



## Sacred Fictions of Medieval France (Gallica)

*Maureen Barry McCann Boulton*

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The story of the life of Christ and his mother was told in many texts in various French vernaculars (Anglo-Norman and Old Occitan, as well as Old and Middle French) between the middle of the twelfth century and the end of the fifteenth; there are more than a hundred such texts, extant in at least 400 manuscripts. These "sacred fictions" are the subject of this book. Given that the principal events in the lives of Mary and Jesus were well known to potential audiences, the choice of genre was the most important decision facing a medieval author. The writers of these works made deliberate formal choices which their audiences recognized and which provided one frame of reference for reading them. Professor Boulton here classifies the different lives of Mary and Jesus according to the various narrative forms they take: epic, romance, allegory, chronicle, and meditative text. In addition, because a text's embodiment in its codex reflects how it was encountered by medieval readers, each chapter considers the transmission of the texts, as well as their often radical alteration in different manuscripts when they survive in multiple copies. Maureen Boulton is Professor of French at the University of Notre Dame.

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