The Servant Saint:

Zita of Lucca and Sitha of England (1278-1550)

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Dedicated to Luukas and my family for their never ending support

Table of Contents Page

Abbreviations

AASS: Acta Sanctorum: 27th April, Anonymous Lucchese, *Zita: Virgine Lucchese,* Antwerp: 1675, 497-527.

BBS: Bibliotheca Sanctorum, 10: Niccolò Del Re, *Zita,* Roma: Citta Nuova, 2004, 1483.

List of Figures

All photographs are by author unless otherwise noted

Introduction

The cult of St Zita (d. 1278) has not been extensively examined by modern scholarship. Apart from some general consideration by art historians and hagiographers such as André Vauchez, Michael Goodich and Diana Webb, little discussion has been given to the veneration of this saint during the medieval period.[1] The lack of scholarship is, perhaps, due to the few surviving sources. However, the visual evidence still demonstrates several unique aspects of Zita's cult. The most notable is the geographic concentration of her cult. Venerated as a saint in her native Lucca soon after her death, Zita was not well-known elsewhere in Italy and her worship always remained a strictly local phenomenon in Italy. By contrast, she was accepted on a national scale in England. Her adoption by a foreign community shortly after her cult was established show several transformations of her patron abilities as a holy intercessor, so that she was capable of helping the English in different ways.

In Lucca, where Zita remains a city patron, her cult is still visible and acted upon today. Most interestingly though, there was a successful transplantation of her cult to England that occurred from the early-fourteenth until the mid-sixteenth centuries. Zita's adoption and appearance in England is surprising, especially considering that she did not spread to a notable degree elsewhere and she was not a universally-recognized saint at this time; in that she was not canonized until 1696. It is my argument that the saintly attributes unique to her life, in particular her gender and her status as a servant, discussed in the first chapters, were reinterpreted in England. Her veneration, demonstrated by the amount of surviving votive images, appears to have had a certain fascination across all social and gender divisions. She appealed to men and women, the laity and clergy, the wealthy and

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1 André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Vauchez, *The laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*, trans. Margery Schneider (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1993). Michael Goodich, *Vita Perfecta: The Ideals of Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1982) and Goodich, *Lives and Miracles of the Saints: Studies in Medieval Latin Hagiography* (Burlington: Ashgate Variorum, 2004). Diana Webb, *Saints and Cities in Medieval Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007) and Webb, *Patrons and Defenders: The Saints in the Italian City-states* (London: Tauris Academic, 1996).

poor. This thesis will explore the dynamics of her cult and the possible reasons for her appeal through an analysis of her surviving images in a variety of media throughout England.

The first chapter investigates the origin and development of her cult in Lucca. I discuss the typology of Zita's sanctity, the possible reasons why the Lucchese community saw Zita's life as significant and holy, and how her cult was initially supported and venerated. The later part of the chapter expands on the issue of Zita's popularity, exploring how the distinctive aspects of her life and cult were relevant to social issues and tensions prevalent in Lucca during the late-thirteenth century. The accounts of Zita's *vita* documented in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries indicate how she became the patron saint of domestic servants, prisoners condemned to death, rape victims, and lost items; specially keys.[2] Comparisons between Zita's cult in Lucca with other recent saints elsewhere in Italy helps to clarify why she was believed to be a saint by the Lucchese, and how her cult followed a pattern common to other holy men and women who were popular throughout Italy at this time.

The second chapter investigates the question of how Zita's cult may have been brought to England. This was the only Catholic community in Europe that was interested in Zita after the cult was established. Strong communications between Lucca and England may allow for some speculation regarding why Zita aroused special attention from the English. This chapter concludes that Lucchese merchants must have been crucial in first bringing Zita to English attention. However, her veneration spread with remarkable speed across the country and was clearly able to permeate different levels of society. Her wide-scale acceptance reveals that the English considered her a common saint worthy of full cult honours, despite her uncanonised status.

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2 The attributes unique to Zita will be established in the first chapter regarding the origins of the cult in Lucca based on evidence of her *vita* miracles.

Images of the new Zita, or as she became known in England; Sitha, are relatively abundant across the country in a variety of media. This thesis will explore each particular artistic vehicle of transmission in turn, allowing for an analysis of the varying ways in which Zita's cult was presented according to different locations and intended audiences. Further, evidence drawn upon to document Zita's veneration in her adopted country includes wills with offerings, sermons and verse. This surviving textual evidence of veneration is relevant because it demonstrates how deeply embedded the cult was until the mid-sixteenth century. As will become clear, worship of the new foreign saint developed over time and according to the different needs of particular groups, communities and individuals. The following chapters, which focus on extant murals, rood screens, manuscript illuminations, stained glass, and alabaster statues, each involved independent and overlapping issues that reflect a new relationship between the English and the saint, largely divorced from the relationship she had with the Lucchese.

Some of the earliest images produced of the saint were murals in the interiors of churches. Discussions about these examples in chapter three provide some suggestions regarding Zita's significance to the laity, particularly because of her role as a female servant. Zita could be categorized among other common female saints who addressed the religious needs of the poor. With certain modifications of Zita's original traits, her cult appears to have been reinterpreted. Instead of being a poor servant who related to the concerns of lower class Lucchese woman, by contrast, in England Zita's veneration related to both genders who worked in service, but particularly women. In England, Zita had an appeal just as much to the poor forgotten service girl as to the elite or noble wife.

The largest surviving image collection consists of rood screens throughout East Anglia. Here, Zita is consistently represented alongside the same female saints. A comparison of the common cults venerated in chapter four show that Zita and others addressed similar social concerns. This analysis investigates the process of adaption and transformation that Zita's cult underwent following its transplantation to England. No longer considered new and foreign, Zita had become very familiar for English devotees. Moreover, the common

attributes that she was represented with, such as wearing an apron, holding keys, a book and rosary, were all well-known at this point. The subsequent fate of many of these images testifies to the hostility and vandalism directed towards cult images once Reformation ideals began to take hold in the mid-sixteenth century.

An analysis of Books of Hours illuminations in chapter five show how Zita was used as a model of female sanctity to teach noblewomen appropriate ideals of female behavoior favoured by the male aristocracy and clergy. Analysis of the patronage and ownership of these books testify to how Zita was especially popular among the merchant class and the Dominican Order. Mercantile involvement is another indication for how the stories of Zita may have been carried from Lucca to England, and therefore it can be concluded that they were likely to have been avid supporters who established and spread the cult. Another conclusion which can be drawn from the patronage of these items is how she was supported by the Dominican Order, indicating that the clergy also promoted her veneration.

A comparison of the locations, dates, and style of the stained glass images examined in chapter six, show the different stages of Zita's transformation. These windows cite how the changes made to her image during the course of the fifteenth century were not limited to any particular region in England but were common throughout the country. This chapter explores the very dramatic shift in the saint's presentation from the earliest to the latest representations, from servant to holy noble woman. In addition, it appears that her social elevation was precisely linked to her increasing prominence and popularity, with her images moving from the margins to a much more central and visible location.

The final chapter is devoted to a discussion of alabaster statues which show that there was a mass production of images of Zita in this media during the fifteenth century. The process of adaption and upward social mobility evident in the previous discussion of manuscripts is further evidenced here, since one example has the distinction of belonging

to a royal tomb. In the latter production of images Zita appears normalized and institutionalized so she can be venerated by all of England.

All five media demonstrate how the English quickly took Zita with open arms and minds into their devout practices. The relatively large number of images of this Lucchese servant that have survived the Reformation reveals that her popularity in this country is impossible to fully calculate. Moreover, the survival of so many depictions in different forms could suggest a continuing attachment to her after the Reformation, since sincere care was taken to preserve them. Although they may remain because of other interests, such as historical pride, patronage, or for whatever reason, it appears that the majority must have been destroyed during the Reformation period.

There were no other images produced of Zita after the Reformation of the mid-sixteenth century. Other support throughout Europe include dedications to the saint in Palermo and a sculpture in Milan. The Palermo image dates to the late-seventeenth century and, hence likely commemorated the canonization. A few later testimonies to her cult survive in Lucca. In 1718, Francesco del Tintore completed six panels surrounding the shrine and Zita's corpse in the church of San Frediando (fig. 1).[3] These images of the saint were commissioned to commemorate her canonisation (c. 1696). In England, after the Reformation, Zita appears again in the eighteenth century when there were several Englishmen who found her interesting during an international visit. In 1884, Francesca Alexander and John Ruskin, who were members of the Pre-Raphaelite group, wrote *Tuscan Folk Tales*, which includes several lamentations to Zita. Evaluating this book seems to convey their surprise at the enthusiasm of the cult when they visited Lucca. Ruskin made several sketches of the saint along with a ballad. He was clearly unaware of his country's previous veneration of the saint.[4]

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3 Nicolai, *Zita*, 4.

4 Francesca Alexander, *Roadside* Songs *of Tuscany*, trans. and ill. John Ruskin, (New York: Wiley, 1884-5).

The popularity in England before this date may account for why Zita was canonised 418 years after her death. This discussion of Zita's surviving images is only the surface of a very unique cult that developed from obscurity in a relationship between Lucca and England. The Lucchese and the English venerated Zita according to a variety of differing needs, which shows that there was an extraordinary extension of a medieval cult distinct to two locations. What is so exceptional with Zita's veneration in the medieval period is that her holy status was somehow religiously relevant to two entirely different communities.

Chapter One

Ancilla dei: from servant to saint in thirteenth century Lucca

This thesis investigates the imagery and cult of Zita of Lucca. Zita was a servant of exceptional piety who was venerated as a holy woman during her life and after her death. The primary source manuscripts written after Zita's death show reasons for the initiation of her cult and its support in the Lucchese community. These sources account for why Zita remained popular and why civic veneration continued although she was not officially recognized as a saint until 1696, 418 years after her death. Two particular features of Zita's veneration are unusual: firstly, her status as a servant, whom one would not normally expect to be recognized as a saint; and secondly, the transplantation of what was a purely local cult to a completely different location, namely, to England. This is despite the fact that she was not well-known elsewhere in Italy or the rest of Europe. Even in her native Lucca, where, one would expect the strongest veneration, there is very little in the way of visual or-cultic material from the early centuries after her death. And yet, in England, her cult was extremely popular, as documented by over fifty surviving images of the saint in this country.[1] An analysis of these images demonstrates how Zita's veneration in England was largely divorced from her initial worship in Lucca. As this thesis will show, Zita's cult took on a new life in a foreign setting.

Before an examination of the images, it is useful to study Zita's life and early following. The origins and growth of her cult may provide some explanation of how and why she reached England. The first text to be examined, the official biography of the saint, *Vita di Santa Zita: Virgine Lucchese* (the *vita*), is the most valuable because it includes accounts from witnesses who knew Zita during her lifetime.[2] Thus, the *vita* contains direct information about Zita's life and her relationship with the Lucchese community from

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1 Sebastian Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St Sitha in England: An Introduction,' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 35 (1993), 86.

2 *Vita di Santa Zita: Virgine Lucchese,* in *AASS,* 3rd. ed. 10. April III. Zita. (Brussels-Paris, 1673), 497-527. Assessed 2010: http://acta.chadwyck.com/ Trans. Martha Habash, *Zita* (Unpublished: Creighton University, 2010). I will be using an unpublished English unpublished translation by Martha Habash, to whom I am extremely grateful for her assistance. This documented will be referred to as *vita.* For another published translation, see: Webb, *Saints and Cities,* 160-90.

witness accounts. Apart from the *vita*, there are several texts including religious and government documents written by both clergy and Lucchese citizens dating from the death of Zita until her canonisation in 1696. These include wills specifying financial offerings to Zita, requests for burial in the church, information on the location of her relics, and letters written during the build up to the seventeenth century canonisation process by clergy who supported her sainthood.[3] These documents provide evidence of the cults' promotion in Lucca and its limited appreciation throughout the rest of Europe.

The *vita* recorded several posthumous miracles that demonstrated Zita's ability to grant aid to her believers and justified their belief in her powers as a protector and an intercessor.[4] Zita was credited with over 150 documented miracles in her *vita*, believed to have occurred during her lifetime and immediately after her death. By the time of her canonisation in 1696, she was said to have aided over 1000 people.[5] Because these miracles defined the abilities she had as a patron saint, they require further investigation. However, several issues with the *vita* need to be considered first, including its reliability as a source. The first issue is authorship, as there is no signed author or date. Daniel Papebroch found the original text in the Tuscan Monastery of Camaldoli and, in 1688, Monsignor Fatinello, a descendent of the Fatinelli family, published the life from the manuscript in Farrara (fig. 1).[6] Zita's biography was later published in the Acta Sanctorum, which chronicles the lives of saints.

Both Diana Webb and Michael Goodich have suggested that a notary named Fatinello Fatinelli, or Fatinello di Migliore wrote the original manuscript a few years after Zita's

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3 Monsignore Puccinelli, *Vita: Condotta sulle Notizie, del Codice Fatinelli Sec XIV* (Lucca: 1949), 1-154.

4 Benedicta Ward, *Signs and Wonders: Saints, Miracles and Prayers From the Fourth Century to the Fourteenth* (Aldershot: Variorum Ashgate, 1992) xi-xiv.

5 Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 188.

6 Ibid.160. See also: Niccolò de Re, 'Zita', *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 10 (Roma: Città Nuova: 2004), 1484. (fig. 1) is a manuscript located in Lucca and contains information about Zita's life, which has been dated to the late-fourteenth century, [Archivio di Stato, Lucca, ms. 3459].

death, and possibly even the year that she died in 1278.[7] The local notary Fatinello, a
member of the Fatinelli family who supported the cult, may have been commissioned by
the family to document miracles occurring at Zita's tomb and throughout Lucca. Over
five years, sixty-eight of Zita's miracles were recorded from the period of the 1st-5th of
May in 1278 and another eighty by the end of the month.[8] These accounts would later be
used in the seventeenth century canonisation.[9] The relatively short eight-year interval
between the publishing of the *vita* in 1688 and Zita's canonisation in 1696 demonstrates
how critical the manuscript was likely to have been in the final proceedings.[10]

Zita was one of the many medieval men and women whose acts of piety earned her a
reputation for sanctity during her lifetime, and was subsequently venerated as a saint after
her death. Many of these *beati* (blessed) were never officially canonised by the church.
Others, like Zita, were only formally declared saints centuries after their cults were well-
established. The later part of the seventeenth century in particular was a period when
many of these cults were regularized and formalized, Zita being among them.[11]
According to Church law, altars, chapels, churches and images could only be erected to
formally canonised saints.[12] However, such rules were not always obeyed. Often, the
local clergy and communities supported veneration of these recent saints.[13] Papal bulls
might authorize limited local celebrations, as was the case with Zita.[14] Thus, Zita's
veneration in Lucca fits a pattern of recent cults who remained uncanonised but
worshiped as saints by contemporaries.

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7 Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*, 184-5. See also: Augustine Thompson, *Cities of God: The Religion of the Italian Communes, 1125-1325*
(University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2005), 203: n 153. See also: *AASS*, 'Zita,' 512, and 515-32. See also: Andreas
Meyer, *Felix et Inclitus Notarius: Studien zum Italienischen Notariat vom 7 bis zum 15 Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 2000), 162 and 548 in
Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 188-9. See also Puccinelli, *Vita*, 143-4. All of the above cite Fatinello as the notary who listed the miracles of
Zita between 1250 and 1275. Fatinello was a notary for the church of San Frediando and a member of the Fatinelli family, which
suggests their hypothesis is highly likely.

8 Thompson, *Cities of God*, 203.

9 Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*, 184-5.

10 *AASS*, 'Zita', 497-527. See also: Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 160-90.

11 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 109-68.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid, 68v-70. In 1519, Pope Leo X recognized Zita as *beati*. There is a difference between a saint being declared beautified, '*Beati*'
or '*B*', and officially canonised as a saint '*Sancti*' or '*S*'.

As evidenced by her *vita,* Zita lived a relatively conventional life. She was born in Monasgrati, a village outside Lucca in Tuscany, Italy. At the age of twelve, she entered service with the Fatinelli family outside of Lucca and remained working in their household until her death. She remained a unmarried virgin her entire life. Zita died in 1278 at the age of sixty from a fever that lasted for five days.[15] After her death, her body was moved to the church of San Frediando inside the city walls.[16] According to the *vita,* her passing was accompanied by a series of supernatural events testifying to her sanctity including bells ringing by themselves, a particularly bright star showing in the sky above her room in the Fatinelli house, and Lucchese citizens cured of ailments such as lameness, deafness, and blindness.[17] These events provided further evidence of *fama sanctus* and the aura of sanctity, which were certain miracles and 'senses' believed to be experienced in the presence of a saint especially potent at death. Other common saintly occurrences in connection with Zita's corpse were the smelling of sweet perfume, seeing glowing light, and oil exuding from her body.[18]

The time of the saint's death, *dies natalis,* when the saint passed from this world to the next and became an intercessor, was a highly symbolic moment.[19] Another symbol was the sighting of a star seen above her room at the Fatinelli household that was understood to be her soul passing to heaven.[20] The author of the *vita* wrote that of bishops, royalty, nobility and commoners came to see the body over the following months.[21] It should be

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15 Ibid.

16 It is important to note that this was common. Monasgrati was actually quite far, at least by walking distance, from the walls of Lucca. The transportation of her body into the city both protected her relics and acted as a way for the urban and city to be unified in their religious belief of her as a saint. See in particular: Donald Weinstein and Rudolf Bell, *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000-1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982), 176-7. For relics as a way to unify Lucca with the Sei Miglie see: Diana Webb, *Patrons and Defenders,* 42.

17 *AASS,* 'Zita', 506-8.

18 Ibid, 497-527. For *fama sanctus* see: Goodich, *Vita Perfecta. Fama sanctus* was a term used to describe what was present in the 'aura' of a saint's body and included senses such as sweet perfume, oil exuding from the body, or dirt under the fingernails. These items could be collected and used to perform miracles and cures.

19 Vauchez, *Sainthood,* 1-59.

20 Vauchez, *The Laity,* 161.

21 *AASS,* 'Zita,' 527.

noted that the author might have used the inclusion of these citizens who came to lament Zita to support the importance of the event. One of the primary objectives of any hagiographic author was to exemplify the holiness of the saint. Her *vita* mentions that, because of the number of visitors to her shrine after the cult was established, it was necessary to place a guard to protect her relics during events like her feast day on the 27th of April, that later became a public holiday from 1519 onwards.[22] While there may have been several clergy and nobility, or if this was complete literary invention on the part of the author, the number of visitors was probably exaggerated.

The second issue with the *vita* concerns the supporters who commissioned the manuscript to be written. The earliest manuscript was found with the Fatinelli family, and therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that the Fatinelli influenced the writing, and by implication, the content. The Fatinelli collaboration with the *vita* creates a substantial bias in terms of its reliability as source because of their affiliation with the saint. This wealthy and politically powerful Lucchese family employed Zita as a servant from the age of twelve until her death. It is quite clear that the Fatinelli family promoted Zita's cause as a saint because of their family connections. The Fatinelli enjoyed a high social status in Lucca. Their wealth is demonstrated by the patronage they gave to the cult, further detailed below. The Fatinelli were successful merchants who worked in the Lucchese silk and wool trade. Michael Bratchel, in a study of Lucca during the fifteenth century, uncovered a 1430 manuscript that listed both Bartholomeus and Jannini di Fatinellis as prominent merchants.[23] In addition, several politically active members of the family were exiled to Venice from 1369 until 1400, which was a period when Lucca fell under Pisan rule.[24] Zita, their family patron, would have been politically useful. It can be concluded that the Fatinelli created a tie between with their lifelong employee now being venerated

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22 Webb, *Patrons and Defenders*, 192. See also: Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*, 184-5.

23 Michael Bratchel, *Lucca 1430-1494: The Reconstruction of an Italian City-Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2008), 139 and 296 Bratchel lists Barholomeus and Jannini di Fatnellis in 1430: 'parlamento 16 augosto, Bartholomeus and Jannini di Fatinellis' and Bartolomeo di Giannino Fatinelli as one of 6 names listed as 'mercators serici'.

24 Christine Meek, *The Commune of Lucca Under Pisan Rule: 1342-1396* (The Medieval Academy of America, 1980), 34.

because by promoting the cult, they enjoyed the prestige of being associated with a holy woman.[25]

Fatinelli affiliation with Zita is supported by the content of the *vita* and by documents regarding their patronage of her cult in Lucca in the years following her death. An examination of the Vatican archives regarding Zita by André Vauchez, documents how the Fatinelli consistently promoted her veneration as a saint.[26] The location of Zita's corpse and shrine is in the church of San Frediando and in 1321, the Fatinelli commissioned a chapel for her in the church.[27] In 1373 Giovanni Fatinelli financed the construction of a white marble altar and a glass casket.[28] The sight of her incorrupt corpse in glass would have had an emotional impact on a late medieval viewer (fig. 2). Bodies were regularly examined in the canonisation process and an incorrupt corpse was an indisputable sign of holiness. Pietro Rota examined Zita's relics in 1652.[29] That her body was incorrupt would have further supported her case for sanctity in Rome. The material of glass for a casket was often used to display a saint's incorrupt corpse, and it had the effect of giving visual access for the community to venerate the saint and to ask for aid. Other examples of saints similarly displayed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were Clare of Montefalco (d. 1308) and Rita of Cascia (d. 1457).[30]

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25 Vauchez, *The laity*, 210. See also: *AASS*, May, 'Villana de' Botti', 5 (Paris. 1868) 865-66, in Caroline Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California, 1987), 363.

26 Riti, 'Zita', *Canonisation Process, Lucca proc. 1315* (Lucca: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 1624-5), 61r-63v, in André Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 210.

27 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 210.

28 Ibid, 210. For other saints similarly displayed see also: Eric Kemp, *Canonisation and Authority in the Western Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), 101.

29 Umberto Nicolai, *Documenti Stoniciinerati al culto di Santa Zita, Virgine Lucchese: In Prossimita del Settinmo Centenario della Morte, 1278-1987* (Lucca: Notiziario Storio, 1978), 7. An incorrupt corpse does not decompose. Other examples of incorrupt saints include Clare of Assisi (d. 1253) and Catharine of Bologna (d. 1463).

30 Joanna Cannon and André Vauchez, *Margherita of Cortona and the Lorenzetti: Sienese Art and the Cult of a Holy Woman in Medieval Tuscany* (University Town: Pennsylvania State University, 1999), 53.

The importance of Zita's corpse for the Lucchese community should be briefly discussed. Relics of saints were thought to be alive and capable of working miracles.[31] They were a valuable possession of the community who housed them for several practical and cultural reasons. A practical aspect of relics was their economic benefit because a shrine with successful miracles would have attracted pilgrims who would buy badges, clothing, oil, or other items which had contact with the corpse.[32] A cultural aspect of relics was that they were believed to possess the saints' powers and would protect the city and its inhabitants.[33] Florence and Pisa, for instance, were neighboring cities that rivaled Lucca and its economy. In October of 1430, a doggerel poem to celebrate Lucca's success against a Florentine invasion listed Zita as one of several saints who had protected the city: "...e ancor la beata Zita guardan Lucca, che no sia tradita" (and even the blessed Zita protector of Lucca, would not betray her home).[34] As long as Zita's relics remained in the city where she was a patron, she would continue to protect her devoted Lucchese.[35]

Along with paying for a new altar and glass casket, Giovanni Fatinelli also gave 60 livres for the celebration of mass on the new altar.[36] In 1382, he commissioned a painting of Zita with the Volto Santo (unfortunately not extant).[37] The connection of Zita to the Volto Santo, a wooden crucifix originally displayed in San Frediando, where Zita corpse is located (now moved to the church of San Martino), is significant. The date that the Volto Santo arrived in Lucca has been debated. However, it was a central focus of pilgrimage in Tuscany (fig. 3). Considering that the original location of the Volto Santo in Lucca was in San Frediando, the same church that housed Zita's relics, may account for how English

31 Patrick Geary, *Futra Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 152. See also: Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, and Event 1000-1215* (London: Scholar Press, 1987), 37. Vauchez, *Sainthood,* 444.

32 Geary, *Futra Sacra,* 24-5.

33 Ibid, 68-105

34 Finzi, 'Di un indito poema,' 256-7, in Webb, *Patrons and Defenders,* 163-4. See also: Pellegrini, "Il Piccinino', 23 (1899) 400-1, in Webb, *Patrons and Defenders,* 192: n. 94. For the veneration of relics to protect Italian city-states see: John Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 73. For urban relic thefts and neighboring city-state competition for relics in Tuscany see: Geary, *Futra Sacra,* 132-57.

35 Geary, *Futra Sacra,* 132-57.

36 Riti, 'Zita', 61-63, in Vauchez, *Sainthood,* 210.

37 Ibid, 61r-63v, in Vauchez, *Sainthood,* 210.

merchants who knew about the Volto Santo would have come into contact with and seen the cult of Zita in Lucca, then bringing her back to their own country.[38] The connection of Zita to the other famous Lucchese shrine of the Volto Santo would have supported her religious legitimacy both for foreign pilgrims traveling to Lucca and for the Lucchese community.

In 1410, the Fatinelli requested authority to oversee Zita's shrine. The canons of San Frediando negotiated a compromise, granting the Fatinelli the right to *juspatronatus* over the chapel.[39] As part of the agreement, the Fatinelli had to choose a rector to oversee the shrine from amongst the San Frediando canons.[40] Fatinelli wills dated to 1383, 1388, 1389, and 1401 show requests to be buried in the same church.[41] San Frediando was one of the wealthiest and most elaborate religious houses inside the city walls (fig. 4). The requests for burial in this church would have created a visual and physical tie between their tombs and the tomb of the saint, which may have been used by the family politically.

One last noteworthy manuscript to mention regarding the connection of the Fatinelli with the cult of Zita is a papal bull. In 1519, Pope Leo X specifically addressed a bull to Anthony Fatinelli authorizing an annual celebration with a feast day to take place for *B. (beata)* Zita, on the 27th April.[42] Because the bull was addressed to Antonis Fatinelli, it can be concluded that the Fatinelli were significant petitioners for Zita's canonisation in Rome. This papal document reveals that by the sixteenth century the papacy formally accorded local recognition of the cult.

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38 Refer to: 'Chapter Two: Transmigration of a Cult: Zita in England'.

39 Riti, 'Zita', 61r-63v, in Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 210.

40 Ibid, 85r-94v, in Vauchez, *Sainthood,* 120.

41 Ibid, 43v-44r.

42 Ibid, 68v-70r; in 1519, Pope Leo X recognized Zita as *beati*. There is a difference between a saint being declared beautified, '*Beati'*, or '*B'*, and officially canonised as a saint '*Sancti'* or '*S'*.

Here it is helpful to briefly consider Zita's cult in relation to church hierarchy. Episcopal and papal endorsement of a cult was not uncommon for locally popular devotions of holy men and women. This level of recognition was regularly granted to a community in recognition of the enthusiasm that often surrounded local veneration.[43] There was a difficult relationship between the community who sought sainthood of a local figure and the papacy which reserved to itself the right to formally canonise candidates for sanctity. After the mid-thirteenth century, canonisation procedures were especially longer and more complicated.[44] The bull sent by the papacy reveals that there was communication between the city and the papacy on behalf of Zita. However, this communication did not result in Zita's canonisation, and therefore requires more consideration.

A study of canonisation processes by Vauchez shows that civic governments were often, but not always, reluctant to seek sainthood for a local figure.[45] Difficulties and expenses of maintaining processes meant that most canonisation attempts were unsuccessful. The canonisation process involved extensive politics, required secular organization, time, and a great deal of money. Delays due to changing papal circumstances, such as deaths, elections, and crises were common. And a pope often favored one type of saint over others, as demonstrated by the popular trends of saints canonised during certain pontificates in office.[46] For example, the popes Gregory IX and Gregory XVI especially favoured mendicant saints.[47] Gregory IX supported the Franciscan order by canonising Francis (d. 1226) only two years after his death and Gregory XVI supported the Dominican order by canonising Dominic (d. 1221) only thirteen years after his death. These are only two prominent examples.

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43 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, i.

44 Vauchez, *The Laity*, 153-68.

45 Ibid, 109-12.

46 Ibid, 109-12. See also: Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 72-3. See also Michael Goodich, 'A Profile of Thirteenth Century Sainthood,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44 (1976), 429.

47 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 66.

Candidates for canonisation had to fulfill a number of requirements. In order for the papacy to be convinced that there was a case, initial investigations had to be carried out by one or more designated investigators in the location where the holy figure lived and died. Only if sufficient evidence of sanctity was demonstrated was a formal enquiry opened. In Vauchez's study Zita was not found in the petitions, which indicates that there was no formal inquiry opened to investigate her status.[48]

Furthermore, petitions needed to be sent to Rome with the *vita* and witness accounts to thoroughly examine the saint's life. These witnesses were then likely to be called for an interview, which meant the costs of travel, food, and housing were all added to the expense of the community.[49] When necessary, as was in Zita's case, the saint's corpse was required for examination.[50] All of this was carried out by a group of designated officials at one or more places associated with the saint. They called witnesses, asked a series of pre-set questions, and sent documents to relevant authorities. The procedure was complex.

If a community sought canonisation there was no guarantee that the local figure would be sanctified. Much more commonly a petition was refused. Of the documented canonisation processes examined by Vauchez between 1270 and 1430, a large number were unsuccessful. Communities made thirty-nine requests from 1198-1431 for the right to worship local cults, with only 47% of them decreed for a process from 1198-1435.[51] Some of these requests were made more than once, as, for example, that of Raymond of Penafort. However, each of the four requests for his canonisation was refused. Moreover, even if formal canonisation proceedings were initiated, the attempt could still fail. Success was by no means guaranteed. Of the original 47% of candidates decreed for a process, only 23% of them were canonised.[52] The figures provided by Vauchez suggests

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48 Ibid, 72: table 4.
49 Ibid, 66.
50 Ibid.
51 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 72: table 4.
52 Ibid, 61: table 3.

that many European communities with local cults from the thirteenth until the fifteenth centuries did not actually pursue canonisation because of the probability of refusal, let alone the high costs.

However, the likelihood of refusal did not always deter communities, especially in Italy. Almost every Italian town and region had a candidate for sanctity, which establishes that many Italian communities did venerate *de facto* local cults, despite the fact that they were not granted formal recognition by the papacy.[53] The phenomenon of local saints was widespread in Italy, and to a lesser extent in the Low Countries. The many communities who did not seek canonisation must have been content with local and private worship. This kind of worship was often aided by aristocratic patronage, as the Fatinelli with Zita, or a local secular group, such as the canons of San Frediando.

In comparison, the papacy occasionally gave a measure of recognition for local devotions without canonisation. There was an allocation of saints recognized by the papacy who were not canonised. As previously stated, this recognition was usually given to satisfy the enthusiasm that surrounded local figures. From 1198-1431, 20.4% of processes for canonisation were announced, with 25% of these recognized by the papacy for strictly local veneration.[54] The difference between granting a cult local veneration and formal canonisation was that of local versus universal worship. Local approval allowed celebration of the cult in the locality where the saint's body was preserved and their cult flourished, whereas official canonised required veneration by the entire Christian community. As a result, many more communities successfully sought and received papal recognition for the right to local worship of their favoured holy person. Thus, the negotiation of sainthood between the papacy and communities with local cult figures was very complicated. The ideals of the clergy for a model figure to venerate and the enthusiasm of the urban populace that venerated because they believed the holy man or woman had certain powers had constantly changing social dimensions. Zita was no

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53 Vauchez, *The Laity*, 153-68. See also: Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 84-98.

54 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 226: table 21.

exception. As I will suggest, the Lucchese venerated her as a saint for reasons that related to the social and religious situation in late-thirteenth century Lucca. By contrast, her cult was not taken up with any enthusiasm outside of the immediate vicinity of Lucca, either in Tuscany or the rest of Italy, with the exception of England.

The fact that Zita was recognized unofficially by the papacy for local veneration until the her canonisation in the seventeenth century, demonstrates that there was enough civic patronage and financial support beyond the Fatinelli family. Clerical approval at local level usually began with the clergy of the church in which the tomb was located. There were varying degrees of official recognition, depending on the level of support cult enjoyed. A few examples for Zita are the attendance of civic officials at the feast day, which for Zita began in 1519. These offerings were formally voted for on feast days by civic governments. Lastly, the participation of bishops in celebrations also show clerical support. The Bishop of Lucca, Paganello, gave Zita official cult honours including a feast day after her death in 1668.[55] But there was no evidence that she was recognized by the papacy, Pope Nicholas III, at this time.[56] The Fatinelli family was likely to have been the force behind her cult to the clergy because of their social position in Lucca. There was often a connection between saints and the aristocracy. As Vauchez has observed; "Even when the basic representations of sainthood remained those of popular sensibility, the personas around whom the *aura sanctis* developed came mostly from the elites, who sought to appropriate for their own ends the supernatural prestige popularly attributed to the servants of God."[57] The grace believed to reside in saints was transmitted through the family line. In a significant move, the Fatinelli adopted Zita in order to connect their family to her holy station and secure her as their own family patron.[58]

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55 Nicolai, *Zita*, 1448. See also: Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*, 29. Unfortunately the documents of Paganello's authorization do not include his first name, but only identify him as 'el obispo Paganello de Lucca'.

56 Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*, 24.

57 Vauchez, *The Laity*, 157-60.

58 André Vauchez, 'Lay People's Sanctity in Western Europe: Evolution of a Pattern, (12th and 13th centuries),' in Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell, *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe* (London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 1-21. Kemp, *Canonisation and Authority*, 101.

Although there was support from the wealthy Fatinelli, there is not much material that demonstrates clerical support in Lucca. Rather, the main backing of the cult appears to have been a result of the continuous belief of the Lucchese citizens in Zita's powers. There are several reasons why Zita's life may have appealed to the Lucchese. The Lucchese would have wanted to promote their city by having a patron saint that would have asserted their own worth as a community.[59] A saint's relics were a source of local pride and income through such methods as pilgrimage.[60] Lucca, a significant trade centre, would have wanted to attract visitors to its markets by such local interests as successful shrines and relics of saints. Beyond the economic implications of hosting a saint, Zita must have been able to address the social issues in Lucca at the time the cult was established.[61] Zita could be considered a reflection of what the community thought they needed as an intercessor to help with social tensions or concerns and believed was as an ideal general or specific model.

An analysis of the *vita* allows some speculation regarding the relationship between Zita and the Lucchese. The accounts of Zita's life spread her fame to other locations through such methods as word of mouth, pilgrim badges, and stolen relics. These methods will be further discussed regarding communication and transmigration of Zita's worship to England in the following chapter. An analysis of the content of these accounts raises another issue with the reliability of the *vita*. It was traditional for *vitae* of Christian saints to contain repetitive themes for consistency. In effect, the structure that told of the saint's life is a mixture of social reality and literary invention. The author's use of repetition documented how the miracles of one saint reflected the miracles of other popular saints to support their common holy legitimacy.[62] The difficulty with Zita's *vita* is that it draws very heavily on standard topoi, common to the lives of many other thirteenth century saints. What was unique to Zita's sainthood, as distinct in comparison to other saints, was

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59 Aviad Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 25-9.
60 Ibid, 52-63. See also: Kleinberg, *Proving Sanctity*, 183-207. See also: Diana Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon, 2000).
61 Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country*, 116. See also: Kleinberg, *Proving Sanctity*, 183-207.
62 Ibid, 20-5.

her status as a servant, which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. However, first it is necessary to consider why she was believed to be a saint in the first place based on these standardised themes.

There were several miracles in the *vita* that classify Zita as a particular patron saint by assigning her attributes so that her cult can be communicated and identified both orally and visually. Listed below are some of the more famous miracles. When discussing these miracles it is important to distinguish between the *in vita* miracles from Zita's life, and the posthumous miracles that occurred after her death. The miracles while Zita was alive showed her holy character with virtues that were common to all saints, such as extreme piety, ascetic practices, and charity to the poor. In a study of the miracles and signs of saints during the medieval period, Bededicta Ward generally categorized these as characteristic evidence of the saints' holiness.[63] The corresponding miracles after her death were further proof of her sainthood, but more specifically, they demonstrated how Zita could act as an intercessor on behalf of her followers in a way that was unique to her own life.[64] Zita's life defined how she became patron saint of domestic servants, rape victims, prisoners condemned to death and lost items; specially keys. The symbolic value of the set of keys were also an item not unique to Zita. It was an item also included in the *vita* of Christiania of Markgate (d. 1161).[65] Christiania, however, used keys to escape the household. Zita's keys were a symbol of her protection of the household and its contents, where she was able to lock and unlock doors or valuables because of her position as the head household servant. Both the miracles *in vita* and posthumous were used in the canonisation proceedings as evidence of Zita's holiness.

The *in vita* miracles that were evidence of Zita's virtues usually revolve around food, such as the miraculous multiplications of grain, bread and wine. These were canonic· biblical miracles performed by Christ. They demonstrate how Zita imitated Christ, and

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63 Ward, *Signs and Wonders*, xi-xiv.

64 Ibid, xi-xiv. Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004), 86-120.

65 Elizabeth Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 130-50.

were a fundamental aspect to the veneration of all saints, especially women. In an extensive analysis of food symbolism in medieval Christianity by Caroline Bynum, female saints and the preparation of food was not only common, but closely paralleled the life of Christ.[66] Christ gave his blood and body as sacrament and was often depicted with a wound which poured life from his breast, a representation which could be considered feminine. Although performing the multiplication of loaves of food to feed the poor or changing water into wine are not limited to female saints, they can be commonly found regarding female cults similar to Zita's. The theme of food in the *vitae* of female saints, with roles of nurture and caring in their lives, was standard.[67] Women produced food, both as milk from their breasts and as the preparation of meals in the kitchen. This relationship with food was the same for mothers, wives, and daughters, but also for female domestic servants.[68] What is considerably interesting with Zita's miracles involving the food theme is that several took place in the kitchen, in connection with her role as a domestic woman. By contrast, other female saints were usually not in a kitchen context, but, rather, were more often distributing food as charity to the poor. Also in contrast to Zita, these latter food miracles were most often associated with members of the middle and upper classes, such as Rose of Viterbo (d. 1252) and, most famously, the royal princess turned Franciscan tertiary Elisabeth of Hungary (d. 1231). In both instances, the saint's distribution of food to the poor was miraculously concealed by the transformation of food into flowers, and this also occurred with Zita, who used the surplus of the Fatinelli household to dispense charity.[69]

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66 Ibid, 150-88. Examples provided by Bynum include plate 3: *Mass of St. George*, 1486, and plate 27: *The Man of Sorrows*, Jacob Cornelisz, 1475. For other discussion of Christ being represented feminine see: Flora Lewis, 'The Wound in Christ's Side and the Instruments of the Passion: Gendered Experience and Response,' in Lesley Smith, *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence* (British Library, 1997), 204-29.

67 Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 277-96. Bynum cites the *vita* of Umilta of Faenza as another common example regarding food multiplication miracles.

68 Ibid.

69 Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 189-218..

Another noteworthy aspect raised by Bynum's analysis of food symbolism is her discussion of the medieval social tension with women and the preparation of food.[70] Eve had tempted Adam with the apple, a highly potent religious symbol that had led to the fall of humanity from grace. Because Zita was a female saint involved with the preparation of food she was able to address this particular socio-religious tension.[71] If this tension was applicable to Zita in Lucca, then it appears that there was a negative opinion of Lucchese women, and perhaps in particular, a female underclass. Zita could have been used as an ideal cultural type for the lower class female servants to aspire to for discipline and conduct.[72]

There are four miracles connected with the multiplication of food in Zita's *vita*. The first took place during a famine in Lucca. According to the account, Zita emptied the Fatinelli storehouse to feed the poor. This shows her relationship to keys, as she was able to open the storehouse and one of the major area where valuables were thus kept. Believing they could make a profit, the Fatinelli decided to sell their grain. When the master of the Fatinelli household came to the storehouse it was miraculously refilled.[73] The second miracle took place when Zita was seen giving away the household bread from her apron. She was approached by one of the Fatinelli who told her to reveal the contents of her apron under the suspicion she was stealing to provide charity. But at the moment of discovery, her apron was found to be full of sweet-smelling and beautiful flowers.[74] Apart from bread and grain, Zita was also known for a miracle of changing water into wine for a traveling pilgrim. The pilgrim stopped by a well for a drink. When Zita offered him a drink of water it was transformed into red wine.[75] Alhough both of these last two miracles were common to other saints, Zita's low social situation is quite distinctive, and serves to

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70 Ibid. Eleanor McLaughlin, 'Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Women in Medieval Theology,' in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Reuther, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 213-60.

71 Ibid, 178.

72 Goodich, *Lives and Miracles*, 120.

73 *AASS*, 'Zita,' 500.

74 *Ibid*, 500. Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 135.

75 *AASS*, 'Zita,' 500.

· underline the extraordinary element of her charity. Herself a poor servant, she was nevertheless a source of charity for others.

A fourth miracle with a theme of food multiplication, however not in the context of charity, specifically places Zita in the area of the kitchen with the role of a domestic servant. Caught up in her daily prayer, Zita forgot the task of making the household bread. When she finished her prayers and realized she had not performed her chore, she went to the kitchen, whereupon it was discovered that angels had already made the bread.[76] There was another level to this account that connects Zita to holy food. The Fatinelli household would have eaten and consumed a holy substance prepared for Zita by angels. The holy substance would have given the ultimate nourishment, comparable to the body of Christ at sacrament.[77] This is reminiscent of tales of miraculous provision of food frequently found in accounts of the miracles to the desert fathers, which may by understood to parallel the life of Zita. Importantly, each of these miracles included a Fatinelli family member as a witness, providing further evidence that they likely influenced the content of the *vita* to establish their connection to the saint.

There is another miracle account with the theme of charity that links Zita to the church of San Frediando. This church, as previously stated, eventually became the location of her relics and shrine. In winter she went to the church to pray. Because of the cold, the master of the Fatinelli house offered her his cloak. When she arrived at the church, she saw a cold homeless man outside the church doors. She offered him her master's cloak to keep him warm while she went inside to pray. When she left San Frediando after her prayers, the homeless man had disappeared with the cloak. As soon as she arrived back to the house, the homeless man appeared as an angel in glowing light and returned the cloak.[78] He may, in fact, have been intended to represent Christ or an angel. Again, the Fatinelli

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76 Ibid, 503.

77 Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 192.

78 *AASS*, 'Zita,' 500.

were the primary witnesses to the miracle. This is another standard miracle also found in the life of Martin of Tours.[79]

Zita became a patron of rape victims because when she was younger she avoided a rape attack by a fellow servant.[80] The social relationship between servants and employers during the medieval period, particularly in regard to servant girls, was a prevalent issue, and one not unique to Lucca. Male servants or employers often sexually exploited female servants.[81] Because Zita was associated with an attempted rape she became a patron saint who would protect victims of sexual violence, and especially female servants in this common situation.[82] In contrast, from the position of the employer, because Zita fought the attack, she acted as an ideal of chastity expected by employers for morally good female servants. Female servants were often considered as a threat to the mistress of the household, such as the young servant girl who could potentially be used sexually by her husband. The aristocracy, including noblewomen, had what could be considered a stereotypical view of their servants. The lower servant class were thought to be mischievous thieves and amoral.[83] Because Zita did not pursue sexual sins expected of the lower classes, and above all the amoral young female servant, she acted as an educational model of chastity for medieval servitude.[84] It appears that this was a concern in Lucca regarding their female underclass. Zita was known to have scratched her own face in an attempt to be less beautiful so that she would not tempt men to pursue her sexually.[85] However, this does not provide the most credible evidence that she was approached in this way, since there is so little documentation of her veneration in Lucca, let alone that of the poorer classes who could afford to offer material offerings to the saint.

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79 Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*, 6-8.

80 Ibid, 504.

81 Patrick Goldberg, 'What was a servant?' in *Concepts and Patterns of Service in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Anne Currey and Elizabeth Mathew (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), 1-20. See also, Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 38.

82 *AASS*, 'Zita', 500. See also: Goldberg, 'What was a Servant?', 1-20.

83 Goldberg, 'What was a servant?', 1-20.

84 Ibid. See also: Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*. The female saint could also have been a positive reflection of the Fatinelli mistress, see: Goodich, *Lives and Miracles*, 129-35.

85 *AASS*, 'Zita,' 504.

The posthumous miracles attributed to Zita indicate the ways in which she was venerated in the late-thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Common to other saints, a prisoner who had been condemned to death by hanging saw Zita cut the rope around his neck.[86] Zita brought a Lucchese boy back to life after he had drowned in a river.[87] One posthumous miracle of particular interest connects Zita again to the Fatinelli family. A Fatinelli man, Petrus, was traveling away from Lucca on business. He fell ill and was seen by doctors who determined he would die within a few days. He prayed to Zita, who appeared to him in the night and placed her hand on his forehead. The next day he was cured, to the bewilderment of the doctors.[88] This miracle may be a further indication of Zita's gender type. Although miraculous healings are common, the specific gesture of placing a hand on the forehead is more intimate, presenting her in a role of a female attendant on the sick man.[89]

As part of the same miracle, the author comments that the doctors died a few days later. There could be several plausible interpretations of their deaths. Firstly, this may have been a vengeance miracle from Zita on the doctors. Vengeance miracles usually occurred when the saint was not properly honoured.[90] Alternatively, the deaths may have been intended to support the ability of Zita to intercede for the ill with a healing ability greater than the merely human methods of doctors and contemporary medical knowledge. The connection with the Fatinelli to the miracle may have been included in the *vita* for other motives. Perhaps the Fatinelli intended this account to make Zita comparable to a member of their own family who was concerned, like a mother or other female relative, for their family's personal care.

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86 Ibid, 506.

87 Ibid, 508.

88 Ibid.

89 Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 277-96.

90 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 444-50 ,

The aforementioned miracles are variants of standard miracles attributed to other saints. Although inflected in way which was unique to Zita's life, particular miracles such as the multiplication of bread, the transformation of water into wine, giving food as charity to the poor, transformation of bread to flowers, and posthumous miracles of saving certain victims such as those who had been condemned to death or had died, were all miracles common to many saints.[91] To give one such example, several of the same miracles occur in the *vita* of Thomas of Hereford who was a saint with a popular devotion during the Middle Ages.[92] Michael Goodich, in his *Vita Perfecta*, commented that Zita's *vita* in many respects has modeled that of Martin of Tours.[93] In addition, her age of twelve, when she had a notable change in her life by becoming a servant to the Fatinelli, was a common age among saints for their transition to adulthood and the path to sanctity.[94] Although each of these miracles clearly establish that Zita was holy, the similarity of the accounts to the lives of other saints makes it difficult to understand why the cult was so popular and believed to be individually significant to the Lucchese. However, Zita was distinguished by her station in life, namely as a laywoman and servant without an official tie to any religious order beyond the Frediando canons. What was unique for Zita is this typology of saint involving labour, charity, and peace, and how this particular type arose in the thirteenth century, predominately within the cities of Tuscany.

The previous argument has demonstrated that Zita's miracles were hardly distinctive; instead, her biography is most remarkable for the fact that she was a female servant. A study of the relationship between saints and societies in Europe from 1000-1700 by Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell can be used to compare the cult of Zita to other

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91 Allison Elliott, *Roads to Paradise: Reading the lives of the early saints* (New England: University Press of New England, 1987), 58. 'Bread appears' often in the lives of saints, and especially in female saints' *vitae*.

92 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 222-3. For the multiplication of bread also see: Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*, 58. For the growing popularity of cults that regarded peace movements see Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*, 177. Goodich suggests that, because one of the popular movements for saints at the time that Zita's cult was established involved peace movements, that this may have been connected to Zita's patron ability for prisoners condemned to death. This is also a view supported by Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 22, and in particular: 177. Webb discusses in her translation of the *vita* that Zita opposed self-adornment, indulgence, and excessive consumption, which were concepts that related to the poor.

93 Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*, 6-8.

94 Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*, 77-92.

popular cults that arose during this time. This comparison may establish why the Lucchese accepted the cult during the late-thirteenth century. The study consists of 864 saints (Zita not included). Relevant issues focus on the relationship between saints and the societies who venerated them that may be applied to Zita and the Lucchese. These issues include the proportion of female saints to male saints, the social context of saint's lives such as status and occupation, a geographical analysis of where cults arose in Europe, and the relationship between saints and religious orders.

The first issue regards Zita as a woman who began her journey to sainthood by entering service at the age of twelve. In Weinstein and Bell's analysis of 415 adolescent saints, there was a ratio of 86% male saints compared to 14% who were female. This ratio was greater than previous centuries, which show a majority of male saints, dominated largely by martyrs.[95] The rise of the female saint consisted of visionaries, mystics, and ascetics. Visionary and mystic saints were thought to possess supernatural powers, such as fighting with demons, levitation, and personal interactions with the Virgin and Christ. Clare of Assisi (d. 1253), Clare of Montefalco (d. 1308), and Catherine of Genoa (d.1510) are a few examples of visionary and mystic female saints who were widely venerated.[96] Zita can be categorized as an extreme ascetic who was known to wear a hair shirt and mutilate her legs with a cord, proven by large wounds on her thighs found after death.[97] Scratching her face to destroy her beauty could also be considered a form of asceticism.[98]

Two important conclusions for Zita as an ascetic can be made. Firstly, regarding the classifications of female saints, 62% were visionaries or mystics with supernatural abilities, compared to 38% who were ascetics.[99] Therefore, the majority of female saints were visionary, mystic or a combination of the two, with only a little over a third

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95 Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, 135: table 5.

96 Ibid, 135: table 5.

97 *AASS*, 'Zita,' 503.

98 Ibid, 504.

99 Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, 229: table 16, and 234: table 18.

classified as ascetics. Secondly, the figures of asceticism by gender show that male saints were more likely to follow this path. Weinstein and Bell provide a ratio of 73% male ascetic saints, compared to only 27% female.[100] Because Zita was a female ascetic she could be categorized in a smaller proportion of saints' profiles.

In the thirteenth century there were more women recognized as saints than previously. What distinguished Zita'a sainthood was that she was a female servant. Allison Elliot has suggested that servant saints arose in the thirteenth century among the urban classes because they could address the common situation of the labouring poor.[101] The majority of society were the poorer classes in service. Thus, it could be argued that this aided the extreme spread of the cult in England. Another common issue, relevant to Zita's servant status, was her ability to escape the normal life of a woman who was expected to marry and procreate. As a woman who chose life-long domestic service, Zita found a way to separate herself from the demands of marriage.[102] Servants were expected to marry as well. What was unusual with Zita is that she did not marry during her service, but stayed on in her vocation when she could have left. In her refusal to marry, she took what could be considered a more powerful role, frequent among female saints who were visionaries, mystics, and ascetics. These women became points of access to the divine for men by changing their dangerous, flesh-driven natures through voluntarily chosen virginity or chastity.[103]

The second issue relates more to Zita's occupation. Of the 864 saints in the study, including both male and female, only 16% were in service. This figure defines saints by occupation such as urban patrician, professional workers, or artisans. The other 84% of

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100 Ibid, 135: table 5

101 Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*, 171.

102 Goldberg, 'What was a Servant?', 1-20 and Goldberg, 'Female Labour, Service and Marriage in the Late Medieval Urban North,' *Northern History* 22 (1986), 18-38. And Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire c. 1300-1520* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992), 82-158. See also Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 350.

103 John Coakley, 'Friars as Confidants of the Holy Woman in Medieval Dominican Hagiography,' in *Images of Sainthood*, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell,199-222. See also: Elizabeth Robertson, 'The Corporeality of Female Sanctity in the life of Saint Margaret,' in *Images of Sainthood*, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell, 247-68.

saints who were not in service came largely from a higher social status, such as royalty, nobility, or the wealthy classes.[104] The category of saints in service could be further narrowed by gender. Of the 16% of saints who were in service, there were an 83% greater proportion of male servant saints compared to the 17% female servant saints.[105] Michael Goodich lists only four servant saints in Italy during the thirteenth century, of whom Zita was the only female.[106] Thus, Zita could be categorized in the secondary and smaller of each of these proportions, making her a very rare type of saint when there was such a massive boom of local cults during this period.

There are several possible reasons why a servant saint appealed to the Lucchese. In Zita's *vita,* she was named as *ancilla.* According to Goodich, this term had a dual interpretation where it could mean both female servant and whore.[107] This interpretation seems to indicate that that her life as a female and a servant was particularly significant for Lucchese women in service, and perhaps, morally corrupt prostitutes or bad domestic servants. This aspect of her sainthood has a conflict which inverts the hierarchy of her being a servant and a saint. In one way, Zita was a saint in the service to God, and, in another, she was a woman in service to humanity. As a female servant and saint, she inverted the power between the employer-employee and male-female social hierarchy.[108]

Moreover, her rejection of marriage may have been able to fill a particular void for women who could not find husbands and, thus had to enter service because of their financial situations, which was, most-typically for women, domestic service. This was common throughout all of Europe during the medieval period. Many women of the lower classes were unable to find husbands due to the Crusades and other wars leaving fewer men than women in the demographic. Moreover, Lucca was constantly battling Pisa

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104 Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Societies,* 221: table 14.

105 Ibid, 221: table 14.

106 Goodich, *Vita Perfecta,* 74. Goodich lists four servant saints: 20 and Goodich, 'A Profile of Thirteenth Century Sainthood,' 434: table II. However, Goodich does not mention who they were. For servant saints see also: Derek Baker, *Sanctity and secularity: The Church and the World* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), 83.

107 Goodich, *Lives and Miracles,* xi, 120, and 129.

108 Goldberg, 'What was a Servant?', 1-20.

throughout the medieval period and struggling to keep its male population stable. Zita lived her life as the unmarried virgin and domestic servant. It is very likely there were many other Lucchese women in this same situation, who were, perhaps, frustrated with their lack of finding a husband.[109] These maids found a saint in Zita who could address their common situation in a socially appropriate way, namely through supplication to an ideal virgin servant, who remained in her occupation steadfast, pious, and without complaint.

Drawing more upon the bad female servant, the temptress or the tempted female servant, could fall pregnant. This would be very damaging to her position. She would likely to be forced to leave her occupation, or to give up the child, even by primitive means of abortion. Further, if she fell pregnant by one of the men whom she served, there was the threat of scandal placed upon the entire household. Therefore, both the male authority who wished to protect their household with an appropriate chaste model for his female and male servants, and the female servant, could supplicate Zita for protection.[110]

Apart from lay society, saints associated with labour and charity were popular among the clergy because they could appeal to the growing population in urban Italy and addressed the poor whose lives were defined by occupation. As Michael Goodich has argued in his extremely important study of this phenomenon in thirteenth century Italy: "It seems likely that the same stereotypical relationship of tension and sexual exploitation likewise characterized the master-servant relationship in the middle ages, although modified by a counter-image of purity which the church sought to propagate."[111] Vauchez has established that servant saints also resonated with the merchant class. Servant sainthood in the mid-thirteenth century was a result of the laity's need to expiate the sins that

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109 Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 1-48. Bynum discusses how there was an overpopulation of the male gender in medieval society due largely to wars such as the Crusades. The depletion in the male class resulted in both the opportunity for women to pursue occupations, but also less ability to find husbands, thus, forcing women of the lower class to enter service. See also: Goodich, 'What was a Servant?,' 1-20. For documentation of that lack of men in Lucca at this time see: Bratchel, *Medieval Lucca*, 172.

110 Goodich, 'What was a servant?', 1-20.

111 Goodich, *Lives and Miracles*, 120. See also: Vauchez, *Lay People's Sanctity*, 1-17.

resulted from pursuing money and the transactions of trade.[112] The primary occupations of Lucca at the time Zita's cult was established were banking and the silk trade.[113] Servant sainthood may have been a model promoted by the clergy and accepted by the urban classes such as merchants, but it appears to have been extremely rare, indicating that Zita's cult was unique.

Such a unique situation again raises questions about the origins and propagation of her cult. Perhaps the degree of the heavy investment by the male members of the Fatinelli family in promoting her veneration within their hometown for their own purposes of social and spiritual aid may go some way towards explaining why this particular female servant had a successful local Lucca. At the same time, the very specific local circumstances of Fatinelli support may also explain why Zita had little or no appeal to other communities outside of Lucca. The model of servant sainthood supported by the clergy in Italy, appears to have arisen during the mid-fourteenth century, and, thus after the establishment of Zita's cult. Therefore, it would seem reasonable to suggest that rather than conforming to the ideals of this type of servant sainthood envisioned and supported by the clergy and the people who worked in labour, Zita, as a model servant saint, was perhaps more likely to have been created by the male authority of Lucca, supported by the wealthy Fatinelli and accepted by the male aristocracy, to be used to control the otherwise amoral behavior of the average Lucchese servant girl: *ancilla*.[114]

André Vauchez, Michael Goodich, and Jeremy Goldberg, all propose that Zita was likely to have been used in Lucca by the city government to maintain control over female servants and a potentially disorderly lower class during the thirteenth century.[115] This argument is possible. Even so, according to the *vita* and what can be deduced about her cult from previous discussions, it appears that Zita was popular among all levels of the·

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112 Vauchez, *The Laity*, 103. Specifically for merchants and new popular urban saints in England and Italy also see: Mecklin, *The Passing of the saint: A study of a Cultural Type* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), 147-70.

113 Meek, *The Commune of Lucca Under Pisan Rule*, 53-64.

114 Ibid, 129. See also: Goldberg, 'What was a servant?,' 8.

115 Ibid, 'What was a Servant?,' 1-20.

Lucchese, especially considering she had such wealthy backers as the Fatinelli. Zita may have been used as an ideal for the lower classes to aspire to, in effect, giving the Lucchese patricians control, but it was doubtful that this was the only function of her cult because she was widely venerated among all classes in Lucca for such a long period before her canonisation.

The analysis of women and servants by Weinstein, Bell, Goodich, and Vauchez, allow for a more specific comparison between the life of a tradition male saint and a traditional female saint. At a very general level, the majority of male saints were defined by their lives in exterior space, such as the bishop, confessor or martyr, who became a saint by physical actions outside and in the world. Male saints fled from the interior world to the desert for escape and isolation.[116] In contrast, a female saint was usually restricted to interior space, such as a convent, cell, or home.[117] Here, the female saint could pursue inner mysticism, visionary feats, or asceticism in a more isolated and 'other' location, which was necessary because of her gender in medieval society.[118] Zita was not a nun restricted to a convent. However, it could be argued that she was similarly isolated. She worked in a private household, which gave her the same interior space common to other models of female sanctity. According to her *vita*, Zita worked most of her time in the kitchen or other areas inside the household, a space that could be viewed as socially acceptable for female isolation and providing interior seclusion that was required for her path to sanctity.

Zita had a regular income and her own room in the Fatinelli house. This is suggested by the circumstances of her death in her own room at the Fatinelli household, and her

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116 Mecklin, *The Passing of Saint*, 17-30.

117 Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 25.

118 David Damrosch, 'Non Alia Sed Aliter: The Hermeneuitcs of Gender in Bernaurd of Clairvaux,' in *Images of Sainthood*, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell, 187. For female saint as 'other' see: Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'Misogyhism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church,' in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* ed. Rosemary Ruther, (New York: Simon and Scuhster, 1974), 150-83. For Zita in the kitchen space specifically see: Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 22: "Some of the most vividly evoked spaces in this literature are interiors. The lay saint was often making a conscious effort to reproduce the connections of monastic seclusion in the secular domestic setting."

reported charity practices of giving her bed at night to the homeless or to prostitutes.[119] The privilege of her own room was rather unusual, especially for a female servant. It was more likely that female servants slept in the daughter's room, or even the kitchen. The Fatinelli may have embellished the position she had in the household after her death to further support her holy status, and further emphasize the fact that they gave her proper honours even before her death. The position Zita held in the household was significant. Because of her loyalty to the Fatinelli, she eventually became head household servant.[120] This was a position above other servants with arguably more power and freedom. Both Vauchez and Webb have suggested that this freedom may have provided Zita with more ability to seek charity from the master and mistress of the Fatinelli household.[121] It has also been demonstrated that she likely used the household keeps to dispense the household surpluses, a symbol which she later became identified with. Zita, as a servant, can relate to the mendicant emphasis on poverty, humility, and charity.

The geographical location where the cult arose is an important point because of the popularity of local devotions in this region of Italy during the thirteenth century. Weinstein and Bell give figures which show the three countries that sought the most canonisations during the thirteenth century were Italy (79), France (24), and the Holy Roman Empire and Switzerland (22).[122] In Italy, and especially in the cities of Tuscany, there was a sudden surge of popular local cults. The appearance of local devotions during this period, including the cult of Zita in Tuscan Lucca, was not uncommon. This rise of urban sainthood was specific to Italy, and primarily Tuscany. Other saints with similar local devotions were Bona of Pisa (d. 1207) and Fina of San Gimignano (d. 1253).[123] Yet, Zita was the only servant: Bona was a tertiary and Fina was from the nobility.

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119 *AASS*, 'Zita,' 506.

120 Ibid, 507.

121 Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 32-4. See also, Vauchez, *The Laity*, 104.

122 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 167: table 6.

123 Ibid, 222. Vauchez compares Zita to Fina of San Gimignano (d. 1253).

One final significant point regarding the origins of Zita's worship in Lucca was the fact that her cult developed without the support of any religious order, as was often the case with other recent uncanonised saints, many of whom were associated with the mendicants, either as friars, nuns or tertiarys. Zita regularly attended services at her local church, San Frediando, and after her death both the Dominicans and Franciscans were consulted for the burial preparations.[124] The powerful regular canons of the church of San Frediando oversaw her primary shrine, along with the continuous patronage of the Fatinelli family, but there is little evidence that they were continuously involved. The lack of a connection to a religious order is vital to understanding the support of her cult in Lucca because it could have made her canonisation more difficult. It was arguably easier for a saint to be canonised if they had the support of a religious order that could offer more efficient financial support and influence for the canonisation process.

Vauchez has shown that a saint was more likely to be canonised if they belonged to a religious order.[125] A comparison of the canonisation proceedings of Zita to other saints who did have the support of orders in the thirteenth century provides a clear demonstration. There was little delay in the procedures of saints connected to the first mendicants who were broadly venerated. Examples include Francis (d.1226, canonised 1228), Dominic (d.1221, canonised 1234), Anthony of Padua (d.1231, canonised 1232), and Clare of Assisi (d.1253, canonised 1255). Although these saints were incredibly famous and influential in their lifetimes, the quick processes of their canonisation amply supports how political their cases were. These saints had little delay in canonisation due partially to popular demand and the extent of the cults, which began during their lifetimes, but also their connection to the religious orders and specifically to the pope at the time of their deaths and the establishment of their cults. By contrast, Zita was only a locally venerated saint with no mendicant connections and no other clerical support except for the single community of the regular canons of San Frediando, who, no matter how wealthy, could hardly match either the financial resources or international influence

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124 Ibid, 220-5. See also: Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 31.

125 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 109-12. See also Goodich: 'A Profile of Thirteenth Century Sainthood', 439.

of the powerful and international mendicant orders, such as the Franciscans and Dominicans.

Italian representations of Zita from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries demonstrate that her veneration did not spread far beyond the confines of her native town. Other surviving manuscripts from the *vita* provide evidence that prominent clergy in other areas of Europe supported the cult to some degree much later in the seventeenth century. For example, there were written petitions to the papacy to support Zita's canonisation. In 1696, Bishop Cardinale Buonvisi of Lucca, Archbishop of Genova, Archbishop of Palermo, and the cannons of San Frediando singed one such petition.[126] Such documents provide evidence the cult extended to other areas of Europe, at least within the religious community.

Although there are several difficulties with the primary sources regarding the initiation of the cult in Lucca, and little can be ascertained because of the lack of sources, there remains sufficient evidence that she was regularly honoured. Veneration was maintained despite the lack of cult expansion from Lucca, except for England. In England, Zita, or Sitha as she became known in this country, is represented in over fifty surviving images dating from the mid-fifteenth until the mid-sixteenth centuries. In comparison to Zita's veneration as a mature and humble servant in Lucca, in England she is most often represented as a youthful young maiden.[127] Her type of servant sainthood developed to address different social issues that were largely divorced from the original cult in Lucca, where Zita had become a common saint among others who were similarity venerated in this country. In order to understand how this transformation took place it is necessary to first investigate the way that the cult was carried and communicated to England.

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126 Puccinelli, *Vita,* 1-154.
127 Goldberg, 'What was a servant?,' 1-20

Chapter Two

Transmigration of a cult: Zita in England

The representation of Zita in religious images in England reveals that the cult was very broad throughout the country. Unfortunately, remarkably little evidence remains indicating how the cult might have been communicated between the two countries, which makes it difficult to comprehend why the English adopted and venerated Zita nationwide. Three means of contact between the two countries can be suggested as plausible routes: pilgrimage, immigration, and trade. An analysis of these three possibilities, at the time of the establishment of Zita's cult in this country during the early-fourteenth century, may account for why the cult had such appeal to the English devout, who apparently needed her as a saint for reasons which were largely different to those of the Lucchese.

The first link between England and Italy at the time of the establishment of the cult is pilgrimage. Although this type of journey was predominately local in England, international shrines were also popular.[1] There were three principal destinations: Rome, Jerusalem and Santiago de Compostela.[2] Because international travel required time and finances, those undertaking a journey, such as to Italy, were more likely to be the wealthier classes. There is also an important relationship between lay society and clergy regarding those who went on pilgrimage because they were distinctly different. Both sought holy shrines for a number of different reasons. It could be for a cure, imposed as penance by the church, done voluntarily, to solve a problem, to find an individual protector who would intercede on their behalf, or to save their soul. The act could even be based on guilt for not fulfilling an *ex-voto*. Vauchez has observed that; "In a society in which the notion of the state had almost disappeared, every community, and soon every

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1 Webb, *Pilgrimage*, xi-1.

2 Nicholas Vincent, 'The Pilgrimages of the Anquein Kings of England 1154-1272,' in *Pilgrimage: The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan*, eds. Colin Morris and Peter Roberts, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 12-35 and 37, n. 108: mentions a relic of 'St. Osythe' brought to Ely by a Hospitaller knight. This may be a further corruption or confusion of the Anglieised form of Zita's name, Sitha, in which case it most likely refers to the relic of Zita's toe brought to England by Sir. William Langstrother, who was a member of the Hospitaller Knights order of St. John. See below for further discussion.

person, sought to establish a direct relationship with a personal protector."[3] The primary way to acquire the services of a personal patron saint was to travel to a shrine and either offer a vow or obtain a relic. It should also be noted that most pilgrims were unable to acquire relics because they were jealously guarded. Usually they were given the option of purchasing badges or other items which were claimed to have had contact with the corpse, such as oil or dirt. These items were expensive, which resulted in a high amount either being false or all-together unafordable.

When taking a pilgrimage, many other shrines along the journey were included for specific reasons. Occasionally sites were chosen because they were en route to the final destination and this was a case in point for pilgrimage to Lucca. Lucca was a focal city on a famous route in the medieval period called the Via Francigena. This route extended from Canterbury to Rome (fig. 5). If an English pilgrim chose to undertake an international pilgrimage to Rome, it would be difficult to argue that Lucca was not an included city. There were several factors relating to Lucca on the Via Francigena and how this route would have mobilized the cult of Zita to England. Firstly, it should be noted that Zita's shrine was not the only point of attraction that brought pilgrims to Lucca. The Volto Santo was arguably the most famous sacred attraction of Lucca and a prime point of interest on the Via Francigena at this time.[4] The original Volto Santo, probably created during the second half of the eleventh century, is now lost. The recreation, if reasonably based on the original, depicts an over life-size version of Christ dressed, unusually, in Eastern garb (fig. 3).[5]

In addition to the Volto Santo, the church of San Frediando housed other relics as well. For the Lucchese, the most important were the relics of St Frediando, one of the town's early bishops (d. sixth c.). For English visitors, the church was especially notable for the

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3 Ibid, 6. For reasons why people took pilgrimage see also: Stephen Wilson, *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-36.

4 Dorothy Glass, *Portals, Pilgrimage and Crusade in Western Tuscany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 4

5 Gary Radke, *The Volto Santo of Lucca: Its Provenance and Liturgical Significance* (Unpublished Thesis: Michigan State University, 1975), 30-50: Rake also cites the significance of Lucca on the Via Francigenia and the city's central role in trading relics.

shrine of an Anglo-Saxon King; Richard.[6] Finally, the Lucca cathedral also possessed an altar dedicated to another English saint; Edmund (d. 870) who was an English martyred king of East Anglia. Edmund also enjoyed a cult that was still popular in England during the fourteenth century.[7] By stopping at Lucca to see the Volto Santo, visit the local churches to pay their respects at the shrines of other saintly countrymen, English pilgrims could have easily come across Zita's tomb in San Frediando and made enquiries about the unknown saint with their Lucchese hosts. For some, what they were told was sufficiently engaging or inspiring enough to have stayed with them when they returned home to England. It seems likely that the pilgrims traveling to Lucca to see these different shrines would have likely come into contact with the cult of Zita and her relics.

In addition to these popular attractions, Lucca was conveniently located on the Via Francigena and this would have made it a popular place for resting on the journey to Rome. According to Dorothy Glass's discussion of medieval pilgrimage and the Via Francigena, Lucca was one of the major sites of the route.[8] If a pilgrim was on the direct route then there were two alternate cities to rest before and after Lucca: Pietrasanta and Altopascio. The line of the Via Francigena joined with the Via Cassia route slightly more inland, which was another plausible road to travel. Although these could have been alternative places to stop and rest instead of Lucca, it would appear, at least for the majority of pilgrims and other travelers, Lucca would have been considerably more attractive because of the famous Volto Santo and the hospitable Lucchese with their trade industry.

Pilgrimage was crucial for the cities on the Via Francigena for several reasons. During their stay, pilgrims poured prosperity into the city by buying relics, badges and items they would have required for their journey, as for instance, food and equipment. Correspondingly, cities such as Lucca were hospitable to pilgrims by offering

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6 Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St Sitha,' 85.

7 Diana Webb, *The Holy Face of Lucca, Anglo-Norman Studies IX: Proceedings of the Battle Conference*, ed. Brown (Woodbridge: 1986), 236.

8 Glass, *Pilgrimage*, 4.

accommodation, food, and hospices that would have encouraged an economic stimulus in the city.[9] Pilgrims were vital for the success of any cult. Through word of mouth, the portability of pilgrim badges and purchased or stolen relics, a cult could spread across Europe.[10] There was a large production of pilgrim badges and a high demand for holy relics especially during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[11]

The demand for relics resulted in many being bought, sold, or stolen. Several requests were made to buy the relics from Zita's corpse, although considerably later on. Padri Domenicani of Palermo made a request in 1663. He only received a parcel of her clothing.[12] This relic request likely was related to a church dedication to Zita in Palermo, where there still remains some visual evidence of the saint dated to the seventeenth century. In 1865 Padre Patis of Vienna made a request, which was denied.[13] There was also apparently a request by Bishop Jacobus de Voragine of Genoa, which was also refused.[14] Patrick Geary, who has extensively examined relic thefts, demonstrated how the English were the largest collectors during the medieval period, and that Italian holy items were in the highest demand.[15] Commerce was an important source of these holy objects for individuals and communities, but these relics were often not acquired legally, which will be discussed further below regarding a stolen relic of Zita that was brought to England.[16]

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9 Glass, *Pilgrimage*, 4. For saints as a source of civic revenue see: Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country*, 52-3. And Kleinberg, *Proving Sanctity*, 183-207.

10 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 240-300.

11 Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*, 176-7. See also: Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints*, XVIX. See also: Wilfred Bonser, 'The Cult of Relics in the Middle Ages,' *Folklore* 61 (Munich: 1950), 68-87. See also: Francis Bond, *Dedications and Patrons of English Churches: Ecclesiastical Symbolism Saints and Their Emblems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914), 19 and 126: Bond lists four dedications to Zita.

12 Nicolai, *Santa Zita*, 8. For more information on the church dedication in Palermo see: Kemp, *Canonisation and Authority*, 498.

13 Nicolai, 4.

14 Brian Coe, *Stained Glass in England:1150-1550* (London: Howard and Wynham, 1981), 46.

15 Geary, *Futra Sacra*, 59-63.

16 Ibid, 63.

Although Zita's shrine was not the most famous of Lucca, it is possible that there were English who did have a prime interest in her cult and wished to travel to see her shrine. Surviving evidence of a sermon by a Lollard preacher supports that there were those who chose pilgrimage to Zita, which will be detailed below.[17] If there were English who traveled to Lucca, specifically to see the shrine of Zita, then they must have known about her cult before undertaking the journey in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Such knowledge would have been obtained by word of mouth from those to traveled through England or, possibly, by secondary relics such as badges.[18] Webb cites one such surviving badge for Zita's shrine dated to the fourteenth century.[19] The saints who had originated as the property of their community remained so, but were increasingly offered to a wider audience in a variety of different ways. It should be noted that relics were both convenient because of their portability but also effective, since it was believed that these items could perform the saint's miracles.[20] If the relic was genuine, it would perform successful miracles at the new locations it was brought to or on the behalf of its new owners.

As mentioned above, relic theft can be documented for Zita's cult. In 1446, a Hospitillar Knight of the Order of St. John named Sir William Langstrother stole Zita's big right toe.[21] The Order of St. John was a military and religious order established to provide hospital care and military protection for pilgrims in Jerusalem during the Crusades. Sir William Langstrother was the brother of John Langstrother (d. 1471). On the 9th of March 1469, he was elected Prior of the Hospitallers in England. The close family connection suggests that Sir William was also a prominent member of the Order. William himself was prior of the Hospitallers in Lincolnshire.[22] In the mid-fifteenth century, he was

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17 Anne Hudson, *Selections from English Wycliffite Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 87-9, n. 16: line 179.

18 Webb, *Pilgrimage*, 37.

19 Ibid, 152.

20 Geary, *Futra Sacra*, 152. See also: Kemp, *Canonisation and Authority*.

21 Gregory O'Malley, *The Knights Hospitaller of the English League 1224-1565* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 53. See also: Collin Morris and Roberts, *Pilgrimage: The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 37: Morris and Roberts mention the bone of St. Osythe.

22 Thorlac Turville-Petre, 'A Middle English Life of St. Zita' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 35 (Nottingham, 1991), 103.

summoned to the defense of Rhodes.[23] He traveled through Rome, where he took part in a chapel dedication of the Knights of St. John on February 26th, 1446.[24] On his return journey in the same year he stayed in Lucca. While in Lucca, on the 23rd of November, he requested a private viewing of Zita's incorrupt body from Bishop Blalthazar Manni, whereupon he stole her right big toe. It is difficult to suggest how he was able to acquire the relic. With great speculation, he could have bit, broke, or cut it off. By whatever means, he did manage to smuggle it out of Lucca. He brought the toe back to Eagle in Lincolnshire and dedicated a chapel to Zita's honor at Ely, calling her St. Sithe.[25]

Tales of relic theft are common. If the theft was successful, that is, if the thief who was still in possession of the relic told the story and named the saint it was taken from, then the saint had allowed the act to occur. If the theft was discovered and prevented, thus told by original possessors, the saint didn't approve of being stolen or moved. This demonstrates that Zita wanted to go to England because she had allowed the theft to take place. While stealing a relic such as a toe may have been common during the medieval period, the personal decision to do so was still a momentous act. The interest Langstrother had in Zita must have been strong enough to lead to the theft and would have had potential repercussions.[26] It could be expected that the theft of the toe of the Lucchese patron saint would have caused a tension between Lucca and England at the time. According to the context of relic thefts, it is almost certain that Langstrother believed that Zita wished to be taken to England, that the toe would work successful miracles, and, therefore, that he was justified in his actions.[27]

It is important to note the significance that the thefts of relics had on the community it was illegally brought to, in this case England. A theft dismantled the value of the item

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23 John Frankis, 'St. Zita, St. Sithe and St. Osyth,' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 36 (Nottingham, 1992), 269.

24 O'Malley, *The Knights Hospitaller*, 53. See also Brian Camm, 'Some Norfolk Rood-Screens,' in *A Supplement to Blomenfield's Norfolk*, ed. Ingleby, (London: 1929), 269.

25 Ibid, 269.

26 Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha.' 84. Sutcliffe suggests that the theft may have reflected badly on Langstrother's reputation

27 Geary, *Futra Sacra*, 132-57.

because the act broke the context which gave a relic meaning, namely the community
who initially venerated it.[28] And also, there was greater emphasis on the entire body,
which was more prestigious and impressive to have than just a toe. But, on the other
hand, a fragment was surely better than nothing. The toe still contained the full person of
the saint and their holy essence. To quote Geary on the symbolism of stolen relics; "In its
new location it became an important symbol only if the society made it one, and this
symbolism was necessarily a product of that society."[29] Therefore, the stolen relic of Zita
in England appears to imply that she was already well-known in this country before the
relic of her toe arrived. Its arrival may have sparked interest in the cult and the church
dedicated by Sir William Langstrother in Ely, who no doubt supported her veneration in
England. The church dedication, although small, would have made local pilgrimages
possible for English worshippers interested in Zita, rather than having to travel to Lucca
to visit her shrine and view her incorrupt body. It also seems plausible that Ely was not
the only location in England that contained a dedicated to Zita. However, Ely was in a
central position, which made it an important location, particularly for pilgrims from
Yorkshire, where there is also evidence of Zita in images.[30]

One last issue regarding Lucca's position on the Via Francigena, although not regarding
pilgrimage, was the importance of the route itself in thirteenth century Italy. While
pilgrims were common on the road, so too were merchants and other travelers because of
its convenience. The route was inland, which protected travelers from the dangers of
journeying near the coast with threats of pirates and kidnappers who used ransoms as one
of their main sources of income.[31] In addition, the extensive network of Lucchese
hospices would have been attractive to merchants and other voyagers. The three

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28 Ibid, 7.

29 Ibid.

30 Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 85.

31 Glass, *Pilgrimage*, 4. For dangers of traveling near coast see: Jenny Kermode, *Medieval Merchants: York, Beverley and Hull in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 158-90. For the spread of culture and trade during pilgrimage see also: Wilson, *Saints and Their Cults*, 36. See also: Pierre Sanchis, 'The Portugese 'Romarias',' in Wilson, *Saints and their Cults*, 261-90: Sanchis and others in Wilson discuss why pilgrimages could be taken, whether because of guilt, fear, or superstition. But Sanchis in particular discuses how relics were also a sense of identity.

prominent cities for merchant trade along the Francigena were Lucca, Pistoia, and Pisa.[32] The route connected the entire west side of Italy with Rome. This link was revolutionary for communication, and, thus the spread of trade and culture. The importance of Lucca on the Via Francigena could be considered vital for the cult migration to England because those who traveled through the powerful merchant city centre, for whatever reason, may have come into contact with the cult of Zita and her relics. In conclusion, the line of the Via Francigena, which passed through the textile trade centre of Lucca, made a clear communication path for the cult to travel to England.

Zita's shrine was also likely to have attracted pilgrims because of her relationship to women and service. As previously mentioned, a surviving manuscript of a fifteenth century sermon given by an English Lollard preacher scolded a wealthy lay woman for vowing to undertake the costly pilgrimage to Zita's shrine after she had lost her household keys: "And a wife who lose a key worth only three pence, and she will go to seek St Sithe and spend a noble ten shillings on the journey, and in her life betray Christ, with a false image as this when she was dying. Alas! What a vow is this, to waste so much good in vein pilgrimage for a thing of so little value?"[33] Lollards were heretics and this view regarding the value of pilgrimage was normal, although not always agreed with. It is here worth noting for two reasons: firstly, keys were a symbol for Zita who had been a head household servant known to carry the item at her belt and were also used to identify her in images. And secondly, for the importance of pilgrimage, although the woman here was held up as a figure of ridicule, subjected to this preaching for insisting to take the pilgrimage to Zita's shrine by a heretical preacher, the fact that she had vowed to do so for the simple reason of losing her keys, is worth noting. In addition, it shows Zita's significance to English women, rather than men.

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32 Glass, *Pilgrimage*, 4.

33 Hudson, *English Wycliffite Writing*, 87-9, n. 16: line 179: Images and Pilgrimages; Lollard Polemic: "And a wife lose a keye of vaew of pre pens, anon she will hete to seke seynt sithe and spende a noble or ten schilyngis in pe iurney, and not onus in pe zer visite pe lest bedrade Christis quiche ymage by hir wip a drath of dryng. Allas! What a vowe is pis, to waste so myche good in veyn pilgrimage for a ping lost of so litil valewe?" (author's own translation).

Another form of pilgrimage was for wealthy to pay poor religious men and women to take pilgrimages on their behalf, either before or after their deaths for penance, fulfillment of an *ex voto*, or to supplicate the saint on behalf of their eternal soul. Sebastian Sutcliffe, who uncovered the will of Alison Hudson of Brodsworth, Yorkshire, dated to 1509, found such a pilgrimage vow. In her will, Hudson requested that the pilgrimage she owed to 'Sent Syth of Euyll' be made.[34] Euyll may be an appellation for Ely, and of course, Syth; Sitha. Local pilgrimage may have been common, but any of these could equally have been to Lucca. Sir David Lindsay mentions other vows of pilgrimages to Zita's shrine to both Lucca and Ely in his 1553 published discussion of the 'Superstitious Pylgramagis' of the common people.[35] These pilgrimages were undertaken well after the cult was established in England, but nevertheless they do indicate Zita's popularity and the possibility of pilgrimage as a means by where her fame traveled, first by those accidently coming upon her shrine in San Frediando, and then by possible pilgrimages in her honour to her either Ely or Lucca itself.

The second social relationship that may have contributed to the spread of Zita's fame beyond the channel was Lucchese immigration to England. Thomas Blomquist's examination of Lucchese merchants and banking operations listed several families who relocated either temporarily or permanently to England during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Cecio Faytinelli and Guillelemo Faytinelli are named in 1256 as mercers living in London.[36] The spice merchant John Van of Lucca settled in England in the fourteenth century. Bartholomeu of Lucca was given English citizenship in 1334.[37] Also in the fourteenth century, Nicholas Guillelni of Lucca was an apothecary who

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34 Turville-Petre, 'Zita,' 105. Also see, Frankis, 'St. Zita,' 148. Also see Thomas More, *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (New Haven: Complete Works 6, 1981), 22: 84.

35 Turville-Petre, 'Zita,' 105: "Thay requhen thay haiif iowellis thynte to seik sanct syth, or ever thay stynte." See also Early Tudor Songbook, *British Library Royal Appendix* 58: "Kytt hathe lost hur key" in Richard Greene, *The Early English Carols* (Oxford, 1977), 279. And *British Library MS Harley 2255*, f. 116b, *Incipt de Santa Ositha*,: "She beheyght to Seynt Sythe a key/ And ofryde hym a key of wexe". As will be demonstrated with other evidence of the cult in this thesis, wax for light dedications to Zita either before images or shrine dedications, occurred frequently.

36 Thomas Blomquist, *Merchant Families, Banking and Money in Medieval Lucca* (Surry: Ashgate Variorum, 2005), 525. Trade with fat, wood, silk, wool, and other items common for mercers, thus medieval merchants had a diverse degree of commerce.

37 Ibid, 525.

supplied the king's wardrobe and John Falcoun of Lucca was a lambard and mercer.[38] Stonyhurst College has preserved a chasuble known as 'the Lucca Vestment' made around the year 1460 for Ludovico Bonvisi, a member of a well-known Lucchese family who had taken up residency in London. The decorations on this chasuble include a depiction of the Volto Santo, Peter, Paulinus of Lucca, and 'Sitha' is named.[39] It is important to note that this image is another example of Zita connected with the prominent Volto Santo. Here, Zita and the crucifix are both famous Lucchese attractions. Lastly, Thmaes Guenes of Lucca is named in documents of 1500 regarding financial trade.[40] The connection of these Lucchese families with merchant and banking in England provides abundant evidence that there was an immigration that took place around the same time as the establishment of Zita's cult.

Lucchese settlement in England integrates with the third possible means of communication, namely the merchant and banking trades. Trade provides the most well-documented evidence of the relationship between Lucca and England. The majority of extant documentation involves the Riccardi family. The Riccardi were Lucchese bankers who financed trade networks throughout Europe, but especially in England, where they were bankers to Edward I (ruled 1273-1307). They enjoyed his favour until 1294 when they were replaced by the Frescobaldi of Florence.[41] A study by Richard Kaeuper on the importance of the Riccardi to Edward I's rule, established that the association between Lucca and Edward was essential to the stability of the government.[42] The relationship provided the Riccardi with protection and a vast network of alliances for their business

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38 Ibid. Despite being an apotherecary, it seems that this family also brought silk and wool across the channel for profit, which was probably not that difficult considering the main trade of Lucca was textiles.

39 Carus Vale Collier, *Notes and Queries* (Oxford Journal Archives, 1893), 12. See also: W. B. Gerish and C. A. N. *Notes and Queries* (Oxford Journal Archives, 1911) 73-4. See also: W. H. B., 'Sir William Langstow,' *Notes and Queries* (Oxford Journal Archives, 1911), 229. See also: G. G. Coulton, *Notes and Queries* (Oxford Journal Archives, 1923), 107. See also: W. R. N. Baron, *Notes and Queries* (Oxford Journal Archives, 1923), 216.

40 Syliva Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London: 1300-1500* (Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1948), 191-233.

41 Richard Kaeuper, *Bankers to the Crown: The Riccardi of Lucca and Edward I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 168.

42 Ibid, 168.

transactions in England. In addition, the Riccardi provided financial flexibility for Edward I's rule.[43]

The types of payments and services they organized for Edward I related to warfare, diplomacy, foreign affairs, household expenses, king's works, and, even after a financially beneficial marriage for the king, castle building.[44] The scale of the transactions shows that Edward I owed his bankers, on average, nearly half the receipts accounted for by the principal government finances, which he apparently repaid regularly.[45] In a study of English towns, commerce and crafts from 1086-1348, Edward Miller and John Hatcher demonstrated that during the thirteenth century foreign merchants provided income related to more than half of the English overseas trade.[46] This trade was certainly related to the Riccardi. Between 1272 and 1294, the Riccardi gave £400,000 to Edward I and supplied the royal court with its largest amount of silk from Lucca.

Lucchese production of silk and wool met the high demand of the English court. Therefore, the supply of textiles for the English court was a source of revenue for both the Riccardi family and the commune of Lucca.[47] Kaeuper has remarked that: "The wool trade was one of the attractions which originally drew Italian merchants to England, and it may well have retained a primary place in their own estimation, even after they had developed extensive credit transactions with wealthy lay society, religious lords and with the king."[48] The successful growth of Lucchese banking, and the wool and silk trade, prompted other merchants to travel to England who would have further communicated cultural topics. With some speculation, these topics were likely to have included religious content, such as the newly established cult of Zita. Apart from the Riccardi family, in

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43 Ibid, 207.

44 Ibid, 86-103.

45 Ibid, 130-1.

46 Edward Miller and John Hatcher, *Medieval England: Towns, Commerce and Crafts 1086-1348: A Social and Economic History of England,* (London: Longman Group, 1995), 201.

47 Ibid, 147.

48 Kaeuper, *Bankers to the Crown,* 35.

1293-6 Hugolino Geaduci of Lucca was considered to be the largest wool exporter in Newcastle.[49] Such evidence clearly marks the support of Zita's cult among English and Italian merchants. Even the main financial support of Zita's cult back in Lucca came from the Fatinelli, who were known merchants of Lucca, although not in England. The cult's support in Lucca suggests that it is highly likely other Lucchese merchants would have been supporters of Zita's cult in England.

Because of their successes in trade, English merchants were the new elite and their social circles would have included foreign (mainly Italian) merchants, nobility and sometimes-prominent clergymen.[50] Lucchese and English merchants would have moved within the same circles because of their business transactions. Merchants invested a lot of their success into the church, demonstrated largely from wills, which provide the largest amount of surviving textual evidence about devotional trends in England.[51] Surviving evidence demonstrates that Zita was popular among several prominent English merchant families such as the Blackburn's of York. In 1445, this family commissioned a Book of Hours that included an illumination of Zita (figs. 26-7).[52] Such patronage indicates how the cult of Zita was already venerated before the mid-fifteenth century by this social class.

There were several plausible reasons why both the English and Lucchese merchants would have promoted worship of a new saint in England. For the Lucchese, Zita was a civic patron. As a home patron she would have been considered both a protector when they traveled and a focus for religious identity when living in a foreign country.[53] However, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters, Zita's spread among English

49 Jenny Kermode, *Medieval Merchants: York, Beverly and Hull in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998) 158-190: Kermode discusses the geography and composition of trade in England with special interest in wool, cloth and wine from Italy

50 Thrupp, *The Merchant Class*, 235-87.

51 Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 1-10. See also: Wilson, *Saints and their Cults*, 13, 202, 274, 276-7, and 287.

52 Refer to 'Chapter Five: Book Illuminations: Education for good wyfes and daughters,'. For Lucchese merchants influence of English merchants see also Kaueper, *Bankers to the Crown*, 80.

53 Sanchis, 'The Portugese 'Romarias',' 264. See also Kleinberg, *Prophets in their own country*, 53.

worshippers was accompanied by changes to her imagery that gradually disassociated her from specifically Lucchese origins. As will be established later in this thesis, in her adopted country, Zita's image appears to have been adjusted to address differing needs, applicable to her new worshippers.

While English merchants' interest in the cult could only be speculated upon, there were certain attributes of Zita that may have attracted this social class. One was Zita's abilities was to save victims from drowning, as recounted in several miracles.[54] Evidence supports the view that the English apparently regarded this patron trait as important. Sutcliffe mentioned a chapel dedication to Zita on a bridge at Bridgenorth, Salop. Webb also lists her name in Northbirdge and a bridge chapel dedication to her at Ripon. The inscription of her name on the bridges and her chapel dedications close to rivers connects the cult to water.[55]

Such an association suggests that at least part of Zita's appeal may have been her ability to protect her followers from drowning. John Aubrey wrote a small script, 'Old Ambrose Brown', which has been dated to the late-fourteenth century: "In those days, when they went to bed, they did rake-up their fire and make a + in the Ashes, and pray and go to Saint Sythe, to delivery them from fire, and from water and all misadventure."[56] Belief in Zita's special abilities against death by water in England did not necessarily have a connection to the cult in Lucca. Sutcliffe has suggested that English devotees may have confused Zita with the English saint: Osyth (d. 653).[57] Osyth was a princess and martyr venerated in England as a patron saint and protector from drowning. In one episode of her *vita*, she remained clutching a book in a river for over forty-eight hours and was later found alive. The images of Zita in England show several variations of her name, such as

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54 *AASS*, 'Zita', 508-9.

55 Sutcliff, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 83. See also Derek Turner, *The Bolton Hours* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983), 139.

56 John Aubrey, 'Memory from Old Amrbose Brown': *British Library, MS Landsdowne 231, f. 114v.*, ed. J. Buchanan-Brown, *Three Prose Works* (Frontwell, Sussex, 1972), 163.

57 Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 83-4

Sitha, Sythe, Cithe, and Ositha, all of which could have been easily confused with the similar appellation for Osyth.[58]

Another patron specialty distinct to Zita was that of lost keys. This item was generally related to the household, but keys were also symbolic for the opening of all doors and cases in the house.[59] Zita guarded over the storehouse and valuables, just as much as the house itself. Therefore, while Zita's keys may have been more relevant to women's keys, it could also be argued Zita's powers with the symbol were just as relevant for men, who might be the ultimate authority for valuables locked in chests, caskets, and all manner of secure containers. If keys that opened items of any sort were lost, Zita would have been an easy saint to approach by both genders, although there is no extant evidence of male prayers to her which specifically mention keys.

While the attributes unique to Zita may have attracted certain social classes for specific reasons, it appears that Zita's life as a female and servant was the most likely reason why she was popular throughout England, at least initially. As will be discussed in the chapter regarding Books of Hours commissioned by several English merchants, Zita seems to have been used as a female model which taught elite women the proper characteristics they were expected to have by the men who surrounded them. Apart from Zita's popularity with the elite, her status as a servant was relevant to other levels of society for different reasons. Richard Marks has argued that her status as a worker resonated with the urban laity in England.[60] He compares her cult to those of Anthony (d. 1231), Eligius (d. 660) and Erasmus (d. 303), all of whom are noted saints for their lives of labour and charity. A comparison of the social issues regarding servant status of Lucca and England can be made. In England, Zita's service roles were likely to have been reinterpreted. She

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58 Francis, 'St. Zita,' 148. See also *Notes and Queries*. See also Camm, *Some Norfolk Rood Screens*, 267. See also Henry MacCracken, 'The Minor Poems of John Lydgate,': *MS.B.M. Harley 2255 leaf 116: To. St. Ositha*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 137.

59 Refer to following chapters three-seven: Apart from a select few group of images, namely alabaster, stained glass, and manuscript illuminations, the vast majority of media discussed in the following chapters of this thesis show Zita with her attribute of keys.

60 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 86-120. For Zita's significance for peace movements and the poor see Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 22.

related to the lives of domestic workers, housekeepers, or married woman, which contrasted to her function with Lucchese poor female servants who required a model of discipline.[61]

Apart from images, the strongest evidence of Zita's veneration in England is sourced from wills.[62] These wills establish she was venerated by the elite and merchants alike.[63] The earliest surviving bequest to Zita in England was for wax, dated to the 2nd of April 1346.[64] In 1402 Sir Thomas de Boynton left funds for the light of Sitha at Acklam, in North Yorkshire. Both instances show devout laymen donating funds and materials for candles or oil lamps in honour of the saint, either at an altar or before a favoured image of her. Wax, candles, oil and funds for saints were all very common offerings that were considered a standard means of paying homage and expressing devotion.[65] John Due of Bedford (d. 1435) mentions Zita in a surviving book from his collection. Alice de Bryene observed her feast day annually.[66] The Fitzherbert family gave a votive offering of a centre light to a window at Norbury in Derbyshire. She was worshiped by three generations of the Copping family.[67] In 1451, John Clerk, a chaplain in York, commissioned a wood carving of Zita that he mentioned in his will, although the work is not extant.[68] There was a brass statue of Zita given by Lady Willoughby (d. 1487) at

61 Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 87-8. For the change in view of the cult between Lucca and England see: Goldberg, 'What was a Servant?,' 8. See also: Vauchez, Sainthood, 350. Refer also to 'Chapter One: Ancilla dei: from servant to saint in thirteenth century Lucca'.

62 Wilson, Saints and Their Cults, 13, 202, 274, 276, 277, and 287. See also: Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 87. See also: Eamon Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety, and Patronage in Late Medieval East Anglia: The Evidence of Rood Screens,' in Katherine French, Gary Gibbs and Beat Kümen, The Parish in English Life 1400-1600 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 133-62.

63 Elliott, Roads to Paradise, 171. Elliott discusses the pious needs of the new growing merchant classes in Italy and England with the respective requirements of a type of saint who could address their daily situations or difficulties. See also: Mecklin, Passing of a Saint, 171-97: 'The Saint and the Democratic Myth'. For the cult's significance to both genders in England see: Barron, 'The Fourteenth Century Poll Tax Returns for Worcester,' Midland History 14 (1989), 1-29 in Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 87, n. 30. Sutcliffe suggests that the poll tax in England gives evidence that service in medieval England was relevant to both genders and, therefore, Zita may have been a patron saint for servants of both sexes.

64 Marks, Image and Devotion, 86-120.

65 Ibid, 157-85.

66 Caroline Barron, 'The Traveling Saint: Zita of Lucca and England' in Freedom of Movement in the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the 2003 Harlaxton Symposium, ed. Peregrine Horden, (Donnington: Shaun Tyan, 2007), 70.

67 Marks, Image and Devotion, 86-120.

68 Testamentta Eboracensia, Surtees Society 30 (1855), 151, in Turville-Petre, Cithe and Pilgrimages in England, 103.

Tattershall in Lincolnshire, also not extant. Elizabeth Wynch gave a light to Sitha worth 13s, 4d, in her will. Agnes Dobbs left her necklace and Agnes White left a silver rosary.[69] It is worth noting that several of the above-mentioned wills suggests Zita's especial popularity with women, an aspect of her devotion also perhaps evident in the Books of Hours to be examined in Chapter Five.[70] In addition, Zita was included in a votive mass at Luton.[71]

There are several mentions of other books which include Zita in verse with devotions and prayers. Back in Italy, Dante referred to her as a saint in his *inferno 21:38*, and this is specially noteworthy. Dante would have been aged only seven at the time of Zita's death and the establishment of her cult in Lucca. That he wrote about her as a saint, with official recognition that was not granted by the papacy, implies that he credited her cult with full honours. In England, apart from the three Books of Hours which include illuminations of Zita, discussed in following chapters, a fifteenth century manuscript in the British Library (MS. Marley 2255), includes a ballad to 'Ositha' on f. 116b: *Incipit de santa Ositha*. Following previous discussions, it seems likely that spelling variations occasionally confused Zita's name, and she may have corresponded here as Ositha. Another English manuscript copied in the third quarter of the fifteenth century contains a Latin life of Zita (Olim Phillips MS. 8831), which was sold at Sotheby's on 30th November 1971 and is now in the Biblioteca Statale di Lucca, *Ms. 40.*1 There is *A Middle English Life of St. Sitha*, now in The Nottingham University Library, *Ms. 37*. This script was written in the third quarter of the fifteenth century. She is included in a Book of Hours owned by John Iwardby, the son in law of Edward Lord Abergenny: Bodleian Library, *MS Gough Liturg. 19, fol. 36*. John Iwardby was associated with Norwich. There are other mentions of her in the *Bodley Liturg. 98: fol. 98v* and *Bodley Liturg. 130: fol.*

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69 Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 88. For the will of Agnes Dobbs see: Serjeanston and Longden, 'The Parish Church and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire: Their Dedications, Altars, Images and Lights,' *Archaeological Journal* 70 (1983), 385.

70 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 186. For the lack of legal authority for women and wills see: Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 88. For women and wills also see: Kathryn Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and their Books of Hours* (The British Library, 2003), 11.

71 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 160.

55, in The Fitzwilliam Museum: *Mclean Ms. 90*, and also in Pembroke College in Cambridge: *MS. 285.1*.

The relatively wide geographic spread of the veneration of the new saint is indicated by the locations of the images of Zita in parish churches (fig. 6). An early testament to her popularity is the naming of a London road in her honour, dated to around 1355.[72] That this took place in London is certainly suggestive of the possible influence of Lucchese merchants active in the capital. One route by which news of the new saint could have spread out from London across England could have been via the Lucchese wool trade to ports such as Lynn and to production centres inland and north such as Oxford, and then Nottingham.[73] It is thus perhaps no accident that the major centre for wool trade was East Anglia, where the largest numbers of surviving images of the saint are found in rood screens discussed in Chapter Four.[74] Each of these aforementioned locations are sites of early examples of representations of Zita, dated as early as 1420. Thus, textual and visual evidence establishes her transplantation to England by the mid to late-fourteenth century, spreading by trade routes and by word of mouth from London to parishes across the country.

Nevertheless, the three methods of transmission discussed so far, pilgrimage, immigration and trade, may not fully account for why an obscure cult such as Zita's was taken up so fervently. One further possibility might propose the insulating effect of such long-distance translocation. In Lucca, it would have been widely known that Zita was not formally canonised, even if this made little or no difference to her local popularity. Hundreds of miles away from home, far from where she was known and commemorated, such distinctions may have been lost in translation, as it were, with English worshippers simply assuming she was canonised.

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72 Erkwall, 'Street Names of the City of London,' (Oxford, 1954), 163, in Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 84. Sutcliffe claims that the St. Benet Church of Sherehog in London was known as the church of St. Sithe in 1356 but was rededicated in 1407 because of "lack of use".

73 Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 86.

74 Refer to: 'Chapter Four: Rood Screens: A stage set for intercessors,'.

Webb argued that the acceptance of Zita in England may have not been related to the distinction between official and unofficial recognition of her cult at all, but rather, for a likely variety of reasons, Zita's particular sainthood as a servant and female appealed to late medieval English society. As she proposes: "This acceptance of a 'modern' Italian saint, who had been a housekeeper in life and performed homely miracles, into the company of martyrs is suggestive of a devout mentality, in which neither historical awareness nor the distinction between 'official' and 'unofficial' saints was of much importance compared to the meaning a saint, or saints might acquire for a particular devotee."[75] For whatever social reasons, Zita's sainthood type must have engaged all levels of English society, which resulted in her adoption throughout the entire community, noble and urban, male and female, wealthy and poor.

Another potential reason why the cult was accepted so rapidly was because there was a lack of a similar figure in the country that could address servants and women as Zita could. Sutcliffe argued that this might have related to why the cult was accepted nationally.[76] In northern France, for example, there was Martha (d. fifth c.) who was the patron saint of domestic servants and cooks.[77] Because England did not venerate a saint such as Martha, they may have found Zita capable of filling a particular void felt by the community regarding women, service roles, and the need for piety.

The English were likely to have had several novel interactions with the cult while in Lucca. Firstly, the English would probably have come into contact with Zita's relics. It could be argued that the visual impact of Zita's relics would have been powerful for the English because her body was incorrupt. There were few incorrupt saints in England; one such saint was Etheldreda (d. 673). While some educated travelers, perhaps even clergy,

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75 Webb, *Pilgrimage*, 152.
76 Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 89.
77 Ibid.

knew about saints who had incorrupt corpses, it was unlikely that the majority of the English who traveled to Lucca had such knowledge or previous experience.

In comparison, incorrupt saints were common in Italy. Clare of Assisi (d. 1253), Sperandia of Cingoli (d.1276), Clare of Montefalco (d. 1308), and Rita of Cascia (d. 1457) were examples of incorrupt saints throughout regions of Italy from the thirteenth until fifteenth centuries. The locations of their shrines made these saints and their relics more accessible for Italians, whereas the English could only travel abroad to see them. It could be suggested that, while the majority of the English did not have primary contact with incorrupt relics, they may have heard of them through secondary communication such as word of mouth.[78] This communication could have led to interest in cults including Zita's.

The English who came to know about Zita through secondary means of communication did not have an experience with the original cult in Lucca. Further, the English did not have immediate access to her relics, an arguably more potent form of veneration considering the holy state of her corpse. Instead, the English learned about Zita through secondary means while in their own country. The significance of this secondary communication was that those who carried the cult from Lucca must have had a powerful enough influence to result not only in the acceptance of Zita as a saint, but that the cult became popular to such an extant that it generated a substantial body of imagery.

The only relic of Zita accessible in England was her right big toe in the church in Ely, stolen by Sir William Langstrother. Based on the lack of likely knowledge of this relic, and because it was only her toe, it appears that Zita's cult developed independent of relics. Zita was articulated and promoted through images from the mid-fifteenth until the mid-sixteenth centuries. She could be identified by certain visual attributes that corresponded to the accounts of her life brought from Lucca. Although the cult had

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78 Webb, *Pilgrimage,* 152. See also Sanchis, 'The Portugese 'Romarias',' 261-90.

originated in Lucca, an analysis of these images establishes several additions of Zita's original functions as a saint. These images reveal a relationship between Zita and English devotees which was largely divorced from Zita's relationship with her Lucchese followers. To further understand the relationship Zita had with the English community and the development of the cult which took place after the migration from Lucca, a comprehensive examination of these images is required.

Chapter Three

Murals: A saint of the kitchen

The earliest images of Zita in England are two murals located in parish churches. Unfortunately, neither of these two murals has survived in particularly good condition. Nor is there much in the way of surviving documentation that might help identify original patrons or contextualise their possible functions and intended audience. As a result, analysis must inevitably remain relatively speculative. The location of the murals within the church, comparisons with other venerated cults in the same area, and the ways in which Zita is presented to worshippers are three significant issues raised by these two works. Firstly, an analysis of the location of the murals in the church structure suggests that Zita had a particular relationship to women involved in domestic tasks, whether as wives, widows, or household servants. Secondly, a comparison of the murals to other images in the same locations allows for two important considerations: another link of the cult to water, and a possible method by which the cult was carried throughout England by mercantile and pilgrimage routes. Lastly, the way that Zita is represented may demonstrate why the English laity venerated her, and how a new foreign cult could address issues of especial concern for medieval women and the poor in domestic service.

The first mural is located in Etheldreda's Church at Horley, Oxon (fig. 7: early fifteenth-century). In this mural, Zita is located on the westernmost pillar in the north arcade (fig. 9). The saint is painted in the centre of the pillar facing towards the entrance door. The mural covers approximately a quarter of the pillar circumference and is a horizontal-rectangle shape. Painted by an unknown local artist, the work has been approximately dated to the first half of the fifteenth century.[1] The church itself was built in the twelfth century.[2] Surviving wall paintings date from a series of remodeling in the fourteenth and

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1 Bowes, *Horley Church* (Horley: 2010), 4-5.

2 Ibid, 4.

again in the fifteenth centuries.[3] It has been suggested that the painting of Zita is likely to have been one of the earliest interior decorations.[4]

The identification of the standing figure of Zita can be made on the basis of the attributes that surround her.[5] The way she is depicted with symbols of a purse at her side and household keys tied to her belt. Both these attributes identify her as a domestic servant, in control of the household doors or valuables and entrusted with a leather purse, perhaps to keep the money used for shopping. She is shown against a deep blue background, wearing a red robe with a gold clasp. The wealthy style of dress is unusual for a servant and was more likely intended to represent her holy status. Alternatively, the heavy drapery may indicate that she is a woman of mature years, which was relevant to Zita of Lucca, who died later in life. There are kitchen utensils that surround her that may also be used for her identification because of her life in the female space of the domestic household, namely the kitchen, which include a wooden spoon at the lower right and below a pair of bellows, picked out in red. Zita appears to be smiling, suggesting she was approachable for worshipers.[6] The way she depicted establishes that she is willing to grant aid to the viewer with mercy and kindness.[7]

Of particular interest is the three-legged cooking cauldron with a handle in the bottom right corner (fig. 8). Anne Marshall has argued for the malevolence of this attribute, which is both a humble item of kitchenware but also may have invoked more negative associations. She has suggested that this cooking item may be recognized as a miniature version of a cauldron often shown as containing the damned in depictions of hell, or

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3 Ibid, 8.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid. Some observers have misidentified the figure. Bowes claimed that the mural was Cytha, who was the 'Queen of Light' that gave her dowry to the poor of Lucca. There is no surviving evidence from sources in Lucca that would support this interpretation of her life. Another falsehood is the date of her feast being December 13th, which is incorrect considering that her canonisation named her the feast day as the April 27th. Lucia was the saint of light whose feast day was December 13th. It appears that there was perhaps some confusion between Zita and Lucia at Horley.

6 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 21.

7 Ibid.

sometimes, souls suffering in purgatory.[8] Occasionally, they are not only souls in hell but are a combination of the damned and the resurrected. Marshall has supported this interpretation with evidence of a similar mural she examined at Pickworth in Lincolnshire where souls are actually shown boiling, although Zita does not accompany this image.[9] Significantly, the location of the second mural of Zita in this discussion also includes a cauldron with souls. As it is repeated, the item merits further investigation. The cauldron is a new attribute for Zita found only in the media of murals. This attribute has a double meaning for the viewer. On one hand, the symbol appears to have directly reflected Zita's roles in the kitchen as a preparer of food, since a cauldron is a pot, obviously used in the kitchen space. On the other hand, it seems likely that the hellish associations of the cauldron also prompt the viewer to invoke Zita's aid against sharing the fate of the damned, petitioning her as an intercessor to save them from the fires of purgatory and hell.

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20 Diana Webb, 'Women and Home: The Domestic Setting of Late Medieval Spirituality,' Sheils and Diana Wood, 'Women in the Church', *Studies in Church History*, v. 27 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 162. See also: Peter Biller, 'The Common Woman in the Western Church in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Century,' *Studies in Church History* 27, in Shiels and Wood, *Women in the Church*, 127-57. For fear of women and heresy see: Petroff, *Consolation of the Blessed*, 1-39. For female servant's potential to poison food see: Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*. Bynum argues that the life of the witch parallels the life of the female saint. Fear of the witch can also be found in: Richard Trexler, 'Florentine Religious Experience: The Sacred Image,' *Studies in the Renaissance* 19 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 7-41.

of all classes. As a saint who had lived in a domestically limited world, she could relate to women in a similar position and act as a patron intercessor on their behalf. Whether the servant girl who could be sexually exploited, fall pregnant by whatever means, or was conflicted with being chaste, Zita was an clear choice for supplication.

The second relevant issue regards a comparison between Zita and other images of saints in the Horley church. Unfortunately, the poor preservation state of the other images makes identification and dating very difficult. One other mural may represent the Annunciation, a common choice for single votive images on church walls. Also identifiable is a large painting of the martyr Christopher, protector of travelers, located on the western back wall, opposite the door and behind the pillar with the figure of Zita. By looking at fig. 8, one can compare the mural of Zita (identified as location: 5) on the map, with the mural of Christopher (identified as location: 6). Christopher had been given the task in life to carry Christ and people across a dangerous river and protect them from drowning.[21] At Horley, he is shown surrounded by blue waves and fish that demonstrate his cults significance to water and merchants who were fishermen, which further supports why he was venerated by this group.[22] Sylvia Thrupp argued that the fishmongers of the merchant classes were one of the most powerful divisions during the mid-fourteenth century.[23] From previous discussions there is also evidence that merchants promoted Zita.

It is not unusual to find Christopher in the church and specifically at this interior location, that of opposite the entrance door. He is a very common subject during this period.[24] The way that he was visually venerated was for those who first entered the church and saw the image of Christopher, would be protected on that particular day by the saint.[25] Rather, the

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21 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 190-200. Marks compares Christopher with another saint: Roch, who was also popular among merchants. Smith, *Art, Image and Devotion*, 82. See also: Francis Bond, *Dedications and Patron Saints of English Churches*, 46.

22 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 190-200.

23 Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London*, 12.

24 Roger Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery, 2001), 114-5.

25 Radke, *Volto Santo*, 152.

surprising comparison of Christopher with Zita is that both their names arise on bridges.[26] Not only were the two saints chosen as subjects in the Horley church, although dated nearly a century apart, they both had dedications on river bridges in other areas around England, which may provide further evidence that the cult of Zita was linked to potential fears which her followers related to water.

Other evidence connecting the two saints is the placement of the two murals at the back west section of the church, directly across from the entrance (figs. 9-10). Apart from being directly opposite the entrance, the size of the mural was a contributing factor. It is the largest fresco in the church with bright notable colours such as deep read and blue. The pillar depicting Zita is placed in front of the mural of Christopher. Although the space designated for Zita, on a round pillar, is markedly smaller than the area given to Christopher, the image still blocks the view of the larger mural at least to some extant. Those attending the church through the primary south side door were likely to have seen the mural of Zita first, or perhaps at the same time as the image of Christopher. This implies that the two saints may have been intended to be viewed together and/or simultaneously by the people coming for prayer and supplication, perhaps women for Zita and merchants for Christopher, or both.

The second mural of Zita is found a small parish church in Shorthampton, near Oxford, and can be dated to around 1450 (figs. 11-14). According to Robert Mealing, the Benedictine monks at the abbey of Enysham were responsible for the small parish.[27] These monks arrived in the area of Shorthampton in 1109.[28] The research collected by Mealing date the earliest existing reference to the chapel to 1296, and the monks seem to

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26 John Leland, *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1535-1543*, ed. Smith, (London, 1907-10), ii. 86, in Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 83.

27 robertmealing.com, http://www.robertmealing.com/category/art/ (accessed March 5, 2012)

28 Ibid.

have continued to care for it until the Reformation.[29] The chapel survived the Reformation, and in 1555 was placed under the care of St. John's College, Oxford.[30]

A 1903 restoration of the church uncovered several murals, including one of Zita. Mr. Phillip Mainwaring Johnston, the architect who removed the whitewash that had probably been placed on the walls during the Reformation, made several sketches of his findings. If the sketches by Johnston are reliable, then it appears that the whitewash protected the murals underneath for several centuries. A comparison of his sketch (fig. 11) and the mural's current appearance (fig. 12) shows how much the image has deteriorated over time.[31] However, the current monochromatic state of the murals suggests that Johnston may have slightly exaggerated his sketches because of their remarkably clear colour and decorative details. It seems more likely, as Mealing suggests, that the drawings were intended to portray what the original images may have looked like following the architect's own examination.[32] The mural of Zita is on a wall with a staggering collection of other surviving images (fig. 13). Nearly each wall of this particular parish is covered with devotional images and individual saints, including Thomas Becket (d. 1170) and Eligius (d. 660), both of whom were extremely popular during the medieval period.

The cult of Eligius raises an interesting comparison with the Zita mural. Eligius was also a foreign saint, but from France rather than Italy. He was the patron of metal workers, coin collectors and engineers.[33] He was also known to have paid the ransoms for slaves. Zita, who was patron saint for servants, and Eligius, who was patron saint for slaves, shows a connection which should not be overlooked. The issues of service, slavery, and labour, were not only current social subjects, but must have been highly significant concerns in this area to explain why these saints were both represented in Oxon.[34]

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29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Philip Mainwaring Johnston, 'The Church of Shorthampton,' *Archaeological Journal* 31 (1905), Oxford: Bodleian Library.

32 Mealing, *Shorthampton.*

33 Marks, *Image and Devotion,* 86-120.

34 Ibid.

Following the architect's reasonably reliable reconstruction, Zita at Shorthampton is shown with a colourful red background in a blue robe with gold clasp and carrying a purse. The depiction is markedly similar to that of Horley. The keys can also be clearly distinguished at her side. The cauldron is not depicted as her attribute directly with her representation. However, in the Philip Johnston sketch, there is a depiction of a small cauldron which contains sould boiling in hell treaded by a small demon (fig. 14). This lies to the left of Zita. In comparison to the Horley mural, the Shorthampton mural of the cauldron actually contains figures boiling. Most interestingly, the ten figures are predominately female. Mealing suggests only two figures were shown with beards, indicating that they were male, although this may be that they were beardless monks or younger men.[35] Following Mealing's interpretation, this gives further evidence that images in the Shorthampton church, including Zita, were likely to be used for pious teachings on women of the local community, rather than men.

An analysis of these two representations of Zita on the walls of parish churches allows for several observations. The replacement of old and damaged works allowed the emergence of new cults during the fifteenth century.[36] Saints who were venerated in England at the same time were Roch (d. 1327), Anthony (d. 1231), Erasmus (d. 303), Eligius (d. 660), and Bridget (d. 523).[37] These saints and their cults had several similarities. They were all saints of labour, charity, peace, and disease who seem to have been chosen by the people because they could address social issues, conflicts, and tensions that emerged during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[38] Previous discussion suggested how Zita could appeal to a wide range of women, and not just servants. It does seem plausible that male servants would have venerated Zita because of her roles in the kitchen. Men could see these images, with Horley other than the time of mass, and with Shorthampton, since the location on the wall next to the window is very

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35 Mealing, *Shorthampton.*

36 Marks, *Image and Devotion,* 86-120.

37 Ibid, 120-200.

38 Vauchez, *Sainthood,* 199.

visible from most of the church. Both murals are in public locations. However, it appears that Zita was more relevant to women, rather than men because of the surrounding kitchen implements, and way she is presented in the heavy garb of a mature woman.

It is important to discuss the locations of the churches in which these two murals are found. Despite the fact that the murals are in small towns some distance from each other (approximately one hundred kilometers apart), the way that Zita is represented is similar, as indicated by the style of dress with robe and clasp, the kitchen articles surrounding her, the attributes of keys and a purse, and even the colours of red, blue and green applied. Such correspondences could suggest many more intervening images now lost, so that the two works recording a more widely standardised representational formula for the new saint than is now possible to uncover. Perhaps less likely, is any direct dependence of one upon the other, although travelers and pilgrims might perhaps have brought news of her representation of a new and unfamiliar saint which was then deliberately copied.[39] A comparison between the two murals and the suggested dates of their production, show how devotion to Zita spread throughout the country by varying social groups of the English community. Her unique attributes were interpreted in different ways by the varying levels of society, so that the cult appears to have been applicable in some way to nearly all of the English community. This flexibility and adaptability will be further supported with the discussions of other media.

With regard to these wall paintings, it is also noteworthy that these are the only two examples in any media without an accompanying written inscription to identify the saint by name. Instead, at least as can be judged by the present state of these works, since it is always possible that inscriptions have been lost in both cases, the murals use purely visual iconography to identify Zita. This is important to discuss, because when these images were created and viewed there was a distinct separation between the few literate who could read and the larger number of people who could only identify a saint visually by her known attributes. Murals were relevant to both the literate and the illiterate, who

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39 Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 87.

could be visually educated about Zita's cult in regard to her kitchen and female importance, but it was perhaps the easiest accessible form of education for the illiterate laity.[40] There were other functions for images as well. They were a focus of devotion, individual prayer, pleas for help and protection. However, being able to invoke the saint by calling her name either in prayer, vow, mass, or any other way, was significant.

There were varying degrees of literacy in England, but as Horley and Shorthampton were considerably quite small towns, it would seem more likely that the majority who viewed these two murals were less literate in comparison to urban and mercantile centres such as London. The community of the faithful illiterate came to know the saint by a distinctive sign or a well-known episode of the saint's life. These signs were allusions of the saints' name communicated by secondary means such as sermons by a preacher and verbal retelling of Zita's life. The Lollard sermon at Luton, mentioned in the previous chapter, is one such example.[41]

The thirteenth century Italian saint was a modern woman who had a direct role that was based on the new ideals of spirituality, humility, charity, peace, health and poverty. Zita presented a model for viewers instructing them on how to reach perfection, or at least an ideal which was not impossibly reserved only for the nobility or the wealthy. The largest part of medieval society, the poor, perhaps found in Zita a saint who was more approachable, and hence more available, for aid in regard to their own position.[42] While the nobility supported the cult as commissioners and patrons, it was the poor people who venerated her in their small parish churches throughout all of England on a much more extensive scale than can be determined from the small surviving corpus.

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40 Kaftal, *Iconography of the saints*, XXVI. See also: Patricia Cullum and Jeremy Goldberg, 'How Margaret Blackburn Taught Her Daughters: Reading Devotional Instruction in a Book of Hours,' *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain; Essays for Felicity Riddy*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Brown, and alt. (Brespols: 2000), 217-36. Cullum and Goldberg discuss the literacy level of the laity in their examination of Books of Hours.

41 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 160.

42 Cynthia Hahn, 'Speaking in Tongues: The Martyr Romanus and Augustine's Theory of Language in Illustration of Bern Burgerbiliotek Codex 264,' in Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Images of Sainthood*, 165. See also Derek Baker, *Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the world* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), 77-83.

The two murals demonstrate three important factors regarding Zita and her significance to the English devout. These murals show that she was important to women, domestic servants, and merchants. Combined together these three social groups allow some understanding of how Zita had become deeply integrated into urban society and the social developments of English piety during the later middle ages. These murals were likely commissioned by both the church and people as communal and collective endeavors. This analysis shows that the parish churches of England and their communities venerated her to a large extent. Further, the connection of these images to the medieval merchant class and their church sponsorship, show how the cult probably spread geographically across England.

Chapter Three

Murals: A saint of the kitchen

The earliest images of Zita in England are two murals located in parish churches. Unfortunately, neither of these two murals has survived in particularly good condition. Nor is there much in the way of surviving documentation that might help identify original patrons or contextualise their possible functions and intended audience. As a result, analysis must inevitably remain relatively speculative. The location of the murals within the church, comparisons with other venerated cults in the same area, and the ways in which Zita is presented to worshippers are three significant issues raised by these two works. Firstly, an analysis of the location of the murals in the church structure suggests that Zita had a particular relationship to women involved in domestic tasks, whether as wives, widows, or household servants. Secondly, a comparison of the murals to other images in the same locations allows for two important considerations: another link of the cult to water, and a possible method by which the cult was carried throughout England by mercantile and pilgrimage routes. Lastly, the way that Zita is represented may demonstrate why the English laity venerated her, and how a new foreign cult could address issues of especial concern for medieval women and the poor in domestic service.

The first mural is located in Etheldreda's Church at Horley, Oxon (fig. 7: early fifteenth-century). In this mural, Zita is located on the westernmost pillar in the north arcade (fig. 9). The saint is painted in the centre of the pillar facing towards the entrance door. The mural covers approximately a quarter of the pillar circumference and is a horizontal-rectangle shape. Painted by an unknown local artist, the work has been approximately dated to the first half of the fifteenth century.[1] The church itself was built in the twelfth century.[2] Surviving wall paintings date from a series of remodeling in the fourteenth and

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1 Bowes, *Horley Church* (Horley: 2010), 4-5.
2 Ibid, 4.

again in the fifteenth centuries.[3] It has been suggested that the painting of Zita is likely to have been one of the earliest interior decorations.[4]

The identification of the standing figure of Zita can be made on the basis of the attributes that surround her.[5] The way she is depicted with symbols of a purse at her side and household keys tied to her belt. Both these attributes identify her as a domestic servant, in control of the household doors or valuables and entrusted with a leather purse, perhaps to keep the money used for shopping. She is shown against a deep blue background, wearing a red robe with a gold clasp. The wealthy style of dress is unusual for a servant and was more likely intended to represent her holy status. Alternatively, the heavy drapery may indicate that she is a woman of mature years, which was relevant to Zita of Lucca, who died later in life. There are kitchen utensils that surround her that may also be used for her identification because of her life in the female space of the domestic household, namely the kitchen, which include a wooden spoon at the lower right and below a pair of bellows, picked out in red. Zita appears to be smiling, suggesting she was approachable for worshipers.[6] The way she depicted establishes that she is willing to grant aid to the viewer with mercy and kindness.[7]

Of particular interest is the three-legged cooking cauldron with a handle in the bottom right corner (fig. 8). Anne Marshall has argued for the malevolence of this attribute, which is both a humble item of kitchenware but also may have invoked more negative associations. She has suggested that this cooking item may be recognized as a miniature version of a cauldron often shown as containing the damned in depictions of hell, or

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3 Ibid, 8.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid. Some observers have misidentified the figure. Bowes claimed that the mural was Cytha, who was the 'Queen of Light' that gave her dowry to the poor of Lucca. There is no surviving evidence from sources in Lucca that would support this interpretation of her life. Another falsehood is the date of her feast being December 13th, which is incorrect considering that her canonisation named her the feast day as the April 27th. Lucia was the saint of light whose feast day was December 13th. It appears that there was perhaps some confusion between Zita and Lucia at Horley.

6 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 21.

7 Ibid.

sometimes, souls suffering in purgatory.[8] Occasionally, they are not only souls in hell but are a combination of the damned and the resurrected. Marshall has supported this interpretation with evidence of a similar mural she examined at Pickworth in Lincolnshire where souls are actually shown boiling, although Zita does not accompany this image.[9] Significantly, the location of the second mural of Zita in this discussion also includes a cauldron with souls. As it is repeated, the item merits further investigation. The cauldron is a new attribute for Zita found only in the media of murals. This attribute has a double meaning for the viewer. On one hand, the symbol appears to have directly reflected Zita's roles in the kitchen as a preparer of food, since a cauldron is a pot, obviously used in the kitchen space. On the other hand, it seems likely that the hellish associations of the cauldron also prompt the viewer to invoke Zita's aid against sharing the fate of the damned, petitioning her as an intercessor to save them from the fires of purgatory and hell.

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18 W. J. Shiels and Diana Wood, *Women in the Church,* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 127-57.

19 Petroff, *Consolation of the Blessed,* 1-39. See also Bossy, *Christianity in the West,* 73. Bossy describes how men believed, or at least were afraid, of potential enemies in their own household, which essentially was the dangerous woman, or witch. This female antagonist could be either be a wife or a female servant. For the battle against heresy and the potential of the female witch see also: Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Societies,* 1-150. Weinstein and Bell discuss how the poorer classes were often accused of witchcraft, especially women in the kitchen domain who could poison her family's food. See also Rosemary Radford Reuther, *Religion and Sexism: Images of woman in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (London: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 149-83.

20 Diana Webb, 'Women and Home: The Domestic Setting of Late Medieval Spirituality,' Sheils and Diana Wood, 'Women in the Church', *Studies in Church History,* v. 27 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 162. See also: Peter Biller, 'The Common Woman in the Western Church in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Century,' *Studies in Church History* 27, in Shiels and Wood, *Women in the Church,* 127-57. For fear of women and heresy see: Petroff, *Consolation of the Blessed,* 1-39. For female servant's potential to poison food see: Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast.* Bynum argues that the life of the witch parallels the life of the female saint. Fear of the witch can also be found in: Richard Trexler, 'Florentine Religious Experience: The Sacred Image,' *Studies in the Renaissance* 19 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 7-41.

of all classes. As a saint who had lived in a domestically limited world, she could relate to women in a similar position and act as a patron intercessor on their behalf. Whether the servant girl who could be sexually exploited, fall pregnant by whatever means, or was conflicted with being chaste, Zita was an clear choice for supplication.

The second relevant issue regards a comparison between Zita and other images of saints in the Horley church. Unfortunately, the poor preservation state of the other images makes identification and dating very difficult. One other mural may represent the Annunciation, a common choice for single votive images on church walls. Also identifiable is a large painting of the martyr Christopher, protector of travelers, located on the western back wall, opposite the door and behind the pillar with the figure of Zita. By looking at fig. 8, one can compare the mural of Zita (identified as location: 5) on the map, with the mural of Christopher (identified as location: 6). Christopher had been given the task in life to carry Christ and people across a dangerous river and protect them from drowning.[21] At Horley, he is shown surrounded by blue waves and fish that demonstrate his cults significance to water and merchants who were fishermen, which further supports why he was venerated by this group.[22] Sylvia Thrupp argued that the fishmongers of the merchant classes were one of the most powerful divisions during the mid-fourteenth century.[23] From previous discussions there is also evidence that merchants promoted Zita.

It is not unusual to find Christopher in the church and specifically at this interior location, that of opposite the entrance door. He is a very common subject during this period.[24] The way that he was visually venerated was for those who first entered the church and saw the image of Christopher, would be protected on that particular day by the saint.[25] Rather, the

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21 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 190-200. Marks compares Christopher with another saint: Roch, who was also popular among merchants. Smith, *Art, Image and Devotion*, 82. See also: Francis Bond, *Dedications and Patron Saints of English Churches*, 46. .

22 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 190-200.

23 Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London*, 12.

24 Roger Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery, 2001), 114-5.

25 Radke, *Volto Santo*, 152.

surprising comparison of Christopher with Zita is that both their names arise on bridges.[26] Not only were the two saints chosen as subjects in the Horley church, although dated nearly a century apart, they both had dedications on river bridges in other areas around England, which may provide further evidence that the cult of Zita was linked to potential fears which her followers related to water.

Other evidence connecting the two saints is the placement of the two murals at the back west section of the church, directly across from the entrance (figs. 9-10). Apart from being directly opposite the entrance, the size of the mural was a contributing factor. It is the largest fresco in the church with bright notable colours such as deep read and blue. The pillar depicting Zita is placed in front of the mural of Christopher. Although the space designated for Zita, on a round pillar, is markedly smaller than the area given to Christopher, the image still blocks the view of the larger mural at least to some extant. Those attending the church through the primary south side door were likely to have seen the mural of Zita first, or perhaps at the same time as the image of Christopher. This implies that the two saints may have been intended to be viewed together and/or simultaneously by the people coming for prayer and supplication, perhaps women for Zita and merchants for Christopher, or both.

The second mural of Zita is found a small parish church in Shorthampton, near Oxford, and can be dated to around 1450 (figs. 11-14). According to Robert Mealing, the Benedictine monks at the abbey of Enysham were responsible for the small parish.[27] These monks arrived in the area of Shorthampton in 1109.[28] The research collected by Mealing date the earliest existing reference to the chapel to 1296, and the monks seem to

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26 John Leland, *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1535-1543*, ed. Smith, (London, 1907-10), ii. 86, in Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 83.

27 robertmealing.com, http://www.robertmealing.com/category/art/ (accessed March 5, 2012)

28 Ibid.

have continued to care for it until the Reformation.[29] The chapel survived the Reformation, and in 1555 was placed under the care of St. John's College, Oxford.[30]

A 1903 restoration of the church uncovered several murals, including one of Zita. Mr. Phillip Mainwaring Johnston, the architect who removed the whitewash that had probably been placed on the walls during the Reformation, made several sketches of his findings. If the sketches by Johnston are reliable, then it appears that the whitewash protected the murals underneath for several centuries. A comparison of his sketch (fig. 11) and the mural's current appearance (fig. 12) shows how much the image has deteriorated over time.[31] However, the current monochromatic state of the murals suggests that Johnston may have slightly exaggerated his sketches because of their remarkably clear colour and decorative details. It seems more likely, as Mealing suggests, that the drawings were intended to portray what the original images may have looked like following the architect's own examination.[32] The mural of Zita is on a wall with a staggering collection of other surviving images (fig. 13). Nearly each wall of this particular parish is covered with devotional images and individual saints, including Thomas Becket (d. 1170) and Eligius (d. 660), both of whom were extremely popular during the medieval period.

The cult of Eligius raises an interesting comparison with the Zita mural. Eligius was also a foreign saint, but from France rather than Italy. He was the patron of metal workers, coin collectors and engineers.[33] He was also known to have paid the ransoms for slaves. Zita, who was patron saint for servants, and Eligius, who was patron saint for slaves, shows a connection which should not be overlooked. The issues of service, slavery, and labour, were not only current social subjects, but must have been highly significant concerns in this area to explain why these saints were both represented in Oxon.[34]

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29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Philip Mainwaring Johnston, 'The Church of Shorthampton,' *Archaeological Journal* 31 (1905), Oxford: Bodleian Library.

32 Mealing, *Shorthampton*.

33 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 86-120.

34 Ibid.

Following the architect's reasonably reliable reconstruction, Zita at Shorthampton is shown with a colourful red background in a blue robe with gold clasp and carrying a purse. The depiction is markedly similar to that of Horley. The keys can also be clearly distinguished at her side. The cauldron is not depicted as her attribute directly with her representation. However, in the Philip Johnston sketch, there is a depiction of a small cauldron which contains sould boiling in hell treaded by a small demon (fig. 14). This lies to the left of Zita. In comparison to the Horley mural, the Shorthampton mural of the cauldron actually contains figures boiling. Most interestingly, the ten figures are predominately female. Mealing suggests only two figures were shown with beards, indicating that they were male, although this may be that they were beardless monks or younger men.[35] Following Mealing's interpretation, this gives further evidence that images in the Shorthampton church, including Zita, were likely to be used for pious teachings on women of the local community, rather than men.

An analysis of these two representations of Zita on the walls of parish churches allows for several observations. The replacement of old and damaged works allowed the emergence of new cults during the fifteenth century.[36] Saints who were venerated in England at the same time were Roch (d. 1327), Anthony (d. 1231), Erasmus (d. 303), Eligius (d. 660), and Bridget (d. 523).[37] These saints and their cults had several similarities. They were all saints of labour, charity, peace, and disease who seem to have been chosen by the people because they could address social issues, conflicts, and tensions that emerged during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[38] Previous discussion suggested how Zita could appeal to a wide range of women, and not just servants. It does seem plausible that male servants would have venerated Zita because of her roles in the kitchen. Men could see these images, with Horley other than the time of mass, and with Shorthampton, since the location on the wall next to the window is very

35 Mealing, *Shorthampton.*
36 Marks, *Image and Devotion,* 86-120.
37 Ibid, 120-200.
38 Vauchez, *Sainthood,* 199.

visible from most of the church. Both murals are in public locations. However, it appears that Zita was more relevant to women, rather than men because of the surrounding kitchen implements, and way she is presented in the heavy garb of a mature woman.

It is important to discuss the locations of the churches in which these two murals are found. Despite the fact that the murals are in small towns some distance from each other (approximately one hundred kilometers apart), the way that Zita is represented is similar, as indicated by the style of dress with robe and clasp, the kitchen articles surrounding her, the attributes of keys and a purse, and even the colours of red, blue and green applied. Such correspondences could suggest many more intervening images now lost, so that the two works recording a more widely standardised representational formula for the new saint than is now possible to uncover. Perhaps less likely, is any direct dependence of one upon the other, although travelers and pilgrims might perhaps have brought news of her representation of a new and unfamiliar saint which was then deliberately copied.[39] A comparison between the two murals and the suggested dates of their production, show how devotion to Zita spread throughout the country by varying social groups of the English community. Her unique attributes were interpreted in different ways by the varying levels of society, so that the cult appears to have been applicable in some way to nearly all of the English community. This flexibility and adaptability will be further supported with the discussions of other media.

With regard to these wall paintings, it is also noteworthy that these are the only two examples in any media without an accompanying written inscription to identify the saint by name. Instead, at least as can be judged by the present state of these works, since it is always possible that inscriptions have been lost in both cases, the murals use purely visual iconography to identify Zita. This is important to discuss, because when these images were created and viewed there was a distinct separation between the few literate who could read and the larger number of people who could only identify a saint visually by her known attributes. Murals were relevant to both the literate and the illiterate, who

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39 Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 87.

could be visually educated about Zita's cult in regard to her kitchen and female importance, but it was perhaps the easiest accessible form of education for the illiterate laity.[40] There were other functions for images as well. They were a focus of devotion, individual prayer, pleas for help and protection. However, being able to invoke the saint by calling her name either in prayer, vow, mass, or any other way, was significant.

There were varying degrees of literacy in England, but as Horley and Shorthampton were considerably quite small towns, it would seem more likely that the majority who viewed these two murals were less literate in comparison to urban and mercantile centres such as London. The community of the faithful illiterate came to know the saint by a distinctive sign or a well-known episode of the saint's life. These signs were allusions of the saints' name communicated by secondary means such as sermons by a preacher and verbal retelling of Zita's life. The Lollard sermon at Luton, mentioned in the previous chapter, is one such example.[41]

The thirteenth century Italian saint was a modern woman who had a direct role that was based on the new ideals of spirituality, humility, charity, peace, health and poverty. Zita presented a model for viewers instructing them on how to reach perfection, or at least an ideal which was not impossibly reserved only for the nobility or the wealthy. The largest part of medieval society, the poor, perhaps found in Zita a saint who was more approachable, and hence more available, for aid in regard to their own position.[42] While the nobility supported the cult as commissioners and patrons, it was the poor people who venerated her in their small parish churches throughout all of England on a much more extensive scale than can be determined from the small surviving corpus.

40 Kaftal, *Iconography of the saints*, XXVI. See also: Patricia Cullum and Jeremy Goldberg, 'How Margaret Blackburn Taught Her Daughters: Reading Devotional Instruction in a Book of Hours,' *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain; Essays for Felicity Riddy*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Brown, and alt. (Brespols: 2000), 217-36. Cullum and Goldberg discuss the literacy level of the laity in their examination of Books of Hours.

41 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 160.

42 Cynthia Hahn, 'Speaking in Tongues: The Martyr Romanus and Augustine's Theory of Language in Illustration of Bern Burgerbiliotek Codex 264,' in Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Images of Sainthood*, 165. See also Derek Baker, *Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the world* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), 77-83.

The two murals demonstrate three important factors regarding Zita and her significance to the English devout. These murals show that she was important to women, domestic servants, and merchants. Combined together these three social groups allow some understanding of how Zita had become deeply integrated into urban society and the social developments of English piety during the later middle ages. These murals were likely commissioned by both the church and people as communal and collective endeavors. This analysis shows that the parish churches of England and their communities venerated her to a large extent. Further, the connection of these images to the medieval merchant class and their church sponsorship, show how the cult probably spread geographically across England.

Chapter Four

Rood Screens: A stage set for intercessors

Rood screens located throughout East Anglia are the largest collection of surviving images of Zita. The rood screen functions as both architecture and a piece of furniture with a vital religious use. Its dual purpose is as both a divider and a devotional image in the church, placed between the people partaking in mass and the place of sacrament. Each screen includes several saints. Therefore, the main focus of this discussion involves how and why Zita was represented in certain combinations with other cults. A comparison with other saints in the same program may allow some speculation regarding Zita's significance for the laity who viewed these images in conjunction with the experience of mass. Moreover, these images were produced at the height of the cults' visual appreciation in England, which date to directly before the Reformation. Therefore, they show the hostility that cults like Zita's met under the rule of Henry VIII. The physical damage to the images accounts for the cease in Zita's veneration after the mid-sixteenth century.

Eamon Duffy's examination of medieval rood screens in East Anglia has established that the majority were produced between 1450 and 1530.[1] Most, including the examples in this discussion, were created within the same half-century, both in Norfolk and Suffolk. The proximity of all the locations in which Zita is included on rood screens to Ely, where the stolen relic of her toe was brought, should also be noted. It seems likely that Sir William Langstrother and merchants who brought the cult to Ely via trade and pilgrimage routes from Lucca promoted the cult in East Anglia.[2] However, the amount of screens cannot be explained by Langstrother or the merchants alone. The relatively large number of screens with images of Zita indicates that she was a frequent subject accepted by the

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1 Eamon Duffy, 'Holy Maydens, Holy Wyfes: The Cult of Women Saints in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century England,' *Studies in Church History* 27, eds. W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood, *Women in the Church* (Oxford: Basil Blackwelll, 1990), 175-96. See also: Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety and Patronage,' 133-62.

2 Refer to: 'Chapter Two: Transmigration of a Cult: Zita in England,'.

English laity. The dates the screens were made, along with the number of screens produced in the relatively short period of time, establishes that the cult was already common in England with or without the continuous support of noble patronage or merchants. That these screens do still remain implies that despite the Reformation, communities probably protected them over several different, and rather socially and politically turbulent royalties under Henry VIII (ruled 1509-47), Edward I (ruled 1547-53), Mary I (ruled 1553-58), and Elizabeth I (ruled 1558-1603).[3]

Before examining the images of Zita on rood screens, it is necessary to discuss their extremely important function in the church. These screens were the largest and most complex pieces of medieval furniture in the church with a religious function.[4] The screen was built up of panels of wood placed together with an opening in the centre that allowed the clergy to pass through the screen to the altar and location of the Holy Sacrament at mass. The location of the screen in the church is three quarters down the passage to the altar, which divides the high altar and choir from the people.[5] Thus, the screen in every parish is placed between the front row of the people gathered for mass and the area where the host is consecrated.

As a divider in this section of the church, the function of the rood screen was both practical and highly symbolic in the medieval period.[6] The practical function of the screen was to separate the people from the altar during rituals.[7] Visitors to the church also viewed the screens and the saints represented on them at other times and in different contexts. When sermons were not being performed, the laity could be granted limited

3 Duffy, 'Holy Maydens, Holy Wyfes,' 175.

4 Donal Cooper, 'Access to all Areas? Spatial Divides in the Mendicant Churches of Late Medieval Tuscany,' in *Ritual and Space in the Middle Ages; Proceedings of the 2009 Harlaxton Symposium*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 90-107. Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety and Patronage,' 133-6.

5 Ibid, 133. See also: Mecklin, *The Passing of a Saint*, 31-46.

6 Ibid, 136. See also: Anne Sutton, 'From Eve to Bathsheba and Beyond: Motherhood in the Queen Mary Plaster,' in Lesley Smith, *Women and the Book*, 230-65. See also: Penketh, 'Woman and their Books of Hours,' 266-81

7 Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety, and Patronage,' 135. For other symbolic importance of viewing the image of the saint during mass see also: Schmidt, *Italian panel Painting*, 37.

access, both men, and to a lesser extant noble women.[8] However, mass was perhaps the most powerful time of viewing the saints in a religious environment for the people who attended church for meditation, prayer and to hear sermons in a collective way.[9] The height of the screen was very important because it meant Zita was nearly eye-to-eye with the attending parishioners.[10] The combination of hearing the sermon, meditating on the *passio*, and looking to the faces of saints who stood as their personal, universal, collection of heavenly intercessors was intended to reaffirm the people's faith and educate them about who could help them in their daily lives for different needs.

Symbolically, the laity faced the screen in a very important theatrical and emotional experience separate from the clergy, which involved further implications for the way that the people venerated their saints during the ritual performance. These barriers governed movement around the church, indicating that their viewing was conditional. They were a devotional focus of the laity, but this aspect of the screen resonated more with women because they were largely restricted to the nave, and thus looking at these screens the vast majority of the time, whether during mass or other ceremonies.[11] However, women were granted limited access to the altar at other times than mass to some degree, such as when judicial forms would be signed on their behalf, like wills. Therefore, one of the most important factors of this discussion regarding rood screens is the relationship that the images of Zita had to these women who were the primary viewers.

In a very important analysis of the use of the screen as a divider during litigurical rituals for the medieval devotee, Donal Cooper has observed, "These churches accommodated a very broad spectrum of human activities within their walls, from the celebration of the most holy sacrament of the mass to purely secular business deals."[12] When these images

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8 Cooper, 'Access to all Areas?', 90-107.

9 Pugin Welby, *A Treatise on Chancel Screens and Rood Lofts: Their Antiquity, Use, and Symbolic Significance* (London: Charles Dolman, 1851), 8. For the impact of the host on women see: Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 31-72.

10 Cooper, 'Access to all Areas?,' 107.

11 Ibid. 90-107.

12 Ibid, 107.

were viewed at the time the clergy preached, however, was when the saints were specifically evoked. Prayers were said on behalf of the saint, as were desires for salvation, and patronage rights for the donor(s).[13]

The size of the figures represented on the screens further supported their importance to the people. The scale of the figures were intended to be half the size of an average person before them, making the saint appear to partake in the liturgy along with parishioners.[14] This use of scale made Zita more approachable and accessible. As she was human before she was elevated to the status of the sainthood, she could relate to humanity again through acts of intercession for the devout who venerated her with the correct honours.[15]

This communal viewing of mass as a ritualistic and powerful event should be discussed further. The arrangement of the people gathered for mass was hierarchical, so that the wealthiest and most prominent members of society were towards the front and the poor at the back.[16] Therefore, the nobility and higher society in these small communities were closer to the saints and the altar at the during the ceremony. The arrangement was consistent with the function saints had as models for the nobility, who interpreted their characters based on the ideals of the saints' lives.[17] Moreover, a screen or linen cloth usually segregated the sexes.[18] However, while seen first and closest by the higher classes, and often separated by gender, the viewing of the screen was above all a communal act at this time.[19] Everyone was separated from the altar and placed before the image of the saint during mass. The laity was distant from the clergy by a dividing barrier. Although the wealthy were at the front and closest to the saint, they viewed the

13 Ibid, 104. See also: Jacqueline Jung, 'Beyond the Barrier: The Unifying Role of the Choir Screen in Gothic Churches', *The Art Bulletin* 82, (College of Art Association: 2000), 629. Assessed 16.8.12: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3051415

14 Weick, *Time Sanctified*. See also: Gameson, *Role of Art*, 85-6, 108, and 166-175.

15 Bossy, *Christianity and the West*, 3.

16 Duffy, 'Holy Maydens, Holy Wyfes,' 175-84.

17 Refer to: 'Chapter Five: Books of Hours Illuminations: Education for 'good whyfes' and daughters,' .

18 Pugin, *Chancel Screens*. 8. See also Donald Cooper, 'Franciscan Choir Enclosures and the Function of Double-sided Altarpieces in Pre-tridentine Umbria,' *Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* (2001), 53. See also Maria Hall, 'The Tramezzo in Santa Croce, Florence Reconstructed,' *The Art Bulletin* 56 (1974), 339. See also: Cooper, 'Access to all Areas?', 90-107.

19 Duffy, 'Holy Maydens, Holy Whyfes,' 179.

image at the same time as the rest of their community.[20] In a discussion of the social significance of the medieval rood screen, Marks has argued that the communal function was an act of unification for the community with the rood screen being a single focus of imagery, that took place in the prominent lay section of the parish and, accordingly, involved civic piety.[21] Cooper has remarked that "What was distant would also have been familiar' what was divided was implicitly whole".[22] The people may have been separated hierarchically and/or by gender, but everyone still took part.[23]

In another analysis of the function of the screen in medieval churches, Jaqueline Jung has examined how the screen was used to separate men and women, but also exclude lay participation from clergy during church rituals.[24] Architecturally, the screen blocked the emotionally potent consecration of the Eucharist. As Jung remarked, "The canons sought not only to exclude themselves from the outside world but also to surround themselves with imagery that would mirror their own activities, interests and roles". They were mystifying enclosures that the laity desired to be part of, but were forever restricted from. The images on the screens must be understood with respect to lay attitudes who viewed and the clergy who created. They drew viewers into stories with empathy, for instruction and personal identification.[25] Architecturally, the raised screen provided a theatre-like stage that made the event emotionally compelling.[26] In most cases the choir was raised by steps above the floor to the nave, further enhancing the sense of a theatre platform.[27]

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20 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 86-120. See also: Gwenfair Adams, *Visions in Late Medieval Spirituality: Lay Spirituality and Sacred Glimpses of the Hidden Works of Faith* (Koninklijke Brill, 2007), 5-6.

21 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 86-120.

22 Cooper, 'Access to all Areas?,' 107.

23 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 86-120.

24 Jung, 'Beyond the Barrier,' 622-57.

25 Ibid, 624.

26 Pugin, *Chancel Screens*, 8. See also Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 86-120. See also: Jones, 'Visio Divinia,' 37-41. See also: Jung, 'Beyond the Barrior,' 625.

27 Maria Hall, 'The Ponte in S. Maria Novella: The Problem of the Rood Screen in Italy,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* (1974), 163. See also: Cooper, *Franciscan Choir Enclosures*, 1-54.

Thus, the function of the screen was very dynamic. The space of the church was fluid but segregated, as Jung has demonstrated, "Nevertheless, it reveals a connection of the central vessel of the church – however rigidly compartmentalised its sides may be – as remarkably fluid, a space in which vision and reality eclide and the realms of compartmentalized, public – litigurical and private – devotional, blend seamlessly together."[28] The saints like Zita on these screens were in a neutral zone, an area where lay audiences co-joined in an emotionally compelling space, at a community's symbolic and unified event; that of mass. This was when saints would appropriately address the issues, conflicts, concerns, and tensions, of the commonwealth's situations in relation to the saints who stood before them to help with all these tracts, but, perhaps more valuably or critically, were evoked for prayer, intercession and aid before, during, and after their deaths.

Because this was when the clergy would have taught the model adaption of the saints who were set visually before collected citizens, rood screens were a key means by which the stories of Zita would have been told to educate the laity about her abilities as an intercessor at the same time as her image was viewed.[29] The viewing of the saints were commented on by the clergy with stories being preached about her from above and beyond the confined space of the nave.[30] The screen became a stage set of saintly intercessors for the congregation. The saints were the actors who stood on the elevated platform, their lives told here by the preachers. These stories, far from being only entertaining, were highly relevant to the audiences lives'. The saints characters in these stories epitomized heroes, just as the *vita* would do for the more literate. These stories led to veneration both inside and outside the parish, further carrying her cult around England by word-of-mouth.

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28 Jung, 'Beyond the Barrier', 630.

29 Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 21. See also: Mecklin, *The Passing of a Saint*, 17-30. See also: Adams, *Visions in Late Medieval Spirituality*, 5-6.

30 Cooper, 'Access to all Areas?,' 90-107.

Another point to further examine regarding the dividing screen is the way in which it separated the clergy from the laity.[31] This placed the rood screen among issues of power and control between the clergy and laity.[32] As stated above, the dividing point of the screen was accented architecturally, which resulted in the laity worshiping from below the clergy in a physical way, at least during mass.[33] It has already been noted that the aristocracy could be granted reserve access at other times. The saints on the screens functioned between the two areas of the church as an essential and potent separation of the religious space reserved for the clergy and God from the place of humanity.[34] It was appropriate that the saints could be seen to act between these two separate areas because of their role as mediators and intercessors. Zita, and other saints on the screen served as the people's link to the divine in their community's religious house. In this way God, at least on the altar being presented during mass, was visually restricted behind the barrier of the saints. The saint's image was presented between, linking the visual with the emotional, the viewer with God.

The last point to consider about the significance of the screen before examining the images directly is the personal and physical interaction it could allow. The screens could be viewed, touched, and even kissed, although perhaps less likely during mass.[35] As is the case with other media, such as murals discussed previously, it could be argued that this made the image of the saint more available to the laity, at least physically, for veneration in a community that was not able to directly access her relics. As opposed to relics, which could be controlled by the clergy who could grant the laity reserved access by placing a barrier, guard, rope, or other protection around the saint; the rood screen was open to

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31 Mecklin, *The Passing of a Saint,* 31-46.

32 Ibid, 31-46.

33 Pugin, *Chancel Screens,* 8.

34 Ibid, 8. See also: Schmidt, *Italian Panel Painting,* 38-41. See also Dillian Gordon, 'Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Perugian Double-sided Altarpieces: Form and Function,' in Schmidt, *Italian Panel Painting,* 229-49. See also Peter Seiler, 'Duccio Maesta: The Function of the Scenes from the Life of Christ on the Reverse of the Altarpiece: A New Hypothesis,' in Schmidt, *Italian Panel Paintings,* 250-265. See also Adams, *Visions in Late Medieval Spirituality,* 3-4, in particular for his discussion of how the screen blocked the view of the sacrament: "Vision illustrated the objective faith, providing a window through the rood screen into the inner workings of the core of that faith."

35 Schmidt, *Italian Panel Painting,* 37.

everyone both visually and physically.[36] The limitation placed on accessibility to relics was necessary because people often attempted to have contact with the saint's corpse. Physical contact with a saint was considered to be the most effective way to enlist the saint's aid, or to take an item which could perform the saints' miracles, or, as was the case with Zita, the opportunity to steal a relic like her toe. Images, such as rood screens, were considered to be secondary items also capable of working miracles, although not considered as powerful as relics.[37]

Rood screens were impressively large and were meant to viewed and understood in a certain way. The correlation of how the viewer would have seen the image of the saint, alongside other saints in a large program, implies that they were to be interpreted as a collective narrative scene.[38] The images of saints were given divided attention in their own panels, and the number could differ along two divisions. Occasionally there were only two saints to each side, in others there were six, and even large elaborate groupings of twelve may be found. These panels were then grouped into two separate pieces, and separated in the middle for the passage for the priest to the altar, (fig. 15). Few complete examples of fifteenth century rood screens survive. An analysis of the different combinations of saints on the extant screens establishes that they were to be addressed by the viewer for specific votive needs that regarded both the saints' unique and broadly similar abilities. For example, Zita may relate to women of her gender, servants, and poor according to her unique abilities, but in the end, her general function was to be an intercessor who would grant aid to all her English followers, as with any saint. According to Jung, "As medieval mnemonic and meditational theories attest, these images were not only used as illustrative reinforcement for preachers – though this was likely a significant function – but were also devotional instruments in their own right, helping to focus the meditations of and stimulate contemplation in individual viewers"[39] They were used for

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36 Patrick Geary, 'Humiliation of Saints,' in *Saints and their Cults*, ed. Stephen Wilson, 123-40.

37 Ward, *Signs and Wonders*. For secondary relics working miracles see: Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country*, 52-3. Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 444.

38 Ward, *Signs and Wonders*, 111. See also: Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety, and Patronage,' 122-62.

39 Jung, 'Beyond the Barrier', 164.

instruction, memorials such as the saints feasts days, placed on a stage for their audience to access them both visually and physically.

As previously mentioned, this aspect of veneration is particularly significant for Zita's significance to women. For women just as much for men, the images were meant to be self-reflective, they were meant to be possible, though impossible, to emulate, stimulate devotion, and, importantly, be personally identifiable to the viewer. Aforementioned arguments have demonstrated that Zita may have been patronized by men either because of her servant and/or feminine ideal, but she had more significance to women of the medieval period who accepted that appeal for supplication, aid, intercession, education, and advice according to her own life. These images, rather than isolating, identified with the people as a bridge with the invisible divine they wished to have contact with, through the visible saint.[40] In order to understand what significance Zita had with these women, it is necessary to specifically examine the images.

Primarily, the saints were grouped according to gender, which was appropriate since these parish churches were probably segregated down the middle so men were separate from women.[41] However, the typology could further regard the separation from martyrs, bishops, confessors or virgins.[42] An analysis of the surviving screens clearly demonstrates Zita's popularity among similar female cults.[43] However, it is interesting that Zita, who was not a martyr in invariably included among a group of female martyrs. Perhaps, her life of austerity could have been considered like martyrdom. Also, of surprising interest is the fact that in each case she is shown with the same female saints, suggesting that there was a clear taste in representing the same cults as Zita's that were the most popular in the area during this half-century.

40 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 629.

41 Ibid, 622-57. See also: Cooper, 'Access to all Areas?', 90-107.

42 Duffy, 'Holy Maydens and Holy Whyfes,' 179-80.

43 Ibid, 176.

Four rood screens will be discussed in this chapter. They range in date from the fifteenth to the early-sixteenth centuries, although most have not been dated with any great precision except from the Westhall screen, created in 1512. All are in parish churches, three in Nortfolk (north Elmham, Litcham, and Barton Turf) and one in Suffolk (Westhall). The earliest, the fifteenth century screen, is at North Elmham.[44] The screen is first documented in 1548, when the painter William Tulney was paid for some additional colouring to the front of the upper section. In 1550 Henry Wakefield was paid 3.6d for dismantling the rood screen, which establishes it was once a set of two sections, consisting of a lower screen and an upper, loft screen.[45] However, only the lower screen survives.

The panels were found in 1852 as being used as flooring in the pews.[46] It seems reasonable to agree with the hypothesis offered by Peter and Susana Wade-Martin, who suggested that the panels were likely to have been removed during the Reformation and hidden throughout the church for their protection.[47] In 1878, additional pieces were found behind the seats in the north transept and part of the benches in the aisles. In 1882, the whole screen was reconstructed using the surviving pieces.[48] Although the composition still has several missing panels, the re-unification allows for an identification of the saints represented and some additional understanding of the way it was likely to have been originally viewed.

The North Elmham screen consists of four panels. Each panel is divided into two sections with a wooden border, with one saint to each section, making two sets of eight saints per screen and sixteen figures in total (fig. 16). The two panels are separated according to gender with each saint indentified below their figure. On the female section are, from left

44 Peter and Susanna Wade-Martins, *A Guide to the Church of St. Mary the Virgin North Elmham,* (North Elmham: Parochial Church Council, 1995), 1.

45 Ibid, 11.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid, 12. See also Richard Trexler, 'The Sacred Image,' 7-41.

48 Wade-Martins, *St. Mary the Virgin North Elmham,* 12.

to right, are saints Barbara, Cecilia, Dorothy, Zita (who is identified by the inscription of her name as Sitha), Juliana, Petronillia, Agnes and Christina (fig. 17). On the north side of the screen are depictions of small figures painted above the saints, including a fleur de Lys, a Tudor Rose, a man riding a pig, two other small figures and a man slaying a dragon, perhaps either Sts George or Michael.[49]

Zita is represented looking at her neighbor, Dorothy (fig. 22). She is a haloed and carries a set of rosary beads in her right hand and a book in her left. Despite the rich gold robe Zita wears, a white mantle covers her head that likely signifies her more humble origins as a mature servant woman. A more explicit indication of her life as a servant is the white apron wrapped around her waist. Each of the female saints is represented approximately the same age. All are youthful, with the only clear differing aspects being the styles of dress and the attributes which relate to each individual. Dorothy, for instance, wears a royal cape and crown (fig. 18). Aside from their distinctive uses, the figures are shown in a program, suggesting that they were the most fashionable for female and lay veneration at the time the screen was made.

The most surprising aspect of this screen was that every one of the female saints represented were martyrs, except for Zita who is a virgin. It has been suggested by Eamon Duffy, that virgin saints were often compared to martyrs.[50] He argued that the same themes which appear in these women's *vitae* included bloody defilement, rape, illness and death.[51] Although Zita was not a martyr, she may have been able to relate to this theme because she protected women in service roles who had the potential of being raped or sexually exploited by other male employees and employers. Zita's *vita* told how she fought off an attempted attack from a fellow servant and acted as a model of chastity

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49 Ibid, 12.

50 Duffy, 'Holy Maydens and Holy Whyfes,' 177. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints*, XVIV. Kaftal's arguments show that there was little distinction between martyrs and virgin saints. See also: Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, in particular, Chapter Three: 'Food as a Female Concern': 73-112.

51 Duffy, 'Holy Maydens and Holy Whyfes,' 177. See also: Bynum, *Holy Feast and Fast*. See also Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 151. See also: Jung, 'Beyond the Barrior', 640.

throughout her entire life.[52] Zita's inclusion in this screen among female martyrs indicates how popular and broad her cult was before the Reformation. The combination of saints in the other screens shows that Zita was a frequent female subject, although her virgin status was unique in comparison to the other female saints who were presented.

There are two other screens where Zita is the only virgin saint grouped with female martyrs. The first of the two is located in the All Saints Church, at Kings Lynn in Litcham. The Litcham screen includes a date of 1436, (figs. 19-20).[53] It was restored and repainted in 1903, but the panels were clearly left untouched.[54] This screen depicts several of the same female martyrs as well the recurring grouping of eight. From left to right represented are Zita (again named below as Sitha), Apollonia, Dorothy, Juliana, Agnes, Petronilla, Helena, and Ursula. Each of these saints were meant to ease suffering and guarantee a path to salvation.[55]

Available evidence indicates that saints such as Etheldreda, Margaret, Agnes, Dorothy, Apollonia, Bridget, Barbara, Petronilla, were constant subjects on English rood screens. Therefore, their cults merit brief mention of exactly who they were and why these female saints may have been chosen in such a program along with Zita. A comparison of a few of these cults to that of Zitas', may account for why she was included despite her virgin status. Etheldreda (d. 679) was patron of throat aches as she was beheaded and made a martyr, Margaret (d. 1247) was patron against temptation and the homeless, Agnes (d. 304) was patron of betrothed couples and chastity, Apollonia (d. 249) was patron of tooth ache, Bridget (d. 524) was patron of babies and blacksmiths, Barbara (d. mid-thirteenth c.) was patron of widows, and Petronilla (d. first c.) was patron against fevers. Clearly these same female saints were able to address the fears of disease and plague while at the same time helping and teaching women to represent in marriage the correct family values that they were expected to maintain, such as procreation, health, chastity, and loyalty as

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52 *AASS*, Zita, 504.

53 Leaflet revised for Church Tours in 2004.

54 Ibid.

55 Jung, 'Beyond the Barrier', 646.

well as aid them through the natural difficulties of their lives. Thus, Zita was included because of her relationship to women and their daily domestic lives, and perhaps, in particular, her chastity.

The presentation of these widely venerated female saints further suggests that their cults met the ideals of female conduct appropriated by all levels of English society during the medieval period. Moreover, as Jung has clearly argued, the images of saints on screens were also meant to be self-reflectionary for the audience who viewed them. As she has noted, "The high degree of social as well as physical and devotional specificity also allowed them to act as unmistakable points of identification and empathy for those men and women who would have recognized in the figures types of their own selves, suggesting the designers concern to evoke the same sort of self-recognition and empathetic response that was deliberately striven for in contemporary sermons."[56] The people looked to Zita not only as a model for emulation, or approachable supplication because she represented their own lives, but also, empathetically, she represented themselves, and a model they could hope to achieve through their actions in service, whether domestic or occupational.

A unique aspect of the Litcham screen is that each of the saints looks at each other. Zita looks at Apollonia, with whom she was paired, (fig. 19).[57] As at North Elmham, Zita is shown holding a book and rosary, a white mantle, and a white apron which is apparently used repeatedly in each rood screen to signify her life as a household servant. These screens were produced at the peak of the cult before the Reformation. Therefore, these particular attributes must have been the most typical way to visually identify the saint at the time. This issue is of particular significance for the illiterate, who were only able to identify Zita by her traditional symbols. While she was in each case identified by an accompanying inscription, the only way that the illiterate, or reasonably literate in some cases, could identify Zita was by her traditional iconography that they learned during

56 Jung, 'Beyond the Barrier' 647.
57 Church Tours at Burwood Hall, 2004.

mass in conjunction with viewing the image.[58] The repeated iconography and the consistent way that she is shown throughout these examples, as a young and beautiful virgin with her standardized symbols, simplifies and normalized her for easy identification beyond the inscription of her name. After all, every image was a vehicle for both communication just as much as for community, which was especially relevant to the unified way this particular media was most often viewed.[59]

The third screen, dated to 1512 based on surviving documentation from wills, can be found at St Andrews Church, in Westhall, Suffolk. This screen is similar to the previous two, again showing Zita in the company of a group of female martyrs (figs. 21-23). The Westhall screen has the same separation of the two screens according to gender with a total of eight saints recurring on either side. The repeated style shows a standard format and iconography common to many East Anglian rood screens. The screen with female saints represents from left to right, Etheldreda, Zita (again named as Sitha below her image), Agnes, Bridget, Catherine, Dorothy, Margaret, and Apollonia, (fig. 22). There are several of the same saints shown, such as Dorothy, Agnes, and Apollonia, but particular significance can be paid to Etheldreda, whose representation provides a link between the two popular female cults. Etheldreda is a saint who enjoyed a church dedication at Horley where Zita is also depicted in a mural (fig. 7).[60] Both of them also have shrines dedicated to them at Ely.

It is difficult to discuss the way that Zita is represented in the Westhall screen because the panels are not in the best condition and the quality of the screen suggests the work of a provincial or local artist. In this case, the extensive application of gold indicates a more expensive commission. So, Zita wears a green robe laced in gold and carries a book and gold rosary in her hands; the item to her left could have been a set of gold keys or a bag, but is unfortunately difficult, if not impossible, to identify. A surviving inscription on the

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58 Coe, *Stained Glass in England,* 46.

59 Jung, 'Beyond the Barrier,' 649.

60 Refer to: 'Chapter Three: Murals: A saint of the kitchen,'.

left of the screen asks for prayers on behalf of several of donors, including Margaret and Thomas Feltham, the widow Margaret Allen and Richard Love. The latter's will has survived, providing the approximate dating of the screen to 1512.[61]

The inscription recording the donors of the screens signifies that the importance of these images went far beyond merely architectural decoration for the laity. By donating funds to pay for the creation of the screen, donors publically demonstrated their devotion to the saints, and the personal action is highly symbolic.[62] It is important to note that the majority of screens were patroned by women during the medieval period, which is another demonstration of Zita's significance to the female gender of England during the medieval period.[63] The scale of her popularity in East Anglia, at the peak of the cult's visual production, may be supported by an analysis of the donors of rood screens. Because of the amount of work and finances required, these commissions were often a combination of both clerical and lay patronage. While there may have been a select wealthy few who could afford to be sole patrons, it was very rare. More often, the screens were financed by multiple gifts coordinated by the parish, which could perhaps involve negotiations between individual donors and clerical authorities regarding the choice of subject matter. Therefore, the commission involved a shared sense of identity between the people, the clergy, and the saint they chose. Such levels of patronage indicates that these differing levels of society found in Zita a shared sense of value and piety.[64]

For the community, to contribute to the screen was considered a way of enlisting the saints' help.[65] It can be viewed as the equivalent of making a vow of pilgrimage or

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61 Judith Middleton-Stewart, *St Andrew's Westhall: A Brief History of the Parish Church of Westhall* (Westhall: The Vicar and Churchwardens of St. Andrew's, 2010), 5.

62 Coe, *Stained Glass in England,* 11. Coe discusses the requests for donors on stained glass and rood screens. He also cites how the rood screens were popular where the wool trade flourished, which may also explain why Zita was represented in this media and in this area, where, based on previous discussions, the cult was supported by the merchant class.

63 Cooper, 'Access to all Areas?,' 101.

64 Duffy, 'Holy Maydens, Holy Wyfes,' 177.

65 Ibid. 182.

offering an *ex-voto*.[66] Therefore, because Zita was chosen, she was not only popular among the people who chose to represent her, but because they believed and, more importantly, required her individual powers as a saint whose aid they wished to enlist during their lives and upon their deaths. The role of every saint was to help fight for souls in purgatory and intercede on their behalf for the security of their eternal souls.[67] Apart from the religious and pious intention behind being a donor or contributing in some way to the screen, it is still a mark of involvement on behalf of the devotee, which, beyond being pious, publically demonstrated their personal family status to their own community in a religious setting.[68]

The clearest reason Zita was included was because she was a popular religious subject and successful intercessor. The medieval devotee may not have considered a distinction between a martyr and a virgin significant, or a reason to include different types of saints in the same group context or program relevant. Rather, it could be possible that the community based their decision on who they considered to be both fashionable for artistic subjects in the church and were considered to be successful intercessors. [69] Whatever the reasons she was chosen as a subject, her patron abilities must have been required for these communities for them to decide to represent her for communal veneration. Her roles as a servant, female, and especially her virgin status, must have been able to address the immediate concerns of these different communities in East Anglia.

Men likely sought her for the education of their daughters and expectations of chaste family values. Their wives, likely for the same conclusions, but also for their own their domestic lives and expected roles. Even women of the nobility could relate to Zita and their same roles in the household as indicated by her apron being a symbol of her kitchen

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66 Ibid.

67 Vauchez, *The Laity*, 87-8.

68 Jones, 'Visio Divinia,' 37. See also: Barbara Lane, *The Development of the Medieval Devotional Figure: A Dissertation in the History of Art* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 1-6.

69 Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety, and Patronage,' 148.

duties and domestic chores. As she was commonly shown with an apron, she was able to relate to servants who could come to church, possibly including both genders, but more probably with more significance to women of the poorer working class.[70]

One of the most interesting screens is that at Barton Turf, in a church dedicated to Michael and All Angels in Barton, (figs. 24-25). In comparison to the other examples discussed in this chapter, this particular screen is surprisingly well preserved and is the only completed screen with a rood loft in Norfolk. Unfortunately, no documentation survives regarding the commission or date when it was produced.[71] The screen was probably made in the later part of the fifteenth or the early-sixteenth centuries, because this was when the chancel and other paintings in the church were executed, and thus when the finances were most likely available.[72] The painters may have been associated with Benet's Abbey because Barton Turf was placed under their control in 1387.[73] The screen depicts nine orders of angels within twelve panels. Zita (named above her image as Sitha) is represented on the far west among both female and male combinations of saints. Similar to the previous screens, the other female martyred saints include Apollonia and Barbara.

The Barton screen is the most exceptional and detailed of the screens in this media discussion, and is remarkably still in excellent condition.[74] Zita wears the same white mantle over her head and servant's apron around her waist. She carries a green purse and keys in her left hand, and in her right hand is a rosary. The dress she wears is red with gold trimming. She is shown over a green background with a gold floral decoration, establishing that a considerable amount of finances went into the screen. The saint next to her, Apollonia, has a tooth in her hand with a tool that was apparently used to remove

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70 Webb, 'Woman and Home,' 162.

71 Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety, and Patronage,' 154.

72 Church Tours at Burwood Hall, 2004.

73 John Gun, (rev), *Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society*, (Norwich: Miller and Evans, 2009), See also: leaflet compiled for Church Tours in 2005 by 'Lyn Stilgoe'.

74 Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety and Patronage,' 155.

teeth, both of which were items related to her *vita*. Apollonia was the patron saint of toothache, and is commonly invoked to grant aid for problems with teeth. Zita's particular accessibility is revealed here by the characteristics given to her representation, which occurred frequently, such as a smile, evidenced by murals in the previous chapter and is repeated in other examples to be discussed in this and later chapters.

Although Zita is grouped along with Apollonia as a pair (fig. 25), this is the only screen that is not divided according by gender. The presentation of the nine orders of angels relates to the dedication of church to Michael and All Angels, who was the leader of angelic hosts. The fact that Zita was one of only three female saints chosen certainly demonstrates her appeal above other saints. Above the screen with Zita are representations of the nine orders of angels. Divided into three, there is the superior hierarchy of: Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones, followed secondly by the middle hierarchy with depictions of Dominations, Virtues and Powers, and lastly there is a representation of the inferior hierarchy with Principalities, Archangels and Angels. Zita, Barbara and Apollonia, are the only three female saints included: two traditional martyrs and one recent virgin saint: Zita.

It is not unusual to find this type of angelic order in a rood screen. Placed on the rood screen, Zita and the other saints represent the most approachable intercessors for the congregation, carrying their prayers to the heavenly court within which they are placed.[75] Duffy has pointed out the expense and care involved in creating the Barton Turf screen. He suggests that the quality and execution imply a close connection with the monks of Barton Turf or a very wealthy group of patrons.[76] That the screen may have been a group project is supported by the depiction of the nine orders of angels, a reflection of the church being dedicated to a very common collective project: Michael and All Angels.[77] Apart from these above examples, in a number of other screens, Zita is shown with the

75 Hall, 'The Tramezzo in Santa Croce,' 325-41.

76 Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety and Patronage,' 155.

77 Henrey Cautley, *Norfolk Churches* (London: Boydell, 1979), 172.

company of male saints. In the screen at Ashton in Devon, for example, she is paired with Michael Archangel, who is depicted slaying the dragon. Here, Zita carries a book and rosary that are symbols for her piety. She also holds the household keys, and an apron full of flowers taken from her *vita*.[78]

A final point to consider regarding the rood screens is their current state, and how this provides evidence of the Reformation. In several of the surviving screens, all of the saint's faces, including Zita's, appear to have been physically scratched (fig. 20). While it is possible that this damage may have been caused by age, it would be more likely that they were a result of vandalism from a society which, by the mid-sixteenth century, had come to see the inclusion of images of saints in churches as idolatrous. Following this view, the actions of scratching the face of the saint was personal, emotional, and highly negative.

As this discussion has demonstrated, Zita appearance on rood screens regards her most often as part of a catalogue of other female cults. Her presentation alongside long venerated female martyrs, despite the fact that she herself was not a martyr but a virgin servant, demonstrates her adoption and appeal. The repeated representation for her identification with the same iconography and a comparison of the same female saints she was shown with establish how the cult had been modified. This development demonstrates that Zita had become significant and was supported by the entire English community, by both genders, and all levels of society. The pattern of distribution of her images in this media shows that her cult spread very quickly. She was easily identified by the people because of the standardized attributes she is shown with; keys, an apron, a book, and rosary beads. They combine to show her in a more institutionalized manner so that she could be simply identified by these different, small, local parishioners.

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78 *AASS*, 'Zita', 509.

These rood screens, at the height of the cult veneration, establish the full penetration the cult had made in England. They show the extent to which her image was assimilated to more universal models of female sanctity, that of a young, pretty, idealized servant and virgin.[79] The collective worship and petition to Zita during the mass when these images of the saint were viewed, is important. This is the media which was viewed at perhaps the most potent time for individuation and collective piety and private meditation. Gazing on Zita's image as her followers participated in the church rituals, worshippers could experience a sense of communal joining, identity, and pride in the splendor and beauty of the screen created for their local parish church. In these works, Zita was an intercessor set on a holy stage, so that her English devotees could supplicate her together. The main focus of this study thus far has been Zita's significance for the English devout. Worshipers who chose to patronise and venerate these images believed in Zita's abilities as an intercessor who could help them throughout their daily lives.

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79 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 222-3.

Chapter Five

Books of Hours Illuminations: Education for 'good wyfes' and daughters

Three Books of Hours include illuminations of Zita. Illuminations could be considered distinct from other media for two reasons. Firstly, an analysis of the background of Books of Hours in England establishes that these items had quite a unique relationship between the image and the devotee. As opposed to other media, Books of Hours were luxurious privately owned items that were portable, and thus, able to be used in both church and home. Ownership indicates that there was a personal and intimate one-on-one relationship between the owner or devotee and the depicted saint. Secondly, these books were reserved for the wealthy and therefore allow an analysis of how and why Zita was venerated by the English upper class.[1] Zita had a particular significance to medieval nobility, merchants, and Dominicans who were the patrons and owners of these three Books of Hours. With noblewomen, Zita could be seen as a model of proper female conduct, exemplifying ideals of chastity, piety, and moral rectitude. One of the books is considered to belong to an extremely high-ranking nobleman, Lord William Hastings, suggesting that the elite saw in Zita an ideal female saint and one that they could appropriate as a model for the women of their class. Another patron came from a prominent merchant family, indicating Zita's popularity in the merchant class. Lastly, a Dominican male recluse was an illuminator, author and owner of a Book of Hours that included Zita.

The three surviving illuminations of Zita are the Bolton Hours (1407-20, figs. 26-27), the Lacy Hours (1420, fig. 28), and the Hastings Hours (1475-83, fig. 29). Before examining these images, it is useful to briefly consider the production and use of Books of Hours in medieval England. Such a discussion may provide some additional understanding of why Zita was considered a fashionable or popular subject to include. Relevant factors are the

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1 Gameson, *The Role of Art*, 1-69. Victor Schmidt, *Painted Piety: Panel Paintings for Personal Devotion in Tuscany: 1250-1400* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2005), 261. See also: Rodger Wieck, *Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval Renaissance Art* (New York: George Braziller, 1997), 10.

portable aspect of books, who the patrons or owners, and the religious and social significance of reading Books of Hours for the elite class during the fifteenth century.

The other media discussed in this study - mural paintings, rood screens, stained glass, and alabaster statues - are all public images found in churches. Their location indicates that they were viewed as architecture, decoration and for the purposes of communal or private veneration. An important aspect distinct to Books of Hours, was that they were small, portable, personal items. Because they were portable, capable of being carried between locations, they could be used both in church and in the home as an aid for mediation and prayer.[2] With illumination production images of saints for worship were no longer limited to churches, but were now available in the household.[3] Also, in comparison to other media, Books of Hours with illuminations of Zita are the most documented visual body in terms of patronage. Therefore, they are the most reliable sources about the relationship between Zita and the elite individuals who chose to represent her with a specific intent for private veneration.

As Books of Hours were the personal property of the patron or owner, this individual would have chosen what content they wished to have represented, based on their own personal interests and what they considered relevant to their pious needs.[4] The well-off, often aristocratic individuals that paid for and used these books must have known about Zita and believed in her powers as a saint before they chose to include her. It should be noted that because the author and/or the artist was often an educated scribe, possibly even clergy, they would have had a substantial amount of influence over the book's content. The patron often consulted the scribe for what religious themes to include to have the

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2 Gameson, *Role of Art,* 10. See also: Schmidt, *Painted Piety,* 281.

3 Wieck, *Painted Prayers,* 10.

4 Sarah Jones and Felicity Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours of York: Female Domestic Piety and The Public Sphere,' in *Household, Women, and Christianities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages,* ed. Anneke Mulder-Baker and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, (Turnhout: Brespols, 2005), 219. See also Eamon Duffy: *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1240-1570* (Yale University, 2006), 8.

most effective result while still maintaining their personal interests in religious subjects.[5] That Zita was chosen as a subject establishes that she must have been a current topic not only with the owners, but also with the scribes and artists who executed the illuminations.

The final, but nevertheless considerable issue with the background of Books of Hours is that illuminations were the only media that was largely restricted to the wealthy elite for two reasons. To begin with, illuminated manuscripts had a distinctive relationship between text and image. Representations of the saints could be viewed alongside extensive written works such as music verse, prayers, and calendars, implying that both the patron and the intended audience (if the book was a gift) were, at least to an extent, literate.[6] The literacy level required to read an advanced Book of Hours usually went beyond merely the vernacular because the majority of texts were written in Latin.[7] Following Roger Wieck's examination of medieval Books of Hours, it was only in the mid-fifteenth century that other languages such as French were introduced, and this remained relatively rare.[8] However, it should be noted that due to the pictorial aspect of Books of Hours, many owners were not educated in Latin, but, rather, were conforming to popular trends of showing public wealth by owning such luxurious items.[9] Apart from being fashionable to own, Books of Hours functioned as a visual aid which would have had an emotional impact on the book's user. For some, the illumination would have been more effective in helping the devotee to pray than the text.[10] Medieval society experienced the world in an intensely visual way, where sight was generally considered the chief sense for experience and education, rather than text.

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5 Gameson, *Role of Art*, 118-26.

6 Cullum and Goldberg, 'The Bolton Hours', 217.

7 Wieck, *Painted Prayers*, 10.

8 Ibid, 10.

9 Gameson, *Role of Art*, 59. See also: Jones and Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours,' 232-42. See also: Janet Blackhouse, *The Hastings Hours* (San Francisco: Pomegranate, 1997), 27-8, See also: Maurits Smeyers and Jan Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts 1475-1550* (London: Ludion Press, 1996), 13. See also Victor Schmidt, *Painted Piety*. See also: Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 33-5.

10 Gameson, *Role of Art*, 105-18.

The second reason ownership of Books of Hours could be considered restricted to the wealthy is because of the large financial requirements of their production, which involves several further implications. Because the illuminations were personal property they were objects used by wealthy families to show the family's piety and promote status within their communities. These books were used to display the noble characters of their owners and the wealth of the families who could afford to commission them.[11] Showing wealth by art patronage or by the display of heraldry, often included throughout the book, was a clear sign of social status. The display of heraldic symbols was a potent visual tie of the social standing of the patron and their family lineage, which gave the owner, identity, power, as well as a mark of ownership.[12] The more splendid the book, the greater the status of the family appeared to their community.

It should be noted that this issue of the book being private property makes it difficult to speculate on how often they may have been shared publically as a status symbol. There were several possible contexts for reading a Books of Hours. They may have been shown to family and friends, or read aloud which would have involved a communal function.[13] Many Books of Hours, including one example in this study, were gifts, and as such they may have used as a public compliment from the giver to the receiver.[14] Books could have been intended to be read and meditated upon privately by a devout individual or shared by several members of a family, as will be demonstrated below in a discussion of the Bolton Hours. Therefore, when considering the three examples below, it is necessary to keep in mind that the above and other contexts, or a combination of each, were all plausible.

11 Gameson, *Role of Art*, 59. See also: Smeyers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 13-5. For other discussions of art as status symbols see: Mecklin, *Passing of a saint*, 47-64.

12 Janet Blackhouse, *The Bolton Hours*, 34. For other discussion on heraldry see: Marks, *Image and Devotion*. For merchants in particular using heraldic symbols see: Thrupp, *The Merchant Class*, VII. See also Smith, *Art, Identity, and Devotion*, 43. See also . Schmidt, *Painted Piety*, 31-79. See also: Lars-Jones, 'Visio Divinia? Donor Figures and Representations of Imagistic Devotion: The copy of the 'Virgin of Bagnolo' in the Museo dell' Opera del Duomo, Florence,' in Victor Schmidt, *Italian Panel Painting*, 51-6.

13 Gameson, *Role of Art*, 46-57.

14 Ibid, 58.

The earliest surviving illumination of Zita is found in the Bolton Book of Hours (fig. 26: York Minster Library, ms. 2, fol. 40v.), which can be dated to between 1407 and 1420.[15] It was likely to have been completed in the same area where the Bolton family was known to have resided near York. Both the date and the location of the production can be reasonably concluded on the basis of certain saints represented in the program. The newly initiated cult of the rebel Archbishop Robert Scorpe (d. 1405) has been taken to indicate that the book must have been completed shortly after his cult began in England, during the first decades of the fifteenth century. Other saints give evidence that there was more attention given to cults restricted to the York area, which will be further discussed below. The scribe was also the artist, Johannes, who signs the work 'Johannes nomine felix' on folio 122v. Alexandria Barrat, who has examined the Bolton Hours has argued that the signature as 'felix' indicates the author was likely to be a Dominican.[16]

There is no surviving evidence about who commissioned the book. However, enough evidence drawn from the content allows two likely hypotheses. Both of these theories place the patron within two elite York families: the Boltons and Blackburns, who were closely connected by blood and marriage. Some scholars have identified the book's patron as Alice Bolton (d. 1472). Alice was the wife of John Bolton (d. 1448), who was a successful merchant and major of York in 1431.[17] Although Alice may have commissioned the work, she could have intended to give it as a gift to Margaret Blackburn, her eldest daughter.[18] In a recent analysis of the Bolton Hours, Patricia Cullum and Jeremy Goldberg argued that Margaret Blackburn was the patron, of which I agree.[19] According to their examination, which focuses on how the content related to the Blackburn women, whatever Margaret's intent with her commission, there is ample evidence that she wished to use the book alongside her daughters and intended it to

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15 Jones and Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours,' 223.

16 Alexandra Barrat, 'Enveloped in Synne: The Bolton Hours and Its Confessional Formula,' In *Interstices: Studies in Late Middle English and Anglo-Latin Texts in Honour of A. G. Rigg*, ed. Richard F. Green, Linne R. Mooney and A. G. Rigg (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 5. See also, Cullum and Goldberg, 'The Bolton Hours,' 105.

17 Barrat, 'The Bolton Hours,' 3.

18 Cullum and Goldberg, 'The Bolton Hours,' 221-2.

19 Ibid, 217-36.

remain in their possession. The Bolton Hours includes a more than usual number of female saints including Anne and Bridget, as well as miniature figures of women who were intended to represent the donors, detailed below.[20] Apart from the female-related illuminations, there were several other aspects that indicate Margaret and/or her daughters may have commissioned it. Books, and specially Books of Hours, usually passed down through the female line of the family.[21] Although there can be no certainty about the patron being Alice Bolton or Margaret Blackburn, the ownership of the Bolton Hours did pass to one of Margaret's daughters, Alice.[22]

Regarding this rather confusing patronage situation, there is simply no way of being certain if the Bolton Hours was commissioned by grandmother and passed down through two generations, or was commissioned by mother and passed to one generation. The book may have been ordered by or for Margaret Blackburn, Alice Bolton's eldest daughter, or, Margaret may have jointly commissioned the work with her own daughters, Isabel, Alice and Agnes.[23] Thus, the Bolton and Blackburn women were closely related, and it is certain that the Book was used by each of the families' women.

Barratt suggested that the interpretation of the book's use for the Blackburn and Bolton women was not the only function of the book.[24] A comparison between the different types of saints in the Bolton Hours and their origins suggest that Zita, represented on a full folio illumination, 40v, among forty-seven other saints, was actually quite a unique inclusion.[25] It seems likely that the Bolton Hours had a twofold function. It is entirely plausible that it was used both to show the public status of the Blackburn and Bolton families in the York community, and had a particular significance for the women of the

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20 Ibid, 227. For Female use of book of Hours see also: Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 23.

21 Barrat, 'The Bolton Hours,' 3. See also: Cullum and Goldberg, 'The Bolton Hours,' 221. For Book of Hours passing from woman to woman see: Smith, *Art, Identity, and Devotion*, 11.

22 Cullum and Goldberg, 'The Bolton Hours,' 221.

23 Ibid, 221-2.

24 Barrat, 'The Bolton Hours,' 3-44.

25 Jones and Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours,' 214-60. See also: Barrat, 'The Bolton Hours,' 3-44. Further, gold leaf was extravagantly used in the Bolton Hours which would have publically demonstrated their wealth.

two elite families. To begin with the public significance of the book, the saints represented in the Bolton Hours can be separated into two categories according to where their cults originated. There were universal cults that were widely popular around England and the rest of Europe, such as the Virgin, Anne and Bridget. The inclusion of Mary and Anne was not unusual, since the cult of the Virgin was the main theme of Books of Hours.[26] Zita could be categorized in this first group of saints, although her cult was obviously not as widespread compared the famous cult of the Virgin. Marian devotion was extremely popular, especially among the female laity.[27]

The second collection of saints had local devotions in England, restricted predominately to York, such as Archbishop Richard Scorpe (d. 1405) and William of York (d. 1154), who were both the focus of strong local cult status.[28] Sarah Jones and Felicity Riddy have suggested that these male martyrs were represented because they provided a link between the Bolton and Blackburn families to religious lineage in the York community.[29] The family would have used such a connection to demonstrate the social position they enjoyed as successful merchants and a politically important York family. As stated, John Bolton was elected mayor in 1431.[30] Before him, in 1412, around the likely date of the book's production, his merchant brother, Nicholas Blackburn, had also been elected mayor.[31] The illumination of Richard Scorpe is of particular interest. The popularity of Archbishop Scorpe's cult after his death in 1405 coincided with the same time the book was probably commissioned, between 1407-1420.[32] Richard Scorpe, a native of York, led a northern rebellion against King Henry IV in 1405. He was arrested and executed, making him the first prelate to be beheaded by the order of a lay court. Scorpe's martyrdom divided York in which side of the rebellion to support, and the families'

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26 Smith, *Art, Identity, and Devotion,* 11.

27 Marks, *Image and Devotion,* 69-120.

28 Jones and Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours,' 216-8.

29 Ibid, 232.

30 Cullum and Goldberg, 'The Bolton Hours,' 220.

31 Ibid.

32 Jones and Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours,' 222-3.

veneration of the saint in the Bolton Hours clearly indentifies their political stance.[33] The Bolton Hours repeats other symbolic connections to York politics, as for instance, the illuminations of George, Christopher and John, all of whom were patrons of the confraternity of the city's ruling class.[34]

The two distinctive origins of the saints in the Bolton Hours implies that the book was intended to show local pride and the families' tie to the city where the work was probably produced. That an obscure Italian saint like Zita was represented among both local and regional cults of political importance implies that she was included for other, and potentially more personal reasons that related to the Bolton and Blackburn women. These reasons were likely to reflect the function of the book as a medium for domestic, religious teaching, and as a devotional aid for the elite York women. Apart from the political or status value of a Book of Hours, they were also intensely personal, spiritual items. These books were read again and again, devoted to memory with anticipation. They were put in the hands of the devotee to contemplate as a concentrated and deeply personal expression between viewer/reader and image/text.

Books of Hours production in England occurred alongside the expansion of education for noblewomen.[35] As opposed to clerical Books of Hours, intended to be recited at seven different hours throughout the day, busy noblewomen of the laity usually read these items for meditation, prayer and instruction all at once in the morning.[36] Nevertheless, they were still intended to be representative of their original uses based on clerical habits and values.[37] Therefore, it is necessary to speculate on what Zita may have been intended to teach these women, and why they chose her specifically for private devotion.

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33 Sarah Jones and Felicity Riddy, *Reconciliation and Family values: How the Bolton Book of Hours Helped to Calm the Storm of Rebellion in Medieval York.* posted 1 August 2006: http://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/features/bolton/

34 Jones and Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours,' 223.

35 Arthur Dickens, *Late Monasticism and the Reformation* (London: Hambledon, 1994), 1-17.

36 Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion,* 2.

37 Ibid, 2. See also: Wieck, *Time Sanctified,* 27. See also: Duffy, *Marking the Hours,* 55-7.

A noteworthy aspect of the Bolton Hours, when compared to the other two Books of Hours illuminations in this discussion, is the representation of several female donor figures. On the first folio, before the text begins, there is a representation of the Trinity with God the Father holding the crucified Christ before him, with a dove above his shoulder. Below, a family group of a father, mother, son and daughter are depicted (fig. 27), York Minster Library, ms. Add. 2, f. 1v. It must be noted that the personal inclusion of the family into a book was not unusual. As Books of Hours became mass-produced, although only for the elite classes who could afford them, there is evidence that patrons wished to personalize them, even vandalizing them to do so.[38] The most typical example found was to include heraldry, but also donor portraits.

Inscribed scrolls beside each figures spells out the content of their prayers. Such inscriptions were frequently included in Books of Hours with a line of text beside the donors, as a way of giving the patrons' a voice within their book.[39] The text placed the owner eternally in their pious possession.[40] The lines as voice were comparable to a prayer that was also symbolic. This use of text could be considered a dialogue between the donor and God. A votive offering between a devotee and saint was made physically or verbally with an offering of a vow. .

Special interest should be paid to the text voiced by the daughter on the first folio: 'Premia qui prestas nos castas fac et honestas' (You who dispense gifts, make us chaste and worthy).[41] The statement clearly reflected the ideal conduct of the household. Because the words come from the daughter, who asks to be made 'chaste', they appear to have been more applicable to the conduct of the female family members and their domestic roles. The reputation of the family in medieval society was meant to reside on

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38 Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 33-5.

39 Gameson, *Role of Art*, 89.

40 Ibid, 89. See also: Gregirt Kratzmann, *Imagination, Books and Community in Medieval Europe: Papers of a Conference Held at the State Library of Victoria* (Melbourne: 2008), 8-10.

41 Jones and Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours,' 232.

the chastity and characters of the female members.[42] The male role was to protect these women.[43] In their analysis, Riddy and Jones cited several examples of how the Bolton family used marriage contracts to connect their sons and daughters to the York gentry.[44] Although the families were elite due to their success as merchants, they apparently had interests in establishing their family as noble.

The suffrages of saints occur at the back of the Bolton Hours. Cullum, Goldberg, and Barratt all agree that it seems most likely the daughter in the first illumination may also be the figure who appears kneeling before Richard Scorpe on folio 78, and that the same mother figure is represented on folio 40, praying before Zita, identified as 'Sitha' in another scroll to the side of the image. This scroll appears to form a kind of border for the illumination.[45] The representation of a donor figure physically kneeling in supplication before a saint is an artistic recreation of a prayer for intercession, whether to God or to a saint.[46] The donor visually establishes her relationship with Zita. Moreover, it gave the female user a sense of identity that would live after her. Other family members to whom the book passed would recite the prayers that the figure was represented with, saying them after his or her death. So another function of a Book of Hours was to act as a way to remember the deceased.[47] In effect, the prayer and the saint would act both on behalf of the dead and the living.[48]

Zita is shown dressed in a fine robe and seated on what could be a throne. In her lap she holds what are likely to be flowers, a symbol taken for her *vita,* when she transformed

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42 Cullum and Goldberg, 'The Bolton Hours,' 223. See also: Goldberg, 'What was a servant?,' 1-20.

43 Ibid, 223.

44 Jones and Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours,' 214-60.

45 Barrat, 'The Bolton Hours,' 4. See also: Jones and Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours,' 233.

46 Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion,* 57-96. Kneeling is a way for the devotee to approach the saint with humility. See also: Jones, 'Visio Divinia,' 31-56, and in particular page 37: "Donor figures could function as marks of ownership and could assert the depicted individuals personal claims to a higher social or political status or to a greater degree of religious rectitude in life and especially after death." See also: Schmidt, *Painted Piety,* 107-30.

47 Schmidt, *Painted Piety,* 123-69.

48 Smith, *Art Identity and Devotion,* 11 and 96. See also: Lane, 'The Development of the Medieval Devotional Figure,' 1-30.

bread she was distributing to the poor into sweet smelling flowers.[49] The way that she is seated as a female saint holding an object in her lap parallels Marian devotion. The Virgin is often represented seated on a throne with the Christ Child in her lap. In this illumination, Zita has a garland of flowers around her head. She appears quite youthful. However, this is an assumption based on the rather amateur hand of the artist. Her hair is shown streaming down her shoulders, which is a common way to represent young unmarried women, and would be appropriate for Zita, since she was a virgin saint.[50] There is a checkered background to the illumination providing a border and simple decoration.

The kneeling female supplicant is slightly smaller than the saint. Scale was a common means of indicating differing levels of reality, distinguishing the earthly donors and petitioners from the holy powers to whom they appealed.[51] The size of saints showed their power and, as they were often shown with a devotee, the figure kneeling demonstrated the prayer was given in the contexts of supplication and obedience.[52] The donor is shown in a typical and popular supplicant pose, with her hands clasped and kneeling with a straight back.[53]

As in the illumination of the family group, the figure represented with Zita is shown with her knees lowered to the foreground just beyond the border of the Zita illumination. Thus, the kneeling woman is placed between the reader and the saint. The saint is in another,

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49 *AASS*, 'Zita,' 500.

50 Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints*, XXIV. See also: Schmidt, *Painted Piety*. 169-205. See also Ruether: 213-60. The female patron should identify with saints such as the Virgin in books of Hours who was the exact contrasting figure of Eve.

51 Gameson, *Role of Art*, 85-6 and 166-76. See also: George Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints*, XXIV. For the scale of donor figures compared to saints refer to: Gale Soleberg, 'Altarpiece types and regional altarpieces in the work of Taddeo di Bartolo,' Victor Schmidt, 'Italian Panel Painting of the Duecento and Trecento,' *Studies in the History of Art* 61, (National Gallery of Art, Yale University Press, 2002), 218-9. See also: Lane, 'The Development of the Medieval Devotional Figure,' 94. Lane discusses the technique of diminitiative scale, where saints are represented larger than donor portraits.

52 Schmidt, *Italian Panel Painting*, 37. For more information about kneeling devotees in art see: Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 50-69. See also: Gameson, *Role of Art*, 85-6. See also: Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 80.

53 Schmidt, *Painted Piety*, 123. See also: Lane, *The Development of the Medieval Devotional Figure*, 100.

greater world, while the figure kneeling before her is closer to the viewer. The relationship between devotee and saint was personal but they were still separated by the border of the illumination and also the viewer from the image.[54] In this frame the saint exists in one level, the patron stands between the world of the book and the divine, crossing into its barrier to interact with the saint, and the reader is separate, being granted a reserved visual access to the image of the saint and the supplicant.[55]

Special attention must be paid to the gazes of both the saint and the supplicant. Zita looks down at her devotee, attentive to her prayer. The kneeling woman, however, looks back at the viewer over her shoulder. Her gaze is fascinating. Who does she look to as the viewer/reader? Does Margaret Blackburn look back at her daughters who were intended to read the book? It does appear plausible. If Margaret wished to use this devotional Book of Hours for the instruction of her daughters then she would here appear to appeal to Zita on behalf of her daughters, simultaneously tutoring them to approach Zita as a model for their own education following her example. The mother prays to Zita in the illumination as a potent and personal visual clue for her daughters to do the same and thus follow her in their religious practices. Mother teaches daughters what an ideal aspiration Zita generates.

Also, as prayers would be made on the patrons' behalf, and the fact that this book passed through the female line of the Bolton/Blackburn families, Margaret may be supplicating the saint and her own family for aid. She could be looking back at the reader, her daughters in this instance, to ask them to pray for her soul to Zita. Should the figure be interpreted as witness or participant, as teacher and mother, or as supplicant and devotee? It seems likely that all of the above interpretations were plausible, and possibly

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54 Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion.* 11. See also: Schmidt, *Italian Panel Painting*, 37.

55 Hall, 'The Tramezzo in Santa Croce,' 325-41. See also: Lars, 'Visio Divinia,' 41. The three levels of the frame also interact with the three levels of contemplation in reading a Book of Hours, as Lars has stated: "In crossing the threshold of this space, links the saints' intermediate space with the donor's topographical meditative space below. Pushed to the very form of the pictorial space, as if to be excluded from it, donor figure in this outer, allegorical framing space seem to mediate on the image itself" The donor, in essence, interacts with the patron.

overlapped. The illumination creates a series of interconnections between saint, donor, and readers. The final point to consider is that the female supplicant is shown alone, without her husband. Representations of single women, unaccompanied by men, is further evidence that this book was intended to be used especially by the female members of the household.[56]

As commissioner of the book and based on the content that appears to have intended to be used as a devotional aid with her daughters, it seems reasonable to suggest that the woman in this illumination is Margaret, represented as a donor figure praying before Zita.[57] Such an interpretation indicates that the donor(s) were concerned with female education with their future lives as wives in marital service to their husband. Zita may have been able to relate to this interpretation because of her own domestic service roles. As Cullum and Goldberg point out, it was the mother who prays before Zita for the protection of her daughters, not the daughters who identify with Zita as an ideal role model; rather, they are instructed by the mother to venerate her.[58] Zita acted as a bridge between a mother and her daughters for instruction on domestic female roles.[59] Other evidence that the book was designed for the education and instruction of the women, and specifically the daughters of the house, is the writing formula. The book includes ABC texts, from which the women could learn to read.[60] If the book was intended to teach the Bolton and Blackburn women, then Zita was used to teach ideal female conduct appropriated by the mother, and that the combination of other saints taught family history and lineage designed to promote family pride and impress the York community.[61]

The social issues of England were very different from Lucca and this could be directly applied to the cult of Zita with the respective roles she had as a saint for women and

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56 Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 14.

57 Jones and Riddy, 'The Bolton Hours,' 231-2.

58 Ibid, 233-5.

59 Ibid. See also Charity Scott-Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours in Medieval England* (Ds Brewer, 2010) 23-4.

60 Scott-Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours*, 161. See also: Smith, *Women and the Book*, 184-5.

61 Cullum and Goldberg, 'The Bolton Hours,' 233.

service. The relationship between Zita and the miniature of the donor in the Bolton Hours could be considered clearly distinct from the relationship Zita had with the women of Lucca. A view supported by the aforementioned arguments put forward by André Vauchez, Michael Goodich, and Jeremy Goldberg, which proposed that Zita was likely to have been used in Lucca by the city government to maintain control over female servants and a potentially disorderly lower class during the thirteenth century.[62] This argument was possible, but nevertheless, it appears that Zita was popular among all levels of the Lucchese, especially considering she had such wealthy backers as the Fatinelli. Zita may have been used as an ideal for the lower classes to aspire to, in effect, giving the Lucchese patricians control, but it was doubtful that this was the only function of her cult because she was widely venerated among all classes in Lucca for such a long period before her canonisation.

Without going into the social complexities of Lucca regarding the cult, which was discussed in the first chapters, the evidence of the Bolton Hours strongly suggests that the veneration in England involved different functions for the saint. It was common in England for women of the higher classes to be placed in service among other women of equal social level, such as handmaids to royalty.[63] Comparatively, a woman entering service parallels the life-cycle model of a woman entering marriage and hence, service to her husband.[64] The type of household service relevant to Zita's life may have been reinterpreted in England to apply to common domestic roles for women, such as service in marriage to their husbands and family, that was domestic life-service.[65]

Another reason why Zita may have been included was because of her relationship to the household space, at least in regard to female veneration. Webb has argued that women of medieval England required a kind of piety in the household where they could be taught

62 Ibid. 'The Bolton Hours,' 227. See also: Goldberg, 'What was a Servant?,' 1-20.

63 Cullum and Goldberg, *The Bolton Hours*, 227.

64 Ibid, 227. See also: Goldberg, 'What was a Servant?,' 1-20.

65 Goldberg, 'What was a Servant?,' 1-20.

religious ideals and perform devout practices in the space to which they were limited.[66] For the elite women, a saint such as Zita, whose life was defined by the interior space of the household, may have been a popular advocate for private household veneration in personal Books of Hours. Religious life could be lived in the household through supplication to a saint like Zita.[67]

The social standing and level of success the Bolton and Blackburn families had as merchants further demonstrates this class supported Zita. The wealthy attire seen in the illumination characterises Zita as an aristocratic maiden, rather than the poor mature-aged household servant known to the Lucchese. Zita is shown seated in a fine dress with a basket of flowers in her lap, and a gold band of flowers garlanding her hair. The elaborate style makes her appear as a model of a wealthy young female whose conduct, chastity, piety, charity, and her dedication to service were all idealized and materialized.[68]

Apart from the Bolton Hours, there is another Book of Hours that refers to Zita in verse, although it contains no accompanying illumination. It is worth mentioning here because it may potentially provide a connection to the Bolton Hours. The Syon Abbey Hours includes a Latin anthem, verse with response, and a prose prayer to God for Zita.[69] According to the translation of this work by Charity Scott-Stokes, Zita may have been included as a verse in the Syon Hours because she was invoked in places where there were dangers of water and traveling over bridges.[70] The connection of the cult of Zita to water may have been suited to Syon Abbey, for some of whose members the journey to and from Vadstenain Sweden, via the North Sea and Lynn in Norfolk, was dangerous.[71]

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66 Webb, 'Women and Home,' 162.

67 Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours*, 161.

68 Cullum and Goldberg, 'The Bolton Hours,' 227. See also: Hahn, 'Speaking in Tongues,' 162: "Types help readers to understand the saints because each saints life develops according to expectations of his or her class."

69 Ms. 2, 296-297r, St. Zita: *Ave Sancta Famula Citha Jhesu Christi*, (Syon Abbey Hours, Syon Abbey), Latin anthem, verse and response, prose prayer to God, *The Library of Medieval Women: Women's Books of Hours in Medieval England: Selected Texts*, trans. Charity Scott-Stokes, (Cambridge: Brewer, 2006), 121-2: n. 17.6.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

There could be a connection made between the Syon Abbey Hours and the Bolton Hours, based on the two books relationship with another new saint: Bridget of Sweden (d. 1373). The compiler of the Syon Abbey Hours also had an interest in the cult of Zita.[72] Another saint included in the Bolton Hours was Bridget. Thus, both the Syon Abbey Hours and the Bolton Hours include dedications to both Zita and Bridget. Although the Bolton Hours was clearly connected to merchants who were patrons, and the scribe was likely Dominican, there may have been some association with the Boltons or Blackburns with Bridget's cult. The connection of the two female saints in these particular Books may suggest that the original owner of the Bolton Hours had visited Syon Abbey and had a special interest in both Zita's and Bridget's cults.[73] Although York was a considerable journey from Syon Abbey at Isleworth the route between the two locations was popular for pilgrims. According to the *Book of Margery Kemp,* this famous merchant female pilgrim undertook the journey to obtain a pardon.[74]

The second illumination of Zita is found is in the John Lacy Book of Hours, dated to 1420 (fig. 28), St. Johns College Oxford, ms. 94, fol. 35.[75] This Book of Hours was both copied and illuminated by John Lacy who was a Dominican. John Lacy was originally from the Dominican convent at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in Staffordshire.[76] In 1397, he was named sub deacon and in 1398, priest. John Friedman, who has examined several books written by Lacy, comments that it is not known when Lacy joined the Newcastle Dominicans. However, surviving evidence indicates that he lived as an anchorite at the convent from around 1407 until 1437.[77] He wrote and owned several books in Newcastle, which show his status as an illuminator/writer. Some accomplishments include a

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72 St. Paul's Eccl. Soc. Trans. 3, 245: "specially invoked in places where there were perils from water or from dangerous bridges from one which she was blow into the river and marvelously recovered."

73 Scott-Stokes, *Women's Books of Hours,* 121-2.

74 Meech and Allen, *The Book of Margery Kemp* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 245: n. 3.

75 Ms. 94. *The John Lacy Hours,* St. Johns College, Oxford: includes date on folio 16.

76 John Friedman, *Northern English Books, Owners, and Makers in the Late Middle Ages* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 51-2.

77 Ibid.

'whycliffite' English New Testament given to the church of St. John in Newcastle, *(Bodleian Ms. Rawlinson c. 258)*. He also copied Deguileville's *Pelerinage de l'ame*.[78]

Ralph Hanna's analysis of the Lacy Hours establishes that the dialect used by Lacy in the text was likely to have been northern. This view is supported by Jonathan Alexander and Elizbieta Temple's discussion of Lacy's work as a scribe.[79] There is plenty of evidence that indicates Lacy intended this Book of Hours to be for his own devotional use. He signed the work in the lower border of folio 17: 'Lacy scipsit et illuminat'. There are two entries in the calendar under March 8th on folio 11, in honour of his parents and it includes whom he wished the book to pass to on his death.[80] The date of 1420 appears on folio 16v. Lacy's coat of arms are represented on folio 101v, and the final folio of the book shows John Lacy in his cell in a pose of supplication to God, as well as a depiction of his arms.

The text of the Lacy Hours includes miscellaneous devotions. It was written in both Latin and English on parchment that was average in size, but allowed a great amount of detail, measuring 265 x 275. In 1434, Lacy bequeathed the item to the chaplain Roger Stonysdale for the use at St. Nicholas Church, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.[81] The suffrages of saints are located at the front in thirty-one paired illuminations. The location of the suffrages in the beginning section was actually quite unusual for medieval Books of Hours, or for meditation books in general. Suffrages usually occurred at the back, with a calendar in the first section.[82] Here, two saints are paired together per folio with a few lines of text beneath the individual figures. The saints, although rather simplified and some partially defaced, remain in reasonably good condition. There are multiple artistic

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78 Friedman, *Northern English Books,* 51-2.

79 Ralph Hanna, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Medieval Manuscripts of St. John's College, Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 129. See also: Alexander and Elizbieta Temple, *Illuminated Manuscripts in Oxford College Library* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 42. n. 418.

80 Hanna, *Catalogue of St. Johns Oxford,* 129.

81 This manuscript was then given to the priest Henray Smile (d. 1617).

82 Smith, *Art, Identity, and Devotion,* 119-27.

skills shown in Lacy's completion of the book. Lacy was a proficient scribe and a competent, if not professionally trained, illuminator.

The following section after the saints is a calendar. 'Sithe' is named in April, corresponding to her feast day on the 27th. The book was originally produced as a series of six booklets.[83] After the calendar, there are prayers and Middle English instructional lists. The textual presentation below folio 144 implies that the volume may never have been formally completed.[84] Gold leaf, red, green and blue were used consistently. The extremely large amount of gold applied to the illuminations is worth noting. Lacy even used gold as font colour for text, showing his skill as an scribe.[85] Apart from the suffrages of saints, the Lacy Hours contain prayers for Augustine, Bede, Aquinas, and parts of the Psalter.[86]

Each saint is similarly represented in the illuminations of the sufferages. All of them are represented standing barefoot on a small hill of grass, with a halo that extends slightly above the surrounding frame. This may have been an attempt by Lacy to make the subjects have a sense of three dimensionality, and thus a deeper relationship between himself and the figures of the saints. The saints hold their traditional patronal attributes for identification. Moreover, a tiled background in different, often bright gold and red or green colours, creates a decorative effect.

Zita, identified as 'Sithe' below her illumination, shares a folio alongside the martyr Winifred. She wears a gold band around her hair, a gold coloured book hangs from her belt and she holds a bag for collecting the household goods, a symbol of her life as a domestic servant. The colour remains remarkably intact. She stands on a grass hill, indicated by the small decoration in light and dark green. She wears a blue dress and

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83 Hanna, *St. John's College*, 128.
84 Ibid.
85 Friedman, *Northern English Books*, 53.
86 Ibid.

holds what could be breadcrumbs or flowers in her apron, both items that were relevant to her *vita*. The mediocre quality of the depiction means that the keys and rosary to her right side are barely identifiable. The text below Zita is written in black and red. The text also decorates the borders below the figure with floral motifs. In addition, the borders contain mask medallion motifs, another characteristic of the medieval English northern style.[87]

Although it is difficult to ascertain the glance of the figure, due again, to the lack of quality in the artist's skill in figural representations, Zita's left hand does appear to point across the page to Winifred, who holds out a blue book in her right hand towards Zita. Lacy was clearly not a master artist.[88] However, this Book of Hours does allow for a clear interpretation of the traditional symbols with which Zita was usually represented. As in the Bolton Hours and other media images, she is shown in a colourful rich robe with her hair down, indicating her virgin state, and a garland of flowers covers her head.[89] Next to Zita, Winifred is shown with a red line on her neck and holds a sword indicative of her martyrdom by decapitation. In addition, she holds a book for her piety. Apart from the name of the saints given below each image in text, the attention applied to each figure allows for a clear identification.

The iconography is common for Zita's identification. However, Zita's attire is not comparable to a lower class servant, which would have been similar to her veneration in Lucca. The gold decoration and elaborate dress style classifies her, similar to the previous Bolton Hours illumination, among the aristocracy. It could be argued that this decorative style, typical in England for the representation of saints, was intended to reflect her holy status, and specifically, that she was a virgin saint.[90] In consideration of who the intended audience was, namely Lacy, it is perhaps more likely that this depiction was meant to embody a young pretty maiden who would have appealed to a devout viewer, who was here a Dominican priest.

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87 Ibid.

88 Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*, 218.

89 Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints*, XXVI.

90 Ibid.

In comparison to the previous Bolton Hours, which clearly addressed its female users and the public profile of an aristocratic York family, the Lacy Hours seems to have been more concerned with popular cults and pious meditation rather than social status. Considering the owner was also the scribe and artist, Lacy clearly wished to use the book personally for his own devotional needs before he gave it as a bequest, which must have been heart-felt because of his reputation as a Dominican and scribe.[91] The content suggests that he was well-aware of the current religious topics in England. This view supports the enthusiasm that quickly developed around Zita's cult.

Other saints represented include Francis, Benedict, Oswald and Cuthbert. Oswald and Cuthbert in particular, give further evidence that Lacy was connected to northern England.[92] Female saints in the Lacy Hours, all of whom were popular and were also shown in the rood screens discussed previously, include Barbara, Apollonia, Agnes, and Agatha. Several of the female saints were martyrs including Winifred with whom Zita is paired, which establishes that her virgin status was again unique, let alone the patron of servitude and lost items such as keys. Thus, the inclusion of Zita as a saint among female martyrs actually occurred quite commonly, as was seen with the previous discussion of rood screens.[93]

Another aspect, which has yet to be discussed, apart from the brief mention of donor script, is the relevance of where the text is written in relation to the image, and how this would have been read and interpreted by the viewer. The purpose of the illumination was to visualize what was narrated by the text that the saints were joined with, so that the illumination and text both enhanced and complimented each other.[94] In the Lacy Hours, Zita was placed above Latin text. Therefore, it would be important to note the correlation

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91 Friedman, *Northern English Books,* 21-3.

92 Ibid, 53.

93 Refer to 'Chapter Four: Rood Screens: A stage set for intercessors,'.

94 Wieck, *Painted Prayers,* 43. See also Vauchez and Cannon, 'Margherita of Cortona and the Lorenzetti,' 53.

between the reader, Lacy, who would have first seen the image of the saint before reading the words that were about her.[95] She was identified visually by her iconography before her written name, which acted as a confirmation of her identity. The script below her is a short Latin adaption of her life discussing her patron abilities such as finding lost items.[96]

Apart from the above, general, discussions about the way that Zita is represented and the stylistic structure of the Lacy Hours, there is not much novelty to the work. That this Book of Hours remains in outstandingly good condition, the illuminations still fresh and only a few of pages of the book destroyed or vandalized makes it an important example. Several other saints, such as those of the first few folios, have actually been cut out, which was likely to have occurred much later on, perhaps even in the eighteenth or nineteenth century based on the technique of the incisions.[97] However, the book still followed a very normal pattern for medieval Books of Hours produced by religious figures.[98] The significance of Zita's inclusion, then, relates to how the Dominican scribe was well-aware of her cult to include her in his book, and how he intended to use her subject for his own devotional needs. Lacy's choice to represent Zita establishes that her cult was both popular and, perhaps more importantly, had the support of a member of a mendicant order, who was apparently not alone in his veneration. The Bolton Hours was also likely to have been written and illuminated by a Dominican. Thus, it would appear that this religious order were advocates for the cult in England.[99]

The third illumination of Zita is in the Hastings Book of Hours, (fig. 29), London British Library, ms. 54782. It has been dated to the late-fifteenth century, possibly written between 1475 and 1483.[100] The initial date of 1475 can be assumed based on the style, which identifies the book as the work of a professional Flemish artist from either Ghent

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95 Ibid, 20.

96 Hanna, *The Lacy Hours*, 129.

97 A hypothesis posed by the author from an examination of the Lacy Hours in England, 2011.

98 Friedman, *Northern English Books*, 51.

99 See: Christopher de Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1997), 1-27.

100 Janet Blackhouse, *The Hastings Hours* (San Francisco: Pomegranate, 1996), 28-31.

or Bruge.[101] The terminus ante quem of 1483 is provided by the execution of the owner, Lord William Hastings, by order of King Richard III. From this evidence, it can be established that the book was made at the height of Hastings' career, in the years immediately before his death.[102]

The Hastings Hours was commissioned either by or for Lord William Hastings.[103] Whether or not he was the actually commissioner or the book was intended to be given to him as a gift, the content demonstrates that the item quickly came to his possession after it was produced. This argument is based largely on the repetition of his heraldry throughout the book. The first folio of the book shows a ship flying Hastings' colours. These reappear on four separate pages and in three illuminations which show William Hastings' status and membership of the Order of the Garter.[104] Other personal representations that relate to Hastings's ownership are representations of Paul, patron of London, and Leonard, who was his father's name saint.[105] The representations of the saints William and David of Wales may have also been of particular interest to him.[106]

Lord William Hastings was an English nobleman and native of York. He was a close friend of King Edward IV, as shown by the fact that he was assigned a burial place in the same site as the king, in George's Chapel at Windsor.[107] Due to his friendship with Edward IV, Hastings enjoyed a politically powerful position in England where he was made a knight of the Order of the Garter (the premier order of chivalry), Lord

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101 Ibid.

102 Friedman, *Northern English Books*, 55. On 8th February 1969, Dyson Perrins' widow bequeathed it to the British Museum's Department of Manuscripts. Blackhouse, *The Hastings Hours*, 28-31.

103 Turner, *The Hastings Hours* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983), 66b and 67.

104 Blackhouse, *The Hastings Hours*, 43. See also: Smyers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 41. Smyers and Van der Stock note the heraldic colours of Lord William Hastings explicit in such illuminations as the one found on folio 47, which also displays Hastings' membership to the prominent Order of the Garter. For heraldry used in husbands and wives Books of Hours see also: Smith, *Art, Identity, and Devotion*, 11, 26, 81-3.

105 Blackhouse, *The Hastings Hours*, 46-7. See in particular: 15. Blackhouse suggests that the depiction of Jerome may also have been of particular interest for Hastings.

106 Ibid, 46-7.

107 Ibid, 51.

Chamberlain of the royal household, master of the royal mints, receiver of the general of the Duchy of Cornwall, and Chamberlain of North Wales.[108] In 1446-7, he arranged for the marriage of Margaret of York and Charles the Bold.[109] His sister, Elizabeth, was lady-in-waiting to the Queen. Her husband, Sir John Donne, was given several important missions to the Burgundian Netherlands under the orders of the Edward IV.[110] Such royal connections clearly establish not only William Hastings position, but also the immense wealth of his household.[111] Hastings enjoyed showing his wealth and power by building works and patronage of the arts.[112]

Not surprisingly in view of Hastings' wealth and status, the artistic level of the Hastings Hours far out-weighs the previous two manuscripts. And, while both the earlier books were the work of provincial and perhaps relatively unskilled artists, this book was product of a sophisticated professional workshop from one of the major international centres of late medieval book production. As Janet Backhouse established, the Hastings Hours is the work of a Flemish illuminator from the Ghent-Bruges area.[113] Maurtis Smeyers and Jan Van der Stock have recognised the illuminator as the Maximillian Master, best known for his contributions to the celebrated Mayer van den Bergh Breviary (Antwerp, Museum Mayer van den Berg, inv. 946, fig. 30 [Ghent-Bruges] fifteenth century). The same master is also thought to be the illuminator of another Book of Hours also commissioned by William Hastings in 1480: (Madrid, Museo Lazaro-Galdiano, Ms. 15503).[114] A comparison between the illuminations of the Hastings Hours and the Van der Berg Breviary (figs. 29-30), confirms the plausibility of this attribution, particularly in the extensive floral style of the border.

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108 Smeyers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 41.

109 Ibid, 41-2.

110 Ibid, 41.

111 Ibid, 34.

112 Ibid, 51.

113 Blackhouse, *The Hastings Hours*, 4. See also: Smeyers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 3. See also: Wieck, *Painted Prayers*, 9-24.

114 Smeyers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 41.

The masterful hand of the Hastings Hours indicates that the Master illuminator was highly accomplished. His distinct style appears elsewhere, such as the Flemish and English ducal court, which continues to reinforce the discrimination evident in Hastings' choice.[115] The decision to represent Zita suggests how widespread her cult was, especially within the nobility of England. The Ghent-Bruges area was arguably the most popular and advanced school for the production of Books of Hours and illuminations during the second half of the fifteenth century.[116] The area supported international merchants, and, because of the wool-trade, England had firm ties to the area.[117] The high demand suggests that Hastings was not the sole owner of a Book of Hours from the Flemish area. Both Sir George Talbot and the Count of Shrewsbury owned elaborate Books of Hours produced with similar skill.[118] Hastings had several connections to the Netherlands. Apart from the marital connection of his sister to a court member who traveled often to the area, he was the leader of the Burgundian party at the English court.[119] This role would have placed him in the Flemish world of art and culture.[120]

The Hastings Hours opens with a calendar (folios 1-12b) of saints from England, the Netherlands and France. The following section (folios 13-17b) consists of gospel extracts. The section of the Hastings Hours reserved for the suffrages of saints is located towards the back (folios 19-72). The original section included individual decorations of 29 saints, of which seven are missing.[121] The pages are divided into sixteen lines and written in semi-cursive of red, blue, gold, and white.[122] One of the most interesting novelties of the Hastings Hours is the use of floral patterns in the borders of the pages. According to Blackhouse, independent flower paintings of this level of detail were a

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115 Ibid, 23.

116 Blackhouse, *The Hastings Hours*, 4. See also: Smeyers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 3-13: "when Bruge workshops were the forefront of production".

117 Backhouse, *The Hastings Hours*, 4-5. See also: Wieck, *Painted Prayers*, 24.

118 Symers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 47-57. See in particular, 47: "A great many wealth citizens also commissioned manuscripts, with Books of Hours enjoying almost unimaginable success as both aids to prayers and status symbols."

119 Symers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 41.

120 Ibid.

121 Wieck, *Painted Prayers*, 8. See also: Blackhouse, *The Hastings Hours*, 15.

122 *Blackhouse, The Hastings Hours*, 14.

development of the last two or three years of the 1470s. The Hastings Hours may in fact be one of the first books of the medieval period to be filled with floral patterns to such an elaborate extent.[123] This is another demonstration of the level of the master illuminator/artist, and the amount of detail he applied to the illumination.

The pages of the Hastings Hours portray both the secular and sacred subjects. The themes combine allegorical, romantic and battle depictions. Zita is represented on folio 66, alongside a second illumination, 67b, which includes a short biography of the new saint. A recent facsimile, edited by Derek Turner provides an excellent indication of the original layout (fig. 29).[124] Zita, named as 'Sitha', is shown in a typical scene for a patron saint of an Italian city-state, with a city view of Lucca in the upper left background. Civic patrons of foreign cities were often depicted in a landscape with a town in the background that was under their protection. This was also a common way to depict patron saints by the Ghent-Bruge masters.[125]

Similar to the two previous illuminations, in the Hastings Hours Zita is a young maiden dressed in a fine gold dress. She is haloed, her hair delicately tied with a gold ribbon. The illumination contains a border, which appears as the shape of a window, both incorporating and isolating the image for a specific effect.[126] Window frames were symbolic of the saints' role as an intercessor who could act on behalf of her followers between this world and the next.[127] Through the window border of this illumination, the viewer was being given access to the divine.[128] It also gives an effect of depth for the viewer. The border was laden with flora coloured in red, blue and gold. Flora was a

123 Ibid, 19. See also Smyers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 1-13.

124 Turner, *The Hastings Hours*, 66b and 67.

125 Smyers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 18. See also: Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints*, XXIV.

126 Wieck, *Painted Prayers*, 99.

127 Gameson, *Role of Art*, 105-7. See also: Smeyers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 18. The use of the border like window also enhanced the depth of the picture.

128 Gameson, *Role of Art*, 135-49.

distinct representation to this period of the Ghent-Bruges Flemish illuminations.[129] Zita carries a purse for collecting the household goods that is standard identification from her *vita*.[130]

Zita also carries a book in her hand for her piety which is a significant symbol especially in this media. Zita appears to be glancing down at the book in meditation. The book may have been intended to reflect the symbolic importance of the Book of Hours. The book in Zita's hand is essentially a book within a book. It could be speculated that her meditation looking down at the book is an insistence for the reader to similarly mediate on the words on the following folio. Just as the reader looks devoutly at the images and the texts in the Hastings Hours, so Zita is contemplating the written works of God. The servant saint has become a model of pious reading for the viewer. The physical connection between reader and saint may have made Zita not only more comparable to the reader, but also more approachable as an intercessor.

However, it should be noted that a book is an extremely common attribute for all classes of saints in late medieval art. It must be remembered that this was only a symbol of her piety as common to other saints shown with books. As evidenced from her *vita*, Zita was not, in fact, literate. She neither wrote nor could read scripture. The book is a way for the viewer to identify her piety and understand her holiness as institutionalized among other female saints. The relevance of the book here, rather than in other media, is the connection with reading and contemplating a Book of Hours' text. It should also be noted that the book Zita holds seems to have an expensive binding of metal that was typical for Ghent-Bruge book illuminations, which may have been a stylistic decision of the artist to indicate where the book was produced.[131]

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129 Smeyers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 28. Between 1475 and 1480, the particular border style found in the Hastings Hours appeared in Flemish illuminations. The characteristics of the style include shadows, flowers, and miniature figures which added depth.

130 *AASS*, 'Zita', 507.

131 Blackhouse, *The Hastings Hours*, 14.

The illumination on the opposite folio depicts a joust attended by noblewomen (fig. 29). The women seem to be both watching the joust and discussing the text. They wear fashionable headdresses, another display of the artist's skill and knowledge of current fashions. The knights in the joust could be the two women's champions.[132] Their silent dialogue parallels the use of the book for entertainment and discussion. The horse wearing trappings of golden teardrops has an interesting inscription that reads, 'Basir', or what as been interpreted to mean 'Kiss', a script that supports the romantic and chivalric themes used throughout the Hastings Hours.[133] Gameson suggested that Books of Hours *often included a fusion of spiritual and physical combat which was intended to parallel* the battle between good and evil with good eventually conquering.[134] This theory is supported by Sarah Crew in her discussion of the way that saints were represented with subjective themes that told of the same universal battle, although her discussion is more relevant to the depictions of saints in stained glass.[135]

Opposite the noblewomen sits another figure, a small fool dressed in a what appears to be a white animal costume with ears, no doubt intended to be allegorical and entertaining. This small miniature also looks towards the text. The illumination of Zita in the Hastings Hours supports that she appealed to the nobility because of the status of Lord William Hastings. Her appearance alongside romantic and chivalric imagery establishes that her model as a female servant saint must have appealed to the higher classes, especially considering the exalted status of Hastings. Perhaps it was the ideal of Zita as a female virgin which may have attracted the nobility and their idealising, but strict, notions of female conduct.[136] Husbands imposed a particular kind of female behaviour on elite women. Books were used as a code of this behaviour that taught piety, purity, and female domestic service. Clearly these are aspects that would relate to Zita's model life.

132 Ibid, 22-3.

133 Turner, *The Hastings Hours*, 139.

134 Weick, *Painted Prayers*, 18-9. See also: Smith, *Art, Identity, Devotion*, 166-7. For popular chivalric themes in Book of Hours see: Kratzmann, *Imagination, Books, and Community*, 45.

135 Sarah Crew, *Stained Glass in England 1180-1540* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1987), 52-62.

136 Sandra Penketh, 'Women and their Books of Hours,' in *Woman and the Books: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane Taylor, (London: British Library, 1997), 266-81.

In all three Books of Hours, Zita is represented as an idealized young and beautiful female saint who reflected the perfections of chastity, piety, and female service. An analysis of these illuminations demonstrates how Zita was significant to both genders in medieval England. Men and women considered Zita an educational model and patron intercessor for women who served their husbands in marriage and were expected to represent chaste family values. For men who controlled women, and women who, at least were expected, to obey, Zita acted as a model how they should behave in the domestic setting.[137] Based on the analysis of these three surviving illuminations, Zita's popularity could be considered widespread among the aristocracy and successful wealthy merchants. Due to the likely dates of the books production, two produced within the same decade in the early-fifteenth century, and the third around the mid to late-fifteenth century, it appears that Zita's cult was well-established within the higher circles of society well before the beginning of the sixteenth century.

A last significant aspect demonstrated by the analysis of Books of Hours, is the different level of skill applied the three illuminations. The Bolton Hours is a provincial and rather amateur production from a scribe in York where Zita was significant to several elite women. The Lacy Hours was created by a Dominican who was a scribe, illuminator and artist for his own devotional purposes. The Hastings Hours was an epitome of splendor from the Ghent-Bruge Maximillian artist for a high Lord close to the king. These three distinct levels applied to the Books of Hours show just how deeply integrated the cult of Zita had become during the fifteenth century into high class levels, genders, and the devotional life of the period. The clear historical information regarding the commissioners and patrons of these books, who were both political and religious figures who chose to represent Zita as a subject in an item of personal property with the intent of individual veneration establishes a well-defined, personal, relationship between specific devotees and Zita. Most notably, she could be venerated and appreciated by a wide range of followers, from women of the merchant class to a Dominican priest and a powerful

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137 Smith and Taylor, *Women and the Book*, 70-82.

aristocrat. Such a diversity of worshippers testifies to the ways in which the cult of the poor servant woman could be adapted and transformed to suit a variety of social and devotional needs.

Chapter Six

Stained Glass: Luminous protector

All images created for the purposes of veneration had some emotional impact on a devout viewer. Stained glass, however, was quite unique. Other than the practical use of windows to protect the church structure from natural elements, the combination of colour and light displayed a symbolic relationship between heaven and earth. The images of saints were depicted in the glass pane between these two worlds, where they were able to intercede on behalf of followers who viewed and venerated from below.[1] Importantly, while representations of Zita in other media were restricted to particular areas in England, stained glass windows of her are visible throughout the entire country. They can be found in the east as far as Norfolk, in the west as far as Sussex, and in the south as far as London.[2] An analysis of the different locations allows one to map the extent of the cult's spread throughout the country. Additionally, because these windows can be dated across the entire period from the early-fifteenth until the mid-sixteenth centuries, from the arrival of the cult through its greatest popularity to eventual end due to the Reformation, these works provide the clearest chronological examination of the transformations which Zita's cult underwent in England.

Precisely because of their larger numbers and wide geographical dispersal, not all stained glass representations of the saint will be analysed here. Instead, for the purposes of this discussion, five examples can generalize the entire corpus. All of these examples are found in parish churches. In chronological order, the windows are located in the churches of East Markham (1400, figs. 31-33), Mells (1400-50, figs. 34-35), Emneth (1450-75, figs. 36-37), Langport (1475-1550, figs. 38-39), and York, (1501-15, fig. 40). A distinctive aspect of these windows is their visual experience and it is important to

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1 Mecklin, *The Passing of a Saint,* 31-46. See also: Gameson, *Role of Art,* 47. See also Michael Laclotte, 'Observation on Some Polyptyches and Altaroli by Ambrogio Lorenzetti,' in Schmidt, *Italian Panel Painting,* 180-205. Laclotte discusses the function of the 'window' as a pane between two worlds of the saint. However, his discussion regards more specifically rood screens, rather than stained glass windows with saints as subjects.

2 Refer to: 'Chapter Four: Rood Screens: A stage set for intercessors'.

consider this when discussing each of the images below in order to attempt to recreate the emotional impact they had on a devout medieval viewer.

No matter where one's eyes wander in a medieval church, they find ornament that aided devotion and spread the word of God. What defines each media is the way that they were viewed and when. There are two general functions for a window in a parish. Firstly, the window is part of the architectural construction that allows light to pass into the building while also protecting the interior from natural elements such as wind and rain.[3] In the end, a window's architectural function is structural. However, because the location of these windows is in a religious building where ritual and votive offerings are performed, its secondary decorative function is highly symbolic. A successful design for a window has luminosity and colour with appropriate subject matter for votive needs.[4] Various styles and techniques were applied to the glass in order to display colourfully depicted subjects like saints in what can be defined as a compelling dance of light that would have contained deeper connotations for a devout person, especially during this period of English history.

It can be suggested that the image reflected Zita's ability to travel between this world and the next.[5] Just as the inside visitor would have looked up to Zita as a patron who could protect them from natural elements outside, simultaneously, the image served as a way for the light and spirit of God to shine down through her.[6] As the combination of colours changed throughout the day depending on the location of the sun, the saint shifted to different hues and brightness, streaming a ray of light into the stone structure. This was then, as it is now, extraordinarily beautiful. The combination of colour shinning through the glass is an extraordinary visual expression where emotionality is enhanced to compel attention, give visual pleasure and stimulate prayer and meditation.

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3 Sarah Crew and Sarah Brown, *Stained Glass in England: 1180-1540* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office 1987), 33.

4 Christopher Woodforde, *English Stained and Painted Glass* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), 32.

5 Gameson, *The Role of Art*, 47.

6 Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 59-69. See also: Mecklin, *The Passing of a Saint*, 31-46.

The architectural frame of the window supports the symbolic value of the saint's holiness and abilities. The frame of the window defines a limit, but a devotee could look through the glass to another world where the saint stood between the church and nature or heaven.[7] Represented in this pane that separated the area of the church between the people from the holy place of sacrament at the altar, the saint mediated between this world and the next, the house of God and the house of the world, the interior from the exterior.[8] The outside medieval town was full of fear, perils, disease, and inevitable death. As demonstrated from previous discussions, a church's decorative program, often featuring groups of particularly popular and trusted saints, were able to address these concerns. The church was a safe haven guarded by saints in windows located on the enclosing walls. Both the scale and the height of the window was often manipulated by the artists to show the importance of the figure over the viewer so that the individual would look physically up to the saint in a way that defined universal and heavenly hierarchy.[9] The saint was higher and closer to God. The viewpoint of the window forced the viewer to worship the saints in glass, and God above the saint, with reverence, awe and humility.[10]

The value of light in the medieval period for the veneration of saints has not been discussed to this point, but it was a significant aspect of worship and should be noted. Although the type of light which passes through a pane of glass is from the sun, heightened by the colours used, there were other functions of light that can be connected to religious practices, and principally for the adoration of saints. The lights of candles, for instance, were often used as votive offerings. One example for an offering to Zita is the mother who credited Zita with bringing her son back to life after he had drowned in a

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7 Gameson, *Role of Art*, 47. See also: Schmidt, *Italian Panel Painting*, 30. Although Schmidt discusses the role of the saint on dividers of screens, the same analysis can be compare to the function of the saint in the glass plane.

8 Refer to: 'Chapter Four: Rood Screens: A stage set for intercessors,'.

9 Gameson, *Role of Art*, 150-91.

10 Gameson, *Role of Art*, 150-91. For worship with humility from a lower viewpoint see also: Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 59-61. For a related discussion on worship with humility by looking up at rood screens see: Pugin, *A Treatise on Chancels*, 8.

river. The mother gave a wax mould worth the same weight of her boy as an *ex-voto*.[11] Offerings of wax for candles can also be found for the cult in England.[12] Typically, candles were placed in front of the shrines of saints at the time a vow or an *ex-voto* was given. Vauchez proposed that the candle's flame disappearing and wax burning involved a symbolic transference that was, and still is, considered holy.[13] The light which surrounded the shrine made the popularity of the cult visually evident to those who attended the church. Whether the clergy may have lit the flame of the candles or followers who came to see the image, it publically demonstrated that that community venerated her in that parish, whether to locals, pilgrims, or visitors.[14] The light involved in viewing a stained glass window made the saint appear alive with luminosity. It could be argued that the saint in stained glass light is comparable to other methods of devotion through the ideas surrounding holy light.

The majority of the images which have been discussed to this point represented Zita in three general ways. The first was as a poor Lucchese servant in mature years, the second was as a youthful and richly clad maiden, and the third was as a common female helper saint who was normalized among other female cults. These different ways of representing the saint depended on the relationship between the intended English viewer or viewers of the community and Zita, but also the time that they were produced.[15] Zita was first represented in England as comparable to her original cult in Lucca. The representation developed so that she became a young maiden whose female sanctity was idealized and considered common among other similar female cults, and was also applicable to the elite classes, who need not be ashamed in supplicating a servant.[16] The later development of

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11 Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 160-2.

12 One such example was found by Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 190: In 1402 Sir Thomas de Boynton made bequests to the light of St. Sitha at Acklam in North Yorkshire and Elizabeth Wynch gave a light to Sitha worth 13s. 4d.

13 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 444-70. Wax offerings were often given as weight of the body and could also have been silver. It was a financial commitment. See also Cannon and Vauchez, *Margarita of Cortona and the Lorenzetti*, 119-30. For lights being central to votive offerings of saints see also: Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 160. See also: Adams, *Visions in Late Medieval Spirituality*, 43.

14 Wilson, 'Cults of Saints', 241.

15 Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country*, 76.

16 Refer to: 'Chapter Seven: Alabaster Statues: A servant supplicated by a king'. This hypothesis is further supported in the following chapter regarding the alabaster statue of Zita located in Henry VII chapel as Westminster Abbey.

the cult is evidenced in the stained glass to be discussed below. For this class, Zita acted as an ideal model. Significantly, the windows show a combination of these three different ways to represent the saint, which demonstrate the different levels the cult developed according to when they were produced. Placed in chronological order, this is the only media where the full transformation of the cult according to the different stages the images were commissioned becomes visible. Therefore, these examples allow for the clearest examination of the uses Zita had to the community who venerated her throughout all of England and who modified the cult from Lucca in order for her patron abilities to be suitable to their own cultural and religious needs.

In the earliest stained glass images Zita is shown in ways that refer to her life in Lucca as a mature female servant, as indicated by her representation with her head covered with a white cloth, wearing a humble or poor style of dress, and an apron symbolizing her servant status.[17] In one of the early windows, that at East Markham (1400, figs. 31-33) Zita is depicted in a way which was more comparable to the initial functions of her cult that arrived from Lucca.[18] Because of the small size of the window it is difficult to analyse the figure in detail. Zita's traditional iconography is still evident, such as the household keys in her left hand, the book in her right, a white cloth over her head, and a poor style of dress including a simple white apron around her waist.

The East Markham window is the earliest surviving stained glass representation of Zita to be studied in this thesis. Because this glass window can be reasonably dated to the early-fifteenth century, it seems to have been commissioned when veneration of Zita was first circulating in England.[19] The small glass section of this arch is rather fragmented. Out of the four sections in the top of the window, only the two closest to the centre remain intact, representing Zita standing next to another female subject. The other figure is probably the Virgin who is shown crowned, her hands clasped in prayer and her golden

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17 Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha', 88. See also: Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints*, XVIV.

18 Refer to: 'Chapter One: *Ancilla dei*: From servant to saint in thirteenth century Lucca,'.

19 Refer to: 'Chapter Two: Transmigration of a cult: Zita in England,'.

hair streaming down over her shoulders. Zita's figure has no identifying inscription. Instead, she is known by her attributes of keys, book, and her white servant's apron. Traces of colour remain, such as the yellow in Zita's dress beneath the white apron and in the halo around her head. The thoroughly repaired glass pieces around the saint clearly show that there were replacements and additions in the window composition to maintain the overall shape. The traces of blue glass, for instance, were clearly added later in order to preserve the image.

The addition of the blue glass to the earlier image is important to discuss because it may have influenced the surviving examples of Zita in this media. When this window was commissioned in the fifteenth century it was during a wave of rebuilding in parishes of England, especially in areas where the wool trade flourished such as East Markham, in Norfolk.[20] Old glass was taken out to make room for new glass, allowing for the emergence of new cults. This argument would support the view that in the fifteenth century Zita was considered a popular new saint for veneration in England.[21]

As there is no defining context to view the window, they were an individual choice. The windows with representations of the new saint can be found in different locations throughout the church. In the majority, Zita is located in the very small left section of the top arch in side-aisles. She can also be seen in chapel areas, such those dedicated to Our Lady, as at East Markham. It seems that the relatively peripheral location, at the very top of windows in the side-aisle, was perhaps considered most appropriate for a newly established or foreign cult, such as that of Zita, rather than a prominent main chancel window, where it was more fitting to depict Christ and/or the Virgin, the damned suffering, or the Last Judgment. Very occasionally, as will be discussed later in the case of the Somerset window, Zita's representation is located in the main chancel window

20 Coe, *Stained Glass in England.* 11. For other religious art which was seen to arise at this time in parish church see: Duffy, 'The Parish, Piety, and Patronage', 132-62.

21 Stephen Wilson, 'Cults of Saints in Churches of Central Paris', in Wilson, *The Saints and Their Cults*, 233-60.

above the high altar, which is a much more prominent setting. It is possible that such a placement indicates particularly strong veneration of her cult in this area.

In a stained glass from the church of St Andrew in Mells, Somerset, Zita is once again shown in her guise as a poor servant (1400-50, figs. 34-35). The window is located in a side-aisle of the church and can be reasonably dated to the first half of the fifteenth century, on the basis of its' style.[22] St. Andrew's is an impressive parish. The Hornder and their descendants, the Asquiths, who have graves in the churchyard, held the manor at Mells since Henry VIII. Perhaps these families were prominent patrons for the interior decoration, but their involvement is only speculative.[23]

As in the East Markham window, at Mells Zita is shown dressed in the clothes of a servant, with a white apron around her waist and the set of household keys dangling from her right hand. Unlike the previous example, however, here her head is bared to reveal her long blond hair, a presentation that would appear to represent her status as a virgin or maiden.[24] In her left hand she holds three brown and white objects that are somewhat difficult to identify. Most probably, they represent three loafs of bread, a subject taken from her *vita* when an angel miraculously produced bread in the kitchen when she had forgotten to do so because of her prayer.[25] Alternatively, it may be intended to show three towers of Lucca, which identifies her patron city. She wears a deep red dress beneath her white apron, which seems a rich colour for a servant. Both her appearance as a young virgin and rich style of dress indicate the beginning of the transformation of her image away from the pious servant of the original Lucchese devotion towards a more common model of female virtue and piety, similar to Books of Hour illuminations discussed previously.

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22 *Mells Church of St. Andrew* (Somerset: Friends of Somerset Churches and Channels, 2002), n. 28.
23 Ibid.
24 Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints*, XXIV. Kaftal discusses how virgins were usually similar to generic saints with hair streaming down, and only occasionally with a cover, most likely a mantal, draped over their heads.
25 *AASS*, 'Zita,' 503.

Zita stands on a tiled checkered background that was common for medieval glass depictions of saints, and there is an elaborate border of columns in reasonable condition, which frames the image.[26] The typical background of stained glass in examples such as this often had a preoccupation with architectural structures that mirrored the interiors of churches or castles with columns, miniscule windows, tiled floors, pedestals and even elaborate furniture.[27] The mixture of architecture appeared to the viewer as a church within a church; an image of heaven where the saint now dwells.

Zita is again placed at the far left in the upper arch level of the glass. Other saints represented in the Mells church windows that date to the same period include Agatha, Apollonia, Margaret and Catherine.[28] All these female saints are similarly shown with their hair streaming down in alternating colours of blond and brown. Each was widely venerated throughout England, especially Catherine, who was one of the most popular female saints during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[29] Although the window is situated in a side-aisle, a comparison to the other saints seems to suggest that Zita's presence was again intended primarily for the veneration of the female section of the congregation.[30] As other discussions in this thesis have established, the similarity of these female cults were considered common indications of female ideals.

Contrasting with Zita's representation as a servant at East Markham and Mells, in two other windows she is dressed in rich and elaborate drapery, as comparable to how she was depicted in the Books of Hours analysed in chapter five.[31] These examples show the later transformation of the cult. Zita's servant status is suppressed and instead she is shown as a wealthy woman, wearing the richly coloured robes common to other female saints situated in heaven. These images normalize her, presenting her as one among many

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26 Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints*, XXIV.

27 *Ibid*, XVIV.

28 Coe, *Stained Glass in England*, 11.

29 Weick, *Time Sanctified*, 106-7.

30 As the rest of the subjects in the central composition below the arch were added in the 1840's they are not relevant to this discussion.

31 Refer to: 'Chapter Five: Books of Hours Illuminations: Education for 'good wyfes' and daughters,'.

saints, the equal of holy princesses and virgin martyrs. Such a presentation perhaps made her more attractive as an object of veneration for men as well as for women and particularly for the wealthy classes, who may have considered it beneath their dignity to venerate a servant saint. This hypothesis is further supported by the fact that these windows were viewed publically. The wealthy were likely to have seen a servant dressed as an elite saint as more approachable than one who related more to an unequal and poor class.[32]

The first of these later examples is located in the Emneth parish church of St Edmund, in Norfolk (1450-1550, figs. 36-37). The Emneth window can be reasonably dated to the late-fifteenth century and is the oldest stained glass in the church.[33] As in other examples, Zita is again placed in the upper arcading of a side-aisle window at the left. The fact that she appears in almost exactly the same location in three windows is significant. The same locations likely related to shared assumptions about the most appropriate location for new saints, which was not in main windows of the façade or east end. It seems probable that new saints like Zita were best placed in side-aisles because they were not major local or national patrons. Her placement in the upper level, rather than lower down, and on a smaller scale, indicates her popularity as a new foreign cult, but not to the same level as cults who had originated in England.

Despite the small size, the Emneth window is beautifully detailed, displaying the artist's skill. Zita smiles, which denotes a kind of living and accessible humanity, as she looks down at her devotees.[34] The figure next to her is also rich in detail. Another female figure is shown holding a crown, perhaps intended to represent the coronation of the Virgin, or a female saint of royal descent. The two figures in the centre are the only which survive in a composition that was originally a group of four. Zita carries a large set of gold rosary beads and the traditional keys are visible in her right hand. The artist places her on an

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32 Hahn, 'Speaking with Tongues', 162.
33 Information provided by the Parish church of St. Edmund, collected by author, 2010-11.
34 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 21.

elaborate octagonal pedestal that was a typical way to show depth and the elevated status of the saint. Her attire is very rich, and most notably, there is no apron around her waist. This is extremely unusual. The stained glass windows are one media of very few images which fails to endow Zita with an apron, the other two examples being Books of Hours and one alabaster statue. The lack of such a clear visual indication of who she is, namely a servant, is extremely significant, and will be examined further in this discussion. In Emneth, the halo around her head still has traces of yellow and there is a white cloth over her head, which appears as a common visual style of her dress in this media to show her as a modest woman who was likely to relate to wealthy housewives, widows and mothers who lived in the domestic setting, comparable to Zita's life.

Apart from this surviving image of Zita, there are several other stained glass images in the Emneth Church that date to the same period. All are located in the same area of the window: the top arch. They may survive because the upper arch is the smallest section of the window for a subject and was arguably more durable because of a stronger surrounding metal encasement. Another possible reason for their survival may be due to the fact that the upper arch is also the hardest to reach and thus destroy or remove, which may again relate to the Reformation and how the largest section of the window was more vulnerable.

The Langport window in All Saint's Church of Langport, Somerset (1475-1500, figs. 38-39) is the largest, most detailed and best surviving example of Zita in a completely unified stained glass composition. This window is, actually, the largest and most ornate remaining stained glass window in all of Somerset from the late-fifteenth century. The three major centres for glass at this time were York, Norwich, and Somerset.[35] Therefore, its survival is a pivotal example of English medieval stained glass. Characteristic of the Somerset style, the window includes decorations such as a fleur-de-lys pattern in the background and a border coloured in blue, red, and gold.[36] Zita stands as one of ten

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35 Coe, *Stained Glass in England*, 17-45.
36 Ibid.

central figures in the main chancel window above the high altar. She is represented in the second level of the central composition, second from the right. Such a prominent location, opposed to previous side passageways, demonstrates the importance of her cult in this area during the fifteenth century.

The elegant technique and use of detail in this representation is comparable to the smaller window at Emneth. The detail, especially visible in the delicate hands of the figures, shows the hand of a master artist. Zita is named as Sytha below the image. She wears an olive green cloak, a rich dress of white and gold, and a robe that covers her head and shoulders. Her hands are joined in prayer as a symbol of her piety and a string of rosary beads hang down over her left wrist. As in the Emneth window, she conspicuously does not wear the white servant's apron. Also unique to the Somerset image is the fact that Zita does not hold a set of household keys. The only two visual clues to her identity are her name inscribed below and the rosary beads that were symbolic of her extreme piety. The rosary is found in the depictions of many female and male saints to show their piety. The item is not unique to Zita. The lack of other visual evidence to indicate who she was is striking.

Items such as the keys, apron, book, and bag, were the chief symbols to visually identify Zita, especially for the illiterate who were unable to recognize her name. These items were symbols of whom she was in life based on her most famous miracles.[37] Brian Coe stated in his examination of stained glass in England produced between 1150 and 1550 that: "It must be remembered that the majority of the population could not read, and the many visual symbols used in medieval art were not mere abstractions for decorative purposes but vital clues to the laymen of the meaning of the window."[38] Considering that there was little other iconography to identify Zita in this later image, apart from the single attribute of the rosary, suggests that her cult had fully developed by the time the Somerset window was produced. She had become a common saint for veneration in England,

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37 Cannon and Vauchez, *Margarita of Cortona and the Lorenzetti*, 123-50.

38 Coe, *Stained Glass in England*, 46. See also: Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints*, XXVI.

recognizable not only by her traditional symbols but, rather, by her representation as a female saint represented in a universalizing and normalizing manner, as one of many typical female holy women. It also becomes apparent that those who commissioned these works, especially for the main chancel window at Somerset, were the wealthy merchants or elite. The patrons of such windows like the one at Somerset suppressed the representation of Zita as a servant, indicated by the lack of symbols of keys or an apron. Rather, the patrons highlighted her ideal female virtues, in order for their class to be able to approach a servant saint.

Another window analyzed by Richard Marks is located in the north choir in Winchester Cathedral at Hampshire, York (1501-15, fig. 40). This window can be reasonably dated to between 1501-15 because the patron, Bishop Richard Fox, had a similar chapel decorated at Fairford during the earlier part of his episcopate, between 1501-15. Comparisons between the Fairford stained glass windows and those at Winchester show that they were completed around the same time.[39] In the Winchester window Zita carries a book in her right-hand, keys in her left, and is named as Sytha beneath the image.[40] Again this representation seems intended to emphasize her virgin state, suggested by her blond hair shown streaming down and the long white dress she wears. Little remains of other glass at Winchester.[41] There does remain a composition of ten apostles together with a cleric, possibly a portrait of Bishop Fox, kneeling before Zita.[42]

Bishop Richard Fox (d. 1524) was clearly the patron, as his motto, 'est deo gratia' (thanks be to God) is included in the chapel.[43] Marks has argued that, based on the style and the identity of the patron, the artist was likely to be a Netherlandish glazier.[44] Fox served Henry VII as Lord Privy Seal for 22 years and was one of the leading clerical

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39 Marks, *Stained Glass in England,* 212-3.

40 Ibid, 213.

41 Ibid, 212-3. There was a restoration made in 1852. The picture included is a pre-restoration engraving is by Carter, 213: fig. 180.

42 Ibid.

43 Marks, *Stained Glass in England,* 212.

44 Ibid, fig. 180: 212-3.

administrators of the period. He had a central role in affairs of state and was attracted to humanist styles. The windows commissioned by him at Winchester are very detailed, as is shown by the anatomy of the figures like Zita.[45] Several novelties to stained glass style during the fifteenth century were brought from the Netherlands and were characterized by the range and richness of colours used, spatial experiments, and details of contemporary dress.[46] The Winchester image is similar to other stained glass works that were produced from York in a Netherlandish style. Zita's eyes, for instance, are large and shown with a small half curved stroke with a dot as a pupil in the centre, a gaze that showed her large eyes looking down at the viewer, and was a well-known technique of Netherlandish glass.[47]

Another stained glass window, although not novel in representation, is worth discussing because it includes prayers for the donors. Christopher Woodforde analyzed a stained glass window that included Zita in Brodwoodkelly in Devon. Here Zita is presented in a composition that also included the Virgin and the Crucifixion. Below the glass are inscribed prayers for donors and a date of 1523. This glass can thus be recognised as one of the last images of Zita produced in England, only a decade before the advent of the Reformation.[48] Requests were often made to pray for the soul of the donors in inscriptions which were displayed alongside windows and other images of saints. As previously discussed regarding donor inscriptions on rood screens and Books of Hours, by making the largest donation possible, the donor hoped for intercession.[49]

It was expected that donors would have wanted to be acknowledged, but they must have also been self-conscious of their role as a mediator in the image's creation as a votive offering, which would have been used by their community.[50] The image publically

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45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Coe, *Stained Glass in England*, 17-45.

48 Woodforde, *Stained and Painted Glass*, 32. See also: Coe, *Stained Glass in England*, 11.

49 Duffy, 'Holy Maydens, Holy Wyfes,' 175-96. See also Jones, 'Visio Divina,' 31-56.

50 Schmidt, 'Italian Panel Painting', 1-30. See also Coe: *Painted glass in England*, 11.

records their act of generosity in their lifetimes, but it also made the donor eternal in a pious, religious and visual creation. This was a personal expression, where their souls would be prayed for by the reading of the inscription. Although the inscription asks for prayer, the reading alone was not exactly enough. The viewer also has to agree to pray for them long after they were gone. Such strong connotations in religious iconography must have gone beyond merely the desire to show personal status. By securing the aid of visitors, patrons ensured as many prayers as possible to help speed their souls through the trials of purgatory. The donors of stained glass from the medieval period are usually difficult to ascertain unless their names are physically included with the glass as an inscription. Also, because of the expense of the materials required for windows, such commissions were rarely the effort of a sole patron.[51]

The donors of this window were not sole commissioners. Nevertheless, the fact that groups of donors had commissioned images of Zita is a significant demonstration of her popularity to the community and the wealthy elite or clergy who chose her as a subject. Although the reason these donors chose to represent Zita can only be speculated, it appears likely that it may have been because of her ideal female character. This image, then, appears to be another example of Zita being chosen by a family group of patrons to teach women of the female household ideal female chaste characters they were expected to represent publically, comparable to her function in illuminated manuscripts.[52]

There are other surviving images of Zita in stained glass that are not extensively discussed in this thesis because of their similarity to the above examples, but they do merit brief mention to demonstrate how often she was chosen as a subject in this particular media. She can be found in windows throughout Oxfordshire, Derbyshire, and Norfolk.[53] These above listed windows also include Zita with the same collection of other

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51 Coe, *Stained Glass in England*, 1-16. Coe lists the materials used, costs, and how stained glass was made.

52 Refer to: 'Chapter Four: Books of Hours: Education for 'good whyfes' and daughters,': figure 6: (1407-20), *York Minster Library, Ms. Add. 2, f. 40v.*

53 There are two extant windows at Oxfordshire: first (fifteenth c.). In both, Zita is shown as a wealthy young maiden with gold flowing hair in a robe with gold claps, carrying keys in her hand and a book for her piety. In Mapledurham Oxfordshire (fifteenth c.)

female saints. A specific analysis of each is not required. The main focus should remain on the sheer popularity of representing Zita which occurred over a time span of one and a half centuries.

The development apparent in these images shows that Zita was initially considered a poor domestic mature servant from Lucca, but the ideal of her sainthood rapidly transformed into a more universalizing figure, dressed in rich robes and given more typical_attributes common to other female saints, such as a prayer book and rosary. The servant status which was the unique aspect of her life from Lucca was suppressed, most likely so that the elite who were patrons could venerate her. Despite her new fanciful representation, she must have been able to still address the poor, who were, by vast majority, in service, because this was her chief patron trait. A full development of the cult occurred so that Zita became relevant in different and similar ways to the entire English devout, largely on the basis of her female, servant, and chaste ideal.

As demonstrated by the lack of servant attributes, such as an apron and keys in the later images, Zita's servant status appears to have been subdued by her elite patrons so that this group could venerate her more because of her ideal female character, rather than her servant roles. On the other hand, however, it seems difficult to fully agree with this hypothesis because Zita's roles as a servant do appear to be highly significant to the same roles that women, especially women of the elite class, were supposed to perform in the domestic spaces such as the kitchen. It seems reasonable to conclude that, Zita, as an ideal female was highlighted in churches at Somerset, where her servant status was less articulated in such an important public placement. Zita was assimilated to standardized views on female sanctity, elevated to the upper classes, disassociated from manual

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Zita is depicted with Stephen, Mary Magdalene and heraldic glass in east window. In Derbyshire, (mid-fifteenth c.) Zita is shown between Winifred and the Virgin. In Norfolk (fifteenth c.) Zita is depicted among Agatha, Petronilla, Faith, Apollonia, Cecilia, and Christ in the south isle windows. In Charlich (fifteenth c.) Zita is named as Sitha alongside Catherine, Apollonia and Cecilia in the south transept of the east window above the altar. In Herefordshire, Barkway (late fifteenth c.) includes the Tree of Jesse and figures of Zita, Roch, Mary Magdalene and musical angels.

labour, although apparently still highly relevant to it.[54] She addressed prejudices of wealthy classes who paid for windows, viewed, and venerated them. Her ideal chaste female values were visually promoted, representing her as an ideal virgin, but her servant roles were standardized, which was, perhaps expected when venerating the saint by a community where she was extremely well-known.

The geographical location of these images must be noted because they show the distribution and extent of Zita's cult (fig. 6). The windows at East Markham and Emneth may be explained by their location along Lucchese trade routes from the coast to East Anglia. The cult had been brought to this particular area and promoted by Sir William Langstrother and merchants. Her appearance at Mells and Somerset is likely due to the way her cult was carried from London by merchants traveling across the country. The style of her representation differs in each of these areas, based on the likely time of their production. Although Zita was represented in different locations in England, the style is more relevant to the time that the windows were produced, so it appears the development of the cult took place in a unified way across the country.

From this analysis of stained glass images several conclusions may be made. A comparison of the various ways Zita was represented establishes that the cult had developed from its arrival in the country until the Reformation when the worship of all cults were abolished. The first windows of the saint from the fifteenth century establish that the ideals of Zita were attractive to English elite where she was shown as a modest female servant. As her worship spread, her representation was modified according to context, function and need.[55] While first perhaps attractive to the elite and their ideals of female piety and chastity, Zita's unique servant type became popular among all levels of the urban and poor, and both genders of the English devout.[56] But in a few rare examples she is specifically not shown as servant, which seems to indicate that her ideal female

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54 Hahn, 'Speaking in Tongues', 162.

55 Goldberg, 'What was a Servant?', 8-10.

56 Michael Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*, 3.

chaste character was more significant to the English community, and especially the wealthy classes who were patrons, while the poor focused more on the initial attraction of her servant ideal.

Chapter Seven

Alabaster Statues: A holy servant supplicated by a king

There are only three remaining statues of Zita in England. Two of these statues are difficult to analyze because there is no surviving documentation about the patrons, artists, or the original location for which they were intended. Both are extremely similar. So much so, that they were perhaps made from the same Nottingham prototype, which could indicate that there was a mass production of images of Zita in alabaster. While the way that she is represented is similar to other media, several conclusions about how she was venerated through sculpture may still be made. In venerating these images, the devout viewer interacted with a three-dimensional form, and therefore the worship had a particular kind of empathetic relationship between the image and the devotee. The third alabaster statue is perhaps the most unique representation of Zita to be discussed in this thesis. Its' dissimilarities to other examples requires a separate visual analysis. It was chosen by King Henry VII (ruled 1483-1509) to be set as one of the series of saintly protectors guarding his tomb, which was completed by 1509 before his death. This unique royal commission makes this a particularly fascinating and important case study.[1]

The first two sculptures are standard examples of late medieval Nottingham alabaster. The first is located in the Nottingham Castle (fifteenth century, fig. 41) and the second is in the Burrell Collection in Glasgow (1470-1500, fig. 42). Despite the lack of sources, comparative analysis with other similar statues provides approximate dating and suggestions for their locations and devotional functions. Both examples closely resemble other extant alabaster statues produced in Nottingham that can be accurately dated to the late-fifteenth or early-sixteenth centuries. It is not unusual to find that the only material that portrays Zita in sculpture is alabaster, because it was the most common material for

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1 Trexler, 'Florentine Religious Experience,' 7-41. See also Eamon Duffy, 'The Reformation and the Alabastermen,' in Paul Williamson, *Object of Devotion: Medieval English Alabaster Sculpture From the Victoria and Albert Museum* (Virginia: Art Services International, 2002), 54-70.

devotional sculptures during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in England.[2] There were several other materials available, as for instance wood, stone, ivory, and marble.[3] However, alabaster was a more economical and practical choice for several reasons. It could be obtained locally from areas such as the mountains outside Nottingham, which was the largest area of production and where these first two statues were likely produced.[4] While a luxury object, devotional sculptures of alabaster were less expensive than other sources for several reasons. It was readily available and easily worked. Alabaster was the most typical for English medieval sculptures because of its lower cost, local accessibility, and equal artistic expression to other more costly or internationally sourced materials, resulting in high demand and production for domestic consumption.[5] These statues were not only bought domestically, but there was an international market for them as well.

The majority of surviving Nottingham alabaster figures were produced between 1370 and 1500, of which about 2,400 examples survive.[6] The earliest were large expensive commissions, such as for royal tombs, as is the case with third example of Zita analysed below.[7] Later, workshops mass-produced popular subjects on a smaller scale. This made them more affordable for the mid-level wealthy to elite to purchase for personal devotional use. These sculptures were small in size to fit in the domestic setting, easier to afford, and although still a luxurious object to own in the grasp of a select few, were still widely acquired.[8] Because alabaster was a prized luxury material, domestic and international trade of these objects flourished. Statues were shipped to other Continents via several ports, including London, Darmouth, Bristol and Southampton.[9] Southampton

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2 Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 1-120.

3 Williamson, *Object of Devotion*, 28 and 169-178.

4 Ibid, 16.

5 Ibid, 16-19.

6 Ibid, 19.

7 Phillip Lindley, *Gothic To Renaissance: Essays on Sculpture in England* (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1995), 82.

8 Williamson, *Object of Devotion*, 19.

9 Ibid, 28.

is significant to note considering that this town also has visual evidence of Zita, and thus her cult appears to have been largely supported in this area.[10]

Created not by personal commission but to be sold on the open market, English alabaster works were more or less mass produced and limited to a relatively narrow range of subject matter, chosen from the most popular themes for private devotion. Fashionable subjects included the Trinity, various key events from salvation history, and devotional objects such as the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Other English saints for whom alabaster statuettes remain include Fiacre, Erasmus, and, of course Zita.[11] While individual statues were accessible for sole patrons, the two surviving sculptures of Zita were more likely to be located in a church as figures that were part of a larger program, which will be further examined below. Although only two examples of Zita survive, given the scale of operations in the English alabaster trade, it is very likely that many more were created, at least for the domestic market, if not for international sale.

Saints on altarpieces are usually represented in the same area and style, with their traditional attributes for identification. There is rarely an accompanying name. The same can be deduced regarding these two examples. Typical of other female saints in alabaster, Zita is depicted in heavy drapery with a full length belted robe and a mantle over her head.[12] One of the clearest visual marks that these were Nottingham productions is the background style and colour. The typical colours characteristics of Nottingham alabaster are green, blue and red with dark earth tones.[13] The same colours can be found remaining in the two sculptures of Zita, most clearly in the red of her dress and robe. The standard pattern found, also distinct to the area, is a circular flower shape made of six white dots with a single red dot in the centre upon a green background. Unfortunately, the lack of colour in the two remaining sculptures is difficult to see. However, there is an apparent

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10 Refer to: 'Chapter Three: Murals: A saint of the kitchen'.

11 Williamson, *Object of Devotion*, 19-22. See also: Duffy, 'The Reformation and the Alabasterman', 63.

12 Ibid, 78-104.

13 Ibid.

use of green and red which seem to indicate that the same floral pattern was used on both the statuettes.

In the first, now in Nottingham Castle (late-fifteenth century, fig. 41.), Zita holds her usual attributes of a book and rosary beads. Hanging from her belt are the keys and purse. She also holds a second object delicately in her right hand; this might be either flowers or a loaf of bread, both symbols related to the miracles in her *vita* and items that have been associated with the saint in other media.[14] She wears the same style of belted robe which covers her head and a simple apron around her waist. As in other examples, such clothing explicitly identifies her as a servant. In addition, also typical of Nottingham productions, her dress and robe appear long, which is further enhanced by large horizontal folds.

The second sculpture is extremely similar. This statue (1470-1500, figs. 42-43, *Burrell Collection*) is now in Glasgow.[15] Again, Zita holds a book in her right hand. She wears an apron around her waist with keys and a purse tied to it. In her left hand she holds a rosary and another item, which could be either bread or flowers. Her head is covered decorously with a mantel and her robe hangs about her in heavy folds, tied around by a belt. The same traces of colour remain, such as red visible in the drapery. It can be suggested based on the similarity between the two sculptures that they were possibly made from the same prototype in Nottingham, which was not uncommon. The similarity of form, style and technique of all Nottingham sculptures suggests that most surviving examples came from a small number of workshops in one area.[16] Moreover, the works are close in size, approximately 34cm from base to head. The repeated iconography and strong similarity between the two suggests that not only were both sculptures Nottingham productions during the late-fifteenth or early-sixteenth century, but that the two works were produced

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14 *AASS*, 'Zita,' 503.

15 The Burrell collection houses a large majority of late medieval and Renaissance art which was given to Glasgow by Sir William Burrell in 1944.

16 Williamson, *Object of Devotion*, 19.

by similarly schooled artists, or one who was at least familiar with the same style and technique, if not from the same shop based on a single prototype.[17]

The eyes of the two figures appear downcast, which is perhaps a presentation intended to show Zita at peace. Such detail demonstrates the exceptional skill of alabaster sculptures in England during this period.[18] The artist worked the material for a specific effect on a devout viewer. The three-dimensional form represented the saint as a life-like miniature, with whom the devotee could engage with in a physical and empathetic interaction.[19] The contours of her face could be touched or kissed for physical veneration, as with other media such as murals, rood screens, and illuminations discussed previously. It can be suggested that this type of three-dimensional veneration of a saint's form was comparable to the veneration of relics.[20] Previous arguments have demonstrated that relics and secondary images were believed to be capable of performing miracles. Such contact with the saint's representations was emotional, and demonstrated the devotees' relationship with her for them.[21]

The most likely provenance and function of these two sculptures would be as part of a larger altarpiece program of a reasonably wealthy parish church. While such altarpieces were in the reach of a wealthy few for private domestic devotion, it was more common that altarpieces of this size were placed on an altar, or raised on a wall in a parish.[22] Alabaster altarpieces are frequently found furnishing church interiors, and most often in the eastern section.[23] Whatever the original location, what can be deduced is the height the image would have been placed for visual appreciation. Comparative analysis of these

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17 Wildburgh, *Medieval Alabaster Carvings*, 69-87.

18 Williamson, *Object of Devotion*, 16.

19 Marks, *Image and Devotion*. 21. See also Hildburgh, 'Representations of Saints in Medieval Alabaster Carvings', *Folklore* 61 (1950), 257: figure: 15: plate 83.

20 Ibid, 21. Refer also to: 'Chapter Three: Murals: A saint of the kitchen,'.

21 Geary, *Futra Sacra*, 50-6.

22 Fergus Cannan, 'If Marble Will Not Serve': Medieval English Alabaster Sculpture From Quarry to Object of Devotion,' in Williamson, *Object of Devotion*, 37. See also 152.

23 Ibid, 37.

two examples with others of the same style and size suggests that the two Zita statuettes were intended to be viewed from lower vantage points, were end pieces of a larger composition, and likely positioned on the right hand side. This hypothesis is supported by several visual clues.

Firstly, Zita is shown with her eyes downcast, indicating that the viewer would have looked up at her from below, perhaps from a kneeling position to humbly petition the saint. It could be argued that this was a typical way to represent the eyes of a saint in religious art. Several of Zita's miracles, for example, note that she kept her eyes lowered because sight was believed to be the chief way that sin entered the body and soul. By keeping her eyes cast down she avoided the corruption of her spirit.[24] However, her gaze more likely indicates that the sculptures were in a setting intended to be above height of a devout supplicant. Private devotional images from the fourteenth and fifteenth churches interiors always show religious images placed above head height. The worshippers are not meant to look eye-to-eye with holy figures, as this would be disrespectful. Rather, saints were meant to be viewed from below, from praying or kneeling in a pose of supplication.

Secondly, a comparison of the shape of the sculpture with others from the same period and area establishes that the figures were probably the end pieces of larger compositions of sculptures typically positioned in a higher setting. The two images of Zita (figs. 40-41) can be compared to a unified ensemble such as the Swansea altarpiece, dating from around 1450-80, which represents the joys of the Virgin ('Swansea Altarpiece', A. 89-1919). A comparison of these examples demonstrates that the two statuettes of Zita were originally the wing figures of a larger altarpiece, and most likely positioned on the right hand end. Saints were the wing figures on either side of altarpieces, with the female subject given the right position, as with the Swansea altarpiece. In addition, similar to other wing statues, these two figures of Zita are very narrow, which would fit into this section of the altarpiece. Lastly, both are represented in a way only differentiated by the

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24 *AASS*, 'Zita', 503 and 506. See also: Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 170-7.

saint's common attributes. The rest of the middle altar program was a narrative from the life of Christ or the Virgin.[25] In this instance, the Marian scenes, including the annunciation on the left and the coronation on the right, is surmounted by the Crucifixion (fig. 43). It is easy to conclude that the two surviving figures of Zita would have flanked a similar Marian or Christological theme.

An altarpiece program was usually viewed in broader visual contexts with ornate frames, drapes, or precious metals on the altar.[26] The importance of viewing these figures at the time of mass should also be noted. Similar to the function of the saint on the rood screen, the viewing of the figure in conjunction with the time of mass was emotionally powerful for a medieval devout viewer.[27] This was when the stories of Christ and intercessors were told in relation to how they could help the audience who worshiped with correct honours and stimulate devotion. Paul Williamson has noted in his examination of medieval Nottingham alabaster that: "In short, the images transformed an otherwise absent and disorganized cast of saintly characters into leading members of local communities, intimately connecting them to the day-to-day lives of parishioners."[28] Zita and other saints were the common subjects represented because they could relate to the people attending for prayer or aid.

The third alabaster statue is very different to the other two examples discussed thus far, and indeed to all of the representation of the saint analysed in this thesis. By virtue of its royal patronage and preeminent location, this sculpture is perhaps the most interesting and unique depiction of Zita in all of England. The third alabaster figure is located in Henry VII's Chapel (ruled 1485-1509) in Westminster Abbey, London (finished 1509, fig. 44). Here Zita's English cult reaches its apex, with her statue is placed in a collection

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25 Ibid, 13-6.

26 Stephen Perkinson, "'As They Learn It By Sight of Images': Alabaster and Religious Devotion in Late Medieval England,' in Williamson, *Object of Devotion*, 45.

27 Refer to 'Chapter Four: Rood Screens: A stage set for intercessors,'.

28 Perkinson, 'Alabaster and Religious Devotion', 51.

of religious imagery that was viewed by the most illustrious patrons in the country, and which surrounded a royal tomb in central London.

Westminster Abbey is one of the greatest and most famous religious houses in all of England. It has been the location of royal tombs with architecture and religious decoration that dates from its construction in 1090 until today.[29] The alabaster statues in Henry VII's Chapel are the largest surviving collection of figure sculptures from Early Tudor England. The group originally consisted of 107 figures, of which 96 remain.[30] The saints that surround Henry VII's tomb in the centre of the chapel were chosen by the king himself, to be set in place before his death in 1509, as dictated by his final will, dated the March 31st, 1509.[31] The sculpture can thus be dated with some confidence to the first decade of the sixteenth century. The likely date makes this statuette one of the last to have been commissioned before the Reformation put an end to saints' veneration in England. It is reasonable to conclude that the lost figures were probably destroyed during the Reformation or the Civil War started in 1643.[32]

The prominent location of this sculpture allows for a number of conclusions about the veneration of Zita in England. Firstly, because Zita was chosen as a subject in the Henry VII's chapel, her cult must have been circulating in the royal court. It cannot be known for certain that Henry VII named her individually, since she is not specifically mentioned in his will, as some of the other saints are. However, Henry's will demonstrated his extreme piety and nearly obsessive, meticulous supervision of his chapel's construction, which would suggest that he did actually chose every artistic representation and that the figures were in place before his death on 11th May, 1509.[33] The Abbey was the location

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29 Phillip Lindley, 'Sculptural Functions and Forms in Henry VII's Chapel,' in Tim Tatton-Brown and Richard Mortimer, *Westminster Abbey: The Lady Chapel of Henry VII* (London: Boydell, 2003), 259-94.

30 Ibid.

31 Margaret Condon, "God Save the King!": Piety, Propaganda and The Perpetual Memorial,' in *Westminster Abbey*, Tatton-Brown and Mortimer, 58-98.

32 Lindley, 'Sculptural Functions and Forms', 259-94.

33 Helen Dow, *The Sculptural Decoration of the Henry VII Chapel, Westminster Abbey* (Edinbrough: Pentland, 1992), 51-2.

of his anointing and coronation, and was thus a fitting location for his burial.[34] His design for the chapel shows the importance he placed on the statues of saints. According to Henry's will, he had designed the 'plat' (plan) himself, although not extant.[35] The sculptures dominate the walls, further enhanced by the many wax candles he wished to have burning before them in a public show of the saints' importance, and just as equally for the people who viewed from below to supplicate the figures on behalf of his soul.[36]

If this analysis of the sculptural figures and commission is accurate, then the fact that Henry VII venerated Zita should not be underestimated. It is surprising opposition of a king venerating a servant. There are several plausible reasons why Zita was represented. Previous discussions have shown that the aristocracies as well as the middle classes were attracted to the new saint. A comparison of the patron of this sculpture to the Book of Hours commissioned either by or for Lord William Hastings, who enjoyed a close relationship with the royal circles, further supports the extent of her veneration in England with the nobility in the medieval period.[37] Henry VII's resting place is guarded by phalanxes of saints so that he has many intercessors willing to act as his advocates before God, which is only fitting for a king. Therefore, it may not be unusual that Zita was chosen, since it has already been concluded that she was known by several figures from the highest nobility. Nevertheless, Henry VII and/or his advisors still chose particular saints and excluded others. As there is a choice operative here, Zita was included deliberately to guard over the king's rest and usher his soul up to paradise, and this needs to be examined further.

It could be argued that Zita's sculpture is in a location that was intended for a particular kind of audience, namely royalty. Presumably clergy would view it, and to a lesser extent laity were also granted access, since the tomb glorifies the king as a great and pious ruler.

34 Barbara Harvey, 'The Monks of Westminster and the Old Lady Chapel,' in Tatton-Brown, *Westminster Abbey*, 28.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Refer to: 'Chapter Five: 'Books of Hours Illuminations: Education for 'good whyfes' and daughters,': fig. 7: shows female patron of the Bolton Hours kneeling before Zita in an illumination.

There are several possible reasons why Henry VII was interested in Zita's cult. She may have been a model that the nobility sought for the laity in domestic service, or even perhaps their own personal servants who were often came from nobility as well, since the royal court had servants who were expected to represent their station. The ideal of Zita's servant values likely appealed to the strict notions of how a royal servant was expected to behave.[38] It was a foremost honour to serve the king. Although the cult apparently developed into a common saint for veneration in England, it retained the same functions which had originally appealed to the English community, that of a steadfast, loyal and honourable servant.

Apart from being a model of a life dedicated to the service of others, Zita may also have appealed to the king on behalf of his servants, for their own pious needs. Phillip Tatton-Brown, who has extensively analysed Henry VII's will and possible personal motivations behind it, has noted "It (the will) contained the customary provision for the payment of the King's debts, for the welfare of his servants, and, despite a proclaimer against outrageous pomp and ceremony, for a regal funeral".[39] It appears that he had the welfare of his servants in mind as well. While Zita was intended to guard over him, she was also included to guard over his household, from his wife to all the many dependents of the royal household, including servants. This argument is further supported by Henry VII's evident intention to show his prestige and lineage in the chapel. As evidenced by his will, he intended the tomb to be a resting place for his family, including his wife among others.[40]

The sculpted figures extend out of their niche, which is unusual for sculptural architecture. More often, sculptures are found in areas like this in a walled encasement which acts to border and protect them. The extension of the figures of saints for their

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38 Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*. See also: Goldberg, 'What was a servant?', 1-20. Cullum and Goldberg, 'The Bolton Hours,'.

39 Condon, 'God Save the King!', 64.

40 Smith, *Art, Image, and Devotion*, 249-87. See also: Dow, *Westminster Abbey*, 30 and 61.

protected niche goes beyond enhancing their sculptural importance in the chapel.[41] The physical placement of the saint beyond to interior protection of the niche enhances her power and importance to look over the king's resting place.[42] Henry VII wrote of these saints in his will that there should be in his tomb: "as many images of my advouries" (be made asmany of the Ymagies of or sade advories).[43] These 'advouries', as Henry VII named them, were meant to protect his tomb and care for his soul to heaven after his death. Zita, and others, were advocates for the patron. The tomb was a memorial but it was also commemorative.

However, the fact that Zita had been a servant may not have been a crucial aspect of her appeal for Henry VII. Zita met the models of servitude but also for women in general. In contrast to the function for the lower female class of Lucca, in England Zita was used more in relation to the conduct of noblewoman. In this case, the style of the figure, especially evident in the elaborate dress that she wears, is dissimilar to any other image of the saint, making it extremely hard to identify her at all, especially considering her name does not accompany the statue. She carries a book and rosary, both of which were her common attributes by this date, and standard signs of pious disposition. But the elaborate, even on might say regal, robes are very unusual and her most common symbols of keys, a purse and wearing an apron, which were the clearest indications of her life as a servant, are all lacking. Here, Zita's image seems to have been modified to become more appropriate for its royal setting.

Characteristic of Tudor court art, the artist created an appropriately sumptuous image of wealth and luxury.[44] Thus, Zita wears an elaborate headdress in the shape of a turban set with jewels, as do several of the other female saints in the chapel.[45] Such clothing gives no indication of her servant status. There appears to have been a deliberate suppression of

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41 Ibid.

42 Dow, *Westminster Abbey*, 30 and 51-2.

43 Ibid, 31.

44 Phillip Lindley, *Gothic to Renaissance*, 8.

45 Dow, *Westminster Abbey*, 73.

this aspect of her cult. If that were the case, it would seem to specify that the ideal of female sainthood she represented was considered more relevant to the viewers' piety and interest, rather than her abilities as a domestic servant. Or perhaps her servant status was suppressed, although still relevant to his concerns, so that Henry VII could more appropriately and publically supplicate a holy servant.

Apart from the inclusion of Zita as popular subject, servant protector for Henry VII's house, and ideal female, there may be other connections found in the chapel to her cult which account for why she was chosen. There is evidence that Bishop Richard Fox was greatly involved in the completion of the chapel.[46] As will be recalled from the previous chapter, Fox's cathedral of Winchester was also endowed with a sainted glass depiction of Zita (1501-15, fig 40). Moreover, the king also insisted on the inclusion of several seals throughout the chapel that were of personal significance to him. One of these is the seal of Syon Abbey.[47] As noted in chapter five, a Book of Hours made for this monastery included a lament and prayers for Zita.[48] Syon Abbey was well-aware of Zita's cult and venerated her along with Bridget.

Comparative analysis of the other saints chosen by the king allow for some insight into his pious concerns. The other figures of saints in the chapel cover the wall that encircles the room (fig. 45). Individual subjects are in groups consisting of thirteen bays, divided by four or five figures per section. Zita is the second statue from the left in the tenth bay. The other saints in the same area are Helen, followed by Zita. She stands beside the early Christian martyr, Sebastian, who is flanked by two archers, thereby injecting the element of narrative into a collection of iconic standing saints. This is a testimony to Sebastian's enormous popularity as one of the two universal plague saints, whose martyrdom by arrows and subsequent resurrection was understood as proof of his ability to protect his devotees against bubonic plague, since plague was thought of as deadly arrows sent down

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46 Condon, 'God Save the King!', 97. See also: 'Chapter Six: Luminous protector,'.

47 Ibid, 97.

48 Refer to: 'Chapter Three: Books of Hours: Education for 'good whyfes' and daughters,'.

from heaven.[49] The second universal plague saint, Roch, whose cult was still relatively recent in the early-sixteenth century, was also included, along with monastic healer Antony Abbot, protector against St. Antony's fire (ergotism).[50] A series of saints celebrated for their ability to defend against disease and death are here invoked to protect the royal resting place and assist the king in his hopes for spiritual health and life.[51]

Other female cults represented in the chapel include Agatha, Winfred, Margaret, Dorothy, Apollonia, and Barbara. In every media discussed to this point there has been the same collection of female martyr saints. The common denominators of their female lives involved death, blood, and difficult marriages, and this should be noted. Zita may have been relevant because of her protection of the poor and those condemned to death, but there also seems to be an interest of her female domestic roles, and perhaps because the model she provided as a faith servant acted as a weapon against heresy.[52] Aforementioned arguments have established that the female domestic servant was closely tied to the notions of the witch, or bad servant.[53] A model servant like Zita may have been an appropriate ideal for female servants to supplicate, rather than turning to the darker forces of the devil. Nevertheless, it was the function of every saint to act against the works of the devil and petition God on behalf of humanity.

Moreover, that the other cults categorized with Zita were consistent allows for the most popular saints to be listed. Zita was likely to regard the same concerns that apparently related to both genders. Although her cult was perhaps more relevant to women, the fact that her patron here was the king is momentous. Of the 109 statues of saints placed

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49 Louise Marshall, 'Manipulating the Sacred: Image and Plague in Renaissance Italy,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 47, (1994), 485-532. See also: Louise Marshall, 'Reading the Body of a Plague Saint: Narrative Altarpieces and Devotional Images of St. Sebastian in Renaissance Art,' in *Reading Texts and Images, Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Art and Patronage*, ed. B. Muir (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2002), 237-60.

50 Marshall, 'Manipulating the Sacred', 485-532.

51 Lindley, 'Sculptural Forms and Functions', 280. See also: Dow, *Westminster Abbey*, 57-75.

52 Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 22. See also Goldberg, 'What was a servant?', 1-20. See also Marks, *Image and Devotion*, 86-120. See also: Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 151-99.

53 Refer to: 'Chapter Three: Murals: A saint of the kitchen.' See also: 'Chapter Four: Rood Screens: A stage set for intercessors'

around Henry's tomb, the majority are female saints, most of them traditional virgin martyrs and princesses widely venerated in the early-sixteenth century. Zita is grouped among similar female saints because of her ideal female character and common saintly abilities of protection from death, help in the after life, and service. It seems that Henry VII suppressed Zita's servant status, which was more appropriate, so that it he could supplicate a servant saint in such an illustrious public location, namely that of his posthumous home, at least publically, while still interested in her servant ideal.

It can be speculated that the viewing and purpose of Zita's image in this context is rather different to those of others considered previously, because of its more exalted location. In small parish churches, Zita's images are quite visible and easy to identify because of the standard way that she was represented, with her traditional attributes and servant dress. By contrast, at Westminster Abbey her statue is very difficult to see, let alone identify, because of the high placement in the chapel, the very different way she is represented, and the absence of any indentifying inscription. In contrast to other examples, where Zita was individually approachable for veneration by the people, at Westminster Abbey, she was likely chosen for the religious needs of the patron, namely Henry VII. There certainly appears to be a deliberate emphasis on an overpowering number of saints who were to act as 'advories' or advocates for his soul. The tomb is foremost a religious expression based on the piety of the king, where Zita and other saints would aid him after his death. The more saints the better, so why not include her, since all of the English believed in her abilities as a saint and considered her a successful intercessor by this time?

In a way this follows on from what has been observed in other examples, such as in stained glass, where Zita becomes just a standard, somewhat anonymous, well-dressed female saint. The specific details of her life are passed over in favour of the more general aspects of her female saintliness. This analysis seems to suggest that the king chose Zita because she was a fashionable subject for veneration, so that she had become almost institutionalized by the time the decision was made to represent her at Westminster.

Beyond the vast majority of the English who venerated the cult because of her servant status, namely the poor in domestic service, Zita's fame had spread so that a king could appeal to a holy servant.

A negative aspect of alabaster as a material is that it is fragile. It is softer than marble and stone and was therefore easier to crush, burn, deface and destroy during the English Reformation.[54] It is thus all the more remarkable that the majority of English sculptures that survive from the pre-Reformation period are alabaster, testifying to the sheer volume of work produced from areas such as Nottingham.[55] It could be argued that the statue of Zita at Westminster Abbey most likely owes its survival to its prestigious location. If nothing else, its elevated placement meant that it could not easily be removed or destroyed during the turbulent times over the following centuries. That some of the other figures are missing shows that even the cults represented in a location such as this still came under threat throughout history.[56] The other two alabaster sculptures of Zita, discussed earlier in this chapter, were clearly taken down from their original settings and taken apart from a larger altarpiece composition, revealing that they were more vulnerable.

It is reasonable enough to propose that many other alabaster statues of Zita were commissioned from the early-fourteenth until the early-sixteenth century that have not survived. The preservation of the three considered here indicates that there was some community concern for Zita's cult at a later period. The Reformation establishes why no other images of the saint were produced after the mid-sixteenth century, since the veneration of all cults were abolished and churches were dismantled under the orders of Henry VIII, and later his son Edward I.[57]

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54 Phillip Tatton-Brown, 'Canterbury and the Architecture of Pilgrimage Shrines in England,' in Morris and Roberts, *Pilgrimage: The English experience*, 90-107. See also Duffy, 'The Reformation and the Alabastermen', 54-70.

55 Paul Williamson, *Gothic Sculpture: 1140-1300* (Yale University, 1995), 20.

56 Lindley, 'Sculptural Functions and Forms,' 259-94.

57 Ibid.

Over fifty documented images of the saint survive in England. So there must have been care taken by a devout community who protected and hence, continued to worship and believe in Zita's powers as an intercessor. That so many documented images of Zita survive, several included in the above-mentioned chapters, gives some indication of how popular the cult was during the mid-fourteenth to mid-sixteenth century. It will never be certain what extent the cult of Zita had in England during the medieval period. The care for the survival of the images, especially regarding portable media like alabaster statues, must have meant that worshipers venerated Zita as an internationally adopted saint during and after the Reformation, enough so in order to ensure the survival of her representation. Other than the immediate effects of the Reformation, which account for the cease in English veneration during the medieval period, there are several other reasons why her visual representation may have survived. Apart from veneration, these images were important for families, civic and community history, pride, patronage, and of course admiration.

The surviving images and their locations, original or moved, can be used as a general map of the cult spread in England (fig. 6). The extreme veneration of the holy servant through secondary images in England together with the continuous support of the original cult in Lucca, likely influenced her later canonisation in the seventeenth century. Although Zita was never restored to the former significance she had enjoyed in England, the importance she had once enjoyed in this country should be given its due attention. Several conclusions about the way that she was venerated, and the significance that she had to this foreign community who adopted an obscure holy woman can now be examined based on the way that she was articulated through these images.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the singular transmigration of the cult of Zita from beyond her native town of Lucca to England. Her widespread popularity in England has been charted through the proliferation of images. It is intriguing to find that a relatively obscure humble and holy woman, who worked as a domestic servant, appealed to a culturally distinct community and satisfied their own religious needs for a patron saint. The discussions of the five different media have shown the ways that Zita was able to address English supplicants. As I have argued, Zita's cult retained the initial attraction to a sanctified ideal female servant. However, the cult also underwent a significant transformation, so that nobility and royalty were able to supplicate a servant without the potential conflicts regarding their class. Zita was venerated by both genders, by urban audiences and parish communities, by aristocrats and merchants, by both clergy and laity, and servants and kings, for distinct and sometimes overlapping reasons that can now be addressed and summarized.

The different media used for Zita's representations were chosen for specific reasons and effects, depending on function, site and presumed audience(s). In contrast to the situation in Zita's native town, in England Zita's typology as a female servant had different and deeper connotations. As was argued in the first chapters, in Lucca, Zita has been interpreted by some historians as being linked to mercantile and male desire to control a female underclass.[1] In England, however, it appears that Zita was accepted by both the poor in domestic service, as well as the nobility, for other reasons than only her servant status.

Public cult images in parish churches such as the murals discussed in chapter four documents the spread of Zita's cult from Lucca to England and represent some of the earliest visual representations of her. Although there are only two surviving examples in a

1 Sutcliffe, *The Cult of St. Sitha*, 84.

relatively deteriorated state, both are similar and suggest a common interpretation. While Zita was apparently approached by men, such as merchants who were the likely carriers of the cult to the country in the first place and strong promoters of her sanctity in their new place of residence, because of the way Zita is presented in these paintings and their locations within the church, it appears that the murals were probably designed to relate specifically to the women of the congregation. In both murals, Zita is dressed in heavy, elaborate drapery that was more likely to reflect what a mature-aged woman would wear. She was able to address wives, widows and mothers because of their domestic roles in the kitchen. In addition, kitchen utensils and a fascinating symbol of a cauldron representative of hell, surround Zita. These are two symbols which show her relationship resonated more with women, rather than men. However, if the cauldron she is presented with relates to her capacity to intercede on behalf of souls in purgatory, she would appeal both to men and to women. She specifically addresses women who worked in the domestic setting, perhaps more for servants, but her specific function here would have also related to all women who dwelled in the kitchen, whether housewives, mothers, or daughters.

Apart from such specific female classes, the murals would have also addressed female servants who had the same expected household chores. Thus, Zita was able to meet the pious needs of women from a variety of differing social positions, because of the way her sanctity graced the interior spaces of the household. Independent of class, for the noble woman expected to obey her husband and represent chaste family values, just as much as for the lay servant who provided the family with substance from the kitchen, Zita could offer intercession and aid. Her life, lived through the kitchen and the production of food, represented the correct woman for all women to aspire to imitate.

This thesis has suggested that the symbol of hell with cauldrons may have been an attempt to address the issues and the fears which surrounded heresy during the late medieval period. The concept of the witch closely parallels the life of any female saint, and especially the life of the domestic female servant in hagiography. Woman's chief

weapon to kill a man was through the tempting use of her flesh. If a witch or morally corrupt servant breached the household, then where better would she perform her devilish practices then in the kitchen, other than the bedroom? These women could use poison to kill any member of the household through their actions in the kitchen space. Such fear of servants, or women's conduct in general, would have needed a pious aspiration, of which Zita generated, rather than the potential works of the devil.

There was clearly an attempt to strengthen old service practices during these centuries with a model servant saint like Zita. A woman who lived her entire life loyally to a wealthy merchant family, serving and protecting their lineage, appealed to the elite for their own servants to emulate. Her chastity in service was also likely to be appropriated by the mistress of the household as a model for her servants. In England as in Lucca, Zita could be promoted as an ideal for servants to adhere to, if only for the mistress to monitor conduct.[2] Her lifelong loyalty to the family she had maintained without complaint, alongside her charitable and ascetic practices, generated a servant to be revered.

The first images of the saint in the form of murals appear in Horley and Shorthampton. Their presentation outside of Oxford were carried via trade and merchant routes in the country, further demonstrating that these classes brought the cult from Lucca and continued to support her in their new country of residence. As these are the earliest English images of the saint, it seems likely that Zita's initial appeal revolved around her role as a virtuous domestic. However, Zita's powers as a protector from drowning also encouraged merchants to supplicate her for safe travel. Just as Zita was supported by Lucchese merchants, so too was she able to appeal to their English equivalents, who were the usual patrons of saints' representations in small parish churches throughout the country where the wool and silk trades flourished. This is further demonstrated with other discussions such as the images of rood screens in East Anglia.[3]

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2 Smith and Taylor, *Women and the Book,* 80-3.

3 Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 83-6.

Rood screens, created at the height of the cult's popularity, indicate how Zita had developed into a typical female saint important to all English devotees because of her characteristics, which relate to both her service roles and her gender. The full development that appears in the images of rood screens before the Reformation shows how Zita was widely accepted by women and men as an exemplary saint renowned for her chastity, piety, and steadfast service.[4] Zita is most typically identified by her common attributes, which were clearly well-known during the mid-fifteenth century when these screens were produced. The repeated iconography evident in these images show just how rapidly the cult spread throughout East Anglia. Zita is consistently shown wearing an apron and holding keys, a book, and a rosary. While the book and rosary indicated her extreme piety, common among other female saints, the other items such as the household bag and keys were unique to her life as a servant who was entrusted with guarding the household, opening valuables and collecting household goods. As was established in the initial chapters which focused on the creation of the cult in Lucca, these were symbols relevant to her life as a holy woman who was able to dispense charity to the poor.

The proliferation of Zita's representation on rood screens indicates the male aristocracy and merchants modified Zita as an idyllic saint throughout East Anglia, where she also enjoyed a church dedication at Ely. Again, this model seems to be in appropriated by men, but in place for women. Most often, the images of Zita are located in the female section of the church, segregated from the space allocated to men, in a program of other popular female cults. The discussion of this media has specifically focused on the architectural significance and function of the rood screen. Zita was presented on a screen-like platform and viewed during the time of mass. As was concluded, this was an extremely important visual context that had deep connotations for the medieval devout viewer, where here, it is evident that Zita was specifically viewed by laywomen. Although accepted by laywomen, it was her chastity that men saw as a fitting example for women to emulate. Men saw her as a proper educational tool, and thus promoted her in

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4 Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 22.

art, but it was the women who accepted that ideal, either for protection or supplication, as well as the model for aspiration which male society had appropriated for them.

Apart from the female laity, it seems likely that a servant, and especially a female domestic servant, appealed to the model the aristocracy sought for their own servants. As with the previous discussion of murals, it seems that Zita was used to act against heresy. It is plausible that many maids were unable to travel to church, at least on occasion, because of the demands daily placed on them. Thus, there was a need for piety in the domestic setting for these women, and that piety could be met in supplicating a saint like Zita, whose holiness was defined by the interior space of the household. For the employer and employee, being unable to travel to church because of daily demands was no excuse for a lack of piety, as evidenced by Zita's life.

Thus, it appears that Zita's earliest audiences were housewives, mothers, and daughters. But it was the largest population of medieval society, the poor, who accepted Zita as a saint for their religious needs. This aspect of her cult was attractive to both genders in English society who worked.[5] However, as has been easily concluded, Zita was more likely able to relate to women in service instead of men. There are several reasons why female servants would have looked to Zita in particular when at church, and especially during the congregation. A female servant who was afraid of the conduct of other male servants or employers was able to supplicate Zita for protection, or at least in her view of lack of intimacy with men, whether forced or voluntary. As a chaste servant herself, Zita was perhaps able to lend a better ear to their concerns and daily lives. As a member who had lived among their own class, she was far more approachable than clerical or royal saints. Zita was clearly appropriated by the elite, who may have promoted her loyalty in service for their own household to aspire, but it was the larger class of the poor in servitude who accepted her and supplicated her for aid. Zita inverted the employee and employer hierarchy, while still adhering to both with equal significance. Thus, there was a very dynamic function of her cult because of her gender and vocation.

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5 Cullum and Goldberg, *The Bolton Hours*, 223-5. See also: Sutcliffe, *The Cult of St. Sitha*, 83-6.

Zita had lived her life based on the morals of chastity, poor and labour.[6] She, and other female saints, were able to create a bridge between the divine and the poor. She could present a model of the sanctity of service, of the necessity of accepting one's social condition in life and making the best of it. She valorizes domestic life, shows how to turn it into a spiritual advantage, and make it part of service to God and to others. As may also have been the case in Lucca, Zita justified the needs of the woman who could not find a husband or was forced into service because of a difficult situation. Zita never married and served in her position through her entire life loyally and without complaint. The maid who remained a virgin, either voluntarily or because she was unable to find a husband, was able to offer Zita patronage when feeling any doubt about her position.

Books of Hours were viewed by the wealthy and were commissioned well after the cult was established during the mid-fifteenth until the early part of the sixteenth century. These were privately owned objects facilitating a distinctly personal relationship between the devotee and the saint. Examples such as the Bolton Hours clearly related more to wealthy bourgeois daughters, where Zita acted as an educational chaste model for women entering into life-cycle service in marriage to their husbands. The roles which were the same for the female laity, those that took place in the interior of the household, and particularly the kitchen, did not differ in class. The same roles were expected of all women who were all hierarchically below their husbands and the never-ending marriage debt. The patron of the Bolton Hours also establishes the continued support of the merchant class, since the Bolton and Blackburn women were successful English merchants based in York.

In illuminations Zita's representation was modified to become more detached from her origins as a domestic servant. In every illumination Zita is shown as a chaste young virgin, and, thus was likely used to teach feminine values. She was an object of

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6 Kleinberg, *Proving Sanctity*, 55.

instruction for the lives daughters who would soon serve their husbands. The original appeal of her life as a servant in the house of the Fatinelli was reinterpreted so she could address all women of the household space, including the nobility. Her attire, often shown as a chaste idealized female, was intended to be representative of correct family values, and one that, by implication, would show the reputable conduct of the entire household. Her roles as a servant were adapted to focus on her ideal as a virgin female, rather than a poor servant whose life was defined by occupational status. As opposed to the heavily draped and mature woman in murals, in illuminations Zita is shown as a wealthy young female, more comparable to virgins and martyrs.

As evidenced from Books of Hours, veneration of Zita had permeated into the highest levels of the elite. By the mid-fifteenth century, as certain manuscripts indicated, Zita was accepted by religious orders, since the scribe of one, and possibly two, books were Dominicans. Her appeal to the highest of the nobility is evidenced by the Book of Hours commissioned by Lord William Hastings, who was closely tied to the royal court. In these illuminations, Zita is not shown with attributes that would allow her identification as a servant. Rather, she is presented as a wealthy young maiden whose chastity and piety is emphasized with her hair streaming down, the youth of her chastity shown, and great wealth of her style of dress, so that noble woman need not feel conflicted by supplicating a servant. It becomes clear that her virgin status was more important to the nobility, rather than her service roles. This was an appropriate representation so that these noblewomen and men could privately and publically enter communion with a servant.

The stained glass images date from the arrival of the cult until its end during the Reformation. Therefore, they document the full transformation of the cult chronologically, as well as its geographical trace across the country. The first representations in stained glass, such as those at East Markham and Mells, show Zita as a humble domestic servant. She is clad in heavy drapery with an apron around her waist. At times, however, as in the murals, the rich colours of her dress are hardly appropriate for a servant and, thus show the continuing efforts to modify her image, by combining

references to her life as a domestic servant with allusions to heavenly glorification. In the earliest images of this group, she holds her traditional attributes of keys, purse, book or rosary and wears the apron identifying her as a domestic. She is most often shown in the top section of the window and on the left, along chancel aisles. It seems that very often this location was considered to be the most suitable area for newly established and foreign cults, rather than the main chancel.

Interestingly, the initial attraction of the English to her servant ideal is suppressed in the later images of stained glass produced in the late-fifteenth to early-sixteenth centuries. Zita is given more devoted attention, especially evident in the window at Somerset, where her image dominates a large portion of the main east chancel window above the altar. Also of interest with regards to the stained glass window at Somerset, is the lack of the standard attributes of an apron, keys, and purse. Instead, she is only shown with a rosary, a conventional symbol of piety found present in many images of saints. Moreover, she is dressed in gold drapery, in common with the other saints in the window. As a result, she is no longer a servant but a standard female saint, pious and beautiful, shining with heavenly glory. Such an imposing figure poses no problems of social inversion for the noble and other members of the social-elite who wished to petition her for aid. She appears universalized and institutionalized in a repeated collection of female saints, all of whom were widely venerated in England.

The alabaster statues show another means by which Zita was petitioned, allowing the possibility of more direct physical contact between the image of the saint and her devotees. Across the social classes, Zita represents an ideal of domestic service was held out as a model to be imitated and revered. The two images produced from Nottingham show that there was a mass production of her image in England through this media. While there were many of these small devotional sculptures in the reach of a select few, it is more likely that these two surviving examples were the flanking figures of a large altarpiece intended to be in a raised devotional setting of a parish. The fact that two strikingly similar statues as this survive, likely even made from the same prototype or

shop in Nottingham, makes it reasonable to conclude that many other statuettes were produced that do not survive, and were perhaps intended for both parish altarpieces and single devotional objects for reasonably wealthy families to place in their homes.

Significantly, the third alabaster statue, located in Westminster Abbey in the Henry VII chapel, show that Zita was known and venerated by royalty. Henry VII decided to have her as an 'advourie' to watch over his tomb, and essentially care for his soul in its journey to the afterlife. As in the illuminated Books of Hours and the later stained glass windows, at Westminster Zita lacks her traditional attributes of keys and an apron, which define her as a servant. More surprisingly, she is also shown without the conventional tokens of piety such as a book and rosary, neither of which are class specific and both of which are common to many other female saints. Lastly, there is no accompanying inscription. Thus, her transformation is complete: she has become an anonymous saint, marked by no distinguishing attributes, a broad example of a universalized feminine ideal. Only in this way could a king venerate the Lucchese holy servant woman.

As evidenced from Henry VII's will, he likely personally chose to represent her, and the reasons for his choice can only be speculated upon. However, it is my argument that he saw the ideal of both Zita's servitude and femininity as models for the English community and his own household, although, in a way, this contradicts the fact that she is not shown as a servant. Henry VII wished his chapel to be the resting place of his family, showing his prestige and lineage. Perhaps he wished to suggest Zita as a model for his servants, as well as for women in general who should follow her example and adopt the appropriately feminine virtues of modesty and chastity. Beyond these particular groups, all of England was able to supplicate her because she had become anonymous and habitual, so that she was indistinguishable from the other saints and common in religious practices. Death, plague, and disease were very present concerns in medieval society. The other cults represented in this chapel, such as Anthony and Sebastian, show that Henry VII viewed these as serious issues. Zita was able to relate to the same concerns as a holy woman and intercessor. The tomb was not only commemorative of the monarch. Henry

VII was very pious, and he expected alms offered and prayers to be said on his behalf after his death. *His saintly advocates, including Zita, were to be supplicated for the safety* of Henry VII's eternal soul. Therefore, the king considered Zita his own patron protector, among others.

During the course of the fourteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, Zita of Lucca was transformed into Sitha of England. Her representation underwent changes from mature servant to a richly dressed, beautiful young virgin. The development appears to have had a dual significance between the primary benefactors who were patrons of her images, namely the elite, and the people of the commonwealth who venerated her for other reasons. The lower classes and the aristocracy venerated Zita equally for different and sometimes similar reasons because of her gender and her life as a holy servant.

Importantly, the most striking aspect of her cult, namely her servant status, gradually comes to be visually suppressed in the later images. A series of examples have been identified that do not represent Zita as a servant saint: the illuminations in the Books of Hours, the Somerset glass window at Langport, and the alabaster statue at Westminster. As has been suggested, the fact that Zita was a servant may have been a significant element of the original appeal of her cult. For employers, she offered an appropriate model for their own servants, enacting the kind of servitude and devotion they would themselves wish to receive. But in a more intimate relationship between saint and devotee, her image was recast, where it seems that wealthy concerns did not wish to enter into close communion with a servant, however pious. Merchants and wealthy landowners, who went to churches just as often as their servants, did not seek to highlight her servant attributes.

Although the elite were interested in Zita's servant life, her appeal for this class was perhaps more general, as she became more and more conformed to the standard ideal female saint. For these worshippers, it was her sanctity rather than her service that was

most attractive. Like many other popular saints, she was a powerful patron and successful intercessor who could protect them in life and after death. The same cults venerated were Erasmus, Christopher, and Roch, who were saints of death, plague, disease, and labour.[7] Other female saints, such as Agatha, Apollonia, and Winifred, with whom Zita is repeatedly shown, had several common denominators with their cults. Apart from Zita, these women were all saints of martyrdom whose lives involved the themes of charity, blood, and marriage.[8] Zita was able to relate to these similar concerns because of her life as a servant, although it was publically suppressed. By the end of the fifteenth century her veneration spread to the highest peak of English society, namely the king, as well as to the lowest forgotten domestic servant in urban England.

There is evidence of other modes of veneration with surviving literary evidence of Zita in poems, verse in other Books of Hours, wills, and votive offerings. Examples include the Lollard preacher who scorned a woman for making such expensive travels to an image of Zita in England in order to pray to the saint because she had lost her household keys. A mass at Luton, and other books such as the Syon Hours include prayers to Zita. Each of these dedications to the saint continue to reinforce how she was important to English women, particularly servants, and the roles that she had as a patron and intercessor who functioned on behalf of her followers.

The Reformation brought an end to the production and veneration of Zita's images in England. A few later testimonies to her cult survive in Lucca and other Italian cities, but largely in a different context. Under the continued patronage of the Fatinelli family, images of the saint were produced in Lucca directly after her canonisation (fig. 1).[9] It is clear that Zita's veneration was quite different in England. These images do not relate to

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7 Vauchez, *Sainthood*, 157: labour and charity. Also: Vauchez, *Lay people's sanctity*, 87-8: Vauchez discusses the common concerns of the laity and poor were illness, personal protection for their souls, war, and a nearly obsessive focus on death. See also: Wieck, *Time Sanctified*, 116-7.

8 Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*. See also: Sutcliffe, 'The Cult of St. Sitha,' 84. See also: Webb, 'Women in the Home,'. See also Duffy, 'Holy Maydens, Holy Whyfes,' 179.

9 Nicolai, *Zita*, 4.

the discussion of the cult's transmigration to England, so they will not be discussed in this thesis. They are worth mentioning here because they show that the cult remained popular in Lucca until she was canonised. Evidently, Zita was not widely venerated outside of Lucca apart from England. Her continued support in Lucca, and the large corpus of images in England who adopted Zita nationwide before the Reformation, are the two most likely factors resulting in her seventeenth century canonisation.

Zita's transplantation to England from Lucca, the only country that recognized her as a saint, and on such an extraordinary scale, has been the focus of this thesis. The English adopted a humble holy woman from Lucca because her ideal met their devotional needs. Both the Lucchese and the English communities were able to find in this female saint protection, intercession, and someone who they could approach for aid throughout their daily lives.[10] Zita unified England from the poor to the elite.[11] The English appear to have found her to be highly approachable even going so far as to modify her cult to suit their individual and collective needs. The cult of this saint requires further study, as I believe this analysis could go deeper. However, I hope that this small discussion here will spark further interest in the *ancilla dei* of Lucca.

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10 Webb, *Saints and Cities*, 9.

11 Goodich, *Vita Perfecta*, 3: "While his character was presented to youth as an object worthy of emulation, whose life embodies the noblest ideals of his age, at the same time the saints' developments reflects the social and political conflicts which engaged his contemporaries." This is an important quote which I consider relevant to the medieval veneration of all cults.

Catalogue of Figures

All photos are by author unless otherwise stated

Figure 1: Anonymous Lucchese (possibly Fatinello di Fatinelli), *The Life of Saint Zita,* late-fourteenth century, Archivo di Stato, Lucca, ms. 3459

Figure 2: Interior view of San Frediando, Body of St. Zita, San Frediando, Lucca

Figure 3: Anonymous, *The Volto Santo*, San Martino, Lucca

Figure 4: Exterior view of San Frediando, Lucca

Figure 5: Author, Map of the Via Francigena

Figure 6: Author, Map of images of Zita in England

Figure 7: Anonymous English, *St. Zita*, early-fifteenth century, St. Etheldreda Church, Horley

Figure 8: Cauldron, detail of fig. 7

A GUIDE TO FEATURES OF INTEREST IN THE CHURCH

1) COFFIN & OTHER STONES

2) RECORDED VICARS

3) DOMESTIC CHAMBER ORGAN

4) VICTORIAN COKE BURNER

5) ST ZITA

6) ST CHRISTOPHER

7) WAR MEMORIAL

8) CLOCK AND BELLS

9) BRASS EFFIGIES

10) "T" MEDALLIONS

11) COMMUNION TABLE

12) OLD GLASS

13) 1850 RESTORATION AND
      ADORNMENT
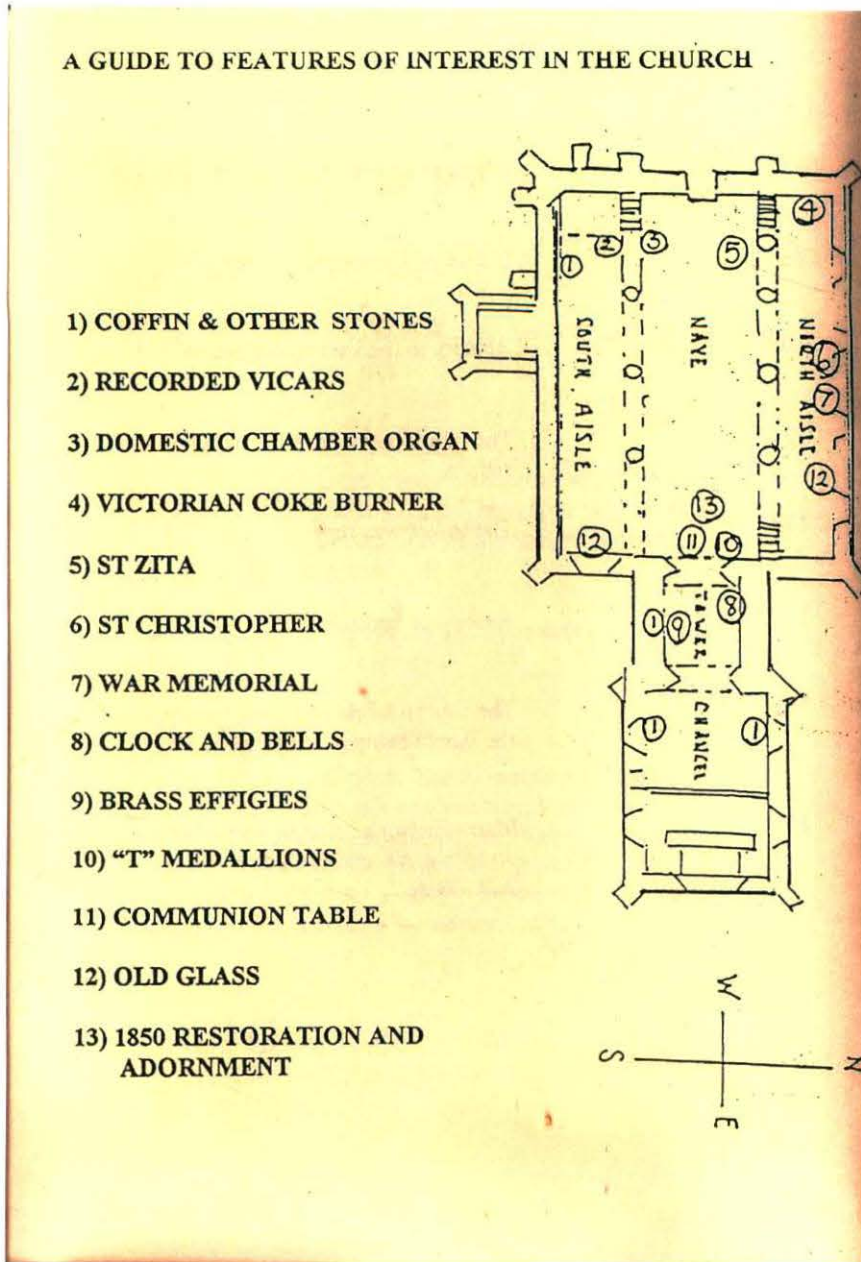
Figure 9: J. P. Bowes, *A guide to features of interest in St. Etheldreda Church*, Horley

Zita (5)

**St Etheldreda Church, Horley
Near Banbury**
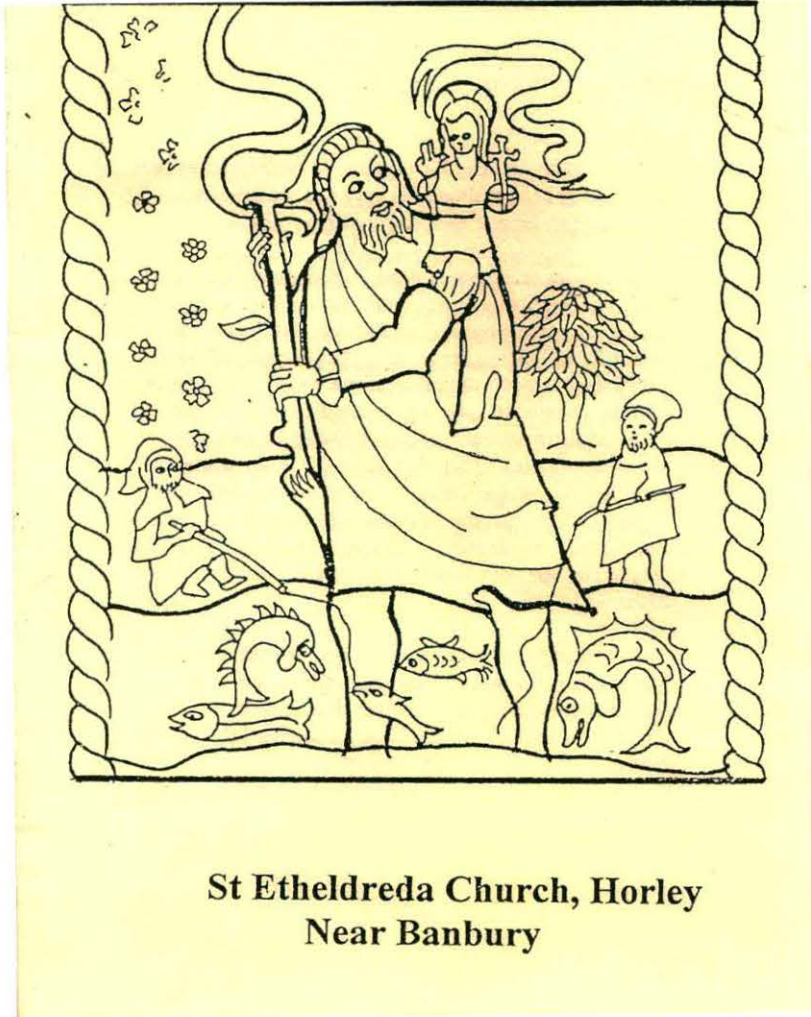
Figure 10: Bowes, *Mural of St. Chirstopher,* St. Etheldreda Church, Horley

SHORTHAMPTON CHAPEL

Plate 6

ST. SYTHA.

P. M. Johnston, del.

Figure 11: Philip Mainwaring Johnston, *St. Zita,* 1903, All Saints Church, Shorthampton

[*Archaeological Journal* 1905 (Oxford: Bodlein Library, 1905), 166: plate 6]

Figure 12: Anonymous English, *St. Zita*, mid-fifteenth century, All Saints Church, Shorthampton

Figure 13: View of interior of All Saints Church, Shorthampton

Figure 14: *St. Zita*, detail of fig. 13

Figure 15: Anonymous English, *Barton Turf Rood Screen*, mid-fifteenth century, St. Michael and All Saint's Church, Barton Turf

Figure 16: Anonymous English, *North Elmham Rood Screen*, sixteenth century, St. Mary Church, North Elmham

Figure 17: *St. Zita,* detail of fig. 16, (fourth from left)

Figure 18: *Sts. Dorothy and Zita,* detail of fig. 17

Figure 19: Anonymous English, *Sts. Zita and Apollonia*, 1436, All Saints Church, Litcham

Figure 20: *St. Zita*, detail of fig. 19

Figure 21: Anonymous English, *Westhall Rood Screen*, 1512, St. Andrew's Church, Westhall
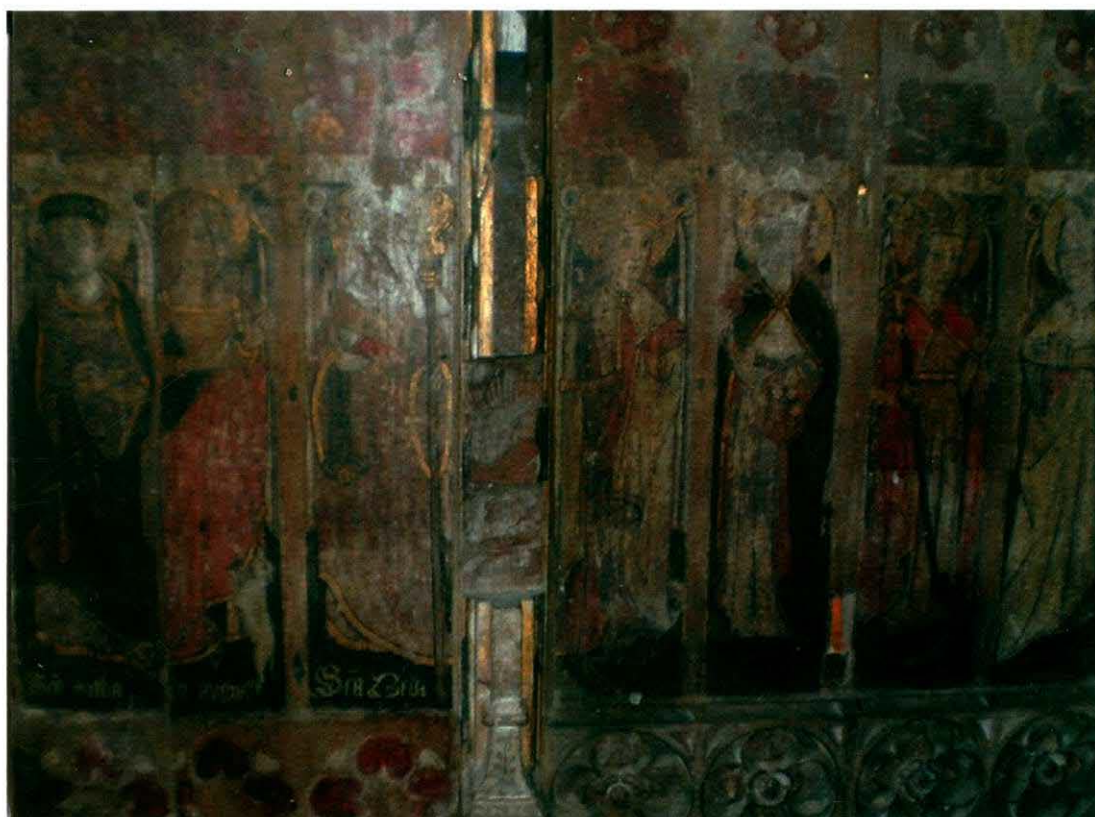
Figure 22: *St. Zita*, detail of fig. 21, (second from right)

Figure 23: *St. Zita*, detail of fig. 21, (centre)

Figure 24: Anonymous English, *St. Zita*, All Saints Church, Barton Turf

Figure 25: *St. Zita,* detail of fig. 24, (second from left)

Figure 26: Dominican Artist, *Zita*, The Bolton Hours, c. 1407-20, York?, York Minster Library, ms. Add. 2, f. 40v.

Figure 27: Dominican Artist, *Family/Patron Group*, The Bolton Hours, c. 1407-20, York?, York Minster Library, ms. Add. 2, f. 1v.

Figure 28: John Lacy, *Sts. Winifred and Zita*, The John Lacy Hours, 1420, St. John's College, Oxford, ms. 94, f. 35

Figure 29: The Maximillian Master, *St. Zita*, The Hastings Hour, c. 1475-83, Ghent-Bruge, London British Library, ms. 54782 [Photo: Turner, fig. 66b]
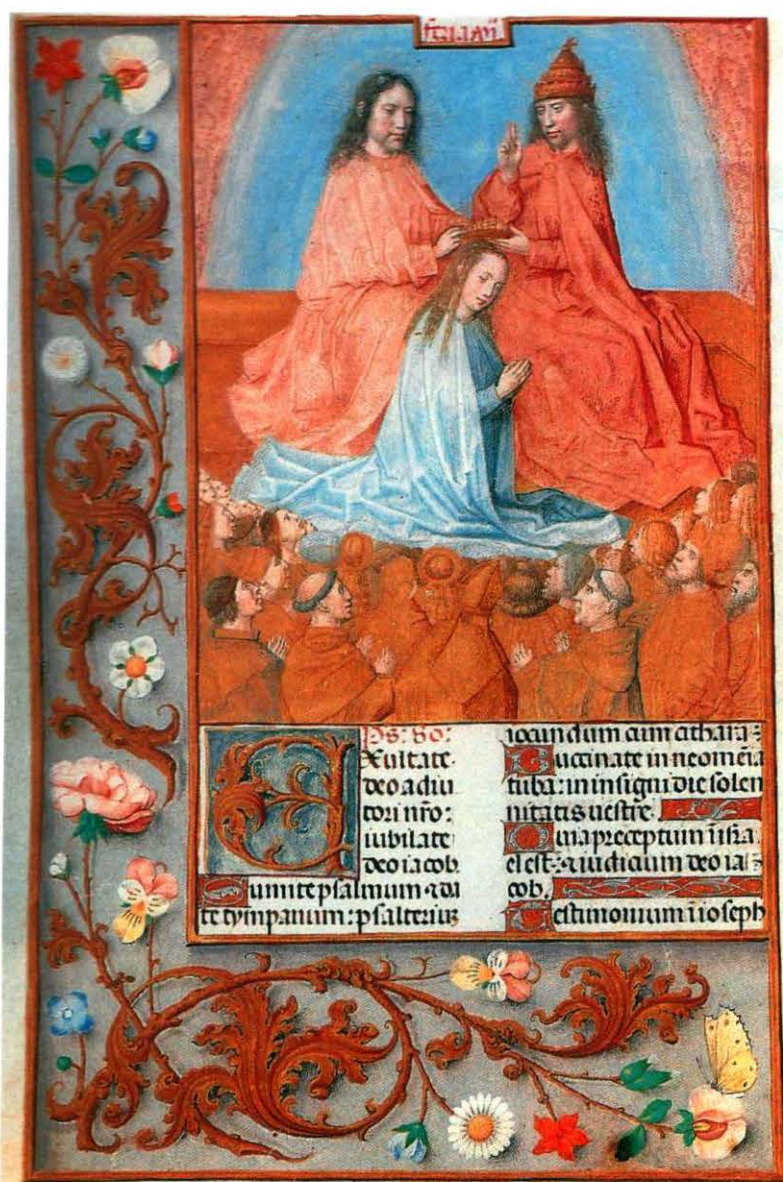
Figure 30: The Mayer Master, *Coronation of the Virgin*, Mayer van der Bergh Breviary, 1410, Ghent-Bruge, inv. 946: fol. 75v, [Smeyers and Van der Stock, *Flemish Illuminated Manuscripts*, 41]

Figure 31: Interior view of Our Lady's Chapel, St. John the Baptist Church, East Markham
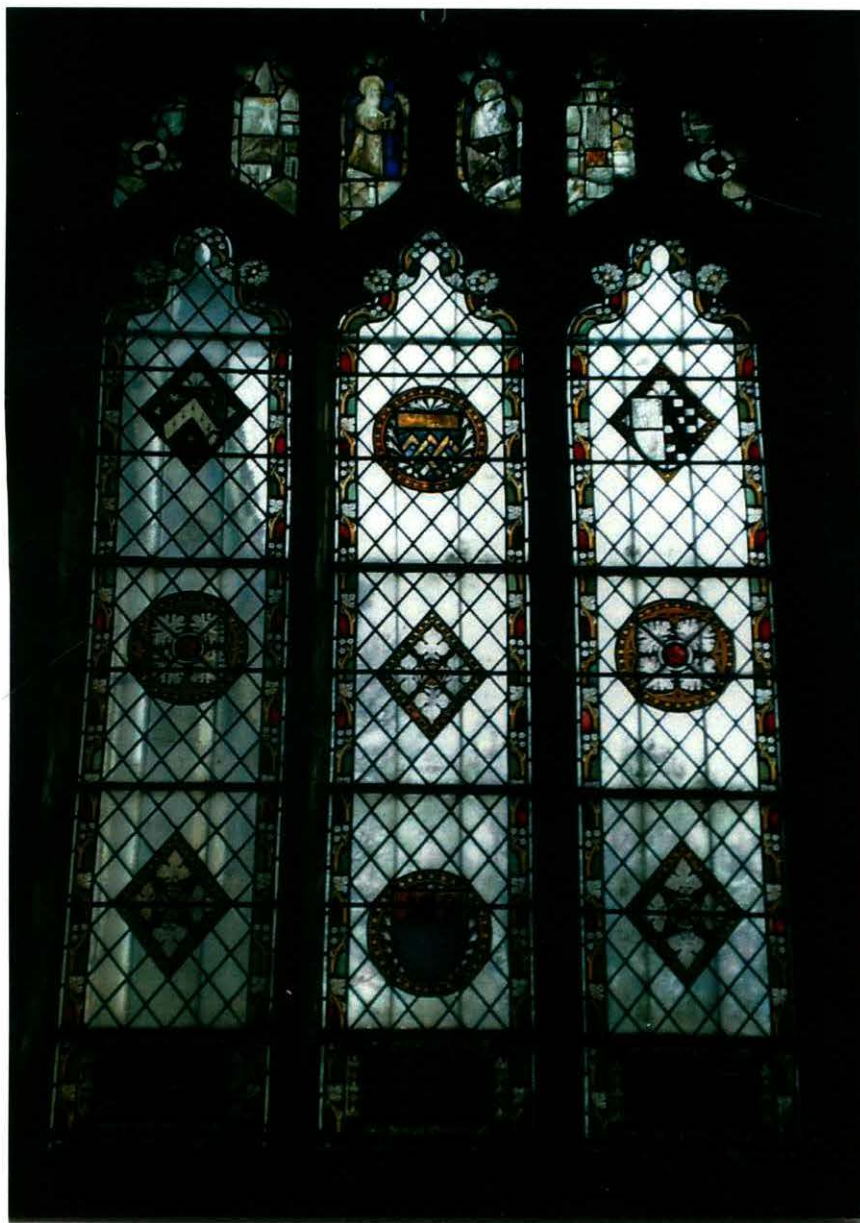
Figure 32: Anonymous English, *St. Zita*, fifteenth century, St. John the Baptist Church, East Markham
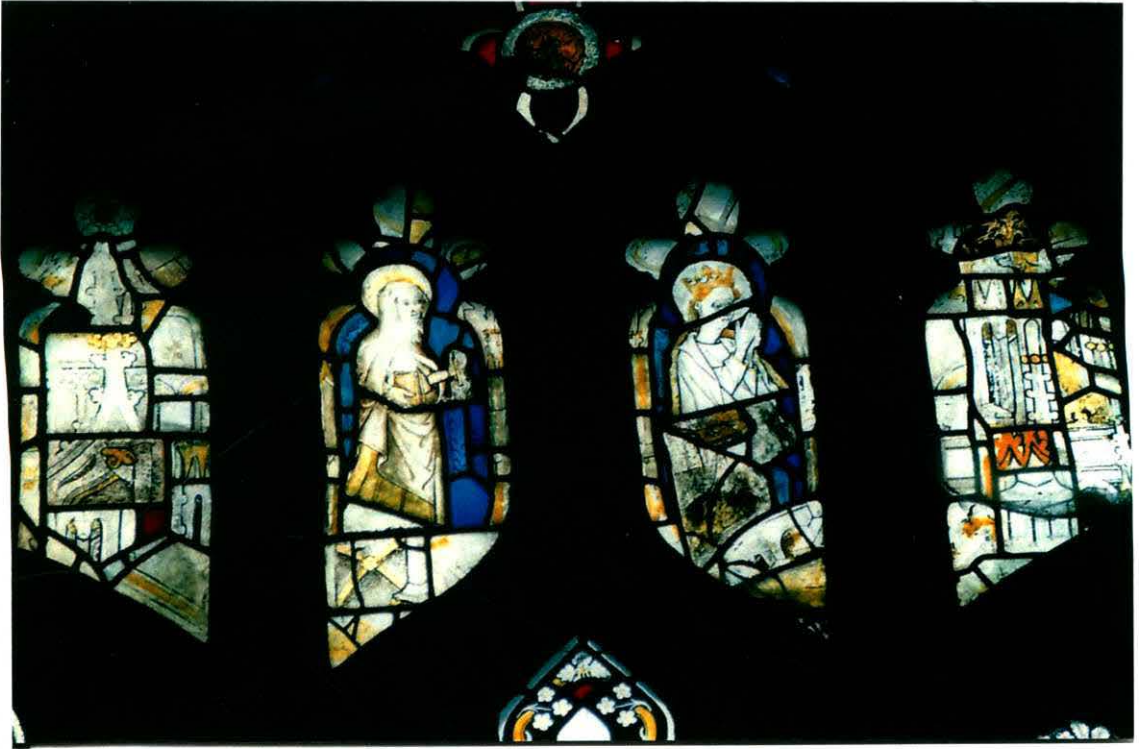
Figure 33: *Zita and the Virgin*, detail of fig. 32

Figure 34: Anonymous English, *St. Zita*, mid-fifteenth century, Mells Church, Frome
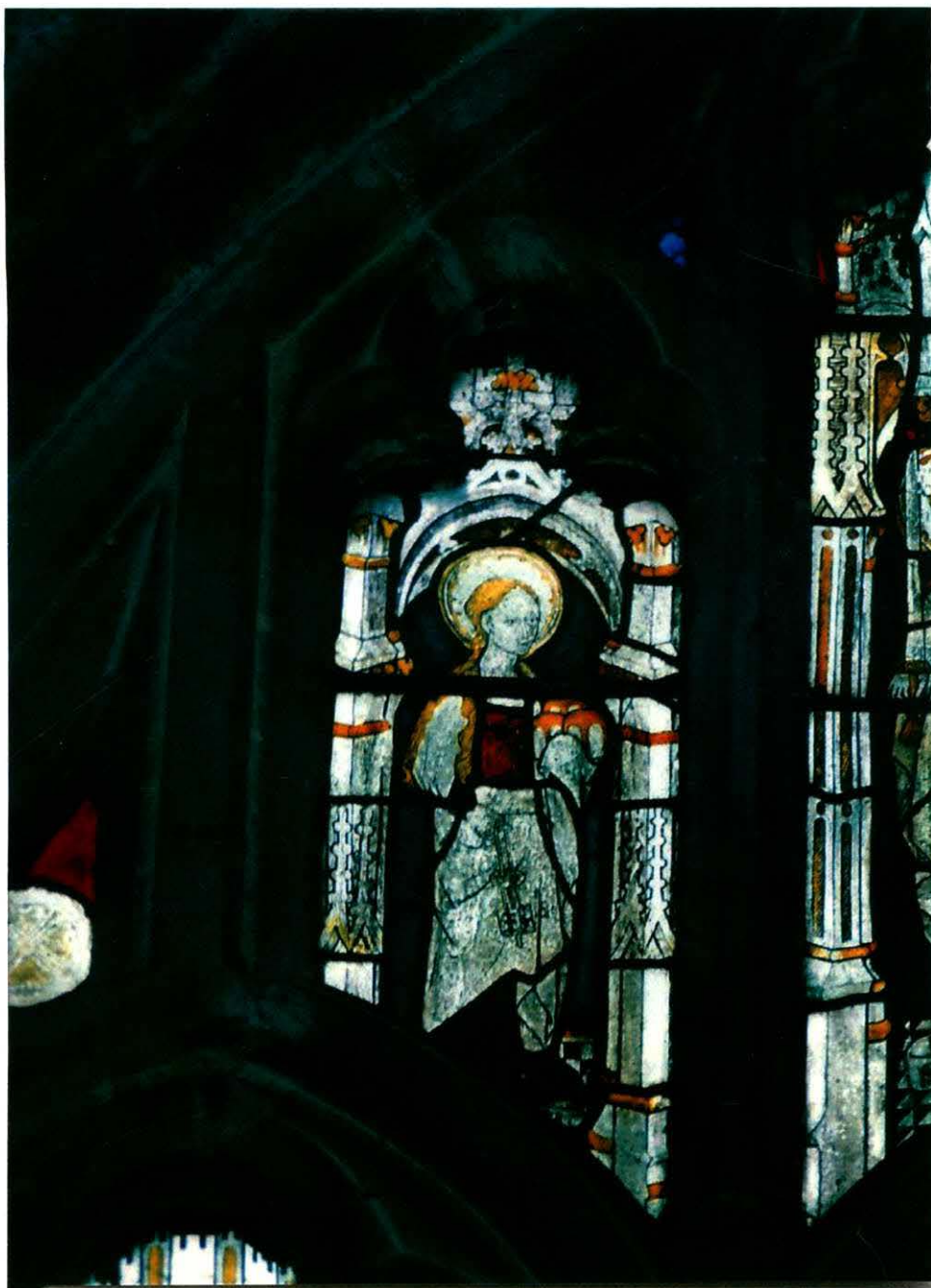
Figure 35: *St. Zita*, detail of fig. 34

Figure 36: Anonymous English, *St. Zita and the Virgin Mary*, mid to late-fifteenth century, Parish Church of St. Edmund, Emneth

Figure 37: *St. Zita*, detail of fig. 36

Figure 38: Anonymous English, *St. Zita,* c. 1475-1500, All Saint's Church, Langport, Somserset (second centre row of main window section,second from right).
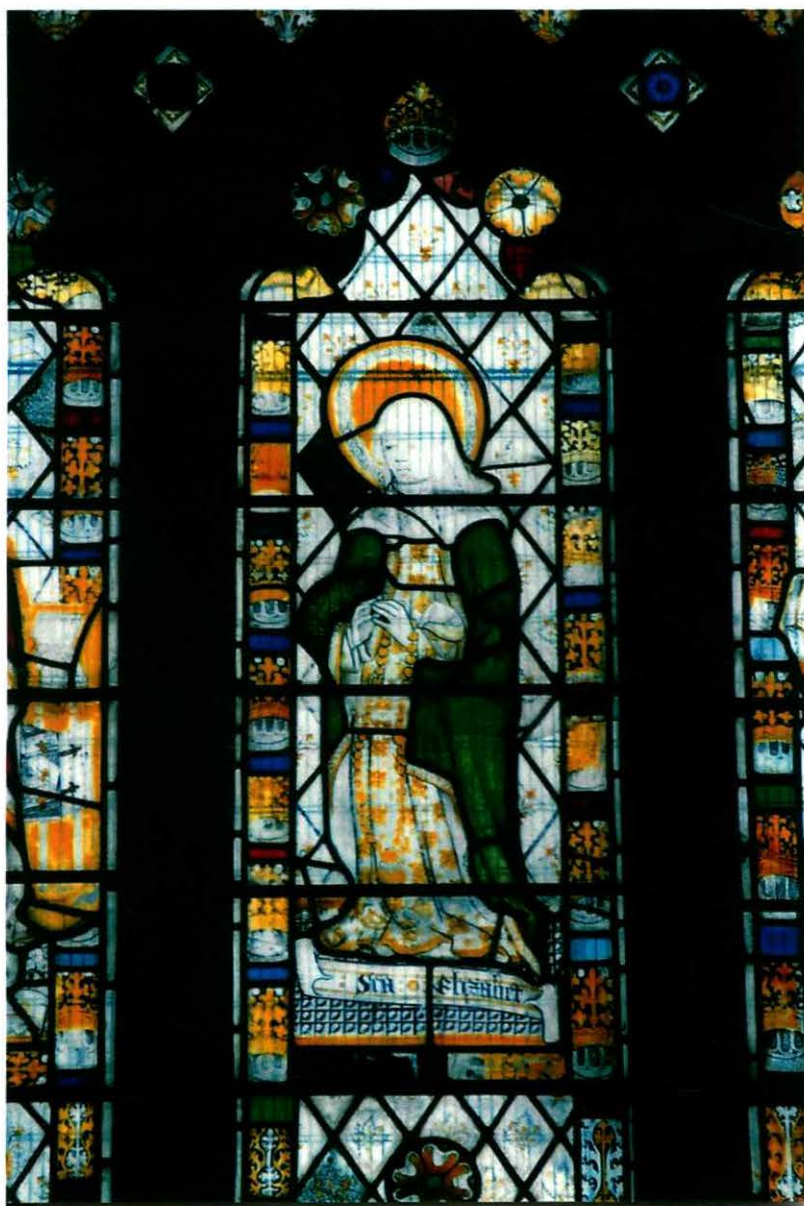
Figure 39: *St. Zita*, detail of fig. 38

Figure 40: Anonymous Netherlandish/English, *St. Zita*, c. 1501-15, Winchester Cathedral, York, Hampshire

Courtesy Soc. Antiquaries

FIG. 15: ST. SITHA

(p. 83)

Figure 41: Anonymous Nottingham English, *St. Zita*, fifteenth century, Nottingham Castle Collection [Photo: Hildburgh, 'Medieval English Alabaster', 83: fig. 15]

Figure 42: Anonymous Nottingham, *St. Zita*, c. 1470-1500, Private Burrell Collection, Glasgow, inv. no. 1/44
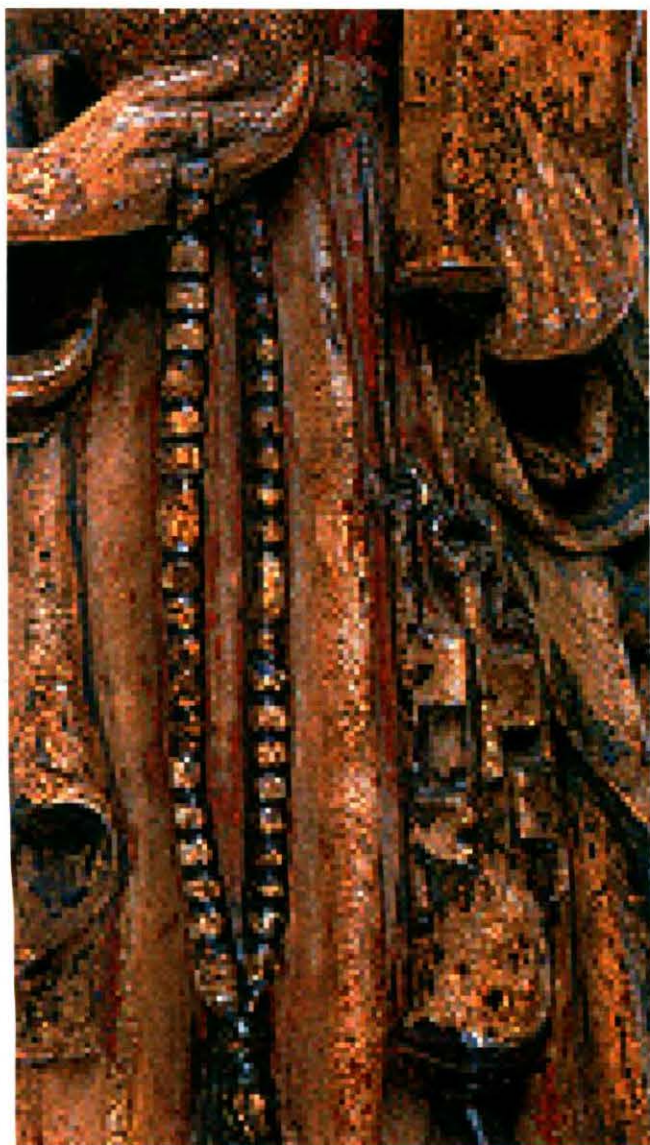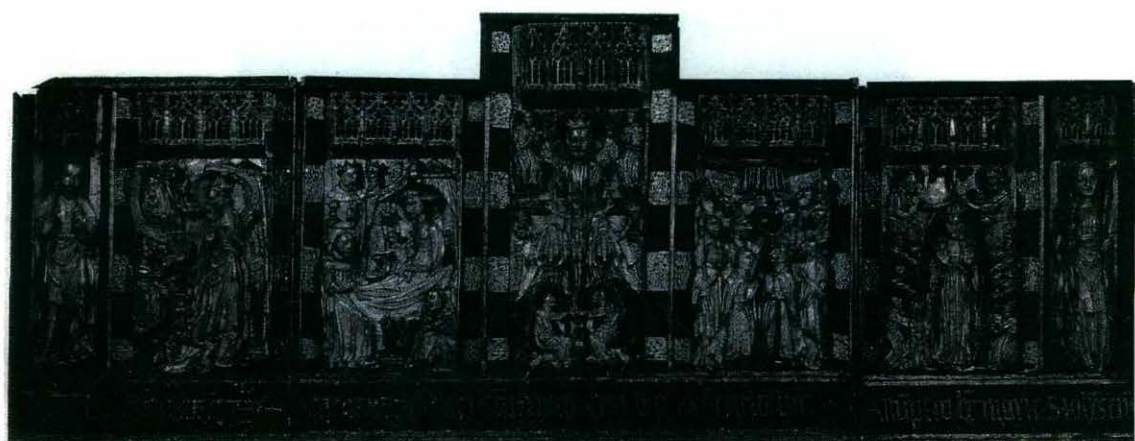
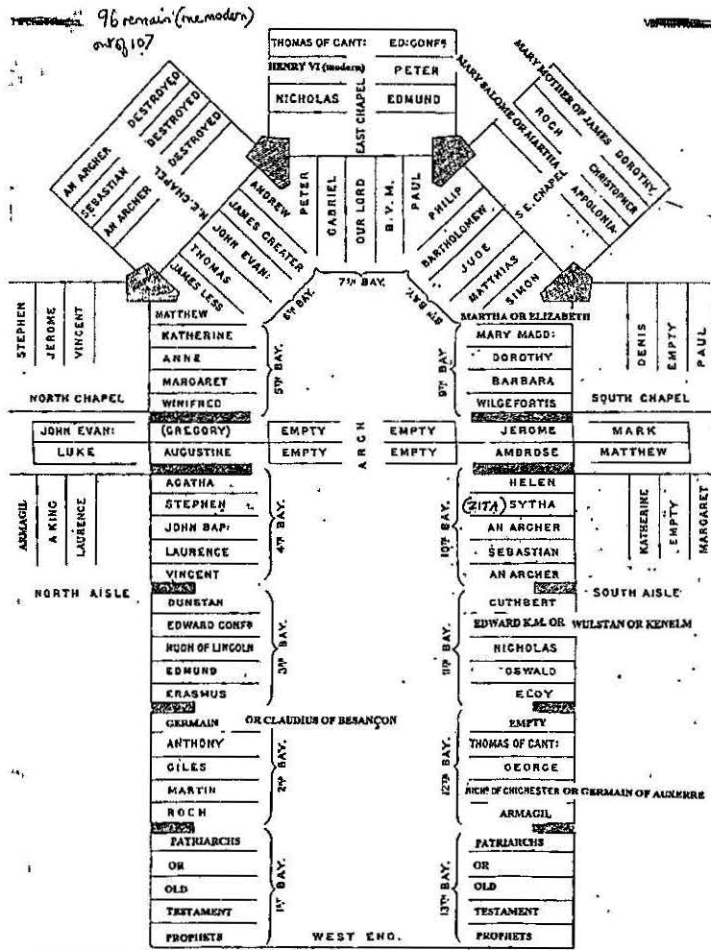Figure 43: *St. Zita*, detail of fig. 42

Figure 44: Anonymous Nottingham, *Swansea Altarpiece*, c. 1450-80, Victoria and Albert Museum, London [Photo: Williamson, *Object of Devotion*, 37]

Figure 45: Anonymous English, *St. Zita*, 1509, Chapel of Henry VII, Westminster Abbey, London [Dean and Chapter of Westminster]

A SYNOPTICAL VIEW OF THE IMAGES INSIDE HENRY VIIth CHAPEL.
The Names in Brackets are those of Figures now gone. Names marked ? are more or less doubtful.

Updated list with names in bolder type identified by Phillip Lindley. (see Lady Chapel book, 2003)

Figure 46: Philip Lindley, *Chapel Henry VII Plan*, [Lindley, *Westminster Abbey*, 281]
Westminster Abbey: The Lady Chapel of Henry VII (The Boydell Press, 2003)

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