Fig. 23.1: Sculpture at the right jamb of the south chancel porch, c. 1225, Nidaros Cathedral.

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Chapter 23
The Virtues Building Jerusalem: The Four Daughters of God and Their Long Journey to Norwegian Law in the Thirteenth Century

From the late twelfth to the late thirteenth century, the Norwegian state was fundamentally transformed. A legal revolution was a major part of this transformation, turning law and the system of conflict resolution into an instrument of governance.[1] The ambitious aim was to ensure that all acts of governance, even in remote courts that normally would be beyond the control of the king and his administration, would please God and unleash his blessings rather than his wrath. To achieve this transcendent aim, the allegory of the Four Daughters of God played a central role. This chapter will show how the allegory was employed in Norwegian law, and how it connects to Jerusalem as an authoritative model of just rule.

Jerusalem as a *Topos* in the *King's Mirror*

The allegory of the Four Daughters of God, which has its origins in the Psalms, went through several transformations from *Midrash Rabba* to sermons written in the Parisian abbey of St Victor. In thirteenth-century Norway, it has left traces in the decoration of the Nidaros Cathedral and the teachings in *Konungs skuggsjá* (the King's Mirror), before it was included in one of the about 220 chapters in the Norwegian Code of 1274, to be read aloud before any major decision was made in a court in the Norwegian realm. As argued below, the allegory is intimately related to Jerusalem as a model of government for the ruling king, and for all adjudication – as an act of governance – in the king's name.

The city of Jerusalem was a *topos* known to the makers of the Norwegian Code of 1274. This can be deduced from the references to Jerusalem found in the *King's Mirror*, written in Old Norse probably in the late 1250s.[2] This text was used at the king's court for educational purposes, and thus must have been well known to King

1 Sverre Bagge, *From Viking Stronghold to Christian Kingdom. State Formation in Norway,* c.*900–1350* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2010), 220–5.

2 Sverre Bagge, *The Political Thought of the King's Mirror* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1987), 12–15.

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Magnus VI the Law mender (1238–1280), who was in charge of lawmaking. It must also have been familiar to the aristocrats participating in the King's lawmaking project in the 1260s and early 1270s.

There are five references on four different occasions to Jerusalem in the three parts of the *King's Mirror*. In Part I on the Merchant, the land of Jerusalem [*iorsala land*] is referred to as an example of places in the south where warmth in the summer is as harmful as cold weather is in the winter in the north.[3] In Part II on The Man at Court, two references are made to the ignorant man who goes to Jerusalem [*iorsal*] and gains no wisdom from the journey to the Holy City, and on his return tells stories that the learned only find ridiculous.[4] In Part III on the King, reference is made twice to the city of Jerusalem. Firstly, there is the depiction of how God in his wrath punished Israel with a plague after King David had acted unjustly (2 Sam 24:15–18). As the plague in the shape of God's angel with a flaming sword approached Jerusalem [*iorsala borgar*], David asked the angel to punish him rather than the people of God.[5] Secondly, there is the depiction of how King Solomon decided that Shimei would only be safe from rightful punishment as long as he stayed in the city of Jerusalem [*iorsalaborg*], which he left three years later and was subsequently captured and killed by the king (1. Kgs 2:36–46).[6]

The references to Jerusalem in Parts I and II of the *King's Mirror* are geographical and of no symbolic significance. In the example in Part I, Jerusalem is in some manuscripts mentioned alongside Apulia in Italy as an intolerably hot place in summer,[7] and it would have made no difference if Apulia was mentioned alone. In Part II, the reference to Jerusalem could instead have been to Rome, for instance, without the meaning of the passage being changed at all. However, in the two references to Jerusalem in Part III of the *King's Mirror*, a biblical *topos* applies, besides being geographical and historical. Not only were David and Solomon, kings of Israel with their seat in Jerusalem, role models for the young princes intended to read the *King's Mirror*, but the theme of the two stories is about the "political" virtues of justice, peace, truth, and mercy.

God's wrath was unleashed by King David's unjust act, and a plague tormented his realm. It is, however, first when the plague approaches Jerusalem that David is forced to speak the truth of his own injustice, and steps out of the city and forward to take the punishment he deserves. The reference to King Solomon describes a very different situation. The king holds back a just judgment and grants undeserved

3 *Konungs skuggsiá*, trans. Ludvig Holm-Olsen, Norrøne tekster 1, Oslo: Norsk historisk Kjeldeskrift-Institutt, 1983.

4 *Konungs skuggsiá*, 39.

5 *Konungs skuggsiá*, 115.

6 *Konungs skuggsiá*, 117.

7 *Kongespeilet*, trans. Anton Wilhelm Brøgger (Oslo: De norske bokklubbene, 2000); *Kongsspegelen*, trans. Alf Hellevik (Oslo: Det norske samlaget, 1965).

mercy for Shimei to enjoy peace as long as he stays in Jerusalem. When Shimei nonetheless leaves the city, he also abandons the merciful peace granted to him, and is thus captured and killed. Implicitly, the historical Jerusalem of the biblical kings is construed as an ideal state that mirrors the Heavenly Jerusalem, and is hence tied to justice, peace, truth, and mercy. This effects how the two kings act.

The key issue in Part III of the *King's Mirror* is the following: how can the Norwegian realm be turned into a Jerusalem of justice, peace, truth, and mercy? Parts I and II, that together makes up a little more than half the text, are aimed at very practical issues, and deal with, for example, how to sail from Norway to Iceland and how to dress and speak at court. The essence of the two parts is how to have success as a merchant and a man at court. Part III is also practically aimed, dealing with how to govern the realm. However, the practical advice is not for the prosperity and progress of the king, but for the benefit of the realm: "kingship was established and appointed to look after the needs of the whole realm and people rather than for sports and vain amusements," is plainly stated in the *King's Mirror*.[8] Law, and the application of law, is one main instrument to achieve this. When the Lord in Gibeon appeared before Solomon in a dream and told him to ask for whatever he wanted, Solomon replied that he wanted a discerning heart and the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, and to govern rightfully (1. Kgs 3:5–9). The king's prayer in the *King's Mirror* is along the same lines, asking the Lord for the ability to pass just judgments. Notably, the king here considers his people holy, and clearly casts himself as the wise and yet humble Solomon:

> Thou has appointed me to judge and govern Thy holy people. Therefore, I pray Thee, give more heed to the needs of Thy holy people, which Thou has appointed me to rule over, than to my merits; but give me the right understanding, self-control and sense of justice, eloquence, purpose, and good intentions, so that I may be able to judge and determine the cause of rich and poor in such a way that Thou will be pleased, while they will rejoice that justice is done among them.[9]

The king's duty is to protect his realm from God's wrath by punishing the unrighteous and untruthful, but also by granting mercy and securing peace. In the *King's Mirror*, this duty is being taught to princes and young aristocrats at court, and the two stories of King David and King Solomon serve as didactic *exempla*. As we have seen, Jerusalem also serves as a symbol in this context.

Even though we can detect the use of Jerusalem as a *topos* in the *King's Mirror*, the Holy City plays no prominent role in the text. Far more important are justice, peace, truth, and mercy. They are not simply abstract virtues, but construed as personifications, in accordance with medieval literary practice. They are variably

8 *The King's Mirror (Speculum regale – Konúngs skuggsjá*. (New York-Oxford: The American-Scandinavian Foundation/London: Humphrey Mildford-Oxford University Press, 1917), 297.

9 *King's Mirror*, 294.

called the Four Daughters of God and the Four Sisters. We encounter them for the first time in the *King's Mirror* when God makes a pact with Adam:

> Four sisters were called to witness this covenant, divine virgins, who should hear the laws decreed and learn all the terms of the agreement: the first was named Truth, the second, Peace, the third, Justice, and the fourth, Mercy. And God spoke thus to these virgins: "I command you to see to it that Adam does not break this covenant which has been made between Me and him: follow him carefully and protect him as long as he observes these things that are now decreed; but if he transgresses, you shall sit in judgment with your Father, for you are the daughters of the very Judge."[10]

God summoned the Four Daughters once again when Adam had violated the pact: "Since the law has now been broken, I want those virgins whom I appointed keepers of our covenant to sit in judgment with us."[11] Then each of the Four Sisters spoke, and gave a contribution to the verdict from their individual perspectives – truth, peace, justice, and mercy. "[W]hen the sentence had been passed in Adam's case, the sisters all came to a friendly agreement; Mercy and Truth embraced while Justice and Peace kissed each other with loving gestures."

This concluding passage displays the very origin of this allegory, the Biblical Psalm which reads: "Mercy and Truth have met each other, Justice and Peace have kissed" [*misericordia et veritas occurrerunt, iustitia et pax deosculatae sunt*] (Ps 85 (84)). The idea in both Psalm 85 (84) and in the allegory is that perfect harmony – the ideal state of things – is achieved when these virtues come together in unity. According to the *King's Mirror*, it was the king's duty to bring them together in his courts:

> it is as much the king's duty to observe daily the rules of the sacred law and to preserve justice in the holy judgments as it is the bishop's duty to preserve the order of the sacred mass and all the canonical hours.[12]

As the Church upheld the world order through the liturgy, the king performed a similar task through his judgments. Hence, it is a most terrible disaster when there

> come failure in the morals, the intelligence, or the counsels of those who are to govern the country. For something can be done to help a country where there is famine, if capable men are in control and there is prosperity in the neighbouring lands. But if dearth comes upon the people or the morals of the nation, far greater misfortunes will arise.[13]

The whole aim of the *King's Mirror* is to teach the future king, and those who will govern the realm in his service, how to perform governance in a way that will please God. The stories of King David and King Solomon, and several other stories, are pedagogical tools to ensure that morals and welfare will be upheld by – among

10 *King's Mirror*, 252.
11 *King's Mirror*, 255.
12 *King's Mirror*, 298.
13 *King's Mirror*, 194–5.

other things – just judgments. It is, therefore, all about building Jerusalem – the city that cannot endure injustice and demands the truth, as in the story of King David, and where mercy is granted and peace enjoyed, as in the story of King Solomon.

The Origin of the Allegory of the Four Daughters of God

On this backdrop, we can understand why the Four Daughters of God deserves a place in the *King's Mirror*. They are the very tools to build Jerusalem, i.e. a polity conditioned by divine virtues. The long, winding and surprising journey of Four Daughters of God from the Bible to Norwegian governance underlines the determination to transform the Norwegian lands into a realm governed by "the sacred law and [. . .] the holy judgments".[14]

The Four Daughters of God and their reception in Jewish and Christian cultural history have fascinated a number of scholars, but has never been a hot research topic. Richard Heinzel (1838–1905) and Wilhelm Scherer (1841–1886) published short pieces on the Four Daughters of God in *Zeitscrift für deutsches Altertum* in 1874 and 1877.[15] Hope Traver's dissertation *The Four Daughters of God – A Study in The Versions of this Allegory* is the first and only major work on the subject, published in 1907.[16] Traver also published a short piece in 1909[17] and an article on the subject in 1925.[18] Traver's work seem to have been unknown to Laurence Marcellus Larson (1868–1938), who translated the *King's Mirror* into English in 1917, as in a footnote in his translation, he searches for the sources to the allegory on the Four Daughters of God.[19] Rudolf Meissner (1862–1948) also seems to have been fascinated by the allegory when he translated the *King's Mirror* into German in 1944,[20] and in his 1943 article "Der Sündenfall im norwegischen Königspiegel," he uses the work of Heinzel, Scherer, and Traver to detect its origins.[21] Nonetheless, the first to

14 *King's Mirror*, 257.

15 Richard Heinzel, "Vier geistliche Gedichte," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 17 (1874); Wilhelm Scherer, "Die vier Töchter Gottes," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 21 (1877).

16 Hope Traver, *The Four Daughters of God – A study of the Versions of this Allegory, with Especial References to those in Latin, French and English* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1907).

17 Hope Traver, "The 'Four Daughters of God'," *Modern Language Notes* 24, no. 6 (1909).

18 Hope Traver, "The Four Daughters of God – a Mirror of Changing Doctrine," *Publication of the Modern Language Association* 15, no. 1 (1925).

19 *King's Mirror*, 257.

20 Rudolf Meissner, "Der Sündenfall im norwegischen Königspiegel," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 23 (1943).

21 Meissner, "Der Sündenfall im norwegischen Königspiegel."

place the *King's Mirror* version of the pan-European allegory of the Four Daughters of God into a Norwegian, historical context was Einar Molland (1908–1976) in his 1972 article "'Les quatres filles de Dieu' dans Le Miroir royal Norvegien."[22] Molland's article was translated into Norwegian and published in 1974 as "'Guds fire døtre' i Kongespeilet",[23] and again *post mortem* in 1996. Molland was as ignorant of Meissner's and Larson's efforts, as Larson was of Traver's, and he was also ignorant of the fact that Mattias Tveitane (1927–1985) had been working simultaneously on the article "The 'Four Daughters of God' in the Old Norse King's Mirror."[24] Tveitane had knowledge of Larson's work, but not of Traver's and Meissner's, and neither was cognizant of the ongoing work of Molland. Hence, simply relating these efforts to investigate the Four Daughters of God in a Norwegian context advances current scholarship.

In his quest for "den Mythus von den vier Törchtern Gottes" in 1874, Heinzel starts out with Psalm 85 (84) as the origin.[25] Scherer finds in 1877 that this short passage was developed in the Jewish *Midrash Rabba*.[26] This is observed independently by Larson in 1917.[27] Molland, who on the other hand was acquainted by the work of Scherer, elaborates on the subject and quotes this Jewish source from the early Middle Ages.[28] The *Midrash Rabba* reads:

> R. Simon said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, came to create Adam, the ministering angels formed themselves into groups and parties, some of them saying, "Let him be created," whilst others urged, "Let him not be created, thus it is written, Love and Truth fought together, Righteousness and Peace combated each other" (Ps.lxxxv, n) [. . .] What did the Lord do? He took Truth and cast it to the ground. Said the ministering angels before the Holy One, blessed be He, "Sovereign of the Universe! [. . .]Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."[29]

This is quite far from the description of the Four Daughters of God in the *King's Mirror*. Firstly, they were construed as daughters of God, and not as angels. Secondly, they were called upon initially to witness the pact God made with Adam, and then to judge when the pact was violated – not to discuss the very creation of man. Thirdly, the Four Daughters of God was not in conflict even though they

22 Einar Molland, "'Les quatres filles de Dieu' dans Le Miroir royal Norvegien – Exégèse médiévale de Ps 84, 11," in *Epektasis. Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Danielou*, ed. J. Fontaine and C. Kannengiesser (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972).

23 Einar Molland, "'Guds fire døtre' i Kongespeilet," in *Strejftog i kirkehistorien.*, ed. Peder A. Eidberg, *et al.* (Oslo: Kirkehistorisk Samfunn, 1974).

24 Mattias Tveitane, "The 'Four Daughters of God' in the Old Norse King's Mirror," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 73 (1972).

25 Heinzel, "Vier geistliche Gedichte," 43, who uses the old numbering system and hence refers to Ps 84.

26 Scherer, "Die Vier töchter Gottes," 415.

27 *King's Mirror*, 257.

28 Molland, "'Les quatres filles de Dieu'," 158–9.

29 *Midrash Rabba*, ed. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, London: Soncino Press, 1939.

represented different views. Fourthly, they fused into a harmonious unit without force or assistance. Even without this evidence, it would have been surprising if the allegory of the Four Daughters of God had travelled directly from *Midrash Rabba* to the *King's Mirror*. Rather, Molland's investigation displays that a model for the *King's Mirror* was created through a reception of this section in the *Midrash Rabba* by historical actors related to the abbey of St Victor outside the medieval walls of Paris.

It can be disputed,[30] but Molland finds – in the tradition of Traver – that the first to use this Jewish tradition in a European-Christian context was Hugh of St Victor (*c*.1097–1141), in charge of the school at the abbey of St Victor around 1133–1141.[31] In Hugh's version of the allegory, God descends to Earth to judge man, accompanied by Truth. On Earth, they are met by Mercy, who pleads man's case. Truth and Mercy cannot come to a common understanding, even after they are commanded to do so by God. God hence decides that Truth shall take hold in man's heart and Mercy shall return to Heaven with God, and in this way both Truth and Mercy shall see the case from the other side. As Truth later leaves man's heart and herself returns to Heaven, Justice awaits in Heaven and looks down and witness the coming of Truth. They both ask God for Peace, and Peace then descends to man.

We find Hugh of St Victor's version of the allegory of the Four Daughters of God in a compilation of miscellaneous texts, which probably predates his death in 1141. In the previous year, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) gave another version in one of his sermons. Bernard had a close relationship to William of Champeaux, who established the monastery of St Victor, and he corresponded with Hugh on the question of baptism.[32] In Bernard's version of the allegory, God has equipped man with four virtues – Mercy, Truth, Justice, and Peace – which man loses with the Fall. They are also mentioned as two pair of twins, as sisters, and Mercy addresses God as Father. After the Fall, the twins Truth and Justice accuse man, while the other twins, Mercy and Peace, argue for man to be spared. God calls the Four Sisters to Heaven, and there they are sent to Christ who most cleverly unites them.[33]

Molland also found the idea that Christ ensures harmony between the Four Daughters of God in a version of the allegory by Peter the Venerable (1092–1156) in his *Tractatus contra Petrobrusianos* from around 1137 and 1140. In this version, there is a conflict between Justice and Truth on one side, and Mercy and Peace on the other. The conflict originates from the Fall of Man, and through the death of

30 Elbert N. S. Thompson, "Concerning the Four Daughters of God," *Modern Language Notes* 23, no. 8 (1908): 233–4.

31 Arne Odd Johnsen, "Om St. Viktorklosteret og Nordmennene. En skisse," *Historisk Tidskrift* 33 (1943–1946): 420.

32 G.R. Evans, *Bernard of Clairvaux* (Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 98.

33 Molland, "'Guds fire døtre' i Kongespeilet," 39–40.

Christ, they are united.[34] We also find the Four Daughters of God in a version of the allegory by Stephen of Tournai (1128–1203), where they argue for and against man in a court where the devil is prosecutor. Yet another version is authored by Pope Innocent III (1161–1216).[35] However, these two last versions seem not to be linked to the text in the *King's Mirror*. The same applies for the use of the allegory in the theological poem *Chateau d'Amour* by Robert Grosseteste (*c*.1175–1253) from sometime between 1230 and 1253, even though Tveitane finds this text a possible source for the Norwegian version of the *King's Mirror*.[36] Rather than following the allegory of the Four Daughters of God further through the centuries,[37] we need to return to St Victor in the twelfth century to find the model that most probably influenced the reception of the allegory in Norway.

Pierre la Mangeur (1100–1179), better known as Petrus Comestor, was initially a canon at the St Victor abbey and ended his career as chancellor at Notre Dame in Paris, in charge of the school of theology from 1164 to 1168.[38] It was in this capacity he wrote his famous biblical commentary *Historia Scholastica*, completed in 1171.[39] There was a close relationship between Notre Dame and St Victor,[40] and Petrus Comestor returned to the abbey in his later years, where he was buried in 1179. He left behind a number of sermons. Traver first discovered a sermon dealing with the Four Daughters of God after the acceptance of her dissertation, but included some information about it in the published version, since it was "so curious that it should not be omitted".[41] Molland finds two of Petrus Comestor's sermons to be relevant for the allegory's reception in Norway, in which the Daughters of God are presented as assisting God during the creation of man, and at the judgment of Man after the Fall. As punishment, the four virtues abandoned man, but then Mercy and Truth, and Justice and Peace were reunited with man through the sacrifice of Christ.[42]

Molland concludes that the allegory of the Four Daughters of God found in the *King's Mirror* is in the tradition of Hugh of St Victor,[43] while yet stressing that it might

34 Molland, "'Guds fire døtre' i Kongespeilet," 41.

35 Molland, "'Guds fire døtre' i Kongespeilet," 42.

36 Tveitane, "The 'Four Daughters of God' in the Old Norse King's Mirror," 803–804. See also Traver, *Four Daughters of God*: 29–31.

37 Molland, "'Guds fire døtre' i Kongespeilet," 43–5.

38 John W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants – The Social View of Peter the Chanter & and His Circle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 156. Another prominent figure at Notre Dame, Peter Chanter, had extensive experience as a judge. There is no evidence that Peter Comestor did; Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants*, 7–9.

39 Thomas E. Marston, "A thirteenth-century Manuscript of Comestor's Historia Scholastica," *The Yale University Library Gazette* 30, no. 2 (1955): 60.

40 Johnsen, "Om St. Viktorklosteret og Nordmennene," 413.

41 Traver, *Four Daughters of God*, 17 n.13.

42 Molland, "'Guds fire døtre' i Kongespeilet," 41–2.

43 Molland, "'Guds fire døtre' i Kongespeilet," 46–7.

be related to the allegory as presented by Petrus Comestor.[44] I do not follow Molland in his reasoning. In Hugh's version, the Four Daughters of God are virtues, whereas in the versions of Bernard of Clairvaux and Petrus Comestor, they are simultaneously virtues, sisters, and Daughters of God. With Hugh, the main characters are Truth and Mercy, while Justice and Peace play a secondary role. With Bernard of Clairvaux and Petrus Comestor, on the other hand, all four play an equally prominent role. If we return once again to Hugh's version, Truth and Mercy are in conflict with each other, while in Bernard of Clairvaux's version Truth and Justice are in conflict with Mercy and Peace. In Petrus Comestor's version, there is no conflict between any of them. While they represent different views, these views are part of a larger harmony and cause no controversy. Lastly, according to Hugh, harmony is established by God intervening in the conflict between the Four Daughters of God. In Bernard's version, harmony is established by Christ. In the version of Petrus Comestor, an effect of Christ's death and resurrection is also harmony, but this is not achieved by Christ personally.

Against this background, the most likely model for the allegory of the Four Daughters of God in the *King's Mirror* is not that of Hugh of St Victor, but the versions by Bernard of Clairvaux and Petrus Comestor. Of these two versions, the one by Petrus Comestor stresses the harmony between the Four Daughters of God, and hence most closely resembles the version in the *King's Mirror*. However, as stressed by Sverre Bagge, we must keep in mind that the "source may be some lost version, or he [the author of the *King's Mirror*] may have borrowed freely from one or more of the extant versions."[45] The fact that the allegory of the Four Daughters of God was either based on a model used by Petrus Comestor that is applied in no other context than the Norwegian one, or more freely composed in a Norwegian context, is of great interest. Its uniqueness may indicate that the application of the allegory in this specific context responded to a specific need. It may be conceived of as guidance for the king and his civil servants in their pursuit to fulfil the will of God. They were aware that one day they themselves would be judged according to the same standards that God had demanded of them when judging.[46] Not only the welfare of the realm, but their own salvation was also at stake.

The Four Daughters of God in a Norwegian Context

As we cannot know for certain what model the allegory of the Four Daughters of God in the *King's Mirror* was based on, we can also not be sure of how this model

44 Molland, "'Guds fire døtre' i Kongespeilet," 42, 46.

45 Bagge, *The Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, 54. See also Tveitane, "The 'Four Daughters of God' in the Old Norse King's Mirror," 804.

46 *King's Mirror*, 360.

came to exercise influence in a Norwegian context. However, we can still make reasonable conjectures.

All three Norwegian archbishops between 1161 and 1214 spent time at the abbey of St Victor.[47] Archbishop Eystein Erlendsson (*c*.1125–1188) visited St Victor in 1161, while Archbishop Eirik Ivarsson (*c*.1130–1205) and Tore Gudmundsson (*c*.1140–1214) had both been canons at the abbey. Eystein was at St Victor too early to have met Petrus Comestor there, and through him personally become acquainted with his sermons in which the Four Daughters of God appear. However, his two immediate successors as head of the archbishopric of Nidaros could very well have done so. It can be claimed as a likely scenario that a young Norwegian canon sought out the older and renowned Petrus Comestor at the abbey, copied a manuscript with the sermons for study, brought them home to the edge of Christendom, and as archbishop caused Petrus Comestor's sermons to be far more widespread than they otherwise would have been. However, we have to keep in mind that there is a series of other possibilities.

Firstly, Archbishop Eystein might have met Petrus Comestor in Paris during his stay at St Victor just outside the city walls. After all, Petrus was head of the school of theology at Notre Dame and a celebrated theologian and exegete. Secondly, St Victor was a place of learning not only for Norwegian archbishops, but for Scandinavian clergy in general. Others stopped by the abbey, like *magister Godefridus et magister Walterus* who travelled to Rome on behalf of the Norwegian archbishop in the late 1160s.[48] Hence, a whole series of persons may possibly have brought a manuscript with the sermons of Petrus Comestor to Norway. Thirdly, there were also several Norwegian laymen of high rank visiting St Victor in the late twelfth century. The sister of Archard (*c*.1100–1171), abbot at St Victor 1162–1171, was married to a Norwegian aristocrat, probably the governor Salmund Sigurdsson.[49] In a letter from the 1160s, she raises the issue that many Norwegians misuse the hospitality of the monastery by claiming friendship with her husband.[50] Either, Salmund himself, his wife, or son,[51] or any of these unknown, parasitic guests may well have brought a manuscript with the sermons of Petrus Comestor to Norway, thereby making the allegory of the Four Daughters of God known here. Fourthly, we can imagine several persons, known and/or unknown, clergy and/or non-clergy, Norwegian and/or non-Norwegian, who in the second half of the twelfth century travelled to Norway with a manuscript containing the sermons of Petrus Comestor for a variety of purposes. Fifthly, it is also possible that no manuscript of Petrus Comestor's sermons was brought to Norway

47 For the relations between Nidaros and St Victor, see Chapter 14 (Øystein Ekroll), 183.

48 Johnsen, "Om St. Viktorklosteret og Nordmennene," 410; DN: 19, 46.

49 Arne Odd Johnsen, "Om nordmenns studiereiser i middelalderen," in *Strejftog i kirkehistorien. Kirkehistorisk samfunn 40 år*, ed. Peder A. Eidberg, *et al.* (Oslo: Kirkehistorisk Samfunn, 1996), 56.

50 Johnsen, "Om St. Viktorklosteret og Nordmennene," 409–10.

51 Johnsen, "Om St. Viktorklosteret og Nordmennene," 410.

at all, but that the allegory was instead transmitted orally, and later written down in Norway. This could explain why the allegory of the Four Daughters of God in the *King's Mirror* does not exactly resemble any other known version. However, the most likely scenario remains that either the archbishops Eirik Ivarsson or Tore Gudmundsson was the source of knowledge of the Four Daughters of God in the version of Petrus Comestor in Norway. Possible evidence in support of this hypothesis is some worn sculptures at the archbishop's cathedral at Nidaros.

As we have seen, the allegory of the Four Daughters of God was linked to the Fall of Man in the version of Petrus Comestor. The Fall of Man is also the main theme in the decorations of the south chancel porch at Nidaros Cathedral, usually dated to about 1225, and substantially researched by Margrete Syrstad Andås. This portrayal of the Fall of Man is far more elaborate than is usual in the Late Romanesque period, and Andås concludes that "[T]his must be considered a significant break with an otherwise very fixed tradition and it should therefore be taken to indicate a clear intention from the side of the Cathedral".[52] Andås also finds on the south chancel porch not only a more elaborate portrayal of the Fall than usual, but also four worn figures that might be the Four Daughters of God (Figs. 23.1 and 23.2). The south chancel porch was a judgment porch, where a whole series of actions related to judgment (what we today would classify as judicial judgments) was carried out. Thus, in this porch and room for public action, you find both the story of the Fall of Man as well as a possible portrayal of the Four Daughters of God who witnessed the pact and participated in the judgment when the pact was violated.[53]

The pictorial program of the south chancel porch is likely to have been commissioned, or at least sanctioned, by the archbishop. If the four worn figures actually represent the Four Daughters of God, the archbishop must have favoured the allegory and known of the role the Four Daughters of God played in the Fall of Man in Petrus Comestor's sermons. The south chancel porch was completed around 1225, and might have been ordered by Archbishop Tore Gudmundsson before his death in 1214. As we have seen above, he had been a canon at St Victor, possibly at the same time when Petrus Comestor had returned to the abbey of his youth. However, there is seemingly an element missing in the south chancel porch – in Petrus Comestor's version of the allegory, Christ restores the relation between the four virtues and man, yet he is absent in the cathedral's sculpted south portal. However, on the keystone in the vault above the scene of the Fall of Man and the worn figures that might be the Four Daughters of God, we find Christ. He holds a book in his left hand and raises his right. In each of the four corners of the vault is one of the four

52 Margarete Syrstad Andås, "Art and Ritual in the Liminal Zone," in *The Medieval Cathedral of Trondheim. Architectural and Ritual Constructions in their European Context*, ed. Margarete Syrstad Andås, *et al.*, Ritus et Artes (Brepols: Turnhout, 2007), 98.

53 Andås, "Art and Ritual in the Liminal Zone," 96, 105–11.

Fig. 23.2: Sculpture at the left jamb of the south chancel porch, *c.*1225, Nidaros Cathedral.

evangelists. The resurrected Christ from the sermons of Petrus Comestor, who restores the harmony, is guarding "the sacred law and [. . .] the holy judgments," and makes the scene in the south chancel porch complete.

Before continuing, it should be noted that even if the version of Petrus Comestor was more suited for use in a judgment portal than the versions of Hugh of St Victor and Bernard of Clairvaux – because the judicial aspect was more prominent – it was nevertheless less suited than the versions of Stephen of Tournai and Robert Grosseteste. In both their versions, the legal aspect is a striking feature of the allegory. At the same time, none of the latter two were linked to the abbey of St Victor, the major source of learning for Norwegian clergy and others in the second half of the twelfth century. Of what was present in the intellectual discourse at St Victor, the version of Petrus Comestor seems to be the best choice for a judgment porch. This underlines the essence of the convoluted reception history of the Four Daughters of God we have now witnessed: it is likely that it travelled to the edge of

Christendom to serve a purpose, and that the role it came to play in Norwegian law and state formation was not by chance but intended.

The Four Daughters of God in a Judicial Context

As we have seen, the allegory of the Four Daughters of God originates in Psalm 85 (84). It was further developed in Jewish exegeses, then in a European-Christian tradition, before it travelled to Norway to be used in the judgment porch at Nidaros Cathedral in the 1220s, and then finally to become a textual image of the good judgment in the *King's Mirror* about 1250. The motives for choosing, reworking, and transmitting the image from Psalm 85 (84) have varied, and the allegory has served different purposes. However, in a Norwegian context the allegory primarily seemed to have served the purpose of illustrating good judgments.

An illustration of a poor judgment, not drawn from the stock of biblical imagery but rather from the legendary history of Themar in Ireland, was probably already well established in Norwegian intellectual life in the High Middle Ages. Themar– – Tem, Temere[54]– in the *King's Mirror* is Tara/Temuir/Teamhrach/Teamhair, the legendary seat for the Irish high kings.[55] In the *King's Mirror* the story of the kingdom of Themar is applied twice – first in Part I, when the marvels of Ireland are dealt with,[56] and for a second time in Part III, when the theme is governance in general and adjudication in particular.[57] The essence of the story is that the otherwise just king makes himself guilty of injustice due to friendship and enmity. By this, he disturbs the whole world order, and his throne, his castle, and the very land in his realm is turned upside down, and the realm is deserted. We have to keep in mind that there was a close connection between Norway and Ireland for centuries until the beginning of the twelfth century. It is quite telling that in the *King's Mirror* there is a section on the wonders of Iceland, Greenland, and Ireland, which hence were counted as a part of the Norwegian cultural sphere. Accordingly, this made the transmission of the story of the misjudgement in Themar from an Irish to a Norwegian context quite natural. It is probably a version of a well-known story from the Irish book of law *Senchas Már*, where it is said that when King Fachtna Ulbrethach gave a false judgment, the fruit fell off the threes and the cows would not give milk.[58] It is also linked to the poem *Audacht Morainn*, in which

54 *Konungs skuggsiá*: 24, 102, 04.

55 Brage Thunestvedt Hatløy, "Den eldre Gulatingslova i komparativ kontekst. Eit materielt og rettskulturelt blikk på den eldre Gulatingslova i lys av irsk mellomalderrett og Frostatingslova" (Master Thesis, University of Bergen, 2016), 5; Meissner, "Der Sündenfall im norwegischen Königspiegel," 280–1.

56 *King's Mirror*, 113–5.

57 *King's Mirror*, 308, 12, 14.

58 Hatløy, "Den eldre Gulatingslova i komparativ kontekst," 5.

the judge Morann teaches the prince the virtue of judging.[59] However, *Audacht Morainn* teaches the blessings of the right verdict rather than the course of the false verdict. However, despite the story of Themar being well established in Norwegian intellectual life in the High Middle Ages, it was not transmitted from the *King's Mirror* to the Code of 1274. Instead, it was the allegory of the Four Daughters of God that would serve a guide to the art of adjudication.

The allegory of the Four Daughters of God travelled a long way from the Psalms to the *King's Mirror*. However, as we have now seen, it also had to find its place next to an existing tradition on explaining the art of adjudication. The question then to be addressed is: what did the allegory have to offer that made it valuable? The thirteenth century was a period of restructuring of governance in the Norwegian realm after the civil wars between 1130 and 1217, after the abolition of slavery, which must have caused poverty and a vagabond problem, and after the breakdown of the kingship society, which must have caused a vacuum in regulation. At the same time, the dominating ideal image of the king was a king whose realm mirrored the heavenly order. To obtain a restructuring of governance that would please God, it had to be done by paying attention to the "the sacred law and [. . .] the holy judgments." The story of Themar informed the king of what not to do. The allegory of the Four Daughters of God offered the king more positive guidance. And who could better guide the king than those who had assisted God himself when making the pact with Adam, establishing the governing rules – and when God judged Adam after the Fall, applying the governing rules?

Bringing the Four Daughters of God into the Norwegian realm and into the courtroom of ecclesiastical law, as is seen in the judgment porch at Nidaros Cathedral, would be getting halfway there. The Gelasian doctrine of the two swords is a particular theme in the *King's Mirror*. The separation of governing power between Church and King is explained by using the image of the two swords and an image of two staves.[60] However, most elaborate and original is the image of the two halls.[61] In one hall, the bishop sits, and in the other the king has his high seat and judges in "temporal matters."[62] The author of the *King's Mirror* is far more concerned with the totality of power in governing the realm to the satisfaction of God, than with the border between ecclesiastical and royal power.[63] When the Four Daughters of God, a conventional ecclesiastical image both of judging and of the tool to pass good judgments, are brought into the *King's Mirror*, it would therefore

59 Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2001), 284; Fergus Kelly, "Introduction," in *Audacht Morainn* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976), XIII.

60 Bagge, *The Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, 114–6.

61 Bagge, *The Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, 117.

62 *King's Mirror*, 258–9.

63 *King's Mirror*, 364.

be necessary to ensure that "the sacred law and [. . .] the holy judgments" would govern the entire Norwegian realm, and not just the cases heard in the judgment porch of Nidaros Cathedral.

The Four Daughters of God in the Code of 1274

In general, Bagge finds that the treatment of law bears no evidence of the author of the *King's Mirror* being a judicial *feinschmecker* (epicure).[64] The author's legal insight does not extend much further than acknowledging the need for new and better law in the Norwegian realm. It is difficult to read Part III of the *King's Mirror*, comprising almost half the manuscript, without getting that message.

As already mentioned above, the *King's Mirror* was aimed at the princes and young aristocrats at court. Prince Haakon (1232–1257) fell ill and died in 1257. His 19-year-old brother Magnus stepped up and was crowned as King Magnus VI to rule together with his father, King Haakon IV (1204–1263). Up to this point in his life, Magnus might have had quite different plans, as the younger brother. He may even have been planning to spend his life in the hall opposite his brother's hall before 1257. According to a Scottish chronicle, Magnus attended teaching at the Franciscan abbey in Bergen in his youth.[65] When King Magnus VI died in 1280, he was buried in the Franciscan church, of which he and his father had been patrons. In his testament, he gave donations to all the poor in his realm. His Code for the Norwegian Realm of 1274 is also concerned with the wellbeing of the poor, and his legislative project can be seen as an attempt to put God's will into action in his Norwegian realm.[66] From the extant sources, King Magnus VI appears to have been a pious king with close connections to the Franciscans.[67] Under any circumstance, we must imagine that the allegory of the Four Daughters of God must have made an impression on him, because he put it in all of his Codes of law.

The *King's Mirror* warns that a poorly governed realm will fall into chaos. It might be said that the story of the Fall of Man in the *King's Mirror* is also the story of the fate of a realm governed by poor laws and morals. We have already seen the discussion on the disastrous consequences of "failure in the morals, the intelligence, or the counsels of those who are to govern the country" in Part II. We can imagine that the *King's Mirror* was not only an instrument for teaching princes and

64 Bagge, *The Political Thought of the King's Mirror*, 66–8.

65 Knut Helle, "Magnus 6 Håkonsson Lagabøte," NBL.

66 Jørn Øyrehagen Sunde, "Above the Law – Norwegian Constitutionalism with the Code of 1274," in *Constitutionalism before 1789: Constitutional arrangements from the High Middle Ages to the French Revolution*, ed. Jørn Øyrehagen Sunde (Oslo: Pax, 2014), 165–70.

67 Jørn Øyrehagen Sunde, "Kong Magnus VI Lagabøter og hospitalet i Stavanger," *Stavanger Museums årbok* 126 (2017).

young aristocrats at court, but for preparing the ruling elite in general for the legislation to come that would prevent this kind of moral fall.

Legislation on a broad scale as an instrument of governance of all spheres of society was a new idea in the High Middle Ages. The first code issued for an entire realm in Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire was *Liber Augustalis* for Sicily in 1231, and the second was *Las Siete Partidas* for Castile in 1265.[68] The later King Magnus VI's sister, Kristina (1234–1262), married Prince Felipe of Castile (1231–1274) in 1258. About 100 persons from the Norwegian court travelled to Castile with the princess in the fall of 1257, and could there witness the ongoing legislation. King Alfonso X (1221–1284) had, as part of the preparation for the new code, issued *Especulo* and *Senearia*, where the concepts behind the legislative activity was explained.[69]

Whether Part III of the *King's Mirror* was inspired by the Castilian *Especulo* and *Senearia*, or if it just coincidently served the same purpose in the Norwegian legislative project of the 1260s and 1270s, we cannot know. However, the legislative activity in Norway must have started about the time the members of court returned from Castile: King Haakon IV died in 1264, but King Magnus VI treats his father as co-legislator in the Code of 1274.[70] The Code of 1274 was based on the regional codes made for the four Norwegian legal provinces in 1267–1269, and the Icelandic Code of 1271 called *Jarnsiða*. The four regional codes have been lost, after they were replaced by the Code of 1274. However, a copy of *Jarnsiða* still exists. In this manuscript, the allegory of the Four Daughters of God comes first in a lengthy provision on how to judge. Since *Jarnsiða* was a part of the same legislative project as the regional codes, the allegory might have marked the beginning of these law books as well.

In the Code of 1274, in the Code of the Norwegian Cities of 1276, and in the Icelandic Code of 1281 called *Jónsbók*, the allegory of the Four Daughters of God was included in a provision in the book regarding what today is classified as crime and tort.[71] However, the content of the provision is general and regards adjudication in all kinds of cases. Hence, in most of the 39 copies preserved from the Middle Ages of the Code of 1274, the provision is given a title that ties it to all judgments. It starts with a demand on judges: they should investigate (*mæta*) the case carefully, because God will punish the judge who misjudges, especially the one who judges too strictly:

> There are sufficient examples that God has avenged harshly because they have judged too leniently, and even more severely because they have judged too strictly. And that is why the

68 Jørn Øyrehagen Sunde, "Daughters of God and counsellors of the judges of men – a study in changes in the legal culture in the Norwegian realm in the High Middle Ages," in *New Approaches to Early law in Scandinavia*, ed. S. Brink and L. Collinson, Acta Scandinavia (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 134–5.

69 Sunde, "Daughters of God," 133–4.

70 Sunde, "Magnus Lagabøtes Landslov," SNL.

71 Sunde, "Above the Law," 131–2.

> judges should choose to be mild if they can, because it is difficult to strike the right balance.[72]

The harsher a punishment, the more important it is to consult the Four Daughters of God, referred to in the Code of 1274 as the 'Sisters':

> But the more difficult it is, the more blessed are those who manage to please the four sisters, who shall be present in all just judgments that delight God and seem well measured to man.[73]

Each of the Four Daughters have a separate task when it comes to guiding the judges:

> This is Mercy and Truth, Justice and Peace. Mercy shall guard the judgment from anger and hatred. Truth shall see to it that lies are not told. Justice shall see to it that the judgment is not imbalanced by injustice. The task of Peace is to hold back so that a too rash and harsh judgment does not corrupt justice.[74]

But the provisions do not operate only with the Four Daughters of God guiding the judge, but also with equally as many bastards (*horbornum*), which are Fear, Greed, Hate, and Friendship:

> And to guard against misjudgements, one must be familiar with the pitfalls, and keep in mind that there are four reasons for false judgments. Either they are made of fear – if one fears the one on trial, or of greed – if one takes bribes, or of hatred – if one hates the one on trial, or of friendship to assist those one is in company with.[75]

The provision is not intended to be only of a symbolic character. The last section reads:

> That is why it is best if this chapter is read aloud when a sentence is to be passed in a major case.[76]

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72 The translation here and in the following footnotes is my own. The original text reads: "Finnazt *oc* nog døme til þerss at þeir hafa lotet harðar hemdir af guðj er van dømt hafa en þo hinir harðare er of dømt hafa *oc* þui skal domen hu*er*uítna til hins bætra føra at þeir vita iam vist hvartveggia þui at allmiot er mundangs hof", ms Holm Perg 34 4to (*Landslog Magnúss Hákonarsonar*), fol. 28v.

73 The original text reads: "en þui miorra sem er þa ero þ*ei*r þuí sælle er suo fa høft þ*ei*ra ííií systra hofe sem J ollum rettom domom eigu at uera suo at guði likar en monum høfer," ms Holm Perg 34 4to (*Landslog Magnúss Hákonarsonar*), fol. 28v.

74 The original text reads: "En þ*at* er Miskum *oc* Sannynddi Retvisi Friðsem Miskum a at va razt at eigi kome grimd eða hæipt J doma Sannvnddi a at gøyma at eigi verði lygi fr*a*m boren Rettvisi a at varazt at eigi verði með rangyndum hallat rettom dome. Friðsemj a at varð ueita þar til er rett*r* domr fællr a at eigi verði með reiðj akafr afellis domr alagðr," ms Holm Perg 34 4to (*Landslog Magnúss Hákonarsonar*).

75 The original text reads: "En at me*n*n varezt þui mei*r*r ranga doma þa ma varlla illt varazt nema vití *oc* þuí minizt me*n*n a at með fiorom hattom v*er*ða ranger domar Annat hvart með rætzllo at m*enn* ottazt þa*n*n er h*ann* skal døma vm Elligar með fegirnj þar sem m*aðr* sinkir til nockor rar mutu eða með hæift þar sem maðr hatar þa*n*n er h*ann* skal ðøma vm eða með vinatto þar sem m*aðr* vill væita lið felaga sinum," ms Holm Perg 34 4to (*Landslog Magnúss Hákonarsonar*), fol. 28v–29r.

76 The original text reads: "*oc* er æ þui bæt*r* er þersse cap*itu*li er optar lesen þar sem vm stor mal skal døma", ms Holm Perg 34 4to (*Landslog Magnúss Hákonarsonar*), fol. 29r.

We have no evidence of the actual reading aloud of the provision. However, this part is not missing in any of the preserved 39 medieval manuscripts of the Code of 1274, which might indicate reading aloud was an undisputed part of the Code. In more than 70 of the about 220 chapters in the Code of 1274 there is a reference to a more open-ended judgment that should be made. The need for guidance in this is already great, made even greater by demanding that judges should not follow the black letter of the Code when it was too strict or too lenient, but should pass a judgment that would be just in the eyes of God:

> The judges are appointed to measure cases and misdeeds, and to temper the sentence according to the circumstances, as the men at the *ting* and the person providing justice finds most truthful in the face of God and their own conscience. And not, as has been stated by the fool, that they judge only according to law.[77]

The central role of open-ended law can be claimed to have been present already prior to 1274, where negotiation played a central role in Norwegian law. The new element is the guidance offered with the allegory of the Four Daughters of God. At the same time, it has to be admitted that the description of the role of the Four Daughters of God when passing a judgment is vague, and one might wonder how much guidance they gave in actual practice. However, let us look at a specific case, a provision on repayment of debt for example. According to the Code of 1274 VIII-5, a poor person who loses all his property by fire or shipwreck or another kind of accident shall pay his debt when God makes him able to do so. However, how does the judge decide what 'another' accident [*oðrum misfellum*] is, or when God will have made the debtor able to repay his debt [*guð ler honom efni til*]? Let us imagine that a river has flooded the fields of the debtor and left it covered by sand and stone. Truth would then state that covering fields is not the same as the total destruction of a fire or a shipwreck. Mercy would state that a flood of this kind deprives a man of his income in exactly the same way. Justice would state that the creditor's well-being and prosperity is dependent on the repayment of the debt. And Peace would end the exchange of arguments by stating that a too hasty repayment of the debt would devastate the debtor, leave him a poor beggar who in the end could easily resort to crime, and hence disturb the peace which all in society benefit from, including the creditor. In this way, the judge would acquire four coordinates with which to navigate in the specific case. When consideration of all four virtues was made, the judgment would represent harmony between Truth, Mercy, Justice, and Peace.

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77 The original text reads: "En þui er domren til nemdr at þa skal ranzsaka *oc* meta saker *oc* misgerníngar *oc* tempra suo domen eptir mala voxtum sem þing me*n*n *oc* ret· taren sia sannazt firir guði eptir síní samvizku En eigi sem margr snapr hefir svarat her til at þeir døma ecki annat en log þui at sanlega skulu þeir þui firir suara sem log," ms Holm Perg 34 4to (*Landslog Magnúss Hákonarsonar*), fol. 28v.

This was an ambitious aim, and not met in all cases. However, we have reason to believe that the Code of 1274 was widespread and enjoyed high esteem, because around 1350 there might have been as many as one manuscript of the Code per 1150 inhabitants in the Norwegian realm. With the Code of 1274, the allegory of the Four Daughters of God was also communicated. If they were actually consulted in all judgments, the idea was that it would unleash God's blessing rather than his wrath, and promote the building of Jerusalem in Norway's green and pleasant land.