I'm not on Twitter, but my thanks to all Twitter users who have brought, and continue to bring, light into this affair. Image: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Twitter-logo.svg (license: Apache License 2.0).

While I am not on Twitter or Mastodon myself, several friends and colleagues have kindly informed me that my name was mentioned in context of #ReceptioGate and that my work seems to have been plagiarised. This of course was alarming for me, so first of all, I checked myself whether this could be true, and within minutes I was 90% sure that indeed plagiarism had occurred.

What do you do if you are 90% certain that someone plagiarised your work? In my view, do not go public. While I deeply care about academic honesty, I also think that one has to be very careful to make accusations of plagiarism in public. Sometimes, textual parallels can be explained differently; footnotes can get lost, or simply be forgotten in the first place; there are honest mistakes and all sort of things that sound unlikely but still happen sometimes. Also, to adopt the modern version of a medieval legal maxim to this case, it is better that ten plagiarists escape than that one innocent scholar suffer.

So while checking and double-checking the textual parallels, I also reached out to the person accused of plagiarism, and specifically mentioned the two blogposts of mine they appeared to have plagiarised in their online project description. As a result, the latter was updated very quickly with a reference to my blogposts, but my suggestion to mark the quotations as such was ignored. From this, I had to conclude that the parallels were not a coincidence, and that there was no innocent error; the missing quotation marks were deliberately absent. At the end of this, I was 99% sure I was dealing with plagiarism.

Meanwhile, more people had found more suspect passages in the same publication (and other works of the same author), and as I double-checked these allegations, I found yet more quotations from yet more unacknowledged sources. We no longer talk about one or two quotations which were 'forgotten' to be marked as such; we are now talking about substantial parts of the text being compiled from a wide range of unacknowledged sources.

So by now, I am 99.99% percent certain that the text in question consisted in large parts of plagiarized material. Also, by now the project description has been moved, reworked, abbreviated, and translated, effectively stopping to contain plagiarized material in its most recent version. While stopping to plagiarize is a good thing, the silent correction also means that the authors who were plagiarized are still not given credit, no apologies were made, and in fact checking the allegations of plagiarism has become more difficult.

My name, and that of several respected colleagues, is still quoted in the context of #ReceptioGate, but for any outsider it has become much more difficult to understand what is going on here. Indeed, to anyone new to the affair, the allegations may look like a he-said-she-said situation, as the links cited on Twitter and elsewhere are dead and the allegations can no longer be checked by simply looking at the texts in question.

I did not ask to be plagiarised; I did not ask to be drawn into this affair; and when I asked that verbatim quotations were marked as such, it was to no avail. So in the interest of clarity, I decided to make public a list of those passages in the project description under discussion which are verbatim (or near-verbatim)
quotations from other authors. The first two columns of the below table allow one to compare the "Intersexuality in Picture" page (as archived on 31 December 2022) to the publications, online or in print, from which it quotes without citing them or otherwise marking the quotations. The third column contains the bibliographical details of the relevant original publications, most of which are freely available on the internet; in some cases, I briefly comment on details of the textual relation. Also, as far as I am aware of other people having publicly observed the parallels before me, I gave their names here. The scholars who first brought light into this on Twitter were Paula Curtis (@paularcurtis), Yael Rice (@Yael_Rice), Peter Burger (@JPeterBurger), and Yikes Industrial Complex (@MxComan). Peter Burger, supplementing his excellent overview here, has published what is, to my knowledge, the most complete list of unacknowledged sources in the text under discussion here, but there are in fact more such passages, as one can see from the table below.

While I am grateful to all scholars who spent time and effort to clarify these issues, I have of course double-checked all textual parallels myself, and all remaining errors are my own. If you spot an error, please do contact me or leave a comment.
"Decoration in medieval manuscripts was not only for the purpose of embellishing the book object, it was also intended to aid literacy by offering a visual support, to help the reader find his/her way around and into the book."

"[...] the Liber introductorius (Kitāb al-madkhal al-Kabīr ‘alā ’ilm aḥkām al-nujūm), which became one of the most important and widespread texts in late medieval astrology in Latin Europe."

"[...] our clear divisions between Church, secular society and medicine, understood today as different intellectual frameworks, may not always do full justice to the cross-disciplinary nature of the reflections on sexuality in the Middle Ages."

"The distinctions between “science,” “the Church,” and “lay society,” understood as “different intellectual frameworks,” [...] may not always do full justice to the cross-disciplinary nature of scholastic thought itself."

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<tr>
<td>&quot;Decoration in medieval manuscripts performed a number of functions. It was used to enhance the appearance of the book, and its value. [...] However, decoration was also intended to aid literacy by offering visual as well as textual contents, to help the reader find his or her way around the book, or to aid the interpretation of a text.&quot;</td>
<td>University of Nottingham, Manuscripts and Special Collections, &quot;Decoration and illumination&quot;, <a href="https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/medievalbooks/decorationandillumination.aspx">https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/medievalbooks/decorationandillumination.aspx</a></td>
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<td>&quot;An elaborate presentation of this system can be found in Abū Ma’shar’s (lat. Albumasar, † 886) Liber introductorius (Kitāb al-madkhal al-Kabīr ‘alā ’ilm aḥkām al-nujūm), which became one of the most important and widespread texts in late medieval astrology in «Latin Europe».&quot;</td>
<td>Klaus Oschema, &quot;The Last Days of Taurus – When Hermaphrodites Are Born…&quot; (18/05/2018), <a href="https://intersex.hypotheses.org/5353">https://intersex.hypotheses.org/5353</a></td>
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First noticed by Peter Burger.
"Intersexuality in Pictures", [www.receptio.eu/genderfluidityinthemiddleages](http://www.receptio.eu/genderfluidityinthemiddleages) as archived on archive.org on 31/12/2022

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| "In the medieval debate about sex differences, the Church cannot be understood only as an institution that defined and enforced a sexual code. As recent research by Peter Biller, Caroline Bynum, Alain Boureau, Joseph Ziegler, and others has brought to light, medieval theologians and canonists also participated actively in learned discussions about the natural body."
| Maaike van der Lugt, "Sex Difference", p. 102. First noticed by Peter Burger and Yikes industrial complex. As the latter pointed out, 'recent' had a different meaning back in 2010. |
| "Starting from Christ’s isolated side wound in Books of Hours [6], it is arguable that these images destabilise Christ’s gender by drawing the focus on Christ’s body to a prominent bleeding vulva."
| "In the learned laws (Roman law and canon law), hermaphrodites were relatively prominent from the 12th century on. Hermaphrodites could marry, inherit, act as witness, enter holy orders etc. according to the gender assigned to them. The legal status of ‘predominantly male’ hermaphrodites was clearly better than that of women and with only few qualifications equalled that of men; unlike women, for example, they could be ordained, but unlike men, dispensation
| Christof Rolker, "All humans are male, female, or hermaphrodite" (11/07/2015), [https://mittelalter.hypotheses.org/6596](https://mittelalter.hypotheses.org/6596). First noticed by Yael Rice and Yikes industrial complex. |
was needed for such an ordination. Lawyers discussed various criteria (body and behaviour) as indicating the ‘prevailing’ sex; following Hostiensis, both laws finally adopted the solution that in doubtful cases, the ‘perfect’ hermaphrodite should swear an oath which gender s/he belonged to. This at least in theory left some choice to the individual; in practice, much depended on the social environment."

"The graphic illustration of these text passages will be investigated in particular: 1. Decretum Gratiani, C. 4, q. 2 et 3, c. 3 § 22 Hermafroditus an ad testamentum adhiberi possit, qualitas sexus incalescentis ostendit. 2. Summa Parisiensis 2.4, q. 2/3 s.v. hermaphroditus Hermaphroditus: In terra enim calida plures nascuntur utriusque generis qui, si magis adjungant viris, tamquam viri dabunt testimonium. Hermes interpres, i.e. mercurius, frodis spuma, i.e. venus. Inde hermaphroditus qui ex his natus utriusque formam gerit.

3a. Huguccio, C. 27, q. 1, c. 23 ad v. ordinari Quid si est ermafroditus? Distinguitur circa ordinem recipiendum sicut circa testimonium faciendum in testamento, ut IIII. q. III. Item ermafroditus (c. 3 § 22). Si ergo magis calet in feminam quam in virum, non recipit ordinem, si secontra [sic], recipere potest, set non debet ordinaris propter deformitatem et menstruositam [sic], arg. di. XXXVI. Illiteratos (c. 1), et di. XLVIII. c. ult.[1] Quid si equaliter calet in utrumque? Non recipit
"Intersexuality in Pictures", www.receptio.eu/genderfluidityinthemiddleages as archived on archive.org on 31/12/2022

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<td>ordinem. 3b., C. 4 q. 2 et 3 c. 3 § 22 ad v. sexus incalescentis</td>
<td>look at my original blogpost (and the pdf it contains) if you are curious!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si quidem habet barbam et semper vult exercere virilia et non feminea et semper vult conversare cum viris et non cum feminis, signum est, quod virilis sexus in eo prevaleat et tunc potest esse testis, ubi mulier non admittitur, scil. in testamento et in ultimis voluntatibus, tunc etiam ordinari potest. Si vero caret barba et semper vult esse cum feminis et exercere feminea opera, indicium est, quod feminius sexus in eo prevaleat, et tunc non admittitur ad testimonium, ubi femina non admittitur, scil. in testamento, set nec tunc ordinari potest, quia femina ordinem non recipit.</td>
<td>1. Quid si utriusque membri officio uti potest, secundum quid de facto fuit in villa mea, scilicet Secusiae? Respondeo: eligat cui se dicat, secundum quid episcopus Tauriensis diocesanus noster de ipso fecit et iuret quod de caetero alio non utetur, quia nec fungi debet duplici officio, maxime tam diverso.</td>
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<tr>
<td>testamento, ut III. q. III. Item ermafroditus (c. 3 § 22).</td>
<td>3b. Huguccio, C. 4 q. 2 et 3 c. 3 § 22 ad v. sexus incalescentis</td>
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| Si ergo magis calet in feminam quam in virum, non recipit ordinem, si secontra [sic], recipere potest, set non debet ordinari propter deformitatem et menstruositam [sic], arg. di. XXXVI. Illiteratos (c. 1), et di. XLVIII. c. ult.[1] Quid si equaliter calet in utrumque? Non recipit ordinem. | Si quidem habet barbam et semper vult exercere virilia et non feminea et semper vult conversare cum viris et non cum feminis, signum est, quod virilis sexus in eo prevaleat et tunc potest esse testis, ubi mulier non admittitur, scil. in testamento et in ultimis voluntatibus, tunc etiam ordinari potest. Si vero caret barba et semper vult esse cum feminis et exercere feminea opera, indicium est, quod feminius sexus in eo prevaleat, et tunc non admittitur ad testimonium, ubi femina non admittitur, scil. in testamento, set nec tunc ordinari potest, quia femina ordinem non recipit.
“Intersexuality in Pictures”, www.receptio.eu/genderfluidityinthemiddleages as archived on archive.org on 31/12/2022

Unacknowledged source

[Der lateinische Text enthält mehrere, nur teilweise vom Schreiber korrigierte Fehler, die im obigen Text emendiert sind.]

4. Hostiensis, Summa aurea

Quid si utriusque membri officio uti potest, secundum quid de facto fuit in villa mea, scilicet Secusiae? Respondeo: eligat cui se dicat, secundum quid episcopus Tauriensis dioecesanus noster de ipso fecit et iuret quod de caetero alio non utetur, quia nec fungi debet duplici officio, maxime tam diverso."

Citation and comment


First noticed by Yael Rice. Note that DeVun did not claim all poets she listed refer to the story of Hermanphroditos.

Sophie Sexon, "Queering Christ’s Wounds and Gender Fluidity in Medieval Manuscripts" (08/08/2017), http://www.historymatters.group.shef.ac.uk/queering-christs-wounds-gender-fluidity-medieval-manuscripts/.

"Medieval vernacular poets, including Dante, Chaucer, Chrétien de Troyes, Guillaume de Lorris, Jean de Meun, Christine de Pizan, and Boccaccio, among others, all made extensive use of Ovidian material on the story of Hermaphrodite narrated in Metamorphoses in their writings. The myth of the hermaphrodite, in particular, found a number of admirers and interprets [sic]."

"Medieval vernacular poets, including Dante, Chaucer, Chrétien de Troyes, Guillaume de Lorris, Jean de Meun, John Gower, Christine de Pizan, and Boccaccio, among others, all made extensive use of Ovidian material in their writings, and the myth of the hermaphrodite in particular found many admirers and interpreters."

"Analysing Christ’s isolated side wound in Books of Hours, it is arguable that these images destabilise Christ’s gender by drawing the focus on Christ’s body to a prominent bleeding vulva."

"Comparing these images to the shape of Christ’s isolated side wound in Books of Hours, it is arguable that these images destabilise Christ’s gender by drawing the focus on Christ’s body to a prominent bleeding vulva."
"A noted polymath, Alan wrote during the 1160s or possibly 1170s a work entitled De planctu naturae (The Complaint of Nature), which examines the relation between grammar and gender."

"By the turn of the fourteenth century, Latin alchemy was in the process of changing from a self-consciously scholastic discipline, wedded to the language of Aristotelian natural philosophy, to a field of study that was increasingly religious in its sentiments and vocabulary."

"The image of the hermaphrodite became crucial to these new writings, as can be seen from the text and manuscript illuminations of the undated Aurora consurgens and the early fifteenth-century Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit (Book of the Holy Trinity). This is one of the earliest alchemical manuscripts containing emblematic symbolism. It is also of importance as its text used the Trinity and Christ's passion to allegorise alchemical content. This became very influential upon the alchemy that developed in the 16th century and later. About 23 manuscripts have survived, not all from the early period, and many of them contain the series of alchemical emblems, some with high
quality coloured drawings, others somewhat less competent, though in general the symbolism is preserved with only a few relatively minor variations. The manuscripts are complex and fall into three groups, which scholars have investigated. We will look at a number of these images in this discussion forum over the coming months, but initially it would be interesting to consider the two images of the hermaphrodite that appear in these manuscripts. The Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit is not only an alchemical treatise using medical metaphors of regeneration and rejuvenation, but also contains elements of Christian prophecy. It is thought to have been written by a Frater Ulmannus who may have been of the Franciscan Order."

"While the precise date of the Aurora consurgens' composition remains uncertain, the earliest exemplar of the Aurora consurgens is a lushly illustrated manuscript produced in the 1420s and now housed at the Zentralbibliothek of Zürich (Codex Rhenoviensis 172)."

"The use to which the Jews put [sic] the androgyne myth is quite different from its meaning in Aristophanes' tale in the Symposium."
"Intersexuality in Pictures", [www.receptio.eu/genderfluidityinthemiddleages](http://www.receptio.eu/genderfluidityinthemiddleages) as archived on archive.org on 31/12/2022

"Leviticus Rabba 14; Babylonian Talmud, Erubin 18a, Berakot 61a (R. Jeremiah ben Eleazar); Genesis Rabba 8. 1; Tanhumah "B," ed. Buber, 3:33 (Tazria'); (R. Samuel ben Nahman); Leviticus Rabba 14 (Resh Leqish); cf. Zohar 2, 55a."

"Leviticus Rabba 14; Babylonian Talmud, Erubin 18a, Berakot 61a (R. Jeremiah ben Eleazar); Genesis Rabba 8. 1; Tanhumah "B," ed. Buber, 3:33 (Tazria'); (R. Samuel ben Nahman); Leviticus Rabba 14 (Resh Leqish); cf. Zohar 2, 55a. "Androgynos": Genesis Rabba 8. 1 (R. Jeremiah ben Eleazar); Leviticus Rabba 14 (R. Samuel ben Nahman)"

"In Leviticus Rabba 14, the saying is attributed, with slight variants, to Resh Lequish. [...]"


"The Mishnah (Bikkurim 4:1) explains: "The androgynos in some ways is like men, and in some ways is like women, and in some ways is like both men and women, and in some ways is like neither men nor women." (Bikkurim 4:1). In the Mishnah, Rabbi Yosi makes the radical statement: "androgynos bria bifnei atzma hu / the androgynos he is a created being of her own." This Hebrew phrase blends male and female pronouns to poetically express the complexity of the androgynos' identity.

"Joan Cadden is one of the first historians who reflected and invited reflection on the natural characteristics of men and women and on the construction of gender to medieval debates about physiology, procreation, intercourse, and pleasure." Maaike van der Lugt, "Sex difference", p. 101. First noticed by Peter Burger.

"The Mishnah (Bikkurim 4:1) explains: "The androgynos in some ways is like men, and in some ways is like women, and in some ways is like both men and women, and in some ways is like neither men nor women." [...] In the Mishnah, Rabbi Yosi makes the radical statement: "androgynos bria bifnei atzma hu / the androgynos he is a created being of her own." This Hebrew phrase blends male and female pronouns to poetically express the complexity of the androgynos' identity." Rabbi Elliot Kukla and Rabbi Reuben Zellman, "Created by the Hand of Heaven: A Jewish Approach to Intersexuality (Parashat Tazria and Parashat Metzora)" (21/04/2007), https://www.keshetonline.org/resources/created-by-the-hand-of-heaven-a-jewish-approach-to-intersexuality-parashat-tazria-and-parashat-metzora/.

First noticed by Yael Rice.

Meeks, "Image of the Androgyne", here at p. 186 nn. 89-90. Note that this list of references is not really about "Hebrew manuscripts", and that the short hand references ("ed. Buber") is explained nowhere in the project description text.