

Wives, Widows and Wimples Theme 10: Saints

Document 1

**WLC/LM/37: Fragment of an English 'Life of St Zita' (1450-1475, English)
Transcription by Gavin Cole. Translation by Kathryn Summerwill and Thorlac
Turville-Petre**

...did take to go a greate Journey by wey
of vicitacion of goyng to the Church
of Seint James / of Poyde . nigh vnto
Pysas þe Cite **with** a woman famylier
to hyr / Whan forsothe she had to do come
to the same Church and mekely did
offer to oure Lorde hyr prayer of the de //
liueraunce beforesaid . and the Journey
done to thende . She did go by pro //
myse to the Church of thapostill
Petyr . att the gresys // Whiche is
toward**es** the see beyonde Pysas the
Citee . V . myles / The famylier woman
goyng abak therfore did leve Cithe
gone into the Citee Pysan // and for
why whosoeu**er** purposith to do the
more goode dothe make vnlefull
the lasse goode þat he hathe lusted. Cithe
not leving the stablissed purpose
did go to the forsaid Church of the

Prince of Postelles . With meke prayour
Junyd to devoute fastyng // Now as
in the even tyme as she did come ayen
by the Citee Pysan . she was desyred
to lodgeing . but when she not willing
to graunte did come to the bathes of
the mounte Pysan / . This tyme the
Sonne beyng weste . she was moche
praide of a man well knowen to hyr
that she wolde woutsaffe from thens
forthe to take lodging // But yet
she wold not rest to abyde there/
Forsothe she vnaferd in farvour of
hyr spyritt did ou**er**passe that hyll
of Sherpe Journey // which is called
of Seint Julyan. Whereof an heremite
she was exorted to reste by greate
instance of prayers . that nott by
aventure she shuld goo in the night
of suche derkenesse // into the hand**es**
of theves / or wilde best**es** . She also...

...did undertake a great journey by way of
pilgrimage, going to the Church of St
James of Poyde [S. Jacobi de Podio], close
by the city of Pisa, with a woman familiar
to her. When indeed she had come to that
church and meekly offered to our Lord her
prayer of the deliverance aforesaid and of
the completion of the journey, she went
according to a promise to the Church of the
Apostle Peter at the Steps [Piero a Grado]
which is 5 miles towards the sea beyond
the city of Pisa. The woman friend
returning, thus left Cithe going into the city
of Pisa. And because whoever purposes to
do the greater good makes illicit the lesser
good that he has wished for, Cithe, not
leaving her fixed purpose, went to the
aforesaid Church of the

Prince of Apostles with meek prayer
together with devout fasting. Now in the
evening, as she came back by the city of
Pisa, she was offered lodging, but when
she was not willing to accept this, she
came to the baths of Mount Pisa. This time,
the sun being in the west, she was begged
by a man well known to her that she would
consent from thenceforth to take lodging.
But still she would not rest and stay there,
but in fervour of spirit climbed over that
hill of steep ascent called St Julian, where
she was exhorted by a hermit with very
insistent prayers to rest, that she would
not venture to go in so dark a night into
the hands of thieves or wild beasts. She
also...

Document 2

WLC/LM/11, f. 42r: Prayer to St Zita (1450-1475, Latin)

Transcription by Kathryn Summerwill. Translation by Julia Barrow

Salve felix famula . sitha **Jhesu Christi**.
Que cum mente sedula deo placu
isti . pauperes reficiens nudos induisti. Et
egenis omnibus ministra fuisti.
Petram manu deferens qua pectus
tundebas. Peruigil in **precibus** casta
permane
bas. Virgo que virtutibus ita flouruisti. Fac
nos frui gloria quam tu meruisti. **Versa**
O Ora pro nobis beata Sitha. **Responsorio**
Ut digni efficiamur **eterna** vita. Oratio
A Impotens sempiterna deus qui beatam
Sitham famulam tuam in nu
meris decorasti miraculis in presta
suppliciter **orantibus** vt gaudia eterna que
peccan
do **perdere** inuimus. eius suffragantibus
meritis iterin **primereri** valeamus **per**
Christum. dominum. nostrum .

Hail Sitha happy handmaid of Jesus Christ,
who pleased God with diligent mind [and]
clothed the naked poor, refreshing [them],
and were a servant to all the needy,
bearing a stone in the hand with which you
beat your breast¹. You remained watchful
in prayers, a chaste virgin who flourished
thus in virtues. Make us to enjoy the glory
which you have merited.

Verse: Pray for us, blessed Sitha.
Responsory: That we might be made
worthy of eternal life. Prayer: Almighty and
eternal God, who has adorned your
handmaiden the blessed Sitha with
countless miracles, fulfil to those humbly
praying that the eternal joys which by
sinning we have deserved to lose, we may
be able to deserve once more by her
supporting merits through Christ our Lord.

1. Or 'chest'

Documents 3 and 4

Alabaster statue of St Zita (15th century)

MS 250: Images of the Virgin Mary from the Wollaton Antiphonal (c.1430)

Images only

Document 5

WLC/LM/1, f. 6v: Extract from lection on the martyrdom of St Margaret, from a Breviary (1175-1225, Latin)

Transcription by Kathryn Summerwill. Translation by Julia Barrow

Erat autem Margareta annorum
quindecim ut ab impio o libro
tradebatur incarceratione . evovae.
In huius igitur feiissimis dolis
frequens circa illam nutrix conti
nuis satagebat officiis . evovae.
¶ Quadam die aprefecto uibeba
tur presentari quam decollandam
tradidit cuidam spiculatori . evovae.
Benedicta dei filia mox subiec
ta capitalis sententia inducias ro
gavit oracionis sue . evovae. Qvi
me dignam fecit infortes sanctorum
in omni spiritu meo laudo no
men eius assiduum . evovae.
Qvi **gloriatur**.
Ihesv corona. Elegit eam.
Virgo dei margareta orationibus

Now Margaret was fifteen years old when
she was handed over by the wicked
Olybrius¹ to gaol. Evovae². In this man's
most cruel schemes her nurse attending
her bustled about with continuing
attentions. Evovae. On a certain day she
was seen³ to be presented by the prefect;
he handed her over to a certain
executioner to be beheaded. Evovae. When
the girl blessed by God was placed under a
sentence of death she asked for respite for
her prayer. Evovae. 'In all my spirit I
praise his unceasing name who has made
me worthy of the fates of the saints.'
Evovae. He who glories in the crown of
Jesus has chosen her. When Margaret the
virgin of God had finished her prayers she
said 'Brother, slay me quickly, for the glory

finitis mox inquit frater me
macta quoniam au tem
mundi regnum uicit **Christi**
mei gloria. **Benedictus Dominus qui**
beatam.

of my Christ has conquered the kingdom of
this world'. Blessed be God who has made
her blessed.

1. Olybrius was the governor of Antioch.
2. This 'word' consists of the vowels of 'seculorum, Amen', being the last words of the Gloria Patri, and is used as a name for the cadential endings of the Gregorian Psalm tones. Michael Kennedy and Joyce Bourne, "evovae" *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music*. 1996
3. MS reads *vibebatur*, an error for *videbatur*