, Judith and Susanna* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); Margarita Stocker, *Judith, Sexual Warrior: Women and Power in Western Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); Paula Sommers, "Gendered Readings of *The Book of Judith*: Guillaume du Bartas and Gabrielle de Coignard," *Romance Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (2001): 211-220; Karant-Nunn and Wiesner, *Luther*, 60.

<sup>25</sup> Anna Sophia von Quedlinburg, "The True Soulfriend Jesus Christ with Emblems to Contemplate," in Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents*, 71.

<sup>26</sup> Ursula von Münsterberg, "'The Enlightened and Highborn Lady Ursula, Countess of Münsterberg, etc., Duchess of Glatz, etc., [gives] Christian Reasons for Abandoning the Convent of Freiberg,'" in Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents*, 53.

Katharina Schütz Zell exhorted other women to “take on you the manly, Abraham-like courage while you too are in distress.”<sup>27</sup> The use of biblical and historical male and female examples played an important role to the formation of Christian perspectives on women and their expected behavior.

Devotional literature was used in conjunction with familial instruction by Lutherans to teach girls how to behave virtuously, in order to join Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Anna, and Elizabeth in Paradise.<sup>28</sup> Adult women had a similar repository of books approved by Lutheran pastors. In funeral sermons women were commended for reading the Bible, devotional literature, and catechisms or prayer books.<sup>29</sup> Lutherans established a specific repertoire for their daughters that included catechisms, the Bible, funeral sermons and “the Maiden’s Mirror” [*Jungfrauenspiegel*].<sup>30</sup> Catholic writers produced literature similar, usually the lives of female saints, to the “the Maiden’s Mirror” that were also used for female edification and provided Christian female examples for their emulation.<sup>31</sup> Both Catholic and Lutheran pastors used examples of faithful Christian women to encourage not only women, but also all their parishioners towards spirituality.

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<sup>27</sup> Katharina Schütz Zell, “Letter to the Suffering Women of the Community of Kentzingen,” in Elsie McKee, ed. and trans., *Church Mother: The Writings of a Protestant Reformer in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006): 51.

<sup>28</sup> “Das wirt/ lieben töchter/ ein schön und herrliche mutter sein/ wenn sie mit Sara/ Rebecca/ Rachel/ Anna/ Elisabeth/...im ewigen Paradeiß wird in das grüne gehen.” Johann Mathesius, *Leichenpredigten* (Nürnberg 1561). Mathesius published a series of works in which he encourages his own daughters to imitate biblical heroines.

<sup>29</sup> Cornelia Niekus Moore, “The Quest for Consolation and Amusement: Reading Habits of German Women in the Seventeenth Century,” in *The Graph of Sex and The German Text: Gendered Culture in Early Modern Germany 1500-1700*, edited by Lynne Tatlock (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994): 251. Moore gives an expanded study of what women and daughters read during this period.

<sup>30</sup> Cornelia Niekus Moore, *The Maiden’s Mirror*, 91-96. “The Maiden’s Mirror” was a collection of Biblical heroines and virginal saints lives that imparted the importance of purity and piety of young women.

<sup>31</sup> Johannes Landspergius, *Daß Leben und Offenbarungen der Heiligen Jungfrawen Gertrudis* (Cölln, 1657). Landspergius dedicated this publication about the life of Saint Gertrude to a group of 15 Benedictine nuns at the Helvede Cloister in Eisleben.

In addition to depictions of biblical examples, female writers used general definitions of religious responsibilities to display their perceptions of piety and holiness. Abbess Anna Sophia von Quedlinburg defined the responsibility of nuns to “honor Jesus, care for the Word of God, and respect the sacrifice of Christ’s blood by daily sacrificing oneself to God’s sight.”<sup>32</sup> She did not mention the importance for women to remain subservience to male civil authorities or loyal to religious leaders. Anna Sophia von Quedlinburg bypassed the expected gender roles of *Stiftsdamen* by Lutheran males by strictly expressing female service to God and scriptures, without reference to marriage, family, or a male hierarchy. Depictions of piety and virtue used by female writers expressed a focus on personal religious devotion, not communal spirituality through marriage or family.

Luther’s commentary on women and their position in both church and society relating to marriage developed further in the depiction of *Stiftsdamen* in funeral sermons written by later Lutheran pastors. Luther established the rhetoric for depictions of women in funeral sermons through his earlier examples of virtuous women from the Old Testament as well as the Virgin Mary to denote a focus on family and marriage for females. Lutheran pastors used biblical female figures to reinforce their conceptualizations of marriage and gender, yet they also praised *Stiftsdamen* similarly to married women. Funeral sermons depicted both married and single women as chaste, prudent, spiritually pious, and devout. For Lutheran pastors and theologians, funeral sermons did not entirely reinforce the concept that marriage was the appropriate environment for women to express and live out these virtues.

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<sup>32</sup> Von Quedlinburg, “The True Soulfriend Jesus Christ,” in Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents*, 77, 79.

The Reformation changed the way women expressed their religious beliefs and their position in both society and the church. This is evidenced in the things women wrote about their perspectives, religious institutions, and their role within society. During and beyond the Reformation, women who remained Catholic nuns, those who left the convent entirely, and those who remained celibate but adopted Lutheran doctrines, clearly communicate their convictions about their place in society and religion.

Some Catholic nuns, such as Katherine Rem, Caritas Pirckheimer, Jean de Jussie, and Clara Hortulana argued to stay within convent walls.<sup>33</sup> Ursula von Münsterberg decided to disavow her Catholic profession and leave the cloistered life in Freiberg. Martha Elisabeth Zitter became an Evangelical laywoman after she left her Ursuline convent. Katharina Schütz Zell married the former Catholic priest and Lutheran pastor Matthew Zell in Strasbourg after professing her own Lutheran beliefs. *Stiftsdame* and abbess Anna Sophia von Quedlinburg, refused to give up her monastic position and stayed within her convent, adapting her beliefs to Protestant theology. She used her outside connections by writing to her family to encourage them of the value in virginal servitude to Christ for women. These writers broke the model of silent piety and expressed things beyond societies expected education for women.

Nuns argued that they could only achieve a proper pious education behind convent walls. Pirckheimer, the abbess of St. Clara, emphasized that religious guidance along with a grounded moral education received by women in the sanctuary of the cloister, was

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<sup>33</sup> Caritas Pirckheimer, *A Journal of the Reformation Years, 1524-1528*, trans. Paul A. MacKenzie (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006); Carrie F. Klaus, ed. and trans., *Jeanne de Jussie: The Short Chronicle; A Poor Clare's Account of the Reformation of Geneva* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006); Ulrike Strasser, "Clara Hortulana of Embach or How to Suffer Martyrdom in the Cloister" in *Female Monasticism in Early Modern Europe: An Interdisciplinary View*, ed. Cordula Van Wyhe (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

something unique to convent life. She argued that the pious education achieved within justified its maintenance. A classical education for women was more accessible behind convent walls than within society, since nuns were required to learn Latin in order to conduct the Divine Office.

Lutheran women wrote of their education outside the convent, particularly by Lutheran pastors and their emphasis on scriptural knowledge. In a letter written in defense of her fervor for religious truth against the accusations of a preacher from a neighboring town, Lutheran wife Zell emphasized her own spiritual worth and the knowledge gained from personal experience under the leadership of Lutheran leaders and theologians.<sup>34</sup> Ursula von Münsterberg, a former Catholic nun, no doubt encountered Lutheran ministers who taught the importance of adhering to *Sola Scriptura* and who encouraged abandoning the legalism of the Catholic Church. Ursula von Münsterberg argued that obedience to the “Word of God” and not to institutions established by men facilitated her flight from the cloister in Freiberg in 1528.<sup>35</sup> The amount of theological knowledge and arguments against the Catholic faith that Zitter possessed are incredible considering she was within a convent.<sup>36</sup> She too must have had access to reformation preaching, perhaps as in other cases, pastors entered the cloister and spoke with the nuns. Access to education remained an important element of female devotion for women of all religious confessions.

During the early modern period, Catholic nuns fought against outside authorities and dealt with internal conflicts, some on a personal level with family, friends, and

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<sup>34</sup> Zell, “A Letter to the Whole Citizenship,” in *Church Mother*, 228.

<sup>35</sup> Ursula von Münsterberg, “The Enlightened and Highborn Lady Ursula,” *Convents*, 41.

<sup>36</sup> Leonard, *Nails in the Wall*, Chapter 3. Leonard discusses the involvement of local councils, evangelists, and families in bringing information to women inside convents in order to encourage their removal from the cloister.

spiritual leaders. Jussie frequently emphasized the importance of a safe haven for women in the form of a convent, most especially against the growing exterior threat of the Reformation.<sup>37</sup> Pirckheimer did not believe in the security of a life outside of the cloister or the theological arguments of Protestant preachers and townsmen. Families threatened to remove their female relatives from the convent and enter the cloister by force. Incredibly, even under familial pressure, only one of the nuns left Jussie's convent and returned to her family, the rest remained by their own will.<sup>38</sup> A year after Rem published her letter in 1524, Pirckheimer writes, "some wanted to remove their children, sisters, aunts from the cloister by force, and with many threats and also with many promises of which, without doubt, they could hardly keep."<sup>39</sup> Catholic nuns were zealous to retain their place within the structure of the cloister and practice as their female ancestors had without deterrence from changing political and social positions outside the convent walls.

These nuns rejected Protestant reforms against monasticism and argued that the propositions to leave their religious lives within the convent jeopardized their salvation. Catholic nuns were not always successful in convincing local Protestant authorities to allow them to remain enclosed. Jeanne de Jussie chronicled the struggle between her convent's desire to remain enclosed within the town of Geneva and the newly Protestant secular officials. Tensions escalated and the officials forced Jussie and her fellow nuns to flee to a neighboring town under the protection of the Duke of Savoy in 1535.<sup>40</sup> Jussie and her sisters relied on the help of a Catholic secular authority to assist them in

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<sup>37</sup> Jussie, *Chronicle*, 23.

<sup>38</sup> Jussie, *Chronicle*, 144, 150.

<sup>39</sup> Pirckheimer, *A Journal of the Reformation Years*, 12.

<sup>40</sup> Jussie, *Chronicle*, 90.

maintaining their vision of female spirituality.<sup>41</sup> Through the support of powerful outsiders, some nuns were able to remain enclosed despite the surrounding religious reforms against monasticism.

These women used their education to write pamphlets and letters in defense of their religious beliefs. In most cases, nuns attempted to convince their powerful family members outside convent walls that they made decisions with religious fervor and sincerity. Pirckheimer fought against her local city council's demands for religious reforms to abolish convents.<sup>42</sup> Through a volley of letters published between Rem and her brother Bernhart Rem, a local administrator, she confirmed her ability to make religious decisions based on her own understanding of religious obligations. Pirckheimer directed her petitions on behalf of her cloistered sisters to the city council of Nuremberg, who attempted to replace their Franciscan confessors with Lutheran preachers.<sup>43</sup> Jussie used her authority as abbess, to encourage her convent sisters not to return to their families or to succumb to the teachings of the protestant preachers who entered the convent with secular city officials.<sup>44</sup> Pirckheimer continued to fight the local authorities through letters to her brother-in-law Martin Geuder, a councilman, petitioning city officials to allow her convent to remain untouched.<sup>45</sup> Through their letters to powerful male relatives, nuns demanded a space in which to live without the injunction of secular male authorities and religious prescriptions for change.

Catholic female monastics held onto their religious devotion and argued for the right to express themselves within their own framework and conditions. Women used not

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<sup>41</sup> Jussie, *Chronicle*, 175-176.

<sup>42</sup> Pirckheimer, *A Journal of the Reformation Years*, 1, 3. She was abbess from 1503-1532.

<sup>43</sup> Pirckheimer, *A Journal of the Reformation Years*, 8.

<sup>44</sup> Jussie, *Chronicle*, 124.

<sup>45</sup> Pirckheimer, *A Journal of the Reformation Years*, 13-18.

only their spirituality to argue for a place in the convent, but also scriptural passages to justify their profession as nuns. In 1523, Rem argued with specific biblical passages to reinforce her argument that only God could judge her spiritual decisions to remain enclosed.<sup>46</sup> Ex-nun Ursula von Münsterberg also quoted scriptures that emphasized her spiritual security through her commitment to Jesus Christ as the proper authority, not councilmen or religious leaders.<sup>47</sup> Rem along with her fellow nuns believed it was blasphemy to renounce their vows and that to leave the convent would be an act of sin.<sup>48</sup> Rem and her young niece, also a nun, wrote that evangelical preachers were the false prophets of New Testament gospel warnings.<sup>49</sup> These women argued intelligently and with assertive authority against the local opposing magistrates and councilmen to retain a space outside of the household.

By contrast, Protestant women, who were former nuns, argued that the cloister did not provide a sanctuary for women, but that it harbored abuse and misuse of power. Zitter, a former Ursuline nun, accused the nuns in the convent in Erfurt of blatant coercion to get novices to profess.<sup>50</sup> She wrote that she joined the convent against her own better judgment and through the influence of the convent superiors because of her tender age.<sup>51</sup> Von Münsterberg, a former nun, described how outsiders were afraid to approach her to ask for charity and spiritual advice and were threatened with punishment

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<sup>46</sup> Katherine Rem, "The Answer of Two Nuns in the Katherine Convent of Augsburg to Bernhart Rem and Afterwards His Answer to This," in *Convents*, ed. Wiesner-Hanks, 29. (Isaiah 33 and Job 8).

<sup>47</sup> Von Münsterberg, *Convents*, 43, 53. (John 3:16, 6:51, 14:6; Psalms 119:92, Acts 13:26; Matthew 22:37).

<sup>48</sup> Rem, "The Answer of Two Nuns," in *Convents*, 31.

<sup>49</sup> Rem, "The Answer of Two Nuns," in *Convents*, 29.

<sup>50</sup> Martha Elisabeth Zitter, "Basic Reasons Which Have Induced the Maiden Martha Elisabeth Zitter to Leave the French or White-Ladies Convent of the Ursuline Order in Erfurt and to Profess the True Evangelical Religion," in Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents*, 83.

<sup>51</sup> Zitter, "Basic Reasons," in Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents*, 85.

if caught speaking with her due to the strict enclosure regulations of the cloister.<sup>52</sup> The depiction of cloisters by women leaving them displays a negative spiritual environment. Yet, the desire of female religious to express their religious devotion in the forum they choose is universal to the writings of women remaining or leaving the convent.

These now Protestant, but former Catholic nuns, also wrote about their desire to determine how to express their spirituality. Zitter argued, “There is no worthy example in Holy Scripture or the first pure Christian churches, where such convent vows as they are now performed were sworn or upheld.”<sup>53</sup> Ursula von Münsterberg sought to convince her family that she could not remain in the life she had previously chosen because, “here [in the convent] we bind ourselves to obedience, but to people rather than God, and henceforth obey not God but people.”<sup>54</sup> *Stiftsdamen* also expressed a desire to remain separated from society in monastic environments.<sup>55</sup> Abbess Anna Sophia von Quedlinburg wrote to her parents to receive their permission to construct a pamphlet to explain, “What every Christian, but especially women, constantly needs to observe and perform.”<sup>56</sup> She acknowledged the “weakness” of the female sex but while doing so she still supported women’s ability to worship God without restraint because women have souls the same as men.

Such argumentation extended to married Lutheran women as well. In a pamphlet, Zell defends the scriptural approval of clerical marriage, justifying her right to be married and as equally capable of evangelizing the true “Gospel” of Christianity as a pastor’s

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<sup>52</sup> Ursula of Münsterberg, “Christian Reasons,” in Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents*, 59.

<sup>53</sup> Zitter, “Basic Reasons,” in Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents*, 89, 91.

<sup>54</sup> Ursula of Münsterberg, “Christian Reasons,” in Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents*, 49.

<sup>55</sup> Von Quedlinburg, in Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents*, 69.

<sup>56</sup> Von Quedlinburg, in Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents*, 75.

wife.<sup>57</sup> Von Münsterberg elevated her own ability to choose for herself what service to God meant over her family's decision to place her in a convent by leaving to become a devotee outside the cloister. These women expressed their faith by writing about their beliefs about life inside and outside the convent.

Women within convent walls wanted to maintain the positions that provided them with the ability to express their opinions and authority. *Stiftsdame* abbess and regent Anna Sophia von Quedlinburg diverged from the other female writers of this time through her arguments for both Catholic and Lutheran practices in order to preserve her religious and secular positions in Quedlinburg, both expressions of power and privilege. Abbess Anna Sophia's writings reflect a different perspective on women's roles in religion and an adapted practice of monasticism for women who desired to remain enclosed but also accepted Lutheran theological beliefs. She described herself as a bride of Christ and used imagery from the Song of Solomon to argue that individual women, just like the church, could be brides of Christ, confirming that a monastic life was not against biblical teachings.<sup>58</sup> Zell calls herself a "church mother," noting her intense loyalty to the Christian faith from her youth and in her own words, validating her authority as a female writer of proper Lutheran practices.<sup>59</sup> *Stiftsdamen* expressed their spirituality to God by remaining in the convent while also adapting to Lutheran liturgies and beliefs.

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<sup>57</sup> Zell, "Katharina Schütz's Apologia for Master Matthew Zell, Her Husband, Who is a Pastor and Servant of the Word of God in Strasbourg, Because of the Great Lies Invented about Him," in *Church Mother*, 72-73.

<sup>58</sup> Anna Sophia, in Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents*, 71.

<sup>59</sup> Zell, "A Letter to the Whole Citizenship of the City of Strasbourg from Katharina Zell, Widow of the (Now Blessed) Matthew Zell, the Former and First Preacher of the Gospel in This City," in *Church Mother*, 226.

Themes within women's writings center on the importance of scriptural support for religious decisions they made in their own expressions of faith. Monastic women's decisions to remain in or leave religious communities point to an understanding by women of biblical authority for personal justification and include their own interpretations of religious duties. For Protestants, the Gospels became the highest authority of Christianity and the interpretation of those scriptures focused on a personal expression of faith, for Catholics, authority remained in the hands of religious leaders and councils. Yet, women rejected both religious models because they chose to remain in or leave convents, or like *Stiftsdamen*, to combine aspects of both. By writing, women asserted themselves over both familial and religious authorities in order to assert their interpretations of piety across religious expanses. These women were proactive in defining a place for themselves, yet for many of them, priests and pastors had the ultimate decision about the depiction of their lives in funeral sermons. Lutheran pastors, in accordance to their theological standards for proper female behavior, shaped women's image after death, and represented them as obedient women.

## Funeral Depictions of Piety

Lutheran funeral sermons praised women for their acts of piety, devotion to God and Lutheran beliefs, even when their behavior deviated from Luther's instructions for female social and religious conduct. Though, during the seventeenth century, Lutheran theologians argued that female duties in church and society revolved around their position as wives.<sup>60</sup> Yet, Lutheran pastors praised the lives of the *Stiftsdamen* in funeral sermons that emphasized the importance of holiness in monastic orders. Funeral sermons were not considered strict biographies of those commemorated, but as models of Christian devotion meant for emulation. Lutheran pastors and authors used married women, nuns, and *Stiftsdamen* as models of virtue and examples of chastity, piety, and obedience in their sermons. Eulogies published by Catholic nuns that commemorated their sisters show similar representations of ideal female behavior.<sup>61</sup> Funeral sermons displayed how women were eulogized as models of Christians who adhered to religious expectations for female pious behavior that also transcended conventional identities.

Funeral sermons displayed what sixteenth-century religious leaders and the laity expected of their wives, daughters, and the religious females of their communities. Lutheran pastors utilized scriptural references to celibate, married, and holy women to bolster their audience's assurance that the reposed *Stiftsdamen* had attained salvation through their faith and devotion to God. Leopold praised Countess Maria for her expression of religious spirituality and her confession of sins so that she entered death as

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<sup>60</sup> Marshall, *Women in Reformation*, 26.

<sup>61</sup> Ignatius Trauner, *Unvermeidliche Zeit-Verwechslung* (Augsburg, 1695); Dominicus Renner, *Klag-seufftzendes Ach!* (Munich, 1686).

a pious woman devoted to God.<sup>62</sup> Lucia Appel, the Lutheran abbess of the cloister at Ebsdorf, was praised for her spiritual steadfastness and the ease of her repose due to her constant Christian devotion.<sup>63</sup> The emphasis of similar virtues and use of scriptures to praise these women points to an overarching gender conception about the proper behavior for women in early modern Europe. These women were expected to fulfill their religious occupations and live morally pure lives. Women were also expected to receive a spiritual education that focused on piety that ensured their ultimate salvation. Catholic nuns were also expected to display fortitude in faith and in service to God. Lutheran funeral sermons and Catholic necrologies revealed the importance of image at death and display details about female religious devotion than what is known about many early modern European women.

Lutheran funeral sermons presented the religious virtues and personal piety of the deceased and promoted an ideal example of social conformity in the rewards of Christian living. Pastors did not use funeral sermons as a forum to reprimand individuals for their spiritual weaknesses. Instead, authors praised individuals for their acts of virtue and display of Christian ideals as an example for lay emulation. Funeral sermons followed a rubric for praise and comfort established by Luther and other early Lutheran pastors.

Martin Luther's early *Sermon von der Bereytung zum Sterben* (1519) was influential in emphasizing a preacher's use of the scriptures to comfort [*trost*] their mourning

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<sup>62</sup> "Wollen wir von der weiland unser gnädigen Fürstin und Frawen hoher Fürstlicher Ankunfft/ J.F.S. Christlichem Leben und Seligem Abschiedt kurzen einfeltigen und warhafftigen Bericht thun." Leopold, *Christliche Leichpredigt gehalten*, A4<sup>r</sup>; "Aber sie haben solche ire schwere Sünde bald berewet/ ihrem lieben Gott demütig gebeichtet/ und ihm dieselbige in rechtem Glauben umb des zukünstigen Messiae willen abgeben." Leopold, *Christliche Leichpredigt gehalten*, B1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> "Da sie der liebe Gott zwischen 9. Und 10. des Morgens/ sanft und seelig hat einsclaffen lassen." Broitzen, *Christliche Predigt*, D3<sup>r</sup>. In 1529, Ernst, the confessor of the Kloster Ebsdorf, converted it into an evangelical women's house, but Reformation theology was only completely enforced in 1565. Today evangelical women live under the direction of an abbess in association with the Klosterkammer Hannover organization. <http://cms.heidekirchen.de/pages/ostheideelbtalae/uebersicht/kloster-ebstorf.php>

parishioners.<sup>64</sup> Johannes Odenbach's *Ein Trost Büchlin fur die Sterbenden* (1535) listed the proper confessions for the sick and in preparation for the dying.<sup>65</sup> He also gave instructions for the use of psalms, and prayers for the treatment of sickness, dying, and death for the use of both pastors and the laity.<sup>66</sup> Odenbach emphasized the "brevity of life" [*leben ist kurz*] and that consolation could be found only through God's "mercy and help" [*gnaden und hilff*].<sup>67</sup> Luther and Odenbach played an important role in the theological establishment of practices in later Lutheran rituals for the dead and the formulation of funeral sermons.<sup>68</sup>

All funeral sermons, regardless of confession, were written to assuage the pains experienced by the living for the dead. Women were mourned within their religious communities with words that represented the pain of losing a loved one. The suddenness of Catholic nun Caecilia's death evoked an expression of pain and emotion from her Mother Superior at the Frauenchiemsee cloister: "My God and my heart: Oh my chest: also in the greatest and last death pains."<sup>69</sup> Dominicus Renner, the author of a Catholic funeral sermon, used Psalm 18:5 to express the separation now felt by those living apart from Benedictine abbess Maria Catharina at Kloster Khiebach: "The sorrows of hell

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<sup>64</sup> "Daraus folget/ das die sacrament/ das ist/ die eusserliche wort Gottes/ durch eynen priester gesprochen gar ein frosser trost sind/ und gleych eyn sichlich zeychen/ Göttlicher meynung." Martin Luther, *Sermon von der Bereytung zum Sterben* (Wittenberg, 1519), B2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> Johannes Odenbach, *Ein Trost Büchlin fur die Sterbenden* (Wittenberg, 1535), B5<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> Psalm 6, 23, 25, 32, 33. Odenbach, *Ein Trost Büchlin*, C2j<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> "Mit Gottes gnaden und hilff/ Kanstu hindurch wischen/ und diesen Kelch trincken...Dis leben ist kurz." Odenbach, *Ein Trost Büchlin*, A5<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> Austra Reinis, *Reforming the Art of Dying: the ars moriendi in the German Reformation (1519-1528)* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 258; Craig M. Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead: Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450-1700* (London: MacMillan Press, 2000), 156; Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual, an Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 138; Susan Karant-Nunn, "'Fragrant Wedding Roses': Lutheran Wedding Sermons and Gender Definition in Early Modern Germany," *German History* 17, no. 1 (1999): 25-40.

<sup>69</sup> "Mein Gott und mein Herz: Ach mein Jest: auch in dem grösten und letsten Todtsschmerzen." Abbot and Abbess-Prioress of Kloster Frauenchiemsee, *Hochwürdiger in Gott*, A1<sup>v</sup>.

entangled me: the cords of death overwhelmed me.”<sup>70</sup> At the funeral of married parishioner Maria Sophia Mingeroda, Lutheran pastor Georg Trautmann expressed his sorrow in a similar articulation of anguish, “Oh suffering! Oh bitter pain.” [*O Pein, O bitter schmerz*].<sup>71</sup> At the death of Catholic abbess Maria Catharina, Dominicus Renner depicted her loss for the community by lamenting, “the crown and adornment of our heads is fallen. Oh sad fall!”<sup>72</sup> In doing so, he referred to the contribution and importance of her spiritual value to their community at large; he considered her a “crown” to them. Women were commemorated with words of comfort and with the assurance that religious steadfastness in life secured eternal salvation.

Authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth century Lutheran pamphlets were closely connected to their female subjects of commemoration through family ties, spiritual leadership, and as close community associations beyond the cloister. Expressions of how the audience dealt with grief for their reposed loved ones also revealed the authors’ emotional connection with their parishioners in the funeral sermons. Lutheran pastor Andreas Leopold commemorated Countess Maria of Saxony; the abbess of the *Damenstift* in Quedlinburg with a sermon on how to properly address the problem of pain experienced after a loved one’s death.<sup>73</sup> He consoled the mourning audience that they could find solace in the words from Psalm 116, “precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”<sup>74</sup> In 1748 Lutheran pastor Friedrich Dreißigmark published a funeral

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<sup>70</sup> “Der Hölle Bande umfingen mich, und des Todes Stricke überwältigten mich.” Renner, *Klag-seufftzendes Ach!*, B4<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>71</sup> “O Pein! O bitter schmerz! Auss dieser Jammer-Reife.” Trautmann, *Bildniss*, A2<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>72</sup> “Die Cron unnd Zierd unsers Haupts ist abgefallen. O schmerzlicher Fall!” Renner, *Klag-seufftzendes Ach!* (Munich, 1686), B1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>73</sup> Leopold, *Christliche Leichpredigt gehalten*, A3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>74</sup> “Der Todt seiner Heiligen ist werth gehalten für dem Herrn.” Leopold, *Christliche Leichpredigt gehalten*, A2<sup>v</sup>. (Psalm 116:5).

sermon for his aunt, Eva Dorothea, a *Stiftsdame* and dedicated it to his mother.<sup>75</sup> In it he focused on the comfort of his “beloved mama” to convince her that her sister achieved salvation through her monastic life.<sup>76</sup> Authors of funeral sermons encouraged their parishioners to maintain their faith through the reassurance of their reposed relative’s achievement of salvation.

Authors wrote to explain to their listeners the proper way to understand sickness and death as an element of achieving salvation. For Catholics, the act of receiving Holy Communion granted eternal salvation along with a life of piety. Maria Susanna Kienburg’s necrology depicted skull and crossbones at the top of the page and emphasized the struggle to understand life and death; “Ah, how little is on Earth, which can withstand death! How unknown is the struggle of men’s lives! How certain is the goal of death!”<sup>77</sup> The author specifically noted the fact that Maria Susanna partook of Holy Communion and received forgiveness of sins before she died: “This soul received the Holy Sacraments and was taken in death to eternity.”<sup>78</sup> Even after the Reformation, many *Stiftsdamen* continued the Catholic practice of receiving confession and Holy Communion on their deathbeds. Bruno von Broitzen praised *Stiftsdame* Lucia Appels’ for her true love of God, her acts of repentance, her knowledge of the scriptures, and her partaking of the Holy Sacraments, even when she suffered from sickness.<sup>79</sup> It was equally

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<sup>75</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Dreißigmark, *Den Sieg der Gläubigen im Tode* (Wolfenbüttel, 1748).

<sup>76</sup> “Deine Schwester ist erblasset, Und da Sie den Henland fasset/ So sol Jesus auch allein, Dir Statt einer Schwester senn.” Dreißigmark, *Den Sieg*, A4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>77</sup> “Ach wie ist so gar nichts auff Erden/ welches vesten Standt halten kunte! Wie ungewiß ist die Refl deß Menschlichen Lebens! Wie gewiß das Zihl deß Todts!” Abbess Maria Joanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Josephina, *Beständiger Fried den Lebendigen Ewige Ruhe den Verstorbenen* (13 January 1667), A1<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>78</sup> “Dieser Seel nach Empfangng der Heiligen Sacramenten hat der Geäß/ frene Todt in die Ewigkeit entführet.” Abbess Maria Joanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Josephina, *Beständiger Fried den Lebendigen*, A1<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> “Gott hat sie geliebet ohn falsch und heuchelene/ sie hat ihm gedienet mit Beten und mit Gottesdiensten/ sein Wort hat sie für ihren grössersten Schaz gehalten/ die heiligen Sacramenta hat sie nicht verachtet/

important in both faiths to enter the last stages of life with clear consciences of their moral and spiritual standing before God, their judge. Lutheran funeral sermons also depicted life as transient and death as a waiting period or entrance into eternal salvation as long as reposed individual had prepared for death through a faithful life, as *Stiftsdame Lucia Appel* had for the Judgment Day [*jüngsten Tage*].<sup>80</sup> For those who mourned for their loved ones, authors comforted and assured their audiences that their loved ones were in eternity. Through their words, they also displayed the virtuous behavior of those they commemorated. Authors spoke of the importance of female chastity in behavior and piety in their actions while living, so that parishioners would be comfortable in death.

Lutheran female expressions of piety centered on a commitment to family and the home. Funeral sermons highlight the gender perceptions that were expected of women and how those expectations correlated with how women conducted acts of piety. Luther used the virtues of the Virgin Mary, in her role as the physical mother of Christ, to promote humility and chastity to other wives and mothers through modest behavior within a family environment.<sup>81</sup> Pastor Johannes Kaufmann emphasized the importance of a mother's religious guidance to her children in Margareta Susanna Fischer's funeral sermon, "gladness and joy is had by the mother of children whilst she devotes her children to God in happiness, yes even babies in their cradles."<sup>82</sup> Later in the funeral sermon Kaufmann took the voice of Fischer's children and commented on the gratitude

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sondern das hochwürdige Abendmahl/ auch die geringe zeit/...insonderheit hab ich ihr dasselb zwenmahl in ihrer Kranckheit." Broitzen, *Christliche Predigt*, D1<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>80</sup> "[Gott] wolle dem Leibe eine sanffte Ruhe und fröliche Aufferstehung Verleihen am jüngsten Tage." Broitzen, *Christliche Predigten*, D3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>81</sup> Luther, "Sermon on the Visitation, held according to the ordinances of Brandenburg and Nuremberg on the day of Mary's ascension, 1532," in Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 48-49.

<sup>82</sup> "Frewde und Wonne hat gehabt/ des Kindes Mutter/ dieweil sie Gott zur frölichen Kinder Mutter gemacht/ ja das Kindlein in seinem wiegelien." Johann Kaufmann, *Ein Christlicher Sermon von der frommen und Gottseligen Rachel tödlichen Abgang* (Leipzig: Johan Börners und Eliae Rehefelds, 1610), A3<sup>f</sup>.

they felt for the care and comfort their mother provided them.<sup>83</sup> Lutheran pastor Georg Trautmann wrote that wife and mother Maria Sophia loved the Holy Scriptures from youth [*Jugend*] and she upheld those principles even in death [*Todt*].<sup>84</sup> Maria Sophia would therefore be equipped with the spiritual foundation to provide a spiritual environment for her children in the home. Luther stated that women gain praise as mothers when, “she nurses the child, rocks it, bathes and does other things to it, and when she otherwise works and helps her husband and is obedient.”<sup>85</sup> Georg Trautmann mentioned that Lutheran Maria Sophia Mingerode, who had lost a baby in childbirth, would rejoin her child in heaven [*und trägt ihr liebstes Kind*].<sup>86</sup> He emphasized her endurance as a mother in life and her reward for her earthly service with the return of her child in death. The description of Mingeroda expressed her piety through service to God not as a monastic but as a mother. The description of the piety of reposed female parishioners and fellow nuns were meant for the edification and comfort of their audiences, community, and future readers.

Biblical women were used to set a moral standard in funeral sermons for married women. Although fifty-three years separate their deaths, Lutheran mothers Maria Sophia Mingeroda and Maria Katharina Alexander, are depicted as chaste like Judith and pious like Rachel in their behavior.<sup>87</sup> Martin Luther stated that Rachel was “set forth as an example of very beautiful and motherly affection and chastity,” due to her desire to bear

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<sup>83</sup> “Ihr Söhne und Töchter ehret ewre Mutter all ewer lebenslang/ und denckt daran/ was sie für Gefahr angestanden hat/ da sie euch unter ihrem hertzen getragen/...da er in MutterLeib gelegen/ o die verfluchtes unnd vermaledentes Kind?” Kaufmann, *Ein Christlicher Sermon*, C1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>84</sup> “Das hat/ O her/ dein Wort von Jugend auff geliebet/ Und sich darinnen stets biß in den Todt geübet.” Trautmann, *Bildniss*, B2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>85</sup> Luther, “On Married Life, 1522,” in Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 172.

<sup>86</sup> “Sie lebet nun ben Gott/ und trägt ihr liebstes Kind/” Trautmann, *Bildniss*, B3<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>87</sup> “Daß Die wie Judith keusch/ wie Rachel fromm gewesen.” Salfelds, *Den Wohlgetroffenen Wechsel Der zeitlichen Trübal* (Halle, 1700), A2<sup>v</sup>; Trautmann refers to Genesis 35:19.

children to her husband Jacob.<sup>88</sup> Kaufmann utilized the Biblical story of Rachel, the wife of Jacob, as an avenue to present Margareta Fischer's familial service in life and to admonish the audience to emulate faithful wives Rachel and by extension, Fischer.<sup>89</sup> He reiterated that the role of a wife was to be a helper [*Gehülff*] to her husband and that Fischer fulfilled her duty as obedient wife.<sup>90</sup> For Lutherans, marriage, not monasticism or sainthood through asceticism was the primary way of expressing religious fidelity for women. Luther stated, "the work of a married woman is not continuous praying and fasting, but the godly administration of children and the household, and the taking care of parents."<sup>91</sup> Authors of funeral sermons promoted ideals of spirituality and family duty for women to emulate.

For single women, the virtues of virginity, chastity, and piety played an important role in the depiction of expected behaviors and roles. After her death in 1686, Benedictine abbess Maria Catharina was praised by priest Renner for her virginity, chastity, and piety that he stated ensured her spiritual salvation.<sup>92</sup> He noted the importance of the cloister as a safe place of spiritual expression for women, specifically Maria Catharina. Lutheran pastors depicted women as models of virtue and piety in funeral sermons, even when their subjects' actual practices of Christianity did not match up with their expectations for female behavior. For *Stiftsdamen*, Lutheran funeral sermons focused on female acts of charity, chastity, and devotion to religious virtues.<sup>93</sup> Virtuous behavior was directly linked to eternal rewards in funeral sermons. The focus of

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<sup>88</sup> Luther, "Lectures on Genesis LW V," in Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 70.

<sup>89</sup> Kaufmann, *Ein Christlicher Sermon*, A2<sup>v</sup>. (Genesis 20-35).

<sup>90</sup> "Sintemal da Weib darumb des Mannes Gehülff gennet wird." Kaufmann, *Ein Christlicher Sermon*, B2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>91</sup> Luther, "Sermon on the gospel for the Sunday after Christmas, Luke 2:33-40, 1521," in Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 77.

<sup>92</sup> "Gaudia Matris abens cum Virginitatis honoraē." Renner, *Klag-seufftzendes Ach!*, B3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>93</sup> Broitzen, *Christliche Predigten*, D1<sup>r-v</sup>.

funeral sermons about women displayed a recurring theme of strict adherence to Christian virtues and the importance of their faith in service to God in order to achieve a heavenly reward. Renner emphasized abbess Maria Catharina's access to a devotional life within the convent directly related to her future eternal dedication to God in heaven.<sup>94</sup> Lutheran and Catholic authors of funeral sermons emphasized the inevitability of death and the importance of faith in God in order to enter peacefully into eternal life. Lutheran author Heckenberg notes the brevity of earthly life and the assurance of eternal life for those, like Apollonia, who followed the prescriptions of Christian devotion.<sup>95</sup> Heckenberg writes, that Christ himself assures that Apollonia rested in heaven because of her devotion to God during her earthly life.<sup>96</sup> Funeral sermons displayed not only how wives and mothers displayed virtues but also how single women attained salvation through their religious devotion.

Lutheran pastors utilized scriptural references to celibate, married, and holy women to bolster their audience's assurance that the reposed *Stiftsdamen* had attained salvation through their faith and loyalty to God. The use of biblical passages and the religious devotion of women praised in funeral sermons encouraged the audience and bolstered their spiritual strength in remaining virtuous.<sup>97</sup> Apollonia, a *Stiftsdame*, is compared not

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<sup>94</sup> "Lasset euch gesagt/ und einbunden senn/ ihr Töchter Jerusalem/ die ihr in beschaulichen Leben deß Himmels/ durch den Kloster=Stand/ euch allhie befindet/ so lieb mir senn die Rehen und Hirschen auff den Feldern/ so wenig understehet euch meine geliebte Löwin aufzuwecken/ noch wachbar zumachen/ biß sie selbst wil." Renner, *Klag-seufftzendes Ach!*, C1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>95</sup> Heckenberg, *Christliche und Eintfältige Leichpredigt*, A4<sup>v</sup>-B1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>96</sup> "Kom du auch O meine trewe Liebhaberinne/ und ruhe in den Kammern meines Vaters/ Ich wil deine Seele in meinen Schoß nehmen/ und den Leib in sene Grab Kammer zur Ruhe legen/ kein Leid sol dir wiederfahren," Heckenberg, *Christliche und Eintfältige Leichpredigt*, A2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>97</sup> Broitzen, *Christliche Predigten*, A1-C3. The first section of Lucia Appel's *Leichenpredigt* lists numerous biblical passages focusing especially on the godly examples within the scriptures and how to live a Christian life.

to Judith and Rachel, who were faithful wives, but to the virgin martyr Saint Barbara.<sup>98</sup> The invocation of saints outside of those mentioned in the scriptures was uncommon for Lutheran pastors, but Heinrich Heckenberg used the example of virgin Saint Barbara to point specifically to Apollonia's chastity and virginity. The use of Christian saints and symbols encouraged the acceptance of *Stiftsdamen* in Lutheran society through the justification of their holiness even outside of the family sphere. Authors of funeral sermons used examples from scriptures and church tradition to associate the women they commemorated with virtuous women already admired by their parishioners.

As Lutheran funeral sermons exemplified female virtues, Catholic documents also used biblical female examples to encourage women to emulate or exemplify those being commemorated in the documents. Abraham Augustiner Baarfüsser commemorated the life of martyr Catharina of Alexandria in a printed pamphlet and dedicated it to the nuns Eusebia Anna Antonia Breuner and Maria Rosalia Sebastiana Buccellen. This printed Catholic sermon is similar to documents written by Lutheran pastors who intended to give religious and moral instruction to their daughters about the proper roles for females and holy living.<sup>99</sup> Baarfüsser lists other female saints and martyrs in this document, giving religious examples of honorable behavior that he encourages contemporary women to emulate.<sup>100</sup> He writes about the importance of remaining pure and chaste, as holy women have times past.<sup>101</sup> Priest Renner compared Catholic abbess Maria Catherina

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<sup>98</sup> Heckenberg, *Christliche und Eintältige Leichpredigt* (Braunschweig, 1634), A2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>99</sup> Moore, *The Maiden's Mirror*. Moore presents Lutheran devotional writings for young girls and women.

<sup>100</sup> Abraham Augustiner Baarfüsser, *Lob und Prob der Herrlichen Tugenden* (Wienn: Ghelen, 1696), A2<sup>r</sup>-A3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>101</sup> Baarfüsser, *Lob und Prob*, B4<sup>v</sup>-B5<sup>r</sup>.

to the New Testament benevolent and charitable female Tabitha.<sup>102</sup> Biblical characters were not the only Christian images used, Catholic nun Maria Catharina was compared to the nation of Judah and the Israelites in their dedication to God.<sup>103</sup> Authors used both physical and spiritual imagery helped audiences to relate the importance of emulating spiritual behavior while also acknowledging the spiritual achievements of the reposed women they commemorated.

The Christian concept of the futility of gathering worldly riches, especially in preparation for a holy death was a common theme in all funeral sermons for women. Depictions of the women clothed in sunlight, bright light, sparkling brightness, gold, silver and precious jewels are used to represent the spiritual holiness and purity of a Christian life of devotion. Lutheran author Georg Trautmann argued, “the Christian’s best [spiritual] clothing is the greatest improvement” towards spirituality, not the accumulation of earthly wealth.<sup>104</sup> Andreas Leopold stated that though some women were covered in pearls [*Perlen*] and precious jewels [*Edelsteinen*], but that earthly wealth does not matter to God.<sup>105</sup> Women were described by funeral sermon authors as physically clothed in silk or fine linen for burial and in life they were spirituality clothed in humility through their service to others as wives, mothers, and nuns instead of a pursuit for their own physical adornment. Trautmann explains that wife Maria Sophia Mingeroda was clothed with light brighter than the sun and her holiness and piety in life protected her

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<sup>102</sup> “Wann ich nit wuste/ daß sie zu Khiebach als ein Abbtissin vorgestanden-sollte ich wohl sagen/ sie sene Tabitha die Jüngerin der H.Apostlen in Joppe gewesen/ so verdolmetscher wird Dorcas; von dero die Apostolischen Geschichten melden.” Renner, *Klag-seufftzendes Ach!*, E4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>103</sup> Renner, *Klag-seufftzendes Ach!*, B4<sup>v</sup>-C1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>104</sup> “Der Christen bestes Klend/ der Christen höchste Zier.” Trautmann, *Bildniss*, A3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>105</sup> “Von dem Rock Lolliae/ welcher gar köstlich mit Perlen und Edelsteinen/...Aber für Gott gelten sie wenig.” Leopold, *Christliche Leichpredigt gehalten*, B3<sup>v</sup>.

clothing from decay and promoted her memory above famed pagan women.<sup>106</sup> Wife Alexander was described as the physical wealth of the earth, one equal to the finest silver in Venezuelan silver mines and as one clothed with the purest silk [*reine Seide*].<sup>107</sup> Author Kaufmann quoted that Lutheran wife and mother Fischer rejoiced in her religious devotion, “I am glad in God and my soul rejoices in the God, my salvation, then he dressed me with the cloak of salvation and clothed me with the gown of justice.”<sup>108</sup> The poetic style used by pastor Heckenberg in his funeral sermon incorporated images of overcoming earthly wealth, social status, and physical adornment through spirituality, a characteristic that *Stiftsdame* Apollonia achieved.<sup>109</sup>

These representations of spiritual wealth over physical wealth also emphasized the importance of religious devotion to women. Abbess Maria Johanna mentioned the passing of life and the value of a life strongly founded in the Christian faith instead of earthly possessions.<sup>110</sup> Yet, a large majority of these women were from noble families who possessed great personal wealth. Monastic women sacrificed the wealth connected with high social standing and devotion to God alone in order to attain salvation.

The importance of attaining blessings in eternal life outweighed earthly suffering and soothed those mourning the women who died. When illness or infirmity shortened

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<sup>106</sup> “Das Weib trägt einen Rock mit Sonnen,” and “Frau Drostin ewren Rock kan keine Motte fressen.” Georg Trautmann, *Bildniss, Der wahren Kirchen Gottes* (1647) A2<sup>v</sup>, A3<sup>f</sup>; Lollia Paulina was the 3<sup>rd</sup> wife of Caligula known for her outstanding beauty and richly adorned clothing, “Wo bleibestu denn nun/ O stolze Kelider-Tocke Paulina Lollia mit deinem schönen Rocke?” Trautmann, *Bildniss*, A3<sup>f</sup>. Amphitrite was a wife of Poseidon, “Der Amphitriten Land/ das Meer mit seinen Quellen Bricht loß und spenet auß die grüngefärbten Wellen.” Trautmann, *Bildniss*, A4<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>107</sup> “Der Schakaus aus Potosie muß bierden Blank verlieren.” Salfelds, *Den Wohlgetroffenen*, A2<sup>f</sup>. Potosi was the historical location of a Venezuelan silver mine; “Ihr Kleid ist reine Seide.” Salfelds, *Den Wohlgetroffenen Wechsel*, A2<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>108</sup> “Ich frewe mich in dem Herrn/ und meine Seele ist frölich in Gott meinem Heil/ denn er hat mich angeyogen mit dem Rock des Heils/ und mit dem Kleid der Gerechtigkeit bekleidet.” Kaufmann, *Ein Christlicher Sermon*, A3<sup>f</sup>. (Isaiah 61:10).

<sup>109</sup> Heckenberg, *Christliche und Eintfältige Leichpredigt*, G3<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>110</sup> Abbess Maria Johanna and Prioress Maria Josaphina, *Fried seye den Lebendigen*, A1<sup>v</sup>.

the lives of devout women they were held in higher regards for suffering with patience and acceptance of blessings beyond this life. Caecilia Weigl, a Catholic nun in the Frauenchiemsee convent, was commemorated with illustrations similar to those used by Lutheran pastors, such as Odenbach, about the brevity of life for, “flowers on earth and mankind both young and old die.”<sup>111</sup> The eulogy for another nun Ursula Khreitter pointed to the importance of maintaining holiness and obedience in the cloister, “as man lives, so he dies.”<sup>112</sup> Though she suffered from a painful illness, nun Ursula remained faithful and devoted to her life in the convent: “In her troublesome state/ [she] had seen nevertheless the arrow of rightness over herself / because she always dreaded the sins in front of her/ but brought a wonderful prayer.”<sup>113</sup> The illness experienced by Maria Christina, a Catholic nun, before her eventual death increased the admiration of her fellow nuns upon her patience and strength in her faithful life.<sup>114</sup> Dreißigmark wrote that when the faithful Christian thanks God for illness suffered like his aunt Eva, a *Stiftsdame*, their pain is lessened.<sup>115</sup> These documents focus on the importance of each woman’s Christian fortitude, even when challenged by sickness.

Andreas Leopold praised Abbess Maria for her charity to the poor of her community that she came in contact with as leader of the Quedlinburg *Damenstift* and the

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<sup>111</sup> Abbot and Abbess-Prioress of Kloster Frauenchiemsee, *Hochwürdiger in Gott* (1665), A1<sup>r</sup>; “Dis leben ist kurz.” Odenbach, *Ein Trost Büchlin*, A5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>112</sup> “Wie man lebt/ so stirbt man.” Prioress Maria Euphrosina and Abbess Scholastica Teresa, *Hochwürdiger in Gott Herr/ Herr/ auch andere Wol-Ehrwürdige Geistlich Hoch und Wolgelehrte* (1682), A1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>113</sup> “In ihrem müheseligen Stand/ hat gleichwol der Pfeil rechter Mannung übersich gesehen/ weil sie ihr allzeit vor dem sündigen geforchten/ sonsten aber ein wunderliches Gebett verbracht/ von ihr gennet das Himmel Ansailen (villeicht sich an den Himmel wollanzubinden) ist zu Glauben/ daß es Gott nit unangenemb/ Psalm 60.” Prioress Maria Euphrosina and Abbess Scholastica Teresa, *Hochwürdiger in Gott Herr*, A1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>114</sup> “Dann seine Botte (ich verstehe unterschiedliche Schmerzen und Kranckheiten) welche we uns zu öffterer Erinnerung unserer Schuldigkeit voran schickit/ mehr unerträlich werkommen/ als der Glaubiger selbstn.” Abbess Maria Johanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Josaphina, *Fried seye den Lebendigen*, A1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>115</sup> Dreißigmark, *Den Sieg*, A2<sup>r</sup>.

endowments she made on their behalf.<sup>116</sup> Although traditional cloisters did not allow their nuns to leave, *Stiftsdamen* exited the convent walls to minister to those outside and were still considered devout. Since *Stiftsdamen* left the convent in their services to community and family, authors of funeral sermons emphasized their chaste and pious behavior to counter the perception that women who left the convent risked violating their purity. For authors of funeral sermons, the importance of chastity, a spiritual education, and conducting acts of charity justified the existence of *Damenstifte*.

Catholic nuns were not given the freedom that *Stiftsdamen* experienced in their ability to leave the convent in order to serve the poor or sick. The Council of Trent's strict regulations on enclosure prevented Catholic nuns' mobility outside of convent walls.<sup>117</sup> Catholic nuns' responsibilities were similar to those expected within the household of women and revolved around being stationary in their expressions of religious devotion through services behind convent walls. Catholic abbess Maria Johanna Schaffmanin held within the convent as a caretaker [*Custerin*] and master cook [*Kuchelmaisterin*].<sup>118</sup> Abbess Maria Johanna, praised nun Maria Gertraud for her devotion to the spiritual life of the convent through her service as a nurse [*Krankenmeisterin*] and caretaker [*Custeren*].<sup>119</sup> Sister M. Ertraud Kendlinger made

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<sup>116</sup> Andreas Leopold, *Christliche Leichpredigt gehalten* (1611), C4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>117</sup> "But for no nun, after her profession, shall it be lawful to go out of her convent, even for a brief period, under any pretext whatever, except for some lawful cause, which is to be approved of by the bishop; any indults and privileges whatsoever notwithstanding." J. Waterworth ed. and trans., *The Council of Trent; the Twenty-fifth Session* (London: Dolman, 1848), Chapter 5, 240.

<sup>118</sup> "In dem sie nach vilen Aemptern/ als nemlich/ Custerin/ Kuchelmaisterin/ Schwestermaisterin/ Kranckenmaistern/ Noveizenmaisterin und Supriorin/ welche mit grossem Enfer und Nuzen verzicht." Abbess Maria Johanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Josaphina, *Fried seye den Lebendigen/ den Verstobnen ewige Ruhe*, A1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>119</sup> Abbess Maria Joanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Ursula Maximilia, *Den Lebendigen Gnad wol zusterben*, (1674), A1<sup>r-v</sup>.

handicrafts for the convent and also stoked the kitchen fire.<sup>120</sup> In caring for each other within the walls of the convent, nuns fulfilled duties that revolved around the immobility of household duties. The piety of Catholic nuns in necrologies focus on the nuns' service inside the convent and were similar to the household duties expected by Lutheran pastors in funeral sermons of wives.

The most significant difference between the Lutheran and Catholic documents is that Catholic necrologies point specifically to nuns' particular occupations and duties fulfilled within the cloister. In the Lutheran documents, only married women were listed as maintaining an occupation specifically as either wife or mother, while the *Stiftsdamen* are praised for their chastity and piety. Catholic nuns were eulogized for their services that they completed within the cloister. The corresponding religious expectations for the actions and lives of both Catholic nuns and *Stiftsdamen* expressed at their deaths point to overarching themes relating to societal perspectives about gender and religious roles. Women were honored for their devotion and chastity in both Catholic and Lutheran documents, they also displayed contemporary representations of piety, mirroring biblical female examples. In all the funeral sermons and necrologies, the audience is assured of the salvation of the women who died through the authors' praise of their commitment in life to spiritual pursuits.

*Stiftsdamen* and Lutheran wives had fewer differences in the way they were depicted in funeral sermons than Lutheran theological beliefs on monasticism and marriage would indicate. Through the use of images denoting piety and stalwart Christian faith bolsters the apparent acceptance of *Stiftsdamen* in Lutheran society through their depictions in funeral sermons, the specific praise of these women in funeral sermons also

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<sup>120</sup> Abbess Maria Joanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Ursula Maximilia, *Den Lebendigen Gnad*, A1<sup>v</sup>.

displayed a contradiction between Lutheran dogma and actual practices. The fulfillment of virtuous standards for women is evidenced in the language used by pastors in funeral sermons to describe *Stiftsdamen* and Lutheran wives. Funeral sermons of both monastic and married Lutheran women display what men composed in praise of women and how their qualities praised in death manifest what was expected of them in life. They also divulge how Lutheran women were esteemed as pious examples in life and how both *Stiftsdamen* and married women were characterized in death by Lutheran pastors. Gender expectations for women are reflected in the biblical imagery evoked by the spiritual examples given by pastors and authors to illustrate the proper characteristics, responsibilities, and virtues for all Christians. Women also had expectations for their expression of piety and depictions of female religious devotion.

### Female Expressions of Piety

Women in all female religious communities fought to maintain their own traditions and practices amid the changing religious atmosphere of Post Reformation Europe. The expectations of authors for women also contributed to the perception of appropriate female actions and practices. Catholic authors wanted nuns to represent holiness and spiritual purity within cloistered spaces. Lutheran authors wanted all women to express piety and religious devotion under the auspices of their families. The development and adaptation of traditions by women reflected a desire for female voices to be heard independently from their collective voice under the auspices of the Catholic voice or Lutheran voice. Catholic female authors and the depictions of *Stiftsdamen* by Lutheran pastors expressed both traditional and innovated perceptions about female responsibilities to God and society.

Catholic nuns were among the most adamant fighters against the Reformation's religious developments by clinging to their established lives in the cloister. They wrote elaborate defenses that favored the retention of convents as religious institutions and safe havens for women.<sup>121</sup> Enclosure, following the Council of Trent, affected the social structure of convent life and secured a stricter observance of Catholic rule within convent walls.<sup>122</sup> Yet, this created a new hierarchy within the cloister that provided nuns with the ability to organize themselves behind convent walls.<sup>123</sup> Nuns also found ways to establish and keep their own traditions and observances without the direct intervention of priests or

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<sup>121</sup> Wiesner-Hanks ed., *Convents*, 29.

<sup>122</sup> Strasser, *State of Virginity*, 124-125.

<sup>123</sup> Leonard, *Nails in the Wall*, 32.

bishops.<sup>124</sup> Vows and other mandated rules for nuns were clearly established through universal Catholic expectations of chastity, faith, and enclosure. Still, nuns were able to write convent chronicles, necrologies, and other documents for their future sisters to read and follow. Nuns' perceptions of their own place in society and their religious responsibilities as to what they felt was important for their personal practices of the Catholic faith secured for them the need for convents to remain as asylums for women through the Reformation.<sup>125</sup>

The Lutheran church did not clearly define places for women to practice celibacy and monasticism in the same way as Catholic cloisters and convent rules. Most if not all Lutheran *Damenstifte* had a past as Catholic convents and the spaces they inherited remained intact with nuns who voluntarily converted to Lutheran monastic practices after the Thirty-Years War.<sup>126</sup> The development of houses of decorum [*Zuchthäuser*], run by chaste females for the protection, purity, and education of the local elite's daughters, continued the close supervision and the maintenance of the chastity of noble single women.<sup>127</sup> Others were reestablished to provide safe havens for daughters of the elite and socially prominent in Lutheran society. *Stiftsdame* Lucia Appel served as abbess at Lüne Convent in Lüneburg, which first experienced the introduction of evangelical preachers in 1529, but did not incorporate Lutheran ordinances officially until 1562.<sup>128</sup> *Damenstifte*

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<sup>124</sup> Harline and Put, "A Bishop in the Cloisters: The Visitations of Mathias Hovius (Malines, 1596-1620)," *The Sixteenth-Century Journal*, 22, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 611-639.

<sup>125</sup> As discussed previously through the writings of nuns who fought to remain enclosed. Caritas Pirckheimer, *A Journal of the Reformation Years, 1524-1528*, trans. Paul A. MacKenzie (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006); Carrie F. Klaus ed. and trans., *Jeanne de Jussie: The Short Chronicle; A Poor Clare's Account of the Reformation of Geneva* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006).

<sup>126</sup> Abbess Anna Sophia of the newly formed *Damenstift* in Quedlingburg argued that monasticism was acceptable for Protestant women, in Wiesner-Hanks, *Convents*, 71.

<sup>127</sup> Strasser, *State of Virginitly*, 71-72; Wiesner, *Gender, Church, and State in Early Modern Germany*, 62.

<sup>128</sup> Jens-Uwe Brinkmann and Jutta Brüdern, *Kloster Lüne* (Königstein: Karl Robert Langewiesche Nachfolger Hans Köster Verlagsbuchhandlung KG, 1902): 62.

provided evangelical women not only a safe place to live a religious life but also as a Lutheran sanctuary for women's education.<sup>129</sup>

For *Stiftsdamen*, *Damenstifte* were places to receive an education outside of the home. For Catholic nuns, convents were havens of self-expression through their publications of necrologies. Male Lutheran and Catholic clergy were not the only ones who composed religious commemoration documents about women. Women worked within convent walls, homes, and also as authors of funeral documents. Catholic nuns had a more accessible avenue of expression within the convent through convent chronicles and necrologies. Catholic nuns like Maria Ursula, the former prioress of Nonnberg, wrote some of the necrologies in this study.<sup>130</sup> Due to her position of authority within the convent, prioress Maria Ursula was commemorated in a more elaborate format than other necrologies for nuns from the Nonnberg convent.<sup>131</sup> Her necrology displays a detailed discussion of her contribution to the religious community using the symbolism of a field being cultivated: "she threw off here and there the seeds of virtue, which then (because he found a fruitful earth) also brought hereafter fruits of a hundred-fold."<sup>132</sup> Prioress Maria Ursula's devotion and work within the convent resulted in an increase to the spiritual and physical benefits bestowed upon the convent. Necrologies and convent records provided

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<sup>129</sup> Irene Crusius, "Im Dienst der Königsherrschaft, Königinnen, Königswitwen und Prinzessinnen als Stifterinnen und Äbtissinnen von Frauenstiften und klöstern." in *Nonnen, Kanonissen und Mystikerinnen: Religiöse Frauengemeinschaften in Süddeutschland*, Eva Schlotheuber, Helmut Flachenecker, Ingrid Gardill (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008): 59-77.

<sup>130</sup> Abbess Maria Joanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Scholastica, *Den Todten Gottes Ansehung* (1676), A1<sup>r-v</sup>. Maria Ursula Maximiliana Fugger, died on 24 August 1676 between nine and ten at night; she was sixty-six years old and had served in the convent for fifty-three years.

<sup>131</sup> Abbess Maria Joanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Scholastica, *Den Todten Gottes Ansehung*, A1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>132</sup> "Sie wurffe nach und nach den Saamen der Tugenden aus/ welcher dann (weil er ein fruchtbare Erd antraffe) auch hundertfache Frucht herfür brachte." Abbess Maria Joanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Scholastica, *Den Todten Gottes Ansehung*, A1<sup>f</sup>.

women in the Catholic monastic tradition with an avenue of expression about what they perceived to be valuable qualities of their fellow nuns.

The briefly detailed necrologies written for reposed nuns by Catholic abbesses provide an example of cloistered female voices that commemorated women in language that mirrors Lutheran pastors' funeral sermons for *Stiftsdamen*.<sup>133</sup> Necrologies primarily depict Catholic nuns as devotees who provided their convents with specific services and talents. Maria Christina not only fulfilled expected roles as a female but also held authority positions as an administrator among the nuns [*Schwestermaisterin*], head nurse [*Kranckenmaistern*], in charge of novices [*Noveizenmaisterin*], and served as the Superior of the convent [*Supriorin*].<sup>134</sup> Maria Gertraud was cellar manager [*Kellermaisterin*], and officer [*Aempter*].<sup>135</sup> Both women in this document were praised for their economic responsibilities within the convent. These two Catholic nuns were able to fulfill roles unavailable to them in marriage. Nun Elizabeth Grimigin, "was entrusted with responsibilities and she led a holy life" within the Nonnberg convent as both choir member and devout sister.<sup>136</sup> For Catholic nuns like Elizabeth their value as an active member of the convent was emphasized in necrologies and pointed to their roles as contributors to the functionality of the cloister.

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<sup>133</sup> Jill Bepler "Practicing Piety: Representations of Women's Dying in German Funeral Sermons of the Early Modern Period," in Clare Bielby and Anna Richards, eds., *Women's Representations of Death in German Culture Since 1500* (New York: Camden House, 2010), 12-30.

<sup>134</sup> "In dem sie nach vilen Aemptern/ als nemlich/ Custerin/ Kuchelmaisterin/ Schwestermaisterin/ Kranckenmaistern/ Noveizenmaisterin und Supriorin/ welche mit grossem Enfer und Nutzen verzicht." Abbess Maria Johanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Josaphina, *Fried seye den Lebendigen/ den Verstobnen ewige Ruhe*, A1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>135</sup> Abbess Maria Joanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Ursula Maximilia, *Den Lebendigen Gnad wol zusterben* (1674), A1<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>136</sup> Abbess Maria Johanna and Prioress Maria Josaphina, *Fried seye den Lebendigen/ den Verstobnen ewige Ruhe*, A1<sup>r</sup>.

Necrologies for Catholic nuns include similar themes to funeral sermons written for Lutheran males that included a lengthy section on how their work benefited economically both their families and the community. The record in the necrology of the value of nun Elizabeth to the convent in Salzburg in economic terms denotes the importance of the work of women within monastic households. After her own death, abbess Maria Abundantia was commemorated by her fellow nuns, “we hope death has not fished the worth of pearls [out of the sea] nor shot the noble stag, the pearls are set in the Crown of Life, the stag is but...a deer of God’s mercy and friendship.”<sup>137</sup> Here, the women praised abbess Abundantia for her spiritual worth on earth and how it solidified her place as valuable to God in eternal life. Catholic nuns were able to write about each other directly and with an accepted role as convent historians, a privilege that was not accessible to the *Stiftsdamen*.<sup>138</sup>

Necrologies, like Lutheran funeral sermons, also used scriptural passages in order to encourage their audiences and readers towards stricter devotion and spiritual piety.<sup>139</sup> Abbess Maria Johanna quoted biblical passages, “my beloved is in me and I in him...our transcendence is in Heaven,” and “where my treasure is, there my heart is also,” that emphasized the commitment of nun Maria Elizabeth to her Christian faith.<sup>140</sup> Abbess Maria Johanna confirmed that her fellow nun Maria Elizabeth achieved salvation and

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<sup>137</sup> “Wir hoffen/ es hab der Todt an dem werthen Perlien nichts erfischet and dem Edlen Hirschlein nichts eriaget/ das Perlein sen versezt in die Cron deß Lebens/ das Hirschlein aber sen/ Cervus Amicitiae pro/ 5. iuxta sept. ein Hirschlein der Gnaden und Freundschaft Gottes.” Abbess Maria Abundantia Theresa and Prioress Maria Benedicta, *Den Lebenden*, A1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>138</sup> The Catholic convent Nonnberg in Salzburg, Austria and Frauenchiemsee, a Benedictine convent in Bavaria, contain extensive collections of documents by its abbesses. Both collections are accessible at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, Germany.

<sup>139</sup> Abbess Maria Abundantia Theresa and Prioress Maria Benedicta, *Den Lebenden ein brinnendes Verlangen* (1686), A1-2.

<sup>140</sup> “Mein Geliebter mir/ und ich ihm... Unser Wandel ist in dem Himmel. Und: Wo mein Schaz ist/ ist auch mein Herz.” Abbess Maria Joanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Ursula Maximiliana, *O wie glücklich stirbet man!*, A1<sup>r</sup>. (Matthew 6:21).

she emphasized the assurance that her holiness gave to her after death. “For most of her life she was found in the convent, which brought her to [become] an Abbot-Sister: she gave her petition twice, then went to a better Teacher and Truth.”<sup>141</sup> Examples from the scriptures displayed Catholic nuns’ perspectives on the appropriate ways to mourn their sisters and in order to comfort themselves through the remembrance of their reposed sisters.

*Stiftsdamen* were depicted as gender neutral by male authors. Funeral sermons for *Stiftsdamen* did not display characteristics that fulfilled the ideal Lutheran qualities of females, such as devotion to family and the care of children. Instead they focused on the service of *Stiftsdamen* to God. Their funeral sermons also did not mention specific vocations, like the Catholic necrologies for nuns, or traditionally male characteristics in their spiritual solidarity. *Stiftsdamen* appear to fill a gender void for Lutherans that does not attribute social or religious female or male characteristics to their conduct. The void of descriptions about the service and position of *Stiftsdamen* to Lutheran society is indicative of a belief in their “otherness.” Lutheran theological precepts discouraged the function of women outside of marriage due to their weakness against the temptations of sin without a male head of household to instruct them. Yet, these enclaves of *Damenstifte*, in Northern Germany denote that single women existed, functioned, and were examples of Christian piety outside of marriage and family. Though *Stiftsdamen* were commended for their pious education, a universal expectation for Protestants, their

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<sup>141</sup> “Ihr meistes Leben-durch welches man sie nie müßig gefunden in dem Closter/ brachte sie zu als ein Abbtin-Schwester: wurde aber zwenmal wegen ihres unschuldigen zugegeben/ denen sie mit gutter Lehr und Erempel treulich vorgangen.” Abbess Maria Joanna Francisca and Prioress Maria Ursula Maximiliana, *O wie glücklich stirbet man!*, A1<sup>v</sup>.

chastity was overemphasized to justify their conduct outside of marriage and to secure their depiction as examples for other Lutheran to emulate.

Lutheran families emphasized the importance of knowing the scriptures and lauded their daughters for their study of spiritual things. Primarily, families allowed *Damenstifte* to remain under the Lutheran profession for their daughters to practice religious devotion and receive a spiritual education while being connected with their families and communities outside. Noble families desired spiritual protection for their daughters, especially those who did not marry. *Stiftsdamen*, seem to remain silent on the decision of their families to place them in *Damenstifte*. Yet, in funeral sermons, *Stiftsdamen* are depicted as willingly entering the *Damenstift* and accepting their position in Lutheran society as female religious. As Apollonia Eggeling's noble family prepared her for the convent, she, being able to read as a child, studied the Lutheran catechism.<sup>142</sup> Lucia Appel's eulogy mentions that she received an education from her father and paternal aunt before the age of nine when she entered the *Damenstift*.<sup>143</sup> Appel's education consisted of memorizing Biblical passages and learning to clearly display Christian virtues. Broitzen praised Lucia's parents for their dedication to the Christian education of their daughter and for their private training of morality to ensure her virtuous upbringing as a young woman before she entered the *Damenstift*.<sup>144</sup> Lucia continued her godly devotion and education in the sanctified setting of the *Damenstift*. Education played an important role in Protestant lay theology, for women who were outside of the marriage their pious

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<sup>142</sup> Heckenberg, *Christliche und Eintfältige Leichpredigt*, G4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>143</sup> Broitzen, *Christliche Predigt*, C4<sup>v</sup>. Broitzen mentions that Lucia's education involved "all noble virtues."

<sup>144</sup> "Diese Christliche Adelige Eltern/ haben ihnen hoch angelegen sein lassen/ ermelte ihre Tochter in der wahren Gottsfurcht/ und allen Adelichen Tugenden zu erziehen/ auch ihre intention desto besser zu erreichen/ sie im 9. Jahr jres alters Anno 1571. in diß Kloster/ welches gleich wie andere reformirte/ seminarium pietatis und virginei decoris ist/ gethan." Broitzen, *Christliche Predigt*, C4<sup>v</sup>-D1<sup>r</sup>.

education secured their acceptance as devout single women separated from the instruction of family.

Catholic convents ultimately provided a place for educated women to produce their own images about themselves and others. *Damenstifte* though less structured for the education and publication of literature such as necrologies or convent chronicles did provide places for women to learn and practice spirituality outside of the construct of motherhood and family, even if the women did not record their perceptions of themselves and others. Some Catholic nuns ignored enclosure and constructed their own examples of virtue from within convent walls through necrologies and depictions of their own virtue.<sup>145</sup> Catholic women had a greater opportunity to express their own opinions about commemoration and their expectations for other nuns. In addition to participating in the publication of necrologies, there is evidence that some widows of printers published Catholic funeral sermons as well as other devotional documents.<sup>146</sup> Convents provided a place for women to receive a Christian education and also a classical education within the structure of the Catholic Church. Abbesses maintained church standards through the commemoration of their fellow nuns in necrologies and reinforced the expectations for nuns who would read the necrologies in years to come. Through necrologies, nuns were able to express their own perceptions about their fellow nuns and what monasticism meant to them for the records of their respective convents.

*Stiftsdamen* did not have similar forms of literature in order to express their personal opinions and perceptions about their responsibilities as women devoted to God. Lutheran funeral sermons were written for parish congregations and broader audiences

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<sup>145</sup> Strasser, *State of Virginity*, 129.

<sup>146</sup> Giovanni Matteo Giberti, *Kurtzer Begriff Deß Lebens Der Seel. Clarä von Monte Falco* (Munich: Maria Magdalena Rauch, 1698). *Acht-Tägiges Jubel-Fest* (Munich: Maria Elisabeth von Geldern, 1696).

than Catholic necrologies and included specific exhortations for audiences to be more devout in their Christian practices. *Stiftsdamen* and married Lutheran women were both used by pastors in funeral sermons as depictions of chastity and loyalty for audiences to emulate. Both funeral sermons and necrologies brought women into the community through the publication of their depictions and writings.

*Stiftsdamen* were also brought out into the public through the charity work they conducted outside of convent walls. By doing so, they redefined the religious concept of separated female devotees through their participation among their communities. When *Stiftsdamen* left the convent, though they exited the holy grounds, their mobility was counterbalanced with devotion given to religious activities and a foundation in their own spiritual education. *Stiftsdamen* provided works of charity to their surrounding community through schools [*Stiftsschule*]. Those who benefited from this outreach included children who studied in the school [*Stiftsschule*] held on the grounds of the *Damenstifte*, but who lived in the surrounding community. An important component of the life in the *Damenstifte* included working with the surrounding communities to aid in the improvement of those in connection to the convent.<sup>147</sup> *Stiftsdamen* were more physically mobile, yet Catholic nuns were more heavily involved in education and hospital care in the years following the Reformation and beyond.<sup>148</sup>

Catholic nuns also provided encouragement to each other towards conducting acts of charity. Many necrologies focused on the importance of charity (Psalms 41:1), faithfulness like sheep that followed a righteous shepherd (John 10), and the fulfillment

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<sup>147</sup> Leopold, *Christliche Leichpredigt gehalten*, C4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>148</sup> Strasser, *State of Virginity*, 155. Jesuit orders were particularly involved in education in Bavaria.

of their religious responsibilities as an inheritance Jacob gave his sons (Genesis 49).<sup>149</sup> Apollonia, a *Stiftsdame* at the Lutheran convent in Isenhagen, performed deeds of charity for the poor in her community.<sup>150</sup> *Stiftsdamen* focused on opportunities for spiritual services in their local poor [*Armen*] of their congregation, parish, and religious communities for charitable acts and improvement.<sup>151</sup> *Stiftsdamen* maintained a position in Lutheran society and they were respected for their acts of charity and austere living conditions.

*Stiftsdamen* were distinguished from Catholic female monastic groups by their Lutheran practices, absence of monastic vows, and for the majority, a lack of habits.<sup>152</sup> *Stiftsdamen* were primarily from wealthy-noble backgrounds and showed some similarities to Catholic groups like the Daughters of Charity.<sup>153</sup> Ultimately, they were not mendicant nor did they mobilize outside of an organized stationary community completely. Lutheran standards for *Stiftsdamen* did not require vows of celibacy or marital union with God, which led some young women to live in the convent for a brief period in order to receive an education in “womanly virtues” and handicrafts before entering marriage.<sup>154</sup> Though it seems that most women who were present during the

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<sup>149</sup> Abbess Maria Abundantia Theresa and Prioress Maria Benedicta, *Den Lebenden*, A2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>150</sup> “Und sie mit allen Trewen gemeinet/ gegen arme und dürfftige Leute.” Heckenberg, *Christliche und Einfältige Leichpredigt*, H1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>151</sup> “Und wie oft haben arme verjagete Prediger/ Schuldner/ verbrandte Leute/ unnd dergleichen/ von JFG ein Fürstlich Almosen bekommen/ Wie sie auch die Armen in ihrem Stiff/ wo sie nur gekond in Gnaden bedacht.” Leopold, *Christliche Leichpredigt*, C4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>152</sup> Although *Stiftsdamen* were expected to dress in a manner respectful to their position, chastity, and in some cases the women dressed in a “uniform” of sorts. Attached image 3 displays an example of how the *Stiftsdamen* dressed in the 1800s. (Medinger Konventualin: Jens Schulze, [http://www.klosterkammer.de/html/k\\_s\\_frauen.html](http://www.klosterkammer.de/html/k_s_frauen.html)).

<sup>153</sup> Silvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life 1450-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 227; Patricia Ranft, *Women and the Religious Life in Premodern Europe* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 96-112; Barbara B. Diefendorf, *From Penance to Charity: Pious Women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>154</sup> Moore, *The Maiden’s Mirror*, 174; Strasser, *State of Virginity*, 72. It is interesting to note that this has changed for modern women living under the authority of the Klosterkammer Hannover in historic

conversion of their convents from Catholic to evangelical, remained there for their lifetime. Acts of charity also helped connect the *Stiftsdamen* with their relatives outside the *Damenstifte*, a relationship that ended when “vows of stability” were taken, but *Stiftsdamen* were not required to take oaths of immobility.<sup>155</sup> Most *Stiftsdamen* who joined after the transition to Lutheran services and pastors, were only temporary devotees.

Funeral sermons, necrologies, and documents that addressed the role of *Stiftsdamen* were for mostly the educated upper classes to validate their beliefs about women and their role in religion and society. A majority of *Stiftsdamen* were from families of wealth, but they were praised for how they committed their lives to spiritual improvement and to the aid of the needy in their communities. *Stiftsdamen* were introduced to society as virtuous women although they transgressed the simple theological teachings of Luther about women and marriage. Lutheran abbesses who held positions of authority within the secular world had numerous funeral sermons written about them by multiple authors, all praising their religious fortitude in both of their positions of authority.<sup>156</sup>

The author, Bruno von Broitzen, noted that Lutheran abbess Lucia Appel chose due to her piety to join the convent at age nine and was elected to the position of *Domina* at the age of 32 by her fellow *Stiftsdamen*.<sup>157</sup> This displayed that women created the structure inside the *Damenstifte*. Appel was thus able to fill a role of leadership and

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*Damenstifte*, although women are encouraged not to live in these facilities unless they are single or widowed. (Interview with Inge Kubasta, Kloster Lüne).

<sup>155</sup> Evangelisti, *Nuns*, 43.

<sup>156</sup> Leopold, *Christliche Leichpredigt gehalten*, A1<sup>f</sup>. Countess Maria from Saxony was not only the Abbess of a prominent convent within Quedlinburg, but also the Princess of that region.

<sup>157</sup> “Daß die am 32. Jahr ihres alters/ durch einhelligen Confens, des ganzen Erwürdigen convents zu einer Domina ist eligieret worden.” Broitzen, *Christliche Predigt*, D1<sup>f</sup>; “Daß sie aber dem Kloster order der versammlung wissentlich und vorsetzlich einigen schaden und nachtheil solte zugefüget haben.” Broitzen, *Christliche Predigt*, D2<sup>f</sup>.

respect through her decision to join the religious community at Ebsdorf, a position to which she would not have had access in marriage. *Stiftsdame* Appel took an active part in her own desired expression of spirituality outside of her defined role as a Lutheran woman. *Stiftsdame* Apollonia Eggeling was characterized as devoted completely to living a spiritual life, through her service as cook and shepherdess to the convent in Isenhagen.<sup>158</sup> This displayed her economic worth and ability to contribute, like Catholic nuns to the services that an independent community needed in order to maintain itself.

Funeral sermons mentioned the economic, religious, and political stations of the women's families.<sup>159</sup> The format of funeral sermons included descriptions in a biography style that included concrete information about the deceased family, social station, and marriage status. Abbess Maria is noted as being both the religious and political leader of Quedlinburg, due to her familial status as countess and in her service as the Lutheran abbess. Funeral sermons included a section called the "Personalia," or lineage section, that listed the person's familial heritage. Women were specifically praised for being raised in noble and God-blessed [*Gottseligen*] families.<sup>160</sup> Social status reinforced the authority that some Lutheran *Stiftsdamen* held by default through their elite families and heritage.

Ultimately, female religious were discussed in public through published documents, even when their practices and beliefs remained private or enclosed. Though their practices were divergent from the prescribed roles expected of women from Catholic and

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<sup>158</sup> Heckenberg, *Christliche und Eintfältige Leichpredigt*, F2<sup>v</sup>; H1<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>159</sup> "So ist demnach die Ehrwürdige Domina außdem uhralten Adelichen Geschlechte der Appel von Christlichen Eltern geborn worden" Broitzen, *Christliche Predigt*, C4<sup>v</sup>. These two in-depth studies on funeral biographies address the importance of these sections and the socio-economic perspectives that can be gained by studying funeral sermons. Bepler, "Women in German Funeral Sermons," Niekus Moore, *Patterned Lives*.

<sup>160</sup> "Gottseligen und ehrlichen Eltern." Heckenberg, *Christliche und Eintfältige Leichpredigt*, G4<sup>v</sup>.

Lutheran society, nuns and *Stiftsdamen* found avenues of expression in society. Lutheran female piety centered on religious devotion and the fulfillment of household duties; Catholic nuns and Lutheran *Stiftsdamen* spirituality in contrast centered on their services to God and the surrounding community.

Both Catholic nuns and Lutheran *Stiftsdamen* validated their place outside of the family by how they depicted each other and were depicted by pastors in funeral sermons. Catholic women revealed their expectations of their fellow nuns of chastity and holiness in necrologies. Catholic women wrote about themselves and each other in words that emphasized their separateness from the rest of earthly society. Lutheran *Stiftsdamen* were depicted by males in a way that proved their virtues, but did not praise their separation from society by living in *Damenstifte*. *Stiftsdamen* created a space in the *Damenstifte* that did not correlate with the expected roles of women in Lutheran society.

## Conclusion

This study contributes a different perspective to the relationship between female Lutheran monastics and male spiritual leaders in early modern Germany. The funeral sermons of evangelical nuns and Lutheran wives in the duchies of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Braunschweig-Lüneberg, and Electoral Saxony have not been substantially examined in comparison to the eulogies of Catholic nuns in southern German duchies who resisted the Reformation. The way in which Lutheran funeral sermons praise both nuns and married women demonstrates that Lutheran pastors did not overtly distinguish what was expected of them in these documents. This study shows that the virtues for which all women were praised was incredibly similar, though theological beliefs differed both dogmatically and geographically.

Themes of religious faith, service to God, and chaste behavior in religious practices, characterize depictions of women found in funeral sermons. The use of both monastic and married women by authors provided audiences with pious examples of Christian living also characterize funeral sermons and necrologies. Women were honored for their religious fortitude and charitable deeds as both physical and spiritual mothers. The virtues praised in the funeral sermons center on established images and understandings of Old Testament women, such as Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Judith, and Deborah. Luther and subsequent preachers emphasized the examples of these biblical matriarchs and their dedication to God as written in the scriptures. Lutheran preachers who presented eulogies for both nuns and married women imparted what they considered to be proper womanly characteristics through biblical examples that fulfilled either spiritual motherhood or household matronly duties for their living laywomen. The funeral

sermons for *Stiftsdamen* and married women did not differ as much as might be expected in comparison to Lutheran theological teachings about the place of female monastics and the importance of the home for women in Lutheran worldviews.

The impact of Lutheran dogmas on monasticism in Germany not only shifted the theological beliefs of single women, but also the commemoration of their lives. Protestant women, specifically *Stiftsdamen* argued for the chance to express piety similar to the way nuns wrote to remain in an enclosed environment. This points to the desire of single women in Europe to have control over the spiritual aspects of their lives as well as their living conditions. Women remained in *Damenstifte* despite Lutheran theologies and practices against the establishment and maintenance of female religious houses. These unique female monastic societies incorporated both the beliefs of the Lutheran church along with the patterns of monastic life. *Stiftsdamen* created a space for themselves outside of both Catholic and Protestant prescriptions for proper female religious expression. This meant that these women exited not only the physical bounds but also the societal bounds of enclosure and restraint. In their movement, *Stiftsdamen* maintained the religious tradition of female pious devotion through their service to God, but they also expanded the role of single-women in Lutheran society by their separation from family life.

What is surprising about these documents is that Lutheran pastors praised the lives of *Stiftsdamen* even though these women did not follow the traditional Lutheran standards of marriage and motherhood. This seemingly significant contradiction appears to be isolated to the northern German duchies of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Braunschweig-Lüneberg, and Electoral Saxony in the years following the Reformation up

to the present day.<sup>161</sup> The funeral sermons written for parishioners in Lutheran regions were mainly rural, but each had close connections to cultural centers and provincial authorities. In contrast, the Catholic documents come from well-established cities and religious communities with a concentrated population. Yet, all the funeral sermons depict women and their religious obligations in a similar manner. Therefore, the relationship between location, confession, and the depiction of gender in funeral sermons is minimal.

The resistances of Catholic nuns to the Reformation and the demands for them to leave the convent, although there are important contributions to the historical understanding of women and their gender expression, have previously overshadowed the place of *Stiftsdamen*. In all of the funeral sermons, women were praised for their religious devotion and charitable services under the auspices of Christian faith and service. Writers of all genders shared an appreciation for the sacrifice made by religious women who practiced their spirituality outside of married life. Funeral sermons display how women *Stiftsdamen* chose to express their piety through their own models of single womanhood instead of following Lutheran practices for females. Catholic nuns also created a space for themselves while enclosed through their depictions of each other and their publications that reached an audience on the outside.

The significance of *Damenstifte* is the apparent contradiction of their existence in relation to Lutheran theological teachings that marriage was the principle means of female religious expression. The Lutheran theological teaching against female monasticism within the Lutheran sphere fuels this contradiction. However, *Stiftsdamen* were able to live in isolated communities and were praised for their virtues by male

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<sup>161</sup> Currently, there are at least 17 Evangelical Female Religious houses (*Klöster* and *Stifte*) in the Klosterkammer Hannover. [http://www.klosterkammer.de/html/kloester\\_stifte.html](http://www.klosterkammer.de/html/kloester_stifte.html).

pastors. The theological beliefs of the time following the Reformation focus on the concept and importance of female piety and virginity. The more important factor for women was not related to marital status, but hinged on their expression of faith within the Lutheran devotional realm. Though Lutheran theological teachings reflect a growing importance on the family as a unit functioning as the source of service to the world and individuals, *Stiftsdamen* maintained a place within the Lutheran church for single religious women. The most important attribute for all women in the documents was following the basic Christian precepts of their denominations. For both Lutherans and Catholics, female chastity, charity, and pious devotion were the most important virtues for women to display. This points to the overarching theme of female chastity and Christian devotion among early modern European writers of funeral sermons and necrologies.

Wealth and societal position also contribute to the depiction of women in funeral sermons, due to family monetary investments in the costs of printing such documents. Therefore, families also influenced the maintenance of these communities, which were set apart from marriage due to their vested interest in the preservation of their single daughters' chastity. Evidence points to the placement of noble daughters in *Damenstifte* who were unable to form suitable marriages.<sup>162</sup> These Lutheran families allowed for these religious communities to remain as a place of protection for their daughters' virginity and education. Although Lutheran practice shifted from the appropriate expression of sexual self-control to the institution of marriage alone, some women were able to combine both their Lutheran beliefs and the traditionally Catholic practice of convent life. For wealthy families, a desire for a safe-haven in which their daughters

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<sup>162</sup> Braun, "Frauentestamente," 14.

could live unmarried and chaste, overrode the theological belief that marriage was the best female expression of morality. *Damenstifte* provided a societal need to maintain the status and piety of certain daughters of the nobility.

This concept is reflected in the Lutheran tradition of composing funeral sermons for both married women and *Stiftsdamen* that display similar praise for both types of women by pastors and male family members. Within the Lutheran documents, religious women are displayed as heroic and pious examples for others to emulate, contradicting the general Lutheran theologies about the dangers of female monasticism. Married women are shown as spiritual avenues for the preservation of religious devotion. The main themes in all the funeral sermons and necrologies written for women are spirituality and religious fortitude. The documents presented here depict evidence that religious devotion, even that which contradicted formal theological beliefs, outweighed objections to the isolation to single-women remaining outside the sphere of marriage.

Protestant funeral sermons were prescriptive as much as they were descriptive; public praise of particular traits was intended to encourage such traits in the living. The religiously stylized sermon format of these documents makes these sources useful for the examination of societal expectations that male contemporaries held of these women. Many of these pastors commemorated virtues that they hoped their other parishioners would emulate and preached them in ways to promote their own careers as writers and orators. It is important to note that these sources must be probed with a measure of caution and not as definitive authorities on the realities of these women's lives. Yet, they can be used as windows into the moral expectations and appreciation of *Stiftsdamen* as well as their Catholic counterparts. By the expanded study of funeral sermons, more

knowledge can be gained about the perception of *Stiftsdamen* in Germany and their respective religious roles in Lutheran society. The influence these women possessed in relation to the formulation of gender ideas in early modern Europe deserves more study and consideration.

*Stiftsdamen* constitute an important and overlooked resource for insight into the development of women's charity organizations and single women's roles in early modern European society. These sources provides a better understanding of early modern Europe and the transition of the relationship between religious women and society spanning from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment, yet few scholars have conducted extensive studies on the *Stiftsdamen*. By studying the connection created by the *Stiftsdamen* between female mystics of the medieval cloister and charitable female organizations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this study expands the understanding of the development of religious women's place in history.

The significant difference between Catholic and protestant nuns was that Lutheran *Stiftsdamen* were brought under male control through their depictions in funeral sermons in a way that Catholic nuns who authored their own necrologies were not. *Stiftsdamen* gave up their voices when they adopted Lutheran principles on the position of women and Catholic nuns maintained their voice even while enclosed through the publication of convent literature, such as necrologies. *Damenstifte* and Catholic convents were closed during Napoleon's conquest across Europe by 1802 and women of both confessions lost an avenue to express female monastic voices.

Evidence given for the existence of self-expression and autonomy for single-women in these *Damenstifte* provides an insight into the structure of German society as one

supporting the development and success of an “outside” class of women. A majority of monastic groups were phased out after the widespread secularization of 1803. Although, evangelical women continued to serve in religious positions, some outside of marriage, making the *Stiftsdamen* an important group to study for the scholarship of women’s religious history in Europe.<sup>163</sup> A majority of Lutheran churches in northern Germany today remain connected to the traditions of their Catholic past and work to maintain their Catholic ancestry.<sup>164</sup> These depositories of religious houses for women merit further research and examination especially in the field of gender analysis in relation to the roles that *Stiftsdamen* have played since the Reformation up to present day Germany.

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<sup>163</sup> Inge Kubasta, Personal Interview, Kloster Lüne in Lüneburg, Germany, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

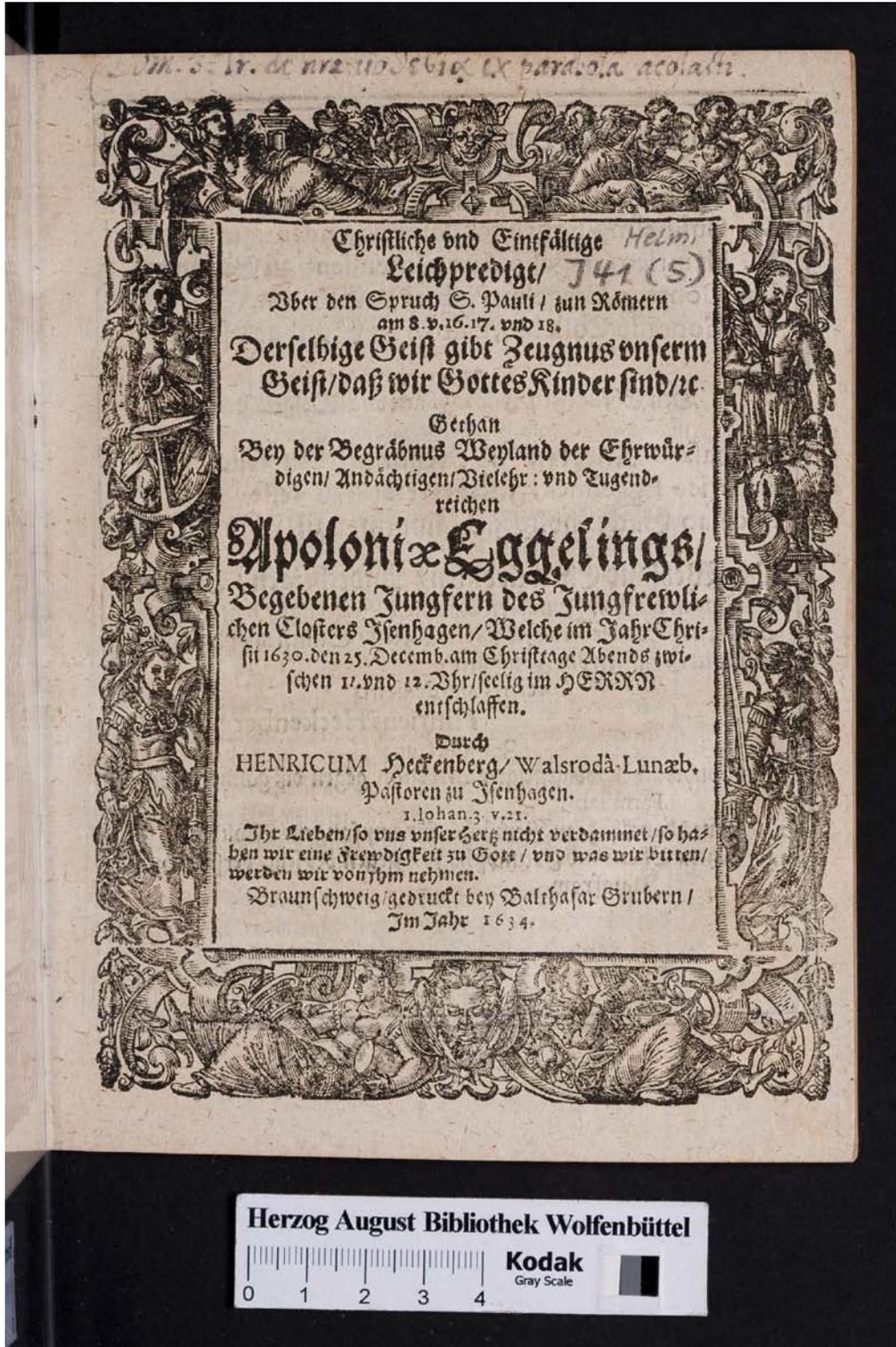
<sup>164</sup> Inge Kubasta, Interview. Ms. Kubasta works to preserve the history of Kloster Lüne and lives a life of quiet devotion on the convent grounds. Kloster Lüne was previously a Benedictine convent and then became a Lutheran *Damenstift*, currently it belongs to the *Klosterkammer Hannover*; a religious organization set up to support and maintain historical places of religious significance. Kloster Lüne houses a wonderfully preserved collection of liturgical tapestries and altar cloths from their Benedictine past. <http://www.kloster-luene.de/>.

Appendix

“Bildniss, Der wahren Kirchen Gottes,” Georg Trautmann (1647)



Heinrich Heckenberg, *Christliche und Einfältige Leichpredigt*, 1624, Apollonia Eggeling, *Stiftsdame*.



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