

Reading Richard Rolle's *Officium* – Life and Miracles of an Uncanonized Hermit in Medieval England

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1. Introduction

At the 7th Korean-Japanese Symposium in Medieval History of Europe in 2010, I read paper titled 'Religious Women in Medieval East Anglia – Not isolated, but marginalized'. In that paper, I considered gender bias problem on medieval religious women. I dealt with two religious women in England: one was a famous anchoress, Julian of Norwich and the other was a disputable vowess, Margery Kempe of Lynn. In my conclusion, I wrote:

The absence of historical evidence makes some religious women invisible to our eyes. And at the same time, applying modern terms to religious women gives an exaggerated importance to some of them. In this sense, both Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe of Lynn were marginalized religious women. Highly rated Julian is one side of a coin, and lower rated Margery is the other. Religious women are not isolated, but marginalized by medieval writers, who were mainly men, and then by today's scholars.¹

My question on that paper was who or what makes religious women marginalized. To answer my own question, my conclusion was not satisfactory, because I paid little attention to religious or semi-religious men. Evidence of rich communication between anchoresses and local lay people are found in some rules for anchoresses and wills probated in courts of medieval London, Norwich and other cities. Also religious or semi-religious men can be found in various types of written records in Medieval England.

E.A. Jones pointed out 'the neglected question of anchoritic masculinity'.² The purpose of this paper is to answer this question. In this paper, I will reconsider the origin of idealistic anchoritic lives from the Desert Fathers such as St. Antonius and St. Pachomius, and how *the Rule of St Benedict (Regula Sancti Benedicti)* lead people to the idealistic monastic life. Then, I will focus on writings about a life and miracles of Richard Rolle of Hampole (d.1349), a famous hermit.

About the terms, I will use monks/nuns for members of religious communities, anchorites/ anchoress for people who were enclosed in their cells which often detached to local churches or monasteries, and hermits/hermitesses who chose solitary lives but had freedom to move around.

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1 Sono Morishita, 'Religious Women in Medieval East Anglia – Not isolated, but marginalized', *Journal of Western Medieval History*, Ewha Womans University, Korea, No. 26, Sept. 2010, p.49.

² E. A. Jones, *Speculum Inclusorum, A Mirror for Recluses: A Late-medieval guide for anchorites and its Middle English translation*, Liverpool, 2015, p.xxxiv.

2. From the anchoritic life to the monastic life

(1) The Desert Fathers

St. Antonius (d. 356) was a religious hermit and is called one of the earliest monk who organized Christian monasticism. The Latin term ‘monachus’ derived from the Greek word was first found on a historical document written in the 4th-century, which coincided with his lifetime.³ Christians who wanted to re-create the life of the church of the Apostolic Age chose the solitary and ascetic life in the desert. Biblical texts tells people to keep single life, to abandon one’s personal property, and to retire from the secular world. ‘Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me”’ (Gospel of Mathew, Ch.19, 21.). ‘What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away’ (First Epistle to the Corinthians, Ch. 7, 29-31).

According to the *Life of St. Antonius* written by Athanasius, Antonius abandoned his property inherited from his parents when he was around 20 years old after listening to the gospel of Mathew I quoted above. He sold everything he owned and left his sister to Christian ascetic virgins with some money. He gave the rest of his money to the poor people, and then he visited an aged holy man who followed solitary life at the fringe of the village. During his ascetical training, he followed an old man’s guidance and had a relationship with other solitaries of the area. He kept strict life with fasting, deprivation of sleep, and reading gospels, and he was often attacked with temptation of evil spirits. Then he became to be an independent hermit, and kept his solitary life on the edge of the desert, but many people visited him who were attracted his ascetic life. After his 20 years’ solitary life in the desert, he started a new life as a teacher and as a spiritual leader. He cured ill people, drove away evil spirits, reconciled conflicts, and guided people who needed his help.⁴

People who sought his guidance called him ‘father (abba)’, and each person lived his own hut, but they often had spiritual meeting with Antonius and other members. The first monastery with monks was formed in this way, and in proem of *the Life of St. Antonius*, Athanasius wrote his *Life* for the people who wanted to know how Antonius started his ascetic life dedicated to the God, how he lived his solitary life, and how he ended his life. Athanasius wrote his life for his disciples, and his *Life* was read by people as a rule of a hermit. At the time of St. Antonius’s

³ Taiichiro Sugizaki, *The History of Monastery* (修道院の歴史), Sogensha, Tokyo, 2015, p.18.

⁴ Taiichiro Sugizaki, *The History of Monastery* (修道院の歴史), Sogensha, Tokyo, 2015, pp.21-22; C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 2nd edition, London, 1989, p.5.

death, there were colonies contained more than hundred hermits, around the Nile Delta. A group of hermits lived alone in each hut or cave, and at the center of their community, there were buildings of church and bakery. This is a quite different type of community from monastery we know, but this community of hermits developed to the monastery of nowadays.⁵ Hermits and their leader worked to gain their daily supply, and they produced baskets, linen, and ropes to sell. The first monastic community of hermits emerged in Egypt during the Diocletian Persecution, and in those days, people became to much care about their ordinary life as a good Christians than a martyrdom for faith. And after 313, the opportunity of martyrdom was rapidly decreased (but not vanished), then the importance of normative guideline for daily life was increased, however, any clear rule for their life was not survived.

St. Pachomius (d.346) converted to Christianity while he was a conscript of the Roman army. St. Pachomius also followed a wave of anchoritic life in the desert, soon he was persuaded by his disciples to organize the community and established nine monasteries for men and two for women. His monastery contained several hundreds of monks or nuns, and within the walls, there were a church, a refectory, an infirmary and a guest house. There are monks' residences which are similar to buildings of Roman Army camp where St. Pachomius spend his period of youth. Each house contains 20 monks and housemasters who controlled monks' life adequately. Antonius's community had a rule of ascetic life, and St. Pachomius's community introduced the communal residence of people which fostered fellowship among people and the necessity of obedience to the superior's instruction. His monastic rules was not survived, but St. Pachomius's community is one of origins of medieval monastery.⁶

Two main streams of the desert fathers, St. Antonius and St. Pachomius, were integrating into the rule of St. Vasilios of Caesarea (d.379). Unlike St. Antonius and St. Pachomius, Vasilios was highly educated person from wealthy family. He converted to the Christianity when he was 25 year old, and visited famous desert fathers. He was impressed by St. Pachomius's community, and on his return hometown, he started an ascetic solitary life not in the desert but in the forest of the north of Asia Minor. Few years later, he founded religious community at Caesarea, and set his rule for community. His rule was not a organized like law, but he wrote his rules in the form of Qs & As. The Longer rule contains 55 questions and extensive answers. The shorter rule contains 313 questions and short answers. Vasilios concluded that communal ascetic life is much better than solitary life. He also set the rule of stability. Vasilios became to be an archbishop of Caesarea, and he set the community of hermits into the church organization. The council of Chalcedon in 451 declared that no one could found a monastery or oratory against the will of local bishops.⁷ His rule for monastery is strictly observed in the Orthodox Church.

⁵ C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, London, 1984, p.6.

⁶ Taiichiro Sugizaki, *The History of Monastery* (修道院の歴史), Sogensha, Tokyo, 2015, pp.25-26; C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 2nd edition, London, 1989, pp.8-9.

The solitary life of hermit was difficult to keep their moral and often ended up to the moral hazard. People sought their solitude, but to avoid nervous breakdown or committing ethical transgression, the best way was to live together under the leaders control and guidance. Next, I will take a look at *the Rule of St. Benedict*, which became to the basic rule for monastery in the western Europe.

(2) The Rule of St. Benedict

St. Benedict of Nursia (d.543) founded a monastery in Monte Cassino circa 529 and wrote *the Rule of St. Benedict*. According to Pope Gregory I, St. Benedict was from upper wealthy family of Nursia, and went to Rome to study liberal arts. However, he was afraid of being ruined by vices, he fled Rome and gave up his property, and then he moved to Subiaco and lived as a hermit for three years with guidance of another hermit Romanus. St. Benedict's name gradually became to be well known among the people, he was invited to a monastery as an abbot. He tried to lead monks to the right way and strictly controlled the monastery to prevent corruption, but his effort was triggered a protest and some of the monks attempted to kill him. He returned to Subiaco, and organized 12 monasteries contained twelve monks each. Local bishop called Florentinus got jealous of his fame and give him a poisoned bread, and he caught out Florentinus's evil plot, the bishop sent twelve naked young women to his monastery. He was afraid that weak monks might yielded the temptation, he decided to leave Subiaco and moved to Monte Cassino. He founded a monastery there and gathered all of his disciplines into one monastery.

In St. Benedict's rule, first chapter, he explained four types of monks: first one is 'coenobitarum' who lives in an enclosed monastery under the monastic rule, second one is 'anachoritarum', i.e. 'eremitarum', who follows a solitary life after having a long monastic experience and having mind conditioned by discipline, third one is the most wicked kind of monks, 'sarabaitarum' who live alone, or in small group, without a rule, and the fourth one is 'gyrovagum', who keep wandering around, moving from a monastery to another monastery.⁸ In the 2nd and 3rd chapters are the rule for an abbot and monks, and following chapters, there are rules of management and daily life of monastery such as punishment, monk's daily meal, daily labor and time-schedule. And following chapters are about dealing guests and about communication with outside, such as monks' family. Chapter 55 is about monks' clothing and belongings, and acceptance of novices is on chapter 58 and 59.

In his rule, St. Benedict strongly insisted that the monastic life should be controlled by an abbot, but he recommended an abbot to have communication with younger monks before making decision. His rule is not too strict, and enough workable. Monks' daily life are well organized, and he laid weight on the need for stability. Novices were not able to be a member of the

⁷ Taiichiro Sugizaki, *The History of Monastery* (修道院の歴史), Sogensha, Tokyo, 2015, pp.26-30; C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, London, 1984, pp.9-11.

monastery without a strict procedure, and once to be a member of the monastery, it is not easy to leave the community.

From the Desert Fathers to St. Benedict, people sought an idealistic religious life and it is clear that solitary life in the desert is a best way. However, as the Rule of St. Benedict shows, the religious life in monastery was the most recommended and taking solitary life was discouraged.

3. From the monastic life to the anchoritic life

(1) Medieval Monasticism and the order of hermits

Between the 6th century and the 11th century, thousands of monasteries were founded by royal family and nobility, and these monasteries took rule of St. Benedict and other monastic rules. Most famous and influential monastery was founded at Cluny by Duke of Aquitaine and Berno who was appointed as a first abbot. The Cluny followed the rule of St. Benedict. Being patronized by local noble families, the Cluny controlled other local monasteries as its daughter houses, and in 1024, Pope John XIX granted the Cluny the privilege which made the Cluny being free from other religious control except the Pope. The Rule of St. Benedict ordered monks to play and work, however, the Cluny and its family monasteries became to spend much more time to play, not to work.

The Gregorian Reform of the 11th century concerned with the morality and independence of clergy from the secular interference, and simultaneously, returning back to the idealistic image of the early church, i.e. 'Vita Apostolica'. Monastic life at the Cluny no longer satisfied people who sought for salvation, since the Cluny's play was too elaborated and the powerful Cluniac empire could not be free from the secular involvement. St. Bernard of Clairvaux accused the Cluny, and

⁸ 'Monachorum quattuor esse genera manifestum est. Primum coenobitarum, hoc monasteriale, militans sub regula vel abbate. Deinde secundum genus est anachoritarum, id est eremitarum, horum qui non conversationis fervore novicio, sed monasterii probatione diuturna, qui didicerunt contra diabolum multorum solacio iam docti pugnare, et bene exstructi fraterna ex acie ad singularem pugnam eremi, securi iam consolatione alterius, sola manu vel brachio contra vitia carnis vel cogitationum, Deo auxiliante, pugnare sufficiunt. Tertium vero monachorum taeterrimum genus est sarabaitarum, qui nulla regula approbati, experientia magistra, sicut aurum fornacis, sed in plumbi natura molliti, adhuc operibus servantes saeculo fidem, mentiri Deo per tonsuram noscuntur. Qui bini aut terni aut certe singuli sine pastore, non dominicis sed suis inclusi ovilibus, pro lege eis est desideriorum voluntas, cum quicquid putaverint vel elegerint, hoc dicunt sanctum, et quod noluerint, hoc putant non licere.

Quartum vero genus est monachorum quod nominatur gyrovagum, qui tota vita sua per diversas provincias ternis aut quaternis diebus per diversorum cellas hospitantur, semper vagi et numquam stabiles, et propriis voluntatibus et gulae illecebris servientes, et per omnia deteriores sarabaitis. De quorum omnium horum miserrima conversatione melius est silere quam loqui. His ergo omissis, ad coenobitarum fortissimum genus disponendum, adiuvante Domino, veniamus.' in T. G. Kardong (ed.), *Benedict's Rule, A Translation and Commentary*, Minnesota, 1996, pp.34-35; Gyo Furuta, *Saint Benedict no Kairitu (The Rule of St. Banadict)*, Tokyo, 2000, pp.15-18.

he became to be an abbot of Cistercian Abbey in 1115. Other monastic orders were founded in the 11th century and 12th century, such as Cartusian and Fontevraude monastery. The Order of Cistercians branched off from the Cluny and other monasteries. Bernard of Clairvaux tried to make the monastic life return to the age of St. Benedict. Their lives were based on manual labor in woods and fields in remote place. Cartusian Order founded by Bruno followed their own rules, and it combined life of recluse and life of monks. Anchoritic life was a idealistic, however, they kept living together. From the 11th to the 12th centuries, the life of hermits and the life of monks became integrated, and the papacy tried to control monk-hermit under the system of monastic order.⁹

In England, hermits and anchorites are under bishops' control, and rules and rituals for anchorites are written by bishops and clergies. The Life of Christina Markyate depicted various types of hermits/hermitesses and anchorites/ anchoresses around Christina, but eremitic community of Markyate was finally transformed into a monastery.¹⁰

(2) Revival of anchoritic life

There were a number of religious options for men and women in medieval England. Christian society offered people both communal and individual lifestyles, such as a clergy (only for men), monk/nun, anchorite/anchoress, and hermit/hermitess. For seeking personal salvation, people attended Mass and listened to priest's sermons. Innumerable works on theological studies, church rituals and sermons were written, but these books were only for literate people. Majority of the people were illiterate, so priest's sermons and liturgy shepherded by people to the ideal life of pious Christian. It works quite effectively, and at the end of the 11th century, not only clerical and monastic people but also secular, ordinary lay people became to be aware of "Vita Apostolica", and some of them sought the life of "Imitatio Christi". From the 12th century, movement of various religious men and women became to be highly visible.

According to Warren, there are five religious options for medieval women in England.¹¹ Five options are nuns, hermitessess, beguines, tertiaries (a member of the third order) and anchoresses. Noble women, often a member of a royal family, chose the way to be a nun, or an abbess of a nunnery she or her family founded. However, the number of nuns were strictly limited because of financial and ethical issues.¹² Beguines (*mulier religiosa*) were women who lived and worked

⁹ Shunichi Ikegami, *Religious Movement of Medieval Europ*, (ヨーロッパ中世の宗教運動), University Press of Nagoya University. 2007, pp.8-106.

¹⁰ *The Life of Christina of Markyate, A Twelfth Century Recluse*, edited and translated by C. H. Talbot, Tronto, 1998.

¹¹ Ann K. Warren, 'Five Religious Options for Medieval Women' *Christian History*, Issue 30,1991, Christianity Today, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-30/five-religious-options-for-medieval-women.html>, 2019/06/02).

¹² C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, London, 1984, p.228.

as an informal religious group at the Low Country in the 13th-century. Gilchrist pointed out the problem of terminology, and the definition of "Beguines" itself is obscure and need to check each Beguine's historical and material evidence carefully.¹³ Generally speaking, there was no Beguine in England. Tertiary, the third order was created by St. Francisco in 1221 for both single or married, lay men and lay women. Because there were so many people asked to join the first or second order, but it was impossible to accept all of them. Other orders such as the Dominican also created the third order during the 13th century. Compared to tertiaries and nuns, much smaller number of women chose a solitary life-style such as an anchoress. Hermitess was not a common choice for women and not enough number of historical documents are left. On the other hand, sufficient number of documents and sources of medieval anchoresses are well survived.

Clay, Darwin and Warren pointed out that the number of anchoresses was much larger than anchorites.¹⁴ According to Darwin, male solitary is hermit and female solitary is recluse (i.e. anchoresses), and the role of hermit includes 'construction and maintenance of roads and bridges'. He cultivated waste land, took care of travelers, taught, preached and received alms for helping poor. No man or woman could be an anchorite or anchoress without a permission of bishop, and if applicant is a monk, he needed the approval of his abbot, and if not, he needed to take a local bishop's approval.¹⁵ In medieval England, man had freedom to choose a solitary life, and could get support from royal family, nobility, bishops and other church people, wealthy burgess and local society.¹⁶ General explanation of anchoresses and hermits in researches of Clay, Darwin and Warren are similar to each other. Jones wrote that 'during 11th and 12th centuries, monks left their monasteries to live alone or in small groups of hermits', because of the desert origin of monasticism was recalled and attracted monks to pursue the idealistic religious life. Jones also pointed out that 'it was regarded as a special form of monastic life,' but 'the majority of anchorites were secular priests or laywomen, and they tended more often to be enclosed at parish churches.' And in the 13th century, solitary life is divided into two categories: wandering hermits and anchorites/anchoresses enclosed and controlled by the church. The number of anchorites is less than anchoresses, so in the late middle age, solitary life became to a part of 'semi-religious or non-regular vocations'.¹⁷

The question then arises about monk-hermits/monk-anchorites and lay-anchoresses. Still

¹³ Roberta Gilchrist and Marilyn Oliva, *Religious Women in Medieval East Anglia—History and Archaeology c1100-1540*, Norwich, 1993, pp.19-20 & 72-73.

¹⁴ Rotha Mary Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England*, London, 1914; Francis D. S. Darwin, *The English Medieval Recluse*, London, 1944; Ann K. Warren, *Anchorites and their patrons in Medieval England*, Berkeley, 1985.

¹⁵ Rotha Mary Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England*, London, 1914, p.xvii; Francis D. S. Darwin, *The English Medieval Recluse*, London, 1944, pp.4-6.

¹⁶ Ann K. Warren, *Anchorites and their patrons in Medieval England*, Berkeley, 1985, pp.15-18.

¹⁷ E. A. Jones, *Speculum Inclusorum, A Mirror for Recluses: A Late-medieval guide for anchorites and its Middle English translation*, Liverpool, 2015, pp.3-6.

some hermits and anchorites who were originally members of monastic order or secular church can be found. And there is also nun- anchoresses in the late middle ages, such as Julian Lampyt of Carrow.¹⁸ Next, I will examine the writings about Richard Rolle.

4. Richard Rolle, uncanonized hermit

(1) Richard Rolle of Hampole

Richard Rolle of Hampole is one of the 14th Century Mystics of England. Walter Hilton's *The Scale of Perfection*, *The Revelation of Divine Love* by Julian of Norwich, and anonymous authors' mystical work, *The Cloud of Unknowing* are belong to the mystical works of the 14th century, and these are written in Middle English. Richard Rolle is called 'the father of English Mysticism'.¹⁹ He left many English writings and several Latin works, and his devotional prose in English were the most widely read in the 14th and 15th centuries. Some of his English spiritual works were written for women. There are too many manuscripts and some of works are wrongly ascribed to him.²⁰ His works and activity as a hermit inspired a flourishing cult in the north of England. He was never officially canonized, however, the calendar of church of England mentioned his name on 20th January. After his death in 1349, *Officium* was drawn up to prepare for his canonization, but it was never done. There are a couple of surviving manuscripts, and the Cistercian nuns of Hampole might be instigators of his canonization. Allen pointed out that The Virgin Mary, the Mother of God appears in his miracles in *Officium*, however, she was rarely mentioned in his own writings. This is an evidence of Cistecian influence to *Officium*.²¹

According to *Officium*, Richard Rolle was born at Thornton in the North Riding of Yorkshire. His birth year is not clear, but is likely around 1300. When he became 13 or 14 years old, Master Thomas Neville, Archdeacon of Durham, sent him to university of Oxford. But when he was 19 years old, he left university without taking degree and went back his home. By God's inspiration, he realized brevity of life, and one day he asked his sister to bring her tunics (one is white and the other is grey) and his father's rain hood to the wood nearby. Next day, she brought these things to him, and then he cut off sleeves from the grey tunic and buttons from the white tunic. He took off his clothes and wore the white tunic first, and over the white tunic, he wore the grey one, and

¹⁸ Flank Dale Sayer, 'Who was Mother Julian?', in: *Julian and her Norwich*, ed. Julian of Norwich 1973 Celebration Committee, Norwich, 1973, p.7.

¹⁹ *The Fire of Love or Melody of Love and the Mending Life or Rule of Living*, translated by Richard Misyn from the *Incendium Amoris* and the *De Emendatione Vitae* of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, edited and done into Modern English by Frances M. M. Comper, Introduction by Evelyn Underhill, London, 1920, pp. vii-viii.

²⁰ Hope Emily Allen, *Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole and Materials for his Biography*, London, 1927.

²¹ Hope Emily Allen, *Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole and Materials for his Biography*, London, 1927, pp.49, 55.

covered his head with his father's rain hood. He dressed appropriately to be a hermit, but his sister was so surprised to see what her beloved brother did, and she cried that his mind is gone. Richard left his family and started a life as a hermit. He was well educated, however, without his degree, he could not join to major religious orders nor to be a priest, and he could not teach or preach. His action might disappointed his family and his patron, Tomas Neville. Richard was not interested in study of philosophy or secular studies. He left his home and moved to Yafforth. To avoid to be brought back home by his family, he needed to find a new patron. He went to a local church and prayed. A wife of John Dalton, a squire, also went to pray that church, and her son recognized that person praying in the church was a son of William Rolle. And on the next day, the feast of the Assumption, Richard went into the church and put on surplice. He sang matins and give sermon to people in the church. His sermon was so splendid, and after mass, John Dalton invited Richard to dinner. John was a friend of Richard's father, and John became to be a patron of Richard, and gave him clothes suitable for a hermit, provided him a solitary place to live and food. Then, he rescued a certain lady who was troubled by evil spirits and dying. It costs his peace and quiet solitary life. Demons started to make upset him, and then he had to change his abode frequently. 1322, his patron Dalton was arrested and lost his property, but it was not mentioned in *Officium*, therefore, Richard might moved from his land to other place at that moment. Until his death, it is not clear where he lived. Richard wrote *The Form of Living* for an anchoress and a former nun, Margaret Kirkby around 1348. In 1349, Richard died at the Cistercian nunnery at Hampole, where he was a confessor and spiritual advisor of nuns.²²

At nearby site of Hampole, there was another Richard the Hermit, and he held hermitage. In the late 13th century, there was a house of anchorites near Doncaster, and anchoresses lived there. Allen pointed out that 'the neighbourhood of Hampole was apparently something of a centre for the solitary life, and it may be this fact which brought Richard Rolle here.'²³ He lived at Hampole and had close contact with the nunnery. Contrary to the common sense, Richard often meet nuns and anchoress of the nunnery and worked as a spiritual advisor, but he was not a priest, and he became to be a hermit unofficially. In those days, sexual misconducts of nuns who worked and walked outside of the enclosed nunnery were episcopal concerns, and Aerled of Rievaulx, who wrote *De institutione inclusarum (the Rule of Life for Recluse)* in the 12th century, accused some anchoresses because they opened window of her enclosed cell and made their cells the house of prostitutions.²⁴ At the end of the 13th century, Pope Boniface VIII published a

²² Hope Emily Allen, *Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole and Materials for his Biography*, London, 1927, pp.51-61; *The Fire of Love or Melody of Love and the Mending Life or Rule of Living*, translated by Richard Misyn from the *Incendium Amoris* and the *De Emendatione Vitae of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole*, edited and done into Modern English by Frances M. M. Comper, Introduction by Evelyn Underhill, London, 1920, pp.xlv-lviii.

²³ Hope Emily Allen, *Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole and Materials for his Biography*, London, 1927, p.511.

decree called *Periculoso*, which require nuns to strictly enclosed in the nunnery and limited their activity strictly inside the nunnery. Allowance of such an arrangement which appointed Richard to be a confessor of nuns could not be made by episcopal authority. Only lay person who founded the nunnery and gave his patronage to the nunnery could make such an arrangement.

(2) Miracles of Richard Rolle²⁵

Probably the Nuns of Hampole drove forward canonization of Richard, and they did it because they wanted to solve a financial problem of the monastery. In 1312, the visitation of archbishop Thoresby found that nunnery was under the severe poverty and debt. In 1353, a few years after the death of Richard, the Archbishop appointed a commission of inquiry to unwise rule of the nunnery. Reformation of the nunnery was done, and then there happened miracles which show the sainthood of Richard.²⁶

The first miracle recorded in *Officium* was about Roger. He was a householder, and on the night of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, he saw the blessed hermit Richard in his dream and talked with him. He was so impressed then he thought he could pleased him by bringing stones and building his tomb in the church of nunnery of Hampole. When he carried stones with cart, oxen drawing the cart fell down, and Roger was almost crushed under the stones. However, he had no injury. The stones was set up at the gate of the churchyard, so people do not forget this miracle.

The next episode was about Joan who certain woman who lost her power of speech and her bodily health. She was almost dying, but one day Virgin Mary appeared her dream and she brought Richard Rolle to her. Richard cured her, adn he left his ring on her finger as a token of the miracle.

John who was wounded by his enemy is cured. A paralyzed woman was restored by Richard. A bedridden Thomas heard a voice to send a candle and burn it before the image of Virgin Mary. He asked his family to do so, then he was cured. Two boys drowned by falling into a well were revived. William bitten by snake was restored. John restored his crippled arms and legs. Isabella who lost her power of hearing was cured. In addition, other 17 people are experienced miracles and most of the case, they cured in exchange of going pilgrim, dedicate candle to church, visit the tomb of Richard etc.

²⁴ *Aelred of Rievaulx's De Institutione Inclusarum, Two English Versions*, edited by John Ayto and Alexandra Barratt, Early English Text Society O.S. 287, 1984, pp.1-2.

²⁵ *The Fire of Love or Melody of Love and the Mending Life or Rule of Living*, translated by Richard Misyn from the *Incendium Amoris* and the *De Emendatione Vitae of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole*, edited and done into Modern English by Frances M. M. Comper, Introduction by Evelyn Underhill, London, 1920, pp.lvi-lxii.

²⁶ Hope Emily Allen, *Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole and Materials for his Biography*, London, 1927, pp515-516.

There is a story about Richard and anchoress Margaret Kirkby. Richard cured her pain, and promised that it would never be happened. However, Margaret suffered by the same pain again, and she tried to call Richard, but she found that he was dead at that moment.

His *Officium* and miracles are short and unfinished. However, after 1353, the house of Hampole was no more financial trouble. In 1400, Pope gave the indulgence for people who visit there and gave alms to the church for maintenance of church buildings. From 1411, nunnery of Hampole became to be flourished. However, Richard Rolle has never been officially canonized.

(3) Why not canonized?

There are couple of causes of the failure of canonization. In those days the mortal disease known as the Black Death spread across Europe, and the mortality for priest and monks are higher than lay people, because they often took care of sick people and had to go to the bedside of dying people to hear their confession. In England, the survival rate of local priest is estimated to be less than 60% during the epidemic from 1349 to 1350.²⁷ The institution of the church in England was shaken, and the procedure of Richard's canonization could not be appropriately done. In addition, Richard left university and became to be an hermit without a permit of bishop, and in his writings, he wrote:

'In all things that we work or think be we more taking heed to the love of God than to knowledge or disputation. Love truly delights the soul and makes conscience sweet, drawing it from love of lusty thing here beneath, and from desire of man's own excellence. Knowledge without charity builds not to endless health but puffs up to most wretched undoing' (*The Fire of Love*, Book I, ch.5).²⁸

'But no man may be of so great presumption that he suppose himself to be such a one; although he has perfectly forsaken all the world, and though he has led a solitary life, unable to be reproved, and though he has gone up to the contemplation of heavenly things. For this grace truly is not granted to all contemplatives, but seldom, and to most few: the which, taking greatest of body and of mind, are only chosen to the work by the strength of God's love' (*The Fire of Love*, Book I, ch.11).²⁹

Richard Rolle's radical acts and words might be other cause prevent him from canonization.

²⁷ Colin Platt, King Death, *The Black death and its aftermath in late-medieval England*, UCL Press, 1996, pp.97-98.

²⁸ *The Fire of Love or Melody of Love and the Mending Life or Rule of Living*, translated by Richard Misyn from the *Incendium Amoris* and the *De Emendatione Vitae* of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, edited and done into Modern English by Frances M. M. Comper, Introduction by Evelyn Underhill, London, 1920, p.28.

²⁹ *The Fire of Love or Melody of Love and the Mending Life or Rule of Living*, translated by Richard Misyn from the *Incendium Amoris* and the *De Emendatione Vitae* of Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, edited and done into Modern English by Frances M. M. Comper, Introduction by Evelyn Underhill, London, 1920, p.55.

Richard's English Psalter was adapted by the Lollards. Richard Rolle looked like an eccentric person.

5. Conclusion

From the point of church hierarchy, an anchoress might be regarded lower than a nun. However, solitary a life of an anchoress was allowed to enjoy their independent life, and also living in the city gave her an opportunity to contact with lay people as a counselor. Richard Rolle of Hampole is a hermit, and he has never belonged to any monastic order and is not a clergy.

Jones pointed out that from 13th century, the image of hermits who wanders alone and of anchorites who were strictly enclosed is established.³⁰ And Clay, Warren, Jones say again and again, in the middle age England, the number of anchoress is much higher than anchorite, a male counterpart. However, there are still a lot of anchorites or monks act like a anchorite, and hermit who took in charge of maintenance of road and bridges.³¹ Richard Rolle of Hampole is one of the example of medieval hermit. His social status looks high, but his troublesome action and words prevent him from the canonization. Medieval hermits are also marginalized, and on the contrary, medieval anchoresses are centralized in the context of anchoritic life in the middle ages. Examination of various background of each hermit/anchorite/anchoress and monk/nun is necessary. Richard Rolle shows his irregular semi-religious activity and relationship with local monks/nuns, hermit/anchoress, and lay patrons. A hermit is a person wandering alone, but Richard has never been alone. An anchoress is recommended to live in a enclosed cell, but not alone and she often regarded as a counselor of local people. I think we have to reconsider the phrase 'strictly secluded' 'strictly enclosed' often used in scholarly works.

³⁰ E. A. Jones, *Hermits and Anchorites in England, 1200-1550*, Manchester, 2019, p.5.

³¹ Rotha Mary Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England*, London, 1914, pp.49-65.