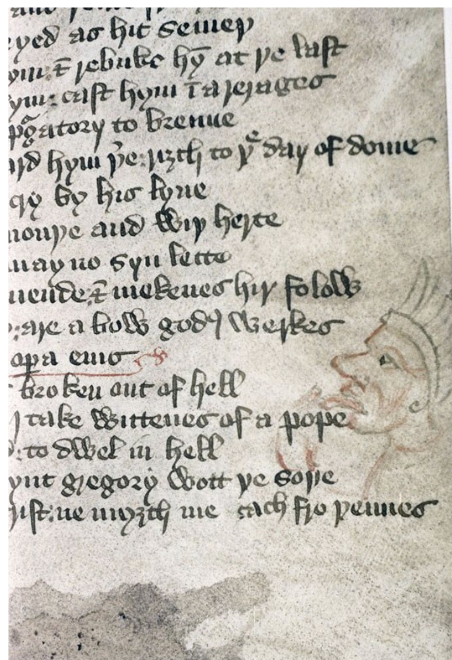
Marginalia

The Journal of the Medieval Reading Group



Yearbook

April 2011

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Cover Image: The Emperor Trajan contemplating the C-Text of Piers Plowman. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS Douce 104, folio 56r. Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library. Copyright © Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2011.

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Editor's Foreword

Joni Henry, *St. John's College, Cambridge*

Our twelfth issue of *Marginalia* celebrates the work submitted by students of the MPhil course at Cambridge in the academic year 2009-2010. As well as a dissertation and a palaeography project, the course requires each student to write two essays; the two published in this issue were selected by the convenors of the MPhil course as the best writing produced that year.

Alexander Gabrovsky's essay ('The Good, the Bad, and the Penitent Thief: Langlandian Extremes, the Edge of Salvation, and the Problem of Trajan and Dismas in *Piers Plowman*') explores Langland's use of the figures of Dismas, the good thief crucified alongside Jesus, and Trajan, the virtuous pagan emperor of Rome. He proposes that these two figures are deployed as extreme opposites to allow Langland to examine two contrasting beliefs about salvation, salvation via God's grace and a kind of Pelagian salvation via good works. With close readings of the text, he argues that through the depiction of these two contrasting figures and other antitheses, Langland makes a strong case for a salvific belief where the two contrasting theories exist in tenuous equilibrium. In such a belief, the possibility of salvation for both believers and non-believers exists but Langland emphasises the difficulty of realising this possibility – all sinners must dangle, like Trajan and Dismas, precariously on the edge of salvation.

In her essay, '"In cordis tui scrinio conserua": Richard Methley, *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Reading for Affectivity', Sara Harris discusses Methley's translations into Latin of the Middle English texts of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls* in Cambridge, Pembroke College MS 221. She focuses on Methley's approach to the demands of Carthusian reading practice, which placed a heavy responsibililty on the translator to make faithful, as well as orthodox, translations of doctrine. Associated with this practice is the importance of God's love as a guide to affective reading and interpretation. She shows how Methley's construction of translation and gloss create works that encourage readers' analytical engagement with the text, works that form a Carthusian commentary on the possibilities for understanding the union of the soul with God.

Also in this issue are reviews by members of the Medieval Reading Group of recent books of medieval scholarship on topics ranging from the centrality of the medieval world in the works of Shakespeare to the vernacular versions of the *Vita Adae et Evae*.

We are very grateful to the authors of these two excellent articles and all our reviewers. We also thank all the other supporters who make this journal possible: the members of the advisory board, the editors, the website experts, and the members of the English faculty who kindly advise and support the Medieval Reading Group and this journal. In particular, many thanks to all the members of the Reading Group whose papers, questions and camaraderie continue to make the study of the Middle Ages at Cambridge both challenging and supportive.

The Good, the Bad, and the Penitent Thief: Langlandian Extremes, the Edge of Salvation, and the Problem of Trajan and Dismas in *Piers Plowman*

Alexander Gabrovsky
University of Cambridge

> And yet the synfulle sherewe seide to hymselve:
> 'Crist, that on Calvarie upon the cros deidest,
> Tho Dysmas my brother bisoughte thee of grace,
> And haddest mercy on that man for *Memento* sake,
> (B-text, *Passus* 5. 464-7)[1]

In the above passage, Robert the Robber recalls Dismas on the cross, who, in his final moments, defends Christ against the vicious attacks of Gestas, the Bad Thief. At the centre of Robert's dual address to 'hymselve' and 'Crist' is Dismas: a 'man for *Memento* sake'. Although Robert finds comfort in the established tradition of penitential rhetoric, his situation spirals into uncertainty: 'What bifel of this feloun I kan noght faire shewe' (B.5.472). Christian theologians were simultaneously amazed and perplexed with the inherent contradiction that a thief, who receives a kind of *clara visio* at the crossroads of death, becomes the sole heir to the heavenly kingdom, elevated to a status of glory as the first to enter Paradise.[2] It is no coincidence that as a symbol of God's mercy, Dismas is sometimes depicted alongside Christ in the Harrowing of Hell, appealing to the ideal of *imitatio Christi*.[3] In fact, 'some writers carry the paradox so far as to suggest that the greatest sinners make the greatest saints',[4] which it could be argued contributes to a pattern of colliding Langlandian extremes.

In the B-text, Will begins to question the logic behind God's decision to admit Dismas into heaven. To my knowledge, David Allen's article is the only instance of scholarship isolating Dismas, a figure who deserves more critical

I am indebted to Dr Nicolette Zeeman for her valuable advice and assistance in the project.

[1] All quotations are from William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman: A Complete Edition of the B -text*, ed. A.V.C. Schmidt, 2nd edn (London: Everyman, 1995).

[2] For the influence of the Benedictine monk Uthred of Boldon (c. 1360) on deathbed salvation for Christians and non-Christians, see Cindy Vitto, 'The Virtuous Pagan in Middle English Literature', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 79:5 (1989), 1-100 (p. 33). I would argue that Dismas, having known Christ directly, does not fall strictly under the category of 'virtuous pagans'.

[3] Alyssa Lyra Pitstick, *Light in Darkness: Hans Urs Von Balthasar and the Catholic Doctrine of Christ's Descent into Hell* (Cambridge: William B. Eardmans, 2007), p. 83.

[4] Susan Snyder, 'The Left Hand of God: Despair in Medieval and Renaissance Tradition', *Studies in the Renaissance* 12, (1965), 18-59 (p. 26).

attention for our understanding of Langland's salvation theology.[5] Allen is correct in that Will introduces a Dismas *distinctio* of saved sinners, where Imaginatif's 'denigration of Dismas's station in heaven … is remarkable for its lack of respect and its exegetical eccentricity', especially in comparison to traditional scriptural exegesis on Luke 23. 39-43.[6] Allen believes this is 'authorial transgression that requires authorial restitution', and this restitution depends on Patience's contentment at the side table in Conscience's court (as opposed to the high table), which tacitly 'corrects' Imaginatif's 'pedagogically defensible overstatement'. Langland, he argues, manages 'the seemingly contradictory task of restoring Dismas's dignity without taking any away from Imaginatif' (p. 42). I do not deny, *pace* Allen, the 'exegetical eccentricity', but I would argue that Imaginatif's statement is in fact unapologetically excessive, as this is part of a broader scheme of Langlandian extremes and binary oppositions that directly address the problem of salvation. In the following pages, I will argue for a dialectic that develops very early in Passus 10 with the *topos* of starving beggars situated in front of the 'gate', the boundary where 'povere menne' hunger for salvation. Beggars are pushed to the extremes of criminality and poverty, which paradoxically intensifies their desire for God.[7] In this dialectic, Trajan is an antitype to Dismas. He dangles precariously with the Good Thief at the boundary/ gate, and Langland's salvation theology suggests that, like Dismas, he is a soul very narrowly at the cusp of being saved or damned: '*Salvabitur vix iustus in die iudicii*; / *Ergo – salvabitur*!' ('The just man shall scarcely be saved; Therefore – he shall be saved!') (B.12.278-80). Nicolette Zeeman's ground-breaking scholarship on the nature of desire investigates Langland's development of the Stoic and medieval notion that 'the cosmos is structured in terms of contraries or contrasts, that understanding of one phenomenon involves understanding of its opposite'.[8] In light of the medieval knowledge of antithesis,[9] I propose that Dismas and Trajan function as the radically contrasting parts of Langland's rhetori-

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[5] 'The Dismas *distinctio* and the Forms of *Piers Plowman*,' *The Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 3 (1989), 31-48.

[6] Allen calls this 'a division into its relevant parts of a concept'. In medieval commentaries, the *distinctio* 'gathered together the various uses of a term in Scripture' (p. 35).

[7] Nicolette Zeeman postulates: 'It might be that, the better the goods are, the greater the merit in doing well without them, and the greater the desire that comes of lacking them', "*Piers Plowman" and the Medieval Discourse of Desire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 224).

[8] Zeeman, p. 187.

[9] On the medieval development of *opposita*, *adversa*, or *contraria*, see also Constance Brittain Bouchard's "*Every Valley Shall Be Exalted": The Discourse of Opposites in Twelfth-Century Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

cal attempt to use *merism* to describe salvation.[10] Throughout the poem, oscillating extremes clash to the point '[t]hat wise wordes wolde shewe and werche the contrarie' (B.12.50). To this end, Langland presents us with co-existing theological oppositions (e.g. grace vs. good works) and polarized characters (e.g. Dismas vs. Trajan or Gestas), which drive the salvific debate towards a tenuous equilibrium. This presentation of doctrinal extremes, albeit hasty and uncompromising, is perhaps Langland's most effective pedagogical tool in resolving the problem of salvation.

Mary Davlin points out, 'the word 'likeness' and its cognates and synonyms are frequently used in the poem to stress similarity between God and His creatures'.[11] It is common in medieval artwork and literature to stress the visual and emotional likeness of the crucified Dismas to Christ and to 'look upon the suffering convict as a pseudo-martyr, thus Christ-like'.[12] For example, in the *Story of Joseph of Arimathaea*, Dismas is Christ-like in that his body is not found in his tomb, but later appears to John 'like a king in great might, clad with the cross'.[13] Dismas's 'likeness' to Christ is also apparent in the crucifixion, where he shares in his agony. More directly, Bonaventure boldly declares that Christ 'in a mystery … is the good thief'.[14] In much the same vein are Francisan writings which associate holiness with the Good Thief; for example, Merback points out interesting echoes of the story of the Good Thief in the writings of Thomas of Celano (d. 1260) who claims that St. Francis was 'led like a robber' and that his dying wish was to be buried among the remains of thieves.[15] Such writings may have influenced Langland's representation of the Good Thief. Lawrence M. Clopper, in his critical study on Langland and the Franciscans, suggests we might 'read *Piers Plowman* as part of a broad reformist culture, one admittedly informed by Franciscan thinking and preaching'.[16] As we shall see, Imaginatif's ironic description of Dismas as a poor 'beggere bordless' (B.12.199) verges on neo-Franciscanism.

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[10] The *Oxford English Dictionary (*2nd ed.) defines *merismus* as 'a form of synecdoche in which two (or in early use sometimes more) contrasting or complementary parts are made to represent the whole.'

[11] *The Place of God in Piers Plowman and Medieval Art* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002) p. 146.

[12] Mitchell Merback, *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), p. 19.

[13] *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses*, trans. by M.R. James (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924), p. 165.

[14] *St Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, trans. by Robert Karris, Works of St Bonaventure, 8, 3 vols (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute Publications, 2001-2004), III (2004), p. 2147.

[15] Merback, p. 229.

[16] "*Songes of Rechelesnesse": Langland and the Franciscans* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 327.

Before considering Langland's treatment of Dismas, let us consider the long tradition of depicting the Good Thief as the moral opposite to the Bad Thief. This is notably evinced in the gospels, particularly in Luke 23. 39-43.[17] Other precedents include the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, where the contrast is visibly represented with Dismas 'on atte riȝth half' of Christ, and Gestas is 'þat oþer atte left [i.e. *sinistra*] half'.[18] For Augustine, the two thieves signify humanity: those on the left seek 'temporal glory,' whereas those on the right seek 'celestial glory'.[19] The moral divide between the Good Thief and the Bad Thief occurs more explicitly in *The Story of Joseph of Arimathaea*: Gestas would 'hang up women by the feet and cut off their breasts, drink the blood of babes: he knew not God nor obeyed any law', whereas Demas 'despoiled the rich but did good to the poor, even burying them' (p. 161).

With this moral contrast in mind, I turn to Langland's deployment of the language of theft. Langland revives the 'likeness' of the Christ-thief image directly: 'If he reve me [Satan] of my right, he [Christ] robbeth me by maistrie' (B.18.276-8). Bonaventure, along with Ambrose, calls Christ 'the good thief, who lay in ambush for the devil, so that he might carry off his possessions'.[20] Of interest is the suggestion that Christ uses deception against the devils, which Marx believes 'carries with it no doctrinal implications' and postulates that this deception motif is 'typical of late medieval writers'.[21] I propose, however, that Langland develops this accusation further and portrays Satan as the Bad Thief (i.e. Gestas) when Christ declares: '*Thefliche* thow me *robbedest*. The Old Lawe graunteth / That *gilours be bigiled* – and that is *good* reson' (B.18.339-40, emphasis mine). In this particular case, Christ is the Bonaventurian Good Thief that rightfully 'robbeth' and who openly admits to having 'begiled' Satan, the Bad Thief,

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[17] 'And aftir that thei camen in to a place, that is clepid of Caluerie, there thei crucifieden hym, and the theues, oon on the riyt half, and `the tother on the left half. But Jhesus seide, Fadir, foryyue hem, for thei witen not what thei doon. … And oon of these theues that hangiden, blasfemyde hym, and seide, If thou art Crist, make thi silf saaf and vs. But `the tothir answerynge, blamyde hym, and seide, Nether thou dredist God, that art in the same dampnacioun? And treuli we iustli, for we han resseiued worthi thingis to werkis; but this dide no thing of yuel. And he seide to Jhesu, Lord, haue mynde of me, whanne thou comest `in to thi kyngdom. And Jhesus seide to hym, Treuli Y seie to thee, this dai thou schalt be with me in paradise.'
(*The Holy Bible, Containing the old and new testaments, with the apocryphal books, in the earliest English versions made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and his followers: Edited by the Rev. Josiah Forshall, F.R.S. etc. Late Fellow of Exeter College, and Sir Frederic Madden, K.H. F.R.S. etc. Keeper of the MSS. in the British Museum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850))

[18] *The Middle English Prose Complaint of Our Lady and the Gospel of Nicodemus, ed. from Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2498*, ed. by CW Marx and JF Drennan (Heidelberg: C. Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1987), pp. 102-3.

[19] *St Bonaventure's Commentary*, III, p. 2147 [i.e. Bonaventure writes on Augustine}.

[20] *St Bonaventure's Commentary*, III, p. 2147.

[21] *The Devil's Rights and the Redemption in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995), p. 112.

of his faulty claim. Christ has '*good* reson' to beguile and rob, and He is therefore the Good Thief. In other words, Langland maintains a clear moral distinction between the Good Thief and the Bad Thief and oscillates between the two extremes. Likewise, Piers 'for pure tene' decides 'to go robbe that rageman and reve the fruyt fro hym' (B.16.86-9).

Pamela Gradon notes Langland's rather 'grudging tone' towards Dismas, suggesting that Langland 'feels the story [of Dismas] to be out of tune with his presentation of *Dowel* or reward for merit'.[22] To demonstrate why this conclusion is problematic, we need to first look at Will's argument in passus 10:

> A Good Friday, I fynde, a felon was ysaved
> That hadde lyved al his lif with lesynges and with thefte;
> And for he beknew on the cros and to Crist shrof hym,
>
> He was sonner ysaved than Seint Johan the Baptist
> And or Adam or Ysaye or any of the prophetes,
> That hadde yleyen with Lucifer many longe yeres.
> A robbere was yraunsoned rather than thei alle
> Withouten any penaunce of purgatorie to perpetual blisse
> […]
> And now ben thise sovereyns with seintes in hevene -
> Tho that wroughte wikkedlokest in world tho thei were;
> (B.10.413-420, 425-6)

No passage better represents, to use Britton Harwood's phrasing, Will's 'problem of belief' in Christ.[23] Will argues that the most ardent sinners are saved, rather than 'any of the prophetes'. Will's 'problem' with this seemingly unfair and immoral outcome betrays his skepticism regarding Christian morality and Langland's concern to show Will's perversion of Christian teaching.[24] In fact, such is the unsettling force of Will's conclusion that it prompts the poet of the C-text to replace the dreamer with the voice of Rechelesnesse, in order to 'withdraw a further degree of authorial sanction'.[25] It is also worth noting that the A-text abruptly stops at this point as though reaching an irresolvable theological crisis. What is important is how the confession of Dismas provides the groundwork for this distortion of the tenets of faith and the nature of grace in

[22] 'Trajanus Redivivus: Another Look at Trajan in Piers Plowman', in *Middle English Studies Presented to Norman Davis in Honour of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. by Douglas Gray and E.G. Stanley, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), pp. 93-114 (p. 106).
[23] *Piers Plowman and the Problem of Belief* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).
[24] For example, Marie Collins argues that 'this is neither the traditional nor the proper function of adducing the great penitents' in 'Will and the Penitents: *PP* B X. 420-35', *Leeds Studies in English*, 16 (1985), 290-308 (p. 303).
[25] Derek Pearsall, 'The Idea of Universal Salvation in *Piers Plowman* B and C', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 39.2 (2009), 257-281 (p. 264).

the face of Will's despair. For Langland's medieval audience, any mention of the Good Thief would certainly bring to mind his anti-type, Gestas, 'that oother theef' (B.12.214). Dismas functions as a mirror of inversion that exposes the characteristics of his moral opposite. Specifically, Will as the skeptical narrator shows negative traits of Dismas's anti-type (i.e. Gestas). From Luke's dialogue, the medieval audience would find an obvious echo of the Bad Thief in the voice of Will. Gestas and Will are both equally skeptical. Gestas demands proof before 'belief': 'if thou be the Christ, come down from the cross that I may believe thee.'[26] Similarly, in the passage above, Will the skeptic challenges the logic behind a great sinner receiving disproportionate mercy, becoming 'sovereyns with seintes in hevene - / Tho that wroughte wikkedlokest in world'. Also, the alliterative effect of pairing 'robbere' and 'yraunsoned' stresses the inherent fallacy Will detects in the restoring of payment to the thief, and not to the victim robbed. In light of this apparent inverse relationship of sin with mercy, Will is skeptical of his 'findings': 'A Good Friday, *I fynde*, a felon was ysaved'. However, the inner-dream prepares Will for what Robert Frank calls the 'answers of Imaginatif', and offers more insight on the Dismas story.[27]

Before we consider Imaginatif's digression on degrees of bliss, there are a few surface departures to note from Will's rendering of Dismas in passus 10. For Imaginatif, the thief had 'ben in wille to amenden' (i.e. *facere quod in se est*, 'doing what is in him') (B.12.194). Imaginatif also points out how Trajan, an analogue to Dismas, 'wolde amende' if he had been given proper Christian teaching (B.12.286). Will's Dismas, however, inappropriately merits salvation absolutely, whereas Imaginatif's Dismas seems to merit salvation congruently (*meritum de congruo*) on earth and condignly (*meritum de condigno*) in heaven.[28] In all cases, the thief arrives at a knowledge of failure, and he 'knewliched hym gilty' (B.12.192). This is also consistent with Will's rendering of Dismas who 'beknew on the cros,' and Robert's Dismas who 'knoweliched his [coupe] to Crist' (B.5.474). Epistemology and penitential doctrine intersect when the sinner must come to 'know' the self before contrition, *culpa*, and confession are even possible. Imaginatif, in direct response to Will's polemic, 'as thow speke' (B.12.191) scolds him for his Gestasian skepticism and instead invites him

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[26] *The Story of Joseph of Arimathaea* in *The Apocryphal New Testament*, trans. James, p. 163.

[27] '*Piers Plowman' and the Scheme of Salvation: An Interpretation of Dowel, Dobet, and Dobest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 58.

[28] These two terms deserve clarification, *congruent* merit 'is relative and conditional, whereby man receives reward from God out of God's generosity' and *condign* merit 'is absolute, strict merit, whereby man can be said to merit the reward of salvation absolutely and justly', see James Simpson, *Piers Plowman: An Introduction to the B-text* (London: Longman, 1990), p. 79.

to identify with Dismas, who too was 'unholy of werkes' (B.1.3). Paradoxically, the greater the sin, the greater is the sinner's desire for Christ. The scene in heaven that follows implies that salvation is possible even for the sinful narrator, where moral effort is duly rewarded:

> Ac though that theef hadde hevene, he hadde noon heigh blisse,
> As Seint Johan and othere seintes that asserved hadde bettre.
> Right as som man yeve me mete and sette me amydde the floore:
> I have mete moore than ynough, ac noght so muche worshipe
> As tho that sitten at the syde table or with the sovereynes of the halle,
> But sete as a beggere bordlees by myself on the grounde.
>
> So it fareth by that felon that a Good Friday was saved:
> He sit neither with Seint Johan, ne Symond ne Jude,
> Ne with maydenes ne with martires ne [med] confessours ne wydewes,
> But by himself as a soleyn, and served on the erthe.
> (B.12.195-204)

Derek Pearsall notes how the notion of degrees in heaven has scriptural basis in Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*, as well as in John 14:2.[29] Later, Imaginatif suggests that the thief occupies a place in heaven at the expense of someone else, 'that oother theef' (i.e. Gestas). There are not many places available to 'sitten at the syde table'. In Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 2498, a scribe translates portions of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and comments on the consequences of Dismas's position: 'Seint Austyn seiþ þat þere ne may noman noumbre þe folk þat ben gon to helle for þe þef þat henge on Goddes riȝth side.' Langland reasserts this Augustinian concept and adds a limitless number in hell: 'Hevene hath evene noumbre, and helle is withoute noumbre' (B.20.270). This view of salvation as a desperate race to snatch a seat in heaven contributes to the Dreamer's anxiety: 'Al for tene of hir text trembled myn herte' (B.11.115). It is no surprise that the notion of degrees in heaven clashes with mainstream fourteenth-century thought on the equality of heavenly reward.[30]

Langland introduces 'degrees of bliss' in passus 12 as part of a sequence of co-existing extremes, where Dismas simultaneously conveys both criminality and the virtue of poverty. Imaginatif's description of heaven is indeed problem-

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[29] 'The Idea of Universal Salvation', p. 267.
[30] See Carleton Brown, 'The Author of *The Pearl*, Considered in the Light of his Theological Opinions,' *PMLA*, 19, (2004), 127-45 and Pearsall, 'The Idea of Universal Salvation', p. 267; note also line 607 in *Pearl*.

atic and perhaps develops ironic fissures that destabilize the text beyond what Allen cautiously calls an 'overstatement' (p. 41). First, Langland brings to our attention several lines earlier that pride caused 'Lucifer to lese the heighe hevene' (B.12.40). This almost serves as a warning against 'so muche worshipe' for those positioned above Dismas. They sit in Lucifer's old chair on 'heigh' and 'at the syde table or with the sovereynes of the halle'. On the other hand, Dismas sits 'by himself as a soleyn' and again 'by myself'. It is no coincidence that Imaginatif himself pre-figures Dismas in this respect when he declares, 'I sitte by myself' (B.12.2). In both instances, seclusion evokes an ironic tone of humility, especially when Imaginatif openly removes the possibility of sloth (B.12.3). Similarly, Patience and the narrator in Conscience's court 'seten bi oureselve' (B.13.36). Dismas's enforced segregation is also problematic in light of Clergie's complaint that 'Now hath ech riche a rule – to eten by hymselve / In a pryvee parlour for povere mennes sake' (B.10.99). Instead, the other heavenly guests should be eating alongside beggars like Dismas. Dismas's likeness to a 'beggere' is in fact oddly reminiscent of Trajan's depiction of Christ 'in a povere mannes apparaille' (B.11.185). If we imagine the scene as a caution against desiring 'so muche worshipe', the association of the dubious 'confessours' and 'wydewes' sitting at the high table destabilizes the argument for a meritocracy in heaven. I would not agree with Allen that the resolution must wait until passus 13, where Patience refines Imaginatif's overstatement. Rather, Imaginatif *himself* sets up this hierarchical vision of heaven in order to make his own subsequent retraction more effective.

Let us first consider a sequence of narratives on the hungry 'beggere' and 'povere menne' who stand in front of the gate, which serves as the boundary at the cusp of salvation.[31] This menagerie of beggars leads up to Imaginatif's digression and lends support to the thief's claim as the first heir to enter heaven, in spite of Will's faulty argument, and elevates him to the plane of 'maydenes,' 'martires,' 'confessours,' and 'wydewes.'

Dame Studie introduces the theme of hungry beggars crawling before the gate/boundary:

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[31] Admittedly, there is a large body of scholarship on the topic of poverty in *Piers Plowman*, and Derek Pearsall aptly notes 'the persistence of Langland's concern for the sufferings of poor people is remarkable, as many of his readers have recognized, and seems unusual for a medieval writer', see 'Poverty and Poor People in *Piers Plowman,*' in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. by Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron, and Joseph S. Wittig (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer), pp. 167-85, at p. 167.

Ac the carefulle may crie and carpen at the yate,
Bothe afyngred and afurst, and for chele quake;
Is non to nyme hym in, nor his noy amende,
(B.10.64-67)

These beggars plead 'at the yate' before apathetic, rich 'maistres' for 'mete' and 'mercy.' Langland's wordplay on 'mete' and 'mede' evokes the sinner's hunger for salvation. Here, we find only 'amonges meene men his mercy and hise werkes'. Scripture then develops this idea and puts it in a more explicit salvific context. In her sermon from Matthew 22. 1-14, she describes the parable of the lord's feast: '*Multi* to a mangerie and to the mete were sompned' (B.11.112).[32] Upon approaching the gate, however, 'the porter unpynned the yate / And plukked in *Pauci* pryveliche and leet the remenaunt go rome' (B.11.113-4). Will then wonders if he is among the *predestinati*: 'wheither I were chose or noght chose' (B.11.117). Will compares the baptized Christians who also 'rome' to the wandering 'reneyed caytif': a thief who steals from his Lord, and does 'renne in arerage and rome fro home' (B.11.129). The run-away serf/thief becomes a penitent sinner who is invited to dine at the heavenly feast only 'if contricion wol come and crye by his lyve / Mercy for hise mysdedes' (B.11.135-6). The run-away serf anticipates Dismas, who is also invited to the feast because Christ 'haddest mercy on that man' (B.5.468). Analogous to the serf, Dismas is similarly described 'as a beggere'. Trajan later clarifies that the 'feast' is strictly for the poor and *not* the rich citing Luke 14. 12-14: 'by the Evaungelie that whan we maken festes, / We sholde noght clepe oure kyn therto, *ne none kynnes riche* [...] Ac calleth the carefulle therto, the croked and the *povere*' (B.11.188, emphasis mine). Imaginatif's portrayal of Dismas as a beggar compliments Trajan's glorification of poverty. The implication is that there is one God and that all Christians, despite their earthly possessions, are on an equal plane as His serfs, who must beg at the gates for their 'mete'/salvation. Critics emphasize Will's reliance on baptism, but often ignore his caveat that salvation is possible '*But if* contricion wol come'. Imaginatif exploits Will's unintended metaphor and continues the dialogue to further illustrate the possibility of salvation for the penitent sinner. We see a progression in Will's understanding of certain 'pre-requisites' for salvation in his analogy of the wandering serf-thief to Scripture's sermon. In the end, all five speakers (Studie, Scripture, Will, Imaginatif, and Trajan) admit only 'meene men' of poverty through the gate. In this dialectic surrounding

[32] I agree with Gordon Whatley's assertion that the voice of Scripture is Will's 'own interpretation of the scriptures' ('The Uses of Hagiography: the Legend of Pope Gregory and the Emperor Trajan in the Middle Ages,' *Viator*, 15 (1989), 25-63 (p. 51)).

grace versus good works, the shared glorification of poverty perhaps points to the possibility for a principle that unifies the seemingly contradictory paths to salvation.

Langlandian extremes typically co-exist; on the surface this co-existence appears problematic, but digging deeper unearths an essential equilibrium. As mentioned earlier, the Bad Thief represents the moral opposite to the Good Thief. Similarly, the poet sets up Trajan in hell as the anti-type to Dismas in heaven:

> And right as Troianus the trewe knyght tilde noght depe in helle
> That Oure Lord ne hadde hym lightly out, so leve I [by] the thef in hevene:
> For he is in the loweste of hevene, if oure bileve be trewe,
> And wel losely he lolleth there, by the lawe of Holy Chirche,
> *Qui reddit unicuique iuxta opera sua.*
> (B.12.209-13)

The Trajan episode is often discussed in isolation, but Langland strikes an equal balance between the two extremes of Trajan and Dismas. Let us consider a few key contrasting elements, which will reveal some insights into the poet's theological aim. Trajan is 'noght depe in helle' whereas Dismas has 'noon heigh blisse' in heaven. Trajan shouts from the depths of hell ('Ye, baw for bokes!') and is opinionated, if not boasting, despite his reputation for humility in the Middle Ages. On the other hand, Dismas is completely silent throughout the poem and shows outward signs of meekness. Zeeman notes how Trajan is 'the most extreme form of the natural in the text'.[33] It follows that Dismas, as a corollary, signifies the most extreme form of revelation. Gregory intercedes on Trajan's behalf as an intermediary, whereas Christ speaks directly to Dismas. Before his death, Dismas *knows* Jesus to be the Son of God (i.e. has faith), whereas Trajan dies an ignorant Pagan without faith in Christ. In other words, Langland polarizes the text with side-by-side accounts of a believer and non-believer. On the surface, Trajan establishes a kind of Pelagian doctrine of good works,[34] whereas Dismas's *clara visio* suggests typical Bradwardinian grace. Dismas is saved by God's grace alone (e.g. he 'grace asked of God'). Such a comparison provides a lavish backdrop for competing beliefs on salvation throughout the

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[33] Zeeman, p. 229.

[34] A closer examination reveals the episode as semi-Pelagian, as propounded by Robert Adams in 'Piers's Pardon and Langland's Semi-Pelagianism' *Traditio* 39 (1983), 367-418. David Aers also examines this debate and its Augustinian roots in *Salvation and Sin: Augustine, Langland, and fourteenth-century theology* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009).

poem. By providing us with two radically different avenues to salvation with this use of *merism*, Langland makes a strong case for the possibility of universal salvation for both believers and non-believers, and these oscillating extremes suggest a more likely equilibrium somewhere between grace and good works.

More importantly, we discover a common ground with Dismas in Trajan's glorification of 'the povere; / For in hir liknesse Oure Lord ofte hath ben yknowe' (B.11. 230). Trajan's diatribe on 'parfit poverte' (B.11.271) prepares the reader for Imaginatif's analogy of Dismas to a beggar in the next passus, as well as the glorification of Patience in passus 12.[35] It is no coincidence that poverty is also subject to the medieval discourse of opposition. Constance Bouchard's study elaborates on medieval images of poverty as a model for conversion, and she cites a letter from Bernard of Clairvaux to the count of Troyes, where the conversion of 'a poor man to a rich man' is described as 'a radical and indeed abrupt change from one status to its diametric opposite' (p. 77). The greater our poverty and our lacking, and quite possibly the greater our sin, the more fervently we desire and therefore merit God. Despite the binary oppositions between Dismas and Trajan, there exists a unitary resolution in their shared poverty. In addition, the end of the Trajan episode mentions how Dismas and Trajan are rewarded equally and rest 'wel losely' on the 'loweste of heaven,' in danger of falling off the edge. On the surface, this is 'slightly ridiculous-sounding.'[36] Pearsall's reading here would imply a mistake in God's Judgment, contradicting His omnipotence, but this is obviously not what Langland intended. Instead, I propose the equality of reward in heaven between the two theologically polarized characters of Trajan and Dismas suggests an equality between all of God's chosen: it suggests that *all* sinners precariously dangle on the brink of salvation, which is barely within our reach.

In response to Will's polemic, Imaginatif is careful not to give too much glory to the thief, and his caution certainly 'wreaks havoc in a tradition that Langland almost certainly knew':[37]

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[35] Allen, pp. 43-44, is correct in that the seating of Patience at the side table in Conscience's court 'correct[s] Imaginatif's overstatement … if Patience can be happy at Conscience's feast here on earth, then Dismas must be overjoyed in Paradise.'
[36] Pearsall, 'The Idea of Universal Salvation', p. 267.
[37] Allen, p. 38.

For he that is ones a thef is everemoore in daunger,
And as lawe liketh to lyve or to deye:
De peccato propiciato noli esse sine metu
And for to serven a seint and swich a thef togideres –
It were neither reson ne right to rewarde both yliche.
(B.12.205-9)

The suggestion that the thief commits crimes in heaven seems ludicrous. In the end, Imaginatif essentially retracts his digression on the degrees of bliss, albeit in stages (B.12.213-224). Initially, the mention of 'reward' and 'reson' might seem to justify a 'Pelagian' argument. However, the motives behind the *personification* of reason (or to be precise, *ratio divina*) are mysterious and hidden from view:[38] a few lines later, clerks now 'aresonedest Reson, a rebukynge as it were' and 'ne kouthe the skile assoille', attempting to explain 'why that oon theef upon the cros creaunt hym yelde / Rather than that oother theef'. These are the same clerks described earlier by Clergie, who attempt an understanding of Trinitarian theory, and yet 'Alle the clerkes under Crist ne koude this assoille' (B.10.247-250a). If we are to follow strict Pelagian doctrine, both thieves sinned equally and should merit an equal degree of reward/punishment but the mysteries of the faith inevitably means putting aside rational faculties. The stubborn clerks express the same puzzlement as Will regarding Dismas's 'undeserved' reward and are reminiscent of the unsympathetic clerks who 'breketh noght to the beggere as the Book techeth' (B.10.84).

Imaginatif's resolution, however, is as direct as it is enigmatic: '*Quare placuit? Quia voluit*' (B.12.215a). This tag line, albeit unsatisfactory, flatly dismisses the limits of human understanding in regards to the classic paradox that great sinners make great saints: 'It were neither reson ne right to rewarde both yliche'. In a poem concerned with the perversion of Christian teaching, the question of Dismas's exact position in heaven is certainly *not* practical knowledge and dangerously risks falling under the accusation of *curiositas*. Dismas's reward is God's decision, which is unquestionably just. After all, God has the power to save even Judas if he so chooses.[39] Davlin argues for the co-existence of God's absolute freedom and 'truthe' in the poem.[40] Imaginatif comes to the final conclusion that gratuitous intellectual acquisitiveness in minute theological matters

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[38] John Alford has re-examined the variety of meanings behind the word *resoun* in his chapter, 'The Idea of Reason in *Piers Plowman*' in *Medieval English Studies Presented to George Kane*, ed. by Edward Donald Kennedy, Ronald Waldron, and Joseph S. Wittig (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988), pp. 199-215.
[39] See Whatley on Bonaventure, p. 37, and Vitto on Thomas Buckingham, p. 31.
[40] Davlin, p. 161.

(such as the degree of reward in heaven) is insignificant when weighed against the more pressing issue of salvation or damnation. Instead, he brings to our attention the notion that Dismas and Trajan dangle from heaven. In other words, Langland suggests that everyone lies 'everemoore in daunger' at some equilibrium point within these extremes, precariously on salvation's brink.[41] In the end, venturing salvation is both thorny and uncompromising, where complacency must give way to action.

[41] I agree with Zeeman and David Aers in describing Langland as a dialectical poet, and therefore this essay does not intend to position Langland in any particular theological camp. The discussion on Dismas nonetheless supports Derek Pearsall's analysis of the idea of universal salvation ('The Idea of Universal Salvation', pp. 257-81), whereby God's justice is mitigated by mercy on the Day of Judgment. Pearsall develops this idea from Nicholas Watson's 'Visions of Inclusion: Universal Salvation and Vernacular Theology in Pre-Reformation England', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 27 (1997), 145-88.

'In cordis tui scrinio conserua': Richard Methley, *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Reading for Affectivity

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For one early sixteenth-century annotator of Margery Kempe's *Boke*, the Carthusian monk Richard Methley (d. 1527/8) was best remembered for following comparable devotional practices to Kempe in his crying, fainting and 'ardowr of lofe'.[1] If such 'extreme' physically manifested mysticism is for some later critics a symptom of Methley's 'naiveté', late medieval interpretations were more positive.[2] Preserved at Mount Grace, where Methley spent the greater part of his life as a monk, the attempt of the *Boke*'s annotator to render Kempe's spiritual and somatic symptoms legitimate by adducing the evidence of Methley, suggests that, for many, his devotional practices were considered to be exemplary.[3] The manuscript transmission of his works supports such a hypothesis, and Cambridge, Pembroke College MS 221 is no exception to this: it is a fair copy of two of Methley's works written at the Carthusian monastery of Sheen by the 'highly esteemed' scribe William Darker, and possibly bound by the librarian of its sister house at Syon, Thomas Betson.[4] The manuscript contains Methley's translations into Latin of the fourteenth-century anonymous English text, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and the Middle English translation of Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of*

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[1] *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. by Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004), pp. 97 and 442. For more on the annotator, see Kelly Parsons, 'The Red Ink Annotator of The Book of Margery Kempe and his Lay Audience', in *The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe and Gower*, ed. by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo (Victoria, British Columbia: University of Victoria, 2001), pp. 217-238. For bibliographical information on Richard Methley, see James Hogg, 'A Mystical Diary: The *Refectorium Salutis* of Richard Methley of Mount Grace Charterhouse', *Kärthausermystik und –Mystiker*, *Analecta Cartusiana*, 55:1 (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 1981), pp. 208-238.

[2] David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948-59), II (1955), p. 224 and James Hogg, 'Mount Grace Charterhouse and Late Medieval English Spirituality', in *Mount Grace Charterhouse and late medieval English spirituality, by James Hogg. Die Privilegien des Kartäuserklosters Marienparadies nach der Londoner Handschrift British Library Additional 17096, herausgegeben von Wilhelm Brauer*, *Analecta Carthusiana*, 82:3 (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 1980) pp. 1-43 (p. 31).

[3] See further Karma Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1991), p. 211.

[4] James Hogg, 'Richard Methley's Latin Translations of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Margaret Porete's *The Mirror of Simple Souls*', in *Stand up to Godwards: Essays in mystical and monastic theology in honour of the Reverend John Clark on his sixty-fifth birthday*, ed. by James Hogg, *Analecta Cartusiana*, 204 (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 2002), pp. 73-90 (p. 82). For more on Betson, see Vincent Gillespie's introduction to *Syon Abbey*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie, with *The Libraries of the Carthusians*, ed. by A.I. Doyle, *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues*, 9 (London: British Library, 2001), p. xlvii.

Simple Souls by 'M.N.'. The circumstances of the manuscript's preservation stress the high importance attached to the collection and dissemination of contemporary devotional texts amongst late medieval Carthusians. Yet in the Order's emphasis on solitary study, the possibility of erroneous interpretation was a significant danger; Carthusian reading practice places a heavy responsibility on the translator to render doctrine in a way that is not merely faithful to the text, but also orthodox. Whilst this paper will largely focus on Methley's approach to these demands in *The Cloud of Unknowing*, the first of the translations in Pembroke MS 221, the strategy for devotional reading he constructs there is equally relevant for the difficulties involved in the perusal of the manuscript's second text, the potentially heretical *Mirror of Simple Souls*.

Methley held the teaching of the *Cloud*-author in high esteem, producing a very careful translation which is scrupulously attentive to textual accuracy.[5] Yet in its insistence on the abstract nature of affective devotion, to a certain extent the *Cloud* diverges from Methley's own practice as a mystic. For the *Cloud*-author, the challenge of mystical language is 'to express spiritual things in such a way that the 'bodily words' do not become confused with their spiritual referents'.[6] If Methley disagreed that the disciple should leave 'outward bodely wittes' (p. 124/2), he was attracted by the key role assigned to God's love in grasping the divine: 'By loue may he be getyn & holden; bot bi þouȝt neiþer' (p. 26/4-5).[7] Such is love's centrality to Methley's thought, that in his early work, the *Scola Amoris Languidi*, (composed in 1481), he considers its encouragement in others to have a devotional function:

> Omnium creaturarum summum studium est amare et amari. ... Hinc est enim quod quia deum diligo actuali deuocione gracias illi ago in secula seculorum, omnes ad amandum deum prouocare studeo.[8]
>
> (The highest study of all creatures is to love and to be loved… Hence it is also that, because I love God with active devotion, I give thanks to him forever by attempting to provoke others to love God'.)[9]

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[5] *The Cloud of Unknowing and The Book of Privy Counselling*, ed. by Phyllis Hodgson, EETS, o.s., 218 (London: H. Milford for the Early English Text Society, 1944), p. xxv.
[6] J.A. Burrow, 'Fantasy and Language in *The Cloud of Unknowing*', *Essays in Criticism* 27 (1977), 283-298 (p. 295).
[7] All references taken from *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ed. Hodgson.
[8] James Hogg, 'The *Scola Amoris Languidi* of Richard Methley of Mount Grace Charterhouse transcribed from the Trinity College Cambridge MS.O.2.56', *Kärthausermystik und –Mystiker*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 55:2, (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 1981), pp. 138-16 (p. 138).
[9] Translation by Lochrie, *Kempe*, p. 213. All unattributed translations elsewhere are my own.

Due to the importance of such incitement to love, throughout his *Cloud* translation Methley inserts references to an affective language based on the *Song of Songs*, also employed by the thirteenth-century Carthusian, Hugh of Balma in his *Theologica Mystica*.[10] Such insertions form part of an interpretative strategy which encourages the reader to look to God's love for the elucidation of textual difficulties. For Methley, the *Cloud*-author's criticisms regarding the difficulties surrounding the verification of somatic mystical experiences are neutralised through recourse to the very sensations of love from which they arose. Only through love can the faculty of discernment be exercised in ascertaining the veracity of visionary manifestations. Methley's language thus itself encourages this faculty of discernment, one particularly necessary in the context of the unorthodox teaching of Methley's other translation, Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls.*

The fidelity of Methley's translation of the *Cloud of Unknowing* encourages the reader to adopt a strategy of attentive, analytical reading in keeping with a Carthusian belief in the interdependence of textual accuracy and didacticism, where Latin translation facilitates 'rigorous theological analysis and wider transmission'.[11] In contrast to the other Latin translation of the *Cloud,* where the anonymous translator simply adds to the text, creating 'more of a paraphrase than a strict translation',[12] Methley prefers to replicate the idiosyncrasies of his author within the translation, in order to comment on them in the gloss: 'vbi necesse fueri explanare pro capciosis et opiniosis in fine capitulorum quorundam, que quidem difficilia videntur ad intelligendum' ('Where it was necessary to explain at the end of each chapter that which indeed seemed difficult to understand according to sophistries and opinions').[13] Perhaps because of his conviction that in modern times understanding theological teaching is very difficult ('difficillime', p. 1/17), Methley follows the syntax of the original closely, even replicating grammatical discrepancies: he translates the *Cloud*'s 'who-so cloþeþ

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[10] See further Hugh of Balma, *Théologie Mystique*, ed. and trans. by Francis Ruello and Jeanne Barbet, 2 vols (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1995-6), especially I, p. 194.
[11] Vincent Gillespie, 'Dial M for Mystic: Mystical Texts in the Library of Syon Abbey and the Spirituality of the Syon Brethren', in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition: England, Ireland and Wales: Exeter Symposium VI*, ed. by Marion Glasscoe (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999), pp. 241-268 (p. 245).
[12] James Hogg, 'The Latin Cloud', in *The Perth Charterhouse before 1500, by W.N.M. Beckett. An English Carthusian in the Kingdom of Naples: Dom Bernard Sidgreaves, by James Hogg. The Latin 'Cloud', by James Hogg. Analecta Cartusiana,* 128 (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 1988), pp. 91-102 (p. 92). This translation may also be by a Carthusian: see Sarah M. Horrell, 'Middle English Texts in a Carthusian Commonplace Book', *Medium Ævum* 59 (1990), 214-227 (p. 218).
[13] *Richard Methley: Divina Caligo Ignorancie: A Latin Glossed Version of* The Cloud of Unknowing, ed. by John Clark, *Analecta Cartusiana*, 119:3 (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 2009), p. 1/20-22. All references in the text are taken from this edition.

a pore man (...) sekir be þei þei do it vnto Criste goostly (p. 107/3-5)', with the appropriate change from singular to plural (p. 76/20-4). At least one of Methley's audience took a similarly passionate interest in textual accuracy: James Grenehalgh, fifteenth-century Carthusian annotator of two other manuscripts of the *Cloud of Unknowing* (amongst other mystical works), also corrected Methley's translation.[14] He makes insertions to clarify the sense, (e.g. p. 72/10n) and alters passages where Methley misinterprets the source text, such as changing 'luxuriosus secreto' to 'luxuriosi'.[15] Such fidelity is part of a wider Carthusian determination to ensure the textual uniformity of books belonging to the Order, reaching its peak with the release of the now lost fifteenth-century work, the *Valde Bonum,* which attempted to eliminate national and regional differences in Latin orthography.[16] Methley himself was enthusiastic about textual correction. At the end of his *Scola Amoris Languidi*, he encourages the monastic reader, 'si necesse sit opus hoc corrigite' (if it is necessary, correct this work).[17] Such corrections and annotations are a means of ensuring a mindful, analytical engagement with the text. Methley repeatedly urges the reader to mark what he says 'diligentissime' ('most diligently', p. 55/8), and how he says it, frequently employing the imperative 'nota, lector' ('note, reader', e.g. p. 39/12-14). His injunctions are taken up by the scribe of Pembroke MS 221, William Darker, who has similarly indicated noteworthy statements in the text, and particularly in Methley's gloss. The long digression in a note to chapter seventeen on the necessity of restraint in the mystic, correcting faults in oneself before those of others, has been marked 'nota bene' ('note well') three times by Darker; once, 'Nota conclusionem' ('note the conclusion'), and once, 'nota hanc mirabilem distinccionem' ('note this marvellous *distinctio*') (p. 35-6n). These annotations were an intrinsic part of a process of diligent reading, as well as a way of fostering such reading in others: the Carthusian Guigo I envisaged copying itself as a peda-

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[14] M.G. Sargent, 'The transmission by the English Carthusians of some late medieval spiritual writings', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 27 (1976), 225–40 (p. 238) and *Richard Methley*, ed. by John Clark, pp. iv-vii. But see M.G. Sargent, 'James Grenehalgh as Textual Critic', *Analecta Cartusiana*, 85 (2 vols) (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 1984, ll. 73-4 for an alternative interpretation.

[15] He notes here that Methley's translation has made the devil, rather than his disciples, the subject of the sentence: 'Loquitur hic de antichristo tantum, et non de complicibus (p. 75/4n).'

[16] See M.G. Sargent, 'The Problem of Uniformity in Carthusian Book Production from the *Opus Pacis* to the *Tertia Compilatio Statutorum*', in *New Science Out of Old Books: Studies in Manuscripts and Early Printed Books in Honour of A.I. Doyle* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995), pp. 122-141 (pp. 128-9, 131).

[17] James Hogg, 'The *Scola Amoris Languidi* of Richard Methley of Mount Grace Charterhouse transcribed from the Trinity College Cambridge MS.O.2.56', in *Kärthausermystik und –Mystiker*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 55:2, (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 1981), pp. 138-165 (p. 163).

gogical process 'quia ore non possumus, manibus predicemus' ('since we may not preach by mouth, we may preach with our hands').[18]

If Methley deliberately constructs translation and gloss to encourage readers' analytical engagement with the text, the outcome of such analysis is an increased awareness of the affective potential of the *Cloud*. In contrast to Walter Hilton's Latin translator, the Carmelite Thomas Fishlake who 'is not concerned to produce a 'learned' translation which matches all of Hilton's [...] allusions to ecclesiastical writers', Methley takes advantage of the interpretative flexibility afforded by translation to insert theological references, teaching a way of reading grounded in the wider context of affective doctrine.[19] The reader is encouraged to interpret the *Cloud*-author's work in terms of the anagogical mode of scriptural exegesis, the mode which facilitates a 'fusion between the understanding of Scripture and mystical contemplation'.[20] Methley consistently stresses this when translating the phrase 'þis piue litil loue put' (p. 131/14); for example, 'hec parua mocio dileccionis anagogica' (p. 94/14-15) and 'hac modica anagogica consurreccione' (p. 90/32-33). Such an emphasis is influenced by Hugh of Balma, who considers that in the anagogical interpretation of Scripture, the mind is directed toward the love of its creator: 'mens ... ad amorem sui Creatoris multipliciter et mirabiliter ... dirigitur'.[21] Significantly, for Hugh the conversation between the bridegroom and the bride in the *Song of Songs* is representative of this divine 'anagogical art' ('ars anagogica'). The anagogical mode is one which draws the soul, as the spouse 'adhuc a sponso peregrinanti' ('still separated from the bridegroom'), to seek the love of God (p. 194). Hugh writes of the bride's requests that:

> Quae petitiones nihil aliud sunt quam ignita desideria et inquietae adfectiones, dilectum ad sui sursumactionem felicius obtinendam ardentius provocantes. (p. 194)

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[18] Cited in Vincent Gillespie, '*Cura Pastoralis in Deserto*', in *De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Michael G. Sargent (Cambridge: Brewer, 1989), pp. 161-182 (p. 172), in which see more on the Carthusian understanding of the *cura animarum*.
[19] John Clark, 'English and Latin in the *Scale of Perfection* – Theological Considerations', in *Spiritualität Heute und Gestern*, ed. by James Hogg (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 1982), pp. 167-212 (p. 212). Although he does not seem to have known the other works of the *Cloud*-author, Methley may have been familiar with some writings of the pseudo-Dionysian school; see further *Richard Methley*, ed. Clark, pp. xvii-xxi.
[20] Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, trans. by Marc Sebanc, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Eerdmans, 2000) I, p. 190.
[21] Hugh of Balma, *Théologie Mystique*, I, p. 180.

> (These requests are nothing other than the inflamed desires and unceasing affections that provoke the beloved more keenly to obtain with greater success the end of being elevated towards Him.)

The utility of such language in increasing the reader's love towards God may provide one reason for Methley's evocation of the Canticle throughout his translation of the *Cloud*. He most frequently references the Song of Songs 2. 5: 'quia amore langueo' ('I am sick of love').[22] 'Wiþ a scharpe darte of longing loue' in chapters 6 and 12 of the *Cloud* becomes 'iaculo acutissimo prelanguidi amoris' (p. 18.21/22) and 'cum acuto telo prelanguidi amoris' (p. 27/22-23). Methley's use of the superlative in the first example may reflect a sense of the Song of Songs' especial power to stimulate the *affectus*. For Richard of St Victor, the inflamed arrow of love ('igneus ille amoris aculeus') pierces the affective power of the soul so completely that it has no more strength to contain or dissimulate the ardour of its desire.[23] Such arrows wound the soul, causing it to languish with what the *Cloud*-author calls a 'longing desire vnto God' (p. 96), and which Methley translates as a 'languens desiderium ad Deum' (p. 49/11). However, Methley's use of the superlative 'acutissimo' also reflects his frequent emphasis on the *Cloud*-author's use of hyperbole. When glossing the *Cloud*'s statement concerning the love of God that: 'se it as cleerly as þou maist bi grace com to for to grope it & feele it in þis liif', he points out that 'Spiritualia non possunt corporaliter palpari. Hoc intellige per yperbolen' ('Spiritual things cannot be felt physically. Understand this through hyperbole', p. 24/20-21). Methley similarly constructs a language based around excess, most notably in his preface, where contemplation becomes a 'scienciam defecatissime et vnificatissime et viuificatissime vnicionis et vnionis inter Deum et viatorum animas' ('The most clear and unified and living knowledge of the unification of the union between God and earthly souls', p. 1/13-15). Such hyperbolic language is itself ultimately based on the love of God: Methley notes of the *Cloud*-author that: 'loquitur per yperbolen, id est excessum pre nimia affeccione' ('He speaks through hyperbole, that is, exaggeration caused by overwhelming love', p. 62/7 -8).[24] By focusing in his translation on hyperbole and anagogy, Methley encourages a method of interpretation based on affectivity. This, as much as an atten-

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[22] All Biblical translations taken from the King James Bible.
[23] Richard of St Victor, *Les Quatre Degres de la Violente Charité*, ed. by G. Dumeige (Paris: Vrin,1955), p. 31. Methley's readers knew Richard's works: fol. 103^{v} of Pembroke MS 221 contains an extract from his commentary on Psalm 121, taken from the Paris 1518 edition (*Richard Methley*, ed. Clark, p. iii).
[24] Translation from *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ed. and trans. by James Walsh (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1981) p. 204).

tion to textual accuracy, may be a specifically Carthusian way of reading, nurtured by eremitism: recalling the Song of Songs 4. 9 St Bruno, founder of the Order, writes of the desert where men 'can acquire the eye that, because of its clear look, wounds the divine spouse with love' ('Hic oculus ille conquiritur, cujus sereno inuitu vulneratur sponsus amore').[25]

Yet even whilst attempting to encourage accurate, prayerful interpretation of the text, Methley's emphasis on the physical terminology associated with the Song of Songs itself may be open to misinterpretation. One reason for its employment is the place of *languor* within his own devotional practice. He stresses the 'most hateful' ('odississima') pain of separation from God, creating a distinctive style of prayer: 'Ooo · agh · agh · amore langueo · Ihesu gracias ago · dissolui desidero.' ('I languish with love. Thank you Jesus. I desire to be dissolved in death.')[26] Such prayer is most reminiscent of Richard Rolle, who in *The Form of Living* likewise expresses mystical experience using the words of the Canticle:

> Amore langueo. [...] Dyuers men in erth haue dyuers yiftes and graces of God, bot þe special yift of þo þat ledeth solitary lif is for loue of Ihesu Criste.[27]

However, some considered there was a worrying potential for self-delusion inherent in Rolle's view of an affective devotion based on the physical symptoms of Christ's love, manifested 'in feruore, in canore, et in dulcore' ('in heat, in song, and in sweetness').[28] The *Cloud*-author points out that those experiencing *fervor* misunderstand the spiritual nature of the 'fiir of loue' (p. 86/13). Such over-reliance on the corporeal symptoms caused by God's love can lead to an inability to discern his 'goostly' presence (p. 85/19). For an anonymous Carthusian detractor of Rolle, writing to the hermit Thomas Basset around 1400, his version of affective piety was 'the stuff of ruin' ('materia ... ruine') because 'he made men judges of themselves' ('fecit homines judices sui').[29] Methley was particularly concerned with the mystic's ability to determine the veracity of visions accurately, and goes to some effort to rebut such criticisms, outlining a concept of discernment in which the *affectus* played an important part. He

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[25] Bruno et al., *Lettres des premiers chartreux, Sources Chrétiennes*, 88, 2 vols (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1962), I, p. 70.

[26] Methley, *Schola Amoris,* ed. Hogg, p. 139. Pembroke MS 221, fol. 41^{v}.

[27] *Richard Rolle: Prose and Verse*, ed. by S.J. Ogilvie-Thompson, EETS, o.s., 293 (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1988), p. 15.

[28] Richard Rolle, *Incendium Amoris,* ed. by Margaret Deanesly (Manchester: Longmans, 1915), p. 38.

[29] M.G. Sargent, 'Contemporary Criticism of Richard Rolle', in *Karthäusermystik und –Mystiker*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 55:1 (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 1981), pp. 160-205 (p. 200).

places greater emphasis on *languor* than Rolle, which for him negates all bodily senses ('exsuperant omnes sensus'):[30]

> Vita mea consistit in amore languore, dulcore, feruore, canore, rarius tamen in sensibili feroure quia dilectus michi promisit quod frequencius in languore sicut et ille almus Ricardus dictus de hampol frequencius in calore de quo non legi quod tam frequens fuerit in languore.
>
> (My life consists of the yearning [languor] of love, sweetness, fervor, and song; less often it consists of sensory fevor because my beloved promised me that I would be more frequently in a state of languor, just as Richard of Hampole was more frequently in a state of heat, since I did not read that he was in a state of languor very frequently.)[31]

Whilst leading the mystic away from the outer life and towards prayerful interiority, for Methley the distinguishing characteristic of such *languor* is its basis in love, and it is this which constitutes his response to the problem of accurate discernment: he considered the truth contained within the experience of God's love to be a way of verifying affective phenomena. To teach the reader to interpret according to the hyperbolic and anagogical is to begin to teach the discernment necessary for the visionary.

Such discernment was especially necessary in the contemplative practice envisaged both by Methley and the *Cloud*-author, in which diabolic temptations occurred frequently. Methley writes in his late treatise on the discernment of spirits, the *Experimentum Veritatis,* that the devil can appear in a great variety of bodily guises ('valde multis modis').[32] Sometimes these could appear to be good: St Augustine wrote that demons could be deceptively helpful, speaking truth and disclosing useful knowledge of the future.[33] *Discretio spirituum* was thus an area in which Methley felt his readership needed guidance, especially as

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[30] 'A Mystical Diary: The *Refectorium Salutis* of Richard Methley of Mount Grace Charterhouse', ed. by James Hogg, *Karthäusermystik und –Mystiker*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 55:1, (Salzburg: University of Salzburg), pp. 208-238 (p. 224).

[31] Methley, *Refectorium Salutis*, ed. Hogg, p. 221. Translated by Lochrie, *Kempe*, p. 216.

[32] M.G. Sargent, 'The Self-Verification of Visionary Phenomena: Richard Methley's *Experimentum Veritatis*', in *Karthäusermystik und –Mystiker*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 55:2 (Salzburg: University of Salzburg, 1981), pp. 121-137 (p. 125).

[33] Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, ed. by J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 34 (Paris: Migne, 1855-64), p. 465.

the visionary was thought to be 'particularly vulnerable' to the devil's deceits'.[34] It led him to clarify the *Cloud*-author's description of Satan, based on his personal experience. When the *Cloud*-author remarks that the devil 'haþ bot o nose-þerel, & þat is grete & wyde. & he wil gladly kast it up, þat a man may see in þerate to his brayne vp in his heed' (p. 103/8-10), Methley states:

> Si seruis suis sic diabolus semper appareat, tamen alijs, vt frequenter michi apparens, nunquam sic visus est. (p. 74/11-12)
>
> (If to his servants the devil may always thus appear, however when appearing to others, and frequently to me, he has never been seen so.)

He is keen to stress the dangers of the demonic: 'þe fiire of helle wellyng in þeire braynes' (p. 102/14-15) becomes rather 'igne infernali in cerebro suo bulliente', emphasising the boiling heat of hell (p. 73/12-13). Methley's change to the singular 'cerebro' here also stresses the permeability between Satan's brain and that of the contemplative who is falsely judgmental. The *Cloud*-author notes that such contemplatives attribute their stirrings to 'þe fiire of charite & of Goddes loue in þeire hertes' (p. 102/15-16], and Methley's use of the Song of Songs in his translation may reflect his anxiety concerning this false 'fiire of charite'. Rather than rendering Satan's 'nose-þerel' as a 'naris', the standard Latin word, Methley chooses 'foramen' (p. 73/29), evoking the Song of Songs 2. 14, where the dove hides herself 'in foraminis petrae' ('in the clefts of the rock'), interpreted by St Bernard of Clairvaux as the Christian soul, hiding herself in Christ and His wounds.[35] Satan, however, represents a false refuge. For Methley, this misinterpretation of the language of love, and of the refuge afforded by the love of God, is caused by a lack of a quality which he considers interdependent with love, discretion: 'Quod fit subito sine discrecione et aduertencia, fit absque caritatis attendencia' ('Those that are made sodenly wiþouten discrecion and auysement are also without mindfulness of love', p. 74/11-12).[36] In the *Experimentum Veritatis*, Methley states that the experiences of the contemplative are to be believed 'si sensibilem diuinum amorem habuit' ('If they have sensory divine love').[37] Such love verifies itself through complete union of the will with God:

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[34] Rosalynn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writing of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries* (York: York Medieval Press, 1999), p. 47.
[35] St Bernard of Clairvaux, *Opera Omnia*, ed. by J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 83 (Paris: Migne, 1854), cols. 1070-74.
[36] C.f. *Cloud*, ed. Hodgson, p. 103/17-9.
[37] Sargent, 'Self-Verification', p. 127.

> Scio ipso deo gracias experimento esse verum. Deus amatores suos non potest defraudare desiderijs suis quia vnus sunt semper voluntatis.[38]
>
> (I know by God himself that his graces are true in experience. God cannot deceive his lovers by his desires because they are always of one will.)

Rather than attempting to counter the charge of the subjectivity of visionary phenomena, Methley instead retreats into an intimacy yet more radical: that between the lover and the beloved. In such discernment through love, although the soul and God are of one will, crucially, they remain separate. The discretion that Methley seeks to evoke through his employment of loving language both is a means of avoiding heresy in its union with God's will, and itself an emblem of such avoidance in its acknowledgement of the ultimate separation of the soul from God.

However, Methley remains anxious to impress upon the reader his awareness of the heretical possibilities inherent in the dissolution of the soul. At the end of the preface to the *Cloud*, he states concerning mystical unification that:

> Est autem vnicio actiue ex parte Dei, passiue ex parte anime, in purissima coniunccione vt possibile est viatori. Vnio autem est illorum duorum copulacio, quorum vtrumque manet in sua substancia. et hoc contra heresim Begardorum. (p. 2/8-11)
>
> (But it is in active union on the part of God, passive on the part of the soul, in the most pure union that is possible for an earthly being. But one union is of the two of them, each of which remains in his substance, and this against the heresy of the Begards.)

The discretion that allows the soul to remain separate from God whilst being one with His will is of particular importance in the second translation that makes up Pembroke MS 221, Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls*; it nurtures a style of affective readng which allows love to discern the devout intention within Porete's unorthodoxy. For Nicholas Watson, Methley's treatment of the *Mirror* demonstrates that he was 'fascinated, but wholly unalarmed by the text'.[39] Yet Methley's specific mention of the Begard heresy, cited above, makes

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[38] Sargent, 'Self-Verification', p. 135.

[39] Nicholas Watson, 'Melting into God the English Way: Deification in the Middle English Version of Marguerite Porete's *Mirouer des simples âmes anienties*', in *Prophets Abroad: The Reception of Continental Holy Women in Late-Medieval England*, ed. by Rosalynn Voaden (Cambridge: Brewer), pp. 19-49 (p. 49).

this lack of concern an unlikely scenario. It is true that both Methley and M.N., the Middle English translator of the *Mirror* from whom Methley worked, hardly seem to be troubled by potential Wycliffite interpretations: Methley remarks of Porete's image of the host being used as mortar that it is simply used as a comparison.[40] However, his glosses show a significant concern with Free Spiritism, and particularly the heresy of the annihilation of the soul in God. He notes of the Soul who has become nothing that:

> In nichilum est redacta, non secundum essenciam, sed secundum intelligenciam sueve reputacionis. (Pembroke MS 221, fol. 46r)
>
> (She is reduced to nothing, not in essence, but in her understanding or esteem of herself.)[41]

Apart from the Free Spirit doctrines certain Lollards admitted to harbouring, the contents of the bulls published against the heresy circulated widely in England in standard canon law collections.[42] If Methley was not aware of them, later readers certainly were: one sixteenth-century hand on fol. 40v of Pembroke MS 221 directs readers to the Clementine disposition, *Ad nostrum.* Whilst the *Cloud*-author mentions those 'Antecriste discyples' (p. 105/1) who use the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as an excuse to set aside the law of the Church (p. 104), Methley or his readership could also have learnt about Free Spiritism from the works of Walter Hilton, or the English *Chastising of God's Children*, which contains a translation of John Ruysbroec's attack on the heresy.[43] Intriguingly, on fol. 41r, William Darker notes that 'iste liber aliter intitulatur Russhbroke qui fuit prior de ordine cartusiensi, et hunc libellum primo composuit' ('this book is alterna-

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[40] Pembroke MS 221, fol. 51r.

[41] Translated by Edmund Colledge and Romana Guarnieri, 'The Glosses by 'MN' and Richard Methley to 'The Mirror of Simple Souls'', *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà*, 5 (1968), 357–382 (p. 379).

[42] For the proceedings of such a trial, see Anne Hudson, *The Lollards and their Books* (London and Rochester: Hambledown Press, 1985), pp. 120-123 and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), p. 263.

[43] See further J.P.H. Clark, 'Walter Hilton', in *The Chastising of God's Children and the Treatise of Perfection of the Sons of God*, ed. by Eric College and Joyce Bazire (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957), pp. 247-249. See also Marleen Cre, '*The Chastising of God's Children* and *The Mirror of Simple Souls* in MS Bodley 505' in *Medieval Texts in Context*, ed. by Graham D. Caie and Denis Renevey (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 122-135 for a fifteenth-century Carthusian manuscript in which the *Chastising* is found alongside M.N.'s translation of the *Mirror.*

tively called Russhbroke, who was prior of the Carthusian Order, and he first composed this little book').[44] If Methley shared Darker's opinion concerning the text's authorship, either he was not aware of the refutation of Porete's teaching in the *Chastising,* or possibly saw no danger in translating another work of a respected member of the Order. Yet his closing statement shows a consciousness that the *Mirror* could be open to misinterpretation, hoping that: 'qui hunc legerint librum nec vnum male intelligant verbum' ('those who read this book do not take one word badly').[45]

If Methley believed the *Mirror*, as well as the *Cloud*, to be a work by a Carthusian author, this may explain his view of the essentially pious nature of the text. Together, the two works form a commentary on the possibilities for understanding the union of the soul with God in the light of a specifically Carthusian version of discretion centered on love. At least one reader envisaged the works as mutually complementary: on fol. 60ᵛ one annotation on the nature of time in the *Mirror* refers the reader back to chapter 4 of the *Cloud.* An interpretative continuum is formed between the texts by Methley's consistent stress on the anagogical and hyperbolical.[46] Commenting on another passage where Porete insists on the dissolution of the soul in God, he warns readers to beware of understanding the text literally at this point:

> Sed cum hec anima sit vnus spiritus cum deo per dileccionis vnicionem et vnionem, vocat se id quod ipse propter illam vnionem per vehemenciam, pocius quam per attendenciam, loquens yperbolice. (Pembroke MS 221, fol. 71ᵛ)
>
> (But when this Soul is one spirit with God by the union of love, and calls herself that which he is, she is speaking in hyperboles, because of that union, in her vehemence rather than in her consideration.)[47]

If M.N.'s approach to glossing the *Mirror* attempts to teach 'a style of 'safe reading' that will protect the reader's orthodoxy throughout the book', Methley's own glosses to both the *Mirror* and the *Cloud* are similarly concerned with the interpretative techniques that allow the Carthusian reader to develop the faculty of discernment more through the *affectus* than through intellectual analysis.[48]

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[44] On reasons for this belief, see M.G. Sargent, '*Le Mirouer des simples âmes*' and the English Mystical Tradition', in Abendländische *Mystik im Mittelalter: Symposion Kloster Engelberg 1984,* ed. by Kurt Ruh (Stuttgart: Metzlersche, 1986), pp. 443-485 (p. 461).
[45] Pembroke MS 221, fol. 99ʳ.
[46] See e.g. Pembroke MS 221, fols. 47ʳ, 53ʳ, 56ᵛ and 60ᵛ.
[47] Translation from 'Glosses', ed. Colledge and Guarnieri, p. 379.

Commenting on the image of the 'cloude of vnknowyng' (p. 23/23), and the 'lackyng of knowyng' (p. 23/20) necessary for its contemplation, Methley outlines a strategy for reading which makes no attempt to reconcile varying mystical traditions:

> Omnem scienciam tuam si bona est, in cordis tui scrinio conserua, nichil penitus exercens in actu mentali tempore huius exercicij. (p. 17/4-6)
>
> (All your knowledge if it is good, keep in the book box of your heart, hardly ever using it in mental action during the time of this exercise.)

Rather than specifying prescriptive techniques for contemplation, instead the true contribution of Methley may be to teach a style of *lectio* based in a love which transforms reading itself into a 'devotional performance'.[49]

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[48] Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, p. 295.
[49] Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 58.

Marginalia Reviews

Feeling Persecuted:
Christians, Jews and Images of Violence in the Middle Ages
Anthony Bale
(London: Reaktion Books, 2010)
ISBN: 978-1-86189-761-9 (Hardcover); 254 pages.
RRP £29 ($45).

In his introduction to *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms 1350–1500* (CUP, 2006) Anthony Bale aptly cited Frederic Raphael's dictum that the Jews are 'the margin which runs down the middle of the page of European history'. Synthesising recent approaches from a number of disciplines, Bale argued persuasively in that book that the deployment of anti-Judaic topoi in the production of late medieval English literary culture was no merely marginal matter. *Feeling Persecuted* consolidates some of the arguments of that first study, and expands their scope; it is, however, more a recapitulation than an advance into new territory.

Bale's subject is what has been described as the 'rhetorical construction' of the Jew in late medieval England. His focus is not the well-attested persecution of Jews by medieval Christians, but rather the persecution of medieval Christians by Jews — a phenomenon that is equally well documented, despite its being wholly invented. Imaginatively translating Jewish violence from the remote biblical past into the immediate medieval present, late medieval Christian culture found utility in depicting itself as currently victimized by the same murderous Jewish agency that it invariably over-emphasised in its representations of the Passion. (Hence the circulation of many tales of Jewish Eucharistic sacrilege, well-poisoning and child-murder, among which last Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale* is the most well-known.) This was true even — and perhaps especially — when Jews themselves were unlikely to be encountered, as was the case in England following Edward I's expulsion of the Jewish community in 1290. (Bale states that the Jews were 'comprehensively expelled', although this idea has been contested by James Shapiro and David Lawton, among others. However, it is safe to say that their existence in late medieval England was at best peripheral.)

Bale seeks to understand medieval Christian attitudes towards Jews and Judaism holistically, inviting consideration of the 'aesthetic, intellectual and devotional reasons' for imaginary slanders. His emphasis, as might be expected, is on the 'authorizing' nature of perceived persecution: victimhood as a peculiarly empowering form of subjectivity. Beyond this broad point, however, the chief strengths of his book lie in its often deft analyses of an array of texts and artefacts. Bale hones in on the most characteristically tangible and piercing qualities of medieval material culture — its appeals to 'somatic engagement'. 'Medieval people did not see books and pictures as separate from themselves … but as recreational objects which could touch, impress, hurt or wound the reader or viewer.' And so the import of Bale's title is clarified in his first and perhaps most interesting chapter: 'feeling persecuted' — 'feeling' having both a tactile

and an emotional register — was one of the fundamental affects in the material expression of 'affective' devotion.

The second chapter comprises seven brief discussions of purportedly Jewish biblical and post-biblical violence, with an emphasis on the imagined vulnerability of Christian children. A fourteenth-century Paris ivory statue of the Virgin and Child, with a depiction of Herod's Massacre of Innocents on the reverse, nicely illustrates the inherent proximity of graphic murderousness and devotional comfort in the medieval Christian psyche (though one might argue that any crucifixion scene would have done the same). Imagined Jewish violence is further explored, with help from Freud's essay "A Child Is Being Beaten", in the apocryphal scenes of Christ's childhood depicted in the Tring tiles, as well as in several 'mock lullaby' lyrics. Bale also returns to the subject of ritual murder (the so-called 'blood libel') already addressed in his earlier book; here he focuses on the cult of William of Norwich, allegedly crucified by Jews in 1144 (aged 12) as described in Thomas of Monmouth's *vita*. Bale suggests we view such cases 'as personalized and emotional reconstructions of Christ's passion', cognate with devotional practices that also sought to relocate its distant horrors "within the everyday, local and familiar".

Two central chapters focus on what Bale calls the 'interruptive' function of the Jew. The first addresses the art-historical issue of 'profile-positioning' in medieval Christian visual representations, and uses the examples of Judas, the two thieves crucified with Christ, as well as Longinus and Stephaton (honorary Jews both). In an insightful discussion of the 'lavish and beautiful' Salvin Hours (c. 1270), Bale contends that 'Jews prevent a fully focused, uninterrupted gaze on Christ'; they become objects of the viewer's antipathy 'not simply because they are 'ugly' and 'Jewish' but because they create a tension in modes of looking'; they are, in more than one way, at odds with Christian perspective. Next Bale turns to the apocryphal Jephonius — the Jew who attacks the Virgin's funeral and whose hand sticks to the bier — as depicted in the Taymouth Hours, the murals of St Mary's parish church in Chalgrove (Oxfordshire), and the N-Town 'Assumption of the Virgin'. Jephonius's role, Bale claims, is to provide narrative and iconographic resistance to Christian faith: 'a kind of inversion of the Assumption', he drags Mary's body down, stalling her ascension. Bale discusses his relationship with the apostle Thomas and with other more 'Jewish' doubters, including Jonathas in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament,* who so memorably mishandles the Eucharistic 'cake'. The Jew's interruptive hand — often punitively severed, and rejoined only upon conversion — is thus 'an eloquent and shocking metonym of incorrect engagement with Christian symbols'.

Medieval Christian representations of Jerusalem and the Holy Land are the subject of two rather different chapters towards the end of the book. One looks at the ways Jerusalem was depicted (or invented) as a potential destination for European pilgrims. The other describes its 'transportability' — its potential for imaginative recreation in late medieval England where it might prove even more potent than the reality: 'one could ... feel oneself to be at Calvary ... without the inconvenience and inauthenticity of [going to] the real Jerusalem'. These chapters discuss fifteenth-century pilgrim accounts, Saint Helena and the Invention of the True Cross, the layout of English 'Calvary chapels' (including Red Mount Chapel in King's Lynne), and the travels of Margery Kempe, whose whole life was 'a performance of feeling persecuted'.

A final chapter deals rather more cursorily with Jewish sources: commemorative accounts of the mass suicide of persecuted Jews at Clifford's Tower, York, in 1190 and marginal illustrations from the Prato Haggadah (Spain, c.1300). While offering a salutary reminder that 'Jews too engaged in somatic, emotional and physical devotional practices, often based around feeling persecuted,' Bale also points out that the cultural celebration of persecution — Christian or Jewish — is often 'the prerogative of a relatively secure and empowered group'. Accordingly, he concludes with a sharp critique of recent Zionist historiography and a call to avoid labelling the kinds of 'cultural antipathy' described in his book with the modern, racially inflected term 'anti-Semitism'. (Bale in fact made circumspect use of precisely that word in his first book; here he explicitly disavows it as 'an anti-critical, ahistorical and totalizing term which obscures more than it illuminates'.)

This is a usefully illustrated volume. Quotations from Latin texts are given only in translation, and only a select bibliography is included.

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Shakespeare and the Medieval World
Helen Cooper
Arden Critical Companions
(London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2010)
ISBN: 978-1-904271-78-9 (Hardcover); 272 pages.
RRP £55.

Helen Cooper's aim in *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* is a simple one, expressed in its opening sentence: to establish that 'the world in which Shakespeare lived was a medieval one' (p. 1). Her book begins with the real world that formed Shakespeare's early life and experience, the medieval street-plan of Stratford, and it ends with the next world: the 'city full of straying streets', and death, 'the market-place where each one meets', as the widows in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* describe it (1.5.15-16, p. 233). And in between it encompasses Shakespeare's 'the little world of man', the *theatrum orbis* of his wooden O.

This book is the culmination of Helen Cooper's long-lasting efforts to deconstruct the periodisation that has emphasised the break, and not the continuity, between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The tendency is nowhere more visible than in the connotative accretions of the terminology: we claim the sixteenth century as our own when we label it 'early modern' and hail it as a moment of new life after sterility when we say 'renaissance'; we relegate to the realm of the 'positively medieval' anything that smells of backwardness or barbarity. The division runs deeper than just words: as Cooper comments, 'we often label everything we like in the Middle Ages as proto-Renaissance, and everything we don't like in the Renaissance as medieval' (p. 2). In fact, of course, habits of thought die hard, and for as much as the sixteenth century saw some

tectonic shifts over the course of its turbulent religious, political, technological and intellectual development, it also held fast to where it had come from, its medieval origins becoming more precious and more clear as they became more distant. But the sheer ubiquity of the influence of the medieval has meant that the wood has tended to be missed for the trees: as Cooper observes, 'Chaucer [has] almost disappear[ed] from sight in much criticism of Shakespeare', but 'many times as much ink has been poured out over his relation to Plutarch' (p. 209).

Cooper's book is therefore a timely one, and deserves to be a significant one, in reorienting perspectives to the important place of the medieval, visible and invisible, direct and intangible, in Shakespeare's mind. But it is testimony to the suppleness of her writing, and the lightness with which she wears her learning, that this book remains beautifully simple. It covers a vast array of material with a swiftness of pace and ease of style that are sufficient to inform the undergraduate or interested layperson, without being laborious for the scholar. One of the delightful things about it is the incidental detail one encounters along the way – that, for instance, among the unnoticed bequests of the Middle Ages to the modern world are the alphabetical index, double-entry book-keeping, the mechanical clock, and the humble button. The book is full of such moments of intriguing detail and enticing speculation: one of the best is a subsection of chapter seven, 'A Note on Bottom and the Ass' (pp. 219-220), whose theory about the origin of the donkey-head as a hand-me-down from the talking ass of the Chester play, I leave to others to take or leave.

The book is made up of seven chapters, whose arguments are largely distinct and self-contained. The first, 'Shakespeare's Medieval World', starts with the things that we take for granted that were in fact medieval inheritances: the street-plan of Stratford, the skyline of London; ideas about the cosmos and the shape of human life and death that were staples of a medieval worldview, and barely dinted by the Reformation; and the English language, with all the complex medieval history that made it, in Cooper's words, 'a palimpsest of successive conquests', and which shaped its peculiar boasts and anxieties about identity, vernacularity and nationalism. The second chapter 'Total Theatre' claims as particularly medieval (as opposed to classical) Shakespeare's belief in the stageability of everything. It argues that the cycle plays, which were still being acted in the provinces well into the sixteenth century, and which Shakespeare almost certainly witnessed in Coventry as a teenager, bequeathed to him an understanding of theatre that encompassed all things – 'damnation and bliss; God, and a man caught with his pants down' (p. 48). And, unlike Senecan drama, it 'acted its action' with an 'incarnational aesthetic' that included 'battles and dumbshows... embraces and kisses, on-stage deaths and blood' with total confidence in the audience's willingness to believe in spite of their unbelief (p. 48). This chapter shows that this all-encompassing ethic lay behind the concept of the *theatrum*, not originally connoting a dramatic space but an encyclopaedia or *summa*. When Burbage opened the Theatre in 1576, he was doing more than capitalising the T, Cooper argues: 'the playhouse... present[ed] itself as an encyclopaedia of the world, *theatrum mundi*. The Globe was named by analogy with the world' (p. 52).

The third chapter, 'Staging the Unstageable', considers the impossibilities that medieval and Shakespearean drama alike place on stagecraft and specta-

tion: 'Enter Ariel, invisible'; 'I am Deus Pater'; 'Exit pursued by a bear'. It contends that whenever there is a significant rupture between classical and Renaissance practice, it is because of what happened in between, and Shakespeare's deliberate neglect of the Aristotelian dramatic principles so cherished in other European traditions is no exception. The fourth chapter, 'The Little World of Man', continues its discussion of the medieval influence on sixteenth-century thought with regard to the human psyche and the moral cosmos: the influence of allegorical modes of drama (the Vice and Richard III), indicative nomenclature (Parolles), and the three types of the King, the Shepherd and the Fool. Chapter Five, 'The World of Fortune' turns to tragedy, explaining the evolution of the term from its ethical Boethian origins to its categorising function in the First Folio, and the ironies it entails along the way. The sixth chapter, 'Romance, Women and the Providential World' considers the enduring influence of popular medieval romance tradition: the self-determining agency of its feisty heroines, the benign supernatural forces governing the symmetry of its plot, the truly satisfying happy endings that come about only after deep and genuine suffering. This chapter gives special place to *Pericles,* the play that foregrounds its medievalism by having 'ancient Gower' give the Prologue. The final chapter, 'Shakespeare's Chaucer', discusses Shakespeare's three most pronounced engagements with his notable predecessor. One of the most pleasing suggestions of this chapter is the analogy between the *Dream* and *The Canterbury Tales*: 'Shakespeare's turning of Chaucer's April day's holiday into a midsummer night's dream, and showing in the process how he can compete with his master' (p. 219). The argument in this section insists that 'Shakespeare's responses to Chaucer... are a long way from being acts of allegiance' (p. 210), and the darker analyses of *Troilus and Criseyde* and *Troilus and Cressida, The Knight's Tale* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen,* show Shakespeare persistently turning Chaucerian ambivalence into something more 'deeply disorienting' (p. 234).

This book expands Helen Cooper's 2005 inaugural lecture as Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature in Cambridge on *Shakespeare and the Middle Ages*, and continues the efforts of her last book, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare,* to show the enduring habits of thought in English literature from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. It will give Shakespeareans of all shades a fuller understanding of the world in which he lived and thought, and the ones he created.

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The Present and the Past in Medieval Irish Chronicles
Nicholas Evans
(Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010)
ISBN: 978-1-84383-549-3 (Hardcover); 308 pages.
£60.00 ($99.00).

The Annals of the Four Masters: Irish History, Kingship and Society in the Early Seventeenth Century
Bernadette Cunningham
(Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010)
ISBN 978-1-84682-203-2 (Hardcover); 348 pages.
£45.00 (€50.00).

As the blurb of the first of these books makes clear, 'Ireland has the most substantial corpus of annalistic chronicles for the early period in western Europe'. The Irish annals represent a major repository of information about the development of early-medieval Irish society and there are few aspects of early Ireland that can be researched without some understanding of this corpus of material. Yet, despite this distinction and their continuing usefulness to historians, full-length studies of these records themselves have been few and far between. These two books, as well as Daniel McCarthy's *The Irish Annals* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008), go some way towards addressing this neglect.

A stated aim of Nicholas Evans' *The Present and the Past in Medieval Irish Chronicles* is to 'build on previous research and provide some of the basic groundwork to improve our understanding of the Irish annals' (p. 7). Any book that seeks to conduct an in-depth analysis of the annals is bound to be highly technical. *The Present and the Past* certainly does not constitute 'light reading' and would probably be rather challenging to a reader who does not have some familiarity with medieval Irish history and its sources. However, the root of this problem lies in the nature of the sources themselves, rather than in Evans' approach to them. Indeed, Evans deserves praise for presenting this tangled mass of evidence in as lucid a fashion as possible. Throughout this book, his train of thought is clear and the various strands of argument ably expressed in precise unfussy prose.

Evans concentrates his attention on two textual groups of sources. The first is formed by the *Annals of Ulster* (AU) and the *Annals of Loch Cé* (ALC), both of which share a common source for the section from the year 1014 (when ALC begins) to the 1220s. The second group consists of the *Annals of Tigernach (*AT) and the *Chronicum Scotorum* (CS), both of which contain sufficient material from the monastery at Clonmacnoise to suggest that they were maintained there at some stage of their transmission. Evans' main focus is on the tenth and eleventh century sections of these annals, which he observes have been relatively neglected by scholars but which are highly significant. However, he does not ignore the earlier periods and reconstructs the chronology for the Irish annals for the period 664 to 730 by comparative analysis with other independent sources, most notably Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* and Pictish king-lists. Annalistic entries treating events before 664 prove the most problematic, and

Evans concludes that in this period 'there are more difficulties and contradictions in the sources which hamper any analysis' (p. 188). Evans adopts a number of approaches in his study of annalistic texts: analysis of the content of individual entries, the ordering of these entries, and linguistic analysis of the form in which they were written. One of the most significant (and disputed) issues that Evans tackles is the question of the terminal date for the *Chronicle of Ireland* – the putative common source of AU, AT and CS. Some years ago, scholars such as Kathleen Hughes and John Kelleher argued that this chronicle terminated around the year 911 when AU and the Clonmacnoise group of annals parted company. Evans' researches tend to support this position. In doing so, they refute McCarthy's more recent view that the shared source of the annals was transferred to Clonmacnoise in the mid-eighth century where it remained until as late as c. 1019, as the common source for AU, AT and CS.

Evans appears to have taken pains to make this complex work as easy as possible to use and to digest. Most chapters contain clear and useful concluding sections and the book is teeming with illustrative footnotes. At the outset, two maps give the locations of the various peoples and places mentioned in the text. Evans supplies three appendices that collect and present some of the more complex evidence in the form of tables and diagrams. There is also a detailed index with English translations of vocabulary and phrases in Latin and Irish used in the annals.

The Present and the Past is a very significant work of scholarship; it is well researched, intelligently argued and never attempts to elide the fact that the evidence can be open to more than one interpretation. This book deserves to be an indispensible reference work for any scholar using the Irish annals for research purposes. Indeed, in many ways it functions as a manual, or a handbook, to the annals and is certainly a work that scholars will find themselves returning to again and again. Of course, notwithstanding Evans' important contribution to scholarship, the number of different sets of surviving annals, questions surrounding their interrelationship, the tendency evident in the annals to recast and translate earlier material, the large number of scribes involved in annalistic transmission at a variety of centres, the fact that the annals are generally preserved in later (in some instances considerably later) manuscripts, all conspire to ensure that the Irish annals will remain a rich source of speculation and contention among scholars and that only the most foolhardy will claim to have said the last word on the subject. Evans, in a further instance of the good judgement that characterises this book, makes no such claim.

Among the annalistic sources that fall outside the stated scope of Evans' book are the most celebrated of all the Irish annals, the so-called *Annals of the Four Masters* (AFM). A distinct aura of romance has always hung around this seventeenth-century work, originally styled *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* (The Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland) and considered by many to be the final and greatest monument to the medieval Gaelic world. Indeed, the most prominent of the annalists, the Franciscan Mícheál Ó Cléirigh, has enjoyed a considerable reputation in modern Ireland. In 1944, the 300th anniversary of his death was marked by the issue of two commemorative postage stamps featuring a modern impression of Ó Cléirigh at his desk and emblazoned with the annalists' dedication of their work, *Do chum glóire Dé agus onóra na hÉireann* (For the glory of God and the honour of Ireland), expressing both the nationalism and Catholicism of

the Irish Free State. The design endured on Irish postage stamps until 1969.

As if in homage to the modern reputation of the Four Masters, Bernadette Cunningham's new book, *The Annals of the Four Masters: Irish History, Kingship and Society in the Early Seventeenth Century*, uses the image of Ó Cléirigh from the 1944 stamps as its cover illustration. The publication of Cunningham's book follows on from a new flurry of interest in AFM occasioned by the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the Irish College at Louvain which was marked in 2007. Unsurprisingly, the facets of AFM and its context that pique the interest of 21st-century readers are rather different to those of previous eras. From the outset, Cunningham's focus is on the text of the annals as a work of history noting, quite rightly, that the work itself has been rather overshadowed by the circumstances of its composition. She is also keen to stress the European context of the annals composition noting, as a starting point, that the 'much lauded [dedicatory] phrase. . . was in fact an adaptation of a phrase used also in other countries' (p. 22). Situating AFM in its wider European context might seem like an obvious approach to a work compiled at Louvain, but it is a refreshing and productive innovation in an area that has traditionally been insular in every sense of the word. Cunningham also explores the evidence for the Four Masters' methodology. Her analysis of the manuscript evidence, particularly the neglected autograph manuscripts of AFM, is deft and is supplemented by a generous selection of black and white photographs. This sort of detailed work is complemented by broader accounts of the socio-historical context. The tracing of such cultural context is the sort of research for which Cunningham has already displayed considerable affinity in her 2000 study of Ó Cléirigh's contemporary, Geoffrey Keating, and the chapters that adopt this focus are the most engaging in this study.

On one level, it is somewhat surprising that a full length study of AFM has been so long in arriving. The importance of AFM to scholars in almost every field of medieval and early modern Irish historiography and the continued celebrity of the annalists and their work beyond the scholarly sphere, effectively guarantees a particularly broad audience for a book of this sort. Of course such a mixed audience also provides challenges and, in this regard, the book sometimes betrays its origins as a doctoral thesis. At times, too few concessions are made to the needs of readers whose immediate area of specialisation is not Cunningham's own. A specialist in early medieval Irish history, for instance, is likely to find the array of late medieval O'Donnells (who, like most dynasties, had a fondness for repeating first names and sobriquets from generation to generation) rather bewildering. A genealogical table or two would have been particularly helpful in this regard. Furthermore, the depth of Cunningham's analysis of the text, particularly with regard to the details of AFM's use of known sources, will not always be sufficiently thorough to satisfy those who come to this book with a particular interest in such questions. Points are generally made by referencing one or two representative examples (usually from the fourteenth and fifteenth century material) rather than providing a more comprehensive account. The sort of extensive tables and charts Evans uses to present such material may have been avoided in order to encourage the non-specialist readership a book on this subject is capable of attracting (Cunningham's volume is certainly less visually daunting than Evans' in this respect), but the study's failures of elucidation at other points means such an audience will also encounter prob-

lems. The book could also have benefited from more thorough proof-reading. A range of small inconsistencies might have been easily avoided. For instance, Aodh de Blácam's *Gaelic Literature Surveyed* is dated to 1899 in the main text (p. 13), while the footnote and bibliography give the correct date of 1929; one page later, Brendan Jennings' book on Mícheál Ó Cléirigh is assigned to 1935 in the main text and to 1936 in the corresponding footnote.

Nonetheless, Cunningham deserves credit for undertaking this large scale evaluation, and re-evaluation, of AFM and its context. As the paucity of previous such attempts demonstrates, the scale of such a project cannot be anything other than truly daunting. It is to be hoped that this book will provide a stimulus for further work on these annals, work that should, ideally, culminate in a sorely-needed new edition of AFM itself.

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The Apocryphal Adam and Eve in Medieval Europe: Vernacular Translations and Adaptations of the 'Vita Adae et Evae'
Brian Murdoch
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)
ISBN: 978-0-19-956414-9 (Hardcover); 308 pages.
RRP £58.00 ($100.00).

Brian Murdoch opens his monumental study by challenging a basic critical assumption that we can talk about '*the* text' usefully and meaningfully. The Latin *Vita Adae et Evae* (*VAE*), from which vernacular versions across medieval Europe derive, is 'not really a single text, but rather a more or less flexible accumulation of episodes grouped around a core' (p.vii). Murdoch doubts the fruitfulness of chronological and 'linear' discussion of the vernacular re-writings of the *Vita Adae et Evae*, instead favouring an approach that considers the reception history of the texts across a geographical spread. It is tempting to draw an analogy between the critical methodology informing Murdoch's *The Apocryphal Adam and Eve in Medieval Europe* and the plight of its subjects. Expelled from paradise, the wandering exiles, Adam and Eve, face a world of possibilities and uncertainties, the comfort and security of paradise denied to them. Murdoch likewise faces a terrain of *variance* and *mouvance*, the changing form of the *Vita Adae et Evae* as it is found in 49 European vernacular texts. Yet, unlike the penitential couple who long for the refuge of absolutes, Murdoch relishes the challenge of exploring the shifting, slippery ground.

Despite the presence of textual variations, the basic story of Adam and Eve after they are exiled from the Garden of Eden remains fairly stable. To summarise, the couple suffer the discomforts of cold and hunger and undertake penance by fasting and immersing themselves in river water for a set number of days. Satan, outraged by their atonement, successfully tempts Eve to leave the water. Adam prays and drives away the devil, completing his penance. Eve soon becomes pregnant and gives birth to Cain. The story of Cain and Abel follows, and later, Adam is transported into heaven, receiving a prophetic vision.

The apocryphal material culminates in the legend of the Holy Rood – Adam dies and is buried with twigs or seeds that eventually grow into the tree used to make Christ's crucifix. Seth, Adam's son, records his parents' history on tablets of clay and stone.

After an introductory chapter explaining his critical approach, Murdoch charts how this tale varies on account of its source, form and context over four chapters, beginning his study in Ireland with the text *Saltair na Rann*, one of the oldest vernacular version of the *VAE*, which contains some unusual elements partly due to having a distinctive variant version of the *VAE* as its source, and partly due to scribal misreadings, such as the intriguing name given to the third heaven, 'Ficciona,' a possible misreading of 'faci(t) omnia.'

Chapter 3, 'England, Wales and Cornwall,' contains a particularly fascinating discussion of textual variations within the so-called 'Arundel' class of English manuscripts. Whereas in most European versions of the *VAE*, Adam sees a chariot ('currum') with fiery wheels, most manuscripts of the Arundel class contain the misreading 'choros,' some also containing a mistranslation of 'fiery' to 'fair,' thus perpetuating the myth that Adam saw a choir or circle of fair angels. However, although the Bodley and Wheatley manuscripts probably have the same source, they differ in that Wheatley contains the correct reading as well as the misreading, whilst the Bodley only contains the erroneous idea. This leads Murdoch to speculate briefly about whether the writer of the Wheatley manuscript had access to multiple sources, though he quickly reins in his discussion, wary of speculation, since 'questions like this can rarely have definite answers, and require too many assumptions' (p.108). Yet, he argues, this example leads us to consider further the fluidity of the apocrypha and raises more questions about traditional methods of textual analysis. While Murdoch's eagerness to divert from the conventional hunt for a source text is admirable, and his evidence appears all the stronger for his refusal to enter the realms of speculation, one cannot help feeling that his bolder critical assumptions are curtailed as soon as they enter interesting territory.

It is no coincidence that the most engaging part of the work, chapter 4, 'The Holy Roman Empire and Beyond,' is also that which shows European writers taking greater liberties with the *VAE*. The German works of Heinrich von Munchen and Lutwin add to *VAE* material in two significant ways: by exploring character psychology (especially that of Eve) in greater detail, and by contributing to theological discussions of penance and the fall. In this chapter, we see most clearly the twin agonies of love and guilt that the exiled couple endured, and engage most closely with the vexed issue of how Lucifer fell through envy of Adam before Adam was even created.

Chapter 5 considers versions of the vernacular texts in France, Brittany and Italy. Most interesting here is the discussion of how the source material was adapted for dramatic performance. Although in a majority of vernacular texts, Eve desires death and asks Adam to kill her, the Breton mystery play addresses the issue that Eve, ignorant of the implications of her own mortality, could not yet have known about death. The Breton play therefore introduces the concept of mortality in the form of a dramatic persona, *Maro* (Death), created by God. Not only does this bring an abstract idea to the stage with terrifying immediacy, in a way that reflects the allegorical mortality plays, but it also raises the problem of evil – how the God of classical theism can remain omnibenevolent with

the presence of death and suffering in the world.

The visual culture of the apocryphal story of Adam and Eve is briefly discussed in chapter 6, 'Iconography.' The iconographic tradition is somewhat limited, especially in comparison to the wealth of artistic material depicting the legend of the Holy Rood. Nevertheless, some of the artwork is compelling, such as the illustration found in a twelfth-century Psalter that provides a typological link between Adam's penance in river Jordan and Christ's baptism. Plates of the images could have been included to enrich Murdoch's discussion.

The concluding chapter once again emphasises the need to consider the texts from a pan-European perspective, which is 'just as valuable as the backward search for an elusive original' (p.252-3). While Murdoch's approach is thorough, diligent and original in this field of study, it has the unfortunate effect of making the structure of each chapter very similar, with the four chapters of textual analysis being rather repetitive in form. However, this is an undeniably important work, wide in scope yet painstakingly detailed, which furthers our understanding of textual criticism and theology. It would also be of interest to anyone whose imagination was triggered by what may have happened to the first man and woman after they, with 'wand'ring steps and slow / Through Eden took thir solitarie way' (John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 12:648-9).

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