

Deafness and Pastoral Care in the Middle Ages

Jenni Kuuliala & Reima Välimäki

Abstract: This chapter discusses medieval pastoral care and theological views of deafness and of deaf people's ability to participate in religious life. Focusing in particular on confessors' manuals, and challenging the often black and white interpretations of Augustine's views on (congenitally) deaf people's intelligence and religiosity, the article demonstrates how the authors of these manuals advised parish priests to take care of deaf people's marriage and confession sacraments. Since the sacrament of marriage was a matter of free will, the writers stated that so long as such will could be expressed, there was no barrier to the deaf marrying. As for confession and the necessary sentiment of contrition, the deaf were also allowed and expected to participate in this important sacrament. However, the lack of sophisticated sign language posed a challenge to pastoral care. The chapter uncovers the various means of, and challenges to, teaching the deaf about the inner meanings of religious sacraments and rites.

There are many ways that one could discuss deafness in medieval Christian theology and philosophy. This chapter looks at the influence of medieval theology on how parish priests interpreted, and in turn treated, their deaf parishioners as they performed their duty of pastoral care. The chapter not only describes the intersection between medieval theology, parish priests, and deaf parishioners, but also evaluates these intersections from a disability-positive perspective. Before describing these medieval intersections, we begin by describing a disability-

positive perspective as it relates to deafness. After this, we will be able to evaluate (to the extent we can based on the existing evidence) how parish priests treated their deaf parishioners.

As a disability that impacts modes of communication, deafness is (and has always been) first and foremost linked with and defined by the social realities and language of the community. Perhaps the most famous demonstration of this is Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts, settled in the 1640s. Since an exceptionally large percentage of the population was deaf between the seventeenth and the early nineteenth centuries, the community developed into one that was fully bilingual. Residents who were deaf, as well as those who were not, used sign-language, regardless of the hearing ability of their interlocutor. Although the hearing inhabitants of the island recognized that others could not hear, the deaf were neither singled out nor portrayed as disabled by the other residents; instead, they were fully integrated, active members of the community.¹ Admittedly, the history of Martha's Vineyard is, in many ways, a one-off case; nevertheless, it offers an illuminating point of comparison to the situation in many modern societies, where audism is a predominant mode of oppression. A term comparable with racism, ageism, heterosexism, or ableism, audism suggests that one person is superior to another because of his/her ability to hear. Thus, at least for the past two or three centuries, deaf people have been forced to culturally and socially adopt hearing norms.²

H-Dirksen L. Bauman has traced the origins of audism, finding metaphysics among its most influential roots: the idea that human identity and *being* [our emphasis] are linked with spoken language. We find clear examples of audism in the thinking of Johann Conrad Ammann, the noted Swiss physician and instructor of non-verbal deaf persons, who wrote at the turn of the

eighteenth century that deaf people were “dull” and animal-like. Over time, as the education of deaf people increasingly became an issue, such comparisons between the deaf and animals likewise became more frequent. Education (and oralism) was perceived to be a means by which deaf people’s apparent animal-like way of being could be improved and erased. Jacques Derrida has been the most noteworthy critic of this kind of phonocentrism; recent linguistic and neurolinguistic studies have also shown that spoken language is just one of the many ways in which a human being is “coded” to communicate.³

Together with the overarching audism of modern, western societies, recent medical developments (especially the Cochlear implant) and educational normalization have lead to the most predominant bioethical question that Deaf Studies – and Deaf communities – are currently facing: that of the right to exist. Writing about the extrinsic value of Deaf communities and sign languages, H-Dirksen L. Bauman and Joseph J. Murray write that “[t]he task of Deaf Studies in the new century is to ask a fundamental question: How does being Deaf reorganize what it means to be human?”⁴ These issues do not directly pertain to the Middle Ages, when sign language in the modern sense of the word and practice did not exist,⁵ and when deafness, although occasionally discussed in medical texts, was largely considered incurable.⁶ However, questions about the ability to participate, especially in the religious life that was central to all communities, were prevalent in the case of the deaf. This intermingles with a longstanding discussion—one that had existed since Antiquity—about (congenitally) deaf people’s level of intelligence and whether they were somehow lesser humans because of their impairment.⁷ Such notions have had long-lasting implications, but, as will be discussed in this chapter, the lived realities of the deaf in the late Middle Ages were far more diverse than one might have imagined.

Throughout the medieval period, deafness appeared as a distinctive type of disability because of the inevitable problems and challenges that it posed to communication in a largely oral society. This pertains especially to congenital/pre-lingual deafness, which prevented a child from learning to speak. Already in Antiquity, views towards deafness and the deaf largely depended on whether the deafness was pre-lingual or acquired later in life.⁸ Medieval canon law and secular law collections imposed several restrictions on deaf people's ability to function in society, especially if the deafness was congenital. These restrictions mostly pertained to those of a higher social standing: law codes, for example, forbade the deaf from acting as judges or plaintiffs, and in many cases from inheriting if they were unable to stipulate—that is, if they could not communicate properly or, according to some lawyers, understand the transaction.⁹ Furthermore, as is well known, a priest was supposed to be physically healthy. For minor impairments it was possible to seek dispensation, but the rules were strict and deaf/deaf-mute men were most certainly denied the ability to be ordained.¹⁰

A note on nomenclature is useful here. The Latin word for a deaf person is *surdus*. However, mute and deafmute were often lumped together, since congenital deafness causes an inability to speak. Therefore *mutus/muta* often refers to someone congenitally deafmute, whereas a person described as *surdus/surda* may have retained their ability to speak, meaning that their deafness was likely caused by an accident, illness, or old age.¹¹ Although the term “deaf-mute” is considered highly derogatory in modern society, in this article we use it when directly referring to the writings of medieval authors. In modern society, “Deaf” or “Deafness” with an upper-case

“D” refer to deaf culture¹²; since this concept did not exist in medieval society, we use the term with a lower-case “d”.

Augustine’s legacy

Augustine of Hippo is the most influential theologian to have written about religion and the deaf, and his writings have been most often interpreted to mean that the ability to hear was a prerequisite for religious understanding, and thus for salvation. He states this claim in his *Contra Iulianum*, pointing to those who are born blind, deaf or feeble-minded (*fatuus*) as examples of original sin passing from parents’ to their offspring:

But, since you also deny that an infant is subject to original sin, you must answer why such great innocence is sometimes born blind; sometimes, deaf. Deafness is a hindrance to faith itself, as the Apostle says: “Faith is from hearing”. Indeed, if nothing deserving punishment passes from parents to infants, who could bear to see the image of God, which is, you say, adorned with the gift of innocence, sometimes born feeble-minded, since this touches the soul itself?¹³

This reasoning led to the conclusion that the deaf (and especially the congenitally deaf) were doomed to damnation. Such literal interpretation of Rom. 10:17 (*Ergo fides ex auditu*) circulated in late Antiquity, but was not universally acknowledged. Jerome, in fact, refuted the reading in a passage that has to our knowledge gone unnoticed in disability history. In *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Galatas*, he responds to the claim that from Rom. 10:17 it follows that the congenitally deaf (*qui surdi nati sunt*) cannot be Christians. Jerome thought that the Gospel

could be taught with sign language: “Moreover, one who tries to solve this conundrum will first attempt to assert that the deaf are able to learn the Gospel by means of nods, everyday routines, and the so-called talking gesticulation of the entire body. Then he will point out that the words of God, to which nothing is deaf, speak instead to the ears about which God himself says in the Gospel, ‘He who has ears, let him hear.’” Jerome further stresses that learning the word of God does not require physical ears, in other words hearing ability: “Furthermore, as I have explained on many occasions, the soul, like the body, has its own limbs and sensory faculties, among which are these [figurative] ears. Whoever has these will not need physical ears to apprehend the Gospel of Christ.”¹⁴

Augustine’s writing has, however, dominated modern scholarship, and his exposition of Paul’s words has for a long time been repeated as a clear example of ancient prejudices against the disabled. Recently, many historians have adopted more diverse views about Augustine’s thought. For example, Scott G. Bruce, Leslie A. King, and John Vickrey Van Cleve and Barry A. Crouch deem this interpretation of Augustine’s thinking as completely false, proposing instead that Augustine’s views were much more inclusive and diverse. In his thinking, they argue, deafness was a *hindrance* for religion, not an inevitable barrier.¹⁵ Irina Metzler, on the other hand, still accepts that Augustine’s theological view in the *Contra Iulianum* condemned the deaf to a theologically inferior position.¹⁶

Augustine’s views on deafness were indeed diverse. Two passages in his other writings present a completely different view from that cited above. In the *De quantitate animae liber unus*, written as a dialogue with Evodius of Uzalis, Augustine proposes that the deaf can be educated, that they

can learn, and, furthermore, that using signs also pertains to the soul. As an example of the education of the deaf, he tells of a young man in Milan, fair in body and most courteous in demeanor, who was a deafmute and could only communicate with signs. In the *De magistro*, Augustine gives sign language used by the deaf as an example of how complex ideas and actions can be discussed without spoken words.¹⁷ Consequently, there would be no intellectual or communicative obstacle to a deaf person learning the Christian doctrine and receiving salvation.

How can we consolidate these two views of Augustine's writings about the deaf, one positive and the other negative? In fact, we cannot, and there is no reason why we should even try. One has to recognize an often-ignored question of timing: Augustine wrote the *De quantitate animae* in Rome in 388 soon after his own baptism, and the *De magistro* followed almost immediately thereafter (388/389). These two early works, which contain the more positive view of deafness, are the musings of a recent convert reflecting on his own liberal arts education as it pertained to Christian doctrine.¹⁸ Especially in the *De magistro*, Augustine was interested in the nature of language and signs, and pushed towards the extremes of their definitions. This is the context in which Augustine's interest in sign language should be understood: it was not for emancipating the deaf but rather an intellectual exercise about what constitutes signs, words and language. The *Contra Iulianum*, by contrast, is the work of a mature theologian who was by then (c.421) the bishop of Hippo and seeking to counter Julian of Eclanum's attack against his doctrine of original sin.¹⁹ Although some scholars have preferred the more benign view on deafness that appeared in the *De magistro* and the *De quantitate animae*,²⁰ it was actually the *Contra Iulianum* in which Augustine pronounced an explicit theological statement: the deaf are inferior in their understanding of faith, and the congenitally deaf suffer due to original sin passed through their

parents. Above all, one has to recognise that Augustine never tried to formulate a coherent view of deafness: what we have from him are these three passages written over the course of more than thirty years, each used as an example in debates about topics that had nothing to do with disability.

Deafness in the Later Medieval Church: Confession, Free Will and Pastoral Care

Augustine's work does, nevertheless, manage to reflect issues that became of practical importance for the high and late medieval Church: the necessity of communicating theological questions to the deaf and the practical difficulty of doing so. Deafness was thus a theological issue, but primarily at the level of pastoral theology, expressed in manuals and catechetical treatises. In what follows, we focus on the normative instructions and regulations contained in confessors' manuals, as well as the practical, religious consequences arising from the theological views on which they were based. When we think about the everyday life and social status of the deaf, religion and the ability to participate in religious life were critically important. Religious life, or lived religion, was tightly interwoven into social relations at all levels. It offered a way for people to perform themselves and their position within society, and it linked an individual experience to that of the larger community in which he/she lived.²¹ The study of pastoral care, above all confession and other sacraments, preaching, and catechesis, is perhaps the best way to examine both lived religion and the ideas of medieval theologians without creating unnecessary binaries between popular and elite religion.²² This idea is also the basic viewpoint of this article, wherein our aim is to explore the interplay between theological views on deafness and their practical implications.

Canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 famously ordained that every Christian who had attained the age of reason had to confess his sins at least once a year to his parish pastor or, with the latter's permission, to another priest. This resulted in a flood of literature—confessors' manuals (*libri confessionales*)—that focused on pastoral care and that provided the necessary instructions and education for parish priests responsible for confessionals.²³ These works appeared especially often in the thirteenth century and were written mostly by Franciscans and Dominicans.²⁴ As Jacqueline Murray notes, these manuals “provide us with a window onto the moral universe of the Middle Ages”. They offer insight into the questions that the confessor was supposed to ask, and the types of values and morals that he was expected to teach his parishioners. Furthermore, as the manuals had a very practical purpose, they not only instructed the confessor in his tasks, but also reflected the laity's values.²⁵ Yet at the same time, there existed a close connection between these manuals for confessors and the works of school theologians and canonists. The manuals were thus a media that facilitated the dissemination of medieval theology at the level of the parish clergy and his flock.²⁶ Often the manuals were organized according to the Seven Deadly Sins, but some writers also used the Decalogue and the Seven Sacraments for this purpose, or mixed two or three of these together.²⁷

We use a representative selection of these texts, from Raymond of Penyafort's fundamental and extremely influential *Summa de casibus poenitentiae* to late medieval “best-sellers” such as Bartholomeus de Sancto Concordio's *Summa pisanella*, to explore both the ways in which the writers of these texts discussed the religious participation of the deaf, and the potential implications of their views on the actual religious participation of the deaf in their communities.

It is, however, important to highlight from the very beginning that not all manual authors mentioned deafness in their work. There are important, well-known manuals such as Robert of Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne* and Alain de Lille's *Liber poenitentialis* that do not touch the topic at all. Others, such as the *Summa rosella* by the Franciscan Baptista de Salis, published between 1480 and 1490, use "deaf" (*surdus*) as a separate title and index term.²⁸ As is always the case with normative sources, deducing exactly how commonly they influenced direct interaction between people is difficult. However, the fact that deafness was a topic frequently discussed in confessors' manuals demonstrates that it held cultural, religious, and societal importance.

When the writers discussed the topic of deafness, they did so through three topics: sexual behaviour in marriage, and in relation to two different sacraments, confession and marriage. We will begin with correct versus improper sexual behavior. Confessors' manuals drew heavily on earlier penitentials and reflected the Church Fathers' ideas about the periods during which a married couple should abstain from sex—in particular Church feast days (for the sake of fasting and impurity created by sexual acts) and during the woman's menstrual period, pregnancy, and lactation. The authors of the earlier penitentials shared the views of Pseudo-Gregory and the Fathers that, even in marriage, sex was impure and sinful, and that engaging in it was a concession to the need to produce children. Periods of abstinence were needed both to legitimize the marriage and to avoid sin. Periodic abstinence was thus a virtue, and separated marital sex from fornication.²⁹ Some of our writers stated the belief—based on Mosaic law that sex during menstruation resulted in impurity—that many children who had been conceived during menstruation or pregnancy were somehow infirm. Another common idea was that childbirth itself resulted in ritual impurity.³⁰ Most often, the manuals stated that having sex during

menstruation would result in the birth of a “leprous” child. Thomas of Chobham discussed the matter of sex during menstruation under the sin of adultery.³¹ According to medieval canon law historian James Brundage, this thinking appears to have originated among Christian writers: despite the existence of “purity laws,” such views were expressed neither in Hebrew Scriptures nor in the writings of ancient anatomists.³²

Deafness or muteness were not such common conditions that they warranted specific mention as the result of illicit marital sex, but occasionally the idea was raised. The *Ayembyte of Inwyte*, a Kentish translation of the *Le Somme de Roi* and intended for a non-educated audience, stated that a child conceived during menstruation would be crooked, blind, leprous, deaf, or dumb. In this text, the issue is discussed among the acts that make marriage sinful; the others include being married for the sole sake of satisfying lust and having carnal relations in holy places.³³ (See Gloria Frost’s chapter in this volume on the various causes of congenital disability.) However, most writers of the manuals do not mention the issue even in passing; all in all, ritual impurity appears to have been a minor issue for most thirteenth- and fourteenth-century authors.³⁴

Nevertheless, religious and cultural views did exist holding that parental sins, especially sexual ones, could result in a child’s congenital disability,³⁵ the extent to which this issue was raised during confession remains unclear.³⁶ More often and in more detail, deafness appears in relation to two sacraments of the medieval Catholic Church: marriage and confessions. We can give a more thorough treatment to them.

Marriage

As indicated above, confessors' manuals instructed parish priests about the seven sacraments. Of the seven, deafness/muteness was most often connected to marriage, which became a sacrament of the western Church only in the first half of the twelfth century. In the thinking of medieval theologians, marriage offered a remedy to lust (one of the seven cardinal sins) and was thus under the Church's jurisdiction. There is not space here to examine the development of marriage as a sacrament, but suffice it to say that by the time the confessors' manuals were written, the ritual was well-established. As theological historian Philip L. Reynolds argues, marriage was "a mode of participating in the life of the church" and, although inferior to celibacy and religious vocations, it was so "only in degree and not in kind".³⁷ Deafness/muteness, in turn, appears in the manuals' discussions of the sacrament of marriage because it intertwines with the medieval consent doctrine, whose origins were both theological and legal. Peter Lombard made the definitive statement about this matter in the 1150s, in his *De sententiae*. According to Peter, consent expressed in words is the efficient cause of matrimony. He also writes that if the couple "consent[s] mentally without expressing themselves in words or with other unambiguous signs, then such consent does not make marriage."³⁸ Although the spoken word was the norm, then, the practicalities of the time meant that customs varied, and partners could follow established customs to "establish the sense and the tense of their signs" as long as such signs were unambiguous.³⁹ Therefore, the deafmute, as well as spouses who did not share a common language, could use non-verbal signs to indicate consent.⁴⁰ Gratian's *Decretals* also point in this direction: the mad could not marry as they lacked the understanding (i.e., mental capacity) to do so, but there was no ban against deaf people getting married.⁴¹

One of the most influential authors of a confessors' manual, Raymond of Penyafort, wrote his *Summa de casibus poenitentiae* between 1224 and 1226 as a guide for his fellow Dominicans who took confessions. He followed the views of Peter Lombard and Gratian (the latter was a known influence on his work). He simply states that anyone who can consent (*consentire*) can marry – he does not even exclude the mad but writes that they can do so if they have lucid moments.⁴² Raymond was also a canon lawyer and decretalist. In the great canon law collection that he compiled, the *Liber extra* commissioned by Pope Gregory IX and completed in 1234, there is a more explicit approval a deafmute joining with someone in marriage: “he cannot or should not be denied, since what he cannot declare with words he is able to do with signs.”⁴³ What mattered is that marriage is based on the free will of the parties involved: if they can express their consent by signs, there is no theological basis on which to deny the marriage.

Other writers followed Raymond's example, some of them in very laconic statements. The English theologian and subdeacon Thomas of Chobham (d. 1233–1236), states in his *Summa Confessorum* that a monastic vow can be completed without words “just like a mute can confirm his consent in marriage with some signs”.⁴⁴ The Franciscan Monaldus de Iustinopoli (Capodistria) (d. ca 1285) was of the same opinion: “the mute and deaf can well enter into matrimony with signs and nods if not with words”.⁴⁵ In the early-sixteenth century, Sylvestro da Priorio (d. 1523) was likewise concise in his *Summa*, referring to the judgement of decretalists Hostiensis (Henry of Segusio, d. 1271) and Panormitanus (Nicholaus de Tudeschis, d. 1445 or 1453):⁴⁶ “whether a deaf or a blind alike can enter into matrimony, according to Hostiensis, as Panormitanus recites in the chapter ‘cum apud. de spon.’, if he can express his consent to the [marriage] contract, he should be admitted, otherwise he is rejected.”⁴⁷ In fact, Sylvestro

probably adopted this passage from an earlier confessors' manual, the already mentioned *Summa rosella* by the Franciscan Baptista de Salis, who discussed the question under a specific title "surdus".⁴⁸

Baptista's opinion is worth looking at more closely. He starts with the usual question about whether a deaf or mute can enter into marriage, but adds a blind man into the list. First, he offers a rationale in favour of marriage: such a man can know women naturally, therefore he has "natural reason" (*ratio naturalis*) to marry. Against it, he says that if one has never seen or heard how a marriage contract is made, he cannot know what matrimony is and thus cannot consent to it.⁴⁹ Again, the crucial point is free will and consent. After this introduction to the problem, Baptista refers to the authority of the decretalists Hostiensis and Panormitanus, namely that if one can express his consent, he must be permitted to marry. According to Baptista, it is up to a "discreet judge" to consider the intended meaning "from actions and signs" (*ex gestis enim et signis*); when doubt remains, he must consult the secular prince.⁵⁰ At the end, Baptista recounts an example of the marriage of a deafmute from his own days:

In the present times we have seen deaf and mute to enter into marriage. And above all we have [an example] of a woman deaf and mute since her birth, who entered into marriage with a man through signs and nods and stayed with him for forty years and more, and they both still live and she very well knows the forces and nature of matrimony, as it is clear first with regards to inseparability, of which she lived with him for so many years. Secondly with regards to good faith, because she is of such virtue and continence that she would not permit anyone but

his husband to touch or kiss her. Which is indeed a miracle, for her husband was an adulterer and he desired that it would become to separation between them.⁵¹

Baptista's account has too much flavour of a moral *exemplum* to be regarded as the life-story of a real deaf woman in the fifteenth century.⁵² Yet even if the story is partly or mostly fictional, it is noteworthy that a deafmute woman takes the role of a humble, pious and virtuous wife who patiently suffered her adulterous husband. There is a bitter tone in Baptista's story: not only did the deaf woman understand the ideal of a Christian wife, she also came to understand the true nature of married life in this world. One should ask if she was an entirely positive character after all: yes, she was the humble and suffering protagonist but at the same time the reader can picture an easily misled deaf wife staying at home while her husband entertained lovers around the village.

How often deaf people actually married is, of course, impossible to know. In hagiographic material there are sporadic examples of deafness mentioned as a hindrance to a young woman's attempts to marry.⁵³ At the same time, there are equally sporadic examples of deaf people marrying. One set of English administrative records known as Patent Rolls (*Rotuli litterarum patentium*) includes an ordination that the brother-in-law of a congenitally deaf man, John de Orleton, must keep his promises and out of his income maintain not just John but also his wife and children.⁵⁴ Another English legal document discusses the marriage of a woman called Margaret who was the daughter and heir of Nicholas de Layburn. The document states that her guardians were supposed to ensure that she was not married against her will, and that if she were to be married, she would not be "disparaged".⁵⁵ The legal case is related to the shift in the English law after the mid-thirteenth-century. Both mentally incapacitated and deaf-mute heirs were appointed a custodian. Before the shift, these custodians were typically family members or

representatives of their lords; later, control over their inheritances was transferred to the king and the custodians that he chose.⁵⁶

The deaf in the Middle Ages certainly faced challenges when they wanted to marry, but the evidence shows that they did marry, and that they were permitted to do so according to theologians and canon lawyers. The confessors' manuals, when discussing the deaf and matrimony, did not speculate about the possibility of a deaf parent having deaf children. Their main concern was securing unambiguous consent for the marriage itself. One can easily imagine this being a real problem during a time without systematic sign language. Above all, it is worth stressing that medieval canon law was more permissive towards the deaf than twentieth-century legislation in many Western countries: in Finland, for example, marriage laws prohibited a congenitally deaf person from marrying another congenitally deaf person between 1929 and 1969.⁵⁷

Confession

If consent to marry someone was difficult to express with signs and nods to a priest who likely had little or no knowledge of sign language, even more challenging was the sacrament of penance. If contrition of the heart was to be followed by confession of the mouth,⁵⁸ what to do when the confessant was unable to speak or hear the confessor's instructions?

Again, Raymond of Penyafort set the example that others then followed, at times quoting his work almost verbatim. The deaf and mute are mentioned under other "doubtful" (*dubitabilia*)

cases, such as the blind, the mad, and the possessed (*demonicacos*),⁵⁹ and Raymond asks what a priest should do if he knows that he has such a parishioner living in mortal sin. He proclaims: “if he (the priest) calls a deaf [person] to make penitence, it does not help, because he cannot hear. If a mute, he cannot confess.” He also notes that “others cannot understand anything due to infirmity.”⁶⁰ The last comment is difficult to interpret: Raymond may mean either those in the last stages of a serious illness or someone suffering from a mental defect that impedes understanding. Nevertheless, for all cases Raymond proposes the following solution:

The priest must do what he can to introduce them to contrition and full penitence, according to what is possible, namely with words, texts, gestures and signs and in other ways he can. If he cannot accomplish it, he should pray to the Lord and have his people pray, so that the Lord may enlighten their hearts to penitence. And when he would have omitted nothing of those things belonging to him, it is not accounted to his fault.⁶¹

Raymond’s solution was still being repeated, in a summary form, in late-fifteenth-century confessors’ manuals.⁶² It can thus be regarded as a standard medieval response to the quandry of how to take confession from the deaf. There are several points to consider in Raymond’s response. First and foremost, the parish priest was expected to do *what he could* in order to induce the deaf to confession and penance. This was, without doubt, the preferred solution, and at least in theory a priest who was charged with deaf, mute or mentally unstable people was to do all in his power to make them understand their sins and to repent them. When all else failed, he should pray to the Lord along with his entire parish, so that God could reach the sinner with whom the priest was unable to communicate. This adds a communal and social element to the

religious life of the deaf and other disabled people: participation in the yearly confession and the communion at Easter was, in the late medieval Church, one of the most significant moments of the year. Participating meant belonging to the community of faithful, and at the same time to one's local community. Avoiding the communion was considered extremely suspicious; even the late medieval Waldensians habitually confessed to their parish priests to avoid suspicion of heresy, although they deemed such confessions invalid.⁶³ Consequently, if a disabled person was excluded from confession, penance and communion due to his disability, he was denied not only salvation but also social participation. Therefore, it is understandable that Raymond instructs the priest to do his best to avoid that kind of situation, and should this fail, to integrate the person into the community through common prayer for his or her soul. This is, of course, an ideal picture; nevertheless, it demonstrates an attempt to include as many people in religious life as possible.

There is, however, a condescending undertone in Raymond's instruction. Although he depicts the challenge as a problem of communication, the comparison to mad and possessed persons conveys an ancient connotation of the deaf as dumb and mentally defected. The inability to hear and speak was perceived as a lesser ability to think.⁶⁴ In contemporary disability studies, this phenomenon is called 'disability spread,' which occurs when one makes a hasty generalization on the basis of a particular disability. Although Raymond considered that deaf people had the ability to be contrite and penitent, if somehow instructed to it, he apparently had no great expectations about their intellectual abilities. However, at least one medieval author of a confessor's manual had higher regard for the intelligence of mutes. The already mentioned thirteenth-century theologian Thomas of Chobham proposed that if a mute person (*mutus*) could

write, he should write down his sins. Although *mutus* often referred to the congenitally deafmute, here Thomas obviously meant a person who was able to hear, as he also proposed that when the priest read the written sins, the mute should show with some signs that he confessed the sins and felt contrition.⁶⁵

Devotion and religious participation

Although meant for very practical purposes, the manuals primarily show one side of the story: that of a priest and theologian. Ordinary deaf parishioners and their religious experiences and views, or even the views of their community members, are mostly missing from our sources. One very particular miracle case may, however, shed light on the matter, raising illuminating questions about the relationship between hearing ability and faith. Although not a very common type of a miracle, cures of the deaf had been recorded in different kinds of hagiographic texts since Antiquity – healing the deaf and the mute is, after all, one of the fundamental types of miracle performed by Christ.⁶⁶

The cure of young man of deafmuteness was investigated during the canonization inquest of St Louis of France, conducted in Saint-Denis in 1282–1283. The records of the process are now lost, but Franciscan friar Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, who was the confessor of Louis' widow Queen Margaret of Provence, compiled his *Vie et miracles* based on the documents. Especially in the case of miracles, the text is deemed to be a faithful representation of the original source.⁶⁷ It is not possible to reconstruct the actual witness accounts, but it is clear that the youth himself had testified in front of the papal commissaries managing the inquest.

As a child, the youth had been “found” outside the castle of Orgelet, owned by the count and countess of Auxerre, and taken in by the castle’s smith named Gauchier. He first worked for the smith and later in the countess’ kitchen, where he communicated with others using signs. In his early twenties, he left the castle following an argument with the chamberlain, and joined the royal entourage that was carrying Louis’s bones from the Holy Land to the Church of Saint-Denis. Upon kneeling down at Louis’ grave, the youth began to hear. The sudden voices shocked him greatly and made him flee. Eventually he returned to Orgelet, where Gauchier and others taught him to speak. To honour the saint who had cured him, the youth took the name Loÿs.

Loÿs’ extraordinary story has been analysed in several studies,⁶⁸ and it is indeed an exceptionally detailed account of the socialization of and working opportunities available to an (apparently) congenitally deaf boy. It also speaks to the identity crisis faced by someone who regains his hearing later in life. For our current discussion, its religious dimensions are particularly consequential. The narrative states:

When he was with Gauchier and his wife and with the said countess, he had often seen them go to church and pray there and have devotion, and kneel and raise their eyes with their hands joined together and raised to the sky. For that reason he now went to the church [of Saint Denis] but not because he knew what a church was or what devotion was. [...] And thus it happened that when the blessed king was entombed, because he saw the other men kneeling and praying at the tomb, he too knelt and joined his hands without knowing what he was doing.⁶⁹

Loÿs' lack of devotion at the time of his miracle was a theological problem for those conducting the canonization inquiry. Personal devotion was considered crucial for obtaining a miracle, but in this particular case there was none since Loÿs' understanding of religion was completely insufficient. The commissioners inquired how Loÿs could be sure that his cure was due to the saintly king's merits, to which he replied that he saw no other possible explanation.⁷⁰ Apparently the commissioners were satisfied with the response – perhaps other evidence was convincing enough. In the end, the text records Loÿs' ability to say Ave Maria and Lord's Prayer as the final proofs of his cured state. The miracle thus did not simply give him his hearing, but it gave him religious understanding.

Loÿs' story was also recorded in an earlier list of St Louis' miracles, compiled at the royal court by the Franciscan historian Guillaume de Chartres before the canonization inquest. In his much shorter and more conventional version of the miracle, Guillaume narrates that Loÿs's decision to go to Saint-Denis was not accidental but rather taken after he had been told by signs about the saintly king's miracles.⁷¹ This version better suited the court's intentions to have Louis canonized, as it was far less controversial. What is interesting here, however, is that Guillaume de Chartres considered it credible that Loÿs could have been taught about miracles, even if that was not the case in real life. Similarly, in the long and detailed testimonies about the miraculous cure of another congenitally deafmute youth (Jacobus de Venetiis, recorded in the mid-fifteenth century canonization process of St Bernardino of Siena), it seems that the young man had travelled from Venice to L'Aquila on purpose. At least none of the educated, critical witnesses questioned him being there; after finding proof that he really had been deaf and mute and that his cure was no hoax, they accepted his story. Particularly illuminating in this sense is the testimony

of *frater* Andreas. He explained that Johannes had wanted to go to the chapel where Bernardino's grave was, so his journey clearly had a purpose. He too had communicated his wishes by signs.⁷²

Both confessors' manuals and the hagiography discussed above repeatedly mention signs and nods/gestures. They do not explicate what is meant by these, but the general atmosphere of difficult, even impossible communication of abstract matters implies that none of the authors assumed a shared sign language. This seems to confirm the existing view that systematic sign languages in Europe emerged only from the early modern period onward. There existed several highly advanced sign languages in medieval monastic communities vowed to silence, but scholars have been sceptical about their use in deaf laypeople's lives.⁷³ The texts analysed here do not alter this picture: none of the confessors' manuals refer to the possibility of monastic sign language as a means of communicating with a deaf person.

That understanding was a prerequisite of true devotion is in itself a sign of the theological development that took place in the high and late medieval Church. From the annual confession to pastoral education on the Creed, Ave Maria, the Lord's Prayer and basic articles of faith, the laity was required to know the fundamentals of Christian theology.⁷⁴ Deafness, muteness and mental disabilities now caused new problems: how to ascertain that a person confessed and on top of that actually understood what and why they confessed? Both the manuals of confession and the miracle of Loÿs reflect this uncertainty from the clergy's perspective. It was no longer enough to be a blessed fool more pious than erudite men, whom Augustine had once described and praised (adding yet another layer to the complexity of his views on disability).⁷⁵ No miracle

case can be read as a description of the “actual” course of the events, not even those recorded in canonization inquests (which were juridical procedures). Nevertheless, they reflect cultural and theological ideas about lay piety and devotion. When it comes to deafness and deaf persons, they can also be read as examples of what was expected of their religious socialization and communication. Given the limits of the sign-language of the time, the level of religious understanding among the pre-lingually deaf was most likely left incomplete, at least usually. This did not make it a trivial matter, however, but a question that was important for theologians, parish priests, and communities alike.

Deafness and religious understanding

The high and late medieval Church expanded its pastoral obligations and directed its gaze to the souls of individual believers through confession, penance and increased catechesis. Some minds were harder to reach than others: the authors and compilers of confessors’ manuals soon realised certain “dubious” cases, as Raymond of Penyafort expressed. The congenitally or pre-lingually deaf were one of the most challenging confessants a medieval parish priest would encounter. Relying on signs, nods and expressions, the priest remained uncertain both whether he had understood the confessants’ intentions and whether or not the penitent had understood his guidance – or if he or she had understood the concepts of sin, contrition, absolution and satisfaction at all. The same problem appeared with regards to marriage, a sacrament for which medieval canon law stressed the free will and consent of the parties involved. Confessors’ manuals’ approach to these problems was above all practical and tried to solve the fundamental problem of communication. The confessor should do his best to introduce a deaf person to confession and penitence. If the intention and consent to marry could be safely inferred from the

signs and nods of a deaf person, there were no grounds to deny the marriage. There was a genuine will to ascertain at least minimum participation in the sacraments.

Below this practical layer there was also a lingering uncertainty about the intellectual abilities of the deaf and mute. When a priest was unable to communicate little beyond concrete things and simple yes or no questions, he had no means to be certain what a deaf person thought about the Church's teachings. Therefore, the attitude of the confessors' manuals is also condescending towards the deaf: they are sometimes bundled together with the mad and mentally defected. It is very difficult to reach an average medieval opinion about the mental capabilities of the deaf, but there were few thinkers who were able to separate between a disorder in a person's sensory organs and his or her intelligence. Irina Metzler mentions Jean de Jandun, a French scholastic in the early-fourteenth century, who was able to determine that a congenitally deaf person's inability to speak was caused by the lack of exposure to speech, not by the lack of neural connection between the ear and vocal organs. This distinction, in theory, allowed him to perceive deafness simply as an inability to hear, not as a more comprehensive neural or mental defect. However, as Metzler herself proclaims, it took until the seventeenth century before such ideas were developed enough for the deaf to be seen as intelligent like the rest of humanity.⁷⁶ Jean de Jandun was an exception, and there is no reason to assume that the authors of the confessors' manuals harbored any great expectations about the deafs' capacity for religious understanding. Of course, it is worth asking if they thought any better of some of the hearing laypeople.

One should neither idealize nor have an overly pessimistic view of the opportunities for religious life among the deaf in the Middle Ages. On one hand, in the absence of a systematic sign

language, their participation in devotional life and especially their ability to attain a deeper understanding of theology must have remained quite limited. On the other hand, the deaf were not systematically excluded from marriage, and the parish priests were instructed to do their best so that they could somehow participate in the yearly confession and receive absolution. From the perspective of human rights, the bare minimum is not enough. Yet in some ways the medieval Church made more effort toward the deaf than did many societies in the following centuries.

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¹ Groce, *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language*, pp. 2–5; Dresser, *Martha's Vineyard*, esp. 46–51.

² Bauman, “Audism: exploring the metaphysics of oppression,” 239–241.

³ Derrida’s work *On Grammatology* is the main work on this; for citation and discussion about Derrida, see Bauman, “Audism: exploring the metaphysics of oppression”, 242–245. See also Baynton, *Forbidden Signs*, esp. 51–56; Bauman, “Listening to Phonocentrism with Deaf Eyes”.

⁴ Bauman & Murray, “Deaf Studies in the 21st Century” (quotation on p. 243).

⁵ Metzler, “Perceptions of Deafness,” 86; Bragg, “Visual-Kinetic Communication in Europe before 1600”.

⁶ Metzler, *Disability in Medieval Europe*, p. 102; Metzler, “Perceptions of Deafness,” 89–90; Laes, “Silent Witnesses,” 472.

⁷ Laes, “Silent Witnesses”; Metzler, “Perceptions of Deafness,” 94–95.

⁸ On antiquity, see Laes, “Silent Witnesses,” 460–473

⁹ See Metzler, ‘Reflections on Disability’, p. 22; Pfau, *Madness in the Realm*, 106–107, and Turner, *Care and Custody*, 37–38, who writes that those born deaf-mute were likely to be

skipped in the line of inheritance. For original texts concerning the inheritance of the deaf-mute, see *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, ed. by Mommsen and Krüger, *Dig.* 37,3,2; *Dig.* 45,1,1; *Dig.* 44,7,1; *Cod.* 6,22,10; Henrici de Bracton, *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliæ*, Vol. 3, p. 300, Vol. 4, p. 178; *Britton*, ed. and trans. by Nichols, chapter 22, cap. 11 (p. 456); *Fleta*, vol. 4, ed. and trans. by Richardson and Sayles, book VI, cap. 40. The English collection “*Bracton*” directly differentiates between congenital deafness and that acquired later in life, as it states that those who were naturally deaf and dumb are classed as unable to stipulate: Henrici de Bracton, *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliæ*, Vol. 4, pp. 178, 309. On the legal restrictions placed on the deaf-mute in Antiquity, see Laes, ‘Silent Witnesses’, pp. 465–467.

¹⁰ Salonen, *The Penitentiary as a Well of Grace*, pp. 156, 179–180, 341–343; Salonen and Hanska, *Entering a Clerical Career*, pp. 9, 12, 103, 115–117, 122–129

¹¹ Metzler, “Perceptions of Deafness in the Central Middle Ages,” 80–81

¹² See e.g. Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture*, 32–35.

¹³ Augustinus, *Contra Iulianum*, III, cap. 4. PL 44, col. 707. Translated in *Fathers of the Church*, vol 35, p. 115.

¹⁴ Hieronymus, *Commentaria in Epistolam ad Galatas*, I, cap 3, vers 2. PL 26, col. 349B–349D. Translated in *Fathers of the Church*, vol 121, p. 122

¹⁵ Van Cleve and Crouch, *A Place of their Own*, 4–6; Bruce, *Silence and Sign Language in Medieval Monasticism*, 174–175; King, “*Surditas*: The Understandings of the Deaf and Deafness in the Writings of Augustine, Jerome, and Bede”, cited in Bruce, *Silence and Sign Language*, 174.

¹⁶ Metzler, “Perceptions of Deafness in the Central Middle Ages,” 79–80, 85.

¹⁷ Augustinus, *De quantitate animae*, cap 18, PL 32, col 1052–1053; *De magistro*, cap. 3, PL 32, col 1197; see also Van Cleve and Crouch, *A Place of their Own*, 4–5; Bruce, *Silence and Sign Language in Medieval Monasticism*, 174; Metzler, “Perceptions of Deafness in the Central Middle Ages,” 85.

¹⁸ Peter Brown has characterized Augustine’s life from September 386 to his ordination as a priest in 391 as ‘Christian otium’, meaning retirement from public life to pursue creative leisure in serious pursuits. See Brown, *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography*, pp. 115–127, cf. p. 134 where Brown states that this intellectual programme started to fade around the time Augustine finished the *De magistro*.

¹⁹ Datings according to Allan Fitzgerald & John C. Cavadini, ed., *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*.

²⁰ See n. 14 above.

²¹ See Katajala-Peltomaa and Toivo, “Religion as Experience”. See also Biller, “Confession”, for the relevance of this term for the study of medieval confession.

²² Reeves, ““The Cure of Souls is the Art of Arts:””, p. 373.

²³ Manuals for confessors had existed earlier, but their production picked up in the thirteenth century. For the earlier texts see Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe, 600–1200*. A classic survey of the manuals for confessors between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries is Michaud-Quantin, *Sommes de casuistique et manuels de confession au moyen âge*.

²⁴ For these developments, see Biller, “Confession,” esp. 7–9.

²⁵ Murray, “Gendered Souls in Sexed Bodies”, 82.

²⁶ Boyle, “The Fourth Lateran Council and Manuals of Popular Theology”; Reeves, ““The Cure of Souls is the Art of Arts,” 374–375.

²⁷ Murray, “Gendered Souls in Sexed Bodies,” 83.

²⁸ Baptista de Salis, *Summa rosella*, p. 488: “Surdus. Utrum surdus mutus et cecus si[mu]l possint contrahere matrimonium”. On Baptista’s *Summa*, see Michaud-Quantin, *Sommes de casuistique et manuels de confession au moyen âge*, 98–99.

²⁹ Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, 90–92, 155–158, 198–199, 242–243.

³⁰ Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, 156–157; Murray, “Gendered Souls”, 87–88; see also Metzler, *Disability in Medieval Europe*, 87.

³¹ Thomas of Chobham, *Summa confessorum*, 365: “Item, debet interdicti mulieribus ne reddant viris debitum in tempore menstruo, quia ex tali concubitu nascitur partus leprosus.”

³² Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, 156.

³³ Dan Michel, *Ayenbyte of Inwyth*, 223–224.

³⁴ Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, 451.

³⁵ For an overview of the topic, see Metzler, “Birth Defects, Causality, and Guilt”.

³⁶ Although some disabilities were thought to be caused by one’s own or one’s parents’ sins, not all disabilities were thought to be so. Instead, all illnesses and impairments resulted from the Fall and were caused by God’s will; therefore they were the shared burden of humankind. For a discussion about causality between sin and disability, see Metzler, *Disability in Medieval Europe*; Kuuliala, *Childhood Disability and Social Integration*; Frohne, *Leben mit “kranckheit”*.

³⁷ Reynolds, *How Marriage Became One of the Sacraments*, 29–31.

³⁸ Peter Lombard, *Sent.* IV. 27.3: “Efficiens autem causa Matrimonii est consensus, non quilibet, sed per verba expressus, nec de futuro sed de praesenti. [...] Item si consentiat mente, et non exprimant verbis vel aliis certis signis; nec talis consensus efficit matrimonium.”

³⁹ Reynolds, *How Marriage Became One of the Sacraments*, 157–158; Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 264.

⁴⁰ Reynolds, *How Marriage Became One of the Sacraments*, 157–158; Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 264.

⁴¹ Gratian, *Decretum*, C. 32 q. 7 c. 26, cited from *Corpus Juris Canonici*, ed. by Friedberg. See also Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 195, 243.

⁴² Raymond of Penyafort, *Summa de casibus poenitentiae*, 514.

⁴³ X 4.1 “De sponsalibus et matrimoniis”: Sane, consuluisti nos per nuncios et literas tuas, utrum mutus et surdus alicui possint matrimonialiter copulari. Ad quod fraternitati tuae taliter respondemus, quod, quum prohibitorium sit edictum de matrimonio contrahendo, ut, quicumque non prohibetur, per consequentiam admittatur, et sufficiat ad matrimonium solus consensus illorum, de quorum quarumque coniunctionibus agitur, videtur, quod, si talis velit contrahere, sibi non possit vel debeat denegari, quum quod verbis non potest signis valeat declarare

⁴⁴ Thomas of Chobham, *Summa confessorum*, 155: “Ideo autem dico voce vel opere firmata, quia licet aliquis nihil dicat ad susceptionem ordinis vel habitus, potest votum confirmare: sicut mutus per aliqua indicia potest confirmare consensum suum in matrimonio.”

⁴⁵ Monaldus de Capodistria, *Summa aurea*, fol. 133rb: “quod mutus et surdus bene possunt matrimonium contrahere signis et nutibus, licet non verbis”.

⁴⁶ On these decretalists, see Helmholz, *The Spirit of Classical Canon Law*, 24–25

⁴⁷ Sylvestro da Prierio, *Summa sylvestrina*, 450: “Surdus simul & caecus vtrum possit contrahere matrimonium, secundum Hosti. vt recitat Pan. in cap. cum apud. de spon. si potest exprimere suum consensum in contrahendo, debet admitti: aliàs repellitur.”; see also p. 242 on how the mute could ask for sacraments and enter into matrimony using signs.

⁴⁸ Cf. similar reference to Hostiensis and Panormitanus in Baptista de Salis, *Summa rosella*, 488.

⁴⁹ Baptista de Salis, *Summa rosella*, 488.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., “Hodiernis tamen temporibus vidimus surdos et mutos contraxisse matrimonium. Et maxime habemus de vna muliere surda et muta a natiuitate que contraxit matrimonium cum vno viro per signa et nutus et stetit cum eo per xl annos et plus: et adhuc ambo viuunt et optime cognoscit vires matrimonii et naturam eius: vt patet primo quo ad inseparabilitatem ex quo [sic] cohabitauit secum per tot annos. Secundo quo ad bonum fidei, quia est tante virtutis et continentie quod nec etiam ab alio quem viro suo permetteret se tangi vel osculari. Immo quod mirum est. quia vir eius adulter erat quesiuit vt fieret diuortium inter eos.”

⁵² Much has been written about the *exempla* in medieval literature. Bremond, Le Goff, and Schmitt, *L’“Exemplum”*, is a comprehensive overview of the genre.

⁵³ See Kuuliala, *Childhood Disability and Social Integration*, 114–117.

⁵⁴ CPR, Edward II, vol. 5, 62–63.

⁵⁵ CPR, Edward III, vol. 16, 181, 284.

⁵⁶ Turner, *Care and Custody*, 100–118.

⁵⁷ Mattila, *Kansamme parhaaksi*, 272.

⁵⁸ The tripartite condition of a successful penance since Gratian’s *Decretum* had been *contritio cordis*, *confessio oris* and *satisfactio operis*. See e.g. D. 1 de pen. c. 87 § 3. See also Larson, *Master of Penance*, 465.

⁵⁹ In medieval thinking, possession was not a sin, as the possessed were innocent victims. Furthermore, the demon did not enter the victim’s soul, which explains the possibility that a possessed person could confess. Then again, a typical symptom of a demoniac was to detest holy

places and the company of clerics, but they could also have lucid moments. See e.g. Katajala-Peltomaa, “A Good Wife”, esp. 74.

⁶⁰ Raymond of Penafort, *Summa Poenitentia*, § 48, p. 479: “si enim vocat surdum ad paenitentiam, non prodest, quia non audit; si mutum, non potest confiteri [--] Alii propter infirmitatem nihili intelligunt”.

⁶¹ Ibid.: “Solutio, debet sacerdos facere posse suum, vt inducat eos ad contritionem, & paenitentiam plenariam, secundum quod est possibile, scilicet verbis, vel scriptis, nutibus, & signis, & alijs modis, quibus possit. Si non potest proficere, oret ad Dominum, & faciat orare populum suum, vt Dominus illustret corda ipsorum ad penitentiam, & cum nil omiserit de contingentibus, tunc non imputabitur sibi.”

⁶² See e.g. Angelus Carletus, *Summa angelica*, fol. 51r; Nicolaus de Ausmo, *Supplementum Summae Pisanellae*, title “Confessor II”. The Franciscan Nicolaus de Ausmo’s manual (1444) is a supplement to an extremely popular fourteenth-century confessors’ manual by the Dominican Bartholomeus de Sancto Concordio (or Bartolommeo Pisano, d. 1347), the *Summa pisanella*.

⁶³ Välimäki, *Heresy in Late Medieval Germany*, 186–188.

⁶⁴ Metzler, “Perceptions of Deafness in the Central Middle Ages”, 80–81.

⁶⁵ Thomas of Chobham, *Summa Confessorum*, 220: “Sciendum est tamen quod mutus si sciat scribere bene potest confiteri peccata sua per scripturam, quia non habet aliud os per quod loqui possit. Ita tamen debet hoc fieri quod cum sacerdos legerit peccata illa scripta, debet mutus aliquo signo ostendere quod ipse confitetur peccata illa et corde dolet de illis.”

⁶⁶ Mark 7:32–37: “et adducunt ei surdum et mutum et deprecantur eum ut inponat illi manum et adprehendens eum de turba seorsum misit digitos suos in auriculas et expuens tetigit linguam eius et suspiciens in caelum ingemuit et ait illi epheta quod est adaperire et suspiciens in caelum

ingemuit et statim apertae sunt aures eius et solutum est vinculum linguae eius et loquebatur recte et praecepit illis ne cui dicerent quanto autem eis praecipiebat tanto magis plus praedicabant.”

⁶⁷ Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, 7–9; Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis*, 37–39.

⁶⁸ Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, 74–78, 89–90; Farmer, “A Deaf-mute’s Story”; Kuuliala, *Childhood Disability and Social Integration*, 57–58, 139–140, 249–251, 254–258; Metzler, *A Social History of Disability*, 200–203; Wittmer-Butsch and Rendtel, *Miracula: Wunderheilungen im Mittelalter*, 272.

⁶⁹ Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, *Les Miracles de Saint Louis*, 53: “il estoit avec le dit Gauchier et avecques sa femme et avecques la dite contesse, les avoit veuz souvent aler au mostier et ilecques proier et estre en devocion et agenoillier et lever eus, leur mains jointes au ciel, le dit Loÿs estoit alé a l’eglise, non pas por ce que il seust qu’estoit eglise ne devocion mes por ce que il veoit les autres en l’eglise agenoillier et lever les mains jointes au ciel et fere teles manieres de choses, il fesoit ausi.[...] Et de ce avint que comme le benoiet roi fust enseveli, por ce que il veoit les autres hommes agenoillier et proier au tombel, ensemment il s’agenoilloit et joignoit ses mains sanz ce que il seust que il fesoit, fors pour fer comme les autres, ne ne le fesoit por nule devocion.” A full English translation of the narrative is in Farmer, “A Deaf-Mute’s Story”.

⁷⁰ Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, *Les Miracles de Saint Louis*, 55: “Et comme l’en demandast au dit Loÿs se il creoit que il eust recue oïe et parole par les prieres et par les merites du benoiet saint Loÿs, et il eust respondu “oil”, l’en li demanda après: “Pour quoi le crois tu, comme en toi n’eust creance adonques ne foi ne devocion vers lui, fors que tu estoies au tombel vuen par cas d’aventure?” Il respondi que il ne set nule autre cause de sa creance fors que tant que il avoit

besoing de ce bienfet. De quoi il croit que pour sa misericorde le benoiet mon seigneur saint Loÿs proia Dieu por lui, et einsi reçut l'oïe, si comme il croit.”

⁷¹ Guillaume de Chartres, *De vita et actibus inclytatae recordationis regis Francorum*, 38:

“comperto per signa, quod apud sepulcrum gloriosi regis Franciae Ludovici fiebant miracula, virtute operante divina, adjunxit se quibusdam peditibus venientibus Parisius”.

⁷² Il Processo di canonizzazione di Bernardino da Siena, 82–87, 196–197.

⁷³ Metzler, “Perceptions of Deafness in the Central Middle Ages,” 86; Bruce, *Silence and Sign Language in Medieval Monasticism*, 175–176.

⁷⁴ French, *The People of the Parish*, 177; Tanner and Watson, “Least of the Laity”.

⁷⁵ *De peccatorum meritis*, cap. 32. Cited and translated in Metzler, *Fools and Idiots?*, 106.

⁷⁶ Metzler, “Perceptions of Deafness in the Central Middle Ages,” 83–85.