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# John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*: Form and Transmission

Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

by  
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I, Mary Wellesley, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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## *Contents*

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Abstract	4
Acknowledgements	5
List of Manuscripts and Early Prints	6
Abbreviations	8
Introduction	11
Chapter One: Problems and Contexts	32
Chapter Two: Types of Textual Apparatus	59
Chapter Three: Idiosyncratic Forms of Textual Apparatus	93
Chapter Four: The Manuscript and Print Extracts	122
Chapter Five: Afterlives	157
Conclusion	190
Appendix 1: The Type A Chapter Headings and the Three Variants	208
Appendix 2: Manuscript Descriptions	218
Bibliography	259

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## *Abstract*

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This thesis is a study of the form and transmission of John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*. The *Life* survives in over fifty manuscripts that date from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. It was also printed several times in the pre-modern period. The thesis examines the ways in which the text was presented in these various forms and shows what such forms suggest about the transmission of the poem. It discusses the manuscripts' physical construction, design and decoration. It taxonomizes the types of textual apparatus that accompany the text and considers textual extraction and modification. These aspects of the manuscripts show how the poem's meaning was framed in a variety of cultural contexts and demonstrate the role played by non-authorial figures in shaping the *Life* for its readers. All the located manuscripts are described in an appendix at the end.

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This thesis would have been impossible without the kind assistance of the librarians at the twenty-two collections I have visited, but especially those of the British Library's Manuscripts Reading Room where the majority of this thesis was researched and written. Latterly, my colleagues in the library's department of Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Manuscripts have been a source of constant good cheer and intellectual companionship.

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I am hugely grateful to the people who have taught me since my undergraduate degree – to Stephen Gill and Peter McCullough for teaching me how to think about literary texts and to Elisabeth Dutton and Winfried Rudolf for introducing me to medieval literature in a serious way. At UCL I have had the privilege of being taught by some fantastic scholars, all of whom have been directly involved with this thesis in some form. I am indebted to Ardis Butterfield, Marilyn Corrie, and Sarah Wood. Richard North was a reader in an hour of need. My debt to him is huge. My two supervisors have been a constant source of wisdom and advice. Susan Irvine has been an empathetic guide. I offer the greatest thanks to Tony Edwards: harsh critic, but great ally. Sometimes supervisions felt more like shallow-water shark-attacks, but I thank you for trying to make me precise. If I may call myself a scholar, it is because of you.

My friends have made the course of the PhD bearable. I will be forever grateful for the laughter and love I have had from Alex C, Alex Z, Alice, Amia, Claudia F, Claudia W-S, Danielle, Daniel (and Fabienne and Clio), David, Finbar, Hussein and Anna-Della, James, Kate – who has lived it all, almost daily – Luke, Liz, Mirra, Molly (and Dom and Stanley and Martha), Nathan, and Tim. But, I offer thanks especially to Kate: thank you for listening so patiently as I felt my way through this. I fear my John (Lydgate) got a lot more airtime than your John (Donne).

My parents have been a great support, tangibly and intangibly, while my brothers and sisters have been reliably and comfortingly derisive: thank you all. I offer the rest of the family – my brothers-in-law and sister in-law, and the ever-expanding brood of nephews and nieces – only affection.

I owe the greatest debt to my mother, who fired my love for the strangeness of the medieval world and who has been as courageous as a lion through the darkness of the last few years.

**sib, adj. and n.<sup>2</sup>**

2. a. Related by blood or kinship.

**sib, n. 1**

- †2. a. Peace, amity, concord. *Obs.*

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*The Manuscripts of the Life of Our Lady'*

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- 1) Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS 21242C, ff. 1–102
- 2) Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 230/116, ff. 54–55v (***Magnificat: II, 981–1060***)
- 3) Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.19, f. 25 (**extract: II, 1628–34**)
- 4) Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.21 (601), ff. 85–156v
- 5) Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.22 (602), ff. 1–110
- 6) Cambridge, University Library MS Kk.1.3, ff. 2–94
- 7) Cambridge, University Library MS Mm.6.5, ff. 1–142
- 8) Champaign-Urbana, University of Illinois MS 85, ff. 2–83v
- 9) Chicago, University Library MS 566, ff. 4–107v
- 10) Dublin, Trinity College Library MS 423, f.103v (**extract: III, 1–7**)
- 11) Durham, University Library MS Cosin V.ii.16, ff. 5–90v
- 12) Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.3.1 [Heege], ff. 176–210 (**Books IV–VI**)
- 13) Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 1.1.6 [Bannatyne], pp. 22–4, ff.25v–26v (***Magnificat: II, 981–1060***)
- 14) Glasgow, University Library, Hunterian MS 232 (U.3.5), ff. 1–104v
- 15) Harvard, Houghton Library MS Lat. 394, flyleaves (**in hand of Thomas Wilson, extracts: II, 1628–34, VI, 309–460**)
- 16) London, British Library, Additional MS 19252, ff. 4–104
- 17) London, British Library, Additional MS 19452, ff. 2–89v
- 18) London, British Library, Additional MS 29729, f. 122 (**in the hand of John Stow, Magnificat: II, 981–1060**)
- 19) London, British Library, Arundel MS 168, ff. 66–85
- 20) London, British Library, Cotton MS Appendix VIII, ff. 2–108
- 21) London, British Library, Harley MS 629, ff. 4v–97
- 22) London, British Library, Harley MS 1304, ff. 4–99
- 23) London, British Library, Harley MS 2382, ff. 1–74v
  - a) London, British Library, Sloane MS 297, f. 88r–v (**single leaf from BL Harley MS 2382**)
- 24) London, British Library, Harley MS 3862, ff. 1–107
- 25) London, British Library, Harley MS 3952, ff. 2–105
- 26) London, British Library, Harley MS 4011, ff. 23–119
- 27) London, British Library, Harley MS 4260, ff. 2–108
- 28) London, British Library, Harley MS 5272, ff. 1–98v
- 29) London, British Library, Harley MS 7333, f. 132 (**extract: II, 1628–34**)
- 30) London, British Library, Sloane MS 1785, ff. 14–29v (**disordered leaves**)
- 31) London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 344, ff. 14v–99v
- 32) London, Society of Antiquaries MS 134, ff. 1–30
- 33) Liverpool, Radcliffe Library MS 16, ff. 1–105 (**copied from print**)
- 34) Manchester, Chetham's Library MS 6709, ff.6–159 (**copied from print**)
- 35) New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library MS 281, ff. 4–114v
- 36) New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library MS 660, ff. 1–76v

37) Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 39, ff. 3v–109

38) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 59B, ff. 135–82 (**partially copied from print**)

39) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 75, ff. 1–83v

40) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 120, ff. 1–94v

41) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 596, ff. 86–174

42) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 73, ff. 10–116v

43) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poet 140, ff. 4–108v

44) Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 237, ff. 158–240

45) Oxford, St. John's College MS 56, ff. 1–71

46) Rome, AVCAU Liber 1405 (formerly known as Venerable English College MS 1306), ff. 1–65

47) San Marino, Huntington Library MS HEH HM 115, ff. 2v–112

48) San Marino, Huntington Library MS HEH HM 144, ff. 11–20 and 77v–79 (**two extracts: II, 1–501; II, 981–1060**)

49) Somerset, Longleat, Marquess of Bath MS 15, ff. 5v–104v

50) **dismembered, fragmentary MS:**

- a) Columbia, Missouri U of Missouri *Fragmenta Manuscripta*, f. 178
- b) Cambridge, Gonville and Caius 804/808, fragment 1, f. 1
- c) Cambridge, University Library, Additional 3077 (7) ff. 1–4

51) **Unlocated:** Quaritch, *General Catalogue*, no. 291, October 1873, no. 18781

#### Early Prints

52) *The Life of Our Lady*, Westminster, William Caxton [1484] (STC 17023 and cancelled run: 17024)

53) *The Life of Our Lady*, London, Robert Redman [1531] (STC 17025)

54) *The Woorkes of Geoffrey Chaucer*, London, John Kyngston for John Wright [1561] (STC 5076), sig. Ppp 1<sup>b</sup> (**extract: II, 1628–55**)

55) *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, London, Adam Islip for Thomas Wight [1598] (STC 5078), sig. Cii<sup>b</sup> (**extract: II, 1628–55**)

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## *List of Abbreviations*

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Add.	Additional
Adv.	Advocates' Library, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
Antiquaries	Library of the Society of Antiquaries, London
AVCAU	Archivum Venerabilis Collegii Anglorum de Urbe (formerly known as the library of the Venerable English College, Rome)
Beinecke	Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT
BL	British Library, London
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
Camb.	Cambridge
CCC	Corpus Christi College Library, Oxford
Chetham's	Chetham's Library, Manchester
Chicago	Chicago University Library, Chicago IL
CUL	Cambridge University Library, Cambridge
<i>Critical Edition</i>	John Lydgate, <i>A Critical Edition of John Lydgate's Life of Our Lady</i> , ed. by Joseph A. Lauritis, Vernon F. Gallagher, and Ralph A. Klinefelter, Duquesne Studies Philological Series, 2 (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1961). All references are to this edition. Where the text is quoted it is incorporated into the text by book and line number. I amend the editors' punctuation. Where the critical apparatus and commentary is cited, this is done by page number.
Durham	Durham University Library, Durham
EETS	Early English Text Society
O.S.	Original Series (1864– )
E.S.	Extra Series (1867–1920)
S.S.	Supplementary Series (1970– )
HEH	Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA
Houghton	Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Hunterian	Hunterian Library, Glasgow
Illinois	University of Illinois Library, Champaign-Urbana, IL
IPMEP	<i>Index of Printed Middle English Prose</i> , ed. by R.E. Lewis, N.F. Blake and A.S.G. Edwards (New York, London: Garland, 1985)
John's	St. John's College Library, Oxford
Lambeth	Lambeth Palace Library, London
Longleat	Library of the Marquess of Bath, Longleat House, Warminster, Somerset
MED	<i>The Electronic Middle English Dictionary</i> , based on Robert E. Lewis (gen. ed.), <i>Middle English Dictionary</i> [University of Michigan Press 1953–2001], <a href="http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/">http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/</a>
NIMEV	Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, <i>New Index of Middle English Verse</i> (London: British Library, 2005)
NLW	National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
Radcliffe	Radcliffe Collection, Liverpool Hope University Library, Liverpool (formerly Liverpool Cathedral Library)
Rawl.	Rawlinson

PL	<i>Patrologia Latina: the Full Text Database</i> , based on <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina</i> , ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1844–1855), <a href="http://pld.chadwyck.com/">http://pld.chadwyck.com/</a>
STC	A. W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave, <i>A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England Scotland and Ireland, 1475–1640</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> edn. rev. enlarged by W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson and Katherine E. Pantzer, 3 vols (London: Bibliographical Society, 1986–91)
TCC	Trinity College Library, Cambridge
TCD	Trinity College Library, Dublin
Bible	All references to the Bible are to the Latin Vulgate, while all translations are to the Douay-Rheims translation. The names of the Books are those of the Vulgate, with modern names in parenthesis for clarification, if necessary.

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‘I believe the true line [of research] lies … in the careful noting and comparison of small details.’

**Flinders Petrie<sup>1</sup>**

‘There is no text apart from the physical support that offers it for reading (or hearing), hence there is no comprehension of any written piece that does not at least in part depend on the forms in which it reaches its reader.’

**Roger Chartier<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Flinders Petrie, *Seventy Years in Archaeology* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., Ltd, 1931), p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), p. 9.

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# INTRODUCTION

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If manuscript survival is any indication of cultural significance, the *Life of Our Lady* by the Benedictine monk and poet John Lydgate (c.1370–1450)<sup>1</sup> was among the most important poems of fifteenth-century England. The text is extant in fifty located manuscript witnesses and fragments and two early prints: the first, from the press of Caxton in 1483 or 1484 (STC 17023); the second, a reprint of this edition by Robert Redman in 1531 (STC 17025).<sup>2</sup> There is no authorial manuscript, but the extant manuscripts range in date from the early decades of the fifteenth century to the early seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup> In spite of this continued appeal, however, and of the historically significant period which it represents, the poem remains neglected by modern scholarship. After Redman printed it in 1531, the complete text of the *Life* remained out of print until 1961.<sup>4</sup> This lacuna in the poem's print history is emblematic of Lydgate's critical fortunes in a more general sense. Although highly regarded in his own day, his work increasingly fell out of favour and has only recently been rehabilitated in the academy.

In 1961, a problematic modern edition of the text was printed by Duquesne University Press, splicing the doctoral theses of three scholars with as many editorial methodologies (*Critical Edition*) without seeking to rationalise these into one system. It is partly as a result of this unreliable modern edition that there is no developed body of critical or scholarly commentary on the poem.

## The poet

John Lydgate was born in c.1370 and appears to have died in c.1450. He slipped from the documentary record on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1449, when his royal grant ceased. The date of his birth

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Gray, 'Lydgate, John (c.1370–1449/50?)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17238, accessed 3rd February 2013].

<sup>2</sup> Sheets Aa.vii and Aaa.vi of STC 17023 are known in a different setting, as STC 17024, which survives as fragments of printers' waste. The early prints of the *Life* are discussed in Chapter Five. In addition, there are some printed extracts of the poem from the early modern period. These are discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>3</sup> There is also a short extract of the poem copied from Bodl. MS Rawl. Poet 140, by an eighteenth-century antiquarian, onto the final leaves of an early fourteenth-century Psalter (now Houghton MS Lat. 394) This is discussed in Chapter Five.

<sup>4</sup> Apart from a partial nineteenth-century edition: John Lydgate, *The Life of Our Lady. Part I. Edited from MSS in the British Museum*, ed. by Charles Edward Tame (London: R. Washbourne, 1879).

is a conjecture which rests on an aside in the prologue to the *Siege of Thebes* in which he writes that he is ‘nygh fyfty yere of age’.<sup>5</sup> This remark seems to fit with the datable documentary record and thus is taken to be trustworthy. (Living to 80 years in the first half of the fifteenth century is impressive, but Lydgate wrote the most popular medicinal manual of his age, so perhaps knew the secrets of long life.)<sup>6</sup>

Lydgate’s early life is obscure. He likely came from the village of Lidgate in Suffolk, for as he wittily remarks in *Isopes Fabules*, excusing his lack of rhetorical skill: ‘I was born in Lydgate;/ Of Tullius garden I passyd nat be gate’.<sup>7</sup> He was accepted into the novitiate of the Benedictine abbey of Bury St Edmunds in around 1382.<sup>8</sup> He was ordained acolyte in 1389, deacon in 1393, priest in 1397.<sup>9</sup> He studied in Oxford, in all likelihood at Gloucester College, the Benedictine house, and while at Oxford he apparently began to write verse.<sup>10</sup>

Early on, his talents attracted the attention of Richard Courtenay, Chancellor of the University. We know this because at a time between 1406 and 1408, Henry (then Prince of Wales) addressed a letter to the abbot of Bury St Edmunds.<sup>11</sup> In the letter, the abbot is named simply as ‘William’, but from the date it can only be William Cratfield, who died in 1415.<sup>12</sup> The letter concerns a certain ‘Dan J. L’, who we can reasonably identify as Lydgate. Henry wrote that Lydgate would like to ‘continuer a les Ecoles’ and asks that he be allowed to stay in Oxford rather than returning to Bury.<sup>13</sup> Henry’s letter is the first document in a long line of

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<sup>5</sup> John Lydgate, *Lydgate’s Siege of Thebes I*, ed. by Axel Erdmann, EETS, E.S. 108 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1911), p. 5, l. 92. The *Siege* appears to have been written in 1421. More specifically, astronomical references in the Prologue suggest a date of 27<sup>th</sup> April 1421 for the fictional return pilgrimage, while a reference to the Treaty of Troyes suggests that the poem was written before Henry V’s death on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1422.

<sup>6</sup> John Lydgate, ‘A Dietary, And a Doctrine for Pestilence’, *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, 2 vols, EETS, E.S. 107 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1911), II, pp. 702–07.

<sup>7</sup> *Minor Poems*, ed. by MacCracken, II, p. 567, ll. 32–33.

<sup>8</sup> Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate (1370–1449): A Bio-Bibliography* (Victoria, B.C.: University of Victoria, 1997), p. 50

<sup>10</sup> John Shirley tells us in his rubric to *Isopes Fabules*, fable VII, that it was ‘made in Oxenford’ (Oxford, Bodl. MS Ashmole 59, f. 24v). Like much of the information that comes from John Shirley this cannot be treated as entirely secure. See *Minor Poems*, ed. by MacCracken, II, p. 598.

<sup>11</sup> The letter can be dated because it mentions Richard Courtenay as Chancellor of Oxford, a post which he held from 1406–08.

<sup>12</sup> Antonia Gransden, ‘Cratfield, William (d. 1415)’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004, online edition: <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6624>, accessed 30th August 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Printed in *Anglo Norman Letters and Petitions from All Souls MS.182*, ed. by M. Dominica Legge (Oxford: Anglo Norman Text Society, 1941), pp. 411–12. Pearsall suggests that at the time this letter was written, Lydgate was not actually studying for a doctorate or a master’s and that he had not actually met the Prince. He writes that he had ‘embarked on no definite programme of study such as a doctorate of theology’ and ‘there would be no question of Lydgate going back to Bury if he were a fully-registered

similar records which testify to the relationship between Lydgate and the crown. It would prove to be an immensely important relationship for Lydgate. Lee Patterson says that 'he produced an extensive body of court poetry whose primary effort was to affirm the supremacy and stability of the noble class.<sup>14</sup> Some seven years later, on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1412, Lydgate would begin work on his great *Troy Book* at the behest of the then prince. It took him seven years to complete.

Other than the reference Lydgate makes in the *Troy Book* to beginning work on this poem in 1412, there is no documentary record of him in the period between 1408/9–1415. It is unclear whether Cratfield granted the wish of the Prince of Wales and allowed him to remain in Oxford. We know that Lydgate was back in Bury on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1415 when, after Cratfield's death, William of Exeter was elected abbot. BL Cotton MS Tiberius B ix, f. 182r mentions, amongst the list of those present for the election of the new abbot, 'Johanne Lydgate'.<sup>15</sup>

The *Life of Our Lady* appears to have been written in c. 1420–22, but this date is derived from information added to the poem's manuscripts by apparently non-authorial figures, and the poem's form and apparently unfinished state may argue for a later date. The competing dates proposed for this poem are discussed in my first chapter. During this period, Lydgate was also apparently at work on the *Siege of Thebes* and living at Bury. In 1423, he was elected the Prior of Hatfield Regis, a post he held until 1434, when he appears to have returned to Bury to live there for the rest of his life. On his return to Bury in 1434 he was awarded a royal annuity, which he drew from that year until Michaelmas 1449.

Whereas in the latter part of his monastic career Lydgate seems to have led a cloistered existence, earlier on in his life he appears to have travelled.<sup>16</sup> In 1426 he made a trip to Paris and in July of that year wrote a verse treatise on Henry VI's claim to the French throne. The death of Henry V on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1422 seems to have had no effect on his patronage by the Lancastrian dynasty, for he was patronized by his son, Henry VI. Indeed, in 1431 he began his major work, the *Fall of Princes*, for Henry VI's uncle, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester. This poem was completed in 1438 or 1439. In 1433 Henry spent Christmas at Bury, remaining

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student for the eight-year master's or the nine-year doctor's degree'. Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (1970), p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> Lee Patterson, 'Making Identities in Fifteenth-Century England: Henry V and John Lydgate', in *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History*, ed. by Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 69–107 (p. 73).

<sup>15</sup> It also mentions 'Willelmo Curteys', who would become the next abbot after Exeter.

<sup>16</sup> On his later career with its more cloistered existence, see W.H.E. Sweet, 'Lydgate's Retraction and his "resorte to religyoun"', in *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth Century England*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 343–59.

there until Easter 1434, and it was during this visit that Lydgate appears to have begun work on the *Legends of SS Edmund and Fremund* at the instigation of his abbot, William Curteys. Curteys was not the only abbot to commission work from Lydgate, who wrote the *Legend of SS Alban and Amphibel* in 1439 at the request of John Whethamstede, abbot of Saint Albans (who is discussed in Chapter Four). Lydgate's patrons in this way were various, and included royalty, aristocracy, gentry, the mercantile classes and guilds.

Throughout his career, Lydgate's capacity to transmute almost any subject into almost any available verse-form won him many patrons, in particular the patronage of a group of prominent Lancastrians for whom the promotion of vernacular literature was inextricably linked to a larger political agenda.<sup>17</sup> Richard Firth Green notes that he 'performed a semi-official role as apologist for the Lancastrian government' with close links to the church and crown.<sup>18</sup> He wrote in an astonishing array of poetic forms and genres: hagiography, romance, *Fürstenspiegel*, dream vision, lyric, versified monastic charter, autobiography and etiquette manual. No other poet of the fifteenth century was so prolific, and his audiences were as various as his works. He wrote in a period of growing and ever more diverse literary audiences. Before Lydgate, no poet could claim to have enjoyed circulation simultaneously amongst so varied a range of readers. Reviewing the *Critical Edition* of the *Life* in 1962, Alan Renoir remarked that Lydgate 'was one of the most prolific writers of all times and places, and his works are perhaps our best index to the literary taste of England during the first half of the fifteenth century'.<sup>19</sup>

### **The poem: form, structure and sources**

The *Life* comprises nearly 6000 lines of Middle English verse, in rhyme royal.<sup>20</sup> Though entitled the 'life' of the Virgin, it is not a conventional hagiography. It is large and sometimes unwieldy, a compendious and digressive work which cites a 'wealth of sources'.<sup>21</sup> The narrative is often lost in extended tangents. Joseph Lauritis noted that Lydgate 'resorts to every excuse to move

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<sup>17</sup> For a nuancing of the 'Lancastrian thesis', see Reginald Webber, *Late Medieval Benedictine Anxieties and the Politics of John Lydgate* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Ottawa, 2008), pp. 38–46.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p.189.

<sup>19</sup> Alan Renoir, review of *A Critical Edition of John Lydgate's "Life of Our Lady"* (1961), *Modern Philology*, 59 (1962), 283–85.

<sup>20</sup> Although there is a short section in Book II in octets: a versification of the *Magnificat* canticle. This is discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>21</sup> Walter F. Schirmer, *John Lydgate: A Study in the Culture of the XVth Century*, trans. by Ann E. Keep (London: Methuen, 1961), p. 151.

away from the third person' in the poem.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes these tangents take the form of personal reflections or prayers, as the narrator reflects on the task of writing a poem in praise of the Virgin (as in – for example – Book II, ll. 411–13, which I discuss in Chapter Two and Chapter Five). Often, however, his digressions lead off into reflections on patristic writing which give the poem a learned veneer at the expense of narrative coherence. The frequency with which Lydgate resorts to the first person caused some confusion among the scribes who copied the text, as we shall see in Chapter Two.

Almost every scholar who has studied the *Life* has noted the confusing aspects of the poem's structure. Derek Pearsall notes that Lydgate 'systematically subdues the narrative to non-narrative ends'.<sup>23</sup> He calls the poem a 'compendium of Mariolatry'.<sup>24</sup> Pearsall's observations were no doubt influenced by Norton-Smith, who argued that in the *Life*, Lydgate had 'invented new total form', but that the 'prolix, episodic, deliberate manner obscures the newly created shape'. He also judged the text to have 'no basic narrative unity'.<sup>25</sup> Simon Quinlan, whose work Pearsall also consulted, called it 'a discontinuous devotional progress from feast to feast, rather than a sequence of incidents with a well-defined nexus'.<sup>26</sup> Schirmer labelled it 'a mosaic, a combination, swollen to epic proportions of hymns, prayers, sermons, fragments of narrative, didactic digressions and detailed descriptions' and stated that it 'has no claim to be judged a narrative work'.<sup>27</sup> Lois Ebin writes that it is 'more of an extended celebration than a life', in which 'Lydgate virtually abandons the continuous narrative to create a unique form'.<sup>28</sup> Most recently, Robert Meyer Lee has called it 'a mixture of Marian adoration, instruction, and narrative'.<sup>29</sup>

The poem traces a basic narrative from the birth of the Virgin to her Purification. It covers her early life, marriage, the nativity of Christ, the circumcision, the coming of the Magi and her Purification. However, where the familiar narrative continues with the events of Christ's infancy from the gospel and pseudo-gospel story (flight into Egypt, the baptism of

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<sup>22</sup> Joseph Lauritis, 'Second Thoughts on Style in Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*', in *Essays and Studies in Language and Literature*, ed. by Herbert H. Petit (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1964), pp. 12–23 (p. 17).

<sup>23</sup> *John Lydgate: Poems*, ed. by John Norton-Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 144.

<sup>24</sup> Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (1970), p. 286.

<sup>25</sup> I am not entirely sure what he means by 'deliberate manner', perhaps he means the poem is *mannered*. Norton-Smith, *John Lydgate: Poems*, p. x, p. 155.

<sup>26</sup> Simon Quinlan, *John Lydgate's Lyfe of Our Lady: An Edition with Notes* (unpublished Master's dissertation, University of London, 1957), p. 285.

<sup>27</sup> Schirmer, *John Lydgate*, p. 154.

<sup>28</sup> Lois A. Ebin, *John Lydgate* (Boston: Twayne, 1985), p. 136.

<sup>29</sup> Robert J. Meyer-Lee, 'The Emergence of the Literary in John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 109 (2010), 322–48 (p. 322).

Christ, the flight from Egypt and the presentation of Christ in the temple), Lydgate falls silent, his poem possibly unfinished. Startlingly, for a poem on the Virgin, the story of the Passion and the Assumption are not covered. The poem might more sensibly be called ‘the Incarnation of Christ’.

The *Life*’s register is distinctively ‘aureate’. Douglas Gray defines aureate diction as a style characterized by ‘patterned syntax, mythological allusions, metrical and acoustic variations’.<sup>30</sup> Lydgate shows a preference for Latinate words and has a wide-ranging frame of reference. His register is in keeping with the subject matter, scope and tone of the poem. As Derek Pearsall observes, ‘the Marian hymn is the *locus classicus* of fifteenth-century aureation’.<sup>31</sup> The *Life*, which sometimes resembles an extended hymn to the Virgin, delights in its own artifice. I discuss the poem’s aureate diction in Chapter Four.

The *Life* is written in rhyme royal, the seven-line form, based on the Italian *ottava rima*, which was used by Chaucer for *Troilus and Criseyde* and for his Marian miracle and female hagiography, the *Prioress’s Tale* and the *Second Nun’s Tale* (which are both anthologized alongside the *Life* in two manuscripts: Chetham’s MS 6709 and BL MS Harley 2382).<sup>32</sup> The use of rhyme royal is probably one of the more oblique ways in which Lydgate seeks to pay homage to Chaucer, while the eulogy to Chaucer at the end of Book II (ll. 1628–55) does so more openly. The poem also shows its debt to Chaucer in other ways. As Robert R. Edwards notes, in Lydgate’s verse ‘the homage [to Chaucer] is doubly inscribed, for the language that offers praise of Chaucer is strikingly rich in allusions to lines and phrases throughout the Chaucer canon – Lydgate praises Chaucer in the language of Chaucer’s poetry.’<sup>33</sup>

### Sources of the *Life*

The Virgin’s biography in the *Life* is based in large part on the apocryphal infancy gospels, the *Gospel of Pseudo Matthew* (also known as the *Opus Imperfectum*) and the *Protoevangelium of Saint James*. However, the *Legenda Aurea* and the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi* are equally important.<sup>34</sup> The biblical and apocryphal narratives that underpin the *Life* are filtered

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<sup>30</sup> Douglas Gray, *Later Medieval Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 132.

<sup>31</sup> Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (1970), p. 263.

<sup>32</sup> Apart from the short section in octets, noted above.

<sup>33</sup> John Lydgate, *The Siege of Thebes*, ed. by Robert R. Edwards (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2001), online edition: <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/edwards-lydgate-the-siege-of-thebes>, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

<sup>34</sup> *Jacobi a Voragine Legenda Aura Vulgo Historia Lombardica Dicta*, ed. by Johan Graesse (Dresdæ, Lipsiæ: Librariae Arnoldinanae, 1846). *Iohannis de Caulibus Meditaciones vite Christi olim S. Bonaventuro Attributae*, ed. by M. Stallings-Taney (Turnholt: Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1997).

through these sources. The first three books of the poem are largely dependent on the *Meditationes*, whereas the final three are more dependent on the *Legenda*. A full account of Lydgate's borrowings from these sources is supplied in the *Critical Edition* (pp. 57–182). The main difference between Lydgate and these major sources is that where they are openly didactic, with a kind of pastoral function, the *Life* is more personal, veined with narratorial interjections. The narrative voice frequently surfaces to reflect on the task of writing about the Virgin and the difficulties involved in that task. Lydgate often seeks to draw attention to the literary artifice of his poem. In Chapter Two I discuss the way these narrative interjections are misunderstood in the glosses that appear in a specific cluster of *Life* manuscripts.

The *Life* is a learned and pious poem, with scriptural references which are broad and wide-ranging. Its use of typology is sophisticated and images often recur. In Book III Lydgate describes Isaiah: 'eke ysaye, with all his Inwarde sight' (III, 584), who begged 'Vnto the doughtir dwelling in Syon/Sende doovne thy lambe fulfilled with mekenesse' (III, 589–99; the reference is to Isaiah 16:1). The 'doughtir dwelling in Syon' is designed to align with his earlier description of the Virgin as the 'humble doughter of Iuda and Syon' (II, 319), the 'mayde, of Iuda and Syon/ The doughtir chosyn of Ierusalem' (II, 296–97), and this phrase prefigures a later description of how the prophet Zacharias bid 'the doughtir of Syon to be light' (III, 615). These allusions link Old Testament material to New, with a focus on prophetic fulfilment.

At times, however, Lydgate's use of source material produces a leaden catalogue of references. In a short passage in Book III, for example, there is reference to Baruch 4:36, 'And Baruk bad to Iherusalem/To by-holde, in all his beste entente' (III, 624–25), to Isaiah 45:8, 'Spake ysaye and sayde in words playne' (III, 631), to Jeremiah 23:15–18, 'And Ieremye spake eke of this day' (III, 638), to Malachy 4:2, 'In Malachie in the same wyse,/This sonne of life shall spryng and Ryse' (III, 657–58), to Micah 5:2, 'lyke as byddyth Miche' (III, 663) and to Daniel 2: 34–45, 'the prophete Danyell,/In his bokes wrote so long afore' (III, 670–71). The poem strains under the weight of its biblical references, its narrative thread lost in extensive name-checking of Scriptural source material.

Moreover this extended documentation of source material is not confined to scriptural borrowings, for Lydgate constantly alludes to the range of his references in his poem. In Book II, for example, he marshals a catalogue of 'ensamples' drawn from patristic writing to validate the mystery of the Virgin Birth. He emphasises the extent and frequency of his references in his linguistic choices. The gesture to the material is so frequent that he runs out of ways to introduce new *auctores*. Thus, in a particular section of Book II, he repeats the adverb 'eke', perhaps ironically, in order to emphasise the repeated use of source material. 'Eke Hildefons,

tellyth of a tree' (II, 680) he writes and, again, '[e]ke certyn briddes called vultures' (II, 687). A few lines later it occurs once more: '[e]ke Plunius, in bokes naturell (II, 693). Needing to refer again to 'Plunius', he offers, '[t]his Clerke also, this wyse plunius/ Saythe in Tawrygge' (II, 708–09), and continues, 'ferthermore, this auctor can eke telle/ Withe Inne his boke' (II, 722–23). Two stanzas later a new authority is introduced: 'Falisco, as hym liste to wryte' (II, 736). Each example is a complex analogy for the mystery of the Virgin Birth. The section ends with:

As by ensamples, moo than two or three  
Hir to serve, as thay haue herde devyse  
Whiche as me semyth ought Inow suffice (II, 901–03)

At this point a reader might be forgiven for feeling that Lydgate's 'ensamples' had 'suffice[d]' some time ago. This pattern is discernable throughout the poem, where narrative is often put aside so that Lydgate may provide a sequence of learned *exempla* on any given subject. My discussion in the following chapters examines the way scribes sought to accommodate the poem's scattershot narrative in their glossing and rubrication.

### **Manuscripts and early prints: the poem's medieval popularity and its decline**

The *Life* survives in a high number of manuscripts. The *NIMEV* lists forty-seven manuscripts and two early prints (STC 17023, 17025) for the poem (*NIMEV* 2574). Two extract manuscripts may be added to the list, as well as an eighteenth-century partial witness, bringing the total to fifty manuscripts.<sup>35</sup> In addition, there is a reference to a late sixteenth-century manuscript of the poem offered for sale by Bernard Quaritch in 1874.<sup>36</sup> I have been unable to trace this manuscript.

The poem was clearly popular in its day and into the sixteenth century, until this popularity waned significantly. Of the fifty located witnesses, there are twenty-nine manuscripts from the medieval period that once, in all likelihood, contained complete copies of the poem. The poem's cultural significance is attested to, not only by the high number of complete or near-complete copies of the text, but also by the way it was so often excerpted or anthologized. Amongst the list of manuscripts there are seven extracts and three fragments, which I discuss in Chapter Four. In addition to these extracts and fragments there are several post-medieval copies of the poem, which are discussed in Chapter Five. The high number of

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<sup>35</sup> I am grateful to Professor Edwards for alerting me to the extract manuscripts: BL Harley MS 7333 and TCC MS R.3.19. The eighteenth-century partial copy is Houghton MS Lat. 394.

<sup>36</sup> I thank Professor Edwards for this information. For a transcription of the Quaritch catalogue entry and notes on this manuscript, see the final entry in Appendix 2.

manuscripts is all the more surprising for the fact that, after 1531, the poem remained out of print in its complete form until 1961, seemingly forgotten by posterity.<sup>37</sup>

The manuscripts of the *Life* reflect changing trends in codicological and literary production. Thirteen of the manuscripts are single text codices<sup>38</sup> which was a phenomenon that began to become more common in the fifteenth century.<sup>39</sup> Others, however, testify to the emergence of a trend to anthologise. The use of the text within manuscripts such as HEH MS HM 144, with its richly suggestive juxtapositions of literary and devotional material, has much to tell us about readers and reading, which critics' historical infatuation with the primacy of authorship has perhaps allowed us to overlook; I discuss this manuscript in Chapter Four.

The manuscripts reveal a range of geographic centres of production, as well as a range of forms of production. Whereas a specific cluster of codices testifies to the emergence of professional, metropolitan workshops which were making manuscripts for wealthy lay clients, other manuscripts indicate an entirely different, regional, and probably clerical production which was possibly for personal use (as in Bodl. MS Bodley 75, BL Harley MS 2382 and Chetham's MS 6709, which are discussed in Chapter Three and the Conclusion).<sup>40</sup> One manuscript appears to be a stationer's copy. It contains a sample of scribal hands, evidence of stationer's rubrication and decoration in varying states of completeness.<sup>41</sup>

The near-complete manuscripts also range in date from the early decades of the fifteenth century to the early part of the seventeenth.<sup>42</sup> Studying the manuscripts of the *Life* is important in that it allows us to examine changes in reading habits and attitudes towards literary texts in a broad sweep of history. The date-range of the manuscripts and early prints tracks some highly significant historical changes. At the start of the fifteenth century, when the poem appears to have been composed, the production of religious literature in the vernacular was overshadowed by the Wycliffite crisis, and the next hundred years saw enormous political

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<sup>37</sup> As noted above there is a partial nineteenth century edition: John Lydgate, *The Life of Our Lady. Part I.* (1879).

<sup>38</sup> BL Harley MS 3862, Longleat MS 15, BL Add. MS 19452, Chicago MS 566, Bodl. MS Rawl. Poet 140, BL Harley MS 629, BL Add. MS 19252, Hunterian MS 232, BL Harley MS 4260, Bodl. Bodley MS 120, Bodl. Bodley MS 75, Beinecke MS 281, NLW MS 2124C.

<sup>39</sup> A.S.G Edwards and Derek Pearsall, 'The Manuscripts of the Major English Poetic Texts', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, pp. 256–78 (pp. 260–61).

<sup>40</sup> Part of what Edwards and Pearsall call 'the beginnings of routine commercial production in London'. *Ibid.*, p. 258. Here I am referring to the 'metropolitan group' of manuscripts, which are discussed in Chapter Two.

<sup>41</sup> Bodl. MS Bodley 120. See Appendix 2.

<sup>42</sup> Here I am discounting Thomas Wilson's mid-eighteenth-century, antiquarian, partial witness.

upheaval, intellectual change and the advent of print.<sup>43</sup> The manuscripts reflect these changes. The surviving witnesses indicate the arrival of this important new book technology not only in the early printed editions, but also in that three of the manuscripts were copied either totally or partly from printed exemplars.<sup>44</sup> And the manuscripts also reflect wider cultural changes, rather than simply technological ones. BL Add. MS 19252 has fifteenth-century non-authorial rubrics which indicate that the scribe was anxious to assert the theological authority of the text (I discuss this manuscript in Chapter Three). Yet another British Library manuscript, BL Harley MS 3952, contains redactions in a late-sixteenth-century hand which indicate that the poem's Catholic theology had become unpalatable to some readers by this period: on f. 103r, in the line 'But at þe laste Pope Sergius' (VI, 344), the word 'Pope' has been replaced with 'Byschope'.

Part of the poem's continued, but not continuous, appeal is the figure of the Virgin Mary, whose preeminence in medieval devotion is almost too obvious to state. The manuscripts of the *Life* track a period of enormous cultural change specifically in relation to the place of the Virgin in religious practice. This was, as Gary Waller observes, 'an era where the Virgin's presence in approved liturgy and devotion was drastically reduced'.<sup>45</sup> And yet, despite the energies of Reformation reformers who did much to displace the Virgin's centrality in religious custom in the sixteenth century, the poem continued to be copied. Two of its located manuscripts, Bodl. MS Ashmole 59 and Radcliffe MS 16, were copied in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, while the unlocated manuscript was dated to the end of the sixteenth century. The poem's manuscripts thus allow us to examine readerly and scribal responses to Marian literature across the artificial, modern divide between 'medieval' and 'early modern'.<sup>46</sup>

The date-range of this study is the date-range of the extant manuscripts: from approximately the beginning of the fifteenth century to the eighteenth century. The last

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<sup>43</sup> For a discussion of the ideology of historical change see Victoria Symons and Mary Wellesley, 'Introduction', *Stasis in the Medieval World: Questioning Change and Continuity*, ed. by Michael Bintley and others (New York: Palgrave, forthcoming).

<sup>44</sup> Radcliffe MS 16, Chetham's MS 6709 and Bodl. MS Ashmole 59.

<sup>45</sup> Gary Waller, *The Virgin Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern English Literature and Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 109.

<sup>46</sup> On the pitfalls of a periodising approach to literary study, see James Simpson, 'Diachronic History and the Shortcomings of Medieval Studies', in *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*, ed. by Gordon McMullan and David Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 17–30.

manuscript of the *Life* is a partial copy made by the antiquarian, Thomas Wilson in c. 1750–55.<sup>47</sup>

### Critical survey and the necessity of this study

The *Life* has languished in a state of critical neglect which its problematic modern edition does not fully explain. The disregard for Lydgate and the *Life* long predates this edition's appearance. There are several useful accounts of Lydgate's critical fortunes, most notably that of Nigel Mortimer<sup>48</sup> and Scanlon and Simpson.<sup>49</sup> Although there is no space to rehearse the work of others here, it may be said that after a period of critical neglect, Lydgate is now receiving renewed scholarly attention. As Ardis Butterfield has observed, 'Lydgate's critical capital is rising fast'.<sup>50</sup> However, scholarship is only just beginning to codify, let alone interrogate, the nature of his voluminous writings.<sup>51</sup> Such parts of Lydgate's output as his short verse have yet to be subjected to concerted critical enquiry and the *Life* has remained one of his least-studied longer works.

Scholarship on the *Life* itself has been confined to a handful of articles. Phillipa Hardman has sought to address some of the thorny problems of the poem's structural incoherence, date and questionable genre. She hypothesizes that the existing poem is the product of two distinct campaigns of composition, that there are 'different narrative methods in the first two and the last four books', and that this is a 'text in transition' which accounts for its 'structural inconsistencies'.<sup>52</sup> Her suggestion is that Lydgate wrote the first two books at a different time from the last four and subsequently yoked them together. I discuss these claims in Chapters One and Two.

Georgiana Donavin has looked at images of light in the poem, drawing attention to the way Lydgate uses and reuses the motif of light in the text. Her article, although insightful,

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<sup>47</sup> See the Harvard Library Online Catalogue: <http://id.lib.harvard.edu/aleph/009890328/catalog>, accessed 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

<sup>48</sup> Nigel Mortimer, *John Lydgate's 'Fall of Princes': Narrative Tragedy in its Literary and Political Contexts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 1–26.

<sup>49</sup> 'Introduction', *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture and Lancastrian England*, ed. by Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. 1–11.

<sup>50</sup> Ardis Butterfield, 'Rough Translation: Charles d'Orleans, Lydgate and Hoccleve', in *Rethinking Medieval Translation: Ethics, Politics, Theory*, ed. by Emma Campbell and Robert Mills (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012), pp. 204–25 (p. 208).

<sup>51</sup> And it was a voluminous *oeuvre* indeed. Pearsall estimates 145,000 lines of verse, twice that of Shakespeare, three times that of Chaucer. Pearsall, *Lydgate* (1970), p. 4. The Lydgate canon remains imprecise, reliant on early twentieth-century scholarship. See 'The Lydgate Canon', in *Minor Poems*, ed. by MacCracken, pp. v–lviii.

<sup>52</sup> Hardman, 'Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*', pp. 249, 255.

contains some factual errors, such as her suggestion that certain manuscripts of the *Life* contain presentation miniatures.<sup>53</sup> Katherine K. O’Sullivan’s approach is historicist: she has sought to highlight the poem’s political undercurrents.<sup>54</sup> She sees the poem as a work which emphasizes ‘proper doctrine and worship in response to the religious and social implications of the Lollard movement in England’ and which seeks ‘to establish the authority and legitimacy of the Lancastrian court by reinforcing lineage and sovereignty in response to political and social anxieties’.<sup>55</sup> O’Sullivan’s contribution is a useful contextualization of the poem. She posits that the poem’s presentation of the Virgin’s heavenly queenship is a device to legitimize the Lancastrian dynasty. Nonetheless, as the date and occasion of this poem are unclear (see Chapter One), some of her suppositions may require changes of nuance.

Most recently, Robert Meyer-Lee has offered a thought-provoking exploration of what he sees as the emergence of a literary sensibility in this poem.<sup>56</sup> He points to its rhetorically sophisticated, aureate Marian poetic register, but also to the way it explores the idea of legitimacy. He writes that ‘Lydgate articulates a vernacular literary as a potential sacral power wielded by an authoritative English poet vis-à-vis Mariology and the threat of heresy and marshaled in defense of his own and his religious order’s position vis-à-vis the crown and alternative official vernacular theologies’.<sup>57</sup> He also argues that the work was intended to be presented to Henry V at the occasion of the General Chapter called to reform the Benedictine Order in 1421.

All in all, there has been no single extensive study of the *Life*. There is a Master’s dissertation from 1957, which might have formed a better basis for an edition of the poem than that of Lauritis et al, but it was never published.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, no systematic study of the extant manuscripts and early prints of the *Life* has yet been undertaken. George Keiser has done some important work in opening up the manuscripts for study, partially in preparation for a new edition of the poem, but this long promised edition is still not out. Keiser’s work has

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<sup>53</sup> Georgiana Donavin, ‘The Light of the Virgin Muse in John Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*’, in *Romance and Rhetoric: Essays in Honour of Dhira B. Mahoney*, ed. by Anita Obermeier and Georgiana Donavin (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 75–89 (p. 76, n. 5).

<sup>54</sup> Katherine K O’Sullivan, ‘John Lydgate’s *Lyf of Our Lady*: Translation and Authority in Fifteenth-Century England’, *Mediaevalia*, 26 (2005), 169–201.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* p. 170–71. There are some small-scale errors in this article, such as the consistent misspelling of the name of the editor of the *Critical Edition* of the poem as ‘Laureatis’.

<sup>56</sup> Meyer-Lee, ‘Emergence of the Literary’. The most recent work on the poem is Amanda Walling’s ‘Feminizing Aureation in Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady* and *Life of Saint Margaret*’, *Neophilologus*, 101 (2017), 321–36. I touch on this article in Chapter Four.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p. 324.

<sup>58</sup> Simon Quinlan, *John Lydgate’s Lyfe of Our Lady: An Edition with Notes*.

nonetheless suggested valuable avenues for research into the manuscripts which this thesis shall enter. His work comprises three articles. The first one was published in 1991 on the ‘*ordinatio*’ of the poem.<sup>59</sup> This article points to the importance of the manuscripts’ *ordinatio* to an understanding of the ‘nature and purpose of the work [the *Life*]’ and how scribes ‘were directing its audience to use it’.<sup>60</sup> In his second article in 1995, Keiser hypothesized that this *ordinatio* or what we might term a ‘textual apparatus’ was influenced by a similar apparatus in Nicholas Love’s *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*.<sup>61</sup> Here he suggests a monastic origin for the type of textual apparatus most commonly found in the manuscripts of the *Life*. I clarify this terminology below and discuss the work of these articles in greater detail in Chapter Two. Keiser’s third article appeared in 2009, on the manuscript treatment of the versified *Magnificat* from Book II.<sup>62</sup>

### **The Critical Edition**

In some ways the scholarship on the *Life* has been defined by the 1961 *Critical Edition*, which, from the point of its publication, has come under scholarly attack. *The Review of English Studies* wrote that ‘[i]t is impossible to escape the conclusion that this book was simply not ready for publication’.<sup>63</sup> Keiser writes, ‘that this edition exists at all may be reason for gratitude, but its inadequacies are so serious as to detract from the beauties of the poem’.<sup>64</sup> W.F. Bolton wrote, more generously, that ‘this edition will enable scholars to read Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady* conveniently for the first time in centuries; they will read with pleasure and profit, if they do so with caution’.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> George Keiser, ‘*Ordinatio* in the Manuscripts of John Lydgate’s *Lyf of Our Lady*: Its Value for the Reader, Its Challenge for the Modern Editor’, in *Medieval Literature: Texts and Interpretations*, ed. by Tim William Machan (Binghampton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), pp. 139–57.

<sup>60</sup> Keiser, ‘*Ordinatio*’, p. 148.

<sup>61</sup> George Keiser, ‘Serving the Needs of Readers: Textual Division in some Late-Medieval English Texts’, in *New Science Out of Old Books: Studies in Manuscripts and Early Printed Books in Honour of A.I. Doyle*, ed. by Richard Beadle and A.J. Piper (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), pp. 207–26.

<sup>62</sup> George Keiser, ‘John Lydgate’s Magnificat: Magnifying Scribal Difficulties’, *Tributes to Kathleen L. Scott : English Medieval Manuscripts : Readers, Makers and Illuminators*, ed. by Marlene Villalobos Hennessy (London: Harvey Miller, 2009), pp. 115–23.

<sup>63</sup> N.D. [Norman Davis], review of *A Critical Edition of John Lydgate’s “Life of Our Lady”* (1961), *The Review of English Studies*, 14 (1963), 182–86 (p. 186).

<sup>64</sup> Keiser, ‘*Ordinatio*’, p. 139.

<sup>65</sup> W.F. Bolton, review of *A Critical Edition of John Lydgate’s “Life of Our Lady”* (1961), *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 61 (1962), 165–68.

There are some simple problems of presentation: the edition is ‘cumbersome... both in its bulk and in its presentation of the text’.<sup>66</sup> The stanzas are spread overly generously across each page (often containing only two per page). The textual variants are cramped together at the bottom of each page, and some of these contain errors. It has not been within the scope of this project to make transcriptions and check textual variants, but there seem to be some disquieting errors of transcription.<sup>67</sup> These errors might not hinder reading of the text, but potentially they hinder study.<sup>68</sup>

The larger, structural problems with the edition lie in the fact that this is the work of three different people, each with a different methodology. Klinefelter, responsible for Books I and II, used commas to designate where there are virgules in the base manuscript, whereas Lauritis and Gallagher ignore the virgule in the base text but nonetheless use their own modernized punctuation, which is often unhelpful for a comprehension of Lydgate’s famously difficult syntax.<sup>69</sup> Perhaps as a result of the division of editorial labour into different books, the line numbers begin afresh at the beginning of each book, rather than running continuously through the poem – a feature which some readers may find confusing.

Although this edition has many useful features, such as an extensive section on the poem’s sources, which gives a sense of the extraordinary range of material that Lydgate used and re-fashioned, there are some oddities even in this. For example, the editors suggest that Lydgate was translating a single, now-lost, French source (*Critical Edition*, p. 97), noting that all of Lydgate’s major works excluding the *Troy Book* were re-workings of French sources. This seems strange, given that Lydgate belonged to an institution with one of the largest libraries in England. His access to potential source material was perhaps greater than any other poet of his period. Given the resources available to him, it seems unlikely that he would have been

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<sup>66</sup> Keiser, ‘*Ordinatio*’, p. 139.

<sup>67</sup> A sample of the errors appears in N.D. [Norman Davis], review of *A Critical Edition of John Lydgate’s “Life of Our Lady”* (1961), 182–86.

<sup>68</sup> One error which would have hindered my own discussion had I not seen the manuscript in person is the work of the BL Harley MS 2382 scribe, who copies the lines that refer to Chaucer in an idiosyncratic way. The edition reports these lines as ‘The noble Rethor, poete of Brytayne/ That worthy was the laurer to haue/ Of poetrye, and the palme atteyne’ (II, 1629–31). However, the scribe in fact wrote, on f. 27v: ‘the noble rethor poete of Britayne/that worthy was the laurer to haue/of poetrye and the psalme atteyne’. This minute error, the use of the word ‘psalm’ for ‘palm’ is rich with significance when placed in the context of the other idiosyncratic ways in which this scribe copies and augments the text. (This particular error is discussed in the Conclusion.)

<sup>69</sup> On Lydgate’s syntax, see Phillipa Hardman, ‘Lydgate’s Uneasy Syntax’, *John Lydgate*, ed. by Scanlon and Simpson, pp. 12–35.

translating only one source.<sup>70</sup> Nonetheless, the theological learning of Vernon Gallagher and Joseph Lauritis, who were both priests, comes through in the critical appendices. Their identification of Lydgate's use of liturgical material is especially helpful for readers with little or no experience of Catholic liturgical practice.

One of the biggest problems in the edition is that it hampers an understanding of the poem's manuscript forms. On a simple level, descriptions of the manuscripts are incomplete and sometimes contain errors. Not all the manuscripts now known to survive appear in the description of manuscripts. The editors were unaware of the existence or whereabouts of several complete or near-complete manuscripts. Radcliffe MS 16 was unknown to them. They noted the existence of two former Mostyn Hall manuscripts, but were unable to locate them (*Critical Edition*, pp. 11–12).<sup>71</sup> The first is now NLW MS 2124C (*olim* Mostyn Hall MS 85).<sup>72</sup> The second is now Illinois MS 85 (*olim* Mostyn Hall MS 257).<sup>73</sup> They also could not locate Beinecke MS 281. This manuscript was bought by Yale in 1960 from C. A. Stonehill as the gift of Edwin J., Frederick W. and Walter Beinecke.<sup>74</sup> Nor was Beinecke MS 660 included.<sup>75</sup> This manuscript was, at the time of the edition's preparation, in the possession of the Marquess of Bute.<sup>76</sup> Besides not knowing of these manuscripts, they were unaware of the excerpts of the poem in Harley MS 7333, f. 132r; TCC MS R.3.19, f. 25r and TCD MS 423, f. 103v. The fragmentary manuscript made up of Camb. Gonville and Caius MS 804, CUL Add. MS 3077

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<sup>70</sup> See M. R. James, 'Bury St. Edmunds Manuscripts', *English Historical Review*, 41 (1926), 251–60. Also M. R. James, *On the Abbey of S. Edmund at Bury: I. The Library. II. The Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge Antiquarian Society Publications, 1895).

<sup>71</sup> On the Mostyn Hall manuscripts, see Daniel Huws, 'Sir Thomas Mostyn and the Mostyn Manuscripts', in *Books and Collectors 1200–1700: Essays Presented to Andrew Watson*, ed. by James P. Carley and Colin G. C. Tite (London: British Library, 1997), pp. 451–72.

<sup>72</sup> It appeared as lot 75 in the Mostyn Sale at Sotheby's 13<sup>th</sup> July 1920. It evidently did not sell in 1920 and was returned to the consigners. It then appeared as lot 1480 in the Mostyn sale at Christie's 24<sup>th</sup> October 1974 where it was bought for the National Library of Wales. I thank Dr. Timothy Bolton for his assistance with this.

<sup>73</sup> This manuscript was lot 76 in the Mostyn sale at Sotheby's 13<sup>th</sup> July 1920, sold for £200 to Quaritch. Thence sold by them to Sir Leicester Harmsworth, before being sold again at Sotheby's, 16<sup>th</sup> October 1945, lot 2019. It was bought by C.A. Stonehill of New Haven, CT for £110. See Sotheby's annotated sale catalogue, *Critical Edition*, p. 12 and also, <http://www.library.illinois.edu/rbx/archon/?p=collections/controlcard&id=660>, accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015.

<sup>74</sup> Previously sold at Hodgson's 23rd April 1953, lot 200, from the property of F. T. A. Ashton-Gwatkin, Esq. I thank Professor Edwards for this information. It was sold for £555.

See <http://brbl-net.library.yale.edu/pre1600ms/docs/pre1600.ms281.htm>, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

<sup>75</sup> This manuscript was presented to the Beinecke Library by Mr. and Mrs. H.P. Kraus in 1985. <http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3446530>, accessed 24<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

<sup>76</sup> Sold at Sotheby's 13<sup>th</sup> June 1983, lot 9. Sold to Kraus for £16,500.

and Columbia, Missouri, University of Missouri *Fragmenta Manuscripta*, f.178 was also not included.

Moreover, the information given on the manuscripts is often incomplete or simply erroneous. The editors write that, in BL MS Harley 3862, the arms ‘of someone of importance are emblazoned on the first page’ (*Critical Edition*, p. 28). The arms, in fact, belong to John de Vere, 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford.<sup>77</sup> The de Veres had a well-documented interest in literary manuscripts, which may have included the Ellesmere Chaucer.<sup>78</sup> There are also other errors in the *Critical Edition*, such as its failure to recognize that Bodl. MS Ashmole 59 was partially copied from one of the printed editions of the poem – either *STC* 17023 or *STC* 17025.<sup>79</sup>

Aside from these basic problems in the data-set, the edition gives a misleading impression of the way the text is arranged and rubricated in the surviving manuscripts. The base text used is that of Durham, MS Cosin V.ii.16. The editors print the table of contents, marginal glosses and the chapter titles that appear in this manuscript, but they also print a series of book divisions which do not occur in this witness. There is no indication of which parts of the extra-textual material are derived from the base manuscript and which parts are drawn from other manuscripts. The editors have created a jigsaw of differing types of what we might term a ‘textual apparatus’ (I explain below what I mean by this term). This information is vital to an understanding of how the poem was read and used, because – as this thesis seeks to demonstrate – no system of ‘textual apparatus’ in the surviving manuscripts is authorial. The modern reader of this edition therefore has little sense of the diversity and subtlety of scribal responses to the poem.

## Methodology

This thesis seeks to marry codicological analysis with literary criticism, and will offer a systematic study of all extant located manuscript forms of the *Life*. However, this is not a textual study, for it has not been possible within the time of this project either to make complete transcriptions or to compare textual variants. Much, but not all, of that work has been done to a fairly satisfactory level by the editors of the 1961 *Critical Edition*. Instead my interest has been in the manuscripts as social texts: as markers of scribal and reader response

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<sup>77</sup> British Library Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts.

[<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7377&CollID=8&NStart=3862>], accessed 12<sup>th</sup> December 2011.]

<sup>78</sup> Ralph Hanna, III and A. S. G. Edwards, ‘Rotheley, the De Vere Circle, and the Ellesmere Chaucer’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 58 (1995), 11–35.

<sup>79</sup> See Chapter Five.

and as indicators of audience.<sup>80</sup> I have sought to study scribes as early readers of the poem, highlighting the role of scribes as readers and critics. For some decades now, scholars have recognized the critical and interpretative work done by scribes. As Barry Windeatt notes, 'much evidence for contemporary literary response can be ignored in misvaluing those opinions of the scribes which are embodied in their texts'.<sup>81</sup> Michael Johnson notes that 'errors and conscious emendations on the part of scribes' are no longer seen as 'mere white noise to be filtered out in the act of recovering the words of the author'.<sup>82</sup> Johnson calls scribes 'interpreters of literary texts and (...) co-participants, along with authors, in the creation of meaning.' As Ardis Butterfield notes, recent decades have seen 'an effort by a number of scholars to reconstitute the page of the scribal manuscript as an authentic object in its own right'.<sup>83</sup> Jessica Brantley notes that 'medieval manuscripts exalt format, demonstrating in the differences among realizations of the same work the importance of physical circumstances for the creation of literary meaning'.<sup>84</sup>

Our understanding of scribal work is expanding, encompassing the different ways in which scribes engaged with the work they copied. At the level of correction, scribal work has recently attracted scholarly attention.<sup>85</sup> Several of the manuscripts of the *Life* demonstrate scribal interpretation of literary texts, not simply at the micro-level in the form of alterations, but also in the manuscripts as a whole: in their choice of text, rubrication of texts, marginal glossing and textual division. For my part, I see scribes not as mechanical copyists, but as readers who make important interventions in the text which are better seen as acts of interpretation.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> I am indebted to the thinking of D.F. McKenzie's *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (London: British Library, 1986).

<sup>81</sup> Barry Windeatt, 'Scribes as Chaucer's Early Critics', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 1 (1979), 119–41 (p. 120).

<sup>82</sup> Michael Johnson, 'Constantinian Christianity in the London Manuscript: The Codicological and Linguistic Evidence of Thornton's Intentions', in *Robert Thornton and His Books* (York: York Medieval Press, 2014), pp. 177–204 (p. 177).

<sup>83</sup> Ardis Butterfield, 'Mis-en-page in the *Troilus* Manuscripts: Chaucer and French Manuscript Culture', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 58 (1995), 49–80 (p. 49).

<sup>84</sup> Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England*, (London, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375–1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>86</sup> In this, I am influenced by the work of Matthew Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2012) esp. Introduction and Ch. 1. See also Neil Hathaway, 'Compilatio: from Plagiarism to Compiling', *Viator* 20 (1989), 19–44 (esp. pp. 19–22).

My particular focus has been the complex, interlocking forms of ‘textual apparatus’ that are preserved in the extant manuscripts of the *Life*. The extra-textual space of the *Life*’s manuscripts is a tissue of clues to the way the poem was read and understood by early readers. In the course of this project I have examined every surviving manuscript of the poem. For each manuscript, I have noted features of physical construction, date, lay-out and appearance, but I also recorded the forms of textual organization and the textual apparatus in each manuscript. Comparing every manuscript’s textual apparatus to the most common one, I noted every variant in the forms of textual division, chapter heading and rubrication. The manuscripts of the *Life* usually contain a complex textual apparatus. There are distinct forms of apparatus that occur in particular clusters of manuscripts. The precise nature of these forms and clusters is detailed in Chapter Two. Here, however, it is necessary to clarify some terminology. Carl James Grindley has offered a helpful classification of printed and written marginalia in texts from the British Isles 1300–1641.<sup>87</sup> His classification highlights the kinds of data I sought to collect:

- 1) Type I Marginalia
  - a. Ownership marks
  - b. Doodles
  - c. Pen trials
  - d. Sample texts
- 2) Type II Marginalia
  - a. Copied letterforms
  - b. Copied illumination
  - c. Copied passages
  - d. Additional texts
  - e. Marks of attribution
  - f. Tables of content
  - g. Introductory materials
  - h. Construction marks
- 3) Type III Marginalia.
  - a. Narrative reading aids
    - i. Topic
    - ii. Source
    - iii. Citation
    - iv. *Dramatis personae*
    - v. Rhetorical device
    - vi. Additional information
    - vii. Translation

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<sup>87</sup> Carl James Grindley, ‘Reading *Piers Plowman* C-text Annotations: Notes Toward the Classification of Printed and Written Marginalia in Texts from the British Isles 1300–1641’ in *The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe and Gower*, ed. by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo (University of Victoria, B.C.: English Literary Studies, 2001), pp. 73–141.

- viii. Summation
  - 1. Textually gleaned marginal rubrics
  - 2. Paraphrased marginal rubrics
  - 3. Condensed overviews
  - 4. Textual extrapolations
- b. Ethical pointers
  - i. Perceptive points
  - ii. Exemplifications
  - iii. Exhortations
  - iv. Revelatory annotations
  - v. Orative annotations
  - vi. Disputative annotations
- c. Polemical responses
  - i. Social comment
  - ii. Ecclesiastical comment
  - iii. Political comment
- d. Literary responses
  - i. Reader participation
  - ii. Humour and irony
  - iii. Allegory and imagery
  - iv. Language issues
- e. Graphical responses
  - i. Illuminations
  - ii. Initials
  - iii. Punctuation
  - iv. Iconography

Grindley's taxonomy requires some nuancing for the manuscripts of the *Life*. The manuscripts contain Types I, II and III marginalia, but the distinctions between these categories necessitate re-definition. He notes that 'by definition, the presence of Type III manuscript marginalia implies a coherent reader response to a particular text, since all annotations and miscellaneous marks which lack conceivable textual context have already been accounted for in Type I and Type II.'<sup>88</sup> In some manuscripts of the *Life* we find evidence of a 'reader response' (i.e. a feature of Type III) in some kinds of Type II marginalia. The tables of content which appear in some manuscripts, for example, outline a series of chapter titles which can be described as a form of 'summation' (III, viii, 1–3). Thus, when I refer to the 'textual apparatus' in the manuscripts of the *Life*, I am referring to everything described in Type III, but also three categories from Type II: (e) marks of attribution, (f) tables of content and (g) introductory materials. I see these types of extra-textual material as part of an apparatus that gives the reader a framework for approaching the poem and often shows evidence of a 'coherent reader response'. It is my

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<sup>88</sup> Grindley, 'Reading *Piers Plowman* C-text Annotations', p. 81.

suggestion that almost no form of textual apparatus in the surviving manuscripts is of authorial origin, and thus the apparatus is often evidence of scribal response to the text.

In my discussion, some manuscripts receive more attention than others because my intention has been to examine particular, local readings of the poem. In Chapter Two I discuss the most common form of textual apparatus, which is found in Durham MS Cosin V.ii.16 (the base manuscript for the *Critical Edition*), but also in a distinct group of related manuscripts. I discuss the variants of the scheme, and idiosyncratic schemes, in Chapter Three. Chapter Five primarily concerns the particular re-configuration of the poem by two different early modern scribes. In each of these instances I have sought to uncover specific responses to the poem in different cultural contexts. It would be impossible to discuss every manuscript. However, short descriptions of every manuscript are provided in Appendix 2, at the end of this thesis.

In my work here, I have given equal weight to the study of the text as to the study of the extra-textual material. George Keiser noted that modern editors of Middle English texts rarely print the textual apparatuses which appear in manuscripts, because they assume that ‘the apparatus is largely or even wholly scribal’. Nonetheless, as Keiser observes, ‘to proceed from that assumption to the conclusion that the apparatus has little or no relevance for an editor is unwise, even if the editor is not prepared to believe that a text is the creation of a community of readers’. <sup>89</sup> I see a text’s manuscript apparatus as a vital source of information on the way it was read and understood. This is especially important for a text like the *Life* because, as I demonstrate, none of the surviving types of textual apparatus is likely to be of authorial origin. Thus this thesis examines the influence of non-authorial figures on the text of the *Life* and shall argue that much of the critical discourse on the poem has been shaped by these figures.

## Outline

Chapter One outlines the problems of approach which the *Life* presents. It looks at questions over authorship, title, patron, date and occasion. It also probes some of the difficulties of form and genre which the poem presents. There is a paucity of documentary evidence relating to the *Life*. The poem goes largely unmentioned by contemporary figures or by Lydgate himself elsewhere in his *œuvre*. Assumptions about the circumstances of the poem’s composition mainly derive from information in an introductory rubric, which appears in several manuscripts. I discuss the reliability of this rubric, which suggests that the poem was written for Henry V,

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<sup>89</sup> Keiser, ‘*Ordinatio*’, p. 140.

examining Henry's reputation for bookish piety and the relationship between Lydgate and the king.

Chapter Two comprises a comprehensive census of the differing forms of division, glossing and rubrication which appear in the extant manuscripts of the *Life*. What emerges here is several distinct forms of textual apparatus which appear in particular clusters of manuscripts. I examine which, if any, of these forms of apparatus is authorial. The introductory rubric, on which so many critical assumptions about this poem rest, is a part of the most common form of textual apparatus, one which is manifestly not authorial. I examine this textual apparatus and its implications. What emerges is that this apparatus frames the poem in a specific way, often seeking to efface the narrator's interventions in the text, misreading the poem's content in places and, in so doing, indicating a disparity between Lydgate's conception of his poem and that of the poem's scribes.

Chapter Three looks at idiosyncratic forms of textual apparatus, which diverge from the most common type and what these tell us about the way the poem's meaning was reframed in different contexts, by non-authorial figures. Like Chapter Two, it examines what the manuscripts tell us about the poem's audience. In the first part of the chapter, I examine HEH MS HM 115 and BL Additional MS 19252. These manuscripts appear to have been professionally produced. In the second part of the chapter I examine two manuscripts (BL Harley MS 2382 and Bodl. MS Bodley 75) produced in a very different context. These manuscripts appear to have been produced by clerical scribes. Their copying and glossing of the text have quite different aims from the professional codices.

Chapter Four looks at manuscripts and early prints which only contain extracts of the poem. As Nigel Mortimer notes, 'any act of selection is in part also one of interpretation'.<sup>90</sup> Each of the excerpts appears in very different manuscript and print contexts. Each demonstrates the surprising ways in which non-authorial figures re-purposed the *Life*. Examining the extract manuscripts and prints provides a platform to explore how Lydgate sought to advertise the value of his vernacular authorship and the way in which his presentation of authorship was received in a later period.

Chapter Five looks at the poem's afterlives. It examines the transition to print, the 1494 Caxton edition and the 1531 Redman edition and what these editions indicate about Caxton and Redman as readers of the poem. It also looks at the manuscript copies made from these prints, and what they indicate about the poem's reception in the sixteenth and

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<sup>90</sup> Mortimer, *Narrative Tragedy*, p. 219.

seventeenth century. Finally, it discusses manuscript owners in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and examines the way the literary and religious past is repurposed by later figures.

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## CHAPTER ONE: PROBLEMS & CONTEXTS

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The *Life of Our Lady* presents several problems of approach. The poem resists attempts to place it in a specific historical context. The most basic details about the text – its date, title, patron, and occasion – are unclear. In Lydgate's other major works we often find information embedded within the texts about when and for whom his poems were written, but the *Life* lacks these references. The internal references which it does contain are obscure. There is no holograph manuscript of the work and the poem appears to be unfinished. Many of the suppositions about this text, suppositions that have since become critical axioms, derive from a single rubric which appears in several of the manuscripts. Little of the information in this rubric is corroborated by evidence found elsewhere.

In addition, the evidence of the manuscripts is often confusing and potentially problematic. Seth Lerer notes of Chaucer that his verse, 'in a quite literal sense, *is* the product of his fifteenth century readers and writers'.<sup>1</sup> The same is true of the *Life*, which survives in divergent forms in a high number of manuscripts. What appears to be left of this text is a series of scribal approximations or reconfigurations of possible authorial intention.

There are two references to the poem in contemporary and near-contemporary verse. The first appears in the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* (composed between September 1443 and 1447) by Osbern Bokenham (b.c.1392/3, d. in or after 1464).<sup>2</sup> It reads, 'In englyssh here laudes, lat hem looke/Of owre ladyes lyf Ihon lydgates booke'.<sup>3</sup> The poem is also mentioned at the start of the next century by Stephen Hawes (b.c.1474, d. before 1529), in the *Pastime of Pleasure* (1505/6, pub. 1509), where he wrote that 'For he [Lydgate] dyde compile than full

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<sup>1</sup> Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers: Imagining the Author in Late Medieval England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Gray, 'Bokenham, Osbern (b. 1392/3, d. in or after 1464)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2785>, accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016].

<sup>3</sup> Osbern Bokenham, *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, ed. by Mary S. Serjeantson, EETS, O.S. 206 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), ll. 2006–07.

nyally/Of our blyssed lady the conversacyon'.<sup>4</sup> Beyond this, the text is unmentioned in the literary or documentary record, and Lydgate does not refer to the poem in his other works.

Alongside the uncertainty over title, date, patron and occasion, the structure and function of the text also poses problems. The poem is formally complex, if not odd. The oddity of its narrative structure begs questions about what kind of poem Lydgate intended the *Life* to be. Is it a *vita* of the Virgin? If so, why does it stop so abruptly at the point of the Purification, neglecting to cover the Passion and the Assumption? Is it, in fact, a devotional meditation on the birth of Christ, an event which forms the apparent centre-piece of the poem? Or is it something else, a type of meditative work, interwoven with complex personal interjections, as the narrative voice strives to give appropriate expression to the praise of the Virgin? Schirmer argues that the *Life* 'unlike any other legend, is an expression of his [Lydgate's] own personal piety: the prayers which he interpolates have no equivalent in the sources'. He continues to say that it is 'not a *vita* and not an organic unity' and that, in fact, the poem is more of a double epic legend, in the manner of works like the *Legends of Saints Alban and Amphibol* or the *Legends of Saints Edmund and Fremund* because of what he called its 'fluctuation' between the story of Christ and the Virgin.<sup>5</sup>

Alongside these difficulties of structure and genre, the nature of the poem's closure has also caused disquiet amongst some critics. Pearsall goes so far as to call the text an unfinished 'fragment'.<sup>6</sup> Ebin agrees with Pearsall, calling the poem 'unfinished' and 'open-ended'.<sup>7</sup> Schirmer bemoaned the 'colourless ending'.<sup>8</sup> Phillipa Hardman summed up some of these problems: 'what kind of work is it? Is it finished? When was it written?'<sup>9</sup> These three questions

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Hawes, *The Pastime of Pleasure*, ed. by William Mead, EETS, O.S. 173 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1928), ll.1342–43. It is worth noting that Mead suggested that 'conversacyon' was a 'blunder' and should read 'commendation' (see edition quoted above, p. 231). He argued that this in fact referred to Lydgate's *Ballade in Commendation of Our Lady*, NIMEV 99. However, as the editors of the *Critical Edition* note, 'conversacyon' can mean 'mode or course of life' in Middle English (p. 2). See *MED*, 'conversacioun' (n.), sense 1. Importantly, the poem uses the term multiple times in this sense and also sense 3, 'The place where one lives or dwells, whether physically or spiritually; habitat, dwelling place'. See for examples, Book I, l. 240 and Book I, l. 621. The manuscripts also pick out this word. All the manuscripts with the Type A chapter titles title Chapter III as 'the conversacion of our lady in the temple'. (The precise significance of the chapter titles and an explanation of the 'Type A' scheme is a central part of my forgoing discussion.) Hence, it seems reasonable to assume that Hawes was indeed referring to the *Life*.

<sup>5</sup> Walter F. Schirmer, *John Lydgate: A Study in the Culture of the XVth Century*, trans. by Ann E. Kepp (London: Methuen, 1961), pp. 151, 154.

<sup>6</sup> Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 285.

<sup>7</sup> Lois A. Ebin, *John Lydgate* (Boston: Twayne, 1985), p. 136.

<sup>8</sup> Schirmer, *John Lydgate*, p. 154.

<sup>9</sup> Phillipa Hardman, 'Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*: A Text in Transition', *Medium Aevum*, 65 (1996), 248–68 (p. 248).

are the central concern of this chapter, and I shall return to them throughout my work here. The first question, ‘what kind of a work is it?’, surfaces again and again throughout this thesis, simply because the poem’s manuscripts reveal how scribes or editors have sought to answer this question each in his own way. The ways in which this poem was copied, arranged, rubricated, entitled and anthologized provide a rich seam of evidence for how it was understood in different contexts.

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In sifting through the sparse and sometimes conflicting pieces of evidence about the *Life*, what becomes clear is that what we know, or think we know, about the basic facts of the poem is largely derived from an introductory rubric in fifteen of the poem’s manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> The first part of this chapter is principally an investigation of the form and historical background of that rubric, whereas in Chapter Two I discuss the manuscripts which contain the rubric, probing them to see whether the *type* of manuscript in which this rubric appears may shed light on its origin and reliability. In the second part of this chapter, however, I consider the poem’s completeness, as well as its form and genre.

### **First principles: authorship and title**

Osbern Bokenham’s description of ‘owre ladyes lyf Ihon lydgates booke’ survives in a single manuscript, BL Arundel MS 327, and it derives from a poem written at the end of Lydgate’s life. This mention of the poem is the only contemporary, external evidence we have for the authorship and title of the text. This is not the case with other major works by Lydgate. In other texts by him, the authorship of a work is sometimes signalled within the text itself. In the *Siege of Thebes* Lydgate names himself as the author.<sup>11</sup> In much the same way, the title of the *Fall*

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<sup>10</sup> TCC MS R.3.22; Durham MS Cosin V.ii.16; Radcliffe MS 16 (copied from STC 17025); BL Harley MSS 4011, 1304, 629; BL Add. MS 19452; Lambeth MS 344; Longleat MS 15; Chetham’s MS 6709, Bodl. MS Ashmole 39; Rawl. Poet 140, Hatton 73; John’s MS 56 and Beinecke MS 281. Bodl. MS Ashmole 59, an early seventeenth-century copy of the poem contains a variant of the rubric in a later hand which is different from the main hand. It also occurs in the Caxton 1484 print (STC 17023) and Redman 1531 print (STC 17025). Lauritis et al. note it as appearing in eleven in the *Critical Edition*, because they omitted John’s MS 56, Radcliffe MS 16 and Chetham’s MS 6709, which do have the rubric (because they were both copied from printed editions, and the prints contain it) and also Beinecke MS 281 because the manuscript was unknown to them. This manuscript was bought by Yale in 1960. On the provenance of these manuscripts and their history before their acquisition by these institutions, see Introduction and Appendix 2.

<sup>11</sup> In the prologue of that poem, he writes that he is ‘I answerde my name was “Lydgate,/Monk of Bery, nyȝ fyfty ȝere of age”’. John Lydgate, *Lydgate’s Siege of Thebes I*, ed. by Axel Erdmann, EETS, E.S. 108 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1911), p. 5, ll. 92–93.

*of Princes* is used in this form by Lydgate within the text, in Book VI, l. 304,<sup>12</sup> whereas the title *Siege of Thebes* is used by Lydgate within the *Fall of Princes* when he refers there to the *Siege*.<sup>13</sup> (There has also been some debate, however, about what the *Siege*'s title should be.<sup>14</sup>) So where does the *Life*'s modern title come from and how secure is the ascription of its authorship to Lydgate?

## Title

There is variation in the titles ascribed to the *Life*, which might indicate that the now-lost authorial manuscript had no title. The acceptance of the title, *Life of Our Lady*, in modern scholarship probably comes from Caxton's edition (STC 17023), which appears to have given it fixity and currency. Caxton appends a colophon to the poem which reads, 'Here endeth the book of the lyf of our lady made by dan John lydgate monke of bury at thynstaunce of the moste crysten kynge/ kynge harry the fyfth' (sig. m 4<sup>b</sup>).<sup>15</sup> Redman's edition (STC 17025) compounds this attribution. At the end of his text, after Caxton's epilogue verses, he puts 'Here endeth the lyfe of our Lady' (sig. Hh 5<sup>b</sup>). Before these printed editions, the poem was entitled differently, if it was at all. However, even after the printed editions gave this title an apparent fixity, the poem, as I shall outline below, was still entitled in a variety of alternative ways by later readers or owners.

The title, *Life of Our Lady* appears twice in the poem's manuscripts. In BL Harley MS 5272, there is an *explicit* in which the scribe names himself: 'Here endith þe life of oure lady. Quod Johanes ffoster' (f. 98v). CCC MS 237, f. 158r has an *incipit* which reads, 'Begynēþ þe prolog of þe lyfe of owre lady'. A partially illegible prologue-*incipit* in John's MS 56 reads, 'Here be gynethe the Prolog of the [illegible: ?bo] ke of oure lady' (f. 1r). Other manuscripts give the poem different titles, or suggest different ones. The opening of BL Harley MS 2382 is lost and so, if it had an introductory rubric containing a title, that is irrecoverable. However, the scribe divided up the poem into books and the rubrics which mark the books may be an indication of the kind of title the manuscript had. At the end of Book IV, the scribe writes

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<sup>12</sup> Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* III, ed. by Henry Bergen, EETS E.S. 121 (London: Humphrey Milford for EETS, 1924), p. 683.

<sup>13</sup> Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* III, ed. Bergen, p. 683.

<sup>14</sup> James Simpson argues that the text should actually be called the *Destruction of Thebes*. See James Simpson, '“Dysemol daies and fatal houres”: Lydgate's *Destruction of Thebes* and Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*', in *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays in Honour of Douglas Gray*, ed. by Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 15–33 (p. 15, n.1).

<sup>15</sup> *Catalogue of Books Printed in the XVth Century now in the British Library, Part XI: England* (Goy-Houten: Hes and De Graaf for the British Library Board, 2007), p. 39, calls this the 'author's introductory rubric', although there is no evidence of it being authorial, as I outline in the following chapter.

‘Explicit quartus liber | De Sancta Maria’ (f. 74v) and on f. 86r, ‘Explicit Sextus | liber sancte marie’. Perhaps, in this way, the whole poem was entitled ‘de Sancta Maria’. (On the work of this scribe, see Chapter Three.) Phillipa Hardman writes that the ‘usual explicit formula’ is ‘vita beate Marie virgine’.<sup>16</sup> However, this is not really the ‘usual’ formula given that it only appears in five manuscripts: CUL MS Mm6.5,<sup>17</sup> Antiquaries MS 134,<sup>18</sup> Bodl. MS Bodley 596,<sup>19</sup> BL Harley MS 1304<sup>20</sup> and CCC MS 237.<sup>21</sup>

Titles added by later readers were varied. John Stow, in his edition of Chaucer’s *Workes* (STC 5078), in which he lists Lydgate’s works, calls the poem ‘on the birth of the Virgin Mary’ (sig. C ii<sup>b</sup>), and these words may account for why this title sometimes appears to be the one given to the poem by antiquarian owners: on f. 1 of John’s MS 56, seventeenth-century hand has written, ‘Lydgate of the Birthe of oure Lady in four Books’.<sup>22</sup> Other later titles differ from this. On the opening flyleaf of BL Cotton MS Appendix VIII, a seventeenth-century hand has written, ‘Iohn Lydyat . monke of Bury S<sup>t</sup> Edmonds / On y<sup>e</sup> Praise of y<sup>e</sup> Virgin Mary’. In BL Harley MS 3952, on f. 1r, there is a crossed through title, ‘~~The Birthe of Christ~~’ in an eighteenth-century hand, with a replacement title, ‘Lydgate’s Life of Mary’ added by a different hand, dating from the nineteenth century. Indeed, the alteration of ‘Our Lady’ to ‘Mary’ perhaps reflects a Protestant sensibility, one which calls the Virgin simply ‘Mary’ rather than making her ‘Our Lady’, which would make her a venerated figure in one shared religion. Bodl. MS Bodley 120, has an eighteenth-century inscription on the first flyleaf reading ‘A poem of ye V. Mary’ and a note of the date: ‘May 7<sup>o</sup> MDCCXV’.<sup>23</sup> Some later readers did entitle the text as it is in modern scholarship. Bodl. MS Bodley 75 reads, on f. 83v, ‘here endeth the poem entitled the Life of our Lady by John Lydgate’, in an eighteenth-century hand.

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<sup>16</sup> Hardman, ‘Text in Transition’, p. 258. Hardman makes further small-scale errors about the manuscripts of the poem, such as the suggestion that Rawl. Poet MS 140 has an inscription which reads ‘Cest I[i]vre appellee la Nativite de la Notre Dame’ on f. 11v. In fact this is an inscription on the opening flyleaves of that manuscript, in a different hand from that which copied the text.

<sup>17</sup> ‘explicit vita beate Marie virginis et matris dei’, f. 142r.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Explicit Vita beate marie’, f. 30r, followed by NIMEV 2742, *Pees Maketh Plente*.

<sup>19</sup> Beneath John Stow’s inscription on f. 174v, ‘Compilid by John lydgate monke of berry on whos soul god haue mercy amen’, the words ‘Explicit vitam beate Marie virginis’ appear in red ink in a decorative *anglicana* hand, which is different from the main scribal hand.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Explicit vita beate marie’, f. 99r.

<sup>21</sup> ‘Explicit vite Marie’, f. 240r.

<sup>22</sup> Although in his list of works by Lydgate at the back of the volume (sig. S ss v<sup>a</sup>; f. 376r), he lists ‘Item 31, Magnificat in mitre’ and also ‘Item 34, The life of our Lady’.

<sup>23</sup> It also contains a note saying it was given by William Brewster of Hereford to the Bodleian. See Appendix 2. On Brewster, see F. C. Morgan, ‘Dr. William Brewster of Hereford (1665–1715)’, *Medical History*, 8 (1964), 137–48.

## Authorship

What, then, of authorship? Is the ascription of authorship to Lydgate any more consistent?

Lydgate is named as the author of the *Life* by the original scribes (as against by later hands) in as many as seventeen of the poem's manuscripts.<sup>24</sup> In one sense, this is a high number, when we compare it to the manuscript record of some other Middle English poems. Alexandra Gillespie notes, for example, that of the seventeen manuscripts of *Troilus and Criseyde*, only two name Chaucer as its author in their *incipits*.<sup>25</sup> In one manuscript of the *Life*, TCC MS R.3.21,<sup>26</sup> dated to the third quarter of the fifteenth century, there is an *explicit* on f. 156v which reads, 'explicit purificacio et finis libri compilati per Joh. Lydgate monachum de Bury'. Beyond this, however, all the medieval attributions of authorship to Lydgate are in the same form and occur in a distinct cluster of manuscripts.<sup>27</sup> The attributions are contained in an introductory rubric at the start of the poem. This rubric also appears to contain information about the poem's patron. It reads:<sup>28</sup>

This booke was compilede by Iohn Lidgate Monke of Bury at the excitacion and  
styryng of our worshipfull prince kyng Harry the fifthe. In the honoure glory and  
worship of the byrthe of the moste glorious maide wife and modir of our lord Ihesus  
crist Chapterede and markyde aftir this table. (*Critical Edition*, p. 240).<sup>29</sup>

The rubric frames the poem in a particular way, making a claim about what kind of a work the *Life* is. It describes the text as a work in praise of the Virgin's birth. It specifies that it is a 'booke' intended for the 'honoure glory and worship of the byrthe of the moste glorious maide wife and modir of our lord Ihesus crist'. And yet, if that is true, the poem is around 5500 lines too long, for it is only a short section of the first book that deals with the Virgin's birth. This is

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<sup>24</sup> Those containing the rubric, listed above, as well as Bodl. MS Ashmole 59 and TCC MS R.3.21.

<sup>25</sup> Alexandra Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate and their Books, 1473–1557* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 35.

<sup>26</sup> A full digital facsimile of this manuscript is available online at:

[http://sites.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/R\\_3\\_21/manuscript.php?fullpage=1&startingpage=1](http://sites.trin.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/R_3_21/manuscript.php?fullpage=1&startingpage=1),  
accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2015.

<sup>27</sup> Apart from Bodl. MS Ashmole 59 which contains a variant of the rubric. This variant rubric is discussed below.

<sup>28</sup> The only one of these that is not medieval is Radcliffe MS 16, which was copied from STC 17023 or STC 17025, in 1602. This manuscript is discussed in my final chapter.

<sup>29</sup> Bodl. MS Ashmole 39 has 'in honor of our lady dyvyded and chaptered after this table', omitting the mention of 'the byrthe of the moste glorious maide'. John's MS 56 has an additional note on the contents of the four books on f. 71r. (See Chapter Two for further discussion.)

therefore an incomplete description of the poem. Alternative senses of the word ‘of’ in Middle English might account for the oddity of this description. The *MED* defines ‘of’ in sense 20a as ‘on account of, as a result of’, which might explain the disparity between the content of the poem and its description in this rubric.<sup>30</sup> Yet even then the syntax is strange. In Modern English the rubric might read ‘In the honour, glory and worship, on account of the birth of the most glorious maid, wife and mother of our lord’. It seems more likely that the words ‘honoure glory and worship’ are intended to form one syntactic unit with ‘of the byrthe’. The rather inaccurate description of the poem might suggest that this rubric was not written by Lydgate himself. Indeed, both the introductory rubric and the modern title share a degree of imprecision in their description of the poem. The rubric’s description of the poem as a work on the ‘byrthe’ of the Virgin is no more accurate than the *Life of Our Lady* as a description of the text. The text only covers the life of the Virgin up to her Purification. The manuscripts seem rarely to supply an adequate title for the poem, therefore.

Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B contains a variant of the rubric in a seventeenth-century hand (which is different from the main scribal hands) on the opening flyleaf of part B of the manuscript. It reads, ‘HERE BEGINNETH A BOOKE/of our blessed Lady Maiden Moder & Wife of our Lord Jhesu Compiled by Danne Johan Lidgate Monke of Bery at the exhortation of our most excellent Prince king Henry y<sup>e</sup> fifte. /In honour glory and worship of her Nativite and her most holy liuinge and conuersation from her birthe to her Purification’ (f. 135r). The author of this rubric has apparently altered the wording of the most common introductory rubric to make it reflect the narrative arc of the poem more accurately. It is not simply ‘in the honour glory and worship of the byrthe’ (*Critical Edition*, p. 240) of the Virgin, but also concerns ‘her most holy liuinge and conuersation’ and describes how the poem details the events up to the Purification. The reconfiguration of the rubric by this later hand in Bodl. Ashmole MS 59 indicates that at least one scribe thought the rubric needed modification.

The most common introductory rubric presents a specific idea of authorship and patronage. Lydgate is named as ‘Monke of Bury’, indicating his attachment to an important monastic institution. As Anthony Bale observes, ‘fifteenth-century readers of Lydgate very frequently marked his poems with tags which called attention to Lydgate’s monastic vocation... These tags advertise the worthy pedigree of text and author’.<sup>31</sup> Robert Meyer-Lee has noted

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<sup>30</sup> *MED*, online edition: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED30218>, accessed 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Anthony Bale, ‘From Translator to Laureate: Imagining the Medieval Author’, *Literature Compass*, 5 (2008), 918–34 (p. 930).

that these tags or epithets give Lydgate's name a kind of 'brand value'.<sup>32</sup> The words situate the poem in a particular context, signaling Lydgate's spiritual identity and – perhaps – his spiritual authority too. The ascription of patronage to Henry V works to much the same end, lending the text an apparent royal seal of approval. In his recent work on authorial attribution in Middle English texts, Vincent Gillespie has pointed to a culture of 'anxiety about fatherless books and about the dubious authority of nameless and unknown authors (...) in English vernacular religious texts'. Gillespie points to the way manuscript rubrics, of the kind attached to the *Life*, seek to assert the theological validity of the texts they accompany. Manuscript rubrics do this in several ways, in ascriptions of authorship (be they accurate or not) and in the ascription of particular patrons. As he says, 'vernacular religious texts, such as Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*, attribute to the king an initiatory role as patron and ideal consumer for their teaching.'<sup>33</sup> Seth Lerer reminds us that late-medieval attributions are not necessarily 'the articulations of knowing biographers or friends' and may instead be 'ideologically motivated, textual manipulations for specific literary ends'.<sup>34</sup> It is easy to see how an apparent royal endorsement from a devout king (and I shall explore Henry's reputation for piety in the following section) would lend the poem a cultural prestige. The *Life*'s introductory rubric is not unusual. In a manuscript of the *Troy Book*, apparently produced in the same workshop as several of the manuscripts of the *Life*, we find a similar rubric:<sup>35</sup>

Here begynneth the boke of the sege of Troye compiled by daun Iohn Lydgate Monke of Bery atte excitacioun and steryng of the moost noble worthi and myghty Prynce kyng Henry the fyfthe ffirste rehersyng the conquest of the golden flees acheued by the manly prowesse of Iason vnder te correccioun of euery prudent redrer (f. 1)<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Robert Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 52.

<sup>33</sup> Vincent Gillespie, 'Fatherless Books', in *The Pseudo-Bonaventuran Lives of Christ: Exploring the Middle English Tradition*, ed. by Ian Johnson and Allan Westphall (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 151–96 (p. 157).

<sup>34</sup> Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers: Imaging the Author in Late Medieval England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> There are several significant similarities between the Rylands manuscript and the 'metropolitan group' manuscripts of the *Life* (which are discussed in the next chapter). The manuscript has a presentation miniature depicting Henry V (who may have been the patron of the *Life*) and also bears the arms of the Carent family, whose arms also appear in Beinecke MS 281 (a manuscript of the *Life*). Kathleen Scott has suggested that the frontispiece of BL Harley MS 629, one of the metropolitan group manuscripts of the *Life* (this group is discussed in the next chapter), may be by the Master of Rylands MS Eng. 1. Kathleen Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390–1490: A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, 2 vols (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), II, p. 262. The text of the *Troy Book* is followed by NIMEV 2742, *Pees Maketh Plente*, which is something also found in a number of metropolitan group manuscripts of the *Life*. It is possible, therefore, that these manuscripts were produced in the same milieu and the rubric was a standard form used by scribes in a particular workshop or network of workshops.

<sup>36</sup> Full digital facsimile available online: <http://enriqueta.man.ac.uk/luna/servlet/view/search>.

The phrasing here, ‘compiled by daun Iohn Lydgate Monke of Bery atte excitacioun and steryng of the moost noble worthi and myghty Prynce kyng Henry’ is an almost exact copy of the wording of the *Life*’s introductory rubric. Comparing the two, it looks as though each rubric is following a kind of standard form, a form that seeks to signal the value of the poem, and its author, to its readers. It may be a form that originates with a group of scribes, rather than with the author himself. (I return to this suggestion in the next chapter.)

### Context of the introductory rubric

John Norton-Smith suggested Lydgate’s relationship with Henry V began when the poet was in Oxford in the first decade of the fifteenth century.<sup>37</sup> He hypothesized that Lydgate made the acquaintance of the prince through Edmund de Lacy (b. c.1370, d.1455), Bishop of Exeter, who was the king’s chaplain, and went so far as to say that ‘Henry and Lacy may well have been the main forces in shaping the direction and style of Lydgate’s religious voice’.<sup>38</sup> Lydgate certainly appears to have had a relationship with both Henry and Lacy. In c. 1406–8, Henry wrote a letter to the abbot of Bury requesting that Lydgate be allowed leave to continue his studies in Oxford and not return to Bury. In it, Henry (then Prince of Wales) cites Richard Courtenay’s report of the monk: ‘les scen, virtue et bonne conversacion de nostre treschier en Dieu Dan J L vostre commoigne’ [the sense, virtue and good conversation of your fellow monk and dearest in God, Don J L’].<sup>39</sup> Lacy is mentioned twice by John Shirley in rubrics to Lydgate’s poem in his various anthologies.<sup>40</sup> Even if he did not have a relationship with Henry himself,

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<sup>37</sup> *John Lydgate: Poems*, ed. by John Norton-Smith (Clarendon Medieval and Tudor Series: Oxford, 1966), p. 195.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions from All Souls MS.182*, ed. by M. Dominica Legge (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1941), pp. 411–12. It is perhaps coincidental that one of the named owners of the All Souls manuscript (in which the Anglo Norman letter concerning Lydgate appears) was ‘*Willelmus Elyot, clericus, magister domus de Port[s]mouth Wynt di[ocesis] in comitatu Sutht ol[im] Registrarius bone memorie Edmundi L[acy] Exon episcopi.*’ Oxford, All Souls College MS 182, f. 2. Perhaps it was in fact Lacy who petitioned the Prince to write to Cratfield to request Lydgate’s leave, quoting Richard Courtenay as a source to lend more authority to his request, and a version of the letter somehow found its way into the papers of one of his clerks.

<sup>40</sup> TCC MS R.3.20, f. 165r mentions ‘a devoute salme of þe sautier which Lydegate daun Johan translated in þe Chapell at Wyndesore at þe request of þe dean whyles þe kyng was at evensonge’. The ‘dean’ referred to here is Lacy. TCC R.3.20 f.1 contains a rubric which reads, ‘Translacyone out of Latyne in-to Englisse of Gloriosa dicta sunt de te & c translated by Lidegate daun John þe Munk of Bury at þinstaunce of þe Busschop of Excestre in wyse of Balade’ (Lacy was later Bishop of Exeter), this precedes the poem *Gloriosa Dicta Sunt de Te* (NIMEV 2688). In another, ‘Here begynneth verses of the sautier whiche þat kynge Herry the V whom god assoyle by gret devucion usyd in his chappell at his hy3e masses by-twene þe levacion and þe concepcion of þe sacrament, translated by þe Monke Lydegate dan John’, this precedes the *Eight Verses of Saint Bernard* (NIMEV 2553) in John Stow’s

Lydgate seems to have had a relationship with his chaplain. The patronage of Henry V, however distant, was immensely important for Lydgate. It was Henry V who commissioned Lydgate's longest work (the *Troy Book*), begun in 1412 and completed in 1420. Furthermore, it was the king's son, Henry VI, and many in the circle around him, who were some of Lydgate's most significant patrons.<sup>41</sup>

## Henry V

Henry was a king with a well-documented reputation for piety. The opening words of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* note that from the moment he came to the throne, 'ea studuit omni devocione complecti que honorem dei, ampliacionem ecclesie' [he applied his mind with all devotion to encompass what could promote the honour of God, the extension of the Church].<sup>42</sup> Elsewhere the chronicle reports that no-one could interrupt him in his prayers, 'tam ardenter inhesit divinis laudibus audiendis et secretis oraculis' [so fervently had he been devoted to the hearing of divine praises and to his own private prayers].<sup>43</sup> On his accession to the throne he ordered the construction of three new monastic houses. As Vincent Gillespie observes, 'the scale and prestige of Henry's plans for these houses, all intended to nestle close to the royal palace at Sheen, undoubtedly sent signals about the ambition and purposefulness of the new king.'<sup>44</sup> The *Life*'s repeated reference to the biblical Syon (I, 296; II, 319; III, 542; III, 588; III, 615; III, 1469; III, 1555; III, 1765) may be an oblique homage to this royal project. In addition to these public acts of piety, scholars have often noted Henry's special devotion to the Virgin, which was evident in both public works and private documents.<sup>45</sup>

Henry's will, made before he left for France in July 1415, testifies to his Marian devotion. Extensive provision is made for liturgical reverence to the Virgin. He requests that in

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manuscript, BL MS Add. 29729, f.126r. This manuscript contains a section of the *Life* and was partially copied from Shirleyain exemplars.

<sup>41</sup> Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate (1370–1449): A Bio-Bibliography* (Victoria, B.C.: University of Victoria, 1997), p.27.

<sup>42</sup> *Gesta Henrici Quinti, the Deeds of Henry the Fifth*, ed. and trans. John S. Roskell and Frank Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 3–4.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 154–55.

<sup>44</sup> Vincent Gillespie, 'Chichele's Church: Vernacular Theology in England After Thomas Arundel', in *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth Century England*, ed. by Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 3–42 (pp. 4–5)

<sup>45</sup> See James H. Wylie, *The Reign of Henry the Fifth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), I, p. 236 who points to the almost 'dangerous' piety shown by the king. See also Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, *Henry V* (New York, London: G. P. Putnam's & Sons, 1901), pp. 86–90, who discusses the King's levity by contrast with his apparently less pious outlook as Prince of Wales.

the event of his death, he be buried at Westminster and that masses in honour of the Virgin should be said for him,

Et volumus ibidem Fundari Altare, in honorem Annunciationis beatae Mariae Virginis, & omnium Sanctorum; ad quod Altare volumus, in perpetuum, singulis diebus, per ejusdem Ecclesiae Monachos, dici Tres Missas; quarum Trium Missarum semper Medium esse volumus Missam de Die; Et, omni Die Dominico: volumus Primam dici de Assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis, & ultimam Missam de Resurrectione Domini. Die Lunae: Primam Missam de Annunciatione, & ultimam de Angelis. Die Martis: Primam Missam de Nativitate Domini, & ultimam de Nativitate beatae Mariae. Die Mercurii: Primam Missam de Sancto Spiritu, & ultimam de Conceptione beatae Mariae. Die Jovis: Primam Missam de Corpore Christi, & ultimam de Purificatione beatae Mariae. Die Veneris: Primam Missam de Sancta Cruce, & ultimam de Annunciatione. Die Sabbati: Primam Missam de Omnibus Sanctis, & ultimam de Requie, pro Anima nostra, & Animabus Parentum nostrorum, & omnium Fidelium Defunctorum.<sup>46</sup>

[We wish that in the same place an altar in honour of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints be founded; at which altar we wish three masses to be said every day in perpetuity by the monks of this same church. Of these three masses, we wish the middle one always to be the Mass of the Day; and, on every Lord's Day, we wish that the first mass to be said should be the mass of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the last, the mass for the Resurrection of the Lord. On Monday the first mass should be the mass of the Annunciation, and the last, the mass of the angels. On Tuesday the first mass should be the Nativity of our Lord, and the last the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On Wednesday, the first mass should be the mass of the Holy Spirit, and the last, the mass of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On Thursday, the first mass should be the Mass for the Body of Christ, and the last, on the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On Friday, the first mass should be the mass of the Blessed Virgin of the Cross, and the last, the mass for the Annunciation. On the Sabbath the first mass should be the Mass of All Saints, and the last should be a requiem mass for our soul, and the souls of our parents, and of all the Faithful Departed.]<sup>47</sup>

He directs that the Virgin be honoured every day. He later stipulates that his funeral should be a simple affair, instructing that the expense be redirected:

à Die Sepulturae nostrae, per Annum unum integrum, exhibeatur xxx. Pauperibus sufficienter in Victu & Vestitu, qui sint Viri multum indigentes; quorum quilibet omni Die pro Anima nostra dicat Psalterium beatae Virginis, & in fine subjugat, in vulgari suo, 'Mater Dei Maria memento Famuli tui Henrici, qui totam spem suam in te posuit.'

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=115206>, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> August 2012, transcribed from Thomas Rymer, *Foedera with Syllabus*, volume 9, July 1415, pp. 283–98. See also Thomas Duffus Hardy, *Syllabus of the Documents Relating to England and Other Kingdoms Contained in the Collection Known as "Rymer's Foedera"* (London: Longman and Co. and Trübner and Co., 1873), p. 588.

<sup>47</sup> I am indebted to Professor Andrew Wilson, who cast an eye over this translation.

[From the day of our burial, for an entire year, let there be provided for thirty paupers, who men are most in need, sufficient victuals and clothing; and let each of them every day say the Office of the Blessed Virgin, and let them add at the end, in the vernacular, 'Mother of God, Mary, remember thy servant Henry who placed all his hope in you'.]

Henry signed the will in his own hand, with the words, 'This is my last will, subscribed with my own hand, R.H. Jesu mercy and gremercy ladie Marie help'.

Henry's devotion to the Virgin was not only manifested in his liturgical prescriptions and grand monastic foundations. He also promoted literary works on the Virgin. In 1420 he commissioned Jean Galopes to make a French translation of the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi*. Galopes' translation is extant in two manuscripts with English royal arms and presentation miniatures: BL Royal MS 20 B IV and Camb., Corpus Christi College, MS 213. BL Royal MS 20 B IV's fulsome opening dedication reads: 'tres hault tres fort et tres vittorieux prince Henry' [most exalted, most strong and most victorious prince Henry].<sup>48</sup> The *Meditationes* was a significant source for the *Life*.<sup>49</sup> George Keiser goes so far as to call it 'Lydgate's principal source'.<sup>50</sup>

Alongside his interest in furthering Marian devotion, Henry played a well-documented role in promoting the vernacular, and vernacular literature in particular. On 12<sup>th</sup> August 1417, four days after landing in France to commence a military campaign, Henry began to send his warrants back to the Chancery in London, in English.<sup>51</sup> As a corollary of his successful military campaigns, the ambitious king sought to promote the vernacular, cultivating a 'nationalistic language policy'.<sup>52</sup> Lydgate, it has been argued, would become a key figure in this programme.<sup>53</sup> As the prologue to the *Troy Book* makes clear, even when he was still Prince of Wales, Henry had been keen to promote the vernacular; once he was king, it would become the standard language of royal and legal affairs. Lydgate writes,

In sothefastnesse, this no tale is,  
Callid Henry ek, the worthy prynce of Walys,  
To whom schal longe by successioun  
For to gouerne Brutys Albyoun—  
Whyche me comaunded the drery pitus fate

<sup>48</sup> 'tres' should really be translated as 'very', but I felt that 'most' better matched the tone of the rubric.

<sup>49</sup> Especially for Books III and IV. See *Critical Edition*, pp. 97, 104, 108, 132–34, 140.

<sup>50</sup> George Keiser, 'John Lydgate's Magnificat: Magnifying Scribal Difficulties', *Tributes to Kathleen L. Scott: English Medieval Manuscripts: Readers, Makers and Illuminators*, ed. by Marlene Villalobos Hennessy (London: Harvey Miller, 2009), pp. 115–23 (p. 115).

<sup>51</sup> John H. Fisher, 'A Language Policy for Lancastrian England', *PMLA*, 107 (1992), 1168–80 (p. 1171).

<sup>52</sup> Nicholas Watson, 'The Politics of Middle English Writing', in *An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280–1520*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and others (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), pp. 331–52 (p. 348).

<sup>53</sup> *The Idea of the Vernacular*, p. 42.

Of hem of Troye in englyshe to translate,  
[...]  
By-cause he wolde that to hyȝe and lowe,  
The noble story openly wer knowe,  
In oure tonge, aboute in euery age  
And y-writen as wel in oure langage,  
As in latyn and in frensche it is.<sup>54</sup>

This promotion of the vernacular and vernacular literature was part of a larger pattern of bookish patronage. Carol Meale notes that ‘Henry V employed metropolitan scribes to produce official documents, service books and even secular texts’.<sup>55</sup> John Fisher has argued that there was a specific form of the vernacular modeled on the king’s own personal style, which was actively promoted by and through the Chancery.<sup>56</sup> Scribes who were engaged in copying public papers also worked on personal commissions for the king. For example, CUL MS Mm V 14, which contains the *Siege of Jerusalem*, amongst other texts, was partially copied by a scribe named Richard Frampton.<sup>57</sup> Frampton worked in Chancery, from 1402–16. He was employed to write the Cowcher Books of the Duchy of Lancaster, a comprehensive register of the title-deeds of the Duchy council. He was paid 13s. 8d. per quire.<sup>58</sup> It is tempting to speculate whether this Richard Frampton was related to a scribe responsible for two beautiful breviaries mentioned in Henry’s will: ‘pulchrum Portophorium in Duobus Voluminibus, scriptum per Johannem Frampton’[two beautiful breviaries in two volumes, written by John Frampton]. Henry directed that these be left to the Bishop of Winchester.<sup>59</sup>

Other names of scribes, and details of their commissions, emerge from the historical record. In 1422 Henry commissioned a bible from John Hethe, a clerk of the Privy Seal, and a year earlier he ordered twelve books on hunting from a scribe named John Robard.<sup>60</sup> Which hunting text(s) this was is unclear; it might have been twelve different texts or twelve copies of

<sup>54</sup> John Lydgate, *Troy Book I–III*, ed. by Henry Bergen, EETS, E.S. 97 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1906), p. 4, Prologue, ll. 101–06, 111–15.

<sup>55</sup> Carol M. Meale, ‘Book Production and Social Status’, in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 201–38 (p. 203).

<sup>56</sup> John H. Fisher, ‘Chancery and the Emergence of Standard Written English in the Fifteenth Century’, *Speculum* 52 (1977), 870–99 (p. 877).

<sup>57</sup> A. I. Doyle, ‘The Manuscripts’, in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background*, ed. by David Lawton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 82–93, (p. 93 and n. 19).

<sup>58</sup> R. Somerville, ‘The Cowcher Books of the Duchy of Lancaster’, *English Historical Review*, 51 (1936), 598–615, esp. p. 599.

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=115206>, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> August 2012, transcribed from Thomas Rymer, *Foedera with Syllabus*, volume 9, July 1415, pp. 283–98.

<sup>60</sup> Frederick Devon, *Issues of the Exchequer Being a Collection of Payments Made Out of His Majesty's Revenue, from King Henry III to King Henry VI Inclusive* (London: John Murray, 1837), p. 368.

the same text. One or more of the manuscripts may have been Edward of York's translation of *Livre de Chasse*, which was dedicated to Henry V.<sup>61</sup> (This vernacular text, known as the *Master of the Game*, also appears alongside the *Life* in AVCAU Liber 1405.) Henry did not only commission books, he was also given books commissioned by others. Bodl. Digby MS 233 is a manuscript containing Trevisa's *De Reginime Principum* and Vegetius' *De Re Militari* and may have been a gift for the king.<sup>62</sup>

The picture that emerges is of a king with an interest in literature, in books, in vernacularity, in Marian devotion and in Marian literature. Although no manuscripts of the *Life* can be directly connected to Henry V, some manuscripts appear to have been produced within the ambit of the king, or to be affiliated to other manuscripts which can be placed within the king's ambit. A manuscript of the *Life*, Beinecke MS 281, contains the arms of the Carent family. The Carent family arms also appear in Manchester, Rylands MS Eng 1: a manuscript which contains a presentation miniature depicting Henry V. An inscription in the Beinecke manuscript states that it was given to a queen, but it is impossible to say to which, this may have been Henry's wife or his daughter-in-law.<sup>63</sup> One manuscript of the *Life*, Bodl. MS Hatton 73, can probably be localized to the court of Henry's son, Henry VI. It contains an inscription which states that it is 'Quene margrete boke'. This is likely to be Margaret of Anjou.

Scholars have generally agreed with the claim of the introductory rubric that the poem was written for Henry V.<sup>64</sup> One of the editors of the 1961 *Critical Edition* of the *Life*, Ralph Klinefelter, wrote: 'I suggest that gratitude to the Virgin Mary for the success of his campaign in France and the recent presentation by Jean Galopes of the *Meditationes* inspired Henry to commission Lydgate to write the *Life* in 1421' (*Critical Edition*, p. 9). Miri Rubin suggests that Henry V claimed Mary 'as a model of majesty and priesthood, of sacred kingship embodied in his own person'.<sup>65</sup> Pearsall points out that if the *Life* was written for Henry, it would be 'a

<sup>61</sup> This is a suggestion made by J.J.G. Alexander, in 'Painting and Manuscript Illumination for Royal Patrons in the Later Middle Ages', in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by John Scattergood and James Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 141–62 (p. 158).

<sup>62</sup> A. I. Doyle, 'English Books in and Out of Court from Edward III to Henry VII', in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by Scattergood and Sherborne, pp. 163–82 (p. 173).

<sup>63</sup> Inscription in a fifteenth-century hand on the verso of the original cover reads: 'thys boke yevyn/ to the quene our souereyne/ lady ffor to se the conversacyon/ off our moost blessed lady off/ hevyn ffor to confort/ and to passe tyme in/ redyng and ovyr/ seying thys lytll/ trety off hyr blessed'.

<sup>64</sup> Some have taken it rather at face value, like Gail Gibson, who wrote that 'there is evidence that the *Lyf of Our Lady* was commissioned and undertaken as a political gesture intended to cement the liaison between Henry IV and the future Henry V and the strong supporters of the Lancastrian dynasty at Bury St. Edmunds'. Gail McMurray Gibson, 'Bury St. Edmunds, Lydgate, and the N-Town Cycle', *Speculum*, 56 (1981), 56–90 (p. 66, n. 64).

<sup>65</sup> Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 286.

further indication of the king's desire to encourage quasi-liturgical English composition in the high style'.<sup>66</sup> Lee Patterson observes, moreover, that Lydgate in the *Life* functions 'not as a courtly maker but as a writer of weighty texts whose very existence is witness to the monarch's [Henry V] historical legitimacy and spiritual seriousness'.<sup>67</sup>

The difficulty, however, with the idea of Henry's patronage of the *Life* is that none of the information in the introductory rubric is corroborated by information within the poem itself. The text lacks, as Pearsall has observed, an 'internal reference [to a patron], such as Lydgate invariably makes in a major work'.<sup>68</sup> (It should be noted, against Pearsall here, that there is no embedded reference to a patron in the *Siege of Thebes*.) Reginald Webber concurs, noting 'apart from the rubric there is no internal evidence whatsoever to suggest a commission by anyone or to date the poem with any degree of certainty'.<sup>69</sup> Douglas Gray also notes that it is 'strange that there is no reference to Henry in the text'.<sup>70</sup> In his other works Lydgate often announces who his patron was, or describes the circumstances of a work's commissioning within the work, as we have seen in the case of the *Troy Book* above. Norton-Smith also notes the difficulty of the lack of an internal reference to a patron. He proposes a different scenario for the date and impetus for the commencement of the work, writing that 'it is more likely that Henry only suggested the subject to Lydgate and urged him to set about writing it (see the wording of the King Harry rubric: 'at the excitacioun of [sic] Kyng Harry')'.<sup>71</sup> As he goes on, 'it is impossible to date the poem. Had it been expressly commissioned by Henry V, Lydgate (...) would probably have mentioned it'.<sup>72</sup>

Was Lydgate's lack of an embedded reference to a patron a feature of the type of work he was writing? Perhaps he felt that a Marian hagiography was not the right place in which to salute a patron or describe the occasion of a work's commissioning, or that a 'conventional dedication to a patron was not thought appropriate in such a poem' as Pearsall puts it, because

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<sup>66</sup> Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (1997), p. 19.

<sup>67</sup> Lee Patterson, 'Making Identities in Fifteenth-Century England: Henry V and John Lydgate', in *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History*, ed. by Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 69–107 (p. 74).

<sup>68</sup> Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (1970), p. 286.

<sup>69</sup> Reginald Webber, *Late Medieval Benedictine Anxieties and the Politics of John Lydgate* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Ottawa, 2008), pp. 57–58.

<sup>70</sup> Douglas Gray, 'Lydgate, John (c.1370–1449/50?)', online edition.

<sup>71</sup> Norton-Smith misses the precise wording of the rubric, which is 'at the excitacion and styyryng of our worshipfull prince kyng Harry the fifthe', *Critical Edition*, p. 240.

<sup>72</sup> *John Lydgate: Poems*, ed. by John Norton-Smith (Clarendon Medieval and Tudor Series: Oxford, 1966), p. 154.

it is ‘so clearly designed for use in a monastic community or for private devotional exercises.’<sup>73</sup>

However, comparison with the *Lives of SS Edmund and Fremund* suggests that Lydgate would not have felt uneasy about embedding a reference either to a patron or to the circumstances of a work’s commissioning within a hagiographic narrative. In the opening section of that poem, Lydgate describes the occasion of its commissioning:

When sixte Herry, in his estat roial,  
With his sceptre of Ynglond and of France,  
Heeld at Bury the feste principal  
Of Cristemesse, with ful great habundance

He continues, fleshing out the details:

Thabbot William [Curteys] his humble chapeleyn  
Gaf me in charge to do myn attendaunce  
The noble story to translate in substaunce  
Out of the Latyn aftir my kunning  
He in ful purpose to yeue it to the kyng<sup>74</sup>

Here, embedded within the text of this verse hagiography, is an explanation of the circumstances of the poem’s genesis. Such a reference is notably absent in the *Life*. George Keiser has offered a plausible explanation: ‘[t]he absence of any mention of Henry’s patronage within the work itself and the particular language of the introductory rubric may imply that the *Lyf of Our Lady* did not reach completion before the young king’s death in 1422’.<sup>75</sup> Keiser’s explanation for the lack of any internal reference to a patron in this poem is convincing, and I shall follow it here.

### Date of the *Life*

In many of his other works Lydgate provides detailed information about the circumstances of a particular poem’s production. In the *Troy Book*, for example, he says that he completed his poem in the eighth year of Henry’s reign (V. 3373–79):

<sup>73</sup> Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (1997), p. 19. A note inscribed by the Bury St Edmund’s librarian Henry Kirkestede in the *Liber Albus* (BL Harley MS 1005 on f. 35v) describes the ‘ordo legendi in mensarum’ [order of reading for the table]. The list is a collection of saints’ lives and sermons like ‘Liber Dialogorum Gregorii’ and ‘Ysiodorus de summo bono’. Significantly this list contains works that all appear to be in prose. Admittedly Kirkestede’s note pre-dates Lydgate’s time at Bury by at least thirty years. However, in the religiously orthodox and perhaps conservative atmosphere of the abbey it is not unreasonable to imagine that the works read aloud were not radically different in Lydgate’s day.

<sup>74</sup> John Lydgate, *John Lydgate’s ‘Lives of Ss Edmund & Fremund’ and the ‘Extra Miracles of St Edmund’*, ed. by Anthony Bale and A. S. G. Edwards (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009), p.37, ll. 57–60 and p. 38, ll. 108–112.

<sup>75</sup> Keiser, ‘Magnifying Scribal Difficulties’, p. 115.

The eyghte yere by computacioun  
Suynge after the coronacioun  
Of hym that is most gracious in werkynge,  
Herry the Fyfthe, the noble worthi kynge.<sup>76</sup>

In the prologue of the *Troy Book*, Lydgate explains his patron's motivation in commissioning the work and constructs what Derek Pearsall has called a 'comprehensive sky picture' with astronomical minutiae sufficient to place the moment of the poem's commencement to 4 pm on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October 1412.<sup>77</sup> But in the *Life* there is little information of this kind.

Nonetheless, the *Life* does give a few hints at the circumstances of its composition. These hints have been taken by some scholars to indicate both the date and occasion.<sup>78</sup> The prologue opens with a reference to 'this long wynter's nyght' (I, 2). The use of the demonstrative, 'this', here seems to imply that readers should understand which winter's night is being discussed, but there is no elaboration. As the prologue progresses, it becomes clear that this winter's night is also a metaphorical winter in which mankind languishes before the birth of the Virgin and the promise of salvation. The same image of the long night and the long night's vigil is used again several times in the poem in reference to the moment before the Nativity of the Virgin and then again to the Nativity of Christ (I, 142–49; III, 461; V, 85–88).

The images of the opening stanza are emblematic of a larger pattern in this poem. Many of the references to the frame narrative, which might give us a sense of when this poem was written and why, are hazy in their detail or appear to have a solely metaphorical meaning. At the end of Book II, Lydgate writes a confusing stanza. Closing off a description of the Virgin waiting for the birth of Christ, 'hir day awaytyng' (II, 1608), Lydgate transitions, mid-way through a stanza, to this:

And as ye shall here, if ye liste tabyde  
And god to forne, yet or the bryddys syng  
And or than Flora, dothe the floures spryng  
To for the kalendes, of apryll or of may  
My purpose is, playnely if I may

For to procede furthe in this dyte (II, 1609–14)<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> John Lydgate, *Troy Book I–III*, ed. Bergen, Book V, p. 869, ll. 3373–76.

<sup>77</sup> Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (1970), p. 166. See *Troy Book I–III*, ed. by Bergen, p. 4, Prologue, ll. 125–46.

<sup>78</sup> See variously, Johnstone Parr, 'The Astronomical Date of Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*', *Philological Quarterly*, 50 (1971), 120–24; *Lydgate's Temple of Glas*, ed. by Joseph Schick, EETS, E.S. 60 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1891) p. cviii; Hardman, 'Text in Transition'.

<sup>79</sup> This is an awkward quotation in view of the stanza break, but typical of Lydgate's fluid use of the rhyme royal stanza. On this, see Phillipa Hardman, 'Lydgate's Uneasy Syntax', in *John Lydgate: Poetry*,

Phillipa Hardman states that here ‘the narrator promises to write about the Nativity before a specific time of year’.<sup>80</sup> Yet, other than this vague indication about the time of year, there are no more concrete clues. Seven stanzas later, at the start of Book III, the narrator comments that ‘I shal syng or maies day the ferthe’ (III, 10). Hardman suggests that the reference would have been one which the poem’s audience understood, writing that ‘Lydgate undertook to complete this part of the *Life of Our Lady* before this particular date for an urgent reason which was presumably known to his intended audience’.<sup>81</sup> The exact meaning of these lines is frustratingly imprecise for readers today. Whereas in the opening of the poem, the narrator was in a metaphorical winter’s night, he now appears to be experiencing the joys of Spring, both real and symbolic. And yet, by the time Book IV begins, the narrator says that he is writing at the start of a new year, describing the appearance of Janus (IV, 1–3). After this point, there are no more references to the frame narrative. The precise circumstances of the poem’s creation escape us.

Given the paucity of evidence within the text, establishing a date for the poem is contingent on the validity of the introductory rubric. If we are to trust this rubric, it would place the poem at some point before 1422 (when Henry V died) and probably after 1413 (when he acceded to the throne). However, this date range is hazy, as it is possible that Lydgate continued to work on the poem after Henry’s death, or that he had even begun it when this Henry was still Prince of Wales. Lydgate wrote verses for Henry before he became king, as we have seen.

Scholars have taken a variety of positions on the date of the *Life*, placing it at numerous different points between 1409–35. Establishing appropriate criteria for dating the poem is difficult. These criteria are contingent on the fact of Henry V being the poem’s patron. In 1891, Josef Schick suggested that the poem was written in 1409–11, based on astronomical detail in the text. He points to the references that Lydgate makes to the time of year at which he is apparently writing. Schick refers to the opening of Book IV:

Whan Ianus Byfrons in colde Ianuarie,  
With frosty berde entreth in the yere,  
And phebus chare neyeth to aquarye,

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*Culture and Lancastrian England*, ed. by Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. 12–36.

<sup>80</sup> Hardman, ‘Text in Transition’, p. 256.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* p. 257.

His watry beame<sup>3</sup> to-fore feverer,  
Whan that his light was pale and no-thyng clere,  
And from hym late was partyd lucyne,  
The same nyght as I sawe her shyne

Ournede newe, with beame<sup>3</sup> glad and merye,  
On the heven, and caste his stremes adovne (IV, 1–9)

Schick writes that ‘this statement seems to refer to the first of January’, and adds that ‘there was a new moon in 1410 on 26<sup>th</sup> December’.<sup>82</sup> On this basis, and what Schick called ‘a freshness’ to the *Life*, he alighted on 1410 as a probable date of composition, *i.e.* at an early point in Lydgate’s writing career. His view of Lydgate’s creative development as a poet seems unsound as a method of dating the poem. Schick’s reading of the astrological data was challenged by Johnstone Parr in 1971.<sup>83</sup> Lydgate tells us that it was the 1<sup>st</sup> January and that the sun (‘phebus chare’) was nearing Aquarius (‘neyeth to aquarye’), and that the moon (lucyne) was newly horned (‘Ournede newe’).<sup>84</sup> For the moon to be horned in this way, it has to be between one and three days old. Working from astronomical tables, Parr identified three possible years within 1400–1422 in which the moon would have been the right shape in this sign (Capricorn) and position in relation to the sun. These years are 1405, 1408 and 1416. However, identifying these years as possible years in which to find evidence of a horned moon is problematic. Parr wrote that ‘the years 1405 and 1408 should probably be eliminated from consideration, inasmuch as Henry V, who seems to have commissioned the poem, was then probably still in what may be called his pleasure-loving and irresponsible youth’.<sup>85</sup> Parr concluded, therefore, that poem was written in 1414–5. His argument rests on an assumption that the poem was indeed commissioned by Henry V. What, however, if the poem was not made for Henry and the date range is therefore wider? The only evidence for the *Life* having been written at the behest of the king comes from the rubric. Both Parr and Schick’s theories are contingent on other pieces of evidence and cannot stand alone.

Norton-Smith proposed an alternative theory. As I have already noted, he believed that Henry did not commission the poem but only suggested to Lydgate that he write it. Noting the

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<sup>82</sup> John Lydgate, *Temple of Glas*, ed. by Joseph Schick, p. cviii.

<sup>83</sup> Johnstone Parr, ‘The Astronomical Date of Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*’.

<sup>84</sup> Professor Richard North tells me that ‘according to the Ptolemaic system the sun enters Aquarius on 21st January, so what this stanza appears to give, with the sun’s chariot (in Capricorn) approaching Aquarius, is nearly 3 weeks of time in 1<sup>st</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> January, in which the sun has just overtaken a new (‘horned new’) moon on their common course around the ecliptic. Since we seem to have moved on at least a week from 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1410 might not be the right year.’

<sup>85</sup> Johnstone Parr, ‘The Astronomical Date of Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*’, p. 122.

lack of an embedded reference to a patron, he wrote that ‘one is tempted to date the poem after the death of Thomas Chaucer in 1434, when Lydgate had returned to a more cloistered existence’.<sup>86</sup> He observed that the only person explicitly mentioned in the poem is Chaucer. However, the reference to Chaucer has prompted another critic to arrive at a different conclusion. Considering this reference to Chaucer, Reginald Webber suggested that the poem was written around 1400 shortly after Chaucer died.<sup>87</sup> He argues that there is a particular force to the Chaucer eulogy at the end of Book II, which indicates that Chaucer’s death was still fresh in Lydgate’s mind.

In all, what we know about Lydgate’s client relationship with Henry V and about Henry’s literary tastes and well-documented piety would lend credence to the claim of the introductory rubric that the poem was written for him. However, the lack of an internal reference to a patron may suggest that at the point of Henry’s death in 1422, as George Keiser has suggested, the poem was unfinished.

### Problems of closure

160 lines before the end of the *Life* (a poem of some 6000 lines), Lydgate interpolated a Latin verse stanza into the text from the *Legenda Aurea*:<sup>88</sup>

Alta petit Turtur cantando gemit veniens ver  
Nunciat et caste viuit solusque moratur  
Pullos nocte fouet morticinium quoque fugit  
Grana legat volitat sociata cadaucra vitat  
Felle caret plangit socium que per oscula tangit  
Petrica dat huic nidum fugit hostem in flumine visum  
Rostro non ledit geminos pullos bene nutrit. (VI, 295–301)

[It soars to heights, its song has a mournful note  
It announces the coming of spring, lives chastely and stays alone  
Warns its young in the night, and shuns carrion flesh  
It collects grains, flies in groups, avoids cadavers  
Has no spleen, mourns a companion, touches with kisses  
Nests in the rocks; it flies from the enemy seen in the river  
Inflicts no wound with its beak and carefully feeds its two young]

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<sup>86</sup> Norton-Smith, *John Lydgate: Poems*, p. 155.

<sup>87</sup> Reginald Webber, *Late Medieval Benedictine Anxieties*, pp. 57–58.

<sup>88</sup> See Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. by William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 146–47. (The Latin stanza is quoted in full, with translation.)

After this moment of hiatus (treated as such by at least two scribes),<sup>89</sup> the narrator states his intention to explain ‘how that first this feste toke his name/So as I can to yov I will atame’ (VI, 307–08). This is an explanation of what is to follow, not an invocation offered up in conclusion of a work. If this part of the poem were really intended to be the closing section of the work, it seems bizarre that Lydgate does not signal this. The poem’s conclusion is oddly abrupt. The final stanza of the poem is as follows:

To whome this feste is in speciall  
Dedicate, bothe of more and lesse—  
Whiche bare hir childe in a lityll stall  
Bitwene an ox and a sely asse.  
And blissede quene, this fest of Candelmasse,  
To thy seruante<sup>3</sup> shelde and socoure be,  
To kepe and save from all aduersyte. (VI, 455–62)

Some manuscripts conclude the poem with the word ‘Amen’.<sup>90</sup> Others, however, leave this space blank, without *explicits* or rubrics, as if accommodating the possibility that there might be more to come.<sup>91</sup> This stanza is an awkward and hasty end to the poem. It also seems uncharacteristic of Lydgate to conclude the *Life* in such a cursory way. What is curious is that Lydgate does not complete the poem with a self-reflexive gesture from the narrator. We find these kinds of gestures in his other works, but also internally within the *Life* itself, in the breaks between the books. It is customary for him, at such junctures, to pause and reflect on the task before him, to halt the narrative for a moment of self-reflection. He marks the division between Books I and II, and II and III, and III and IV, by offering up prayers which call attention to the frame narrative. These flag up the junctures as moments of transition. At the end of Book I of the poem, for example, he writes ‘But lady myne, I put all in thy grace/ This first booke compylede for thy sake’ (I, 873–4). He closes Book II with a prayer to the Virgin, begging, ‘And late thy stremes, of thy mercy shyne /Into my breste, this thryde boke to fyne’ (II, 1666–67). The poem’s readers are invited into the space of the frame narrative at this point of departure. Lydgate does this in his other works too. At the start of Book VIII of the *Fall of*

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<sup>89</sup> Both the scribe of Adv. MS 19.3.1 (Heege manuscript) and the scribe of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B end their copies of the poem after this stanza. In the latter case, the reason being that the next stanza announces the content of the following section, which the Ashmole scribe did not wish to copy. This is discussed at length in my final chapter.

<sup>90</sup> CCC MS 237, John’s MS 56; Bodl. MS Hatton 73; BL Harley MSS 629, 5272, 3862, 1304; BL Cotton MS Appendix VIII, CUL MS Mm 6.5; Illinois MS 85; Beinecke MS 660; NLW MS 2124C; Durham MS Cosin V. ii. 16.

<sup>91</sup> As in, for example, BL Add. MS 19252, which despite its elaborate front matter and opulent decorative programme, leaves the space at the end of the poem blank.

Princes Lydgate addresses Bochas (Boccaccio), imagining ‘the ship of thi trauaille,/ which hath passed the sea of bookis seuene’, begging that the ship not ‘stumble on no sond’.<sup>92</sup> We have the sense that the ship of the *Life* got into difficulty before it reached its intended destination.

The lack of a clearly demarcated moment of closure is unusual in the context of Lydgate’s other works. As Pearsall observes, ‘Lydgate is not good at beginnings and always stumbles clumsily over the threshold of his poems’, but he notes, ‘endings are his peculiar strength’.<sup>93</sup> *The Siege of Thebes* ends with the kind of prayer that Lydgate offers up to the Virgin at the end of Book I of the *Life*. Here Lydgate begins by addressing a prayer to ‘Hym that is most good’, before turning to focus on ‘that heavenly quene’:

And lat vs prey to Hym that is most good,  
Which for mankynde shadde His herte blood,  
Thorgh byseching of that heavenly quene,  
Wyff and moder and a mayde clene,  
To sende vs pes her in this lyf present,  
And of oure synnys parfit amendment,  
And joye eternal whan we hennes wende.  
Of my tale thus I make an ende. <sup>94</sup>

This stanza marks out a moment of formal closure, beginning with ‘lat vs prey’, offering up a prayer of thanks and closing with a direct reference to the work itself, ‘my tale thus I make an ende’. The same pattern is discernible elsewhere. The *Troy Book* has an equally elaborate ending. There, Lydgate ironically closes off the poem echoing Ovid’s *Tristia* and Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, by bidding farewell to his text with ‘go litel bok’.<sup>95</sup> *Lives of SS Edmund and Fremund* closes in much the same way, with ‘Go litel book. Be ferfful... To alle folk that the shal seen or reede’, and ends with a prayer to ‘Souereyn lord.’<sup>96</sup>

There are none of these kinds of leave-taking references in the *Life*, none of the rhetorical envoys we associate with his work, suggesting that it might be unfinished. The poem’s abrupt closure confused its scribes just as much as it does its modern readers. In one manuscript, BL Harley MS 2382, the text of the *Life* is followed by *The Assumption of Our Lady* (NIMEV 2165). Even though this text is in rhyming couplets and is clearly a different poem, it is appended to Lydgate’s poem as the ‘sixth book’. The final rubric reads: ‘Explicit sextus liber sancte marie’(f. 86r), underlined in red and placed in the middle of the page. The scribe makes

<sup>92</sup> Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes III*, ed. by Henry Bergen, p. 827, Book VIII, ll. 134–5.

<sup>93</sup> Derek Pearsall, ‘Lydgate As Innovator’, *Modern Language Quarterly*, 53 (1992), 5–22 (p. 6).

<sup>94</sup> Lydgate’s *Siege of Thebes*, ed. by Axel Erdmann, pp. 192–93, ll. 4709–16.

<sup>95</sup> John Lydgate, *Troy Book I–III*, ed. by Henry Bergen, p. 879, Envoy l. 92; p. 876, Book V, l. 3612.

<sup>96</sup> John Lydgate, *John Lydgate’s ‘Lives of Ss Edmund & Fremund’ and the ‘Extra Miracles of St Edmund’*, pp. 132–33, ll. 3572–74 and l. 3607.

no differentiation between the two texts, seeing *NIMEV* 2165 as a logical narrative continuation of the *Life* (this manuscript is discussed in Chapter Three).

Robert Redman's 1531 edition of the poem (STC 17025) is set out in such a way as to suggest perhaps that he too saw the poem as oddly truncated. At the end of his edition he printed a woodcut of the flight into Egypt (sig. Hh.6<sup>a</sup>). In the image, the Virgin, who is riding a donkey and carrying the Christ-child, looks backwards. Ironically her gaze seems directed straight at text's *explicit*, which announces the end of the poem. The positioning of the image of the flight into Egypt indicates that this is the next event in the narrative and perhaps suggests that Redman thought this episode was lacking in the text.

To sum up, suppositions about the *Life*'s date and occasion are little more than informed guesswork. Nonetheless, since the poem appears unfinished and contains no embedded reference to a patron, it is possible that Lydgate began to write it speculatively for Henry V, and that he put the poem aside, unfinished, at the time of the monarch's death in 1422. However, the poem's form (rhyme royal) *might* argue for a later date of composition. It was this form which he favoured in the latter part of his career, in works such as *The Lives of SS Edmund and Fremund* and *The Secrees of Philosoffres*, which was his last and also unfinished work. The *Life* might just – like the *Secrees* – have been left unfinished at the point of Lydgate's death in c. 1450.

### **Form and genre**

There are two aspects to the unsatisfactory closure of this poem. The poem's final sections seem truncated, as if there were more to come. The final passages do not have the elaborate closing-off gesture which we associate both with points of transition within the *Life* itself and with the ends of other works by Lydgate. The poem feels incomplete. If this really is a 'life' of the Virgin, where then is the rest of her life? Hardman's question, 'What is the poem for?' surfaces again.<sup>97</sup>

Hardman's answer to her question deserves some examination because it touches on many of the difficult issues we have been facing, such as problems of closure and questions about what function the poem has. Hardman calls the poem a 'text in transition', hypothesizing that the work was composed in two distinct stages: one, an originally shorter poem about the birth of the Virgin; and then an extension to this at a later date. Hardman notes that the *Life* has

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<sup>97</sup> Hardman, 'Text in Transition', p. 248.

‘notoriously challenged critical taxonomy’.<sup>98</sup> She sources her answer to the problem of critical taxonomy and function within the chronology of the work’s completion, arguing that there are ‘different narrative methods in the first two and the last four books’, which account for the text’s ‘structural inconsistencies’.<sup>99</sup> She suggested that the poem not only contains a ‘continuous narrative’ but can also be read as ‘a series of independent readings’.<sup>100</sup>

Aside from what she sees as the different tone and scope of each of the poem’s books, Hardman also looks at the evidence of manuscript rubrics in an approach which highlights the difficulty of using rubrics as a means for recovering authorial intention. She suggests that we can see the remnants of the two distinct works in the surviving rubrics in the poem’s manuscripts. Part of her argument concerns what kind of title the work was given by its scribes. She notes that Bodl. MS Bodley 596 has an opening rubric which reads, ‘Here begynynneth the prologue of the birthe of oure ladi’ (f. 86r). Then she suggests that this rubric indicates that this manuscript frames the poem as a work about the Nativity of the Virgin, which may be a vestige of an earlier tradition of rubrics attached to the original Birth of the Virgin poem. The beginning of this manuscript is missing and it is now bound with other items of an entirely different date, so we cannot be sure if there was an introductory rubric and what it said. This prologue rubric is ambiguous, however. Although Hardman feels this to be evidence of an earlier tradition which points to a Birth of the Virgin poem, we might read this inscription differently. A modern editor might print it as ‘the prologue: of the birth of our lady’. It appears that the rubric is only referring to a specific part of the poem: to the prologue, not to the entire text. The same pattern, that is of rubrics referring to particular sections of the text, is visible in TCC MS R. 3.21. The start of the final book of the poem is marked with, ‘Incipit Liber sextus de purificatione beate marie’ (f. 151v). We see a similar pattern in Beinecke MS 660, where the *explicit* at the end of the *Life* reads ‘Thus endith the purification of oure lady to trewe christen men sche is mene for mercy’ (f. 76v). It is unlikely that that scribe intended to suggest that the entire text was about the purification, but that the *explicit* was intended to refer to the final section, just as the prologue rubric of Bodley 596 was probably intended to refer to the prologue alone.

Hardman also looked at another manuscript, CUL MS Kk.1.3, which closes the poem with an explicit that reads: ‘Here endith the boke of the natuuite of our lady and of the birth of our Lorde Ihesu Criste’ (f. 94r); and she suggests that this ‘gives a description of what sounds

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, p. 248.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 249, 255.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, p. 248.

like a two-part narrative', in support of her thesis that the poem was originally comprised of two distinct narrative units. She writes:

[t]his might be read to suggest that at one stage the poem existed in a shorter form which could more appropriately be entitled, 'the natuuite of our lady' and that, while the title of the earlier version remained in use when the poem was extended to its present six-book form, an expanded descriptive formulation was needed for the explicit to the work now lengthened to take in the stories of the whole Christmas season.<sup>101</sup>

However, the evidence of this one manuscript is insufficiently conclusive. CUL MS Kk.1.3 is the only manuscript to describe the poem in this manner. This manuscript is also exceptional in other ways. Attention to the whole manuscript, rather than simply its end-matter, reveals that it divides up the text in an idiosyncratic way, which explains this unusual *explicit*. The divisions in the text are confusingly marked. On f.15r there is a rubric which reads, 'Here endithe the first book of the Nativite of our lady // And begynethe the second book of the counsel of the Trynyte', which corresponds to the start of Book II. On f.41 we find a rubric which corresponds to Book III, 'Here endith the counsel of the Trynyte – And followith þe begynnyng of þe Nativite of Cryste'. The scribe begins the text straight after this and then decides to start a new leaf, and adds in red ink, crossed through: '~~Here begynnyth a book of the Nativite of our Lady~~'. There is no demarcation of Book IV, no demarcation of Book V (f.76r) and the start of Book VI (f.87) has a blue initial. This manuscript, therefore, appears to have three discrete sections, according to its rubrics. They are the 'Nativite of our lady', the 'counsel of the Trynyte' and the 'Nativite of Cryste'. So, the *explicit* of this manuscript seems to be summarizing the sections of the poem that have been previously marked. It *might* be gesturing to an earlier form of the poem, as Hardman suggests, but the evidence is thin. This three-part division of the poem is found in one other manuscript, which is textually related to CUL MS Kk 1.3 and which does not have the same final *explicit*.<sup>102</sup> Given that this *explicit*, which suggests that the poem concerns 'the natuuite of our lady and of the birth of our Lorde Ihesu Criste', only appears in this isolated example, it does not provide conclusive manuscript evidence for a 'text in transition'.

Hardman's analysis of the poem's structure is a thought-provoking possible solution to the problems of structure which the *Life* presents, even if her approach to the manuscript evidence is a little problematic and perhaps too reliant on a few unusual rubrics. Her attention

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<sup>101</sup> Hardman, 'Text in Transition', p. 258.

<sup>102</sup> Bodl. MS Bodley 75, CCC MS 237 and CUL MS Kk 1.3.

to the poem's structure, however, testifies to how difficult it is to taxonomise this work, that is, to identify its function. Perhaps *part* of the difficulty in placing the *Life* within a recognisable formal category is a feature of modern habits of reading. The *Life* is not a work which fosters linear reading: it is narratively fractious. A devotional text of this nature might not have been designed to be read in a linear fashion. It might have been more natural for medieval readers to quarry specific sections for their use, perhaps depending on the liturgical calendar. George Keiser observes, 'fifteenth-century readers did not always read books from beginning to end; rather, having some familiarity with the whole compilation, they sought out specific narrative material within it to satisfy current interests'.<sup>103</sup> However, the differences in modern and medieval reading practices do not properly account for the puzzlement the poem engenders in modern scholars and medieval scribes.

Hardman's work reveals how appropriate the work might be as a poem divided up into a series of readings possibly tied to the liturgical year.<sup>104</sup> Sections of the poem work well as discrete units, and indeed the extract manuscripts of the poem illustrate this fact (these are discussed in Chapter Four). Her theory is no doubt influenced by her work on the Heege manuscript, Adv. MS 19.3.1, which she edited in 2000.<sup>105</sup> In this manuscript, the scribe reframed the poem apparently as a sequence of liturgical readings, only copying Books IV–VI. It is easy to see why he did this. In places, the *Life* has a clear liturgical applicability. For example, in Book VI, in describing the Virgin's purification and how Candlemas commemorates this event, Lydgate instructs:

Fro the highest doun to the leste,  
Euery man and woman in her honde  
To the Temple shulde a tapre bryng,  
Poruȝ out þe worlde in euery manere londe;  
And ther with all make her offryng,  
Aftir the gospell the presteȝ hand kyssyng,—  
With light solempne that all myghten sene,—  
In honour oonly of þe heuenny queen (VI, 350–57).

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<sup>103</sup> George Keiser, 'The *Ordinatio* in Manuscripts of John Lydgate's *Lyf of Our Lady*: Its Value for the Reader, Its Challenge for the Modern Editor', in *Medieval Literature: Texts and Interpretation*, ed. by Tim William Machan (Binghamton: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1991), pp. 137–57 (p. 144).

<sup>104</sup> Hardman, 'Text in Transition', esp. p. 258.

<sup>105</sup> *The Heege Manuscript: A Facsimile of National Library of Scotland Ms Advocates 19.3.1*, ed. by Phillipa Hardman (Leeds: Leeds Studies in English, 2000).

In sections like these, the gospel narrative is linked to liturgical practice. Although the location here is the Jewish ‘Temple’, the description of the ‘presteȝ hand kyssyng’ might easily apply to a description of contemporary religious practice. In these passages, the poem is didactic, practical even. Yet the poem is more than this. To say that the poem is instructional should not preclude the fact that it is also filled with narrative interjections, as well as with prayers voiced in the first person, as in Book V:

O criste Ihesu, to the I clepe and cry,  
Fro day to day to helpe vs and releve,  
And of thy grace, vs wrecches for to gye,  
That or that thou thy rightwysnesse preve,  
Lat pite firste þe to mercy meue (V, 330–34)

Here the narrative voice offers a prayer for all the audience, ‘vs wrecches’. These prayers and interjections draw attention to the act of writing, and perhaps, to the reading experience. They also highlight the spiritual quest the narrator is engaged in, as he strives to give appropriate expression to his devotion. When the narrator complains that his ‘wittes been so dull’ (V, 159), or that he is encumbered with a ‘rude tongue’ (II, 436) this is because of a spiritual as much as a poetic failing. (In Chapters Two and Four I discuss this humility *topos* in greater detail.) Elsewhere, however, the text is a kind of poetic reference work on the Virgin: a gilded, aureate, richly allusive, digressive extended meditation, full of scholarly references. Pearsall brilliantly observes that it is a ‘compendium of Mariolatry’.<sup>106</sup> The poem resists generic classification, possibly in part because it is unfinished. It is impossible to slot the poem into a recognizable, formal category. And yet as the following chapters indicate, the poem was sufficiently rich, varied and polysemous for it to be repurposed and reframed in a variety of different contexts in its history. The question of the text’s genre becomes in this way a question of different genres in different contexts.

## Conclusion

The *Life* is an evasive poem which frustrates attempts to place it in a specific context. The text is often obtuse about the circumstances of its creation, and the paucity of external evidence makes any suppositions about the poem’s authorship, date, patron and occasion contingent on the words of a rubric which survives in some of the manuscripts. This evidence is itself obscure, making it difficult to recover Lydgate’s original purpose. The poem’s structure and its narrative

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<sup>106</sup> Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (1970), p. 286.

form are puzzling and its function often unclear. Conclusions about the poem are not wholly secure. The text appears to be unfinished. As it contains no embedded reference to a patron, it is possible that the poem was written speculatively for Henry V, but left unfinished 1422, at the time of the monarch's death. Although the content of the introductory rubric seems probable, it seems highly likely, as I show at length in the next chapter, that the introductory rubric was added to an early manuscript by an intermediary and thus non-authorial hand. The introductory rubric may, for this reason, have functioned as a kind of sanction for the text, advertising its value through a slightly dubious attribution of patronage which may not reflect the actual circumstances of the poem's composition.

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## CHAPTER TWO: TYPES OF TEXTUAL APPARATUS

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In the prologue to his poem, *Fifteen Joys and Sorrows of Mary* (NIMEV 447), Lydgate's narrator describes how late one night he 'vnclosyd a book' and how, struck by the appearance of the page in front of him, fell into a meditation on the Virgin and wrote the poem which followed.

The appearance of the book in front of him is described in some detail:

... as I took heed,  
By diligent and clear inspecciou,  
I sauh Rubrisshis, departyd blak and Reed,  
Of ech Chapitle a paraf in the heed<sup>1</sup>

Lydgate clearly recognized the effect the visual appearance of the page had on the reading experience, and, I have argued elsewhere, that this appearance functions as a meditative and creative stimulus for the narrator of this poem.<sup>2</sup> This chapter will explore that phenomenon: what effects the 'rubrisshis', 'chapitle(s)' and other forms of textual division may have on the experience of reading the *Life* and more importantly what these things indicate about the people who devised them.

Most manuscripts of the *Life* have a complex textual apparatus. They testify to the efforts of early 'editors' to find appropriate ways to frame a poem that consistently posed and still poses problems of critical approach for all types of reader, including editors and scholars. These manuscripts seek to provide an apparatus that allows ease of reading, for a poem which is both compendious and digressive, with extended documentation of its source material. It appears that few, if any, of the constituent parts of the textual apparatuses in the manuscripts of the *Life* were devised by Lydgate himself. This chapter will therefore examine the work of scribes and editors, and consider the ways in which these early readers of Lydgate sought to organize and gloss his text. As Matthew Fisher notes, in his rich study of scribal authorship,

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<sup>1</sup> John Lydgate, *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, 2 vols, EETS, E.S. 107 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1911), I, p. 268, ll. 16–19. The poem is anthologized alongside the *Life* in TCC R.3.21. The poem also appears on ff. 88r–90v of BL Harley 2255. This manuscript was probably produced at Bury, as it contains the arms of Bury on f. 1r.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Wellesley, 'Textual Lyricism in Lydgate's *Fifteen Joys and Sorrows of Mary*', in *Middle English Lyric: Form, Focus, Function*, ed. by Julia Boffey and Christiana Whitehead (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer), forthcoming.

‘scribes did much more than copy the exemplars before them. Literate, they were themselves the primary audience for medieval literature’.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, the argument of this chapter is that not one manuscript of the *Life* preserves a textual apparatus which is by the author himself. Rather, it will be suggested that the most common form of textual apparatus, which appears in as many as eighteen manuscripts, was composed in different stages, probably by different individuals.<sup>4</sup> To make this case, I begin by defining an ‘apparatus’ and by taxonomizing the different forms of them. I deal first with each of the constituent parts of these apparatuses: the division into books, the division into chapters, the glosses, and the rubrication. Having separated these parts out, I describe how they appear together in different combinations in different types of apparatus. As one might expect, different types of apparatus appear in different parts of the stemma of manuscripts. The forms of these apparatuses are complex and interlocking – constituent parts of the apparatuses appear in different combinations. I describe some basic types before asking whether any constituent part of any apparatus may be derived from Lydgate himself.

### **Definition of terminology**

An ‘apparatus’ may be taken to refer to any form of extra-textual material which demonstrates ‘a coherent reader response to a particular text’, to use Carl James Grindley’s phrase.<sup>5</sup> As I have outlined in the Introduction, Grindley classifies differing types of what he calls ‘marginalia’. His system is complex perhaps because it is intended for use in a wide range of manuscripts, but the extra-textual material in the manuscripts of the *Life* is not as complex. Below is a list of the differing types of extra-textual material under discussion here and in later chapters:

- 1. Rubrics
  - Including *incipits*, *explicits*, book division markers and introductory rubrics

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew Fisher, *Scribal Authorship and the Writing of History in Medieval England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2012), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Durham MS Cosin V.ii.16; Chicago MS 566; TCC MS R.3.22; Beinecke MS 281; NLW MS 2124C; Illinois MS 85; BL, Harley MSS 3952, 629, 4011, 1304; Bodl. MSS Rawl. Poet 140, Ashmole 39; Longleat MS 15; BL, Add. MS 19452; Antiquaries MS 134; Chetham’s MS 6709, Radcliffe MS 16; AVCAU Liber 1405.

<sup>5</sup> Carl James Grindley, ‘Reading *Piers Plowman* C-text Annotations: Notes toward the Classification of Printed and Written Marginalia in Texts from the British Isles 1300–1641’ in *The Medieval Professional Reader at Work: Evidence from Manuscripts of Chaucer, Langland, Kempe and Gower* ed. by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Maidie Hilmo (University of Victoria, B.C.: English Literary Studies, 2001), pp. 73–141 (p. 81).

- 2. Tables of Contents
- 3. Decorated Initials
  - These may demarcate textual divisions, or may suggest divisions in the exemplar from which they were copied.
- 4. Book Divisions
- 5. Running titles
- 6. Chapter Divisions and Chapter Titles
- 7. Marginal glosses – either in Latin or Middle English

Despite the fact that there is little clarity or scholarly consensus on what each of these terms means or on how we should use them, the above definitions will be used in what follows.

(Keiser noted in 1991 that there was a ‘lack of critical attention’ given to extra-textual material and an ‘absence of establish conventions for presenting’ such material.<sup>6</sup>) By glosses, I mean marginal material which enhances comprehension or use of the text. It might explain words, phrases or allusions (they might point to the name of an *auctor* or to a scriptural source). I seek to distinguish glosses from rubrics. In general, glosses appear to be extra-textual material which respond to the text on the local level, whereas rubrics refer to the architecture of the text, as the product of a design which signposts its structure or form (like *incipits* or book division markers). Both the glosses and the rubrics are distinct from the chapter titles. These titles have a specific function which is discussed at length below. By seeking to paraphrase the content of the text, they perform a different function from the glosses, and they are usually numbered and are almost universally in Middle English.

This chapter revisits some of the ideas of the last one, in that it will seek to demonstrate that the introductory rubric contained in fifteen manuscripts is not of authorial origin. The introductory rubric is a part of what I term the ‘Type A apparatus’ and never appears in an apparatus of any other type.<sup>7</sup> As I noted, although circumstantial evidence – such as Henry V’s devotion to the Virgin and his desire to promote vernacular literature – might give credence to the rubric, it falls short of giving outright corroboration.

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<sup>6</sup> George Keiser, ‘The *Ordinatio* in Manuscripts of John Lydgate’s *Lyf of Our Lady*: Its Value for the Reader, Its Challenge for the Modern Editor’, in *Medieval Literature: Texts and Interpretation*, ed. by Tim William Machan (Binghamton: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1991), pp. 137–57 (p. 140).

<sup>7</sup> I have chosen the term ‘Type A’, rather than – say – ‘Type 1’ because I did not want to suggest that this apparatus was an early, original or authorial one. The use of a letter suggested less of a hierarchy to me.

An analysis of the forms of textual division and rubrication in the manuscripts of the *Life* is germane to the question posed by Phillipa Hardman – ‘what kind of a poem is it?’ I quoted this question in the previous chapter, and it is one to which this thesis repeatedly returns. A textual apparatus, be it scribal or authorial, makes a claim for what kind of a work a poem is. As will soon become clear, a scholar of the *Life* must approach the poem as a textual archaeologist, uncovering layers of use and reuse both in the text and in its apparatus. The manuscripts of the *Life* show evidence of conflicting and overlapping types of apparatus which testify to the efforts of a number of scribes to make the work more navigable. They also serve to remind us that many Middle English texts of this period have survived in forms that can really only be described as scribal approximations or reconfigurations. As Malcom Parkes observes, ‘a writer organized his work for publication, and if he did not do so then a scribe would, for inside many a scribe there lurked a compiler struggling to get out.’<sup>8</sup> Parkes’ observation recognizes that the creation of a textual object in manuscript and early print culture was a collaborative project, shared between author and a host of non-authorial figures. The idea that there was a compiler lurking in the scribe, and the idea of the collaborative nature of textual production in manuscript and early print culture, is an idea which I will often return to.

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Studying the textual apparatuses in the manuscripts of the *Life* is important for three reasons. Firstly, many critical assumptions about the poem (reflecting simple questions of date, occasion and patron) come from what appear to be non-authorial rubrics which were added to the manuscripts by scribes. These assumptions must therefore be examined and their reliability tested. Secondly, an apparatus has much to tell us about the *Life*’s readers. As Lydgate noted in his *Fifteen Joys and Sorrows of Mary*, and as many later scholars have noted, a text’s apparatus is important to the experience of reading and performs a variety of functions. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton writes that an apparatus might serve ‘the purpose of conferring authority on the text, citing sources (...) or guiding the reader through a maze of speakers’ or, moreover ‘could also be used to guide the reader in memorization (by offering mnemonic devices) in order to summarize narrative or to enhance mediation and prayer’.<sup>9</sup> The way in which the apparatuses

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<sup>8</sup> Malcolm B. Parkes, ‘The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book’, reprinted in *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), pp. 35–70 (p. 69).

<sup>9</sup> Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, ‘Professional Readers at Work: Annotators, Editors and Correctors in Middle English Literary Texts’, in *Opening Up Middle English Manuscripts: Literary and Visual Approaches*, ed. by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, Madie Hilmo and Linda Olson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), pp. 207–44 (p. 207).

guide the reader through a maze of speakers, cite sources, summarize narrative and enhance prayer will be the main concern in the second half of this chapter and the chapters which follow.

Thirdly, questions about book division often anticipate questions about the structure of the poem itself. As we have seen, Phillipa Hardman sought to account for some of the structural inconsistencies in the poem by hypothesizing that Lydgate wrote its first two books at a different time from the last four, subsequently yoking them together.<sup>10</sup> Pearsall also suggests that the poem's tone differs in its different books, and that there is a 'decline in the impetus of the work' after Book III.<sup>11</sup> The work of Pearsall and Hardman prompts not only the question about which form of textual division Lydgate originally envisaged, but also which kinds of textual division critics should follow when discussing the poem. Schirmer discussed the text as one divided into four books across eighty-two chapters.<sup>12</sup> Later critics, however, have relied on the arrangement of the text printed in the 1961 *Critical Edition*, which divides the text into six books and eighty-seven chapters, despite the fact that this arrangement does *not* occur in the base manuscript (Durham MS Cosin V.ii.16) nor (in complete form) in any manuscript of the poem, as George Keiser has noted. In fact, the decision to present eighty-seven chapters for the poem in the base manuscript, as well as to divide the poem into six books, was influenced by the way work was divided up amongst its editors. Books I and II were edited by Klinefelter, Books III and IV by Gallagher and V and VI by Lauritis. Throughout my following discussion, when referring to or quoting from the text, I refer to the six-book structure, because the system of line numbers in the edition is dependent on this six-book structure and no other edition of the poem is readily available. I refer to the page references, but also to the folio numbers in the manuscript. The arrangement of the text that is printed in the *Critical Edition* only partially occurs in one manuscript: Bodl. MS Bodley 120.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Phillipa Hardman, 'Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*: A Text in Transition, *Medium Aevum*, 65 (1996), 248–268 (p. 248).

<sup>11</sup> Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (1970), pp. 285, 288.

<sup>12</sup> Schirmer, *John Lydgate*, p. 151. Schirmer was using the nineteenth century partial edition by Tame, John Lydgate, *The Life of Our Lady. Part I. Edited from MSS. in the British Museum*, ed. by Charles Edward Tame (London: R. Washbourne, 1879), as well as Redman's 1531 edition (STC 17025), which was itself a copy of Caxton's edition (STC 17023). It is unclear why he thought the poem was in four books as this is not how it appears in either of these editions. Tame's edition has the eighty-seven chapter table at the start, but only prints parts of the poem, those not divided into books. Redman's has no book division at all and appears to have eighty-two chapters, although eighty-seven separate titles appear in the table of contents. I imagine that he worked in part from one of the manuscripts which contain a four-book and eighty-six chapter structure, like Bodl. MSS Hatton 73 or Bodley 596, but referred to the apparent eighty-two chapter arrangement of the Redman edition.

<sup>13</sup> When I say 'in complete form' I mean that there is one manuscript – Bodl. MS Bodley 120 – which contains six books and eighty-seven chapters, a fact which George Keiser does not note in 'The

## Constituent parts of the apparatuses

Some manuscripts of the *Life* have barely any apparatus at all, with extra-textual material which is restricted to the decoration of initial stanza letters and with a few enlarged initials to demarcate major textual divisions.<sup>14</sup> However, the majority of manuscripts have an apparatus whereby the poem is arranged into chapters, and sometimes into books, and in some cases into both chapters and books; and whereby the poem also has a programme of Latin glosses in the margins, running titles, decorated initials and, in many cases, tables of contents. The types of apparatus in the surviving manuscripts may be broken down into their constituent parts. The data which now follows may appear laborious, but must be laid out before we can consider which apparatus, or which part of which apparatus, is of authorial origin. Here I consider forms of division, chapter headings and then glosses.

### Textual division

There are two kinds of textual division: chapter division and book division. These forms of division are often at odds with each other, which may indicate that they were developed at different times. An organization of the text in three,<sup>15</sup> four<sup>16</sup> and six<sup>17</sup> books survives. The four-book and six-book division both occur four times, although no book division at all is the most common.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, there are varieties of chapter division extant, but only two kinds of chapter division are known to occur in more than one manuscript. There are unique

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Ordinatio in Manuscripts of John Lydgate's *Lyf of Our Lady*', p. 148. This is a complicated manuscript. It is made by multiple scribes, who use both a highly decorated *textura*, as well as a cursive secretary hand for the main text. The chapter headings are inconsistent and the text is a kind of jigsaw of different scribal campaigns. It is unclear whether the different scribal campaigns represent the use of different exemplars with different forms of textual apparatus, or multiple scribes working from a single exemplar. The apparatus is therefore not complete and uniform.

<sup>14</sup> As in, for example, BL Cotton MS Appendix VIII. The decoration and textual apparatus of every manuscript is described in Appendix 2.

<sup>15</sup> Bodl. MS Bodley 75 and CCC MS 237. Additionally, CUL MS Kk. 1.3 marks divisions between the first three books, but does not label them as such. BL Harley MS 5272, the product of two scribes, labels the first three books and marks the second three.

<sup>16</sup> Bodl. MSS Hatton 73, Bodley 596; Lambeth 344; John's MS 56.

<sup>17</sup> Bodl. Bodley 120; BL Harley MSS 4260, 5272; TCC R.3.21; BL Harley MS 2382 labels five and marks the sixth – this complicated manuscript is discussed in Chapter Three. Adv. MS 19.3.1 contains an extract comprising Books IV–VI, divided according to the six-book division, but not labelled as such, this manuscript is discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>18</sup> BL, Cotton MS Appendix VIII has five divisions, although they are not labelled as books.

arrangements of thirty-six<sup>19</sup>, forty-one<sup>20</sup>, sixty<sup>21</sup>, fifty-eight<sup>22</sup> and seventy chapters,<sup>23</sup> but the most common arrangement is that of eighty-seven chapters and no book divisions, which appears in eighteen manuscripts.<sup>24</sup> This scheme of chapter division is a part of an apparatus here known as Type A, which appears in a particular cluster of manuscripts on the stemma. A variant of this Type A apparatus, with eighty-six chapters and four books, appears in four manuscripts in a subset of this group of manuscripts (groups and subsets are discussed below);<sup>25</sup> I call this apparatus Type A(ii). There are also other arrangements where the chapters are not numbered, but do have titles.<sup>26</sup>

At times the two types of division (book and chapter) are integrated into one another, as in the Type A(ii) scheme. This variant of the Type A apparatus requires brief explanation. In this apparatus, the eighty-six chapters begin numbering afresh at each of the four books. Although all four manuscripts with this apparatus contain four books and eighty-six chapters, they are not all missing the same chapter from the eighty-seven chapter scheme. Lambeth MS 344 and Hatton MS 73, which were copied from the same exemplar, both contain twenty-seven chapters in the fourth book (as opposed to twenty-eight in John's MS 56 and Bodl. MS Bodley 596). These two manuscripts omit Chapter LXXXIII, 'Howe Symeon Recyved criste of our lady in the Temple', while John's MS 56 and Bodl. MS Bodley 596 omit Chapter XXXIX, 'How the mydwyve<sup>3</sup> dorste not entre with Iosephe into the house for grete sodden light that appered within'. It appears that it is by a fluke that each of the four-book manuscripts also happen to have eighty-six chapters. It seems reasonable to assume that the eighty-seven chapter

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<sup>19</sup> HEH MS HM HM 115

<sup>20</sup> CUL MS Kk 1.3, although they are not numbered.

<sup>21</sup> BL Harley MS 4260, numbering afresh at each book division.

<sup>22</sup> BL Add. MS 19252. In this manuscript there is no rubric, instead the header to the table of contents reads: 'Here begynneth a table compendiously rehersyng the notable maters written in this booke suyng after this nouembrarie'. (f. 1v). See Appendix 1.

<sup>23</sup> CUL MS Mm 6.5.

<sup>24</sup> Durham MS Cosin V.ii.16; Chicago MS 566; TCC MS R.3.22; Beinecke MS 281; NLW MS 2124C; Illinois MS 85; BL, Harley MSS 3952, 629, 4011, 1304; Bodl. MSS Rawl. Poet 140, Ashmole 39; Longleat MS 15; BL, Add. MS 19452; Antiquaries MS 134; Chetham's MS 6709, Radcliffe MS 16; AVCAU Liber 1405.

<sup>25</sup> Bodl. MSS Bodley 596 and Hatton 73; John's MS 56 and Lambeth MS 344. The introductory rubric in John's MS 56 is a variant of the most common one. At the end of the standard rubric, quoted earlier, the scribe has added a supplementary note on the division of the text. The note, on f. 71r, reads:

Divided into foure books chapetred and marked affyr this table / The ffyrste book hape x  
chapetres / The secunde Book . xxiiij. Chapetres. The thyrdde Book . hathe xxiiij . The  
ffourthe . Book hathe . xxvij chapetres.

This scribe appends the ends of Book V and Book VI with an almost invisible 'amen' at the end of the final stanza of each, marking these as textual divisions, but not as book divisions.

<sup>26</sup> CUL MS Kk 1.3 and BL Harley MS 3862.

scheme was combined with a four-book division in the exemplars of these four manuscripts, but in two versions of this new scheme a different chapter was omitted.

The practice of beginning the chapter numbering anew at the start of each book also appears in BL Harley MS 4260, which has six books and sixty chapters beginning afresh, perhaps for the sake of symmetry. (The symmetry of the different schemes is discussed below.) A fragmentary, dismembered manuscript (Columbia, Missouri, University of Missouri *Fragmenta Manuscripta*, f. 178; Cambridge, Gonville and Caius 804/808 and CUL, MS Add. 3303 (7) ff. 1–4) appears to have had the same kind of book and chapter division.<sup>27</sup> Most usually, however, the two types of division (book and chapter) are in tension with one another, as I explain below.

### Tables of contents and rubrics

In manuscripts where there are chapter titles, these are always indexed at the start of the poem in a table of contents, and were probably also indexed in manuscripts in which the opening or closing folios have been lost. In two cases, the table of contents is deliberately placed at the end of the poem, and in one it has been placed at the end after rebinding.<sup>28</sup> The manuscripts contain a variety of different types of rubrication. My discussion of all extant titles, *explicits* and *incipits*, as well as of the introductory rubric which appears in fifteen manuscripts and most likely appeared in twenty-one before the loss of an opening folio or folios, may be seen in the previous chapter.<sup>29</sup> Here it is worth noting that no manuscripts survive with this introductory rubric which do not also have the eighty-seven (or eighty-six) chapters, Latin glosses and table of contents of the Type A or A(ii) apparatus. Manuscripts which appear to contain a variant of the Type A apparatus – that is, manuscripts with a thirty-six, fifty-eight and seventy chapter scheme – contain different rubrics. HEH MS HM 115, which has thirty-six chapters, has an

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<sup>27</sup> Harold G. Jones III, 'An Unedited Manuscript of John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*: Book V, verses 344–364 and 372–392', *English Language Notes*, 8 (1969), 93–96; A.S.G. Edwards and A.W. Jenkins, 'Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*: An Unedited Manuscript of Part of Book III', *English Language Notes*, 9 (1971), 1–3; Stephen R. Reimer, 'A Fragment of John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady* in Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge', *English Language Notes*, 33 (1995), 1–14 (p. 8).

<sup>28</sup> John's MS 56 and CUL MS Mm 6.5 both have a table of contents at the end of the manuscript. John's MS 56 and CUL MS Mm 6.5. In John's MS 56 the final lines of the poem are written on f. 70v and the table of contents begins on f. 71r. In the Cambridge manuscript the poem ends at f. 142r and the table of contents begins overleaf. In other cases, as with Bodl. MS Hatton 73, the table appears to have been misplaced at the end of the poem when the manuscript was rebound, as the leaves containing it do not run on from the end of the text of the poem.

<sup>29</sup> Illinois MS 85, NLW MS 2124C, BL Harley MS 3952, Antiquaries MS 134, Chicago MS 566. Additionally, AVCAU Liber 1405 has an eighty-seven chapter arrangement, but is missing all of Book I and begins Book II, l. 365; it is probable that this manuscript also contained the rubric.

opening rubric which reads: ‘There bene þe notable matiers þat bene contynede in thys booke’ (f. 1r). BL Additional MS 19252 (fifty-eight chapters) has rubric reading: ‘Here bigynneth a table compendiously rehersyng the notable maters written in this booke suyng after this nouembrarie’ (f. 1r.), while C.U.L MS Mm 6.5 (seventy chapters) has ‘Tabula capitulorum libri praecedant’ (f. 142v).

## Glossing

Alongside these forms of division and rubrication, many manuscripts have an extensive network of glosses. As with the chapter titles, a particular set of Latin, marginal glosses appear in the Types A and A(ii) apparatuses.<sup>30</sup> There are no vernacular glosses in these manuscripts (as distinct from vernacular chapter titles). The manuscripts containing variants of the Middle English chapter titles contain contracted forms of the Latin gloss.<sup>31</sup> The Latin glosses never appear without the eighty-seven or eighty-six chapters of the Type A and A(ii) apparatuses. My discussion of the unique sets of glosses in Bodl. MS Bodley 75 and BL Harley MS 2382 will follow in Chapter Three, and of those in Bodl. MS Ashmole 59, in Chapter Five. Other than in these cases, the glosses that appear in manuscripts of the *Life* may be said to follow a standard form.

The Latin gloss serves a variety of purposes. Often the glossing is intended to point to Lydgate’s use of biblical and patristic source material, which is complex and extensive. Sometimes it provides relevant textual material for passages which paraphrase the liturgy, such as the *Nunc Dimitis* (VI, 141–168) and the *Magnificat* (II, 981–1060). Here the Latin text is usually supplied in the margin, sometimes in its full form and sometimes in contracted form. In other instances, there are glosses for the names of the authorities which Lydgate cites. The glosses do not paraphrase the content of the text, but rather supplement it, so as to enrich the text as if it were a repository of information. In this sense, the gloss has a different aim from the chapter titles, which describe the text and serve as a means for readers to locate themselves within the poem.

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<sup>30</sup> For ease of reference, when referring to the chapter titles and Latin glosses of the Type A apparatus, I have chosen to refer to the chapter titles and Latin glosses printed in the *Critical Edition*, rather than to unprinted manuscript sources. Although the apparatus in the *Critical Edition* is a combination of different schemes of division (and thus is problematically misleading about the base manuscript), its glosses and chapter titles are those of the Type A apparatus.

<sup>31</sup> BL Add. MS 19252 and HEH MS HM 115. CUL MS Mm 6.5 contains almost no Latin gloss and only a few glosses picking out authorities.

This combination, of Middle English chapter titles which paraphrase on one hand, and of more learned Latin glossing on the other, creates a sophisticated two-tiered apparatus in which each part performs different functions.<sup>32</sup> While the vernacular chapter headings might simply point readers to particular sections of the text, the Latin material might be used in prayer or for devotional or educative purposes. The different parts of the apparatus might, therefore, be aimed at different kinds of reader. For example, a non-Latinate reader might find the vernacular chapter title for Chapter LVI, ‘Howe prophete3 prophecied the birthe of Criste’ (p. 533; f. 63r) to be a useful explanation of the content of the text to follow. Yet the Latin glosses which follow in the marginal space, which consist of an extensive quotation from the relevant scriptural text, appear to be aimed at a more learned reader, or at a reader who requires a deeper comprehension of the biblical source. The first of these glosses is illustrative. In the margin of the following section of text the words ‘Abdias propheta’ appear, words which seem to be aimed at the Latinate reader who would have no difficulty with this abbreviation. After this, the following appears: ‘In montem antem Syon erit/ Et ascendit ex monte Syon vt montem /Esau’ [Before mount Zion it shall be/ And cometh out of the mountain of Zion unto the mount of /Esau] (p. 533; f. 63r).<sup>33</sup> This is a contraction of a part of the scriptural text (Abdias 1: 17–21). The use of a contracted scriptural text in abbreviated Latin appears to expect an educated reader who is keen to match the poem with the biblical source, whereas the vernacular chapter heading serves a simpler purpose. The different aims of these different parts of the apparatus may indicate that the parts were composed separately; in the second half of this chapter I shall assess whether the Latin glosses are of authorial origin.

### Stemma and types of apparatus

As is to be expected, differing kinds of apparatus are found in the stemma in clusters of manuscripts which are textually related.<sup>34</sup> The most common type of apparatus, that which I

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<sup>32</sup> Joyce Coleman’s work on the Latin sections of Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* provides a possible parallel with the scribal apparatus of Lydgate’s *Life*, which may have been written with two audiences in mind. Coleman’s suggestion is that the Latin sections of the *Confessio* were intended for Latinate prelectors (clerks who read the works aloud), while the vernacular passages were written for a less learned listening audience. See, Joyce Coleman, ‘Lay Readers and Hard Latin: How Gower May Have Intended the *Confessio Amantis* to be Read’, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 24 (2002), 209–34.

<sup>33</sup> AVCAU Liber 1405 f. 39r has a variant which quotes Augustine’s City of God not the scriptural text: ‘In montem autem Syon erit astendent de montem Syon et defendant montem Esau’. See *City of God Against the Pagans (Volume V)*, Book XVIII, Loeb Classical Library 415 ed. trans. Eva M Sanford, William M. Green (Harvard, 1965), p. 476, online edition: [http://www.loebclassics.com/view/augustine-city\\_god\\_pagans/1957/pb\\_LCL415.477.xml](http://www.loebclassics.com/view/augustine-city_god_pagans/1957/pb_LCL415.477.xml), accessed 29<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

<sup>34</sup> For the stemma, see *Critical Edition*, p. 17.

call ‘Type A’ appears (with one exception) in manuscripts of Group *c*. There are seventeen manuscripts with this apparatus in Group *c* and one in Group *b*. The majority of the Group *c* manuscripts appear in subset *d*. The one non-*c*-group manuscript with Type A apparatus is Durham MS Cosin V. ii. 16, which falls in Group *b* and is also the base manuscript for the *Critical Edition*. The variant apparatus, Type A(ii), appears in Group *c*, in subsets *q* and *h*. A few other patterns emerge: the division of the text into six books only occurs in Group *b*, in which each manuscript contains a unique form of apparatus, apart from Durham MS Cosin V. ii. 16, which, as we have seen, has an apparatus of Type A. The implications of these patterns are discussed below.

### **The metropolitan group of manuscripts**

The importance of the Type A apparatus is clear in that it appears in a large number of manuscripts. No other apparatus appears more than once, apart from Type A(ii), which is a variant of Type A. The manuscripts with Type A apparatus all appear to originate in London in the mid-fifteenth century, with the exception of Durham MS Cosin V.ii.16, which belongs to the *b*-group. They are from a group which may be named ‘metropolitan’ on the basis of a study published in 1989 by Kathleen Scott. Scott identified four manuscripts of the *Life* which appear, from their illustration, to have been produced by a workshop in London in the mid-fifteenth century, or to have come from the same illustrative tradition, thus from the same milieu.<sup>35</sup> George Keiser has since additionally identified another seven manuscripts which ‘have much in common’ with Scott’s four<sup>36</sup>, along with a further eight which ‘probably were not copied in the same milieu but clearly show the influence of this group’.<sup>37</sup> All these metropolitan manuscripts share significant features of lay-out and presentation. They are largely high-status codices, invariably on vellum with opulent decoration, using red and blue ink and sometimes with gold decoration on a mauve ground (for the decorative programme of each manuscript, see Appendix 2). The margins are often generous and the Latin glossing is neat and considered, but not of the leaden scholarly type that we see in some smaller scale apparently clerical productions in which the glossing is more extensive and often in heavily abbreviated Latin (two

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<sup>35</sup> The four in question are: BL Harley MS 629; NLW MS 21242C and TCC MS R.3.22 and Beinecke MS 281. See, Kathleen Scott, ‘Caveat Lector: Ownership and Standardization in the Illustration of Fifteenth-Century English Manuscripts’, in *English Manuscript Studies*, 1 (1989), 19–63 (pp. 23–7).

<sup>36</sup> Bodl. MS Rawl. 140; BL, Add. MS 19452 and Harley MS 3952; Antiquaries MS 134; Longleat MS 15; Chicago MS 566 and Illinois MS 85.

<sup>37</sup> AVCAU Liber 1405; Beinecke MS 281; BL Harley MSS 1304, 3862 and 4011; CUL MSS Kk.1.3 and Mm.6.5 and CUL, MS Add. 3303, although given the fragmentary nature of this final MS I would perhaps omit it, especially given its visual similarity to BL Harley MS 4260, which is a *b*-group MS.

examples of this kind of manuscript are discussed in Chapter Three). The manuscripts appear well planned and usually have four stanzas per page in single columns.<sup>38</sup> Six of them are also followed by the emblem-poem *Pees Maketh Plente* (*NIMEV* 2742).<sup>39</sup>

Before we consider whether or not any part of any of the apparatuses is authorial, let us summarise the key points. Firstly, the Type A and A(ii) apparatuses are the only ones which appear in more than one manuscript. There are other variants of the Type A apparatus (with different numbers of chapters) which appear uniquely in single manuscripts, as well as some unique types of apparatus which radically differ from Type A. My discussion of the variants of Type A on one hand, and of the unique types which differ from Type A on the other, may be found in Chapter Three. For now, however, let us summarize the most common type of apparatus to be found in manuscripts of Lydgate's *Life*:

### Type A

- (i) This appears in eighteen manuscripts;
- (ii) All these manuscripts are in Group *c*, subset *d*, apart from Durham MS Cosin V. ii. 16;
- (iii) This type is predominantly of metropolitan origin;
- (iv) All eighteen manuscripts contain:<sup>40</sup>
  - The introductory rubric
  - A table of contents, listing eighty-seven chapters
  - Eighty-seven numbered chapters with Middle English titles
  - No book divisions
  - Latin glosses (which mainly consist of scriptural citation).

### Type A(ii)

- (i) This appears in four manuscripts;

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<sup>38</sup> On the emergence of this phenomenon and the 'standardisation' of layout in fifteenth-century poetic texts, see A.S.G. Edwards and Derek Pearsall, 'The Manuscripts of the Major English Poetic Texts' in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 256–78 (p.264). Only two manuscripts of the *Life* are in double columns: BL Arundel MS 168 and Antiquaries MS 134.

<sup>39</sup> Those that contain this verse or emblem are: BL Harley MS 629; Bodl. MS Rawl. Poet 140; Chicago MS 566; TCC MS R.3.22; Antiquaries MS 134 and NLW MS 21242C (this final witness is not noted in the *NIMEV*). On this final manuscript see National Library of Wales' online catalogue:

<http://isys.llgc.org.uk/isysquery/ir14710/1/doc>, accessed 27<sup>th</sup> December 2014.

<sup>40</sup> The introductory rubric and tables of contents do not appear in manuscripts where the opening folios have been lost – these instances are cited above.

- (ii) These four appear in Group *c*, subsets *q* and *h*;
- (iii) All four manuscripts contain:
  - The introductory rubric
  - A table of contents, listing eighty-six chapters
  - Eighty-six chapters with Middle English titles, with numbers beginning afresh at each book
  - Four book divisions
  - Latin glosses (which mainly consist of scriptural citation).

Type A and A(ii) apparatuses, in that they appear in a significant number of manuscripts, are plainly important for a study of the poem. In contrast, no other type of apparatus appears more than once. The Type A and A(ii) apparatuses contain an introductory rubric on which many critical assumptions about the poem rest. Are they, however, to be regarded in part or in total as being of authorial origin?

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### **The vestiges of an authorial scheme?**

As we have just seen in the complex picture of relationships above, the extant manuscripts of the *Life* reveal such a variety of layers of textual division, titling and glossing, such that no attempt to establish which parts might be authorial, rather than scribal, may be made without a preliminary detailed analysis. Keiser is the only scholar to have gone into the question of whether any part of any extra-textual scheme in these cases may be identified as coming from Lydgate himself.<sup>41</sup> Although Keiser's work has been very influential and Hardman's contribution on the poem's structure is founded on his conclusions, some small-scale nuancing will be needed before we can go any further here.<sup>42</sup>

To start with, it is clear that each scheme of textual division has problems and that the systems of chapter division and book division are at odds with each other in the majority of manuscripts. The six-book division is asymmetrical: Book I has 127 stanzas and 889 lines; Book II has 237 stanzas and 1669 lines;<sup>43</sup> Book III has 258 stanzas and 1806 lines; Book IV has 58

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<sup>41</sup> George Keiser, 'Serving the Needs of Readers: Textual Division in some Late-Medieval English Texts', in *New Science Out of Old Books: Studies in Manuscripts and Early Printed Books in Honour of A.I. Doyle*, ed. by Richard Beadle and A.J. Piper (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), 207–26 (p. 215).

<sup>42</sup> Hardman, 'Text in Transition', esp. p. 248.

<sup>43</sup> The fact that this number is indivisible by seven is due to the eight-line pseudo-ballade form of the *Magnificat* paraphrase (II, 981–1060). On the form of Lydgate's *Magnificat* by comparison with the macaronic version of the canticle in the *N-town Plays*, see Mary Wellesley, "Evyr to be songe and also to be seyn": Play and Interplay in the *N-Town "Visit to Elizabeth"*, *Pecia*, 16 (2015), 153–66.

stanzas and 406 lines; Book V has 100 stanzas and 700 lines; and Book VI has 66 stanzas and 467 lines. Such is the disparity in the lengths of each book that Books IV–VI are significantly shorter than Books II and III.

Equally imperfect is the chapter division in the eighty-seven chapter (Type A) scheme. The chapter divisions often appear to be arbitrary, breaking up episodes in the narrative in illogical ways and misreading its content. As Keiser notes, ‘chapter breaks sometimes disturb the context or even occur mid-sentence’.<sup>44</sup> Some chapters consist of no more than a few stanzas, as in Chapter LXI, which is only two stanzas long, whereas others are much more expansive, as in Chapter XX, which is forty stanzas long. At times the titles given to the chapters appear ill-considered. The title of Chapter LXIII simply repeats the opening line of the chapter, without providing a suitable paraphrase of the chapter’s content. Such is the lack of system that the variants of the eighty-seven chapter scheme which survive may represent the efforts of scribes who were trying to improve on it.<sup>45</sup>

Keiser suggests that the six-book division is authorial and that the four-book structure is a later variant of this scheme. He hypothesizes that the six-book structure is authorial for two reasons. Firstly, there appear to be traces of the six-book structure in manuscripts which do not divide the text into books. Keiser notes the presence of decorated initials and, in one case, a rubric, both of which styles he thinks indicate a book division at an earlier stage in the recension. His argument is contingent on the idea that decorated initials are indeed the vestige of an authorial scheme of division. Secondly, and with no little plausibility through his grasp of the wider context, Keiser suggests that Lydgate chose the six-book structure because it partially mimicked the structure of one of Lydgate’s sources: ‘one reason for supposing that the six-book structure was authorial is its correspondence to textual divisions in the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*’.<sup>46</sup> In what follows I deal with each of Keiser’s arguments in turn.

The first problem with his argument is that labelled six-book division (as opposed to a suggested division in the form of decorated initials or borders) only occurs in manuscripts of Group b; if the six-book division was authorial, we might expect to find it in all parts of the stemma. Secondly, Keiser points to what he calls the ‘vestiges’ of book division, ‘in the decoration of initials and margins’, in manuscripts which otherwise preserve only the system of chapter

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<sup>44</sup> Keiser, ‘*Ordinatio*’, p. 151.

<sup>45</sup> The same may be true of William Caxton’s edition of the poem (STC 17023), which lists all eighty-seven chapters at the start of the poem in a table of contents, but only prints eighty-two divisions within the body of the text.

<sup>46</sup> Keiser, ‘Serving the Needs of Readers’, p. 216.

division.<sup>47</sup> He draws attention to HEH MS HM 115, which has a note on f. 52r reading ‘Incipit liber tercius’ at the same time as it neither suggests nor marks any other book divisions. However, Keiser does not give further details of manuscripts which have the vestiges of such a system. Having examined all the manuscripts, I consider it possible that some of them have the vestiges of a partial book division in the shape of enlarged initials, but there is a high degree of variability in which book divisions are suggested in these manuscripts.<sup>48</sup> BL Harley MS 3862, for example, has but one enlarged initial, whereas other manuscripts suggest different combinations of four book divisions. There seems to be no consistency, nor do we find any specific subset of manuscripts in which enlarged initials or decorated borders for six-book divisions are common to all. Moreover, a number of manuscripts with the Type A apparatus have no suggestion of a book division of any kind.<sup>49</sup> So it is difficult to argue that a six-book division of the poem either exists or is suggested in the majority of the manuscripts. In fact, it is only in Group *b* manuscripts that a six-book division exists, while the ‘vestige’ of six-book division in other parts of the stemma is highly variable.

### **The significance of decorated initials**

The second problem with Keiser’s argument for the significance of decorated initials is that manuscripts have decorative demarcations for a variety of reasons. Scribes or stationers may have wished to highlight junctures in the poem for other reasons, not only because a book division occurred, or was hinted at, in their exemplar. One such manuscript is Hunterian MS 232. This manuscript has eighty-seven divisions marked by small, decorated initials, but no chapter titles and no book labeling or numbering. There are enlarged decorated initials at the start of what would be Books II, III and V. However, a similar kind of enlarged initial also occurs at f. 23r, at the moment in the poem in which the Annunciation is described. Here in the margin and in red ink, the scribe has written ‘Ave Maria gratia plena’. The scribe of this witness only used red ink for important material, like liturgical paraphrases such as the *Nunc*

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, p. 219.

<sup>48</sup> NLW MS 21242C (six enlarged initials), Chicago MS 566 (Books II, IV and VI are enlarged), Durham MS Cosin V.ii. 16 (Books II and III are enlarged), Antiquaries MS 134 (Books III, IV and VI are enlarged), BL Add. MS 19252 (Books I–VI are enlarged), BL Harley MS 629 (Books II, III, IV are enlarged and a slightly enlarged initial at Book VI, Book V is unmarked) Beinecke MS 281 (Books II–IV), Bodl. MS Rawlinson 140 (Books II–VI), BL Cotton MS Appendix VIII (Books III, IV and VI are enlarged), TCC MS R.3.22 (Books II, III, IV and VI are enlarged), BL Harley MS 1304 (Books II, III, IV and VI are enlarged), BL Add. MS 19452 (Books III–VI are enlarged), AVCAU Liber 1405 (Books III–VI are enlarged, manuscript begins imperfectly) and BL Harley MS 3862 (Book II only is enlarged). The divisions of each manuscript are described in Appendix 2.

<sup>49</sup> CUL MS Mm 6.5; Illinois MS 85; Hunterian MS 232 (although a later hand has added six book divisions); BL Harley MSS 1304, 4011; Longleat MS 15; Bodl. MS Ashmole 39.

*Dimitis* (VI, 141–168) and the *Magnificat* (II, 981–1060), or for Latin words or phrases incorporated into the text of the poem, such as the stanza from the *Legenda Aurea* (VI, 295–301). The red ink in tandem with the enlarged initial designates something with a special status, which may have a devotional rather than structural significance.

This pattern, of enlarged initials or borders being used at important junctures in the text, which do not correspond to book divisions, also appears in other manuscripts. In Antiquaries MS 134 there is a large decorated border on f. 11r at the place in the text where the angel appears to the shepherds (III, 512–53). Although Keiser discusses this manuscript and uses it as evidence to support his theory that the manuscripts often preserve the vestiges of a scheme of book division, he does not note that it has this decorated border, or that this border occurs at a place in the text other than the boundary between two books. Once again, as in the case of the Hunterian manuscript, we see that the decorator highlights a passage in the text where an archangel appears. Both angelic manifestations, to the Virgin in one case and to the shepherds in the other (respectively in Luke 1: 26 and 2: 8–15), might have invited liturgically appropriate readings from the manuscript for the feast of the Annunciation or for Christmas, and this may be why they were highlighted in the first place.

The same pattern is apparent in BL Cotton MS Appendix VIII. In this manuscript, some boundaries between books are marked, for here the prologue has a full-page flourishing border in red and blue ink on f. 2r, the beginning of Book II is marked by a similar red and blue flourished border on f. 18r, and the same is true for Book III (f. 49r), Book IV (f. 80r) and Book VI (f. 100r). Book V, however, is entirely unmarked in this manuscript, not even by an enlarged initial; we also see this absence of any kind of Book V marking in four other manuscripts.<sup>50</sup> Crucially, BL Cotton MS Appendix VIII also has exactly the same kinds of borders in places in the text which appear to have been highlighted because of their devotional importance. These passages appear to have been picked out for contemplative purposes. Like the Hunterian and Antiquaries' manuscripts, which give decorative borders to angelic appearances in the text, the designer of BL Cotton MS Appendix VIII affords a full page red and blue flourished border to Chapter XVI, the moment of the angel Gabriel's appearance to the Virgin on f. 24r. The same pattern continues in Book II, with either angelic appearances or passages of devotional importance being given special treatment. At the start of the *Magnificat* text, there is another border on f. 35v (at what would be Chapter XXII), while the end of the versified canticle gets the same treatment on f. 37r (Chapter XXIII). On f. 40r, when an angel

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<sup>50</sup> Chicago MS 566, TCC MS R. 3. 22, BL Harley MS 629 and BL Harley MS 1304.

appears to Joseph and warns him to stay with the Virgin despite the troubling fact of her pregnancy, the scribe has added another border at what might have been Chapter XXVI.

The same use of decoration to flag up an angelic appearance appears in another manuscript, BL Harley MS 1304, in which the scribe or stationer has left a space of around seventeen text lines apparently for an illustration of some kind at f. 49r. This decoration does not mark a book boundary but rather the annunciation to the shepherds (III, 463). All in all, therefore, Keiser has some problems with his argument that certain kinds of decoration or textual demarcation, in the form of enlarged initials or borders, indicate the vestiges of an authorial programme of book division in the exemplars. In short, it may also be said that enlarged initials or borders have other functions. The exact forms of division and decoration to be found in each of the manuscripts of the *Life* are described in Appendix 2.

A further difficulty with Keiser's argument that the six-book programme is authorial is his specific preference for the six-book scheme, as opposed to the four-book one. Having acknowledged the difficulty of establishing which structure came first, nonetheless he decides in favour of the six-book scheme.<sup>51</sup> As we have seen, he takes the six-book structure to be the more likely because it corresponds to particular sections of the Virgin's life in the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*: he notes that Book I corresponds to Chapter 3 of the *Meditationes*, and that Book II is a conflation of material in Chapter 2, Chapter 4, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 of the *Meditationes*.

<sup>52</sup> It remains unclear, however, why the partial and non-chronological correspondence to the *Meditationes* should make the six-book structure more likely. If Lydgate were using the *Meditationes* as a model, perhaps he would also have followed the chronology of that text as well.

A greater problem with Keiser's preference for the six-book division is that, in the four-book scheme, what corresponds to Books IV, V and VI of the six-book scheme (these books are much shorter than the others) is merged into one book which is roughly equal in length to each of Books II and III. This seems to be a more proportional division of the poem and, more importantly, it is backed up by the internal evidence of the text, as I outline below. Keiser prefers the six-book structure because he argues that 'each of the final three books is a self-contained unit, treating, respectively, the Circumcision, the Epiphany and the Purification'.<sup>53</sup> Book II, however, contains several narrative units in one book: the Parliament of Heaven, the Annunciation and the Apocryphal Trial of Mary and Joseph. There is no reason

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<sup>51</sup> Keiser, 'Serving the Needs of Readers', p. 219.

<sup>52</sup> Keiser, 'Serving the Needs of Readers', p. 216.

<sup>53</sup> Keiser, 'Ordinatio', p. 150.

why the enlarged Book IV, as it appears in the *q* and *h* subset of Group *c* manuscripts, could not therefore also contain several narrative units in one book.

Keiser's study of the manuscripts is rich with insight into the systems of textual organization and division, but he gives a relatively scant treatment to the text of the poem itself. An examination of the text suggests that we have a set of *internal* divisions within the text rather than a set of divisions which was possibly imposed by later scribes. These internal divisions indicate a four-book structure which is most likely to be by Lydgate himself. The closing passages of each book are illustrative. Book I ends with a direct reference to a book structure: 'Lady myne', the narrator addresses the Virgin, 'I put all in thy grace/ This first booke compylede for thy sake' (I, 873–74). The narrator continues with a formal leave-taking gesture:

So as I can, forthe I woll procede  
With all my hert, and hole entencion  
Prayeng that mayde, that is of godelyhede  
Croope and Rote, to helpe in this nede  
Whom I now leve in Naȝareth Soiourne  
And to my mater, I will agayne returne (I, 883–89)

The narrator here, begging that the Virgin 'helpe in this nede', offers up a prayer to her. Then, in a self-reflexive moment, he refers to this moment of transition, describing how he will 'leve [the Virgin] in Naȝareth' and take a break. At the end of Book I, the reader is given a glimpse at the scenario of the frame narrative and Lydgate calls attention to the task of writing the poem.

In much the same way, Book II ends with a prayer to the Virgin. After the famous Chaucer eulogy (which I discuss Chapter Four and in the Conclusion), Lydgate uses an almost identical phrase, 'And as I can, forth I woll procede' (II, 1656), begging the Virgin to support his enterprise:

And late thy stremes, of thy mercy shyne  
Into my breste, this thyrde<sup>54</sup> boke to fyne  
That thorough thy supporte, and benyng grace  
It to performe, I maye haue tyme and space. (II, 1666–69)

Here the narrator again invites the reader into the frame narrative and makes reference to 'this thyrde boke'. This, alongside the reference to the 'first booke' at the end of Book I, is the most telling indication that Lydgate conceived of a book structure to his poem. The third book begins

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<sup>54</sup> The *Critical Edition* reads 'thryde'.

in the frame narrative again, by recalling the image of the long winter's night from the prologue (again part of the frame narrative): 'Whanne al was hust and al was in silence,/ And in his course the longe sterry nyght' (III, 1–2). As in the poem's prologue, which looked to the birth of the Virgin, using light as a symbol for the promise of salvation, so too with the start of Book III, in which long night gives way to magnificent light: '...suddenly upon all the erthe/Shed his light for our saluacion' (III, 8–9).

When Book IV begins, we are back in the frame narrative, this time in Winter once more, 'Whan Ianus Byfrons in colde Ianuarie'. Once again it is night, and the narrator looks to the moon: 'lucyne' and at 'nyght as I sawe her shyne' (IV, I, 6, 7); at this point, he recalls the feast of the Circumcision and the narrative of that event proceeds from there. After this, there are no more references to the frame narrative. At each juncture here, whether it is in the Prologue or in the transitions between I and II, II and III and III and IV, the reader is invited into the narrator's space in which the motifs are usually similar. Lydgate also refers directly to book divisions ('first booke' and 'thyrde book').

By contrast, the supposed opening of Books V and VI do not mark a shift into the time and space of the frame narrative. The opening stanzas of the beginning of Book V are a prayer offered up by the narrator. However, this prayer is of the same character as the many personal prayers to be found in the narrative throughout the text. The narrator utters a prayer to God and begs: 'thorough thy helpe I may my style gye / Some what to sayne of thy Epiphanye' (V, 6–7), but there is no reference to the time of year, or the time of day of the frame narrative, as we see in the transitions between other books. The request for divine assistance in the perfection of his 'style' is not unusual in this poem, nor does it mark a particular point of transition; we see a similar request in the middle of Book II, for example, where the narrator begs for the Virgin's 'helpe, and mediacion/ Be to my style full direction' (II, 438–39). While the opening of Book V marks a shift in tone, it is not the major, self-reflexive transition that we see in the openings of Books I–IV. In keeping with this lack of discernible textual transition, Book V is sometimes completely unmarked, not even by an enlarged initial, in the manuscripts of Group c.<sup>55</sup>

The start of Book VI is even less clearly marked as a possible transition than Book V is. Its opening stanza consists of a prayer to the 'blisfull quene' (VI, 2), but appears no different in character to the prayers that have comprised the previous section of the poem. Two prayers addressed to Christ precede this stanza, the first beginning 'Nowe criste Ihesu, this day, this

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<sup>55</sup> BL Harley MS 1304, Chicago MS 566, BL Cotton MS Appendix VIII.

high feste' (V, 540), and the second 'Nowe crist Ihesu, that knowest euery herte' (V, 603). The stanza marks a change in that the prayer here is addressed to the Virgin, but it resembles the supposed opening of Book V – in having neither reference to the frame narrative nor any direct references to the matter of writing the poem (such as those which we see in Books I–IV). In this way, the internal evidence suggests that the four-book structure is the one which is implicit in the text. The prayers at the start of Books V and VI certainly mark shifts in tone, but they do not seem to be as deliberately demarcated as the transitions between each of the *Life*'s first four books.<sup>56</sup>

To sum up, it appears that there are sometimes vestiges of the six-book structure in the manuscripts, although it is tricky to distinguish programmes of decoration from indications of what may have been a system of division in an exemplar. However, these vestiges may indicate textual divisions in an original manuscript rather than an explicit *book* structure per se. To look at it another way, it is possible that there were six textual divisions in an early manuscript which only became book divisions in manuscripts of Group *b*. In this way, I propose that the authorial form of division for the *Life* was the four-book division. As this type of division is only to be found in manuscripts with the Type A(ii) apparatus, a subsequent question is whether the Type A(ii) apparatus may also be authorial. The answer lies in the chapter titles of the Type A and A(ii) apparatuses.

### **Are the chapter titles authorial?**

The system of eighty-seven and eighty-six chapters in the Type A and A(ii) apparatuses are highly unlikely to be of Lydgate himself, for several reasons. One is that the chapter titles often misread the content of the verse in a way that indicates that they were not written by Lydgate. There are frequent examples, where we see the poem reframed as a work of religious instruction, rather than as a personal meditation on the Virgin's story, as it often more plausibly is. The chapter titles highlight some parts of the poem and skirt over others, paraphrasing the content of the verse in inappropriate ways. Perhaps the most glaring reconfiguration of the text is the way the poem's narratorial interjections are often effaced. Joseph Lauritis noted that in the poem Lydgate 'resorts to every excuse to move away from the third person', and one of the most common shifts from the third person to the first are pauses whereby the narrator halts the

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<sup>56</sup> The *Life* is laid out in Beinecke MS 281 in a way which suggests a division of the text into four books. The openings of Books I–IV have decorated borders at ff. 6r, 21r, 52r and 85v.

narrative to reflect on the role of the poet, in self-conscious manner.<sup>57</sup> In Book IV, in a passage where he discusses Christ's name, perhaps in order to interpolate material that would be of interest to devotees of the popular cult of the Holy Name, Lydgate reflects on the idea of the sacral power vested in Jesus' name.<sup>58</sup> This occasions from him an anxious meditation on the impossibility of conveying, in words, the potency of Jesus' name:

One to reherse, the grete worthynesse  
Of this name, whiche may nat be discribede  
My wittes been so dull, with rudnesse  
And in the cheynes of ignoraunce gyvede  
That I alas, of conyng, am depryvede  
Thorugh lak of witte, on eny manere wyse  
To vndirfong, so passyng high emprise

For this is the name, who so can discerne  
Most excellent, and moste of dignyte  
The name of names, sacred from eterne  
As saythe Bernarde, who so lust to see  
Fygured firste, vnto Iosue  
Thorugh his knyghthode, whan that he shulde lede  
The peple of god, to sauе hem in her need (IV, 157–70)

Adjacent to this part of the text, the title in the Type A apparatus, which is given as Chapter LXIV, reads 'Howe the peple of god that duke Iosue had in gouernaunce were saved by the stedefaste by leve of the name of Ihesus' (p. 569; f. 70v). As is immediately apparent, the chapter title supplied here misrepresents the very passage which it claims to paraphrase.

Lydgate's point in this passage is that the name 'Joshua' is the Hebrew version of the name of Jesus, 'fygured first vnto Iosue'. With characteristic interest in typology, Lydgate links Jesus to the Old Testament Joshua, who, along with Moses, led the Jews 'the peple of god' out of Egypt, 'in [t]he[i]r need' (see Joshua 1: 1–9).<sup>59</sup> What saves the Jews is the Exodus and the leadership therein of the younger commander Joshua, who prefigures Christ as a leader, but it is not 'by leve of the name of Ihesus' that they are saved, as the Type A and A(ii) apparatuses suggest. The chapter title in this manuscript not only describes the verse differently from what the text says, but also brushes over the stanza before, the one which contains an anxious

<sup>57</sup> Joseph Lauritis, 'Second Thoughts on Style in Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*', in *Essays and Studies in Language and Literature*, ed. by Herbert H. Petit (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1964), pp. 12–23 (p. 17).

<sup>58</sup> On the cult of the Holy Name, see Eamonn Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1500* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, repr. 2005), pp. 113–15. See also Hardman, 'Text in Transition', pp. 264–65.

<sup>59</sup> I am indebted to Gary Dench of the Venerable English College, Rome for this reference.

humility *topos*. The chapter title misunderstands the typological reference and skirts around the narratorial interjection, reframing the poem as a work of religious instruction.

William Cotson, the scribe of Chetham's MS 6709, who copied his work from *STC* 17023, modified this chapter title, but without removing the confusing reference to Joshua; it appears that he too missed the complex typology. Nor did Cotson draw attention to the interjection of the narrative voice. His chapter title reads: 'An excellente comendacyon of the Name of Jhesu & howe the peple that duke Josue had In governaunce were savyd by this holy name of Jhesu' (f. 122r). This modification seems to be Cotson's own. In *STC* 17023, Caxton's 1484 print of the *Life*, this title reads, 'how the people of god that due Josue had in gouernaunce weren sauyd by the stedfast beleue of the name of Jhesus' (sig. I vi<sup>b</sup>).<sup>60</sup>

This pattern of silencing the narratorial voice in the chapter titles of the Type A and A(ii) schemes is discernable elsewhere. Lydgate describes the events of the Annunciation in Book II as follows:

And with that worde thorugh grace of goddes myght  
Al hole the sonne of the deyte  
That from hevene his blisset bemys bryght  
Shad on the erthe of our humanite (II, 365–68)

He notes that it was the 'worde' through which the Virgin conceives Christ and fills the earth with his salvific light. As in the Book IV, quoted above, when reflecting on the sacral power vested in Christ's name, the narrator pauses at this juncture to reflect on the complexity of conveying the mystery of the Incarnation, of conveying through words, the idea of the word made flesh. Giving appropriate expression to this moment presents a challenge. As in Book IV, quoted above, the narrator refers at this point to Bernard of Clairvaux, 'for whan that Bernarde...with thought vp lifte' (II, 372). In this case, he is referring specifically to the episode described in *De Laudibus Virginis Matris*, Homily III, in which the saint begs that a fiery globe come down from the altar at which he is praying and purge his 'lewd mouth' (the persistent motif of light appears again here).<sup>61</sup> St Bernard also struggles to find appropriate expression for this devotion to the Virgin and is moved to abase himself, to lament his 'pollutus labiis' [unclean lips] and the disjunction between the heavenly words that he hears on one hand and the inherently sinful utterances that issue from his own polluted lips on the other: 'heu quot vana quot false quot turpia per hoc ipsum spurcissimum os meum evomuisse me recolo in

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<sup>60</sup> Cotson's work is discussed in the Conclusion.

<sup>61</sup> On the images of light in the poem, see Georgiana Donavin, 'The Light of the Virgin Muse in John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*', in *Romance and Rhetoric: Essays in Honour of Dhira B. Mahoney*, ed. by Anita Obermeier and Georgiana Donavin (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 75–89.

quo nunc caelestia verba praesumo' (*Critical Edition*, pp. 679–80) [Alas, I cannot forget how many vain, lying dirty words I once vomited out of this foul mouth from which I now presume to speak about heavenly things].<sup>62</sup> At this point, the narrator anxiously reflects, as he does in Book IV, that he is not equipped for this poetic task ‘to speke or wryte in so devote matier’ (II, 443), especially given Bernard’s own anxiety:

But sithen this man so perfyght of levynge,  
This holy Bernarde, so goode and gracious  
So dredefull was this matier in wrytyng  
That was of lyfe, so Inly vertuouse,  
How dar I thanne be so presumpcouse-  
I wofull wrecche in any manere wyse  
To take on me this perfyte high emprise? (II, 407–13)

As is characteristic of the poem as a whole, the syntax of Lydgate’s stanza tumbles out from the opening line. I have modified the punctuation of the *Critical Edition*, so that the stanza with its expansive syntax become a single sentence. It is made up of a long sequence of sub-clauses, creating an anguished *amplificatio*. The saint is described as ‘so perfyght’, and ‘so goode’ and ‘so dredefull’ and ‘so Inly vertuouse’. The humility *topos*, seen in Book IV quoted above, is in use here as well. It is another instance of what Robert Meyer-Lee has called Lydgate’s ‘obsessive deployment’ of the motif,<sup>63</sup> which Pearsall calls an ‘addiction’<sup>64</sup>. Here, Lydgate reflects on the failings of language as a medium to express devotion adequately. His use of the device is in the biblical tradition of the *topos* (see I Samuel 24:15; Wisdom 9:5), rather than the more common forms of strategic self-abnegation which we see in contemporary verse of the period.<sup>65</sup> The narrator describes his ‘lippys poluted’ (II, 414), his ‘hert vnclene’ (II, 415) and his thoughts ‘with all vice3 boyled’ (II, 416). He fears that to ‘wryte of any perfytenesse’ (II, 418) would be ‘presompcion’ (II, 419) and would ‘encurre the endygnacion/Of god above’ (II, 420–21). Bemoaning his ‘style’ (II, 426) the narrator offers up a prayer: ‘with humble hert, thus to hym I pray’ (II, 428), to strengthen him in his task. ‘O lorde, whose mercy’ (II, 429) he begins a new

<sup>62</sup> *Magnificat: Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary by Bernard of Clairvaux and Amadeus of Lausanne*, ed. and trans. by Marie-Bernard Saïd and Grace Perigo (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1979), p. 33.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 50.

<sup>64</sup> Derek Pearsall, ‘Chaucer and Lydgate’, *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. by Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 39–53 (p. 40).

<sup>65</sup> For a history of the *topos* and an explanation of the biblical precedents, see Ernst R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953, repr. 1979), pp. 83–85. For an account of the more conventional fifteenth-century English uses, see David Lawton, ‘Dullness and the Fifteenth Century’, *English Literary History*, 54 (1987), 761–99 (esp. p. 762).

stanza, begging that God ‘purge his lyppeȝ fro all pollucion’ (II, 434) and bestow on his ‘style’ some divine ‘direction’ (II, 439). He goes on:

For of my selfe, for to vndirtake  
To speke or wryte, in so devote matier  
Lytyll wondir, though I tremble and quake  
And chaunge bothe countenans and chere  
Sythen this mayde, of vertu tresorere  
Perturbed was, in loke and in visage  
Of Gabryell to hir the mesage

And full demurely, styl gan abyde  
And in hert, castyng vp and downe (II, 442–50)

In writing this, the narrator draws a parallel between the task of the poet and the Virgin herself at the moment of the Annunciation.<sup>66</sup> Hardman calls this a ‘daring’ parallel.<sup>67</sup>

In the Type A and A(ii) chapter scheme, however, the subtlety of what is at work in this part of the poem is lost. Perhaps the daring comparison between the poet and the Virgin was thought indecorous or inappropriate. At the start of the prayer offered up by the narrator, there is a new chapter, with the title ‘A recapitulacion of the words of Gabriel to our lady’ (p. 341; f. 23v). This misrepresents the content of the poem, effacing the intervention of the narratorial voice. Meyer-Lee says of this moment in the poem that ‘Bernard serves as the authorizing middle term in the equation that identifies the possibility of Mary’s divine conception with the possibility of Lydgate’s divine inspiration’.<sup>68</sup> This is a complex, self-reflexive moment, but the Type A and A(ii) apparatuses have re-framed it.

This pattern of local readings or misreadings, which indicate a non-authorial origin for the Type A and A(ii) apparatuses, is visible elsewhere. At the end of the episode of the Epiphany, Lydgate writes a prayer in which he expounds on the allegorical significance of the Magi’s gifts. He begs that God,

Graunt vs this day of thy magnyfycence  
The gold of loue, the frank of Innocence  
And the chast myrre of clene entencioun

<sup>66</sup> This daring parallel appears elsewhere in the poem. The opening lines of the text describe a ‘long wynter’s nyght’ (I, 2), whereupon it occurs again to describe the Nativity of the Virgin: ‘Hir light daweth, to voyde all offence/ Of wyntir nyghtes full long and tedious’ (II, 145–46) and the image is deployed again several times as a image which portends the Nativity of Christ as well. The shepherds, ‘Kepten her wacche the longe wynters nyght’ (III, 461). Later, the star which portends the birth of Christ is described as drawing its course in the long winter’s night (V. 87). Lydgate in this way aligns the birth of the poem with the birth of Christ and the Virgin.

<sup>67</sup> Hardman, ‘Text in Transition’, p. 250.

<sup>68</sup> Robert Meyer-Lee, ‘The Emergence of the Literary in John Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*’, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 109 (2010), 322–48 (p. 328).

So to presente in our oblation (V, 606–09)

Lydgate asks that God make love, innocence and chastity (metaphorically realized as the three gifts of the Magi) manifest in the act of oblation. He begs for these virtues to be bestowed in the act of offertory. This is a complicated image, whereby virtues granted by God are imagined as offerings to God, but are asked for in the act of the offertory.

Lydgate then begs the Virgin, ‘o sterre of holynesse’ (V, 621) that she ‘Conueye oure offering to þat sterri see’ (V, 622). The sense of distance here, as well as the need to convey the offering to its designated recipient, occasions the narrator to reflect on the distance between him and heaven. He describes the anguished pain of being unable to experience the celestial plane: ‘wher euer is blisse and Ioye hath non ende’ (V, 630). The Virgin is a lode star, ‘the weye of lyffe, the ledder of holynesse/ towarde that courte [i.e heaven]’ (V, 627). She is a ladder from this earthly life, which he calls a ‘sorrowfull vale’ (V, 624). The narrator reflects that ‘in this lyfe we lake/ of sothefast yoye’ (V, 631–32). The sense of distance is compounded by the fact that the narrator cannot actually see the likeness of the Virgin, except in pictures: ‘Only by likeness to loke on thyne ymage/ And on thy son with his fayre visage’ (V, 636–37). The narrator goes on, writing that this is a torment and not a comfort to the anguished Christian soul:

But, o, alas, ther is but a lykenesse  
Of portraiture that dothe vs grete offence,  
For we may not haue full the blissednesse  
Of thy vysage ne of thy presence;  
And so to vs grete harme dothe aparence,  
Whan that we sene of our desyre we fayle,  
We may well pleyne but it may not avayle. (V, 638–44).

Lydgate’s concern here is that images of Christ or the Virgin do not ‘haue full the blissednesse’, that visual images are a paltry vehicle to convey the majesty of God’s works.<sup>69</sup> In the Type A and A(ii) apparatuses, this entire section, with its complex meditations on the nature of experience, faith and devotional practice, is simply labelled, ‘Howe we shulde pray to god to do this offryng gostely’ (p. 630; f. 82v). This chapter title simplifies the content of the poem substantially. It suggests that this part of the text is an unchallenging injunction to perform the offertory, when in fact it is a more sophisticated exploration of which aspects of devotional practice are most spiritually satisfying. Not every scribe concurred with this reading of the text,

<sup>69</sup> The use of images in devotional practice was a target for Lollard thinkers. A Wycliffite text preserved in BL MS Add. 24202, ff. 26r–28v counseled that, when ‘erryng in ymagis’, there was a danger of ‘forgetyng þe meruelouse and precious werkis þat han been done by þee [God].

however. The scribe of BL MS Harley 4260 gave this part of the text a different chapter title, calling it ‘wordis of the compilour c<sup>a</sup> viii’ (f. 96v). The designer of that manuscript seems to have been less keen to frame the poem as a work of instruction, and more content to draw attention to the narrative voice and its anguished interventions.

The effect of these readings, or rather misreadings, in the Type A and A(ii) apparatuses is that the narrative voice is often silenced and the complexity of Lydgate’s poem is lost. The text is described to readers in the extra-textual space as a very different kind of work. Whilst the poem itself is full of complex narratorial interjections and reflective asides, its apparatus frames it as a simpler work, with a more linear narrative which is based on scripture. Most importantly, however, these frames reveal how unlikely it is that the chapter titles are the work of Lydgate himself.

There are further indications that the chapter titles were not the work of Lydgate. The misreading is apparent in many places, as in Chapter LXVII. The heading reads, ‘How prophete<sup>3</sup> and martirs suffred deth for the name of Ihesus’ (p. 575; f. 71v). Yet the three stanzas of text in this chapter describe something different, for here Lydgate is describing the mystical power of Christ’s name. The name of Jesus is ‘magnyfied’ by ‘aposteles’ (IV, 248), with the power to make ‘matris to be bolde/ And mighty like sterne champyons’ (IV, 250–51); it can invest these martyrs with a ‘stable herte to suffer [t]he[i]r passions’ (IV, 252). The name of Christ is ‘full repast’ in ‘abstynence’ (IV, 261) and ‘resistence/Ayene synne’ (IV, 264–65). Although the text of the chapter mentions ‘martirs’, it describes how they are fortified by the name of Christ and how this name provides them with ‘pacience’ in ‘torment’ (IV, 254), nor does it anywhere describe how the martyrs suffer death for the name of Jesus as the chapter heading suggests.

Sometimes the misreading is as simple as the titles confusing the subject of a particular section of the text. In Book III of the poem, for example, Lydgate makes frequent use of typological material, with a clear focus on the idea of prophetic or typological fulfilment. At times, this material is so carefully stitched into the narrative that it seems that the author of the chapter titles became confused, so that he mixed up Isaac’s prophecy about Jacob with Joseph’s about Christ. In the middle of Book III, at the end of a long sequence of biblical prophecies, there is a chapter title, by line 715, which reads ‘Howe Ioseph prophiced the birthe of criste betouchyng of the clothe<sup>3</sup> of his sonne Iacob’ (p. 480). In fact this section of the verse refers ‘To Isaak, whan he was ful in age’ (III, 709), who is only obliquely figured as a typological precursor to Joseph (just as Joshua is figured as the precursor to Jesus in Book IV, noted above), when he ‘Unto Iacob of hertely Ioye sayde’ (III, 713).

Several manuscripts with the Type A apparatus contain a chapter title which restores the poem's focus on Isaac: Antiquaries MS 134, AVCAU Liber 1405, Bodl. MS Bodley 596, Bodl. MS Hatton 73,<sup>70</sup> Bodl. MS Ashmole 39,<sup>71</sup> BL Harley MS 3862, C.U.L MS Mm 6.5, Beinecke MS 281 and TCC MS R. 3.22. All these manuscripts change 'Joseph' to 'Isaac' here. BL Harley MS 629 has 'Isaak' in the table of contents and 'Joseph' in the text. The idiosyncratic Latin glossator of Bodl. MS Bodley 75 simply writes 'Ecce ardour filius'. Manuscripts copied from print emend this title, as in Chetham's MS 6709 and Radcliffe MS 16. (In Caxton's edition, the chapter title reads 'How Isaac prophecyed', sig. g. ii<sup>b</sup>; in Redman it reads, 'Howe Isaac prophecie', sig. R.ii<sup>b</sup>). The other Type A manuscripts did not, however. For example, in Chicago MS 566 the title reads 'How joseph prohecie the birth of crist by touchynge of the clothes of his sonne jacob'; equally, Illinois MS 85 reads, 'How Joseph prophecie the birth of criste'. The example of the Joseph-Isaac confusion is a small-scale change, one which would be thin evidence were it not part of a larger pattern.

To sum up, the often strange placement of the chapter divisions in the Type A and A(ii) chapter scheme on one hand, and the inaccurate paraphrasing titles on the other, are sufficient to indicate that the system of chapter division is unlikely to be of Lydgate himself. It is possible that the chapter *divisions* were suggested in an early manuscript, perhaps in the form of enlarged initials, but the titles and numbers were added later by a scribe. In the following chapter, I discuss two manuscripts which have spaces for initials that correspond to the openings of chapters in the Type A apparatus, but which are not explicitly titled and numbered as chapters.

### **Marginal glosses**

If the chapter titles are not authorial, what of the Latin glosses of the Type A and A(ii) schemes? The evidence here is less clear-cut. These Latin glosses are learned – focusing, in particular, on the text's use of scriptural material. Although this means that certain parts of the poem are extensively glossed, it also means that certain parts of the poem receive scant treatment, barely supplying any apparatus for Lydgate's reference to patristic and extra-scriptural sources. This might indicate that the glosses are non-authorial. Given the way Lydgate so extensively documents his source material, is it not likely that he too would want to provide a gloss which noted all of these sources?

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<sup>70</sup> Title does not appear in the text but in the table of contents on f. 117v.

<sup>71</sup> Title does not appear in the text but in the table of contents on f. 2r.

Some glossing is more detailed than others. The simplest kind is that which merely picks out the name of an *auctor* cited in the text. For example, in the early parts of the poem, the glosses point to patristic writers or parts of the Bible. Adjacent to ‘Off whome spake some tyme wyse Salamon/In sapience wo so lust to seke’ (I, 323–24), the name ‘Salamon’ appears in the margin (p. 270; f. 9v). Although the poem states that the reference here is to Wisdom 7: 7–30 (‘In sapience’), the glossator merely draws attention to the source with the name, Solomon.<sup>72</sup> Two stanzas later, a marginal gloss ‘Anselm’ flags up a similar kind of reference (p. 271; f. 9v), adjacent to the line ‘And of this mayde, as saint Ancelme seyth’ (I, 337). Again, the gloss does not specify which part of Anselm’s works the allusion is from.

In other parts of the poem, however, the glossing is more extensive. The most common form of glossing is that which seeks to supply additional information on a particular scriptural reference. In these instances, often a quotation from the scriptural text is supplied. This is, obviously, more detailed than the single word annotations which name particular *auctores* and it illustrates the glossator’s interest in typological and prophetic material. One such example is in Book V, in a passage in which Lydgate is describing the Magi’s journey home from Bethlehem. The source for this passage is the *Legenda Aurea* (Cap. X: De Innocentibus). The *Legenda* describes how King Herod, passing the city of Tharsis, decides to order all the ships to be burned so that the Magi might have no means of returning home:

Qui cum per Tarsum iter faceret, intellexit, quod magos naves Tarsensium transvexissent et ideo omnes naves Tarsi comburi fecit, secundum quod praedictum fuerat: in spiritu vehementi conteres naves Tarsis.<sup>73</sup>

[When he travelled through Tarsis, it occurred to him that the Magi had taken passage in ships from that city. He therefore had all their ships destroyed by fire, fulfilling the prediction: “With a vehement wind thou shalt break in pieces the ships of Tharsis”.]<sup>74</sup>

Lydgate describes how:

... some bokeȝ sayne,  
That first of all thay wente to the see,  
And retournede to her kyngdome agayne.

<sup>72</sup> The line, ‘Est enim haec speciosior sole, et super omnem dispositionem stellarum: luci comparata, invenitur prior [For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of the stars: being compared with light, she is found before it.] (Wisdom 7:29)’, appears to be especially in Lydgate’s mind as he describes how the light of the Virgin makes the ‘sonne’ appear to be a ‘litil sterre’ (I, 318).

<sup>73</sup> *Jacobi a Voragine Legenda Aura Vulgo Historia Lombardica Dicta*, ed. by Johan Graesse (Dresdæ, Lipsiæ: Librariae Arnoldinanae, 1846), p. 62.

<sup>74</sup> Slightly adapted from Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. by William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 57.

Thay shippede hem at Tharce the Cyte,  
For whiche heroude, of cursede cruelte.  
In Tharce made all the shippeȝ brenne,  
Wher-of wrytheth Dauid, the sauter if ye kenne (V, 449–55).

He only notes his direct source obliquely here, with ‘as some bokeȝ sayne’. And there is almost a challenge in the line, ‘Wher-of wrytheth Dauid, the sauter if ye kenne’. The challenge is taken up in the gloss, which quotes from Psalm 47:8 in the marginal space: ‘in spiritu vehementi conterens naves Tarsis’ [with a vehement wind thou shalt break in pieces the ships of Tharsis] (p. 619; f.80v). It is unclear whether, if Lydgate was responsible for the Latin gloss, he would have flagged up the reference to the *Legenda*. The privileging of scriptural sources in the gloss is clear, however.

At times the glossing is even more detailed than these quotations. The glossator’s most extensive annotations come in Book III. This book, more than any other, contains wide-spread allusion to Old Testament prophecy, and the glossator was keen to flesh out the scriptural references. As George Keiser notes, the manuscripts of the *Life* ‘strongly encourage readers to concentrate on the theme of prophetic fulfillment’.<sup>75</sup> Lydgate interrupts the narrative of the Nativity for an extended explication of how Christ’s birth comes in fulfilment of scriptural prophecy. It is a lengthy passage of *digressio* (III, c. ll. 554–1582) of approximately 1,000 lines (albeit with some changes of tack and alterations of scene), beginning with a reference to the Psalms, ‘David sayde in his wrytyng’ (III, 577), after which Lydgate tells us:

“O blisfull lorde, shewe to vs thy face,  
And we in sothe, only thrugh thy grace,  
Shall saved be from all myscheve and drede”  
And lorde also, now in our grete nede,

Sende vnto vs thy comfortable light,  
Vs to enlumyne liggyng in derkenesse. (III, 578–82)<sup>76</sup>

The glossator has added ‘Domine ostende faciem tuam et salui erimus’ [Lord, show thy face and we shall be saved] (p. 470; f.52v), alerting us to the reference to Psalm 79, which contains the refrain ‘ostende faciem tuam’ [show us thy face] three times.<sup>77</sup> Lydgate progresses to Isaiah,

<sup>75</sup> George Keiser, ‘John Lydgate’s Magnificat: Magnifying Scribal Difficulties’ in *Tributes to Kathleen L. Scott : English Medieval Manuscripts: Readers, Makers and Illuminators*, ed. by Marlene Villalobos Hennessy (London: Harvey Miller, 2009), pp. 115–23 (p. 117).

<sup>76</sup> In the *Critical Edition*, these lines are edited so that lines 580–82 are included within the speech marks. My version above stays closer to the Psalm source.

<sup>77</sup> Psalms 79: 4 reads, ‘Deus converte nos, et ostende faciem tuam, et salvi erimus’ [Convert us, O God and show us thy face and we shall be saved]; verse 8 reads, ‘Deus virtutum converte nos et ostende faciem tuam et salvi erimus’ [O God of hosts, convert us and show thy face and we shall be saved’; while

‘eke ysaye, with all his Inwarde sight’ (III, 584), who begged ‘Vnto the doughtir dwelling in Syon/Sende doovne thy lambe fulfilled with mekenesse’ (III, 589–99). The gloss marks this with ‘Ysaie’ (p. 470; f. 52v).<sup>78</sup> This prefigures a coming description of how the prophet Zachariah bid ‘the doughtir of Syon to be light’, because ‘To Iherusalem’ a ‘myghty kyng’ will come (III, 615, 617). This corresponds to Zachariah 9:9.<sup>79</sup> The glossator locates the passage, writing ‘3akarie’ (p. 473; f. 51r) in the margin, but then goes on to supply a quotation from the next biblical verse, writing ‘potestas ejus a mari usque ad mare’ [his power shall be from sea to sea] (Zachariah, 9: 10) in the margin next to Lydgate’s lines which describe the coming of Christ as a power; that is, next to ‘From see to see, and all the erthe sprede’ (III, 622). At times the gloss is not entirely precise. Responding to Lydgate’s versification of Baruk’s prophecy of the joy which will come from the East (Baruch 4:36), ‘And Baruk bad to Iherusalem/To by-holde, in all his beste entente’ (III, 624–25), the glossator has written ‘Baruk vi’, rather than ‘Baruk iv’, although the scriptural quotation which follows is correct: ‘Circumspice, Jerusalem, ad orientem’ [Look about thee, O Jerusalem towards the East] (p. 473, f. 51r). In the following section, the precision of the glossator’s references is apparent again. Lydgate refers to the Book of Isaiah’s reference to dew falling from heaven. ‘Spake ysaye, and sayde in wordes playne:/ “The high hevynes dothe your grace adewe.”’ The glossator has written, ‘Rorate, caeli, desuper, et nubes pluant justum Isaie xlv’ [Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above and let the clouds rain the just Isaiah 45], which is a quotation from, and reference to, Isaiah 45:8.

A proportion of the Latin glossing weds the text of the poem to liturgical material. In Book III, in the description of the appearance to the shepherds, Lydgate interpolates a paraphrase of the liturgical hymn, *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, taken from Luke 2:14. The opening words of the Latin hymn are actually embedded into the verse:

... the gospel saythe also,  
Our althir myrthe and yoye to encrece;  
Gloria in excelsis deo.  
And in erthe this day a perfyte pees  
To man was shewed, withoutyn eny lees.

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verse 20 reads, ‘Domine Deus virtutum, converte nos, et ostende faciem tuam, et salvi erimus’ [O Lord God of hosts, convert us and show thy face and we shall be saved].

<sup>78</sup> Lydgate’s use of this verse of Isaiah is carefully chosen. The ‘doughtir dwelling in Syon’ is designed to align with his earlier description of the Virgin as the ‘humble doughter of Iuda and Syon’ (II, 319), the ‘mayde, of Iuda and Syon/ The doughtir chosyn of Ierusalem’ (II, 296–97). These linguistic echoes emphasize the sense of prophetic fulfillment.

<sup>79</sup> Exulta satis, filia Sion; jubila, filia Jerusalem: ecce rex tuus veniet tibi Justus. [Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king will come to thee, the just.]

And as saythe poule, goddys benygnynete  
This day aperyd in his humanyte. (III, 547–53)

The gloss adds the next line of the hymn, next to the Latin words in the stanza, ‘et in terra pax hominibus bone voluntatis’ [and on earth peace, goodwill to all men] (p. 468; f. 50r). Then it quotes the scriptural text of ‘poule’ to which Lydgate later refers: ‘Aparuit benignitas humanitas saluatoris nostri dei’ [the goodness and kindness of God our saviour appeared] (Saint Paul’s Letter to Titus, 3:4). The *Gloria* was part of the Ordinary of the Mass, the rite used daily in church services. Here, the gloss supplies the relevant sections of scriptural text, despite the fact that the poem only provides basic clues about which parts of scripture Lydgate is referring to.

These instances suggest that the gloss was developed either by someone with an intimate knowledge of the poem, or someone with a high degree of scriptural learning. In some cases, however, the gloss appears, like the Middle English chapter titles, to misread the text and to supply information which incorrectly glosses the poem’s content. In Book VI, after the description of the doves offered in the temple at the Purification of the Virgin, Lydgate diverges from the narrative, meditating on the significance of the turtle-dove. Possibly influenced by the bestiary tradition, he describes the dove’s avoidance of life-threatening danger: when it ‘espyeth a-myddes the Ryvere/The haukes shadowe... it flieth away’ (VI, 261–62). So too, reflects Lydgate, must the individual soul fly from sin and ‘his fleshe daunte with penaunce’ (VI, 259). Next to this the gloss reads, ‘Oculi ejus sicut columbae super rivulos aquarum’ [His eyes as doves upon brooks of waters] (Song of Songs, 5:12). Although this quotation does refer to doves and to water, it does not seem to be the part of the scriptural text which Lydgate is referring to.<sup>80</sup>

### Tautological information in the apparatus

In places the Latin gloss seems to repeat the information of the Middle English chapter titles, so that the two linguistic strands of the apparatus appear to be at odds with each other. For example, at the start of Book II, the gloss reads, ‘Misericordia iusticia pax veritas’ [Mercy, justice, peace, truth] (p. 313; f. 18r), next to the following lines:

That whan that mercy wolde haue bene ameen  
Rightwisnes gan it, anoon denye  
And whan that pees, for recover gan to crye  
Can trrowth forthe, with a sterne face (II, 38–41)

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<sup>80</sup> Lydgate’s meditation of the dove seems to be his own, as he diverges from the *Legenda Aurea* here.

This part of the poem describes the allegory of the debate between the Four Daughters of God (also known as the Parliament of Heaven), drawn from Psalm 84:11, ‘Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi; justicia et pax osculatae sunt’ [Mercy and truth have met each other; justice and peace have kissed].<sup>81</sup> The Middle English chapter title reads, ‘Howe mercy Pees Rightwisnesse and Trouthe disputed for the Redempcion of mankynde’ (p. 310; f. 17v). Each of the daughters are mentioned in this passage several times, so it is not clear why the glossator chose to make these marginal annotations in this particular place in the passage. His gloss serves to flag up the allegory in the text, allowing readers quickly to locate the episode of the Parliament of Heaven. This annotation would probably only be necessary if the chapter title was not also present in the manuscript. For this reason it is possible that the Latin gloss predates the Middle English chapter titles in the recension.

We see a similar kind of tautology in Chapter V, which is entitled ‘Howe oure lady prayed to god for vii petycions’ (p. 278; f.11r). What follows in the margin is a series of Latin notes: ‘prima peticio...tercia peticio’. The Latin gloss does not really add anything to the text here which was not already specified in the chapter title. Perhaps, therefore, the system of Middle English chapter titles was added to an existing Latin gloss to create the apparatus which I have termed Type A.

At times the Latin gloss repeats the summaries of the Middle English chapter titles. This either suggests that the Type A apparatus was developed with different kinds of readers in mind, or that one programme was grafted on another, resulting in some macaronic repetition of information. The Latin gloss focuses on scriptural references with a particular emphasis on the idea of prophetic fulfilment. The impression which they give of their author is that he was a person familiar with the scriptural text, but without the breadth of education necessary to gloss the full range of Lydgate’s citations.

It is a matter of conjecture, but I hypothesise that there were three stages to the creation of the Type A apparatus. The four-book division would have been an authorial scheme. Since it is my argument in Chapter One that Lydgate’s *Life* was unfinished, it would follow that it was supplied with a set of Latin glosses by a person with a good degree of scriptural learning, but not Lydgate himself, unless he was disposed to interrupt poetic composition from time to time with periods of glossing what he had just written. It seems unlikely to me that the Latin

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<sup>81</sup> On this allegory, which appears in the *N-town Cycle* and *Piers Plowman* see Hope Traver, *The Four Daughters of God: A Study of the Versions of this Allegory* (Pennsylvania: Bryn Mawr, 1907).

gloss is authorial, given that it mainly points out biblical material and does not encompass the range of Lydgate's references to patristic and other source material. I suggest that there was then a third stage in the recension when the Middle English chapter titles were added, by a less careful reader. Given that so many of the manuscripts with the Type A apparatus originate in London, it is possible that the system of chapter divisions was developed in this context, but the evidence is scant and circumstantial.

At this juncture, it is thought-provoking to revisit an idea I touched on briefly in Chapter One – that the introductory rubric of the Type A apparatus is strikingly similar to an introductory rubric in Manchester Rylands Library MS Eng. 1 – a copy of Lydgate's *Troy Book*. There are several significant similarities between the Rylands manuscript and the 'metropolitan group' manuscripts of the *Life*. The manuscript has a presentation miniature depicting Henry V (who may, of course, have been the patron of the *Life*) and also bears the arms of the Carent family, whose arms also appear in Beinecke MS 281 (a manuscript of the *Life*). Kathleen Scott has suggested that the frontispiece of BL Harley MS 629, one of the metropolitan group manuscripts of the *Life*, may be by the Master of Rylands MS Eng. 1.<sup>82</sup> The text of the *Troy Book* is followed on f. 172v by NIMEV 2742, *Pees Maketh Plente*. A number of the metropolitan group manuscripts of the *Life* are also followed by NIMEV 2742, *Pees Maketh Plente*.<sup>83</sup> It is possible, therefore, that these *Life* manuscripts were produced in the same milieu and the rubric was of a semi-standard form used by scribes in a particular workshop or network of workshops. Further investigation into the apparatuses of Middle English manuscripts produced by professional workshops in London in this period is required, but that was beyond the scope of this thesis.

## Conclusion

The manuscripts of the *Life* have various complex and interrelated layers of textual division, titling and glossing. Not one manuscript preserves an authorial apparatus. The four-book division seems likely to be authorial, however, even if this is no more than a hazily sketched design. Four-book division only occurs in manuscripts with an eighty-six chapter scheme, which is itself a variant of the eighty-seven chapter scheme, which I have argued is not authorial. The four-book division was probably, therefore, never fully developed (that is,

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<sup>82</sup> Kathleen Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390–1490: A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, 2 vols (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), II, p. 262.

<sup>83</sup> BL Harley MS 629, f. 97v; Bodl. MS Rawl. Poet 140, f. 108v; Chicago MS 566, f. 107v; TCC MS R.3.22, f.110r; Antiquaries MS 134, f. 30r and NLW MS 21242C, f. 102r (this final witness is not noted in the NIMEV).

clearly numbered and labelled) as a set of book divisions in the unfinished poem before the text of Lydgate's *Life* began to be transmitted.

The most common type of textual apparatus, the Type A scheme which is discussed above, works to frame the poem in a particular way. The Middle English chapter titles brush over some aspects of the poem, frequently silencing the narratorial voice and privileging aspects of the poem which have a didactic or educative function. The work is in this way transformed into a text of pious instruction, rather than being transmitted as a work in which the narrative voice is allowed to meditate on the task of composing a work in praise of the Virgin. What we may thus be seeing in the Type A apparatus is an intermediary hand attempting to make a complicated and unfinished poem legible and navigable.

The larger issue raised by this chapter is that of the intervention of non-authorial figures into the text of the *Life*. In the first chapter I examined the way an introductory rubric which appears in several of the poem's manuscripts has shaped much of the critical discourse on the text. In this chapter I have suggested that that rubric is a part of an apparatus (the Type A and A(ii) apparatus) which is non-authorial in origin and I have sought to show the way this apparatus – the most common one – frames the text, reconfiguring it in places. In both chapters I have sought to demonstrate the influence of non-authorial figures on the text's reception. This recalls Michael Johnson's observation that scribes were 'co-participants, along with authors, in the creation of meaning'.<sup>84</sup> In the chapters which follow this one, the work of non-authorial figures will become central to my discussion. In the next chapter, I discuss the variants of the Type A scheme and what these have to tell us about early readers of the poem.

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<sup>84</sup> Michael Johnson, 'Constantinian Christianity in the London Manuscript: The Codicological and Linguistic Evidence of Thornton's Intentions', in *Robert Thornton and His Books* (York: York Medieval Press, 2014), pp. 177–204 (p. 177).

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## CHAPTER THREE: UNIQUE FORMS OF TEXTUAL APPARATUS

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In the previous chapters I argued that the manuscripts of the *Life* contain a series of scribal interventions into an unfinished text. None of the existing forms of textual apparatus are likely to be by Lydgate himself. In this chapter I explore idiosyncratic forms of textual apparatus, which appear uniquely in particular manuscripts, and I examine the way these types of apparatus frame the text. Whereas the Type A apparatus appears in multiple manuscripts, each of the types of apparatus discussed here appear in single manuscripts. Thus, the discussion in this chapter tapers and I examine local readings of the text in individual codices.

The first part of this chapter deals with high-status, well-planned manuscripts, which may have originated in professional workshops. In the second part, I examine manuscripts that are more likely to have been made for personal use or that had a limited circulation amongst a learned milieu. In *The Medieval Book*, Barbara Shailor juxtaposes the two copies of the *Life* held in the Beinecke Library (Beinecke MSS 281 and 660). She notes that the two ‘manuscript copies of this work tell us something about Lydgate’s audience’ and show that the *Life* ‘appealed to a wide and varied readership, from a wealthy gentry family to an anonymous reader for whom an unadorned text may have been all that was financially feasible’.<sup>1</sup> It is this kind of juxtaposition that drives this chapter. The comparison of manuscripts has as much to tell us as the study of individual manuscripts in isolation. Each of the unique presentations of the *Life* explored here demonstrates the multivalent nature of this text. In different locations, for different audiences and at different times, the poem meant something new and was framed in divergent ways. Phillipa Hardman’s question, ‘what kind of work is it?’ is once again relevant, and this chapter seeks to show that it was specific, or local, conditions which determined what kind of work the *Life* was.<sup>2</sup>

I begin by exploring divergences from the Type A apparatus (which has eighty-seven chapters, no book divisions, and a programme of Latin glossing) amongst well-planned, high-

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Shailor, *The Medieval Book* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Phillipa Hardman, ‘Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*: A Text in Transition’, *Medium Aevum*, 65 (1996), 248–68 (p. 248).

status manuscripts. In particular, I look at a thirty-six chapter scheme, which appears in HEH MS HM 115. I also look at a fifty-eight chapter scheme from BL Add MS 19252. Both of these schemes appear to be contractions of the eighty-seven chapter scheme, which is part of the Type A apparatus.<sup>3</sup> These two manuscripts have a careful and structured apparatus, with clearly labelled and numbered chapters which have vernacular titles. Both manuscripts have running chapter numbers at the top of each page. Both have a substantive programme of decoration, which includes gold ink on mauve ground, feathering and foliage sprays. These manuscripts are created in a way that is careful, ordered and precise.

In the second half of the chapter I look at unique scribal apparatuses which reveal a greater level of divergence from the Type A apparatus than may be seen in the high-status manuscripts I discuss in the first half. In this part of the chapter I examine the work of what appear to be learned, possibly clerical, scribes who may be making codices for their own personal use, or for circulation amongst a small, educated milieu. The manuscripts under discussion here are BL Harley MS 2382 and Bodl. MS Bodley 75. While the manuscripts examined in the first part of the chapter are expensive productions, with generous margins and visually appealing decoration, these other manuscripts are smaller-scale: their decoration is sparse, restricted to coloured initials, touchings and underlinings in red or blue. They are on paper, and their marginal rubrication is in heavily abbreviated Latin. Neither of them have vernacular chapter titles.

## MODIFICATIONS OF THE TYPE A APPARATUS

### **HEH MS HM 115: the thirty-six chapter programme**

A description of HEH MS HM 115 will give a sense of what kind of manuscript it is.<sup>4</sup> The manuscript is a vellum codex measuring approximately 150 mm by 220 mm. The text is written in an elegant *anglicana formata* hand, in a single column, with approximately four stanzas per page, although there is some variation in this. The main text space measures

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<sup>3</sup> George Keiser has suggested that the Huntington scheme is a precursor of the eighty-seven chapter scheme. I discuss this claim below. See George Keiser, 'Serving the Needs of Readers: Textual Division in some Late-Medieval English Texts', in *New Science Out of Old Books: Studies in Manuscripts and Early Printed Books in Honour of A.J. Doyle*, ed. by Richard Beadle and A.J. Piper (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), pp. 207–26 (p. 215).

<sup>4</sup> See also C. W. Dutschke (with the assistance of R.H. Rouse, Sara S. Hodson, Virginia Rust, Herbert C. Schulz, Ephrem Compte), *A Guide to the Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, 2 vols (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1989), I, pp. 152–53.

approximately 90 mm by 140 mm. The text is complete until f. 110r, when a modern hand takes over, imitating the earlier, medieval hand.<sup>5</sup>

The manuscript is handsomely presented. The initials at the start of every stanza are decorated by alternating blue and red paraph marks, which are decorated with either red or blue borders. The same decorated parphs appear around the marginal glosses and the catchwords. There are two decorated borders in the manuscript, at f.2v and f. 52r.<sup>6</sup> These borders include decorated three-line initials on a gold and pink ground with green and blue leaf designs with foliage sprays extending into the margins with small gold leaves, green and blue flowers with pink stamens and green leaf bubbles.

The manuscript was once originally bound with other texts copied by the same scribe, now forming separate manuscripts in other collections. Before it was dismembered, the manuscript contained a prose *Life of Saint Katherine of Alexandria* (Harvard University MS Richardson 44)<sup>7</sup>, a *Life of Saint Jerome* (Camb., St John's College MS 249 [N.16]) and a *Life of Saint John the Evangelist and Saint John the Baptist* (Camb., St John's College MS 250 [N.17]). The *Life of Our Lady* is the only surviving poetic text of this dismembered volume. They were sold together as lot 3597 at the Missenden Abbey sale on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1774 by Samuel Paterson and they are all the work of the same scribe.<sup>8</sup> As a whole, the codex conforms to a particular pattern. Each text copied appears with a set of vernacular chapter titles and divisions which appear in a table of contents at the start of each text. These textual divisions apparently direct the reader to parts of the work most profitable for their spiritual contemplation. The texts appear to have been intended for less learned readers requiring didactic, religious material. One possibility is that the manuscript was made for a community of female religious. Claire Waters has suggested that the manuscript may be linked to the Brigittine house of Syon.<sup>9</sup> The

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<sup>5</sup> The manuscript also has penciled notes collating the text against STC 17023, by William Herbert (b.1718, d.1795). Herbert, incidentally, discusses this manuscript and the print in his enlarged edition of Joseph Ames' *Typographical Antiquities*, later revised by Dibdin. It can only be this manuscript because his discussion concerns a manuscript with thirty-six chapters and HEH MS HM 115 is the only manuscript with this arrangement. See Joseph Ames, William Frognall Dibdin, William Herbert, *Typographical Antiquities or, the History of Printing in England, Scotland and Ireland, begun by the late Joseph Ames*, 4 vols (London: William Savage, 1810), I, p. 340.

<sup>6</sup> The border on f. 52r is accompanied by a small note reading 'incipit liber tercius'. George Keiser has suggested that this is the vestige of an earlier book division scheme. This is discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>7</sup> A full digital facsimile of this manuscript is available at:

[http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/early\\_manuscripts/bibliographies/richardson.cfm](http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/early_manuscripts/bibliographies/richardson.cfm).

<sup>8</sup> *Bibliotheca Monastica Fletwodiana* (London: Samuel Paterson, 1774), p. 205.

<sup>9</sup> Claire M. Waters, *Virgins and Scholars: A Fifteenth-Century Compilation of the Lives of John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Jerome and Katherine of Alexandria* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), p. 5.

scribe's work is found in a manuscript alongside the work of a scribe who worked in the Syon-Sheen milieu (I discuss this below). There seem to be certain resonances in the *Life* and in the other texts, which the designer of the codex sought to privilege, to suit the needs of a specific audience, which may have been a female one.

The text of the *Life* in HEH MS HM 115 has thirty-six numbered chapters, with vernacular chapter titles outlined in a table of contents at the start of the manuscript (ff. 1r–2r). The text is not divided into books and there is some Latin glossing in the marginal space in places (especially ff. 78r–80v). George Keiser has suggested that the apparatus in HEH MS HM 115 is the one from which the Type A apparatus is derived.<sup>10</sup> HEH MS HM 115 is one of the earlier manuscripts of the *Life*. It is dated to the second quarter of the fifteenth century, but the early date of the hand is not conclusive evidence that the manuscript preserves the earliest form of textual apparatus.<sup>11</sup> It is most likely to be a variant of the Type A apparatus. The person who drew up the thirty-six chapter scheme framed the text in a particular way. We see this both in the textual apparatus of the *Life*, but also in the other texts which once appeared in this dismembered manuscript. The focus in this apparatus is on the Virgin, not on Christ, and specifically on the acts and behavior of the Virgin, especially in her early life. This interest is indicated in several ways, in which parts of the text are endowed with a chapter title, which sections are neglected, and certain small-scale linguistic differences in the chapter titles.

On f. 1r there is a red ink heading at the start of the table of contents, reading 'These bene þe notable matiers þat bene contynede in thyss booke'. The introductory rubric from the Type A apparatus, by contrast, states that the poem is 'chaptered and markyde aftir this table' (p. 240; f. 3r). The rubric in HEH MS HM 115 suggests that only some parts of the poem may be considered 'notable'. In comparison with the eighty-seven chapter scheme, the number of 'matiers' picked out in HEH MS HM 115 is significantly smaller.

The distribution of chapters in the Huntington scheme is uneven – some parts of the poem have multiple chapters, while others have none: there is plainly a different focus in the manuscript's apparatus. Comparing the thirty-six chapter scheme with the Type A one, we see the difference immediately. In HEH MS HM 115, the chapter titles direct readers to multiple individual episodes in the early life of the Virgin, those which appear to have been considered 'notable'. They are carefully graduated, revealing the manuscript designer's interest in every

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<sup>10</sup> George Keiser, 'Serving the Needs of Readers', p. 215.

<sup>11</sup> Dutschke, *A Guide to the Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, p. 152.

detail of this part of the poem. This contrasts with the Type A scheme where the focus is on prophetic fulfillment and on specific episodes in Christ's early life.

The HEH MS HM 115 designer is particularly interested in roughly the first third of the poem. There are twenty-three chapters or 'notable matiers' (out of thirty-six) in the first 2300 lines of the poem in this manuscript (the poem is around 6000 lines in total). Chapter XXIII begins at Book II, l. 1411. This means there are only thirteen chapter divisions for the remaining 3,637 lines of the poem. The apparatus suggests that the majority of the 'notable matiers' in the poem were in the part of the text that concerns the Virgin's acts before she became a mother. The extended description of King Herod's search for Christ (V, 8–245), for example, which has six chapter titles and divisions in the Type A apparatus, is left bare in HEH MS HM 115. Yet, in Book VI, during the description of the Purification of the Virgin, when the focus returns to Mary again, HEH MS HM 115 has all but two of the Type A apparatus' chapters. The language of this part of the poem, with its emphasis on Mary's virginity, on her womb, which is 'halowede...so clene in euery coste' (VI, 15), 'euere clene from all corrupcion' (VI, 60), 'exempt from all suche passion' (VI, 78), 'conservyng her clennesse' (VI, 400) focuses on the Virgin's chastity.

Examining the latter two thirds of the poem, the change of focus in this apparatus is even more apparent. From Book III, l. 1–1807, there are twenty-seven chapter headings in the Type A apparatus, while the Huntington scheme has three. This part of the poem describes Christ's birth, the appearance to the Shepherds and a series of portents which confirm the mystery of the Nativity and a sequence of Old Testament prophecies which foretell the birth of Christ. In the Type A scheme, each of these episodes are individually titled (Chapters XXXV–LIX). In HEH MS HM 115, nearly 2,000 lines of verse are summarized in three chapters: Chapter XXIV, 'howe where and whenne criste was borne', Chapter XXV, 'howe joseph brouȝte þe mydeswyves to þe dore wher þat criste was borne and þey durst not entre for a gret light þat schone wyth ynne' and Chapter XXVI, 'Howe þe holy prophytis prophecyeden a for þe incarnation the holy and blessed birth of Crist'. It is illuminating that Chapters XXIV and XXVI provide simple summaries for a large portion of text – describing the birth of Christ and the way it was foretold. The first of these chapters, Chapter XXV, however, picks out a particular episode: the arrival of the midwives of the Virgin. The episode is from the apocryphal gospels, specifically the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*.<sup>12</sup> In another manuscript, BL Add. MS 19252, discussed

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<sup>12</sup> 'Ego tibi Zelomi et Salomen obstretrices adduxi, quae foris ante speluncam stant et prae splendore nimio huc introire non audent' [I have brought you the midwives, Zelomi and Salomen, who stand outside the cave and dare not enter because of the spectacular brightness] (Cap. XXIII). *Evangelia*

below, the chapter title specifies that the source of the episode is apocryphal. The designer of HEH MS HM 115, however, is unconcerned with pointing to Lydgate's source; instead it is the event itself that elicits his attention. It is surprising that the appearance of the angels to the shepherds should merit no chapter heading, but that the Virgin's midwives was afforded one. The focus here is on the Virgin and on the miracle of the uncorrupted birth, on how 'She childed hath, this floure of maydynhede' (III, 207). The chapter title describes the miraculous light the Virgin emits after the birth of Christ ('howe joseph brouȝte þe mydeswyves to þe dore wher þat criste was borne and þey durst not entre for a gret light þat schone wyth ynne'). The poem describes how the midwives 'stonden stylly astonyed of that light' (III, 211), a light which signifies the miracle that has occurred.

The shift in focus away from Christ and more explicitly onto the Virgin is also visible in the first third of the manuscript's chapter titles. The Type A apparatus has a chapter title for Chapter IX, 'Howe Iosephe after he hadde weddid oure lady went to Bedleme and usid þe craft of Carpentre' (p. 301; f.15v), HEH MS HM 115 has no title for this section of the text, preferring instead to draw the reader's attention solely to parts of the text concerning the Virgin and silently omitting references to Joseph.

The focus on the acts of the Virgin, in particular, is also discernable in small-scale linguistic differences between the Type A apparatus and the Huntington scheme. Chapter XXIII in HEH MS HM 115 reads, 'Howe þe bisshoppis tastden oure lady to preue hir clennesse and purid virginite'. In the Type A scheme, however, this chapter reads, 'howe the Bisshopes made Ioseph and oure lady to taaste a watir to preue hem by' (p. 385; f. 33r). In HEH MS HM 115, the focus is on the Virgin rather than her and Joseph, and the use of 'clennesse and purid virginite' placing emphasis on the Virgin's chastity. We see this same interest in the exemplary power of the Virgin's chastity in Chapter VIII, which is titled 'How oure lady may sche be set for an Ensaumple of all virgynite/and worthy ys þat', while the Type A scheme reads 'How oure lady ys sette for an ensamplere of virgynite' (p. 305; f.16v). The addition of 'all virgynite' universalises the claim of the title, and the judgement, 'worthy ys þat' further emphasizes the point. It is the Virgin's saintly life in the Temple in her youth and the miracles associated with her chastity that get particular attention in the thirty-six-chapter scheme.<sup>13</sup> These modifications

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*Apocrypha: Adhibitis Plurimis Codicibus Graecis et Latinis Maximam Partem Nunc Primum Consultis Atque Ineditorum Copia Insignibus*, ed. by Constantius Tischendorf (Lipsiae: Avenarius et Mendelsson, 1853), p. 77.

<sup>13</sup> Catherine Sanok has argued that a distinctive feature of Middle English female hagiography is the way in which it inscribes particular (and, as she argues, gendered), audiences. The same phenomenon may be

may indicate that the Huntington apparatus was designed with a female audience in mind, an audience for whom the life of the Virgin could be used as a pious exemplum.

George Keiser has suggested that the scribe who copied the Huntington text (and the other texts in the now dismembered volume) was familiar with Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Christ* and speculates that the scribe may have recognized the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* as a common source of both the *Mirror* and the *Life*.<sup>14</sup> The *Mirror*, and more specifically its apparatus, provides a useful analogue to the apparatus of the now dismembered volume. As Keiser notes, the *Mirror*'s proem directs that 'euery deuout creature þat loueþ to rede or here þis boke take þe partes þerof as it semest moste confortable & stiryng to his deuocion'.<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that the 'proem' is Love's own prologue, which precedes the translation of the pseudo-Bonaventuran prologue of the *Meditationes*. This suggests that the use of the chapters ('þe partes þerof') is important to the function of Love's text. Love writes that he composed the *Mirror* 'in Englышe to lewde men & women & hem þat bene of symple vndirstondyng'. Love, a Carthusian, adopts a paternalistic tone and his text has a pastoral function.

We see this tone and apparent function in the apparatus of the *Life* in HEH MS HM 115. Chapter XXX in the text (which corresponds to Chapter LXXVII in the Type A scheme) reads, 'Howe þe kyngis offering schal be undirstonden goostley to þe edificacioun of simple soules'. The Type A chapter title reads, 'Howe the offeryng of thise iii kynges shale be undirstoude goostly'. The Huntington modification, adding that this is aimed at 'simple soules' for their 'edificacioun' has the kind of tone we associate with texts like Love's *Mirror*, where he specifies that his text is intended for the 'styring of simple soules to þe loue of god'.<sup>16</sup>

Each of the texts in the now dismembered volume appears with vernacular chapter titles and divisions and a table of contents at their start. The division of the texts into chapters serves a didactic function, for they clarify meaning and aid proper use. In the prologue to the *Life of Saint Katherine* (now Houghton, Richardson MS 44), it is clear that chapters are, in fact, central to the text's function. The prologue describes the genesis of the text on f. 1r:

After I had drawe þe martyrdom of the holy virgin and martir Seynt kateryne from latyn into englesshe as hit is wryton in legendis þat are complete ther was take to me a quayere. Where yn was drawe in to englesshe not oonly hire martyrdom but also hir

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at work here in the apparatus. Catherine Sanok, *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Keiser, 'Serving the Needs of Readers', p. 215.

<sup>15</sup> Nicholas Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ: A Full Critical Edition*, ed. by Michael G. Sargent (New York, London: Garland, 1992), p. 10

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

birthe and lyuynge tofore hir conuersion and how sche was conuerted and spoused to oure lord Jhesu crist. Netheles þe martyrdom of þe saam virgyn was not allinges so plener in þat quayereas hit was drawe by me tofore. And therfore to oure Lordys wurschip and his holy moders and hyres I haue sett hem togydere and maad on of bothe and departed hem in chapitres and somewhat addet thereto moor cleer vnderstondyng in some places.<sup>17</sup>

Clearly, integral to making the best text, the text that is most ‘plener’ is the apportioning of chapters for ‘moor cleer vnderstondyng’. Dividing the text was as important in the creation of the text as the ‘drawe[ing]’ of it ‘from latyn into englesshe’.

The same idea – that dividing a text into chapters helps to clarify meaning – appears in the prologue to the *Life of Saint Jerome*. This text was written by Simon Winter, a brother at the Carthusian monastery of Syon. In it we find an overview of the contents of each chapter and the didactic purpose behind each.<sup>18</sup> Winter writes that he made the translation for the Duchess of Clarence ‘not oonly ȝe shulde knowe hit the more clearly to ȝoure goostly profyte, but also hit shulde mowe abyde and turne to edificacion of other that wolde rede hit or here hit’. He continues that his patroness should ‘first to rede hit, and to doo copy hit for ȝoureself and sithe to latte other rede hit and copye hit’, because the text is ‘ful needful to be knowe and had in mynde of alle folk’.<sup>19</sup> What is illuminating about Winter’s prologue – apart from its expressed edificatory function – is that it indicates that the audience of the text was both a listening and a reading audience. This might suggest that the two-tiered apparatus of the *Life* in HEH MS HM 115 (in the form of vernacular chapter titles and divisions and Latin marginal rubrication) may have been intended to cater to different audiences.<sup>20</sup>

The other two texts also have instructional apparatuses. Before a table of contents listing eighteen chapters, the *Life of Saint John the Baptist* announces that the text is a ‘reule of ryghtwysnes, a myrrour of virginité’.<sup>21</sup> The *Life of Saint John the Evangelist* is divided into eighteen chapters.<sup>22</sup> Each of the texts in the now dismembered volume and their apparatuses

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<sup>17</sup> Claire M. Waters, *Virgins and Scholars*, p. 276.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179–82.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179–80.

<sup>20</sup> As I noted in Chapter Two, Joyce Coleman’s work on the Latin sections of Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* provides a possible parallel to the scribal apparatus of Lydgate’s *Life*, which may have been written with two audiences in mind. Coleman’s suggestion is that the Latin sections of the *Confessio* were intended for Latinate prelectors (clerks who read the works aloud), while the vernacular passages were aimed at a different, less learned listening audience. See, Joyce Coleman, ‘Lay Readers and Hard Latin: How Gower May Have Intended the *Confessio Amantis* to be Read’, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 24 (2002), 209–234.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124–26.

indicate that the designer of the volume, be it the scribe or the stationer, wanted to create a series of vernacular texts with devotional and pastoral uses. Each of the texts uses hagiography for a didactic purpose, and is accompanied by an apparatus which guides the reader through the text in a specific way.

### Provenance of the manuscript

Claire Waters has observed that several features of the now dismembered manuscript which once contained HEH MS HM 115 ‘strongly link’ the manuscript to the Brigittine house of Syon and the nearby Carthusian monastery of Sheen, both founded around 1415 by Henry V. The texts’ ‘references to the writings of St Birgitta of Sweden (...) and the association of one of them with a Brigittine brother are a clear link to Syon, which seems often to have shared books and copying activities with Sheen’.<sup>23</sup> The scribe who copied these texts also copied a collection of vernacular devotional lyrics into a Latin miscellany, Bodl. MS Bodley 549, which was otherwise copied by the Carthusian scribe, Stephen Doddesham. This would appear to place the manuscript in a Carthusian milieu.<sup>24</sup> George Keiser has hypothesized, therefore, that the manuscript ‘originated at Sheen and was produced by a Carthusian scribe for Syon, or for a patron of either Sheen or Syon’.<sup>25</sup> His theory is partially contingent on the idea that the *Life* was written for Henry V and that it had enjoyed ‘early circulation in Lancastrian circles’. He pointed to the ‘Lancastrian connection’ of the other texts. An introductory rubric in Camb., Gonville and Caius MS 390/610, which contains another copy of the prose *Life of Saint Katherine*

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<sup>23</sup> Claire M. Waters, *Virgins and Scholars*, p. 5. See also Veronica Lawrence, ‘The Role of the Monasteries of Syon and Sheen in the Production, Ownership and Circulation of Mystical Literature in the Late Middle Ages’, *The Mystical Tradition and the Carthusians*, ed. by James Hogg (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1996), pp. 101–15.

<sup>24</sup> Doddesham’s work was varied. He seems to have been a professional scribe, copying amongst other things, the *Siege of Thebes*, before becoming a Carthusian. See *Aelred of Rievaulx’s de Institutione Inclusarum*, ed. by John Ayto and Alexandra Barratt, EETS O.S. 287 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. xxix–xxx. Malcom Parkes, *English Cursive Bookhands, 1250–1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 6, plate 6 and p. 25 for a list of MSS copied by Doddesham. See also A.I. Doyle, ‘English Carthusian Books Not Yet Linked With a Charterhouse’, in *A Miracle of Learning: Studies in Manuscripts and Irish Learning* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 122–36, (pp. 125–26). He also copied several versions of Love’s *Mirror*. A.I. Doyle, ‘Book Production by the Monastic Orders in England (c. 1375–1530): Assessing the Evidence’, in *Medieval Book Production: Assessing the Evidence*, ed. by Linda L. Brownrigg (Los Altos: Anderson-Lovelace, 1990), pp. 1–21 (p. 19, n. 86). The three named by Doyle are: Hunterian MS 77, TCC MS B. 15.16 and Bodl. Rawl. MS A. 387B. See also A.S.G. Edwards, ‘Beinecke Ms 661 and Early Fifteenth-Century English Manuscript Production’, *The Yale University Library Gazette*, 66 (Supplement to Volume 66: Beinecke Studies in Early Manuscripts, 1991), 181–96.

<sup>25</sup> George Keiser, ‘Serving the Needs of Readers’, p. 214.

of *Alexandria*, states that it was ‘sente bi a discrete maister vnto Henry v<sup>te</sup>’.<sup>26</sup> Whether the manuscript did indeed originate in such a context is a vexatious issue. However, the character and quality of the manuscript certainly suggest a well-resourced scribe, possibly in or attached to a well-endowed monastic institution.

### **BL Add. MS 19252: The fifty-eight chapter programme**

I now move on to a manuscript which shares several similar features with HEH MS HM 115, but also some illuminating differences. Like HEH MS HM 115, BL Add. MS 19252 is a handsomely presented, well-planned manuscript, with generous margins. It is a vellum codex measuring 195 mm by 275 mm. The text is written in a single column measuring approximately 195 mm by 100 mm. It has four neatly spaced stanzas per page. The manuscript has been damaged: several decorated folios have been removed. However, it appears to have once had an opulent decorative programme.<sup>27</sup> Two decorated borders survive, consisting of a five-line initial of blue, pink and green on a gold ground. Extending out of the initial letters on a pink, blue and gold border are curlicue vines with green lobes on golden balls, trumpet flowers with stamens in blue, green and pink, from which blue, pink and green leaves blossom.

The text is written in an elegant *anglicana* hand and has running chapter numbers at the top right hand corner of each recto folio, which are accompanied by alternating blue or red paraph marks decorated by either blue or red flourishing. Chapter titles and other kinds of rubrication are accompanied by decorated paraph marks. The initial letter of each stanza is in blue or red with blue or red flourishing. The initial letter of each stanza has an opposing red or blue flourished border. The initial letters of each chapter in the table of contents is red or blue with opposing colour decoration. The numbers of each chapter appear in the margins and are in red with blue paraph marks and red flourishing. This carefully planned decoration suggests that the manuscript is professionally produced and very probably of metropolitan origin.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> M.R James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907–08), II, pp. 452–53.

<sup>27</sup> Several of its leaves have been removed, but from their placing we can infer that they once represented decorative borders or – more likely – images. The missing leaves always occur next to a partially surviving decorated border or at a major textual break. The opening quire now consists of three leaves and comprises a table of contents listing fifty-eight chapters, the second quire is missing its two first leaves, and thus omits the opening of the poem. The third quire is missing one leaf at the end of the quire, between ff. 16 and 17, which precedes a decorated border at the start of what might be Book II. This pattern continues, with eight-leaf quires missing a leaf before a decorated border on the next leaf in the text, between ff. 44 and 45 (Book III), ff. 77 and 78 (Book IV) and ff. 83 and 84 (Book V). There are two surviving borders in the manuscript at f. 17r and f. 96r (which represent the openings of Books II and VI, although they are not labelled as such).

<sup>28</sup> Keiser, ‘Serving the Needs of Readers’, p. 220.

The manuscript has an idiosyncratic chapter programme, which comprises fifty-eight chapters and no book division.<sup>29</sup> Forty-five of these chapters correspond in their textual placement to the Type A apparatus (see Appendix 1). Fourteen of these forty-five titles vary in their wording, but are similar in substance to, the titles in the Type A scheme.<sup>30</sup> Eleven further chapter divisions and titles are unique to this manuscript.<sup>31</sup> It seems likely, therefore, that the scheme of division and rubrication to be found in this manuscript is a modification of the eighty-seven chapter scheme which is a part of the Type A apparatus.

A key feature of this manuscript's apparatus is the desire to frame the text of the *Life* as authoritative. The author of the chapter titles has sought to separate out the use of apocryphal and scriptural sources. This is in contrast to HEH MS HM 115, where apocryphal sections of the poem like the Virgin's life in the temple before her marriage merit most of the designer's attention. Chapter XXIX in the table of contents in BL Add. MS 19252 reads, 'the names of the midwives al thowe þey were not at cristees birth' (f. 2r).<sup>32</sup> The story of the midwives of the Virgin comes from the apocryphal infancy gospels and the *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>33</sup>

In other places, we see the manuscript designer keen to assert the authority of the text, as in Chapter XIX, which is entitled 'A rehersayle of stronge auctoritees grounded vpon stronge reson/ to reforme hir wittes that bileuen not þat crist was bore of a maide' (f. 28v). In the Type A scheme, this chapter is entitled: 'Autentike conclusiouns aȝens unbilefull men þat seyne þat Criste may not be borne of a Mayde' (p. 357; f. 28r). The addition of the phrase 'grounded vpon stronge reson' and the explanation that this is intended to 'reforme hir wittes' indicates that the manuscript's designer felt a need to stress the work's doctrinal authority. In much the same way, Chapter XLIII is entitled, 'how fals men circumcised crist in trewe lyuyng men' (f. 78r). The meaning of the title is not immediately clear. In the Type A scheme, this chapter title, Chapter LXII, reads 'How criste suffred circumcision in his chosin peple' (p. 563; f. 69r). Here the designer of BL Add. MS 19252 alters the description of the Jews from 'chosin peple' to 'fals men'. The following stanzas discuss the significance of Christ's circumcision, the pain of which signifies the pain for the Church and its believers of 'herytykes that falsely disobey/To holy chirche and to our faythe verrey' (IV, 90–91), as well as the pain of 'tyrantes' (IV, 93), who 'make marters yelden vp the brethe [of life]' (IV, 96). The designer is keen to juxtapose

<sup>29</sup> Decorated borders appear to have marked six un-labelled book boundaries.

<sup>30</sup> Chapters III, IV, V, IX, VIII, XIV, XIX, XXVII, XXX, XXXII, XXXV, XXXVII, XLIII, LXVI.

<sup>31</sup> Chapters II, XI, XVIII, XXII, XXXI, XXXIV, XL, XLI, XLV, XLVII, XLIX and LIV.

<sup>32</sup> In the text itself this is shortened to read 'the names of the midwives'. (f. 52r.)

<sup>33</sup> *Jacobi a Voragine Legenda Aura Vulgo Historia Lombardica Dicta*, ed. by Johan Graesse (Dresdæ, Lipsiæ: Librariae Arnoldinanae, 1846), esp. pp. 41–42.

the ‘trewe lyvyng men’, who are the ‘marters’, with the ‘fals men’, thus emphasising the danger of falsehood. Here the designer appears to have read the poem with greater care than the designer of the Type A scheme, responding to the prompts in the text. He supplied a more accurate description of the following section in his title, registering the fact that Lydgate is discussing the error of heresy in this passage. We see this pattern elsewhere in the manuscript. In the previous chapter I discussed how parts of the eighty-seven chapter scheme sometimes incorrectly summarize the text. There I noted that in the eighty-seven scheme, Chapter LXIII has a title which reads, ‘howe the peple of god that duke Iosue had in gouernaunce were saved by the stedefaste by leve of the name of Ihesus’, which misrepresents the text. The designer of BL Add. 19252, who seems to be a more careful reader of the poem, has given this chapter of the text the title, ‘A commendacion of þe name of Jhesu’ (f. 79v).

The primary change made by the designer of BL Add. MS 19252 was the decision to remove some of the chapter headings of the Type A scheme, compressing the eighty-seven chapters to fifty-eight. In places where his chapter titles diverge from the Type A scheme, it is usually because he has integrated the substance of several chapters into one. However, there are a few instances where he highlighted other sections, giving chapter titles to places in the text where they do not exist in the Type A scheme. In each of these instances, the designer has sought to highlight instances in the poem where miracles occur. In Book III, he adds an extra chapter title at line 1156, on f. 66r, which reads, ‘How iii sonnes were seen on þe day of cristes birth ca xxxiiii’. Similarly, at line 1723 of Book III, he adds another chapter heading, also not present in the Type A scheme, which reads ‘how þe reynyng of manna figured þe birth of crist ca xli’ (f. 76r). Finally, at line 120 of Book IV, he adds a chapter heading which highlights the miracle associated with Christ’s foreskin, entitled ‘Howe þe pece of incision of crist was brouȝt to Charles by an angell ca xlv’ (f. 79r). Elsewhere the scribe is concerned with separating out scriptural and apocryphal sources, but here his interest in miraculous material may indicate that he saw these extra-scriptural miracles as a part of orthodox dogma.

The two manuscripts discussed in this first section share several significant features. They are both written on vellum; they both have a substantial decorative programme; both appear to preserve divergent forms of the Type A apparatus. The designer of BL Add. MS 19252 seems to have felt the chapter titles and divisions of the Type A scheme were too frequent but also inaccurate in places, and hence modified the textual apparatus. The designer of HEH MS HM 115, by contrast, apparently wished to amplify certain aspects of the text and brush over others. His interest seems to have lain in the material specifically relating to the

Virgin and the way in which her life could have an exemplary function. This apparatus appears to have been made to guide less learned readers – perhaps female readers – through the poem.

## IDIOSYNCRATIC PROGRAMMES

In this, the second part of the chapter, I shift the focus from high-status manuscripts to simpler productions. The two manuscripts under discussion here differ from the previous two, both in the evident cost of their production, but also in the way they lay out and arrange the text. Their rubrics, glosses and divisions of the text differ radically from the manuscripts discussed above.

Here, we find no guiding vernacular rubrics which direct the ‘simple’ reader to use the text for his or her ‘edification’. Instead, the extra-textual space around the *Life* contains glosses in Latin only. The margins of the text become a site in which to record snippets of scriptural learning and to make links between the poem and the liturgy. Sometimes the scribes simply highlight information already in the text, whereas in other instances they appear to supplement the text. The discussion in this section begins with a single-text manuscript from the Bodleian Library. The scribe who made it probably made it for himself or for circulation amongst a small, learned milieu. It is simple in appearance and unimposing in size. This is juxtaposed with a similar codex which is also small and also apparently made by a learned scribe. However, this manuscript differs from the Bodleian manuscript in a number of ways.

### **Bodl. MS Bodley 75**

As with the previous two manuscripts, some description of this manuscript gives a sense of its character and quality. Bodl. MS Bodley 75 is a small paper codex measuring approximately 130 mm by 185 mm.<sup>34</sup> The text is written in a single column, measuring approximately 73 mm by 185 mm. It is written in a secretary hand and the *Life* is the only text in the manuscript. The poem begins imperfectly at Book I, l. 73. The first and last leaves of the opening quire are missing. There are five stanzas per page, the initials of each are accompanied by alternating red and blue paraph marks. There are occasional touchings in red, such as for words like ‘Jhesus’. In the marginal space, glosses are underlined in red ink and the initial letter is touched in red and accompanied by alternating red and blue paraph marks.

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<sup>34</sup> H.H.E. Craster and Falconer Madan, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), vol. II, part I, no. 2253, p. 280.

The text is divided into three books, marked with *incipits* and *explicits*. Additionally, there are three further discrete sections, which designate what would be the boundaries between books in other witnesses. The start of Book IV is marked by a three-line initial, and by a heading which reads ‘de circumcisio domini capitulum’ (f. 61v). Book V is marked by a similar initial and ‘de epiphania dominum capitulum’ (f. 67r). Book VI is unmarked by an initial, but has ‘de purificacione beate marie capitulum’ (f. 77r). Other than these sections there are no other chapters demarcated in the text, although there are thirteen decorated initials which correspond to thirteen of the eighty-seven chapter openings in the Type A scheme.<sup>35</sup> There are no vernacular chapter titles, only Latin glosses.<sup>36</sup>

The glossing reveals a scribe or manuscript designer who engaged thoughtfully with the text in front of him. He was evidently learned, supplying scriptural references as an apparatus to the text. His glosses differ substantially from the Type A scheme, suggesting that they are his own. The overall pattern of the scribe’s glossing reveals him to be interested in particular parts of the poem. His focus is on sections of the poem which deal with gospel accounts of the Virgin’s life, with the way Christ’s birth is in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy and with liturgical parts of the text (the *Gloria Patri*, the *Magnificat*, the *Nunc Dimittis*). The apocryphal trial of Mary and Joseph, the miracles associated with the night of Christ’s birth and the Epiphany are almost completely unglossed, leaving around 3,000 lines of verse unglossed.

The scribe demonstrates a fairly extensive knowledge of the scriptural text, but much of it appears to have been filtered through liturgical books. In several places, he glosses the text with sections from the Hours of the Virgin, as outlined below. Other parts of the *Life* are neglected – he appears uninterested in the apocryphal parts of the Virgin’s story and the work of patristic writers. A startling feature of this manuscript is that no *auctores* are cited in the margins. The *Life* contains extensive documentation of its source material and many manuscripts, especially those with the Type A apparatus, pick out the authorities mentioned in the text, yet the Bodl. MS Bodley 75 scribe never notes a single authority. Perhaps the scribe had no access to these kinds of texts and thus had no frame of reference for them. This is a pared-back apparatus which is mainly focused on the scriptural story.

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<sup>35</sup> These correspond to chapters V, VII, XI, XX – in fact in this case the initial is one stanza earlier – XXII, XXIII, XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXXV, LX, LXXI, LXXXII. This lends credence to my suggestion that the original, authorial manuscript contained enlarged or decorated initials in many of the places where there are chapter titles in the Type A scheme, but that it was only later in the recension, and almost exclusively in the *c*-group that these demarcations became eighty-seven labelled and numbered chapters. For the stemma, see *Critical Edition*, p. 17.

<sup>36</sup> There are three vernacular glosses: ‘a commendacion of oure lady’ (f. 10v) ‘the salutacion of oure lady (f. 16v) ‘the prayer of salome’ (f. 41r).

We see the scribe's interest in liturgical material and uninterest in patristic writing in one of his first surviving glosses (given that the first few leaves of the manuscript have been lost). It appears in the margins of Book I, in the part of the text in which Lydgate is describing the Virgin's early life in the Temple, next to the stanza:

And of this mayde as saint Ancelme seyth  
In his wrytyng hir beaute to termyne  
Of face fayre but fayrer yet of fayeth  
He sayth she was this holy pure virgyne  
Whose chast hert to no thyng dyd enclyne  
For all hir beaute but to holynesse  
Of whome also this Autor saythe expresse (I, 338–43)

Lydgate clearly specifies his source here, 'Ancelme', who is mentioned again at the end of the stanza 'this Autor saythe expresse'. Manuscripts with the Type A apparatus write the name 'Ancelme' in the margin. The scribe of Bodl. MS Bodley 75 has glossed this part of the text differently. He has written 'pulcra facie sed pulcrior fide' (f. 4r) in the margin, to echo the lines, 'hir beaute to termyne/Of face fayre, but fayrer yet of fayeth'. This is a liturgical chant from the feast of the Virgin, commonly sung at Lauds.<sup>37</sup> The scribe is making connections between Lydgate's text and the liturgy, but not highlighting the reference to Anselm. This pattern is discernible elsewhere in the glosses. In an extended section in Book II in which Lydgate supplies a catalogue of miraculous events which validate the mystery of the Virgin Birth, Lydgate compares the 'habitacle... erbor swete/ In this mayde' (II, 804–5) which is 'concerved clene' (II, 803) to 'þe busche...All on flame' (II, 799–800) which 'Moyses be ganne to a proche nere/ And yet no harme came to the bowes grene' (II, 801–02). The scribe glosses this with 'rubum quem viderat moyses incombustum' (Ca. XX) [In the bush which Moses saw unconsumed]. This is a phrase lifted directly from the Lauds antiphons in the Little Office of the Virgin: 'Rubum quem viderat Moyses incombustum, conservatam agnovimus tuam laudabilem virginitatem, Dei genitrix intercede pro nobis' [In the bush which Moses saw unconsumed, we recognize the preservation of thy glorious virginity: holy Mother of God, intercede for us].<sup>38</sup> It is possible that the scribe sought to use the text of the *Life* in much the same way as he used his books of personal devotion. Perhaps he recalled this part of the poem at Lauds and recalled the Little Office of the Virgin at this point in the poem.

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<sup>37</sup> See the University of Waterloo CANTUS database of Latin ecclesiastical chant: <http://cantusdatabase.org/id/007452>, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

<sup>38</sup> See Sister M. Madeleva, 'Chaucer's Nuns', *Chaucer's Nuns and Other Essays* (New York: Appleton, 1925), pp. 30–35. For the text of Lauds, see: <http://www.medievalist.net/hourstxt/bvm3laua.htm>.

Elsewhere we see that instead of glossing the *auctores* mentioned in the text, the scribe chose to pick out a sequence of images relating to the Virgin. Perhaps these potent visual images were intended for meditative contemplation. Lydgate describes the Virgin as ‘eke the gate, the loke<sup>3</sup> breght’ (II, 568), which ‘stooode euere clos, in conclusion/That neuer man, entre shall ne pace/ But god hym selfe, to make his dwellyng place’ (II, 572–75). The image is drawn from Ezekiel (44:2). The scribe glosses ‘porta hec clausa erit’ [this gate shall be shut]. The Virgin is also figured as the ‘Flees of Gedeon’ (II, 576), which merits the scribe’s ‘vellus gedeonis’ [the fleece of Gideon] (f. 20r). (The image of the fleece of Gideon is from Judges 6: 36–40.) The description of the Virgin continues:

...the trone, where that Salomon  
For worthynesse, sette his Riall see  
With golde and yvory, that so bright shone  
That al aboute, the beaute men may se (II, 610–13)

These images are ultimately derived from the Old Testament descriptions of the Ark of the Covenant, and Solomon’s Temple which housed it, as described in Chronicles and 3 Kings.<sup>39</sup> It is made of cedar and gold, much as Lydgate tells us that the Virgin herself is ‘the Auter [Altar] of Cedre gold’ (II, 596). His description correlates to 3 Kings 6:15.<sup>40</sup> St Paul’s Letter to the Hebrews (9:4) embroiders the Old Testament account of the Ark of the Covenant, stating that it contains a jar of manna, Aaron’s rod and the first Torah scroll written by Moses: ‘aureum habens thuribulum, et arcum testamenti circumiectam ex omni parte auro, in qua urna aurea habens manna, et virga Aaron, quae fronduerat, et tabulae testamenti’ [Having a golden censer, and the ark of the testament covered about on every part with gold, in which was a golden pot that had manna, and the rod of Aaron, that had blossomed and the tables of the testament]. Accordingly, Lydgate tells us that the Virgin is ‘the Riche ourne/Kepyng the manna’ (II, 589–90) and ‘eke she was in sygnyfacion/The yerde of Aron’ (II, 593–94). The scribe glosses each of these images, with ‘urna aurea’ and ‘virga aaron’ (f. 20r) and a little later with ‘tronos

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<sup>39</sup> ‘praebete igitur corda vestra et animas vestras ut quaeratis Dominum Deum vestrum et consurgite et aedificate sanctuarium Domino Deo ut introducatur arca foederis Domini et vasa Domino consecrata in domum quae aedificatur nomini Domini’ [Give therefore your hearts and your souls, to seek the Lord your God: and arise, and build a sanctuary to the Lord God, that the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and the vessels consecrated to the Lord, may be brought into the house which is built to the name of the Lord]. 1 Paralipomenon (Chronicles) 22:19.

<sup>40</sup> ‘et aedificavit parietes domus intrinsecus tabulatis cedrinis a pavimento domus usque ad summitatem parietum et usque ad laquearia operuit lignis intrinsecus et texit pavimentum domus tabulis abiegnis’ [And he built the walls of the house on the inside, with boards of cedar, from the floor of the house to the top of the walls, and to the roots he covered it with boards of cedar on the inside: and he covered the floor of the house with planks of fir].

salomomis' (f. 20v), next to 'She was the trone, where that Salamon/ For worthynesse, sette his Riall see (II, 610–11).

These glosses are intriguing. They suggest a couple of things about the scribe: firstly, that his biblical learning was slightly limited, for in contrast with other places, he has not supplied scriptural references or quotations here; secondly, they may indicate something of the way he was using the poem. I have noted that he lifted some glosses from devotional books, especially the Little Office of the Virgin, suggesting a kind of scribal cross-pollination between Lydgate's text and a Book of Hours. The highlighting of these particular images may also have served as an aid to devotional visualisation. Perhaps the scribe wanted to pause at this point in the poem and ruminate on these complex, interlocking images for the Virgin? Unlike in BL Add MS 19252, where the change in the chapter titles points to the Virgin as a holy exemplum and seeks to stress the text's doctrinal authority, here the apparatus is less didactic, possibly serving a more personal, intimate function.

Elsewhere, we see the scribe providing a scriptural apparatus for the *Life*, supplying biblical quotations next to the relevant parts of the text. In places, Lydgate's poem follows the gospel narrative closely and it is illuminating that the scribe glosses the parts of the poem drawn from the gospel account most extensively. This may be because this is the part of the scriptural text that he was most familiar with, or it may indicate his special interest in this material. For example, in the section of text which describes the Annunciation, the margins of the text are full. Next to the line describing the Virgin as 'perturbed was in loke and in visage' (II, 447), the scribe has written, 'cogitabat qualis esset ista salutacio | Ne timeas maria' [And thought with herself what manner of salutation could this be | Fear not Mary] (f. 18v). This corresponds to Luke 1:29–30: 'Quae cum audisset, turbata est in sermone eius et cogibabat qualis esset ista salutation. Et ait angelus ea: Ne timeas, Maria: invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum' [Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God]. The pattern continues on f. 18v, with the scribe adding: 'Ecce concipies et vocabis nomen eius Ihesu' [Behold thou shalt conceive and thou shalt call his name Jesus] (a contraction of Luke 1:31) next to 'Within thy wombe, a sonne of all vertu/ And shall hym calle, whan he is borne Ihesu' (II, 461–62). He also adds, 'Et dabit illa deus sedem dauid patris eius | Et regem eius non erit finis' [And the Lord god shall give unto him the throne of David his father and he shall reign forever] (Luke 1:32) next to 'The see of David, his awne fadirs right/ And he shall Regne, in euery wightys sight/ In the house of Iacob' (II, 465–67). Next to the line 'In what manere shall this thing betyde' (II, 478), the scribe has added a part of Luke 1: 34, 'Quomodo fiet istud'

[How shall this be done?], and has placed ‘spiritus sanctus supervenet in te’ [the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee] (part of Luke 1:35) next to the lines which read ‘within thy blissed syde/The holy goste shall yshrouded be’ (II, 479–80). He has written ‘et ecce Elizabeth cognata tua’ [Behold thy cousin Elizabeth] (part of Luke 1: 36) next to ‘By holde and see a lytyll here be forn/Eliȝabeth’ (II, 486–7) and the words, ‘ecce ancilla domini’ [Behold the handmaid of the Lord] (from Luke 1:38) next to ‘By holde quod she of god make ancille’ (II, 494). In this part of the manuscript, the scribe appears keen to wed the poem to the scriptural text so that the poem and biblical text are used in close conjunction.

The scribe’s glosses are primarily scriptural quotations from the Psalms and the Gospels, unlike the Type A scheme, which highlights parts of the poem drawn from Old Testament, Apocryphal or patristic sources. The image we build of the Bodl. MS Bodley 75 scribe is of a person with rudimentary Latin, whose access to Latin texts may have been restricted to something like a Book of Hours, a simple liturgical book and or a Bible – a person without the resources of a library. Luke 1: 1–30 (which forms the substance of the glosses outlined above) commonly appeared in Books of Hours in the gospel readings after the calendar. Thus the scribe’s familiarity with this part of the scripture and use of this section in his glosses may indicate that he was lifting this material from a Book of Hours. That said, the scribe is clearly proficiently Latinate and well versed in some parts of the biblical text. If he was making the manuscript for circulation, rather than personal use, his imagined audience is evidently a more learned one than the imagined audience of HEH MS HM 115 or BL Add MS 19252, with its readily comprehensible, didactic vernacular chapter titles.

In places, the scribe is so keen to wed the poem to the biblical text that there are times when he re-frames the poem. In the previous chapter, I discussed the episode in Book II in which Lydgate pauses the narrative of the Annunciation to reflect on the task of conveying, in words, the idea of the word made flesh. Lydgate notes Saint Bernard of Clairvaux’s anxious sense of unworthiness in the *De Laudibus Virginis Matris*, Homily III. So vexed is he that he offers up a prayer to strengthen him in his task: ‘O lorde whose mercy gothe not declyne’ (II, 429). Next to the line in which Lydgate bemoans ‘my rude tongue’ (II, 436), the scribe has written, ‘Quare tu enarras iusticias meas’ [why dost thou declare my justices?] (f. 17r). This is from Psalm 49: 16: ‘Peccatori autem dixit Deus: Quare tu enarras iusticias meas? et assumis testamentum meum per os tuum?’ [But to the sinner God hath said: Why dost thou declare my justices and take my covenant in thy mouth?]. There is no reference to Psalm 49 in the text, so the allusion here is the scribe’s own. The scribe has sought to reconfigure Lydgate’s narratorial interjection as a reference to the psalms. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, this

effacement of Lydgate's complex humility *topos* is something which also occurs in the Type A chapter scheme, although, as we shall see in the final chapter, it does not occur in all manuscripts. In the following lines, Lydgate's narrator segues back into the gospel story of the Annunciation, making a parallel between himself and the Virgin (which Phillipa Hardman calls 'daring'): <sup>41</sup>

For of my selfe, for to vndirtake  
To speke or wryte, in so devote matier  
Lytyll wondir, though I tremble and quake  
And chaunge bothe countenans and chere  
Sythen this mayde, of vertu tresorere  
Perturbed was, in loke and in visage  
Of Gabryell to hir the message (II, 442–48)

Next to the first of these lines, the scribe has written 'turbata' (f. 18r). Rather than identifying the narrator as the one who quakes, here the scribe has used the female ending, identifying the Virgin as the one who trembles. Like many scribes, the scribe of Bodley 75 has re-framed this narratorial intervention, preferring instead to draw attention to the part of the text which deals with the Virgin and to reconfigure Lydgate's profession of authorial unworthiness as a reference to the Psalms.

The glosses that accompany the *Life* in Bodl. MS Bodley 75 demonstrate the responses of what appears to be a modestly learned scribe whose appreciation of the poem seems to have lain in the way it could be aligned to liturgical and scriptural texts. Like the author of the chapter headings in the Type A apparatus, the scribe sought – at times – to re-frame the text, silencing Lydgate's assertive narratorial voice and re-configuring the poem. The margins of the text in Bodl. MS Bodley 75 were a repository of scriptural learning, but – as we see by comparison with the manuscript in the next section – this learning was of a more limited kind than what we find in some other manuscripts.

### BL Harley MS 2382

In this section, I examine a manuscript which shares many similar features with Bodl. MS Bodley 75 – similarities of physical construction, textual presentation and glossing practice. BL Harley MS 2382 is also a small-scale, learned production. Charles Owen has suggested that it was copied by a clerical scribe for his own use.<sup>42</sup> Where this manuscript differs from Bodl. MS Bodley 75 is that it is not a single-text codex.

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<sup>41</sup> Phillipa Hardman, Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*: A Text in Transition', p. 250.

<sup>42</sup> Charles Owen, *The Manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), p. 115.

BL Harley MS 2382 is a small paper manuscript copied by a single unnamed scribe, comprised of 129 folios.<sup>43</sup> It measures 150 mm by 220 mm, while the written space measures 90 mm by 165 mm. It is a plain codex, copied in brown ink with occasional touchings in red (underlining of rubrics, running titles, highlighting of the first letters of the rhyme royal stanzas). The hand is a cramped and cursive secretary. The text begins imperfectly at Book I, l. 427. The first two leaves of the eight-leaf quire are missing and the third leaf is torn at the top.<sup>44</sup> The manuscript is very ragged at the edges and the pages are stained. It appears to have been compiled from booklets copied separately.<sup>45</sup> Mary Godfrey writes that it ‘demonstrates elements of manuscript production using booklets, probably by an amateur’.<sup>46</sup> There are headings within the manuscript that refer to particular folios and quires, directing the reader to other texts elsewhere. These indexing notes are important for the reader because, in several places, the scribe has copied sections of text into the remaining space in a folio, at the end of another text, so that single texts are split up over the codex and crammed into available space. The overall impression is one of extreme economy and slightly haphazard planning.<sup>47</sup>

### The texts

The manuscript mainly contains a collection of devotional and religious texts of a Marian or hagiographic kind. The first text is the *Life of Our Lady*. This is followed on f. 75r by *The Assumption of Our Lady* (NIMEV 2165), after which the scribe has copied a prayer to the Virgin from the *Speculum Christiani* (NIMEV 2119) on ff. 86v–87r. What follows is some disordered leaves of Lydgate’s *Testament* (NIMEV 2464) ff. 88–96v, which because of the scribe’s disorganized planning appears again on ff. 108–108v and 128v–129v. The *Prioress’s Prologue and Tale* begins on f. 97r. The tale ends on f. 100r. On f. 100v the *Second Nun’s Prologue and Tale* begins.

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<sup>43</sup> One leaf from this manuscript is missing and is erroneously bound in with another manuscript. BL Sloane MS 297 f. 88 should be f. 51 of BL Harley MS 2382.

<sup>44</sup> Line 427 is the first full line, given the diagonal tear at the top of the leaf.

<sup>45</sup> On booklet production see Ralph Hanna III, ‘Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts: Further Considerations’, *Studies in Bibliography*, 39 (1986), 100–111.

<sup>46</sup> Mary Godfrey, ‘The Fifteenth-Century Prioress’s Tale and the Problem of Anti-Semitism’, in *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400–1602*, ed. by Barbara Kline and Thomas Prendergast (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), pp. 93–115 (p. 104).

<sup>47</sup> Anthony Bale suggests that the *Prioress’s Tale* has been ‘reformatted as part of Lydgate’s *Testament*’. The Chaucerian text, he notes, ‘interrupts the *Testament* at the point at which ‘Lydgate’ the narrator, has detailed his youthful excesses’. Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Anti-Semitism, 1350–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 96.

The remaining texts in the volume are also of a hagiographic or devotional nature. The *Second Nun's Tale* is followed by another section from Lydgate's *Testament*, clearly added to fill the space left by the end of the previous text. On f. 109r, the *Life of Saint Erasmus* (NIMEV 173) appears. It ends on f. 111r.<sup>48</sup> The next text is the *Long Charter of Christ* (NIMEV 4154), beginning on f. 112r. On f. 118v the *Childe of Bristowe* (NIMEV 1157) appears. The text ends on f. 127r. It is followed by an animal prophecy of Merlin (NIMEV 2613.5) on ff. 127v–128r and the final two folios are another section from Lydgate's *Testament*, again apparently copied there to fill out remaining space.<sup>49</sup>

### The manuscript as a whole

This is a manuscript clearly made by a scribe anxious to save space, for whom paper appears to have been a precious commodity. The scribe's choice of texts is largely unsurprising, although the prophecy of Merlin is somewhat unusual. The presence of this text should not preclude the possibility of a clerical scribe, however.<sup>50</sup> The devotional texts, at times, have a flagellatory quality. In the *Life of Saint Erasmus*, the tyrant directs that the soldiers should torture the saint: 'kyte with a knyf his body round aboute/That his guttes & entrails may comen oute'.<sup>51</sup> The *Long Charter of Christ* describes Christ's torment in graphic detail: 'to a piler y was bound al þe nyght/togged and betyn til day-light/ and wasshen with myn owne blode'. The text makes a comparison between the parchment of the figurative charter and Christ's skin.<sup>52</sup> Here it is worth noting that the *Priores's Tale* contains a graphic description of a child's throat being slit, 'My throte is kut vnto my nekke'.<sup>53</sup> This is one of the few lines from the *Priores's Tale* which the scribe glosses.

Manly and Rickert suggested that this was 'a book which a country parson might have written for himself', and even went so far as to name a potential candidate, one William Hert

<sup>48</sup> *Sammlung Altenglischer Legenden*, ed. by Carl Horstmann (Leipzig: Heilbronn, 1878), pp. 198–201.

<sup>49</sup> There is no edition of this text, although a variant of it is printed in *The Welles Anthology MS Rawlinson C. 813*, ed. by Sharon L. Jansen and Kathleen H. Jordan, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies (Binghampton: State University of New York, 1991), pp. 281–284. The version in BL Harley MS 2382 ends at l. 52 of the Bodl. MS Rawlinson C. 813 version.

<sup>50</sup> Barbara Kline has examined the way the canons who copied BL Harley 7333 were unafraid to include heterodox material in their codex. 'Scribal Agendas and the Text of Chaucer's Tales in British Library Harley MS 7333', *Rewriting Chaucer*, ed. by Kline and Prendergast, pp. 116–44.

<sup>51</sup> *Sammlung Altenglischer Legenden*, ed. by Carl Horstmann, p. 199.

<sup>52</sup> *The Minor Poems of the Vernon Manuscript Part I*, ed. by Carl Horstmann, EETS O.S. 98, 117 (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1892), pp. 637–58 (p. 643).

<sup>53</sup> *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 212, l. 649.

(d. 1504).<sup>54</sup> Charles Owen called it ‘a labour of love, evolving as the scribe worked on it’.<sup>55</sup> Throughout the manuscript, the texts are glossed with heavily abbreviated Latin annotation. This annotation is in a cramped and scrawled cursive script, which is difficult to decipher, possibly indicating that the scribe was producing this gloss either for himself or a group of readers who were similarly Latinate. Godfrey notes that the presence of this annotation is ‘quite unusual in anthology copies of the *Prioress’s Tale*—suggesting these poems were valued not only for devotional purposes, but for their intellectual associations.’<sup>56</sup> She goes on to remark that ‘the glosses point to an owner anxious to use his small Latin to frame a reading experience in which the perusal of these selections are moments of scholarly study, reminders of biblical antecedents and connections to the world of intellectual argument and persuasion’.<sup>57</sup> There is no vernacular glossing at any point in the manuscript and no vernacular chapter titles. The scribe appears to have been keen to frame his selection of vernacular material with a scholarly Latinate apparatus. In what follows I seek to modify Godfrey’s suggestion that the scribe’s Latin is ‘small’, because, by contrast with Bodl. MS Bodley 75, the scribe’s glosses indicate that his level of education is more advanced than Godfrey suggests.

### **The treatment of the *Life* in the manuscript**

The *Life* is followed by the *Assumption of Our Lady* (NIMEV 2165). Even though it is in rhyming couplets and clearly different in quality to the poem that precedes it, the *Assumption* is added to Lydgate’s poem as the ‘sixth book’, with a final rubric that reads: ‘Explicit sextus liber sancte marie’, underlined in red and placed in the middle of the page (f. 86r).<sup>58</sup> This desire to continue the narrative of the poem testifies to two things. Firstly: that this fifteenth-century scribe felt rather less anxious about the notion of a discrete, stable textual object defined by authorship than a modern reader, or – even – a contemporary reader, with a different set of sensibilities,

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<sup>54</sup> *The Text of the Canterbury Tales Studied on the Basis of all Known Manuscripts*, ed. by Manly and Rickert, I, p. 248.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Owen, *The Manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales*, p. 115.

<sup>56</sup> Godfrey, ‘Fifteenth-Century Prioress’s Tale’, p. 106.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p. 106.

<sup>58</sup> The scribe has divided up Lydgate’s poem into five labelled and numbered books and then added an additional one which he seems to have felt completed the narrative of the Virgin’s life. In order to achieve this organization, he made modifications to the arrangement of the text in his exemplar. The scribe was, in all likelihood, working from an exemplar which had a six-book division. However, he chose to remove the fifth book division. He appears to have felt that six books were necessary and correct for his new hybrid poem, despite having seemingly felt the *Life* text needed additional material on the Assumption of the Virgin to complete her hagiography. Where there might be a boundary for the start of Book V, the scribe has left an enlarged red initial, but has not actually labelled the transition as the start of a new book (f. 72v).

would have done. For the scribe of BL Harley MS 2382 the narrative of a work and its devotional function was of greater importance than authorial continuity. (In the Conclusion I look at the way this scribe responds to different models of authorship in his glosses and rubrics.) As I noted in my first chapter, the *Life* appears unfinished because of how it falls strangely silent after the events of the Purification, without the kind of elaborate summing up that characterizes the ends of Books I–IV in the poem or the kind of elaborate peroration that we find in the conclusions of other works by Lydgate. And yet this anonymous scribe sought to rectify the problem of the *Life*'s abrupt conclusion by adding a text that suited a set of narrative rather than authorial demands. He chose to add supplementary material which completed the story of the Virgin's life, unconcerned by the fact that this meant adding material by a different author. Discussing the way scribes added lines to fill gaps in incomplete texts, Daniel Wakelin observes that 'the interest of scribes and readers was not an historical one in the author but a formalist one in the text and its internal coherence and accomplishment'.<sup>59</sup> This observation holds true for the sequence of these two texts in BL Harley MS 2382.

The text of the *Life* in this manuscript has no chapter titles or chapter divisions. There are eighteen enlarged or coloured initials or spaces left for initials which correspond to chapter divisions in the Type A scheme. These initials occur at the start of each of the books (as we find in *b*-group manuscripts), as well as in fourteen other places.<sup>60</sup> As in the case of Bodl. MS Bodley 75 the correspondence of chapter openings in the Type A scheme to enlarged or coloured initials in this manuscript suggests that the chapter titles in the Type A scheme may have been an expansion on a series of pre-existing divisions in an early manuscript. As there are no chapter titles in this manuscript, the textual apparatus is comprised of a network of Latin glosses in the margin (and also a small number of decorated initials and book divisions).

### The glosses

Some of the Latin glosses in the manuscript correspond to the Latin glosses of the Type A scheme, which means the scribe may have been copying from an exemplar with those glosses. For example, in Book III where the Type A scheme glosses ll. 1464–70 with 'Abdias propheta In monte ante Sion Et ascendit ex monte Sion ut montem Esau' [The prophet Obadiah. In the mount before Sion, cometh up out of the mount of Esau] (p. 533; f. 63r), BL Harley MS 2383

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<sup>59</sup> Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375–1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p.277.

<sup>60</sup> The coloured or enlarged initials occur at the start of Chapters V, VII, X, XII, XVI, XXI, XXIII, XXIV, XXVI, XXXII, LV, LXXVI and LXXVII. For the stemma, see *Critical Edition*, p. 17.

has ‘abdyas propheta’ (f. 49r). Next to Book III, 1484–91, the Type A scheme has ‘Splendor eius ut lux erit et coruna in manibus’ [His brightness shall be as the light; horns are in his hands] (p. 535; f. 63v), while BL Harley MS 2382 has ‘Splendor eius ut lux erit et coruna in manibus eius’ (f. 49r). However, in many cases BL Harley MS 2382’s glosses are more compressed than those in the Type A scheme.<sup>61</sup> Where the Type A scheme glosses ll. 1475–77 with ‘Naum propheta celebra Juda dies festes tuos ascendit qui insufflat in faciem tuam eripiens te ex eius tribulacione’ [The prophet Nahum. Juda keep thy festivals, he is come up that shall deliver thee from the sorrows of the one that breathes on thy face] (f. 67v; p. 534), BL Harley MS 2382 has ‘Monte Esau in Iudea’ (f. 49r). If the scribe of BL Harley MS 2382 had an exemplar with the Type A Latin glosses in front of him, he appears to have been selective with what he copied, occasionally expanding on what was in front of him, but most often contracting it.

The pattern of the scribe’s glossing reveals an interest in miracles and prophecies and a concern about heterodoxy. Whereas Bodl. MS Bodley 75 welds the text of the *Life* to the liturgy and to the scriptural text (in particular to the gospel text and the Psalms), BL Harley MS 2382 uses the margins of the poem to point to information on extra-scriptural miracles and typological fulfilment. The scribe’s anxiety about heterodoxy is especially evident in a section of Book IV (ll. 78–100), where Lydgate is discussing the symbolic significance of the circumcision of Christ. In this part of the text, the physical pain of the circumcision for Christ is a symbol of the pain for the Church caused by sinners. The Type A scheme allots this a chapter title, ‘How crist suffrid circumcision in his chosen peple’ (p. 563; f. 69r), which misrepresents what follows. However, the scribe of BL Harley MS 2382, picks out each of the symbolic tortures for the Church in his glosses. Lydgate writes that the circumcision is akin to the pain of ‘fals detraction’ (IV, 82), next to which the scribe has written ‘detractores’ [slanderers] (f. 54r); he also bemoans ‘cursyd Robbery’ (IV, 87) and the scribe responds with ‘spoliantes’ [thieves] (f. 54r); Lydgate condemns ‘herytykes that falsely disobey’ (IV, 90), to which the scribe adds ‘hereticos’ [heretics] (f. 54r). Finally, the poem warns against ‘tyrantes’ who ‘execute’ (IV, 93, 95), next to which the scribe has written, ‘occidentes’ [slaughterers] (f. 54r). Each of these glosses are underlined in red, drawing the reader’s attention to each transgression in turn. The scribe seems intent on wringing every last droplet of didactic information from the text here. By contrast, BL Add. MS 19252, for example, gives this part of the text a single title and no subsequent notations.

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<sup>61</sup> There are numerous other instances of this, as in for example ff. 49v–50r in BL Harley MS 2382 as opposed to ff. 63v–64v in Durham MS Cosin V.ii.16.

The scribe demonstrates his learnedness in his glossing of Book III in particular. In this part of the text he supplies a more extensive apparatus of scriptural reference than the Type A scheme. In Book III, for example, Lydgate exhorts his readers to ‘make his grovnde vpon the witnesse/Of prophetes’ (III, 572–73). He describes how ‘Dauid sayde in his wrytyng: /“O blissful lorde, shewe to vs thy face’ (III, 578–79). The BL Harley MS 2382 scribe has written ‘ostende nobis domine faciem tuam’ (f. 36v), following the Type A scheme. This is a contraction of two sections from the Psalter.<sup>62</sup> At the next stanza, however, the scribe adds a gloss which does not appear in the Type A scheme. Next to the line, ‘sende vnto vs thy comfortable light/ Vs to enlumyne liggyng un derkenesse’ (III, 582–83), the scribe has written, ‘Emitte lucem tuam et veritatem’ (f. 36v), which refers to Psalm 42:3, ‘Emitte lucem tuam et veritatem tuam; ipsa me deduxerunt, et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum, et in tabernacula tua’ [Send forth thy light and thy truth; they have conducted me, and brought me unto thy holy hill and into thy tabernacle]. The following lines concern the prophecy of the daughter of Syon, an image to which the poem often returns.<sup>63</sup> Lydgate describes ‘ysaye, with all his Inwarde sight’ (III, 584), who begged ‘Vnto the doughtir dwelling in Syon/Sende doovne thy lambe fulfilled with mekenesse’ (III, 589–99). Here the reference is to Isaiah 16:1: ‘Emitte agnum, Domine, dominatorem terrae, de petra deserti ad montem filiae Sion’ [Send forth, O Lord, the lamb, the ruler of the earth, from Petra of the desert, to the mount of the daughter of Sion]. The Type A scheme simply adds ‘Ysaie’ in the margin. The BL Harley MS 2382 scribe, however, supplies a snippet of the actual verse, writing: ‘de petra deserti’ (f. 36v). The poem does not mention Petra, so the scribe is demonstrating a knowledge of the specific verse. Two stanzas later, Lydgate describes the appeals of the prophets who ‘so longe dyden crye: “O come thou lorde and ne tarye nought”’ (III, 611–12). Here the scribe has added a liturgical reference rather than a scriptural one: ‘veni domine | noli tardare’ (f. 37r). This is an antiphon for Friday in the fourth week of Advent: ‘veni Domine et noli tardare relaxa facinora plebi tuae Israel’ [Come, Lord at do not delay, free thy people Israel from their misdeeds].<sup>64</sup> In the next section (f. 37r) the scribe follows the Type A scheme, but occasionally is more precise in his references. The Type A scheme simply has ‘Ieremye’ in the margin next to the lines:

And Ieremye spake eke of this day  
And sayde that god shulde make seed  
A greyn of Dauid fayrer than floure in may

<sup>62</sup> ‘Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam, et salutare tuum da nobis’ [Show us, O Lord, thy mercy; and grant us thy salvation] is Psalm 84:8. The phrase ‘et ostende faciem tuam, et salvi erimus’ [and show us thy face and we shall be saved] also appears three times in Psalm 79 (verses 4, 8 and 20).

<sup>63</sup> See: I, 296; II, 319; III, 542; III, 588; III, 615; III, 1469; III, 1555; III, 1765.

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.divinumofficium.com/>, accessed 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

Whiche in freshenesse shall euere spryng and sprede  
And conseruen Iuda oute of drede,  
And eke Israel kepe in sekyrnesse  
And he shall make all Rightwysnesse

Vpon the erthe of high and lowe degree (III, 638–45)

Next to this stanza, the BL Harley MS 2382 scribe has written, ‘*Jeremias xxxiii*’ (f. 37r). The scribe refers to Jeremiah 33:15–16:

In diebus illis et in tempore illo germinare faciam David germen justitiae, et faciet judicium et justitiam in terra. In diebus illis salvabitur Juda, et Jerusalem habitabit onfiderenter: et hoc est nomen quod vocabunt eum: Dominus Justus noster.

[In those days, and at that time, I will make the bud of justice to spring forth unto David, and he shall do judgement and justice in the earth. In those days shall Juda be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell securely: and thus is the name that they shall call him: the Lord, our just one.]

The scribe has pinpointed the exact part of Jeremiah to which Lydgate referred, thus demonstrating an impressive degree of scriptural learning. Lydgate’s reference to these verses is quite brief, but the scribe has taken the cue, showing that he was well versed in parts of the Bible which contain prophetic material.

On the next folio (f. 37v), where the Type A scheme has no glosses, the BL Harley MS 2382 scribe has added several scriptural quotations. Lydgate describes the vision of the prophet Malachi, ‘In Malachie in the same wyse/ This sonne of life shall spryng and Ryse/ To all tho that hym loue and drede’ (III, 657–59), next to which the scribe has added ‘*vobis timentibus* | *nomen meum* | *sol iusticie*’, which refers to Malachi 4:2: ‘Et orietur vobis timentibus nomen meum sol justitiae et sanitas in pennis eius et egrediemini et salietis sciut vituli de armento’ [But unto you that fear my name, the Sun of justice shall arise, and health in his wings: and you shall go forth, and shall leap like calves of the herd]. These kinds of annotations, of more unfamiliar parts of the scriptural text, indicate the scribe’s interest in typological and prophetic material. His glosses, which pinpoint the precise scriptural sources for the ‘seed’ of ‘Dauid’ that will grow ‘fayrer then foure in may’ and the ‘sonne of life’ that will ‘spryng and Ryse’, show the scribe responding, in learned fashion, to the typological parts of the poem.

As well as demonstrating a high-level knowledge of particular parts of the Old Testament, the scribe also adds glosses which refer to more familiar parts of the New Testament, like the scribe of Bodl. MS Bodley 75. While the glossing in Book III seeks, largely, to pick out Old Testament references which are cited in the text, the glossing in Book II adds

snippets of gospel verses that are not in the Type A apparatus. For example, in Book II, at l. 1236, in an episode in which Joseph ponders his wife's mysterious pregnancy, the scribe has written 'Cum esset iustus noluit eam traducere' [being a just man, and not willing to expose her publicly] (f. 22r). This is from Matthew 1:19. On the next folio, the scribe has completed the Biblical verse, adding 'voluit occulite dimitte eam' [he was minded to put her away quietly] (f. 22v). Equally, in the description of the Virgin's visit to Elizabeth, next to ll. 946–47, 'Roos vppe a noon, and oute of Naȝareth/ Tawarde the Mounteyns', the scribe has written 'Exurgens maria abiit' (f. 18r), which is a contraction of Luke 1: 39: 'Exsurgens autem Maria in deibus ilia biit in Montana cum festinationes in civitatem Juda' [And Mary, rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda]. One stanza later, next to ll. 954–56, 'For verrey loye and in spirituall gladnesse/The yong enfant...Reioysyde hym', there is a gloss which reads: 'Exultauit in gaudio infans' (f. 18r). This is an extract from Luke 1: 44, 'Ecce enim ut facta est vox saluationis tue in auribus meis, exsultavit in gaudio infans in utero meo' [For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy]. Both of these glosses also appear in Bodl. MS Bodley 75 (f. 25r–v)

Like the scribe of Bodl. MS Bodley 75, the scribe of BL Harley MS 2382 often provides material in the marginal space which is both scriptural and liturgical. For example, on f. 35v, next to the section of the text that deals with the adoration of the shepherds, and the line, 'And Marye cloos within hir herte/Conserved all that she dyed see' (III, 533–34), the BL Harley MS 2382 scribe has written 'maria conser- | vabat omnia verba haec' [Mary kept all these words in her heart] (f. 35v). (The scribe of Bodl. MS Bodley 75 also adds this gloss on f. 43r.) This is from Luke 2:51, but it is also an antiphon for the Tuesday of the fourth week of Advent.<sup>65</sup> The Type A scheme leaves this passage unglossed.

The scribe's other area of interest lies in his glossing of sections of the *Life* which contain accounts of miracles. Miracles are a common theme of some of the texts in the manuscript and they are often glossed. We see his interest in the selection of the two Chaucer texts, in the *Child of Bristowe* and the *Life of Saint Erasmus*, which all describe miraculous events. The scribe's interest in the miraculous material is also evident in the *Life*, in Book IV. Here, the Type A scheme endows Book IV, ll. 110–154 with a chapter title which reads 'How criste shedde his blode v tymes in his manhede' (p. 565; f. 69v), whereas the BL Harley MS 2382 scribe glosses this as 'de quintus effusiones sanguinis' [the five effusions of blood] (f. 54v).

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<sup>65</sup> University of Waterloo CANTUS database, online: <http://cantusdatabase.org/id/003696>, accessed 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

Though in Latin, the substance of the latter title is the same; what follows differs, however. In the Type A scheme the following section of text, which describes the way the circumcision of Christ prefigures the Passion and then describes the miracle associated with Christ's foreskin, is unmarked. There are no glosses in the margin and there is no extra-textual material until the next chapter. The BL Harley MS 2382 scribe, however, has made several marginal annotations in this part of the poem, all marking parts of the text which describe miracles. The scribe has written 'nota miraculum' [note the miracle] (f. 54v) in the marginal space next to the following lines: 'On Caluery hym perced with a spere/That blode and water as bokes maken mynde/Gan streme doyne to his eyne blynde' (IV, 115–17). This describes the story of Longinus – the centurion whose sight was restored by Christ's blood when he pierced Christ's side with a spear.<sup>66</sup> In the next section of text, the scribe has added further glosses. The scribe has written 'de nota Regem Charolo' [note the Emperor Charlemagne] (f. 54v) next to the lines which describe the miracle of 'the pece of his Incision [foreskin]' (IV, 121) which was 'To Charles [Charlemagne] brought in a vyson' (IV, 123) and then one stanza later he writes 'nota miraculum grande' [note the great miracle], next to the stanza which describes how 'the same pece retournede as blyfe/To the place where that it cam froo' (IV, 133–34).<sup>67</sup>

The scribe's interest in miraculous material is also evident in Book III, in a typological section of the poem in which Lydgate is working from Robert Grosseteste's *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* – in this case the *Book of Joseph*, Chapter XIX: 'as Ioseph lust endyte/The sonne of Iacob in his testament' (III, 910–11).<sup>68</sup> Where the Type A apparatus simply picks out the word 'Lincoln' [Grosseteste was Bishop of Lincoln] in the margin (p. 494; f. 55v), the scribe of BL Harley MS 2382 instead draws attention to the miraculous vision of Jacob with a gloss which reads: 'nota de visione Jacob mirabilia' [note the miraculous vision of Jacob] (f. 41r).

While the scribe of Bodl. MS Bodley 75 glosses the most familiar parts of the gospel story, the scribe of BL Harley MS 2382 has a broader sense of the whole Christological story. His glosses reveal an interest in the way Old Testament and patristic sources typologically prefigure or supplement the gospel account. In a more general sense, we see the scribe's wide-ranging interest in different kinds of texts relating to miracles in his selection of other texts in

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<sup>66</sup> The episode is detailed in the *Legenda Aurea* (De Sancto Longino, Cap. XLVII). *Jacobi a Voragine Legenda Aurea Vulgo Historia Lombardica Dicta*, ed. by Johan Graesse, pp. 202–03

<sup>67</sup> This episode is also detailed in another part of the *Legenda Aurea* (De circumcione Domini, Cap. XIII). *Ibid.*, pp. 85–86.

<sup>68</sup> *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, ed. by R.H. Charles (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908), p. 191.

the manuscript. BL Harley MS 2382 and Bodl. MS Bodley 75 demonstrate the work of two learned scribes with different levels of learning and foci of interest.

## Conclusion

The unique types of textual apparatus discussed here show that responses to the *Life* diverged in the fifteenth century. HEH MS HM 115, which may have been produced in Syon-Sheen, seeks to frame the text as a work potentially of use in devotional exercises for ‘symplesoules’. In this high-status manuscript, probably created for a wealthy lay readership, there is a particular focus on parts of the poem which deal with the acts of the Virgin, with her defense of her virginity receiving a particular focus in the manuscript’s apparatus. In HEH MS HM 115, the *Life* is presented alongside a series of other hagiographies, the apparatuses of which suggest they were intended for devotional reading. BL Add. MS 19252, an equally high-status manuscript, demonstrates an apparent dissatisfaction with the Type A scheme, providing a crisper and at times more logical set of chapter titles for the poem. In small-scale linguistic modifications, we see this scribe’s concern to assert the text’s doctrinal authority. These high quality, vellum manuscripts, with their considered decorative programmes, stand in stark contrast to the last two manuscripts discussed, which are all small-scale productions probably made by clerics for their own use. They demonstrate that for scribes producing manuscripts for themselves, or for circulation amongst a learned milieu, the poem was framed quite differently. In Bodl. MS Bodley 75 and BL Harley MS 2382 there are no vernacular chapter titles, just abbreviated Latin glosses. Mary Godfrey remarked of the BL Harley MS 2382 scribe that his ‘glosses point to an owner anxious to use his small Latin to frame a reading experience in which the perusal of these selections are moments of scholarly study, reminders of biblical antecedents and connections to the world of intellectual argument and persuasion’.<sup>69</sup> In fact, by comparison with the scribe of Bodl. MS Bodley 75, the BL Harley MS 2382 scribe reveals a broad scriptural knowledge and wider frame of reference. Whereas the Bodley 75 scribe is predominantly concerned with the gospel narrative of the Virgin’s life, the BL Harley 2382 scribe glosses more widely, showing an interest in miraculous and prophetic material and a knowledge of a larger range of source material. I return to his work in my Conclusion. For now, however, it is enough to say that both scribes add liturgical material to the margins of the poem – showing an interest in aligning the poem to devotional practice. This conjunction of the text with material used devotionally is noticeably absent in some of the later manuscripts of the *Life*, as we shall see in Chapter Five.

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, p. 106.

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## CHAPTER FOUR: THE MANUSCRIPT AND PRINT EXTRACTS

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The previous three chapters have concerned, in different ways, the extra-textual space of the *Life* and the way in which various non-authorial figures – be they scribes or designers – have sought to shape the text’s meaning with the information which they added to the poem’s margins. Here I discuss scribal intervention of a more radical kind, namely extraction; and briefly of a more incidental kind, namely textual co-location. In different kinds of manuscripts we see extracts of the *Life* inserted into, or placed alongside, other texts, each time in such a way that the poem is re-purposed. To varying degrees these different kinds of non-authorial activity support the assertion made by Michael Johnson that scribes are ‘interpreters of literary texts and (...) co-participants, along with authors, in the creation of meaning’.<sup>1</sup>

Amongst the list of fifty manuscripts of the *Life* there are three fragments and eight extracts. The fragments are: BL Sloane MS 1785, which contains a disordered collection of leaves with sections of text from Book II, describing the Virgin’s early life in the temple; BL Sloane MS 297, which is a single leaf from BL Harley MS 2382; and thirdly some leaves from a dismembered manuscript, scattered across different collections, which are: Columbia, Missouri, University of Missouri *Fragmenta Manuscripta*, f. 178; Camb., Gonville and Caius MS 804/808 and CUL, MS Add. 3303 (7) ff. 1–4.<sup>2</sup>

As interesting as these fragments are, this chapter focuses on the eight surviving intentional extracts of the *Life* in both manuscript and print. As Rossell Hope Robbins observed, ‘a characteristic of Middle English verse is the extrapolation from longer poems of several stanzas which then assume an independent existence and are sometimes mistaken for individual

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Johnson, ‘Constantinian Christianity in the London Manuscript: The Codicological and Linguistic Evidence of Thornton’s Intentions’, in *Robert Thornton and His Books* (York: York Medieval Press, 2014), pp. 177–204 (p.177).

<sup>2</sup> This manuscript is incorrectly cited in the *NIMEV* as ‘Additional MS 3077 (7)’, see *NIMEV* 2574, 46(ii). On the fragments of this lost manuscript see, Harold G. Jones III, ‘An Unedited Manuscript of John Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*: Book V, verses 344–364 and 372–392’, *English Language Notes*, 8 (1969), 93–96; A.S.G. Edwards and A.W. Jenkins, ‘Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*: An Unedited Manuscript of Part of Book III’, *English Language Notes*, 9 (1971), 1–3; Stephen R. Reimer, ‘A Fragment of John Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady* in Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge’, *English Language Notes*, 33 (1995), 1–14.

poems'.<sup>3</sup> Here I will argue that the eight *Life* extracts have much to tell us about the status of the vernacular and shifting models of authorship in the late medieval and early modern period. They also shine a light on the social life of texts, on habits of collecting, and on the emergence of antiquarianism in this era.

The extract manuscripts are varied. Firstly, Adv. MS 19.3.1 (known as the Heege Manuscript) comprises Books IV–VI of the *Life*, divided into sections and ending imperfectly.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, TCD MS 423, f. 103v is an extract of seven lines (III, 1–7) in a bilingual Latin and Middle English anthology of devotional and theological texts.<sup>5</sup> Thirdly, HEH MS HM HM 144 contains two extracts: a section from Book II, 1–504 (ff. 11–20), and the *Magnificat* paraphrase (II, 940–1060), ff. 77v–79r. The *Magnificat* paraphrase also appears in three further witnesses. The earliest of these, our fourth extract manuscript, is Camb., Gonville and Caius College MS 230/116, which is a miscellany of Latin texts apparently written at Saint Albans Abbey, possibly for Abbot John Whethamstede (d. 1465).<sup>6</sup> A later witness is Adv. MS 1.1.6 (our fifth extract manuscript, also known as the Bannatyne Manuscript), which was written in 1568. This comprises a draft manuscript (with page numbers) and a fair copy (with folio references) bound together and so contains the *Magnificat* paraphrase (II, 981–1060) twice, on pp. 22–4 and ff. 25v–26v.<sup>7</sup> The third of these witnesses, our sixth extract manuscript, is another early modern manuscript, BL MS Add. 29729, which was copied by the antiquarian John Stow (b. 1524/5, d. 1605) and completed in 1558.

The two remaining manuscript extracts appear each attached to the same Chaucerian text: BL Harley MS 7333 and TCC MS R.3.19 both append the same stanza of Lydgate's eulogy on Geoffrey Chaucer (II, 1628–34) to Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls* (NIMEV 3412). This eulogy of Lydgate's is also extracted in some print witnesses: John Stow's 1561 *Woorke of Geoffrey Chaucer* (STC 5076) contains the stanza which appears in BL Harley MS 7333 and TCC MS R.3.19, whereas a more extended version of the eulogy, consisting of four stanzas, was

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<sup>3</sup> Rossell Hope Robbins, 'A New Lydgate Fragment', *English Language Notes* 5 (1968), 243–47 (p. 243).

<sup>4</sup> Phillipa Hardman, *The Heege Manuscript : A Facsimile of National Library of Scotland Ms Advocates 19.3.1*, (Leeds: Leeds Studies in English, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> *Trinity College Library Dublin: Descriptive Catalogue of the Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Manuscripts*, ed. by Marvin L. Colker, 2 vols (Aldershot: Scolar Press for Trinity College Dublin, 1991), II, pp. 839–44.

<sup>6</sup> On this manuscript and the connection to Whethamstede, see M.R James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907–08), I, pp. 268–76 and also 'St Albans Abbey: History', *A History of the County of Hertford: Volume 2*, ed. by William Page (London, 1908), pp. 483–488, online edition: see <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/herts/vol2/pp483-488>, accessed 17<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

<sup>7</sup> *The Bannatyne Manuscript: National Library of Scotland Advocates MS 1.1.6*, ed. by Denton Fox and William A. Ringler (London: Scolar Press, 1980).

included in Thomas Speght's 1598 (*STC* 5078) and 1602 (*STC* 5080) editions of Chaucer's works.

These eight manuscript extracts are heterogeneous and show the *Life* re-purposed in a variety of ways. Some have the purpose of moral commentary, others were valued for their narrative, others still had a devotional function, and in some places the extracts act as convenient filler to close off an open-ended text. We find sections of the *Life* in a Latinate monastic compendium (Camb. Gonville and Caius MS 230/11), in an antiquarian collection (BL Add. MS 29729), in an anthology for instructing children of the gentry (Adv. MS 19.3.1), and in editions (primarily) of Chaucer, reframed as a biographical addendum (BL Harley MS 7333, TCC MS R. 3.19, *STC* 5078 and *STC* 5080). Not one of the extracts appears with reference to the *Life* as a text, although two do attribute authorship to Lydgate. Freed of their original context in the poem as a whole, these excerpts end up reconfiguring the poem.

Here it will be necessary to address the *Life*'s reconfiguration in later years, ahead of my designated treatment of this subject in Chapter Five ('Afterlives'), as several of the extracts date from the end of the fifteenth or from the sixteenth century. Furthermore, my line of argument will be drawn more generally here than in other chapters, because as we have seen, the extract manuscripts differ markedly in purpose. Some bear a relationship to one another in that they contain the same extract from the poem, but even in these cases, each extract's manuscript context is radically different. In what follows, I treat each manuscript or print extract in turn. The same textual extracts are clustered together (although Huntington MS 144's two distinct extracts somewhat disrupt this organizational scheme). I begin by looking at two manuscripts which contain extracts not found elsewhere (Adv. 19.3.1 and TCD MS 423), before progressing to examine manuscripts or prints containing the same textual extract, and discussing them in groups. I conclude with HEH MS HM 144.

Despite the slightly fractious nature of the extracts, the underlying theme of much of this chapter's discussion will be the concept of authorship. (Concepts of authorship, and how they are reflected in modes of attribution, are explored in the Conclusion.) In two out of the eight manuscripts (BL Add. MS 29729 and Camb., Gonville and Caius MS 230/11), the extracts are accompanied by rubrics which attribute authorship to Lydgate. I argue that, in these two manuscripts, the scribes have attributed authorship to Lydgate for different reasons, because each has his own notion of what makes a valued author. In each case the attribution to Lydgate gives the text a value unique to itself.

Similarly, one of the extracts under discussion here is the eulogy to Chaucer from Book II, which appears in two manuscript witnesses as well as in some early prints. The extraction of

this part of the poem has much to tell us about changing attitudes towards authorship in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The extracts speak both to the way Lydgate figures authorship in the poem (both his own and the authorship of his ‘maister Chaucer’ [II,1628]), and to the way later figures responded to these images of authorship.

Lydgate’s era was one in which concepts of authorial value were shifting, and we see that writ large in the discussion here. Daniel Wakelin observes that authors, scribes and readers were inventing ‘the power of the author in this period, whether cast as the scholastic *auctor* or as the courtly laureate’.<sup>8</sup> We might see vernacular authorship at this point as a continuum between *auctor* and laureate. This was a moment of change in which vernacular writers were beginning to fashion their own value as authors. Lydgate, like other poets connected to the Lancastrian court at the start of the fifteenth century, sought to valorise the vernacular. Looking back to the work of Chaucer, they sought, retrospectively, to create a tradition of vernacular authorship into which they might conveniently insert themselves. Below, we will see that this shifting notion of vernacular authorship is demonstrated in the *Magnificat* extract; that Lydgate, in his translation of the Latin liturgical text, makes a claim for the value of the vernacular and also, by implication, for the value of his vernacular authorship; and that what the different manuscript contexts of each of the *Magnificat* witnesses reflect is the shifting nature of authorial value in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Despite the way several of the extracts touch on issues of authorship, not all of them do. My discussion in this chapter will divide the extracts accordingly into two halves. In half of the extracts we see the importance of authorship to a text’s identity, either because the texts discuss authorship itself, or because the texts’ value was in part contingent on their being visibly authored. In the other half, however, we see parts of the *Life* valued not because they are authored texts, or because they reflect on authorship, but because they might be re-purposed in a larger narrative (as we will see in HEH MS HM 144) or as a series of readings for a household miscellany (as we see in the Heege manuscript, the first under discussion). In these cases, the authorship of the texts seems not to have been a major concern for the scribes. This dividing line between some texts, whose value is bound up with authorship, and others, whose value is contingent on different factors, provides evidence for a certain malleability of authorial value in the period.

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<sup>8</sup> Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375–1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 277.

## Heege: liturgical readings

The Heege manuscript, Adv. MS 19. 3 .1, contains the longest extract of the *Life* of any of the extract manuscripts. This manuscript, which has received extensive scholarly treatment from Phillipa Hardman,<sup>9</sup> takes its name from its main scribe, ‘Recordus Heege’, who signs his name seven times in the codex.<sup>10</sup> The manuscript was produced in the North East Midlands in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, seemingly for a gentry household. Michael Johnston writes that the manuscript was ‘copied in a provincial Derbyshire household for use in that same household’.<sup>11</sup> As the name ‘Sherbrooke’ appears multiple times in the codex, thus it appears likely that the manuscript was made for the Sherbrooke family.<sup>12</sup>

Alongside the sections of the *Life*, the manuscript contains romances *Sir Gowther* (NIMEV 973, in ff. 11r–27v), and *Sir Ysumbras* (NIMEV 1184, in ff. 48r–56v), as well as a prose life of Saint Katherine (ff. 30r–47r), medical recipes (f. 62v, f. 64v), lyrics such as *Omnis Caro Fenum Est* (NIMEV 358, in ff. 95v–96r), an extract from the *Fall of Princes* (NIMEV 1184, in f. 61v), devotional verse such as the *Vision of Tundale* (NIMEV 1724, in ff. 98r–157v) and courtesy texts such as *Stans Puer ad Mensam* (NIMEV 4153, in ff. 28r–29v). Scholars note that the manuscript resembles an instructional anthology. Thorlac Turville-Petre, for instance, called it ‘a compendium for the instruction and occasional amusement of the family’.<sup>13</sup> Hardman further notes that each romance text is paired with a courtesy text focusing on the proper behaviour of young boys, a pairing which indicates that the texts were ‘prepared for children to read’.<sup>14</sup> We see evidence of young readers in the part of the manuscript which contains the *Life*. On f. 202v, at the end of Book V, under an *explicit* which reads, ‘Here endith þe offuryng verement/ Of thre kynges w<sup>t</sup> gud entent’, a different, more shaky, hand has written, ‘Ryght reverent and

<sup>9</sup> Phillipa Hardman, *The Heege Manuscript : A Facsimile of National Library of Scotland Ms Advocates 19.3.1.* see also Phillipa Hardman, ‘Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*: A Text in Transition’, *Medium Aevum*, 65 (1996), pp. 248–68 (esp. pp. 260–62) and ‘Domestic Learning and Teaching: Investigating Evidence for the Role of “Household Miscellanies” in Late Medieval England’, in *Women and Writing, c.1340–c.1650: The Domestication of Print Culture*, ed. by Phillipa Hardman and Anne Lawrence-Mathers (York Medieval Press in association with The Boydell Press, 2010), pp. 15–33 (esp. pp. 28–31).

<sup>10</sup> ff. 29v, 47r, 56v, 60v, 67v, 86v and 157v.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 142–49 (p.142).

<sup>12</sup> For full discussion of the family and its connections see *Ibid*, pp. 142–49.

<sup>13</sup> Thorlac Turville-Petre, ‘Some Medieval Manuscripts in the North-East Midlands’, in *Manuscripts and Readers in Fifteenth Century England: the Literary Implications of Manuscript Study* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983), pp. 125–41 (p.140).

<sup>14</sup> Phillipa Hardman, ‘Popular Romances and Young Readers’, in *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance*, ed. by Raluca L. Radulescu and Cory James Rushton (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009), pp. 150–64 (pp. 163–64).

Worschapffull master I recommend me vn to yov as mekely as I can do offiryng'. It looks like a child's hand, practising writing out a letter formula, perhaps inspired by the word 'offuryng' in the *explicit* of Book V.

The section of the *Life* which this manuscript contains is Books IV–VI. Hardman argues that the excerpt from the *Life* was chosen to form appropriate liturgical readings for specific points in the calendar year: 'Heege recognized the potential inherent in Lydgate's poem of this rearrangement as a calendar of readings'.<sup>15</sup> Although the portion of text represented in the manuscript comprises Books IV–VI, the text is labelled as a series of thematic units rather than as books. Lydgate's authorship of the extract is not stated, nor is the *Life* not cited as the source. The text begins at IV, l. 1 on f. 176r, with a rubric reading 'de circumcisio'. At the end of this section, in the blank space at the bottom of the page on f. 185v there is a prayer against bleeding. Then ff. 186r–210r contain Books V and VI, but only up to line 301, so that the last stanza is the Latin stanza from the *Legenda Aurea* (VI, 295–301), which Lydgate interpolated into the poem. This witness thus lacks the poem's final twenty-two stanzas.<sup>16</sup>

Hardman suggests that the excerpt may have been intended for a young woman or women: 'the pattern of annotation looks as if it was aimed at a female audience'.<sup>17</sup> In addition to this pattern of annotation, an 'El[i]sabet[h] Bradchaw' signed her name in the top margin of f. 45r of the manuscript.<sup>18</sup>

To sum up, the Heege manuscript presents the *Life* in a radically new way. Taking only the final books of the poem – the shortest books and the ones with the most obvious liturgical resonances – Heege anthologized a series of self-contained narrative units with a didactic function, making a manuscript apparently for the instruction of young women and children.

### TCD MS 423

TCD MS 423, f. 103v, contains and modifies a single stanza from the *Life*: the first stanza of Book III, which has the sixth line removed, the seventh line in place of it, and a different final line. The scribe has removed the line which reads, 'Whiche ay abydythe and partyth not from the' (III, 6). Because of a small variation in the second line, with manuscripts in the *b*-group

<sup>15</sup> *The Heege Manuscript*, ed. by Hardman, p. 31.

<sup>16</sup> Intriguingly this is the same end to the text as is found in Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B, which is discussed at length in the next chapter. The two are unlikely to have a common exemplar given that Adv. MS 19.3.1 contains a stanza VI, ll. 211–17 missing in Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B. On the significance of this missing stanza, see the next chapter.

<sup>17</sup> *The Heege Manuscript*, ed. by Hardman, p. 32.

<sup>18</sup> In the following chapter, I note the inscriptions made by other female owners of the *Life*.

reading ‘was passed half’ rather than ‘was halfe past’, it appears likely that this manuscript was copied from a *c*-group manuscript or exemplar. The modification of the final lines makes the stanza a more self-contained unit, which reads:

Whan al was husht and al was in sylens  
And in his cours þe longe sterry nyght  
Was halfe past and fresh of apparens  
lacina shon on hevene fayre and bryght  
Thi worde o lorde which is ful of myght,  
Sent and dessendid from thi roial see  
Unto þe erthe whan that lost weren we

And for<sup>19</sup>

(f. 103v)

The stanza is indebted to Wisdom 18: 14, ‘Cum enim quietum silentium coninteret Omnia, et nox in suo cursu medium iter haberet’ [For while all things were in quiet silence and the night was in the midst of her course]. The verse was part of the liturgy of the Christmas feast, which is appropriate, given that Book III deals with the Nativity (*Critical Edition*, p. 689). The scribe’s modification of the final lines makes the redemptive meaning of the stanza more explicit. In using the second person plural in the final line, the intervention of God into the life of ‘lost’ mankind is more overt. In the *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse*, the verse is (somewhat amusingly) described as ‘One stanza rhyme royal in aureate language, apparently the beginning of an amateurish religious-moral poem’.<sup>20</sup> It is written on the final folio of the manuscript’s first booklet. The folio has been trimmed and the text is surrounded by pen-trials. The rest of the manuscript contains a selection of vernacular and Latin devotional texts.

The manuscript is a paper and vellum manuscript of 149 folios which dates from the second to third quarter of the fifteenth century and is made up of two booklets. The two different booklets contain different watermarks.<sup>21</sup> The extract from the *Life* appears in the first booklet on the verso of the final leaf. The only other text in this booklet is William Nassington’s *Speculum Vitae*.<sup>22</sup> The other texts in the manuscript are largely in Latin: an Augustinian sermon (f. 104), various indulgences and a prayer for indulgences (f. 105r–v), commonplaces drawn from Augustine (f. 105v–6v), Pseudo-Bernadine *Meditationes* (ff. 109v–

<sup>19</sup> These two words appear in the same hand that copied the stanza. The rest of the text on the folio appears to be in a different hand.

<sup>20</sup> Rossell Hope Robbins and John L. Cutler, *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), no. 3926.5.

<sup>21</sup> Colker, *Trinity College Library Dublin: Descriptive Catalogue of Renaissance Latin Manuscripts*, II, p. 843.

<sup>22</sup> William of Nassington, *Speculum Vitae: A Reading Edition*, ed. by Ralph Hanna, EETS O.S. 331 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

117v), and a sequence of theological texts (ff. 118r–20r), which includes one on martyrdom (f. 118v), two sermons in Latin with some snippets of English (ff. 120v–122r and f. 123v), a text on appropriate devotion to the Magdalene (f. 122r), a sermon on Saint Michael from the *Legenda Aurea* (f. 123v), and a series of short Latin *exempla* (ff. 148r–149v); the only other vernacular text in the volume is a Pseudo-Bonaventuran prose *Life of the Virgin and Christ* (ff. 124r–147v).

Alongside so many Latin texts, the appearance of the *Life*, even in extract form, is unusual. Latin texts occur infrequently in manuscripts containing the *Life*, and this is especially true of those manuscripts which contain complete or near-complete copies of the poem (it is worth noting that there are no texts in languages other than Latin or Middle English in any of the manuscripts).<sup>23</sup> Camb., Gonville and Caius MS 230/11, discussed below, is an almost exclusively Latin codex. There are some short verses on the *Agnus Dei* in CCC MS 237, f. 242. A different hand has added the *Martyrology of Saint Usuard* to Durham MS Cosin V.ii 16, ff. 90v–91v. There is a short section of Augustine's *City of God* in Chetham's MS 6709, f. 179v and a Latin couplet in BL Harley MS 2382, f. 127r. A scribe named Edward Fulford (who is different from the main hand) has added a version of the Latin dialogue poem *Ecce Mundus Moriatur* (with a previously unrecorded inter-stanza Middle English translation) to the final folios of Illinois MS 85, ff. 84r–85r.<sup>24</sup> These examples, however, are the notable exceptions across a corpus of fifty manuscript witnesses. Slightly surprisingly, the manuscripts of the *Life* are written predominantly in Middle English (see further below).

### **BL Harley MS 7333 and TCC MS R.3.19: the Chaucer eulogy**

Arguably the most complex of the manuscript and print extracts from the *Life* is Lydgate's eulogy to Chaucer from the end of Book II. This part of the poem had an extensive afterlife of its own. As we have seen, it appears in different forms, of varying lengths, in BL Harley MS 7333, in TCC MS R.3.19 and in several editions of Chaucer's *Works* from 1561, 1598 and 1602: in the two manuscript witnesses the excerpt is only a stanza in length (II, 1628–34), whereas in the later print editions it is longer, comprising four stanzas (II, 1628–55).

Even in complete manuscript copies of the *Life*, this part of the text is often given special treatment, especially at the hands of later readers. Many manuscripts draw attention to this section of the poem by means of chapter titles or glosses. In the Type A apparatus, the

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<sup>23</sup> There is an inscription in French in Bodl. Rawl. Poet MS 140 on the opening flyleaf.

<sup>24</sup> I am preparing to submit these verses to a journal for publication.

eulogy is afforded a chapter title, ‘A commendacion of Chauucers’ (f. 43v). The variants of the Type A scheme also highlight this reference to Lydgate’s literary predecessor. HEH MS HM 115 does not give this part of the poem a chapter title, but does add ‘chaucers’ in the margin; BL Add. MS 19252 adds a note in the margin reading ‘a commendacion of chauceris | a garland’ (f. 45v), underscoring the garland of laurels which Lydgate imagines encircling Chaucer’s head, as a symbol of his laureateship. The scribe of Beinecke MS 281 (a manuscript which largely preserves the Type A apparatus), expands the function and significance of the Chaucer eulogy. There, Lydgate’s prayer to the Virgin, which follows the eulogy (II, 1663–69) is put into the mouth of Chaucer himself, with a title that reads, ‘Howe Chauucers praied to oure lady for his spede’ (f. 52r). In this instance, the dead Chaucer becomes a devout mouthpiece for one of the poem’s many prayers to the Virgin.

The stanza also appeared in John Stow’s edition of *The Woorkes of Geoffrey Chaucer* [London: John Kyngston for John Wright, 1561] (STC 5076), sig. Ppp i<sup>b</sup>. When Speght came to augment Stow’s edition, he expanded Stow’s extract of one stanza, printing four stanzas (II, 1628–55) in *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* [London: Adam Islip for Thomas Wright, 1598] (STC 5078), sig. Cii<sup>b</sup> and *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* [London: Adam Islip for George Bishop, 1602] (STC 5081), sig. a3<sup>b</sup>. Perhaps as a result of these printed versions, there seems to have been an interest in the eulogy well into the eighteenth century. In Beinecke MS 660, an eighteenth-century hand has added ‘vid. Chaucers Life’ to this part of the text (f. 33r). In addition, an eighteenth-century bookseller, Thomas Wilson (b. 1703, d. 1784) copied the four stanzas of the Chaucer eulogy from Bodl. MS Rawl. Poet 140 onto the final leaves of an early fourteenth-century Psalter, now Houghton MS Lat. 394.<sup>25</sup>

The interest in the eulogy outlived the pre-modern period, and is still discernable in modern scholarship. Much has been made of this *paean* to Chaucer and Lydgate’s reference to Chaucer elsewhere, and somewhat unfairly the eulogy has become the most famous part of the *Life*. Despite the richness of the rest of the poem, this short section has received an undue share of scholarly attention and often appears printed in discussions about Lydgate or Chaucerian afterlives, without any other reference to the *Life* as a whole.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> This is discussed in the next chapter. Full digital facsimile of the Houghton manuscript is available at: [http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/early\\_manuscripts/bibliographies/Lat.cfm](http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/early_manuscripts/bibliographies/Lat.cfm). A comparison of the text in Lat. 394 with the Rawl. manuscript reveals similar textual variants, although there are some differences.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Lois Ebin, *Illuminator, Makar, Vates: Visions of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp. 4, 23, 24, 28, 30, 34. Ebin quotes these stanzas several times in different forms and apart from one other brief quotation from Book I, does not discuss the rest of the poem at all. Ebin also quotes a section from the *Life* which appears in BL Harley MS 7333, *Illuminator*,

Lydgate's eulogy to Chaucer represents a complex attempt on his part to validate his own art strategically, for he installs Chaucer in a gilded literary tradition to which he is the only rightful heir. Much has been written about the way in which Lydgate was, in part, responsible for creating a fascination with Chaucer in the fifteenth century. I do not wish to rehearse the work of others here, but the language of his eulogy deserves examination:

And eke my maister Chauser is ygrave  
The noble Rethor, poete of Brytayne  
That worthy was the laurer to haue 1630  
Of poetrye, and the palme atteyne  
That made firste, to distille and rayne  
The golde dewe, dropes, of speche and eloquence  
Into our tunge, thurgh his excellence 1635

And fonde the floures, firste of Retoryke  
Our Rude speche, only to enlumyne  
That in our tunge, was neuere noon hym like  
For as the sonne, dothe in hevyn shyne  
In mydday spere, dovne to vs by lyne  
In whose presence, no ster may a pere  
Right so his dyte<sup>3</sup> withoutyn envy pere  
1640

Euery makyng with his light disteyne  
In sothefastnesse, who so takethe hede  
Wherfore no wondre, thof my hert pleyne 1645  
Vpon his dethe, and for sorowe blede  
For want of hym, nowe in my grete nede  
That shulde alas, conveye and directe  
And with his supporte, amende eke and corecete

The wronge trace3, of my rude penne  
There as I erre, and goo not lyne Right 1650  
But for that he, ne may not me kenne  
I can no more, but with all my myght  
With all myne hert, and myne Inwarde sight  
Pray for hym, that liethe nowe in his cheste  
To god above, to yeve his saule goode reste (II, 1628-55)

*Makar, Vates*, p. 32. Ebin cites Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion 1357–1900*, 5 parts (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co. for the Chaucer Society, 1914–20), I, p. 53, without realising that this is in fact from Lydgate's text, despite the fact that Spurgeon notes that it is. This section of the poem also forms a central part of the discussion in Robert J. Meyer-Lee, 'The Emergence of the Literary in John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 109 (2010), 322–48.

Lydgate's florid language here – the 'golde dewe', the imagined laurels, the 'floures' of 'Retoryke' – figures Chaucer as a laureate poet in the Petrarchan mode.<sup>27</sup> Lydgate previously situates his literary forerunner in a triumvirate with 'Petrak Fraunces' and 'Tullyus with all his wordys white' (*white* denotes 'good' or 'pure').<sup>28</sup> As Seth Lerer notes, Chaucer is figured as 'the refiner of language and the English version of the Classical *auctor*'.<sup>29</sup> Crucially, however, while Petrarch and Cicero are 'Full longe agone, and full olde of date' (II, 1626), there are twenty-two manuscripts, from all parts of the stemma, which vary 'And eke my maister Chaucer is ygrave' with the line 'Chaucer is now ygrave' or 'Chaucer now ys ygrave'.<sup>30</sup> This variant line, which may be a preferable reading, establishes Chaucer as recently dead in opposition to the other poets who are 'longe agone'. This line signals a difference between Chaucer on one hand and Petrarch and Cicero on the other, suggesting Chaucer's uniqueness. Here, Chaucer is what James Simpson has termed a 'remembered presence'.<sup>31</sup> Rather than being a figure consigned to the distant past, Chaucer is instead presented by Lydgate, perhaps with a hint of personal familiarity, as being alive in human memory.

Chaucer's uniqueness is emphasized when Lydgate figures him as a kind of literary frontiersman: the first finder of the 'floures' of 'Retoryke' (II, 1635). At the same time, Lydgate situates Chaucer in a gilded literary tradition while signaling his difference from it. The implication of this figuring is clear: Chaucer is unique not only because he is a vernacular poet, but also because he is a poet whose vernacular work is as prestigious as those of the older cited *auctores*. An additional effect is, of course, to signal that Lydgate too, a vernacular author in the Chaucerian mould, shares in this prestige.

Lydgate continues with a deferential supplication to his literary predecessor, lamenting his death. He describes how 'my hert pleyne/ Vpon his dethe' (II, 1645–46), begging that Chaucer 'supporte, amende eke and corecte/ The wronge trace3 of my rude penne' (II, 1649).

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<sup>27</sup> On Chaucer figured in the Petrarchan mode see Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers: Imaging the Author in Late Medieval England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), chapter 1.

<sup>28</sup> wh<sup>1</sup>t (adj.), sense 1c, MED, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id= MED52610>, accessed 10th April 2013. It may also be that 'white' is a scribal error for 'write'. I thank Professor Edwards for this suggestion.

<sup>29</sup> Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, p. 23.

<sup>30</sup> 'is now' appears in Bodl. MS Bodley 596 and BL Harley MS 2382. 'now ys' appears in Chicago MS 566; Bodl. MSS Hatton 73, Ashmole 39, Bodley 75; BL MSS Cotton Appendix VIII, Add. MS 19452, Harley MSS 3862, 629, 1304, 3862, 3952, 4011; Antiquaries MS 134, Lambeth MS 344; TCC MS R. 22; CUL MS Mm 6.5; Longleat MS 15; CCC MS 237; Hunterian MS 232; AVCAU Liber 1306.

<sup>31</sup> James Simpson, 'Chaucer's Presence and Absence, 1400–1550', in *Cambridge Companion to Chaucer*, ed. by Piero Boitani and Jill Mann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 251–69. Simpson's thinking about presence and absence is indebted to Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, esp. p. 19.

He deploys thus a characteristic humility *topos*.<sup>32</sup> Robert Meyer-Lee has called his uses of the *topos* here and elsewhere ‘obsessive’,<sup>33</sup> while Pearsall has called it an ‘addiction’.<sup>34</sup> Lydgate in this way might be seen to beg for direct action from Chaucer to improve his own apparently lamentable writing. As several critics have observed, the use of the *topos* is highly strategic in that it has the effect of heralding Lydgate’s own writerly prowess. Such modesty topoi, it has been noted, ‘function as inverted self-advertisement’.<sup>35</sup> Pearsall writes, it is ‘no accident that Lydgate will often proceed from his adulation of Chaucer and the acknowledgement that none can “counterfete/ His gaye style” to the demonstration that he can not only do what Chaucer did, but do it better’.<sup>36</sup>

Lydgate goes on to beg the reader that he or she should ‘Pray for hym that liethe nowe in his cheste’ (II, 1654). Again the use of ‘nowe’, as in the variant line cited above, suggests Chaucer’s recent death. This image echoes one of Chaucer’s own, from the Prologue to the *Clerk’s Tale*. The Clerk tells us that the tale he will shortly tell is one which he ‘Lerned at Padewe of a worthy clerk’. He goes on to explain that:

He is now deed and nayled in his cheste  
I prey to God so yeve his soule reste!  
“Franceys Petrak, the lauriat poete  
Highte this clerk, whos rethorike sweete  
Enlumyned al Ytaie of poetricie<sup>37</sup>

Lydgate thus praises Chaucer with an expression which he has lifted from Chaucer’s work.<sup>38</sup> As Robert Meyer-Lee has observed, Lydgate inserts himself into a literary tradition created by his predecessor.<sup>39</sup> And yet Lydgate’s praise of Chaucer differs from Chaucer’s praise of Petrarch insofar as Lydgate’s appears in a narratorial intervention rather than being spoken by a character within the frame of a tale. Lydgate’s request for Chaucer’s assistance in improving his style is

<sup>32</sup> On the *topos* in the literature of the period see David Lawton, ‘Dullness and the Fifteenth Century’, *English Literary History*, 54 (1987), 761–99 (esp. p. 762–63).

<sup>33</sup> Robert Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 50.

<sup>34</sup> Derek Pearsall, ‘Chaucer and Lydgate’, *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. by Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 39–53 (p. 40).

<sup>35</sup> Jocelyn Wogan-Brown and others, eds, *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280–1520* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), p.10.

<sup>36</sup> Pearsall, ‘Chaucer and Lydgate’, *Chaucer Traditions*, p. 45. Here Pearsall is quoting from *Floure of Curtesye*, ll. 239–40, printed in *Minor Poems*, ed. by MacCracken, II, pp. 410–20.

<sup>37</sup> *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 137, ll. 27, 29–33.

<sup>38</sup> Petrarch died in 1374, whereas Chaucer probably wrote this Prologue after 1386 – probably in the 1390s. The ‘now’ does duty for at least twelve years, if not for as many as twenty. In any case, it still indicates a span of time within human memory.

<sup>39</sup> Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, p. 186.

more direct. For Lydgate, Chaucer is a ‘remembered presence’, whereas for Chaucer, Petrarch is a figure cited by one of his characters in a fictive frame.<sup>40</sup> Lydgate’s use of Chaucer is of a different quality from Chaucer’s use of Petrarch, for Lydgate’s narratorial voice is altogether more assertive and contains a more strongly delineated authorial persona. So in the eulogy we hear what is apparently Lydgate’s own voice, while in the Clerk’s Prologue, Petrarch’s voice remains at several removes. This assertiveness on Lydgate’s part, that is to say his desire to foreground his own voice, is of a piece with the *Magnificat* paraphrase which I discuss below.

The eulogy is characteristic of the use of Chaucer’s authorship by the writers who followed him in the early fifteenth century. Writers of this period sought to emulate Chaucer in complex ways. Seth Lerer has labelled this strategic emulation and adoration ‘the Chaucer cult’.<sup>41</sup> In this particular instance, we see what Robert Meyer-Lee calls the ‘postmortem investment in Chaucer (...) in which Lydgate was a central agent’.<sup>42</sup> Several critics have argued that much of our modern-day fascination with Chaucer may be traced back to this point. As Larry Scanlon observes, ‘Chaucer’s initial installment at the head of the English canon owes a great deal to Lydgate’s systematic efforts on his behalf’.<sup>43</sup>

In this way, in the eulogy to Chaucer from the *Life*, we see that Lydgate’s interest in authorship extends specifically to the way in which, by retrospectively fashioning Chaucer’s authorship as laureate, he strategically validates his own authorship as well. Let us now see how this interest in laureate authorship was taken up by scribes and printers.

### **The eulogy in its manuscript context**

In both BL Harley MS 7333 and TCC R.3.19, one stanza of the eulogy (II, 1628–35) is tacked on to the text of Chaucer’s *Parliament of Fowls* (NIMEV 3412).<sup>44</sup> In neither manuscript is there any indication that the stanza is from the *Life*, and in neither of them is the name of Lydgate given. Here we see the *Life* apparently re-purposed as a biographical addendum to a Chaucerian text.<sup>45</sup> The inclusion of the stanza from the *Life* at the end of the *Parliament* is complex and

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<sup>40</sup> Simpson, ‘Chaucer’s Presence and Absence, 1400–1550’, p. 261.

<sup>41</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, p. 23.

<sup>42</sup> Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power*, p. 52.

<sup>43</sup> Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority and Power: the Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 322.

<sup>44</sup> *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson and others, pp. 383–94.

<sup>45</sup> Possibly unconnected to this, in the post-medieval period, some writers thought that Lydgate was the author of the *Parliament of Fowls*. The notion appears in John Bale’s *Scriptorum Illustrum Maioris Brytannie* (Basileae: Apud Ioan nem Oporinum, 1559) [Colophon at the end of the volume states it is ‘Ex Officina Ioannis Oporini’], pp. 586–87. [See also the printed edition of Bale’s manuscripts, *Index Britanniae Scriptorum* ed. by Mary Bateson and Reginald Lane Poole (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902), p. 229.] It

performs two functions. It both serves to valorize Chaucer, but also – more prosaically – to provide a suitable ending to a problematic text. The conclusion of the *Parliament* is famously textually disordered. One witness, Bodl. MS Arch Selden B 24 contains a unique ending, with its text diverging at l. 602 from the text found in other witnesses. Three of the witnesses contain a ‘roundel’ inserted after the penultimate stanza, ll. 673–79.<sup>46</sup> In the case of CUL MS Gg. 4.27, f. 490, a space after this stanza was left by the original scribe and a slightly later hand has added the roundel.<sup>47</sup> Beneath this space, a third hand has added an *explicit* before the start of the *Temple of Glass* (NIMEV 851). In John’s MS 57 the hand is continuous. In Bodl. MS Digby 181, copied by John Brode, the roundel is shorter than in other witnesses, comprising only seven lines, so as to fit into the ruling for heptets. The roundel, although seven lines long, does not conform to a rhyme royal pattern, however, for line 687, ‘Whan they had cause for to gladden ofte’, is omitted. The ‘roundel-heptet’ is presented in the manuscript with no visible demarcation of its different status, but on examination it becomes clear that the rhyme scheme is not regular (ff. 51v–52r). In this way it is clear that all the witnesses deal with the end of the *Parliament* differently, finding different ways to close off the text.

In TCC MS R. 3. 19, f. 25r, the text of the *Parliament* contains an inter-stanza rubric in red, reading ‘Qe bien amy tarde oble’ [He who loves best, soon forgets] in the place where the ‘roundel’ is supplied in other manuscripts. Further on, before the end of the poem, there is another inter-stanza rubric, ‘verba translatoris’ [the words of the translator], beneath which the stanza from the *Life* appears and thereafter an *explicit*. In this manuscript the *Life* stanza is thus

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is repeated in John Pits’ *Angli, S. Theologiae Doctoris, Liverdvi in Lotharingia Decani Relationum Historicarum de Rebus Anglicis* (Paris: Rolinum Thierry & Sebastianum Cramoisy, 1619), p. 633. This is discussed in the next chapter. It also appears in John Stevens, *History of the Antient Abbeys, Monasteries, Hospitals, Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, Being Two Additional Volumes to Sir William Dugdale’s Monasticon Anglicanum* (London: Taylor, Stokoe, Smith, 1722), p. 211. The concept was picked up by later figures. On the opening folio of Bodl. MS Rawl. Poet 140, there is a biography of Lydgate written by Thomas Wilson (b.1703, d.1784), the Leeds bookseller responsible for copying the Chaucer eulogy into the final folios of Harvard, Houghton Library MS Lat. 394. The biography notes that the poet ‘with his Master Chaucer accounted the first refiners of the English Language’ and attributing authorship of the *Parliament of Fowls* to Lydgate.

<sup>46</sup> See *A Parallel-Text Edition of Chaucer’s Minor Poems*, ed. by Frederick Furnivall, 3 vols (London: N. Trübner and Co. for the Chaucer Society, 1871) and also, *A Supplementary Parallel-Text Edition of Chaucer’s Minor Poems*, ed. by Frederick Furnivall, 2 vols (London: N. Trübner and Co. for the Chaucer Society, 1871). Here, I use the term ‘roundel’ as it is the one most commonly found in discussion of the poem, but as Ralph Hanna notes, ‘this term misdenominates what the scribes present.’ Ralph Hanna III, *Pursuing History: Middle English Manuscripts and their Texts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 186.

<sup>47</sup> *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer. A Facsimile of Cambridge University Library MS Gg.4.27*, ed. by Richard Beadle and M.B. Parkes, 3 vols (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1979 [vol. 1], 1980 [vols. 2–3]). Hanna puts the date of this hand to c. 1460–1500. See *Pursuing History*, p. 187.

integrated into the text of the *Parliament*, hemmed in with the *explicit*, thus suggesting that the *Parliament* was a translated work. The *incipit* at the start of the text simply reads, ‘here foloweth the parlement of Burdes reducyd to loue *et cetera*’ (f. 17r), not naming Chaucer.<sup>48</sup>

The text of the stanza varies from its appearance in the *Life*. Here, the wording has a more nationalistic flavour, which foregrounds the Englishness or Britishness (the terms appear to be used interchangeably) of Chaucer. It emphasises the national value of the vernacular literary tradition.

Master Geffray chausers that now lyth in graue  
The noble Retoricion and poet of gret bretayne  
That worthy was the lawrer of poetry haue  
Ffor thys hys labour and the palme atteyne  
Whyche first made to dystyll and reyne  
The gold dew dropys of speche and eloquence  
In to englyssh tong thorow hys excellencie (f. 25r)

The phrase ‘And eke’ of Lydgate’s opening line is gone, making the tone less colloquial and giving a soberness to this eulogy.<sup>49</sup> The ‘rhetor’ is extended, becoming the more conspicuously Latinate ‘Retoricion’, giving greater formality, while ‘Brytayne’ becomes the more weighty ‘gret bretayne’. The modification of the third and fourth lines makes the significance of the laurel crown as a symbol of poetic laureateship more obvious. ‘That worthy was the laurer to haue’ becomes ‘That worthy was the lawrer of poetry haue’. In the next line, the addition of the ‘labour’, as a reference to his poetry, further emphasizes the value of Chaucer’s work. Finally, ‘our tonge’ becomes the ‘englysh tong’, making the national significance of the stanza more overt. In the margin, Stow has written ‘Chausers’, and it is a text with these variants (albeit with some small-scale orthographic differences), which he prints in his 1561 *Woorkes*, sig. Pp 1<sup>b</sup>. (This is discussed below).<sup>50</sup>

In BL Harley MS 7333 the *Life* stanza appears on f. 132v in a blank space at the end of the *Parliament*. That text has no explicit and no visible signs of conclusion. There are no visual clues that this is two different texts yoked together – the *Life* stanza runs on from the *Parliament*. The text on the page is written in double columns and ruled for eight rhyme royal stanzas in each column. The text ends at l. 679, ‘the next verse as I now haue in mynde’. With this arrangement, BL Harley MS 7333, the only witness to end in this way, omits the concluding

<sup>48</sup> An eighteenth-century hand has added an attribution to him on f. 17r.

<sup>49</sup> This witness also contains the ‘now’ in the opening line.

<sup>50</sup> For example, ‘Master’ becomes ‘Maister’, ‘bretayne’ becomes ‘Bretaine’, ‘reyne’ becomes ‘reine’.

stanza of the *Parliament*.<sup>51</sup> At the end of the Chaucerian text there is a blank space of a stanza's length (which might be filled with a roundel in another witness), after which the modified *Life* stanza appears, with the same textual variants as we find in TCC MS R.3.19. The addition of the *Life* stanza here thus performs a dual function: it provides a biographical addendum on Chaucer, as well as supplying a rhyme royal heptet as a conclusion to a problematic text.

The next text after the extract from the *Life* on f. 132v of BL Harley MS 7333 is Chaucer's *Complaint of Mars* (NIMEV 913), entitled 'The broche of thebes as of love | of mars and venus': a unique title in the text's witnesses. This title is derived from Lydgate, being the one given to the text in Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*.<sup>52</sup> In both the extract and in the choice of *incipits*, in this way, what we have on f. 132v is Chaucer, presented through the prism of Lydgate. Here in the extract from the *Life* Chaucer is valorized, as is the literary tradition which he supposedly generated. Thereafter, on the same manuscript page, a Chaucerian text is given a Lydgatean title. This arrangement reveals how manuscript designers were responding to Lydgate's vision of Chaucer.

The textual provenance of these manuscripts is important. Both TCC MS R.3.19 and BL Harley MS 7333 are derived from exemplars copied by the scribe John Shirley (b. c.1366, d.1456).<sup>53</sup> It is impossible to say whether the decision to include the Chaucer eulogy at the end of the *Parliament of Fowls* was Shirley's decision, but the fact that it appears in this place, in two manuscripts derived from his exemplars, may suggest that it was an arrangement present in his copy-text. Even if Shirley did not conjoin the two texts himself, the fact that he copied the eulogy suggests that he probably approved of this conjunction. In any case, Seth Lerer observes that 'maintaining Chaucer's reputation as the laureate and aureate poet seems almost an obsession' for Shirley.<sup>54</sup>

Shirley created poetic anthologies with a clear agenda and he may have produced his manuscripts for commercial purposes. The antiquarian John Stow, who was responsible for giving the Chaucer eulogy currency in printed editions, wrote of Shirley that he was:

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<sup>51</sup> Apart from Bodl. MS Arch. Selden B 24, which contains a spurious ending.

<sup>52</sup> Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, ed. by Henry Bergen, EETS E.S. 121 (London: Humphrey Milford for EETS, 1924 for 1918), p. 9, Bk. I, ll. 321–23.

<sup>53</sup> Jeremy Griffiths, 'Shirley, John (c.1366–1456)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25428>, accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2015. In addition to these two manuscripts, AVCAU Liber 1405 'may be Shirley-related' in the words of A.S.G. Edwards, 'John Shirley and the Emulation of Courtly Culture', in *The Court and Cultural Diversity*, ed. by John Thompson and Evelyn Mullally (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 309–18 (p. 312).

<sup>54</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, p. 46.

A great traveller in divers countries, amongst his labours painfully collected the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, John Lydgate and other learned writers which works he wrote in sundry volumes to remain for posterity. I have seen them and partly do possess them.<sup>55</sup>

Stow's vision of Shirley may be a little romanticized, for Shirley's desire to assemble literary texts may have been driven more by financial concerns rather than selfless philological ones: he probably 'labour[ed] painfully' to rescue soon-to-be-forgotten fragments of literature because these labours might bring him income.

Shirley's motivations have been much discussed by scholars. Eleanor Prescott Hammond, one of the first scholars to study Shirley's activities, called him 'one of England's earliest publishers'.<sup>56</sup> She also described him as a member of 'an earlier English Text Society'.<sup>57</sup> Pearsall called him a 'literary agent'.<sup>58</sup> Aage Brussendorff called him the 'proprietor of a circulating library'.<sup>59</sup> Richard Firth Green has suggested that his activities betrayed 'an antiquarian's concern' to rescue courtly literature.<sup>60</sup> Seth Lerer, whose judgement seems influenced by the words of Stow in the *Survey of London* (perhaps with an echo of Stow's description of a 'great traveller in divers countries, amongst his labours painfully collect[ing] ... works'), calls him 'a kind of romance hero, reading and recording, setting in order the author he transcribes'.<sup>61</sup> Cheryl Greenburg has ascribed him a more commercial role, largely on the basis of documents illustrating Shirley's rental of four shops near St Bartholomew's Hospital, which she argues would have been a good place to set up a scriptorium.<sup>62</sup> Crucially, he was never a member of the Scrivener's Guild, which may be because he was never a professional scrivener, but rather scribed only as secretary to Beauchamp. Not to be a member of a guild had commercial advantages. Greenberg argues that it would be logical for a man wanting to run a private scriptorium to set up shop in Bartholomew's, which was a parish which stipulated that 'a resident may keep a free shop, or exercise whatever trade or calling he pleased without becoming free of the City'.<sup>63</sup> Whether his activities were commercial or not, Alexandra

<sup>55</sup> John Stow, *A Survey of London, Reprinted from the Text of 1603*, ed. by Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908, repr. 1971), II, p. 24.

<sup>56</sup> Eleanor Prescott Hammond, *English Verse between Chaucer and Surrey* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1927), p. 191.

<sup>57</sup> Eleanor Prescott Hammond, 'The Lost Quires of a Shirley Codex', *Modern Language Notes*, 36 (1921), 184–85 (p. 185).

<sup>58</sup> Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul), pp. 74–75

<sup>59</sup> Aage Brussendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), pp. 216–17

<sup>60</sup> Richard Firth Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 132.

<sup>61</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers*, p. 130.

<sup>62</sup> Cheryl Greenberg, 'John Shirley and the English Book Trade', *The Library*, 4 (1982), 369–80.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 375.

Gillespie has written that his work demonstrates evidence of ‘organized, commercial, and even speculative production of manuscripts in England before the arrival of the press’.<sup>64</sup>

Shirley’s texts are almost always accompanied by chatty rubrics. One such, attached to Lydgate’s paraphrase of Psalm 102 (NIMEV 2572), in TCC MS R.3.20, p. 19, reads, ‘Takeþ goode hede sirs and dames, howe Lydgette daun Iohan þe Munk of Bury, moeued of deuocyioun, haþe translated þe salme Benedic anima mea domino’. Here, Shirley is at once familiar with his readers and intimating some personal familiarity with Lydgate, by apparently claiming to understand his state of mind in composing the work. Here and elsewhere these rubrics enhance ‘the prestigious literary-aristocratic connections of his antholog[ies]’.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, much of the contextual information about Chaucer and Lydgate which scholars now rely on comes from Shirley. For example, the axiom that Lydgate began to write verse while at Oxford is derived from a rubric which Shirley attached to *Isopes Fabules*, fable VII, in which he writes that it was ‘made in Oxenford’ (Bodl. MS Ashmole 59A, f. 24v).<sup>66</sup> Seth Lerer has written that key to the modern scholarly perception of Shirley’s reliability is the notion of his personal familiarity with the authors whose work he copied. He writes, ‘most modern critics have taken Shirley’s appellations at face value and have willingly believed his pose as personal acquaintance of Lydgate and the first generation of the Chaucer circle’.<sup>67</sup> This perception is derived from the tone of the rubrics and their apparent intimacy with the circumstances of their creation.

If it was Shirley who conjoined the Chaucer eulogy with the *Parliament*, the conjunction would be of a piece with his gossipy rubrics, for it shows the same interest as the rubrics in both literary celebrity and a definable authorial persona. The effect of all this is to give the reader a more tangible connection to the author of the *Parliament*. As James Simpson observes, this kind of interest in authorial biography ‘is the product of (...) textual monumentalization: the textual project’s correlative is the reconstitution of the exceptional authorial life’.<sup>68</sup>

As I have already noted, Lydgate’s eulogy to Chaucer also gives an impression of personal familiarity with the author, or at least a sense of a recently and personally mourned loss. Shirley too, in his rubrics, fosters a sense of personal familiarity with the authors whose

<sup>64</sup> Alexandra Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate and their Books, 1473–1557* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 49. I have belatedly come across an informative article by Professor Edwards arguing that Shirley’s activities were, indeed, commercial and suggesting that Shirley may have been a kind of ‘literary agent’ to Lydgate. A.S.G. Edwards, ‘John Shirley, John Lydgate, and the Motives of Compilation’, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 38 (2016), 245–54 (p. 253).

<sup>65</sup> Julia Boffey, *Manuscripts of English Courtly Love Lyrics* (Cambridge: D.S Brewer, 1985), p. 66.

<sup>66</sup> *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS, E.S. 107, 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1911), II, p. 598.

<sup>67</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, p. 116.

<sup>68</sup> Simpson, ‘Chaucer’s Presence and Absence, 1400–1550’, p. 255.

works he anthologizes. Nonetheless, whereas Lydgate's *paean* to Chaucer serves to advertise his own literary authority, Shirley's interest in literary celebrity may have been commercially motivated. If this is true, what BL Harley MS 7333 and TCC MS R.3.19 may reveal to us is a re-purposing of Lydgate's strategic authorization of his own work, for commercial ends. In this case the reconfiguring of Lydgate's presentation of Chaucer's authorship would be evidence of a shift in the nature of authorial value in the period.

### **The Chaucer eulogy in print**

When John Stow came to augment William Thynne's 1531 edition of Chaucer's *Works* (STC 5068), he added various kinds of spurious material. His aim was to supplement the texts as much as possible with further Chaucerian texts, as well as with material written about Chaucer. He was anxious to create a sense of Chaucer's biography and authorship. In his 1561 edition, the first stanza of the Chaucer eulogy (II, 1628–35) appears at the end of the volume amongst 'Certayne Balades' on f. cccx<sup>b</sup>, before 'here foloweth certayne woorkes of Geffrey Chaucer whiche hath not here tofore been printed, and are gathered and added to this booke by Jhon Stowe'. The stanza appears at the bottom of the page under an *incipit* which reads, 'A balade in the praise and commendacion of master Geffray Chauser for his golden eloquence'. Stow's 1561 version is taken from TCC MS R.3.19.

Speght's 1598 and 1602 editions contain a more 'extensive critical apparatus'.<sup>69</sup> There, four stanzas are printed from Book II, ll. 1628–1655. These later editions signal that the Chaucer eulogy was originally part of the *Life* (although Stow's list of Lydgate's works at the end of the volume indicates that he thought that the *Magnificat* was a distinct text, as I discuss below). The *incipit* reads, 'Iohn Lidgate againe in a booke which hee writeth of the birth of the Virgine Mary hath these verses' (sig. C ii<sup>b</sup>). No manuscripts of the *Life* give the poem this title. The closest title is an inscription found in Bodl. Rawl. Poet MS 140, on the opening flyleaves, where a later hand has written 'Cest l[i]vre appellee la Nativite de la Notre Dame' [this book is called the birth of our lady]. The printed stanzas appear in a section entitled 'His Death', but under a running title reading 'Chaucers Life'. The section contains both Lydgate's encomium to Chaucer from the *Fall of Princes* and Chaucer's Latin epitaph.

The print and manuscript witnesses of the Chaucer eulogy present a re-purposing of the *Life*. In these witnesses we see an interest in Chaucer's biography in manuscripts and prints

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<sup>69</sup> Tim William Machan, 'Speght's *Works* and the Invention of Chaucer', *Text*, 8 (1995), 145–70 (p. 147).

which may have been produced for commercial purposes. Here, we see a particular construction of authorship, which indicates an emerging interest in the value of vernacular writers. This interest was something which Lydgate himself did much to create (we saw some evidence of in the eulogy). I argue that he did this in ways both implicit and explicit, and it is one of the implicit ways in which he sought to advertise the value of his vernacular authorship that we see in the following section.

### *Magnificat*

Four manuscripts of the *Life* contain copies of Book II, 981–1060, which is a versification of the *Magnificat* canticle, in an eight-line form (as opposed to the seven-line rhyme royal of the rest of the text). As we have seen, the manuscripts are: HEH MS HM 144, ff. 77v–79r; Camb., Gonville and Caius MS 230/11 ff. 54–55v, Advocates MS 1.1.6, pp. 22–4 and ff. 25v–26v and BL Add. MS 29729, ff. 122r–23r. This cluster of witnesses tells a story about the changing status of the vernacular and about shifting notions of authorial value in the medieval and early modern period.

Lydgate may have composed the *Magnificat* separately, perhaps before he wrote the *Life*, and then incorporated it into the text. Some of the witnesses may derive from exemplars in which the *Magnificat* was circulating as a separate entity. Keiser (apparently unaware of the existence of the HEH MS HM 144 copy) speculates, albeit on the basis of three copies, that ‘Lydgate’s *Magnificat* had a lengthy life as a separate work’.<sup>70</sup> John Stow thought it was a separate work. In his list of Lydgate’s works in his edition of Chaucer’s *Workes* (STC 5079), he lists ‘Item 31, Magnificat in mitre’ and also ‘Item 34, The life of our Lady’(sig. S ss v<sup>a</sup>; f. 376r).

It is noteworthy that although there are other kinds of liturgical paraphrase in the body of the *Life*, no others appear in extract form elsewhere. (The versification of the *Nunc Dimittis*, for example, which appears in Book VI, ll. 141–56 is nowhere else extant as an excerpt.) Lydgate versified several other liturgical texts as free-standing pieces. Amongst them are *Letabundus* (NIMEV 1019),<sup>71</sup> which is also in eight-line stanzas; *Te Deum Laudamus* (NIMEV 3261),<sup>72</sup> in eight-line stanzas; *Benedic Anima Mea Domino* (NIMEV 2572),<sup>73</sup> in eight-line stanzas

<sup>70</sup> George Keiser, ‘John Lydgate’s Magnificat: Magnifying Scribal Difficulties’, in *Tributes to Kathleen L. Scott: English Medieval Manuscripts: Readers, Makers and Illuminators*, ed. by Marlene Villalobos Hennessy (London: Harvey Miller, 2009), pp. 115–23 (p.118). Keiser only notes the existence of three of these copies, and equally, the NIMEV also omits the fourth witness: HEH MS HM 144 ff. 77v–79r, noting only the extract representing Book II, 1–504, ff. 11–20 (NIMEV 2574).

<sup>71</sup> *Minor Poems*, ed. by MacCracken, I, pp. 49–60.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, I, pp. 21–24.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, I, pp. 1–6.

and *Misericordias Domini* (NIMEV 178), also in an eight-line form.<sup>74</sup> The *Magnificat* would fit the pattern of free-standing, eight-line versifications of Latin liturgical texts amongst Lydgate's other works.

The *Magnificat* canticle (Luke 1:46–55) recalls Hannah's Old Testament canticle in the first Book of Samuel (I Samuel 2:1–10). It is one of those rare moments in the Gospels in which the Virgin actually speaks, and indeed it is her longest speech. On hearing the words of the Virgin, Luke describes how the infant John the Baptist leaps in Elizabeth's womb. Mary's song of praise forms the centrepiece of the evening office. The *Magnificat* had a special status, therefore, as a familiar and oft-repeated part of the liturgy. Given this special status, it is appropriate that the versification of the *Magnificat* in the *Life* should itself be anomalous in its verse-form.

Even after the Reformation, the central place of the *Magnificat* in the evening liturgy did not shift. In the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* (STC 16276), on the opening page of the order for Evensong, the following direction appears:

Then a lesson of tholde testament, as is appointed like | wyse in the kalendar, except there be proper lessons appointed for that daye. After that (*Magnificat anima mea dominum* in Englysshe as foloweth.        (sig. A iiiia)<sup>75</sup>

The continued use of the *Magnificat* in the liturgy after the Reformation may account for why the poem survives in two early modern witnesses.

There are several Middle English versions of the *Magnificat*. The *N-Town Plays* contains a version, in the 'Visit to Elizabeth' Pageant.<sup>76</sup> It was also versified by John Audelaiy (NIMEV 2271)<sup>77</sup> and James Ryman (NIMEV 3725). No Middle English version of the canticle is like Lydgate's, however. His lengthy 'translation' is eighty lines long (a significant expansion of the ten-line original), making it the longest of the vernacular, verse versions. The work is both lengthy, but also self-assured in its use of the vernacular. Crucially, other versions are macaronic, remaining wedded to their Latin source text and placing the vernacular in a subservient relationship with the Latin which they translate. To explain why Lydgate's version is unique, a comparison with some of the other versions is useful. The comparison illustrates

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, I, pp. 71–77. This poem appears in TCC. R.3.21 on ff. 193v–196r. The manuscript also contains the *Life*, ff. 85–156v.

<sup>75</sup> The backwards bracket here appears in the text.

<sup>76</sup> *The N-town Play: Cotton MS Vespasian D.8*, ed. by Stephen Spector, EETS S.S. 11 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 133–35, pageant 13, ll. 82–117. For a discussion of Lydgate's version alongside *N-town's* see Mary Wellesley, 'Evyr to be songe and also to be seyn': Play and Interplay in the *N-Town* 'Visit to Elizabeth', *Pecia*, 16 (2013), 153–66.

<sup>77</sup> The NIMEV (2271) reports that this is eight thirteen-line stanzas, in fact it is thirteen eight-line stanzas.

what is distinctive about Lydgate's use of English and, I argue, has implications for our understanding of its manuscript contexts.

In BL Cotton MS Vespasian D VIII, the sole surviving witness of the *N-town Plays*, the *Magnificat* is in macaronic couplets, whereby the vernacular paraphrase of the canticle is made to rhyme with the Latin. The result is a halting translation, in which the vernacular is subservient to the Latin. The opening line, 'Magnificat anima mea Dominum, / Et exultavuit spiritus meus in Deo salutai meo' [My soul doth magnify the lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my saviour] is translated as, 'Be þe Holy Gost with joye Goddys son is in þe cum, / þat þi spyryte so injouid þe helth of þi God so', such that 'cum' rhymes with 'Dominum' and 'so' with 'meo'.<sup>78</sup> This subservience is amplified on the manuscript page, where on ff. 72v–73v, the Latin text is written out in a *textura quadrata*, while the vernacular translation is in a cursive *anglicana*. Audeley's version, from Bodl. MS Douce 302, is also macaronic. Although not in the same kind of halting couplet formation, his version is also dependent on its Latin source and indeed integrates parts of the Latin into its rhyme scheme. The first stanza illustrates this:

My soule my Lorde hit mangnefyþ  
Oure lady þus to here sun con say  
Ffore he me here gloryfyd  
To be his moder vergyn & may  
He haþ me chosyn hit is no nay  
To lyver his pepil fro thraldam.  
Mangneficat herefore I say,  
*Anima meadominum*.<sup>79</sup>

Audelay's text is grounded in the Latin – it is an integral part of the verse, a prerequisite of the rhyme-scheme. The words 'Thraldam' and 'dominum' form the two C-rhymes, which solidly round off the stanza. Audeley's version is more fully macaronic than *N-Town*'s, incorporating the Latin into its vernacular form. In the manuscript, there is no suggestion that the Latin is semantically different – there is no graphical shift which signals a change in language, as there is in the *N-Town* manuscript.

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<sup>78</sup> *The N-town Play*, ed. by Stephen Spector, p. 133, pageant 13, ll. 84–85.

<sup>79</sup> Transcription is my own from Bodl. MS Douce 302, f. 24v. For a printed edition, see *John Audelay* ed. by E.K. Whiting, EETS O.S. 184 (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1931), pp. 161–64; see also *John the Blind Audelay, Poems and Carols* (*Oxford Bodleian Library MS Douce 302*) ed. by Susanna Fein (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2009), online edition: <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/fein-audelay-poems-and-carols-oxford-bodleian-library-ms-douce-302>, accessed 6<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

The comparison with *N-town* and Audelay demonstrates the special status of Lydgate's *Magnificat*. His version is unmacaronic and more expansive than the others. It is unlike the *N-Town* version, where an awkward linguistic construction is required to rhyme the Middle English with the canticle. Instead his version is confident in its vernacularity. The first stanza illustrates this:

With the laude and prese my sowle magnyfieh,  
Eternall lorde, both oon twoo and thre,  
That all hath made, and euery thyng nowe gyeth  
Whiche of his might and bountevous pyte,  
Of his goodnesse and his benygnyte,  
Oonly of mercy liste to haue pleasaunce,  
For to considre and graciously for to se  
To my mekenesse and humble attendaunce (II, 981–88).

These eight lines are an expansion of a single verse of the Latin canticle – in this case, 'Magnificat anima mea dominum'. In the *N-Town* version, one line of Latin verse is translated with one line of (somewhat jarring) vernacular. In Lydgate's stanza the translation of the first line of the Latin verse happens in the first line of the stanza, 'With the laude and prese my sowle magnyfieh' and everything which follows afterwards is an amplification of that initial line. As Pearsall wryly notes of Lydgate's style in general, 'two words must never be allowed to do the work that four might do equally well'.<sup>80</sup> Phillipa Hardman has written about Lydgate's 'uneasy syntax', and this stanza exemplifies the difficulties faced by his editors.<sup>81</sup> Hardman notes that Lydgate rarely respects stanza divisions, allowing syntactic units to span several stanzas. His syntax is 'uneasy' in its expansiveness. Here, the stanza requires several commas to accommodate his free use of subordinate clauses. After the first main clause, prolonged by an extended vocative and qualifying relative clause ('With the laude and prese my sowle magnyfieh / Eternall lorde'), there follows a second coordinate main clause ('and euery thyng nowe gyeth'), which is followed by a set of relative clauses with dependent prepositional phrases. This syntax is an expression, in part, of Lydgate's conviction in his own text: expansive and wholly vernacular. This is not a macaronic version of the *Magnificat*, like Audeley's or a subservient, halting translation pressed into couplet form as in *N-Town*. Lydgate's versification of the Latin canticle is of a piece with the eulogy to Chaucer excerpted from Book II. Both, in

<sup>80</sup> Derek Pearsall, 'Chaucer and Lydgate', in *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer*, ed. by Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 39–53 (p. 44).

<sup>81</sup> Phillipa Hardmann, 'Lydgate's "Uneasy" Syntax', in *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture, and Lancastrian England*, ed. by Larry Scanlon and James Simpson, Notre Dame, 2006, p. 12–35.

implicit and explicit ways, make a claim for the value of vernacular literature. While the *Magnificat* advertises the value of the vernacular as a language of literary and religious expression, the Chaucer eulogy signals the value of Lydgate's authorship.

The confidence of Lydgate's version is amplified when we consider it in its original context in the *Life*. There the canticle's eight-line form bursts from the metrical strictures of the rest of the poem's rhyme royal, which often confused scribes who had ruled for seven-line stanzas.<sup>82</sup> Part of the confidence of Lydgate's version lies in its proximity to Latin. In many ways, this is what aureate verse, the distinctive Latinate diction so associated with Lydgate, sets out to achieve.<sup>83</sup> It creates a Latinized version of the vernacular, giving it new status. Lydgate has been called 'the most Latinate writer of Middle English verse'.<sup>84</sup> Pearsall describes his diction as 'quasi-liturgical English composition in the high style'.<sup>85</sup> Lydgate's use of a famously 'half chongyd Latyne,' was strategic.<sup>86</sup> It sought to assert the value of the vernacular, by creating a Latinate version of that vernacular. Robert Meyer Lee has written that Lydgate wanted to 'lay claim to a distinctive transcendental power made manifest by elevated style'.<sup>87</sup> Sheila Lindenbaum suggests that in this period 'the continuing vitality of Lollard texts does much to explain the preference of writers like Lydgate for a Latinate English – an English that could not (...) be confused with Lollard writings'.<sup>88</sup> Lindenbaum's suggestion is thought-provoking, but she seems to imply that Lydgate was in some way afraid that his verse might be confused with Lollard writings. It is unlikely that he was, in my view: the *Life*, in its whole and its parts, is a self-assured and self-consciously learned poem which, in both its frame of reference and its choice of style, asserts its validity as a vernacular religious text. The confidence of Lydgate's vernacular is reflected in the earliest of its orphan manuscript witnesses. There, in Camb., Gonville and Caius MS 230/11, the poem appears in a monastic miscellany. Two factors are essential to understanding its inclusion in this collection: the first is that the text is attributed to Lydgate, and the second is that the style of his vernacular

<sup>82</sup> On which see Keiser, 'Magnifying Scribal Difficulties', esp. pp. 119–23.

<sup>83</sup> For a discussion of aureation and Lydgate's use of it, see Pearsall, *Lydgate* (1970), pp. 262–63. For a compelling, recent discussion of Lydgate's aureation and its use in descriptions of sanctified female bodies, see Amanda Walling, 'Feminizing Aureation in Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady* and *Life of Saint Margaret*', *Neophilologus*, 101 (2017), 321–36.

<sup>84</sup> Jocelyn Wogan-Brown, ed., *The Idea of the Vernacular*, p. 8.

<sup>85</sup> Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate (1370–1449): A Bio-Bibliography* (English Literary Studies, University of Victoria, 1997), p. 19.

<sup>86</sup> *The Works of John Metham*, ed. by Hardin Craig, EETS, O.S. 132 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1906), p. 80, l. 2195

<sup>87</sup> Meyer-Lee, 'Emergence of the Literary', p. 322.

<sup>88</sup> Sheila Lindenbaum, 'London Texts and Literate Practice', in *Cambridge History of Medieval Literature*, ed. by David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 284–312 (p. 298).

translation of the canticle is completely self-assured. In this way, Lydgate's text looks less anomalous amongst so many learned Latin texts, as the work of a Benedictine author who was known to produce confident and distinctively aureate Middle English verse.

### **Camb., Gonville and Caius MS 230/11: Verse from Saint Albans**

Camb., Gonville and Caius MS 230/11 is a small codex containing almost exclusively Latin texts.<sup>89</sup> The manuscript differs from the other three witnesses to the *Magnificat*, which all post-date the medieval period or date from the very end of the fifteenth century. Several texts in the manuscript are extracted from the *Granarium* of John Whethamstede.<sup>90</sup> It appears to have been produced at Saint Albans, and is 'closely connected' to Whethamstede, who in 1439 commissioned Lydgate to write the *Legend of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibel*.<sup>91</sup> The manuscript measures 100 mm by 135 mm, the written space measures 90 mm by 70 mm. It is spare in appearance and largely undecorated. The poem is preceded by an introductory rubric, reading 'Magnificat etc' at the top of f. 113r. The 'M' is written with elaborate strap-work. The poem, which begins below, is written in a neat, upright secretary hand. The initial 'W' is written in blue ink. After this, the opening of each stanza has an alternating red and blue paraph mark. The poem concludes, 'And of alle his werkis/ to be souereyne. j. lytgate.' (f.115v).

The *Magnificat* is almost the only piece of vernacular text in this manuscript. There are some receipts (one with vernacular names of plants on f. 6v, one on f. 8v and one in Middle English and Latin on f. 168v), but otherwise this is a Latin text collection, filled with learned texts appropriate for monastic use. As I noted earlier, in relation to TCD MS 423, it is rare to find Latin texts alongside the *Life*, even alongside extracts of the *Life*. This manuscript context is unusual. I suggest that the inclusion of the *Magnificat* amongst this collection of Latin texts is a function of its distinctive, unvernacular version of the vernacular and the spiritual *auctoritas* of its author. His monastic status perhaps explains why Lydgate's text is (largely) the only

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<sup>89</sup> M.R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907–08), I, pp. 268–76.

<sup>90</sup> M.R. James, in fact, calls it the '*Manipularius*' (p. 269) on account of a rubric in the manuscript. However, as Alfred Hiatt has recently noted, these extracts come from the *Granarium* and thus it seems reasonable to assume the term is 'a synonym for the *Granarium*'. Alfred Hiatt, 'The Reference Work in the Fifteenth Century: John Whethamstede's *Granarium*', in *Makers and Users of Medieval Books: Essays in Honour of A.S.G Edwards*, ed. by Carol M Meale and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2014), pp. 13–33 (p. 16).

<sup>91</sup> M.R James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College*, p. 268.

vernacular text in the collection, as well as why he is the only vernacular author whose work is attributed. In the previous section we saw an interest in laureate authorship, but here – I suggest – we see an interest in Lydgate as a scholastic *auctor*, suitable for reading in a monastic context. As Alistair Minnis observes, ‘in a literary context, the term *auctor* denoted someone who was at once a writer and an authority, someone not merely to be read but also to be respected and believed’.<sup>92</sup> Yet Lydgate has a special status, I argue, as a vernacular *auctor*: that is, as an author who produces a stylistically prestigious vernacular, but one who is also invested with a spiritual authority by dint of his monastic status.

### **Bannatyne: the *Magnificat* in Edinburgh**

The Bannatyne Manuscript, Adv. MS 1.1.16, is of central importance to the history of Scottish medieval verse.<sup>93</sup> Several of the pieces in it appear uniquely. It was arranged and written by John Bannatyne in 1568. In September of that year, plague struck Bannatyne’s home city of Edinburgh and he was confined to the house.<sup>94</sup> The manuscript’s endnote reads, ‘this buik writtin in tyme of pest/ Quhen we fra labor was compeld to rest’ (f. 375r). In the words of Sir Walter Scott (who took an interest in the manuscript, founding an antiquarian society in Bannatyne’s name), what Bannatyne did in gathering together ‘ane ballit buik’ [a ballad book] (p.1) from ‘copies awld mankit and mvtillait’ (p. 59) was a feat nothing short of ‘saving the literature of a whole nation’.<sup>95</sup>

Much later, in the 1820s, this manuscript was rebound by Abram Thomas, also of Edinburgh, before whose time it appears to have been a collection of leaves from approximately four different manuscripts.<sup>96</sup> As it presently stands, the manuscript is a two-part codex, containing both the ‘draft’ manuscript, which has page references, and the fair copy, which has folio references. It seems that Bannatyne assembled a collection of texts before deciding on their arrangement. The main manuscript is divided into discrete sections, along basic thematic lines. The *Magnificat* appears in the early part of the codex, amongst a series of religious and

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<sup>92</sup> Alistair Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1984, repr. 1988), p. 10.

<sup>93</sup> *The Bannatyne Manuscript: National Library of Scotland Advocates' M.S.1.1.6*, ed. by Denton Fox and William A. Ringler (London: Scolar Press in association with the National Library of Scotland, 1980).

<sup>94</sup> For information on Bannatyne’s milieu, see Theo van Heijnsbergen, ‘The Interaction Between Literature and History in Queen Mary’s Edinburgh: the Bannatyne Manuscript and its Prosopographical Context’, in *The Renaissance in Scotland: Studies in Religion History and Culture*, ed. by Ian B. Cowen, Michael Lynch and A.A. MacDonald (Leiden: Brill, 1994) pp. 183–225.

<sup>95</sup> Walter Scott, ‘Memoir of George Bannatyne’, in *Memorials of George Bannatyne* (Edinburgh: Ballantyne and Co., 1829), p. 11.

<sup>96</sup> *The Bannatyne Manuscript*, ed. by Fox and Ringler, p. ix.

moral texts. In both the draft and the main manuscript is it preceded by *NIMEV* 2420, ‘*Ane Prayer for the Pest*’ which appears uniquely here and is attributed to Henryson in a later hand on f. 25v. Like the *Magnificat*, it consists of eight-line stanzas.

A number of the texts in the manuscript were copied from known printed sources. The text of the *Magnificat* is not copied from either *STC* 17023 or *STC* 17025, however. Its textual variants are not shared by these editions and the text appears to be corrupted (I note a specific instance of this below). The *Magnificat* appears in the draft manuscript on p. 22 announced with the incipit ‘Here follows þe song of Virgin Mary callit magnificate anima mea dominum’. It ends on p. 24 with ‘ffinis’. In the main manuscript, the poem begins on f. 25v with ‘The song of the Virgin Mary’ and closes on f. 26v with ‘ffinis’. Bannatyne copied several texts by Lydgate, which he attributed to Lydgate in his rubrics. So, it would appear that his exemplar did not attribute authorship of the text to Lydgate.

The Bannatyne manuscript is a mix of devotional and secular works. It contains erotic verse, as well as sections of theatrical social satire (*Ane Satyre of the Thre Estatis*). Theo van Heijnsbergen calls the manuscript

a testimonial to the presence of a literary consciousness in mid-sixteenth-century Scotland. Many poems in the B[annatyne] M[anuscript] bring together native and foreign lyrical traditions in their different ways of transforming literary conventions and social rituals into moral rules of life<sup>97</sup>

Here, amongst Scottish and English texts of differing kinds, Lydgate’s *Magnificat* appears to have been valued as a ‘ballit’ [ballad], an interesting literary artefact in need of saving from its ‘copies awld’.

### **John Stow and the ‘Magnificat in mitre’**

John Stow is a major figure in the history of the *Life*. He owned or had access to HEH MS HM 144, TCC MS R. 3.21, Bodl. MS Bodley 596, TCC MS R. 3. 19, BL Harley MS 7333 (from which he copied a number of texts), and in addition, he wrote BL Add. MS 29729. A.S.G. Edwards notes that John Stow had an ‘enduring...concern’ with Lydgate’s writings which is manifested both in his copying of Add. MS 29729, completed in 1558, and in a list of Lydgate’s

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<sup>97</sup> Theo van Heijnsbergen, ‘The Bannatyne Manuscript Lyrics: Literary Convention and Authorial Voice’, in *The European Sun: Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature*, ed. by Graham Caie and others (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2001), pp. 423–444 (p. 439).

works which he made some forty years later in his 1598 edition of Chaucer's *Woorkes* (STC 5079).<sup>98</sup>

The *Magnificat* verses appear on ff. 122r–123r of BL Add. MS 29729. They have no *incipit*, but conclude with, 'AMEN lidgate | FINIS ♦John Stowe' (f. 123r). A comparison of the textual variants across the different free-standing *Magnificat* witnesses reveals that Stow likely copied his version of the poem from HEH MS HM 144. His version of the poem begins, 'Miche laude & prays my sowle magnifieth' (f. 122r), HEH MS HM 144 reads, 'Miche laude & prese my soul magnifieth' (f. 77v). Other witnesses begin with 'With laude and prese my sowle magnifeth' (II, 981). Equally, l. 991, reads 'In god that is my savyour & helthe ~~eterni~~ intere', while HEH MS HM 144 reads, 'In god þis my savyoure & helthe eterne'.<sup>99</sup> By way of contrast, we can see that the Bannatyne witness is textually corrupt, and this line reads 'In god that is my souereine hlull entier' (f.25v), and the Gonville and Caius MS 230/116 witness, the line appears less corrupt, reading 'In god that is my souerayn helthe entere' (f. 113r).

The three witnesses of the *Magnificat* discussed above demonstrate different kinds of repurposing of the *Life* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In each manuscript, the text appears to have been valued for different reasons. Seen as a group, the three manuscripts gesture to the emergence of antiquarianism, to shifting ideas of authorial value and tell us something about the changing status of the vernacular in the period. In Bannatyne's and Stow's manuscripts the *Magnificat* appears to have been copied because those scribes may have been anxious to preserve the text as a literary relic of a past era. Yet in Camb., Gonville and Caius MS 239/11 the *Magnificat* was included amongst a collection of Latin texts for monastic use – I suggest – because it was the work of a named author (with a kind of *auctoritas* by dint of his monastic status) producing a confident, aureate poem, which made a claim for the value of the vernacular as a language of literary and religious expression. Its inclusion in this manuscript might suggest that the codex's compiler saw Lydgate's *Magnificat* as having a cultural prestige similar to that of the Latin texts which surround it.

Nonetheless, in HEH MS HM 144, which I discuss below, the *Magnificat* has a different kind of value, for there, being so placed in a literary-devotional anthology as to fit thematically

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<sup>98</sup> A.S.G. Edwards, 'John Stow and Middle English Literature', in *John Stow and the Making of the English Past*, ed. by Ian Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie (London: British Library, 2004), pp. 109–118 (p. 114).

<sup>99</sup> Comparing these lines against two other *Life* manuscripts which Stow is known to have owned or had access to, the suggestion that HEH MS HM 144 is the exemplar for BL Add. MS 29729 becomes more certain. In Bodl. MS Bodley 596, this line reads, 'In god that is my soueraigne helthe entiere' (f. 114r), while in TCC MS. R. 3.21, the line reads, 'In god that ys my souerayne helthe entyere' (f. 107r).

with the material around it, the *Magnificat* is re-purposed to become part of a larger narrative text.

### HEH MS HM 144

HEH MS HM 144 contains two extracts from the *Life*: the *Magnificat* (II, 940–1060), on ff. 77v–79r, as well as a section from Book II, 1–504, on ff. 11r–20r. It is impossible to establish whether the scribe had access to a single, complete copy of the poem, from which he derived these extracts. However, considering the manuscript as a whole, it becomes clear that the selections fit logically into the material which surrounds them. As Daniel Wakelin observes, the [first] excerpt from the *Life* ‘begins a series of excerpts from various works which together form a life of Christ’, while the second extract has interpolated the *Magnificat* into a larger narrative poem, placing it into an episode which describes the Virgin’s visit to Elizabeth.<sup>100</sup> The extracts show narrative and thematic coherence, which suggests that they were selected by design – that is – based on their content, rather than by an accident of survival. The designer of the codex appears to have quarried the sections he required, rather than alighting on a partial exemplar and then copying the only available material. Neither of the texts attribute authorship to Lydgate, nor do they bear any traces of their original context in the *Life*. So far in this chapter we have seen the ways in which compilers, scribes and poets were interested in the idea of authorship, and how they appear to have valued certain texts because they were authored. Now, however, we see a scribe selecting extracts based on their content alone, and re-purposing them in a larger narrative or in amongst a collection of thematically related texts. The scribe did not respect the *Life* as a discrete, stable, authored textual object, but instead extracted what he required to create a *bricolage* of texts.

The manuscript, which dates from the very end of the fifteenth or early sixteenth century, is a compilation of Middle English texts.<sup>101</sup> It was annotated both by John Stow and William Thynne. The codex contains a broad mixture of texts, for it has popular Lydgatean and devotional works as well as pieces such as Chaucer’s *Tale of Melibee* and the *Monk’s Tale*. Created in eight fascicles, the material in the manuscript may be roughly divided into basic categories.<sup>102</sup> Whereas the start of the manuscript has a more explicitly religious theme, the texts in the middle and latter part appear to be more secular. Dutschke notes that the distribution of

<sup>100</sup> Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375–1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 242.

<sup>101</sup> *A Guide to the Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, ed. by C. W. Dutschke, 2 vols (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1989), I, pp. 197–203.

<sup>102</sup> *A Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, ed. by Dutschke, I, p. 202.

watermarks and signatures suggests a ‘2- or 3-part division’ of the codex, comprised of Lichfield’s *Complaint of God* (NIMEV 2714) in part 1, ‘the “religious” material in quires 2–7’ and the third part comprising ‘the “secular” material in the rest of the book’.<sup>103</sup>

The scribe copied the texts from a variety of sources. Several works in the manuscript appear to have been copied from printed exemplars, but the sections of the *Life* were not.<sup>104</sup> All but four of the verse texts in HEH MS HM 144 appear elsewhere in manuscripts of the *Life*.<sup>105</sup> The pattern of shared texts may indicate that these manuscripts may have shared exemplars, possibly derived from Shirleyian manuscripts, but we would need a full textual study to be sure of this. HEH MS HM 144 and ACVAU Liber 1405, in particular, appear to share a common exemplar.<sup>106</sup> It appears likely that John Stow copied some of the texts, including the *Magnificat* in BL Add. MS 29729, from HEH MS HM 144.<sup>107</sup>

The first extract from the *Life* appears as the second text in the manuscript, after William Lichfield’s *Complaint of God* (NIMEV 2714). Lichfield’s text is a dialogue between God and man with a focus on the latter’s sinfulness.<sup>108</sup> The text begins with God’s admonition to man, ‘And think what I have do for the/ Why forsakyst thou me & seruyst Sathan’.<sup>109</sup> The image presented to the reader is one of the sinful, unredeemed soul. Man’s replies reflect on his

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>104</sup> Lydgate’s *Horse Sheep and Goose* (NIMEV 658) appears to have been copied from STC 17019 [1476], equally Lydgate’s *Churl and the Bird* (NIMEV 2784) may have been copied from STC 17008 [?1477].

<sup>105</sup> Benedict Burgh’s *Cato Major* (NIMEV 854), which appears on ff. 114v–135v also appears in BL Arundel 168, ff. 7v–14r, in BL Harley MS 7333, ff. 25–30v, AVCAU Liber 1405, ff. 89r–109r and as a short extract in John Stow’s BL Add. MS 29729, f. 288v. William Lichfield’s *Complaint of God* (NIMEV 2714), which appears in HEH MS HM 144 on ff. 1r–9v also appears in CCC MS 237 ff. 137v–46; Adv. MS 19.3.1 (Heege), ff. 158–170v and TCC MS R.3.21, ff. 182r–189r. *Parvus Cato* (NIMEV 3955), also appears in BL Arundel MS 168, f. 7; AVCAU Liber 1405, ff. 88r–v and BL Harley MS 7333, f. 25r. NIMEV 3504 *The World So Wide* which appears on f. 144, also appears in BL Harley MS 7333 and NIMEV 3436 *The More I Go the Further I am Behind* appears in BL Harley MS 7333 and BL Add. MS 29729.

<sup>106</sup> In other instances a shared exemplar appears more certain. Two manuscripts of the *Life*, Bodl. MS Hatton 73 and Lambeth MS 344 share – alongside the text of the *Life* – NIMEV 222, 808, 2483, 2791, 3190 and 4246 and also preserve an unusual form of textual division and arrangement. See Henry Noble MacCracken, ‘Notes Suggested by a Chaucer Codex,’ *Modern Language Notes*, 23 (1908), 212–14.

<sup>107</sup> As I noted above, Stow itemized both the *Life* and the *Magnificat* as distinct entities in his list of Lydgate’s works in his edition of Chaucer’s *Woorkes* (STC 5079) (sig. S ss v<sup>a</sup>; f. 376r). Given that HEH MS HM 144 does not attribute the text of the *Magnificat* to Lydgate, Stow must have recognised it as both a free-standing piece and also a part of the *Life*.

<sup>108</sup> No critical edition of this poem exists. There is an edition of Lambeth MS 306 in *Political, Religious and Love Poems* ed. by Frederick Furnivall EETS O.S. 15 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1866), pp. 199–232. Additionally, an edition of Camb. Gonville and Caius MS 174 appears in Edvard Borgström, ‘The Complaint of God to Sinful Man and the Answer of Man by William Lichfield’, *Anglia*, 34 (1911), 498–525. The text in HEH MS HM 144 contains two additional stanzas not printed in either edition. See *Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, ed. by Dutschke, I, p. 202

<sup>109</sup> ‘Complaint of God’, ed. by Borgström, p. 508, ll. 7–8.

transgressions and he resolves that he will his ‘synnes forsake/and do gode dedys’.<sup>110</sup> After this, the excerpt from the *Life* appears (f.11r). It is concerned with ideas expressed in the previous poem. Both texts focus on God’s decision to redeem mankind. The excerpt begins with the debate between the four daughters of God and ends with the moment of the Annunciation. The debate between the four daughters was a popular medieval allegory based on Psalm 84:11, ‘Misericordia et Veritas obviaverunt sibi; Justitia et Pax osculatae stint’ [Mercy and truth have met each other: justice and peace have kissed].<sup>111</sup> Lydgate’s source in this part of the poem is the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*.<sup>112</sup> There are other versions of the Parliament of Heaven in Middle English literary texts, yet Lydgate’s version places special emphasis on the metaphorical imprisonment of the soul of mankind before the moment of the Redemption.<sup>113</sup> The extract begins with an image of the sinful, unredeemed soul: ‘Who that is bonde, and feterde in prison/ Thenketh longe aftir delyveraunce/ And he that felyth Payne and passion’ (II, 1–3).<sup>114</sup> The next stanza describes man’s state of ‘exile’ (II, 9), which it becomes clear is ‘hell’ (II, 26), where the sinner’s ‘nekke [is] oppressed, with so strenge a cheyne’ (II, 36). In this sense, the extract picks up on the themes of the previous text, Lichfield’s *Complaint*. Both the *Complaint of God* and the *Life* excerpt deal with God’s direct involvement in the life of the sinner and with God’s motivation for bringing about the redemption of mankind. However, whereas in Lichfield’s poem the sinner resolves to change his ways and seek redemption, in the *Life* extract God must send Christ to redeem mankind.

The extract from the *Life*, in this way, dramatizes God’s decision to redeem mankind, for in its Parliament of Heaven, the four daughters debate the fate of mankind. Peace pleads that mankind’s transgression in Eden was not his fault: ‘He was despoilet, amonge his cruel foon/For lake of helpe, when we left hym aloon’ (II, 83–84), while Truth decrees that ‘he was Rekles’ (II, 85). Unable to reach agreement, they present their respective cases to God. The following discussion is full of knotty theological wrangles and biblical references (II, 132, 138,

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, p. 525, ll. 531–32.

<sup>111</sup> For a full discussion see Hope Traver, *The Four Daughters of God: A Study of the Versions of this Allegory, with special reference to those in Latin, French and English* (Pennsylvania: Bryn Mawr College, 1907).

<sup>112</sup> *Iohannis de Caulibus Meditaciones vite Christi olim S. Bonaventuro Attributae*, ed. by M. Stallings-Taney (Turnholt: Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1997).

<sup>113</sup> For the other Middle English versions, see Robert Grosseteste, *Le Chateau D’Amour de Robert Grosseteste Eveque de Lincoln*, ed. by J. Murray (Paris: Libraire Champion, 1918), for the Middle English version, see, *The Middle English Translations of Robert Grosseteste’s ‘Chateau D’Amour’*, ed. by Kari Sajavaara (Helsinki: Uusfilologinen Yhdistys, 1967). *The N-town Play*, ed. by Stephen Spector, pageant 11, pp. 111–23.

<sup>114</sup> On Lydgate’s use of the imagery of incarceration to describe sin, see Mary Wellesley, ‘Static Menyng and Transitory Melodye in Lydgate’s *Seyng of the Nightingale*’, in *Stasis in the Medieval World: Questioning Continuity and Change*, ed. by Michael Bintley and others (New York: Palgrave), forthcoming.

162). The mechanics of redemption are discussed, and Lydgate touches on questions of original sin. The ‘dethe of synners...is werste of dethes/For synfull blode is no sacrifice’ (II, 237–39). They resolve to ‘fynde a man that shall undirtake...To suffer dethe onely for mans sake/Vucompelled, freely of volunte’ (II, 302–05). Using typological images, Lydgate describes this man as a ‘lambe’ (II, 306), but the daughters ponder ‘of what stok he shall spryng’ (II, 309) and resolve that it must be ‘a clene grovnde’ (II, 316). The extract concludes with the story of Gabriel’s appearance to Mary.

The extract from the *Life* is one which meditates on the purpose of the crucifixion in the larger Christological story. Crucially, the extract foregrounds the role of the Virgin as the instrumental ‘tabernacle’ (II, 324), who facilitates Christ’s incarnation and sacrifice. The extract ends at the moment of the Annunciation. This paves the way for the next text in the manuscript (ff. 21r–43v), which is a prose text on the passion told from the perspective of the Virgin. It is announced by a rubric which reads ‘Here begynneth the Stori of the blyssyd Passion of Crist Ihesu’ (f. 21r). Whereas the text of the *Life* ends at the point of the Annunciation, the next text picks up the Marian theme, but flashes forward to the events of the Passion, the pinnacle of the Christological story. The texts in question, which are the Middle English *Gospel of Nicodemus* and a series of discrete sections from John Trevisa’s translation of Ranulph Higden’s *Polychronicon*, describe Christ’s judgement before Pilate, the Siege of Jerusalem and medieval Jerusalem. This material provides an appropriate segue into the following text, which contains, embedded within it, another excerpt from the *Life*.

The *Magnificat* paraphrase from the *Life* appears on ff. 77v–79r. The text is inserted in the midst of the *Stasmons of Jerusalem* (NIMEV 986), a Middle English pilgrimage text.<sup>115</sup> This text, which is in couplets, maps an imaginative landscape of the Holy Land, fusing together physical and psychological geography. The text moves between various locations, overlaying biblical history and apocryphal legend onto the sites it describes. As George Shuffleton notes, it is a kind of imaginary tour, which might have been used as a spiritual exercise.<sup>116</sup> The inclusion of the excerpt from the *Life* reveals that the designer of this manuscript, knitting together literary-devotional material from a variety of exemplars, engaged thoughtfully with the material in front of him.

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<sup>115</sup> An edition of the text from Bodl. MS Ashmole 61 appears in *Sammlung Altenglischer Legenden*, ed. by Carl Horstmann (Leipzig: Heilbronn, 1878), 355–66. Another version was edited by George Shuffleton, cited below.

<sup>116</sup> *Codex Ashmole 61: A Compilation of Popular Middle English Verse*, ed. by George Shuffleton (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2008), online edition, <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/shuffleton-codex-ashmole-61>, accessed 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

In the previous chapter, we saw the way the scribe of BL Harley MS 2382 attached the *Assumption of Our Lady* (NIMEV 2165) to the text of the *Life* and labelled as the sixth book of the poem. Despite the fact that the *Assumption* is in rhyming couplets and clearly of a very different quality to the *Life*, the scribe pulled the texts together to suit a set of narrative demands, rather than clustering texts together based on the organising principle of authorship. In HEH MS HM 144 we see a similar example of a scribe fusing texts together, despite their very different forms. The section from the *Life* appears in the middle of a description of the place where ‘seynt Johne baptyst was borne’, in the ‘hous of Zakary’. The *Magnificat* excerpt begins on f. 77v, after the following section:

When Mary herd þis wordys dere  
Sche answerede on þis manere  
All hyre herte to god sche hyȝht  
And thankyd god off all hys myȝht  
And there she kneled vpon a stone  
And made Magnificat anone<sup>117</sup>

As when the eight-line *Magnificat* appears in the context of the rhyme-royal *Life* as a whole, the scribe’s interpolation, amongst the couplets, of the octet-stanzas here perhaps signals the special status of the *Magnificat* as both the centerpiece of the evening office and a rare moment in the Scriptures when the Virgin is given a voice.

The texts in HEH MS HM 144 seem to show a scribe who appears to want an anthology, not a miscellany. This is in contrast with the *Magnificat* in Camb., Gonville and Caius MS 230/11, or with the short extract of the *Life* in TCD MS 423, in which the extracts from the *Life* appear in among a more random collection of Latin (and in TCD MS 423 some vernacular) texts. The arrangement of texts in HEH MS HM 144 shows a desire to gather material in the earlier part of the manuscript (which Dutschke calls the ‘religious’ part of the volume) into a basic narrative of the Christological story.<sup>118</sup> It evidences a careful scribe-compiler. The notion that the scribe engaged thoughtfully with the material in front of him is strengthened when we examine the system of decoration and the traces of textual apparatus in the first extract of the *Life* in the manuscript. Here we see the scribe anxious to demarcate different doctrinal aspects of the Parliament of Heaven and to clarify who is speaking in the dialogue. The text of the *Life* in HEH MS HM 144 is related to TCC MS R. 3.21 and CUL MS Kk. 1. 3 (*Critical Edition*, p. 17), which places it in the *b* group of manuscripts. As discussed in

<sup>117</sup> *Sammlung Altenglischer Legenden*, ed. by Carl Horstmann, p. 365.

<sup>118</sup> *A Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, ed. by Dutschke, I, p. 202.

Chapter Two, there is only one manuscript in this group which is divided up according to the Type A arrangement of eighty-seven chapters and no books (Durham MS Cosin V.ii.16). The first excerpt of the *Life* in HEH MS HM 144 has no numbered chapter division or rubrication, other than the opening rubric which reads, ‘How Merci & Pees Ryghtwisnes & Trouthe disputyd for the Redempciun of Mankynde’ (f. 11r). However, it does contain several red initials at the beginnings of particular stanzas. These initials sometimes correspond to chapter openings in the Type A scheme and sometimes represent unique divisions. There are red initials at l. 107 (Chapter XII in Type A) and l. 183 (Chapter XIII), but also at ll. 197, 224, 232. Examining the context, it becomes clear that in each case the initials designate new speakers.<sup>119</sup> For example, line 197 is the opening line of a speech by Truth: ‘Then trouthe a noon touching this matier/ Sayde openly þat alle my ȝten here/ If it be so this man hath trespassed’ (ll. 195–97). Care has been taken by the compiler to divide the text intelligently and to demarcate speakers, for the fact that this manuscript is alone in dividing the text in these places makes it seem likely that it was the compiler, and not his exemplar, who chose to divide the text as it is.<sup>120</sup>

In this and in the collocation of texts in the volume we gain a sense of an intelligently assembled sequence of texts. The debate between the four daughters and Lichfield’s *Complaint* form appropriate companion pieces. Both describe God meditating on mankind’s salvation. Furthermore, the theme of the *Life* extract – its theological explanation for the Incarnation, with a focus on the Virgin – is an appropriate choice to precede the Passion narrative which follows it. In HEH MS HM 144 we see the *Life* excerpted in order to provide an appropriate companion piece for the material which surrounds it.

## Conclusion

The excerpts of the *Life* which survive in manuscript and print witnesses from the medieval and early modern period demonstrate the flexibility of the text, especially in extract. They illustrate different forms and different purposes of excerptation. Each of the manuscripts and prints discussed show the poem reframed or repurposed in complex ways. They also demonstrate changes in the function and collection of Middle English verse. The excerpts illustrate how sections of longer poems were extracted and utilized in the context of medieval literary-

<sup>119</sup> The start of Chapter XII, l. 106, technically signals the daughters bringing their plea to God, not direct speech, but it is nonetheless a change of scenario and audience for their speeches.

<sup>120</sup> As I have noted several times in previous chapters, it is my belief that the autograph manuscript of the *Life* had a series of textual divisions which became chapter beginnings with vernacular titles in particular manuscripts.

devotional anthologies, recorded on random spare folios and copied by antiquarian scribes in the early modern period.

The extracts also point to the way Lydgate sought to make a claim for the value of vernacular authorship and for vernacular literature in the early fifteenth century, both explicitly in his eulogy to Chaucer and implicitly in his choice of style. Lydgate's expansive and confident rendering of the *Magnificat* canticle encapsulates his assertive vernacular voice. The print and manuscript witnesses of the Chaucer eulogy demonstrate the enduring appeal of Chaucerian verse, and how this is filtered through Lydgate's own (self-aware) vision of Chaucer.

It is worth reflecting on how successful Lydgate was in creating this literary tradition, one which embedded itself in the imaginative landscape of later writers. In his 1660 *Parerga* or *Short View of Suffolk and Gloucestershire*, Clement Barksdale (b. 1609, d. 1687) briefly describes the village of Lidgate in Suffolk. He says of it: 'Lidgate, a Village not to be passed by in silence, being ennobled by the birth of *John Lidgate* Monk, whose wit the Muses themselves framed and adorned, his *English Poems* are of such grace and elegancy.'<sup>121</sup> We might consider this against Lydgate's own assessment of his home village. In *Isopes Fabules*, he draws ironic attention to his supposed lack of rhetorical skill by saying: 'I was born in Lydgate;/ Of Tullius garden I passyd nat be the gate'.<sup>122</sup> In the two and a half centuries since Lydgate had proffered this characteristic humility *topos*, much had changed. Whereas Lydgate makes himself servile to Latin Cicero, who is distant and noble, Barksdale, although praising Lydgate in Classical terms, gives his main salute to the value of his English verse. For Barksdale, the Muses are imagined as companions to Lidgate's own son, rather than as a distant presence. In the next chapter I explore more fully the way in which the *Life* was configured in a later age. Where once the *Life* was valued for its devotional and instructional function, in the later age its value was increasingly that of a relic from a forgotten literary past.

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<sup>121</sup> Clement Barksdale, *Short View of Suffolk and Gloucestershire* (London, 1660).

<sup>122</sup> *Minor Poems*, ed. by MacCracken, II, p. 567, ll. 32–3.

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## CHAPTER FIVE: AFTERLIVES

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Towards the end of the *Life*, Lydgate reflects on how difficult it is to dislodge entrenched cultural practices. Discussing the ancient, religious customs of pre-Christian Rome (in this case, the use of candles in religious processions), he notes how these practices continued into the Christian period:

In Rome towne<sup>1</sup> as myn auctour seythe,  
Observede was long and many a day,  
Yet aftir that they turnede to the faythe,  
But euere in one this Ryte thay kept alway—  
For olde custome is harde to putte away,  
And vsage grevythe folke<sup>3</sup> full sore  
To do a-way that thei haue kepte of yore. (VI, 337–43)

Lydgate's observation was a pertinent one, more pertinent than he could have realized, perhaps, because the evidence of the manuscripts and early prints of the *Life* testify to the way the poem itself was 'harde to putte away'. This chapter examines the way that certain figures – scribes, printers and, to some extent, owners – shaped the poem to their own ends, at the end of the fifteenth century and on into the seventeenth, energizing the poem with a new relevance even in a period in which we might have expected it to have disappeared from view.

On f.121v of AVCAU Liber 1405, there is an inscription in a sixteenth-century hand, which reads 'This is Rychard Turbyll's bocke Recorde of Sir Thomas Carne and many more of the hospitale in Rome'. This copy of the poem appears, therefore, to have been in Rome and in the English College since the sixteenth century. The Thomas Carne is likely a kinsman of the Edward Carne who was first a legal advisor to Henry VIII in the 1530s in the deliberations over his divorce from Katherine of Aragon and latterly the ambassador to the Holy See under the

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<sup>1</sup> The *Critical Edition* reads 'twone'.

reigns of Mary I and Elizabeth I.<sup>2</sup> Carne was warden of the ‘Hospital’ at Rome, as it was then known, from February 1559 to April 1560.

This association with Carne is emblematic of the intriguing afterlife that the *Life* had in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, after the point at which we might imagine that a poem in Middle English, about the Virgin Mary, had either lost much of its relevance or become potentially dangerous to own. Carne’s varied diplomatic and legal career, first as one of the architects of the break with Rome through Henry VIII’s divorce, but latterly as a servant of Henry’s Catholic and then Protestant daughters, is a convenient metaphor for the way in which Lydgate’s poem proved itself flexible enough to retain a kind of relevance in a period of immense cultural change.

The poem’s ownership inscriptions testify to the text’s varied and changing audiences in the medieval and post-medieval era. In addition to this, several copies of the *Life* date from the early modern period. In the previous chapter I discussed several extracts from the poem copied or printed in the post-medieval period. In addition to these, there are two early complete printed editions: William Caxton’s 1484 print (STC 17023) and Robert Redman’s 1531 print (STC 17025). There are also three manuscripts copied from the early complete prints: Chethams MS 6709,<sup>3</sup> Radcliffe MS 16,<sup>4</sup> and Bodl. MS Ashmole 59 (hitherto not identified as a copy from one of the prints).<sup>5</sup> The last of these manuscripts is the subject of the central part of this chapter and I conclude by examining the work of a mid-sixteenth century corrector who made substantial modifications to the text of BL Add. MS 19252. Radcliffe MS 16, Bodl. MS Ashmole 59 and the modifications to BL Add. MS 19252 present the varied responses of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century readers. The different agendas of these scribes is evidenced by their copying and or alteration of the poem.

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<sup>2</sup> L. E. Hunt, ‘Carne, Sir Edward (c.1496–1561)’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4712>, accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013]

<sup>3</sup> Neil Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries: Volume III: Lampeter-Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 345–46; Ralph A. Klinefelter, ‘Lydgate’s “Life of Our Lady” and the Chetham MS.6709’, *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 46 (1952), 396–97.

<sup>4</sup> N.F Blake, ‘Manuscript to Print’, *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 409–32 (p. 423). For the *Testament* in this manuscript see Mary Wellesley, ‘A Previously Unrecorded Manuscript Version of Lydgate’s *Testament*’, *Notes and Queries*, 62 (2015), 27–28.

<sup>5</sup> William Henry Black, *A Descriptive, Analytical and Critical Catalogue of the Manuscripts Bequeathed Unto the University of Oxford by Elias Ashmole* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1845), p. 104.

## Ownership inscriptions

The ownership inscriptions in the manuscripts of the *Life* show evidence of a diverse readership.<sup>6</sup> Although Derek Pearsall has suggested that the poem was intended for ‘reading aloud to members of the monastic community’, the inscriptions in the manuscripts suggest a wider audience.<sup>7</sup> As I noted in the previous chapter, the Heege manuscript, Adv. MS 19.3.1, contains a pattern of glossing which suggests a female audience for that copy of the poem. It also contains an inscription which testifies to at least one female reader: an ‘El[i]sabet[h] Bradchaw’ signed her name in the top margin of f.45r. Other manuscripts show a similar pattern. On f. 86r of BL Harley MS 1304 a later hand has added, ‘a good lernyng for women & maydens’, next to Book V, l. 379 (in a part of Book V in which Lydgate issues a misogynistic diatribe). Bodl. MS Hatton 73 contains, on f. 122r, the ex libris of ‘Dame Elizabeth Wyndesore’, ‘Marya Gertrude’ (in a seventeenth-century hand), on f. 9v and also contains a note saying it ‘was Quene margarete boke’, on f. 121v.<sup>8</sup> Beinecke MS 281, as I noted in Chapter One, contains an inscription stating that it belonged to a queen.<sup>9</sup> In BL MS Harley 5272, there is an inscription in an amateurish sixteenth-century hand which reads, ‘Thys ys Elisabeth daness boke/he that stelyng sall be hanged by a noke’, f. 42. Bodl. MS Ashmole 39, contains the name of Anne Andrew who married into the Bourchier family, as well of Isabel Bourchier, Countess of Eu (the sister of Richard, Duke of York) on the inside back cover. The names of Margeret Wenn (ff. 95r, 79r and 100v) and Margry Baugh (f. 100v) appear in NLW MS 2124C. In Durham, MS Cosin V. ii. 16, a ‘Jane Fitzlewis’ signed her name, while Margery Langley signed her name on the verso of the first flyleaf of CCC MS 237.<sup>10</sup>

Several manuscripts show evidence of aristocratic familial ownership. In some cases we find armorial shields emblazoned at the start of the text. Thus the arms of the Carent family can be found in Beinecke MS 281 and those of the De Veres in BL Harley 3862. The De Veres had a well-documented interest in literary manuscripts, which may have included the Ellesmere

<sup>6</sup> The details of the owners of each of the manuscripts of the *Life* are given in Appendix 2.

<sup>7</sup> Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 286.

<sup>8</sup> Julia Boffey and Carol M. Meale, ‘Gentlewomen’s Reading’, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. by Nigel J. Morgan and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 526–40 (p. 528).

<sup>9</sup> In a fifteenth-century hand, on the verso of the original cover reads: ‘thys boke yevyn/ to the quene our souereyne/ lady ffor to se the converssacyon/ off our moost blessed lady off/ hevyn ffor to conffort/ and to passe tyme in/ redyng and ovyr/ seying thys lytll/ trety off hyr blessed’.

<sup>10</sup> Carol Meale, ‘...alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englisch, and frensch’: Laywomen and their Books in Late Medieval England’, ed. by Carol M. Meale, *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 128–58 (p.152, n.44).

Chaucer.<sup>11</sup> The arms of William Carent (b. 1395, d. 1476) are also found in a manuscript of the *Troy Book*, as noted in Chapter One.<sup>12</sup> He also appears to have owned other manuscripts – a copy of the *Canterbury Tales* (specifically which copy is unclear) and a copy of Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* (BL Add. MS 11748).<sup>13</sup>

In other cases, we find the names of several family members inscribed in a single manuscript. Aside from Anne and Isabel, several other members of the Bourchier family wrote their names on the inside back cover of Bodl. MS Ashmole 39. The Bourchiers were a Yorkist, aristocratic family, which is interesting given that the poem may have had Lancastrian origins and associations. The Bourchiers, like the De Veres, had a well-attested interest in Middle English literature. Members of the family are thought to have owned copies of the *Canterbury Tales*.<sup>14</sup> Osbern Bokenham's *Life of Mary Magdalene* is dedicated to Isabel Bourchier.<sup>15</sup>

It was not only the aristocracy who owned copies of the *Life*. The manuscripts indicate that the poem was also owned by regional, gentry families. Hunterian MS 232 contains various inscriptions in sixteenth-century hands which indicate that it belonged to the Golding family in Essex. 'Wyllm Goldynge' appears on f. 8v. Alongside this we find 'Tomas Goldynge of berkyng | Thys indenture wytnessythe that I Willm goldynge of Berkynge in the countye of Essyxe | hathe bound hym selfe a prentys with Tomas' on f. 9r, as well as 'John Goldynge' (f. 3r) and 'Francis Goldynge' (f. 13v). The Goldings appear to have been a similar kind of family to the Sherbrooke family who, as I noted in the previous chapter, were the owners of Adv. MS 19.3.1. As well as these gentry and aristocratic owners, there is also evidence of the poem having belonged to mercantile readers. The name of the mercer Robert Thorney has been added to a decorative banner in TCC MS R. 3.21, f. 245v.<sup>16</sup> On the verso of the opening flyleaf of BL Harley MS 1304 'Johannes hall grocer' has inscribed his name.

<sup>11</sup> Ralph Hanna, III and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Rotheley, the De Vere Circle, and the Ellesmere Chaucer', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 58 (1995), 11–35.

<sup>12</sup> The relationship between this manuscript and a specific cluster of *Life* manuscripts is discussed in Chapters One and Two.

<sup>13</sup> A.S.G. Edwards, 'Manuscripts and Readers', in *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture c. 1350–c. 1500*, ed. by Peter Brown (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 93–106 (pp. 103–4).

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Bourchier may have owned Northumberland, Alnwick Castle MS 455. Her cousin, Jane Bourchier may have owned Toyko, Takamiya MS 24. See Estelle Stubbs, 'Claire Priory, London Austin Friars and *Canterbury Tales* MSS', in *Middle English Poetry: Texts and Traditions, Essays in Honour of Derek Pearsall*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2001), pp. 17–27 (p. 19).

<sup>15</sup> A.S.G. Edwards, 'The Transmission and Audience of Osbern Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*', in *Late Medieval Religious Texts and their Transmission*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994), pp. 157–67 (p. 165).

<sup>16</sup> Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson, 'Anthologies and Miscellanies: Production and Choice of Texts', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 279–316 (pp. 288–89).

Some owners added verse to the manuscripts. On the back pastedown of Bodl. MS Ashmole MS 39 a unique verse couplet appears: 'My harte ys yowrs ye may be sure | And so shall it be while lyff shall indure' (NIMEV 2245.1) which is signed 'Bourscher Richard Daniel'. Amusingly, on the same pastedown we find Lydgate's *Beware of Doubleness* (NIMEV 3656) which admonishes women for their faithlessness. The final leaves of Illinois MS 85 contain a previously undocumented witness of the twelfth-century Latin poem *Ecce Mundus Moritatur*, which is sometimes integrated into the *Visio Philberti* (which appears in different forms across several manuscript witnesses). It is accompanied, in between each stanza, by a hitherto unpublished Middle English translation of the poem. The verses are in alternating vernacular rhyme royal stanzas and Latin mono-rhymed quatrains.<sup>17</sup> They are written by a scribe who names himself as Edward Fulford. The words 'explicit quod Edward | Fulford amen etcetera' (f. 85v) appear in a large *textura quadrata* with floral decorative flourishes added to ends of the lines.

### **Welsh owners**

A curious footnote in the history of the poem is the fact that one manuscript of the poem appears to have been copied by a Welsh scribe and three manuscripts seem to have belonged to Welsh owners by the sixteenth century, while a further codex was in Welsh hands in the seventeenth century.<sup>18</sup> BL Harley MS 4011 was written by a named scribe. On f. 119r, the words 'Etto Gobeth | Explicit Johannes lydgate monke of Bury | quod. W. Grauell', appear in a large decorative banner.<sup>19</sup> NLW MS 21242C contains inscriptions in sixteenth-century hands, reading: 'Rys Llwyd vab John ap Howel' (f. 102r), 'Thomas Som[er]e' (in a legal hand, f. 99r), 'Robert Salsbry' (f. 36v), 'Jhon ap Ievan Lloyd' (f. 42r) and 'Rees Powell' and 'Rhes Thomas' (f. 58r). The second manuscript which was in the hands of Welsh owners is AVCAU Liber 1405, which I noted at the start of the chapter. It belonged to Thomas Carne, probable kinsman of Sir Edward Carne (c.1496–1561) the son of Howell Carne (fl. 1490–1497) of Cowbridge, Glamorgan, and his wife, Cicely or Sibyl, daughter of William Kemys of Newport,

<sup>17</sup> I am preparing a transcription of these verses for submission to a journal for publication.

<sup>18</sup> For further information on Middle English manuscripts owned or made in Wales in the medieval period, see William Marx, *The Index of Middle English Prose, Handlist XIV: Manuscripts in the National Library of Wales* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1999), pp. xvii–viii.

<sup>19</sup> Both A.I. Doyle and Simon Horobin note the existence of this inscription, neither of them translate it. A.I. Doyle, 'Publication by Members of Religious Orders', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. by Griffiths and Pearsall, pp. 109–124 (p. 119); Simon Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the Work of Osbern Bokenham', *Speculum*, 82 (2007), 932–49 (p. 948). The motto is Welsh (modern spelling 'Eto Gobaith'). The phrase translates as 'There's hope yet'. I am indebted to Professor Helen Fulton for this translation.

Monmouthshire. The family claimed descent from the kings of Gwent. The third manuscript is BL Harley MS 629. In that case, an obit has been added to the final page (f. 97v) in a Tudor hand. It reads:

In the yere of our lorde god mliV xxxi the iii day of December was master  
Rysse behedded at the towre hyll in London and one Wylliam Hewsse byng hys  
frand was drawne throwe London to tyborne and there hangeth for tresson.

The same inscription, in the same hand, appears on f. 1r, although it is now all but invisible except under UV light. The note refers to Rhys ap Gruffyd (anglicised as Griffith), a Welsh nobleman and his associate, William Hughes, who were executed by Henry VIII for treason in December 1531. It was alleged that Rhys and Hughes had met on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1531 at Rhys' lodgings in Islington and discussed the possibility of James V of Scotland invading England and installing Rhys as Prince of Wales.<sup>20</sup> It is unclear who wrote the note, but the family owned Middle English manuscripts, so perhaps it was a family member. Rhys' mother, Catherine (d. 1553) née St John, who later married Sir Piers Edgecombe, seems to have owned a copy of Lydgate's *Troy Book*, BL Royal MS 18 D II. She signed her name on f. 1r of that manuscript. BL Harley MS 629 appears to have been in the Griffith family until the manuscript was acquired by Simon D'Ewes.<sup>21</sup> This is indicated by a later sixteenth-century hand which has inscribed the end flyleaf (f. 98v) with the following partially illegible words: 'Complayneth sheweth unto ys good lordship ys pore | [illegible]?Orat Jamys gryffyth of the towne of monmothe | yn the marchis off walys that wher apone | on Charles haskyng [...].'<sup>22</sup> Although largely impossible to decipher this inscription, it would appear to place the manuscript in the hands of the Griffiths family, from the 'towne of monmouth' in the late sixteenth century.<sup>23</sup> The obituary inscription is unusual. It speaks to the way such books had multiple functions in the period. They were repositories of the poem, but were also prized family heirlooms and *loci* of familial memory. The last manuscript which had a Welsh owner in the seventeenth century is Illinois MS 85 (*olim*

<sup>20</sup> Ralph Griffiths, *Rhys ap Thomas and his Family* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993), pp.101, 106, 110–11.

<sup>21</sup> On D'Ewes, see the British Library Catalogue of Illuminated manuscripts: <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=5056&CollID=8&NStart=629>, accessed 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

<sup>22</sup> I am grateful to Professor Wakelin for assistance with this final line.

<sup>23</sup> See Mary Wellesley, 'A Tudor Inscription in London, British Library Harley MS 629', *Notes and Queries*, 63 (2016), 376–77.

Mostyn Hall MS 257), which was acquired by Sir Thomas Mostyn a few months before his death in 1692 at the sale of John Maitland, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Lauderdale.<sup>24</sup>

### Antiquarian owners

In the post-medieval period, the poem was of interest to antiquarian readers, many of whom left their marks in the manuscripts. As previously noted, an eighteenth-century bookseller, Thomas Wilson (b.1703, d.1784) copied sections of the *Life*: the introductory rubric, the final chapter of the poem (VI, 309–462) and the Chaucer commendation (II, 1628–55) from Bodl. MS Rawl. Poet 140, onto the final leaves of an early fourteenth-century Psalter – now Houghton MS Lat. 394.<sup>25</sup> Wilson also wrote a biography of Lydgate on the opening leaves of Bodl. MS Rawl. Poet 140. In it he describes Lydgate as having a stint as a tutor to ‘Several young Noblemen’ and suggests that he ‘much improved himself in the Universities of Paris and Pavia, return’d into England with a perfect knowledge of the French and Italian languages’. The wording and detail of this biography was lifted from John Stevens’ *History of the Antient Abbeys, Monasteries, Hospitals, Cathedral and Collegiate Churches*.<sup>26</sup> He also records Lydgate’s epitaph, which he likely took from John Pits’ 1619 *Angli, S. Theologiae Doctoris, Liverduni in Lotharingia Decani Relationum Historicarum de Rebus Anglicis*:<sup>27</sup>

*Mortuus Sæclo, Superis Superstes,  
Hic jacet Lidgat tumululatus Urna:  
Qui fuit quondam celebris Britannæ  
Fama Poesis*      (Bodl. MS Rawlinson poet 140, flyleaf)

The epitaph also appears in Bale’s *Index Scriptorum*.<sup>28</sup> James Simpson notes in *Reform and Cultural Revolution* that Bale creates for Lydgate ‘a (wholly spurious) humanist’s progress, including

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<sup>24</sup> Daniel Huws, ‘Sir Thomas Mostyn and the Mostyn Manuscripts’, in *Books and Collectors 1200–1700: Essays Presented to Andrew Watson*, ed. by James P. Carley and Colin G. C. Tite (London: British Library, 1997), pp. 451–72 (esp. p. 451, 463).

<sup>25</sup> Full digital facsimile of the Houghton manuscript is available at: [http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/early\\_manuscripts/bibliographies/Lat.cfm](http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/early_manuscripts/bibliographies/Lat.cfm). See also Michael P. Kuczynski, ‘The Facsimilist’s Tale: Thomas Wilson, Schoolmaster and Antiquary, and Harvard University, Houghton Library MS Lat 394’, forthcoming. I am indebted to Professor Kuczynski for allowing me to see an advance copy of this article.

<sup>26</sup> John Stevens, *History of the Antient Abbeys, Monasteries, Hospitals, Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, Being Two Additional Volumes to Sir William Dugdale’s Moasticon Anglicanum* (London: Taylor, Stokoe, Smith, 1722), p. 211.

<sup>27</sup> Ioannis Pitsei, *Angli, S. Theologiae Doctoris, Liverduni in Lotharingia Decani Relationum Historicarum de Rebus Anglicis* (Paris: Rolinum Thierry & Sebastianum Cramoisy, 1619), p. 634.

<sup>28</sup> Bale, in turn, records it as ‘Ex collectis Nicolai Brigham’. John Bale, *Index Britanniae Scriptorum*, ed. by Reginald Lane Poole and Mary Bateson (1902), with a new introduction by Caroline Brett and James P. Carley (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1990), p. 231.

study periods in Padua and Paris'.<sup>29</sup> And Wilson, in turn, repeats these myths. In supplying this information at the start of the manuscript, Wilson appears to have wanted to provide prefatory material that might function as a kind of critical apparatus for other readers.

The practice of providing bibliographical information and a form of critical apparatus is not uncommon in manuscripts of the *Life*. On the opening flyleaf of BL Cotton MS Appendix VIII, a seventeenth-century hand has written a short biography of Lydgate lifted from John Bale's *Scriptorium Illustrum Maioris Brytanniae*:

Johanes Lydgate ad Edmundi fanum Buriensis coenobii monachus omnium sui temporis in Anglia Poetarum absit invidia dicto facile primus floriut. Claruit sexagenarius a°D 1440 sub Rege Henrico VI° | Seripsit Vitam S<sup>ae</sup> Mariae ad Henricum V & alia multa.

[John Lydgate, monk of the monastery of Bury St Edmunds, who had nothing to envy in the English poets of his time [because] he was the first to flourish [in that era]. He distinguished himself at the age of sixty, in the year of Our Lord 1440, in the reign of Henry VI. He composed this life of Saint Mary and many others for Henry V].<sup>30</sup>

At the end of this note there is a reference, 'Balae: p. 586'.<sup>31</sup> The page reference indicates an owner keen to provide a scholarly frame for the text. We see a similar nod to an antiquarian work of reference in Durham MS Cosin V ii 16, on f. 2v, where George Davenport (who elsewhere signs his name on f. 1 with the date 1664), copied a couple of sentences from John Pits' 1619 *Angli, S. Theologiae Doctoris, Liverdyni in Lotharingia Decani Relationum Historicarum de Rebus Anglicis*.<sup>32</sup>

In BL Harley MS 4260 Samuel Knott, rector of Combe Raleigh (d. 1687), added notes in a distinctive mauve ink, making reference to other manuscripts and pointing out allusions in the poem. For example, on f. 1, beneath a note by Humfrey Wanley,<sup>33</sup> he has written 'Vita B Mariae Virg. S Metris Anglicis | MS S. 6.7 ?Far?? [illegible] Catal. B. Bodl. Oxo'.<sup>34</sup> On f. 87r

<sup>29</sup> James Simpson, *Reform and Cultural Revolution, The Oxford English Literary History: 1350–1574, Volume II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.39.

<sup>30</sup> I am indebted to my colleague, Laure Miolo, who helped me make sense of this slightly strange Latin.

<sup>31</sup> John Bale, *Scriptorium Illustrum Maioris Brytanniae* (Basileae: Apud Ioan nem Oporinum, 1559). [Colophon at the end of the volume states it is 'Ex Officina Ioannis Oporini'.] The text is actually taken from pp. 586–87.

<sup>32</sup> Johannes Pitsei, *Angli, S. Theologiae Doctoris, Liverdyni in Lotharingia Decani Relationum Historicarum de Rebus Anglicis*, p. 632.

<sup>33</sup> '126 B.4 | 17 May 1715', f. 1r. This refers to the acquisition of the manuscripts of Robert Burscough (b. 1651 d.1709), prebendary of Exeter and Archdeacon of Barnstaple. See Appendix 2.

<sup>34</sup> This may refer to *Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae* (Oxonie: Theatro Sheldoniano, 1697), but I could not find the entry Knott is referring to. There are notes with traceable entries to Bodl. MSS Bodley 75 and Bodley 120. See Appendix 2.

next to the opening of Book V, l. 18, he points out Lydgate's debt to the *Opus Imperfectum* (see *Critical Edition*, p. 710). On f. 93v, he draws attention to the misogynistic diatribe which is also annotated by a later reader of BL Harley MS 1304 (f. 86r, Book V, l. 379, noted above) and on f. 94r he highlights Lydgate's catalogue of ill-fated women: 'Isoude, Elyn, and eke polixene' (V, 408). In each case, these notes show readers anxious to provide a kind of scholarly framework in which to interpret the poem and a care about questions of allusion, authorship, patronage and textual witnesses.<sup>35</sup>

In some cases, manuscripts of the *Life* are now bound with other items of a different date and it is now difficult to tell whether the antiquarian owners who have inscribed them actually owned the text of the *Life*. Thus, BL Sloane MS 1785 formerly belonged to the antiquary Sir Henry Spelman (b.1563/4, d.1641), whose name is inscribed on f.2r. It is unclear when the items in the manuscript were bound together and therefore whether he owned the part containing the leaves from the *Life*. The poet and antiquarian William Browne of Tavistock owned Durham MS Cosin 16.V. II – his name is inscribed on f. 3r – but it is unclear whether he also owned the part of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59 which contains a partial witness of the *Life*. His name is inscribed in that manuscript on f. 133v.<sup>36</sup> The inscription reads: 'W Browne Inter Templi | 1614' and appears at the end of the Shirleian part of the codex. It is unclear, however, whether at the time the codex also contained the seventeenth-century copy of the *Life* (which forms a central part of the discussion in the rest of this chapter). The binding dates from the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the evidence of antiquarian ownership, from the second quarter of the seventeenth century onwards, the *Life* clearly did not have the widespread appeal it had enjoyed in the medieval period and it was not copied or printed in its entirety until 1961.<sup>38</sup> In the nineteenth century, partial prints of the poem were published. The extracts from the Heege

<sup>35</sup> Sometimes antiquarian owners made small-scale interventions into the manuscript, like Peter Le Neve (b.1661, d.1729), the herald and antiquary. On the recto of the opening flyleaf of BL Harley MS 1304 he has written: 'Liber Petri Le neve | Rouge croix per ?locutoribus Armour 1695'. He also removed the final leaf of the last quire and transferred the text he removed (*ABC of Aristotle*, NIMEV 4155) to f. 103v. Next to the transferred text he wrote: 'this was on the other leaf but I took it out & writ it here | Peter Le Neve 1695'.

<sup>36</sup> On Browne see A.S.G. Edwards, 'Medieval Manuscripts Owned by William Browne of Tavistock (1590/12–1643/5?)', in *Books and Collectors 1200–1700*, ed. by James P. Carley and Colin G.C. Tite (London: British Library, 1997), pp. 441–49. See also Michelle O'Callaghan, 'Browne, William (1590/91–1645?)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3706>, accessed 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016]

<sup>37</sup> Margaret Connolly, *John Shirley: Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth Century England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), p. 166, n.13.

<sup>38</sup> I identify this point given that Radcliffe MS 16 is dated 1603 and Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B is dated to the late Elizabethan or early Stuart period, but after this point the poem clearly fell out of favour.

Manuscript (Adv. MS 19.3.1) appeared in 1843.<sup>39</sup> The sections which appear in the Bannatyne Manuscript were printed in an edition of that codex, in 1873,<sup>40</sup> and in 1879 Charles Tame edited a portion of the poem (Book I and II, ll. 1–1095).<sup>41</sup>

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### **Early Printed Editions of the *Life***

#### **Caxton's 1484 print**

Caxton appears to have printed the *Life* twice (STC 17023 and 17024).<sup>42</sup> Two leaves, sheets sig. Aa.vii and Aaa.vi are known in a variant setting (STC 17024). There has been some debate about what these leaves represent. Robert Proctor and, later, Curt F. Bühler suggested that these sheets represented a now lost edition.<sup>43</sup> As no other sheets exist in variant form, it seems likely that 'the two sheets were reprinted to supply a deficiency in the first print-run'.<sup>44</sup> Caxton's full edition is dated to c.1484 as the paper stocks are shared with his edition of *Troilus and Criseyde*<sup>45</sup> and with two editions completed in 1483, *Pilgrimage of the Soul* and *Liber Festivalis*.<sup>46</sup> Caxton followed a long tradition of supplying the text with a textual apparatus. His apparatus is similar to the Type A scheme – he included the introductory rubric, table of contents and the paraphrasing chapter titles. However, the edition has no marginal Latin gloss, as we find in the Type A scheme. The edition also differs from the Type A scheme in that Caxton conflated some of the chapters. In the table of contents at the start of his edition, he only labelled some of the chapters, allotting several of them in a block to a single title. He did not divide the poem into books. The edition is visually spare, with no illustrations and little decoration. Some surviving copies contain added red ink lombards and paragraph marks. This is

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<sup>39</sup> *The Visions of Tundale*, ed. by W.B. D.D. Turnball (Edinburgh: Thomas G. Stevenson, 1843), pp. 84–137.

<sup>40</sup> *The Bannatyne Manuscript*, 4 vols (Glasgow: Hunterian Club, 1873), II, pp. 64–67.

<sup>41</sup> John Lydgate, *The Life of Our Lady. Part I. Edited from MSS in the British Museum*, ed. by Charles Edward Tame (London: R. Washbourne, 1879).

<sup>42</sup> *Catalogue of Books Printed in the XVth Century Now in the British Library* (Hes & de Graaf for the British Library Board, 2007) Part XI, pp. 139–40; *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue*, no. I00409000, [<http://istc.bl.uk/search/search.html?operation=record&rsid=425942&q=0>], accessed 11th April 2013].

<sup>43</sup> Robert Proctor, *An Index to the Early Printed Books in the British Museum from the Invention of Printing to the Year MD, with Notes of Those in the Bodleian Library*, 2 vols. (London, K. Paul, Trench, Trübner & Company, 1898. 4 supplements, 1899–1902), 9665–66.

<sup>44</sup> *Catalogue of Books Printed in the XVth Century Now in the British Library*, p. 140.

<sup>45</sup> *Printing in England in the Fifteenth Century: E. Gordon Duff's Bibliography with Supplementary Descriptions, Chronologies and a Census of Copies*, compiled by Lotte Hellinga (London: British Library, 2009), p. 94, stocks 134–37.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p.267, 298 (stocks 134, 136, 139–41).

the case with a copy I examined in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.<sup>47</sup> These were probably produced in Caxton's workshop.<sup>48</sup>

### The epilogue verses

In the epilogue to Book II of his *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, Caxton writes that the 'worshi[p]full and religious man Dan John Lidgate, monke of Burye, dide translate hit but late, after whos werke I fere to take upon me, that am not worthy to bere his penner and ynkhorne after hym, to meddle me in that werke', before going on – in a strategic reversal of the humility *topos* worthy of Lydgate himself – to explain all the ways and reasons for 'meddling' very substantially in Lydgate's text.<sup>49</sup> His meddling in the text of the *Life* appears to have been fairly minor, however. Lauritis et al note that Caxton's print is derived from a manuscript related to TCC MS R. 3. 22 (*Critical Edition*, p. 53). His only substantial change to the text was the addition of a series of epilogue verses.<sup>50</sup> These verses, although much less substantial than the epilogues which he added to other works he printed, nonetheless represent his thoughtful engagement with Lydgate's text. They also suggest that Caxton saw the text as having a devotional function. He composed three stanzas in English, in rhyme royal stanzas to mirror the form of the poem itself, and interspersed between them two Latin mono-rhymed quatrain verses. The Latin verses are, in fact, the final prayers of the daily Office, which he lifted from the Breviary. The two vernacular stanzas which follow are translations of the Latin prayers, but what precedes them is an envoy, written by Caxton. It reads:

Goo lityl book and submytte the  
Unto al them/ that the shal rede  
Or here/prayeng hem for charite  
To pardon me of the rudehede  
Of myn empryntyng/ not takyng hede  
And yf ought be doon to theyr plesyng  
Say they thyse balades folowyng (sig. M. 1 iii<sup>b</sup> )

These verses suggest that Caxton saw his edition as having a devotional or quasi-liturgical function and that he hoped the text's sanctity might confer some grace on him, as its printer. The concluding verses ask that 'al them /that shal rede | Or here' shall pray for him, before they

<sup>47</sup> The Morgan Library holds two copies of STC 17024, only one of them, ChL1785, has red ink decoration. See the online catalogue: <http://corsair.themorgan.org/>, accessed 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

<sup>48</sup> On these coloured lombards, see *Catalogue of Books Printed in the XVth Century Now in the British Library*, XI, p. 346.

<sup>49</sup> N.F. Blake, *Caxton's Own Prose* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1973) p. 99.

<sup>50</sup> Sigs. M. 1 iii<sup>b</sup> –M.1 ivi<sup>a</sup> and N.F. Blake, *Caxton's Own Prose*, p. 113.

say the words of the daily Office and his translation. In translating these prayers into seven-line stanzas, Caxton follows a well-worn Lydgatean path. (As I discussed in the previous chapter, Lydgate made many translations of liturgical material, albeit more often in octets.) Caxton's epilogue verses also echo Lydgate's envoy to the *Troy Book* (which in turn echoes Chaucer's conclusion to *Troilus*). Lydgate closes the *Troy Book* with 'go litel bok'.<sup>51</sup> *Lives of SS Edmund and Fremund* closes in much the same way, with 'Go litel book. Be ferfful... To alle folk that the shal seen or reede'.<sup>52</sup> The way in which Caxton copies Lydgate, who in turn copies Chaucer, follows a pattern which we saw in the previous chapter, where I traced the way Lydgate's eulogy to Chaucer (II, 1628–55) is modelled on Chaucer's eulogy to Petrarch in the Prologue to the *Clerk's Tale*<sup>53</sup> and how Lydgate's eulogy to Chaucer was extracted from the *Life* by John Stow in his edition of Chaucer's works.<sup>54</sup>

As I observed in my opening chapter, the *Life* is an open-ended text which appears unfinished. In concluding the work with these verses, Caxton partially closes off the text. Perhaps it was entirely coincidental that he chose to add his own material at the end of the text rather than at the beginning, but part of its effect is to provide a more satisfying conclusion to the poem.

### Redman's 1531 print

In 1531, Robert Redman (b.?, d. 1540) printed an almost identical copy of the Caxton print.<sup>55</sup> Caxton's edition was clearly his exemplar. There is no divergence from Caxton's text; the only additions that Redman made were the decidedly more sumptuous front and end matter and a different final *explicit*. Underneath the dedicatory heading, on sig. A.i<sup>a</sup>, Redman included a woodcut of the Annunciation and overleaf on sig. A.i<sup>b</sup> before the beginning of the table of contents, he printed an image of the adoration of the Magi. At the conclusion of the table of

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<sup>51</sup> John Lydgate, *Troy Book I–III*, ed. by Henry Bergen, EETS, E.S. 97 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1906), pp. 879, Envoy l. 92 and p. 876, Book V, l. 3612.

<sup>52</sup> John Lydgate, *John Lydgate's 'Lives of Ss Edmund & Fremund' and the 'Extra Miracles of St Edmund'*, ed. by Anthony Bale and A. S. G. Edwards (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009), p. 132, ll. 3572–74.

<sup>53</sup> *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) p. 137, ll. 27, 29–33.

<sup>54</sup> *The Woorkes of Geoffrey Chaucer* [London: John Kyngston for John Wright, 1561] (STC 5076), sig. Ppp i<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> Alexandra Gillespie erroneously states that Redman did not print the epilogue verses in *Print Culture and the Medieval Author: Chaucer, Lydgate and their Books 1473–1557* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 177. On Redman see, Alexandra Gillespie, 'Redman, Robert (d. 1540)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23261>, accessed 17<sup>th</sup> May 2013].

contents on sig. Aiiii<sup>b</sup>, beneath an *explicit* for the table of contents which reads, ‘Here endeth the Table/her after | foloweth the Prologe [sic]. | Laus Deo’, he printed an image of the nimbed Virgin standing holding the Christ-child. She is enclosed within a floral arch and two decorative, floral side borders.

At the end of the edition, after the epilogue verses, and his colophon, he printed an image of the flight into Egypt (sig. Hh.vi<sup>a</sup>). In the image, the Virgin, who is riding a donkey and carrying the Christ-child, looks backwards. Ironically (and certainly unintentionally), her gaze seems directed straight at text’s *explicit*, which announces the end of the poem. As I noted in Chapter One, the positioning of the image of the flight into Egypt indicates that this is the next event in the narrative and perhaps suggests that Redman thought this episode was lacking in the text. Much like Caxton’s decision to add concluding verses, Redman’s inclusion of the woodcut may indicate that he felt the text was in some way unresolved. In place of the rubric which Caxton printed at the end of his text reading ‘Enpryntyd by Wylyam Caxton’ (sig. M.liii<sup>2</sup>), Redman has printed ‘Here endeth the lyfe of our Lady’ (sig. Hh.v<sup>b</sup>).

While Caxton’s interest in the literary vernacular is well documented, Redman’s printing activities were somewhat different. He only printed two other texts which he thought were by Lydgate, *Stans Puer ad Mensam* (STC 17030.9), which may be Lydgate’s and *The Assembly of Gods* (STC 17007a), which was widely thought to be by Lydgate in this period, but is not actually his.<sup>56</sup> Redman’s main output was legal texts (including the first printed edition of the *Magna Carta* [STC 9272]), but he also produced herbals and medicinal texts such as *Medicenes for the Plague* (STC 4185) a lot of vernacular devotional manuals such as his *Paternoster, the Aue, the Crede* (STC 16821.7) and *A Tretise to teche a man to dye and not feare deth* (STC 24250). He produced one other Middle English hagiography, the *Life of Saint Margaret* (not Lydgate’s version) (STC 17326). Alexandra Gillespie suggests that he may have been ‘sympathetic to religious reform’.<sup>57</sup> In 1535 he printed a *Prayers of the Byble* (STC 20200.3), which appears to have had a Wycliffite translation of the scripture as its base text. In the same year, Redman printed the Lollard text, the *Lanterne of Lyght*. Perhaps he saw the *Life* as a vernacular devotional manual. Caxton’s epilogue verses, which suggest that the work might be used for practical devotion, may have encouraged him to see the poem in this light.

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<sup>56</sup> Stephen Hawes in the *Pastime of Pleasure* lists this as one of Lydgate’s works: ‘And bytwene vertue and the lyfe vycyous / Of goddes and goddes[es] a boke solacyous / He dyde compyle’. See Stephen Hawes, *The Pastime of Pleasure*, ed. by William Mead, EETS, O.S. 173 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1928), p. 56, ll. 1362–64.

<sup>57</sup> Gillespie, ‘Redman, Robert (d. 1540)’, ODNB.

## From print to manuscript

Curt F. Böhler wrote that ‘experience has taught me that every manuscript ascribed to the second half of the fifteenth century is potentially (and often without question) a copy of some incunable’.<sup>58</sup> And the manuscripts of the *Life* certainly support Böhler’s observation, although they date from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Three manuscripts of the poem were copied from printed editions of the text. The first of the three is Chetham’s MS 6709, which was copied by a named scribe – William Cotson – a canon at an Augustinian Priory in Dunstable in 1493.<sup>59</sup> Chetham’s MS 6709 is a late medieval anthology.<sup>60</sup> It contains both the *Life* and Chaucer’s *Prioress’s Tale* and *Second Nun’s Tale*, as well as some other texts by Lydgate and devotional verse works. The text of the *Life* (ff. 6r–159r) was copied from Caxton’s 1484 edition of the poem (STC 17023) and the text of *Prioress’s Tale* (ff. ff. 173r–78v) and *Second Nun’s Tale* (ff. 160r–73r) was copied from Caxton’s second edition of *The Canterbury Tales* from 1483 (STC 5083). Alongside these texts, we also find Lydgate’s *Life of Saint Margaret* (NIMEV 439), ff. 180r–92v; his *Life of Saint George* (NIMEV 2592), ff. 193r–98v; Lydgate’s *Life of Saint Edmund* (NIMEV 3440), ff. 199r–284v; Lydgate’s *Stella Celi Extirpauit* (NIMEV 3673) ff. 284v–285v and a lyric attributed to Lydgate by Cotson, *O Heavenly Sterre Most Comfortable of Lyght* (NIMEV 2459), ff. 286r–287v. These appear to have been copied from manuscript exemplars. Cotson’s manuscript is therefore copied from a mix of print and manuscript exemplars, which is something we find in each of the manuscripts of the *Life* which are copied from printed editions of the poem. This testifies to the permeable relationship between manuscript and print in the first centuries after printing’s advent in England.

Cotson’s manuscript preserves the textual apparatus of Caxton’s edition of the *Life*, which is largely the Type A scheme: no book divisions, eighty-seven vernacular chapter titles,

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<sup>58</sup> Curt F. Böhler, *The Fifteenth Century Book: The Scribes, The Printers, The Decorators* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), p.16.

<sup>59</sup> On this, see Neil Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, Volume III: Lampeter–Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 345–6; Ralph A. Klinefelter, ‘Lydgate’s “Life of Our Lady” and the Chetham MS 6709’, *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 46 (1952), 396–7 and N.F. Blake, ‘MS Chetham 6709 Manuscript Copies’, in *Language and Civilization: A Concerted Profusion of Essays and Studies in Honour of Otto Hetsch*, ed. by Claudia Blank (with the assistance of Donald Gutch, Teresa Kirschner and Judith Gilbert), 2 vols (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1992), II, pp. 239–54.

<sup>60</sup> A full digital facsimile of the manuscript is available at the University of Manchester Rylands Medieval Collection online:  
[http://enriqueta.man.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/view/search?q=Reference\\_Number=%22Chetham%22s%20MS%20Mun.A.4.104%22](http://enriqueta.man.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/view/search?q=Reference_Number=%22Chetham%22s%20MS%20Mun.A.4.104%22).

although it differs from the Type A scheme in that it has no Latin glossing.<sup>61</sup> Cotson's colophon – much damaged by damp – on f. 1r, is a modification of the version found in Caxton's print. It reads:

This Boke was compyled be dan John lydgate Monke of Burye and ... [illegible: ?wrytn] in the hondis of I William Cotson ?de dunstable canonici the honoure, lawde & worshyppe of almighty godde and of owre Blessid lady his modir and all the saynts whos lyvis shall [...] folowe as hitte shall be shewyd so [...] as hitte is chaptired

The text of the *Life* concludes on f. 159r with the following *explicit*:

Explicit libellus de vita beate virginis marie compilatus per Domnum Iohanem lydgate...[illegible]... et scriptus manibus domini willelmi Cotson Canonici... die Aprilis hoc anno domini Milesimo ccc nonagesimo tercio calatum relaxauit... [illegible].

[Here ends the book on the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary compiled by Don John Lydgate...and written in the hand of Don William Cotson ... day of April in this year of Our Lord 1493. I have put down the pen]

The texts in the manuscript are variously dated by the scribe to 1485, 1490 and 1493 (this latter date appearing in the colophon above). Cotson clearly engaged thoughtfully with the material in front of him. Unique amongst the manuscript witnesses copied from printed exemplars, Cotson modified the wording of Caxton's epilogue verses. When he came to copy out the line which reads, 'of myn empryntyng' (sig. Mlii<sup>b</sup>), he wrote 'of my translatyng' and removed the *explicit* with its reference to Caxton. Cotson's manuscript is discussed further in my Conclusion.

The other two manuscripts derived wholly or partially from printed exemplars both date from the end of the sixteenth or early seventeenth century. What motivated these scribes to make copies of this early fifteenth-century, Marian poem? This was an era in which, as Gary Waller observes, 'the Virgin's presence in approved liturgy and devotion was drastically reduced'.<sup>62</sup> The manuscripts represent, therefore, the old faith and the old technology in a new world. They demonstrate, in a much more powerful sense than the early modern ownership inscriptions discussed above, how 'olde custome is harde to put away'.

The first of these is from the Radcliffe collection, formerly of Liverpool Cathedral Library and now housed in Liverpool Hope University. Radcliffe MS 16 is a paper manuscript,

<sup>61</sup> Although there is a division between Book I and II on f. 28r, which may be Cotson's own addition, based on his reading of the poem and the line, 'But lady myne, I put all in thy grace/This first booke compylede for thy sake' (I, 873–74).

<sup>62</sup> Gary Waller, *The Virgin Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern English Literature and Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 109.

measuring 145mm by 190 mm.<sup>63</sup> It is largely unadorned, the chapter titles are copied in a *textura* hand with some strap-work and the text is written in a single column. The hand is distinctive: loopy and backwards-leaning. The poem is evidently copied from Caxton's edition. It concludes with Caxton's epilogue verses, followed by 'finis | in pryntyd by William caxton' (f. 105r) and contains the same textual variants as Caxton's edition and exactly the same scheme of chapter titling and division.<sup>64</sup> The manuscript is dated to 1602. The date has been added by the scribe at the end of the text of the *Life*, after the *incipit* for the next text, Lydgate's *Testament* (NIMEV 2464), on f. 105r.<sup>65</sup> There are no other indications about the identity of the scribe, or anything of his milieu or location. Like Chetham's MS 6709, this manuscript is copied from both print and manuscript exemplars.<sup>66</sup>

### Bodl. MS Ashmole 59

The final manuscript of the *Life* copied in part from one of the printed editions – Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B – is the most complex. It is derived from a mixture of exemplars and contains some modifications to the text. A study of the manuscript indicates that the main scribe changed the text in ways that reveal much about his contemporary cultural sensitivities. His selections from, and divisions of, the poem illustrate a degree of unease about the nature of the Marian material he was copying, but also an altered sense of the poem's significance. He decorously omits references to the Virgin's purification, quietly eliding problematic references to her body, and to liturgical rites that had been banned in the Reformation. In places, he seeks to shift attention away from Mary and more towards Christ. The copy of the text that appears in Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B is not, therefore, as we might expect, a recusant copy made by a nostalgic Catholic scribe, but a startling re-fashioning of the text in a novel cultural context, very probably to suit the needs of a reader with an antiquarian interest in the poem. The scribe also betrays a different set of literary responses to the text than we find in fifteenth-century

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<sup>63</sup> Sold Sotheby's 21<sup>st</sup> April–1<sup>st</sup> May 1902 (Henry White Sale), lot 1394. The annotated copy of the Sotheby's catalogue held at the BL records: 'Sold to Maggs for £2 2s 0d.' I thank Professor Edwards for alerting me to this catalogue entry.

<sup>64</sup> For example, both the manuscript and STC 17023 omit Chapter LIII and conflate Chapters VI, VII and VIII.

<sup>65</sup> See Mary Wellesley, 'A Previously Unrecorded Manuscript Version of Lydgate's *Testament*', *Notes and Queries*, 62 (2015), 27–28.

<sup>66</sup> The text of the *Testament* appears have been copied from a manuscript, because the text of the *Testament* that appears in Pynson's 1520 print of the *Testament* (STC 17035) print is shorter than that which appears in the manuscript. The text begins 'O how holsom and glade is the memorye' and ends 'ffor the I offryd my blood in sacryfyse' f.118v, while Pynson's text begins '[T]He yeres passed of my tender youthe'.

manuscript copies of the poem. In earlier chapters I discussed the way fifteenth-century scribes often silenced Lydgate's assertive, narratorial voice within the poem (noting this in the Type A apparatus chapter titles in Chapter Two and in Bodl. MS Bodley 75 in Chapter Three). The seventeenth-century scribe of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B has a different sense of the cultural value of 'authorship' *per se* and sought instead to foreground that voice.

The fact that Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B was copied, in part, from one of the printed editions of the poem has hitherto escaped scholarly notice. The text's exemplars have remained overlooked because the editors of the 1961 edition of the poem recognised neither the late date of the scribal hands, nor the significance of the manuscript's textual variants. The oversight is a reminder of George Keiser's remark, 'that this [1961] edition exists at all may be reason for gratitude, but its inadequacies are so serious as to detract from the beauties of the poem'.<sup>67</sup>

### The exemplars

There are two important features of the text as it appears in Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B, which indicate that part of its exemplar was one of the printed editions. The first is the presence of Caxton's epilogue verses, which are added to the end of the *Life*. The poem's editors seemed – for mysterious reasons – to think that these verses were in 'an entirely different hand' (*Critical Edition*, p. 41). Even if it were the work of two hands, they could only be described as extremely similar. The hand is distinctive, it uses three different forms for 'h', and the epilogue verses are neater than the rest of the poem, which at times is rushed and cursive to the point of illegibility. However, an examination of sample words from the epilogue verses with the text of Hand B (I explain Hands A and B below) indicates that they are unmistakably the same hand, with the same distinctive features. The word 'booke' appears in the opening line of Caxton's epilogue, 'Go litel booke', on f. 181v. It also appears in the text of the poem, in Book I, line 874, 'This ffurst booke compiled for thy sake', at the bottom of f. 146v. Both words are written in the same hand. The initial b has a bulbous ascender which loops backwards, as does the 'k', which in its bottom half is formed of several short strokes and pen-lifts and the 'e' has an upwards-flicking hat in both cases. The editor's confusion over the hand that wrote the epilogue verses may be because the scribe chose to copy the Latin mono-rhymed quatrain verses in a decorative, humanist script which may have seemed different to the editors.

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<sup>67</sup> George Keiser, 'Ordinatio in the Manuscripts of John Lydgate's *Lyf of Our Lady*: Its Value for the Reader, Its Challenge for the Modern Editor,' in *Medieval Literature: Texts and Interpretations*, ed. by Tim Wiliam Machan (Binghampton, New York: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1991), pp. 139–57 (p. 137).

The second indication of a printed exemplar for parts of the poem is the absence of a stanza in Book VI, l. 211–17. This stanza is omitted by Caxton and, thus, by Redman, but it is present in every other manuscript but this one.<sup>68</sup> Its absence is a clear indication that this part of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B was copied from one of the printed editions. As to whether the exemplar for the latter part of the text was Redman or Caxton or an exemplar derived from either of those, the evidence is thin. However, at the end of the poem, the scribe has added the explicit ‘Here endith the life of our lady’, which only appears in the Redman edition (sig. Hh.v<sup>b</sup>), suggesting that his exemplar was Redman (STC 17025) or Redman-derived and not Caxton (STC 17023).

The exact nature of the manuscript’s exemplars is more complex when the start of the text is examined. Whereas both the printed editions omit a stanza at Book III, ll. 610–16 (in Redman’s edition this is absent from sig. Q.iiii<sup>b</sup>-R.i<sup>a</sup>), Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B contains this stanza. So, it would seem that Hand B (who copied all but the first eight folios) was working from two different exemplars, or from an exemplar derived from two different exemplars (one manuscript and one print). Manuscripts which omit this stanza are all clustered in sub-group *d* on the stemma, which is where the majority of the manuscripts with the Type A apparatus appear and where the metropolitan manuscripts appear. According to the *Critical Edition*, the textual variants in Books I and II of the Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B exemplar place it in sub-group *o*, while the text in Books III and IV indicate that the exemplar was from sub-group *p*. Yet, for the short extract from Book VI, Redman’s text must be the exemplar – a fact overlooked by the editors.

## Hands A and B

The manuscript is a composite codex. The first 134 folios are a manuscript compiled by the fifteenth-century scribe, John Shirley. The second part (Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B), on clearly paler and smoother paper (ff. 135r–82v) is in two different, later hands. The first eight folios of this second section of the manuscript are in an Elizabethan secretary hand (Hand A), after which a new hand takes over. This hand, Hand B, is an italic-secretary admixture, which suggests it is a late Elizabethan or early Stuart hand. It is perhaps because of the nature of this first half of the manuscript that this much later second part has received little scholarly attention.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Apart, of course, from the other two which were copied from printed sources, on which see above.

<sup>69</sup> See, for example, Eleanor Prescott Hammond, ‘Ashmole 59 and other Shirley Manuscripts’, *Anglia*, 30 (1907), 320–48. Margaret Connolly, *John Shirley: Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth century England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), esp. pp. 150–69; Cheryl Greenberg, ‘John Shirley and the English Book Trade’, *The Library*, Sixth Series, 4 (1982), 369–80.

The stints in the manuscript require some basic description. The programme of copying was not a simple, continuous project. At f.143r the first scribe seems to have tired of his task. Instead of writing out the rhyme-royal stanzas symmetrically and economically, the lines of text get longer, the letter forms sloppier and the final stanza on the verso side is comprised of only four lines (instead of the usual seven). At the start of f.144r Hand B takes up the remaining three lines of the stanza (I, 642), and completes the copying of the poem. A third hand (Reviser C) has worked through the manuscript supplying chapter numbers for some of the chapters. These chapter numbers do not correspond to the printed editions or the Type A apparatus. They are misplaced by one number initially and then become completely different from the Type A scheme. A comparison of the numbering with the idiosyncratic forms of apparatus discussed in Chapter Three reveals that this reviser had access to a manuscript with a fifty-eight-chapter arrangement, of which BL Add. MS 19252 is the only remaining example (if other examples ever existed). The focus of my discussion here is the work of Hand B, whose work is considerably more extensive than that of Hand A and whose idiosyncratic modifications to the text are rich with significance.

The manuscript is missing a substantial section of text. Between f.177v and 178r, 130 stanzas and 1 line are missing, from line 879 of Book III to line 226 of Book IV. Such a loss is frustrating because in the remainder of the manuscript the scribe has made conscious selections from the text. He omits Book V entirely and chooses only to copy one particular section of Book VI. What selections he made in the missing leaves can only be speculated on.<sup>70</sup>

Despite this loss of leaves, Hand B's remaining work is revealing. With the change of hand at the start of the manuscript, a change of purpose is discernible. The text copied by Hand A omits the prologue (Book I, lines 1–63), but beginning at Chapter I it follows the rough pattern of the Type A scheme. The chapter titles (which appear in the inter-stanza space) are in English, and they occur in largely the same places as in the Type A apparatus. They are numbered in the margins. There are some minor divergences: the scribe has begun Chapter II two stanzas later than in Type A, at line 204 and omitted Chapter III, labeling Chapter IV as III and creating a new Chapter IV.

Hand A appears to have copied his text from one of the manuscripts of the poem, that predate the printed editions. This is evident in the fact that the chapter titles used by Hand A do

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<sup>70</sup> The omission of Book V is clearly a scribal choice, not an accident because Book IV ends on f. 180r, leaving a space that could have contained a couple of stanzas, instead of directly moving on to the next book, as is the case with the transition between Books I and II and III and IV. The scribe was aware that he was not about to supply a neat book transition, so perhaps left the rest of the folio blank to indicate that the following material was not what followed in his exemplar.

not appear in either of the printed editions. This section of the text in the Type A apparatus has ten chapter titles, each numbered, in the first book of the poem. In the two printed editions only six of the first ten chapter titles appear in the table at the beginning of the text, although all the numbers from I–X appear. In this table, Chapters VI, VII and VIII all appear next to Chapter V from the Type A scheme, ‘Howe oure lady prayed to god for vii petycions’ (sig. A.i<sup>a</sup>). The situation within the text of the poem itself is even more complicated, because both editions only give the chapter titles up to Chapter V, but they replicate the numbering of ‘V’ for both Chapter IV and V (presumably because of a confusion with reference to Caxton’s copy text, which did not begin numbering from the prologue), and then omit any chapter division or numbering between Chapters V and IX. Consequently, the chapter titles that appear in Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B can only have come from a separate exemplar, which was not one of the printed editions. So, what we see with the two separate hands at work in the manuscript is not simply a single task taken on by two different individuals, but two distinct projects of copying from two distinct exemplars. Given the nature of the first eight folios, it would seem that Hand B came across a fragment that represented a fraction of the poem and decided to complete the work, but was forced to do so using his own exemplar(s).

Hand B made idiosyncratic modifications to the text. On f.144r, when Hand B takes over, the arrangement of the text and a marked divergence from the Type A division and titling is evident. The chapter titles are no longer given here, although a different hand – Reviser C – has added numbers in the margins. At the start of Chapter XII (the second chapter of Book II), the scribe has added, in decorative, humanist hand in the inter-stanza space his first chapter title, ‘Verba misericordie & pacis’ (f. 143r). The scribe’s decision to use Latin chapter titles suggests a degree of education, and possibly an antiquarian scribe. As we saw in the notes in flyleaves of Durham MS Cosin V ii 16 and Cotton MS Appendix VIII, Latin appears to have been the language of choice for antiquarian readers in this period.

At the end of the text of the *Life*, the scribe has copied two other Lydgatean texts. On f. 183r–v we find the opening 63 lines of Book VI of Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes*.<sup>71</sup> On f.184r his *Song of Vertu* (NIMEV 401) appears, omitting the first five stanzas.<sup>72</sup> We might see these selections as evidence of the scribe’s more explicitly literary interests. The *Song of Vertue* begins in its present state with the line ‘Off rhetoricyens men lerne fresshe language’. It is full of the sort of

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<sup>71</sup> *Lydgate’s Fall of Princes III*, ed. by Henry Bergen, EETS E.S. 123 (London: Oxford University Press for EETS, 1924), pp. 675–76, Bk. VI, ll. 1–63.

<sup>72</sup> *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS, E.S. 107, 2 vols (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1911), II, pp. 835–38.

‘sonorous generalities of ubiquitous applicability’ that found favour amongst early modern readers.<sup>73</sup> The opening of the Book VI of the *Fall of Princes* describes ‘Bochas’ alone in his study being visited by Lady Fortune.

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Hand B’s work in copying the *Life* illustrates the text’s altered significance in the early modern period. Two of Hand B’s modifications of the text serve to illustrate the way in which the poem’s meaning had changed in the two centuries since the poem was composed. They indicate the way the scribe framed the text to suit his ends, in line with his contemporary cultural sensitivities. The first of these modifications is the way he has copied Book VI. In fact, the scribe has copied very little of Book VI, recording only a 100-line section of the text, and within that heavily truncated section he alters the text in certain places. The section copied does not seem to be conditioned by a defective exemplar. A comparison with Redman’s edition shows that the text from Book VI copied by the Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B scribe represents material from three full pages and two partial pages in the printed edition. So it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which the section of text copied was conditioned by the survival of a select number of leaves from the Redman edition, rather than a conscious choice.

It is easy to see why the scribe made the modifications he did. Book VI deals with a scriptural episode in which the Virgin presents Christ in the Temple and is ritually purified. The story is described in Luke, 2:27–40. Lydgate’s text places a special emphasis on the purification of the Virgin, rather than simply describing the presentation of the Christ-child. In particular, there is a focus on the Virgin’s womb: ‘God chese thy wombe for this habitacle’ (VI, 12). The language of purity recurs repeatedly throughout Book VI. The Virgin is a ‘chaste toure’ (VI, 3), which ‘brennyng of no flesshely hete’ (VI, 8). Lydgate stresses that the Virgin was already ‘so clene’ (VI, 15), but was seeking ritual purification only to ‘fulfille the precept of the lawe’ (VI, 20). Explaining this law, Lydgate states that ‘If a woman conceive by a man’ then she is ‘vnclene’ (VI, 29, 32). Citing Leviticus, Lydgate explains that a woman must bring an offering so that she can be ‘hallowede and sanctified...al fulli purified’ (VI, 48–49). Yet, he stresses again that the Virgin is exempt from such stipulations because,

... her wombe, the cloyster virgynall,  
Was euere liche, bothe firste and laste,  
Closed and shette as castell principall; (VI, 64–66)

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<sup>73</sup> A.S.G. Edwards, ‘Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes*: Translation, Re-Translation and History,’ in *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain, 1473–1640*, ed. by Brenda Hosington and S. K. Barker (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 21–34 (p. 27).

Nonethelesss when it comes to ‘her tyme of puryfacion/Sche dide a-byde of hir humilite’ (VI, 81).

In Book VI, as elsewhere in the poem, Lydgate is keen to draw attention to the links between scriptural history and liturgical practice. Katherine K. O’Sullivan notes, ‘Lydgate emphasizes the social and religious obligations of the community’.<sup>74</sup> He writes: ‘And of candeles whan this ryte gan passe,/ Came the name first of Candelmasse’ (VI, 371) and the final stanza of the poem reads:

To whome this feste is in speciall  
Dedicate bothe of more and lesse—  
Whiche bare hir childe in a lityll stall  
Bitwene an ox and a sely asse.  
And blissede quene this fest of Candelmasse,  
To thy seruante<sup>3</sup> shelde and socoure be,  
To kepe and save from all aduersyte. (VI, 456–62)

Catholic liturgical practice is at the heart of this last book of the poem – embedded in the final stanza and often referred to. For example, in describing the Virgin’s purification and how Candlemas celebrates this event, Lydgate instructs:

Fro the highest doun to the leste,  
Euery man and woman in her honde  
To the Temple shulde a tapre bryng,  
Poru<sup>3</sup> out þe worlde in euery manere londe;  
And ther with all make her offryng,  
Aftir the gospell the preste<sup>3</sup> hand kyssyng,—  
With light solempne that all myghten sene,—  
In honour oonly of þe heuenly queen (VI, 350–57).

Clearly, there is much in the poem’s content which the scribe might have found problematic, and we can see evidence of this in the changes he made to the text. On f. 180v the second line of the first stanza of the section of Book VI copied by the scribe (line. 205 of Book VI) is different from every other manuscript witness to this section of text, including the two prints. In Redman’s print this stanza reads:

Nowe as me semeth in this hye feste  
That named is the purification  
Euery man oughte to be glad and mery  
And with good herte/ and hole entencion,

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<sup>74</sup> Katherine K. O’Sullivan, ‘John Lydgate’s *Lyf of Our Lady*: Translation and Authority in Fifteenth-Century England’, *Mediaevalia*, 26 (2005), 169–201 (p. 176).

Deuoutely brynge his oblacion.  
And offre fyrste turtell of innocence,  
Of very mekenes/and hertely pacience (sig. Hh<sup>a-b</sup>)

However, the second line is modified in Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B, such that it reads, 'That is so  
hye of pure devocioun'. In making this change and in choosing to only copy a single section  
from Book VI (lines 203–301) the scribe did not include any material that discusses Candlemas,  
or the purification of the Virgin, which involved some very selective use of Book VI.

It is easy to see how a late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century scribe might have  
found references to Candlemas and the purification of the Virgin uncomfortable. In his 2011  
monograph, *The Virgin Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern English Literature and Popular  
Culture*, Gary Waller makes a convincing argument that central to much Protestant thinking on  
the Virgin in the post-Reformation period was an anxiety about the perceived sexualisation of  
the Virgin's body in medieval devotional practice. Waller notes the comic confusion in  
Erasmus' *Pilgrimage to Saint Mary of Walsingham*, when the character Ogygius is asked whether  
he would like to see the Virgin's 'pryvytes'.<sup>75</sup> In the comic pause that ensues, it is apparent that  
the text contains what Diarmaid MacCulloch calls (with reference to Latimer) 'an uneasy  
mixture of derision and gynomorphism'.<sup>76</sup> Clearly what Erasmus and Latimer were responding  
to was the uniquely human, emotional devotion to the body of the Virgin and Christ that  
characterises late medieval affective piety, particularly 'the tenderness, intimacy, fervour and  
pseudo-eroticism of the Bernardine or Franciscan traditions'.<sup>77</sup> MacCulloch says of Erasmus that  
many of his comic colloquies were 'part of a vigorous debunking of the physicality and tactility  
of late medieval popular piety'.<sup>78</sup> Waller notes that by the seventeenth century the Virgin's  
place in devotional practice had changed: 'her presence is spiritual rather than physical, her  
body less central to thought and devotion than her spiritual significance'.<sup>79</sup> We see this in the  
selections made by the scribe of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B.

The feast of Candlemas not only commemorated the biblical event of Christ's  
presentation in the temple but also stressed the significance of Mary's purification. In this sense,

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<sup>75</sup> Waller, *The Virgin Mary In Late Medieval and Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, p.34.

<sup>76</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'Mary and Sixteenth-Century Protestants', in *The Church and Mary: Papers Read at the 2001 Summer Meeting and the 2002 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. by R.N. Swanson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 2004), pp. 191–217 (p. 204).

<sup>77</sup> Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (1970), p. 268.

<sup>78</sup> MacCulloch, 'Mary and Sixteenth-Century Protestants', p. 193.

<sup>79</sup> Waller, *The Virgin Mary In Late Medieval and Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, p. 182.

the festival was linked to an ancient ritual (in fact present in several societies<sup>80</sup>) of ‘churching’, whereby women were ritually purified and re-admitted to the church after childbirth. Keith Thomas writes that this ritual represented ‘society’s recognition of the woman’s new role as mother’.<sup>81</sup> As Gail Gibson notes, the feast of Candlemas therefore performed a dual function as ‘a re-enactment of the womanly rite of post-partum churching as well as of parish Candlemas ritual’.<sup>82</sup> This is significant because, as William Coster notes, the churching of women was ‘one of the most hotly debated political manifestations of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries’.<sup>83</sup> Candlemas was equally controversial. The use of candles at Candlemas (an activity explicitly endorsed by Lydgate’s poem) was banned in the English church in 1548.<sup>84</sup> From his cell in Fleet Prison, the dissenter Henry Barrow railed against the rite with the kind of vitriol that illustrates what a fraught issue Candlemas was. He condemned ‘popish feastes of Christmass, Al-Halloes, Candlemass’ and the ‘especial worship’ of the Virgin’s ‘purification yearly in your church’. He went on,

is not all this absolutely Jewish? Though in deed the prieste’s part savor more of poperie. Seeing therefore they will not have it a Jewish purification, let it be a mixt action of Judaism and poperie. This trumperie is so grosse, as it deserveth no refutation, but a doung forke to cast it out<sup>85</sup>

Barrow was clearly an extreme and culturally peripheral voice, but his sputtering rage against Candlemas illustrates the kinds of cultural sensitivities that the scribe of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B was possibly responding to.

We see a similar kind of modification in the scribe’s choice of chapter title for the section of the text which describes the authoritative sources which provide proof for the virgin birth. While the Type A scheme labels this part of the text, ‘howe holy men by dyvyne likenesse wrote of our lady in commendacion of hir’ (Chapter XIX, STC 17025, sig. H.i<sup>b</sup>; Durham, MS Cosin V. ii. 16, f. 26r, p. 347), the Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B scribe has called this

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<sup>80</sup> Mary Douglas notes several examples of this belief in different cultures amongst Hindus, Andaman Islanders, the Cuna of Panama. See Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966, repr. 2002) pp. 42, 67, 54, 81, 88.

<sup>81</sup> Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Penguin, 1971, repr. 2003), p. 54.

<sup>82</sup> Gail McMurray Gibson, *Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 99.

<sup>83</sup> William Coster, ‘Purity, Profanity and Puritanism: The Churching of Women, 1500–1700’, in *Women in the Church, Papers Read at the Summer Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society 1989*, ed. by W. J Shiels and Diana Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 377–87 (pp. 377–78).

<sup>84</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of The Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c.1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, repr. 2005), p. 143.

<sup>85</sup> From ‘The Brief Discoverie of the False Church’, *The Writings of Henry Barrow 1587–1590 Volume III*, ed. by Leland H. Carlson, 5 vols (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962), p. 436.

part of the text ‘De Christo’. Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B is not a Protestant refashioning of the poem, but the focus has undoubtedly been shifted in certain places, often away from the Virgin.

### **‘Verba compilatoris’: Bodl. MS Ashmole 59’s construction of authorship**

In the foreword to Marshe’s 1555 printing of Lydgate’s *Troy Book* (STC 5580), the otherwise unidentified Robert Braham writes that Lydgate may ‘worthyly be numbred amongst those that haue chefelye deserued our tunge’ (sig. Aa<sup>a</sup>). Marshe figured Lydgate as one who had deserved the language of English. If we compare this with the eulogy that Lydgate addressed to Chaucer at the end of Book II of the *Life*, which was discussed in the previous chapter, we can see the way that notions of authorship, language and vernacularity had altered, irrevocably, in the period since Lydgate had written the *Life*. In the eulogy, Lydgate figures Chaucer as one who had improved the language of English, who had ‘enlumyne[d]’ through his skill, ‘our Rude speche’. (In fashioning Chaucer as an ‘enlumyner’ of the English language he utilizes the persistent motifs of light that come to symbolic fruition in the conclusion of the poem in Book VI and its discussion of Candlemas.) In Lydgate’s construction the language needs improvement, while in Braham’s Lydgate is deserving of a noble vernacular.

Just as in Braham’s introduction to the 1555 copy of the *Troy Book*, the main scribe of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B demonstrates a very different conception of authorship in the way that he augmented and rubricated the text of the *Life*. Interestingly, his choices appear to recover a closer sense of what Lydgate may have intended than the fifteenth-century ‘editor’ who developed the Type A apparatus. The scribe of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B seeks to amplify the narratorial voice, rather than silence it as the Type A apparatus does. In Chapter Two I argued that the placing and titling of Chapter XVIII in the Type A scheme (which appears at Book II, line 429), seeks to gloss over Lydgate’s narratorial intervention in the text.

I noted that at this juncture, just after a description of the Annunciation, Lydgate pauses the narrative to reflect on the complexity of conveying, through words, the idea of the word made flesh. He considers Bernard of Clairvaux and an episode described in the third Homily of *De Laudibus Virginis Matris*, where the saint describes a vision that he has of burning flames above the altar at which he is praying (again the persistent motif of light surfaces in Lydgate’s poem). Bernard is moved to abase himself and Lydgate reflects, anxiously that he is not equipped for this poetic task, ‘to speke or wryte in so devote matier’ (II, 443) especially given Bernard’s own anxiety:

But sithen this man so perfyght of levynge  
This holy Bernarde so goode and gracious

So dredefull was this matier in wrytyng  
That was of lyfe, so Inly vertuouse  
How dar I thanne be so presumpcouse  
I wofull wrecche in any manere wyse  
To take on me this perfyte high emprise (II, 407–13)

His anxiety is such that, two stanzas later, Lydgate offers up a prayer to strengthen him in his task. ‘O lorde, whose mercy’ (II, 429) he begins a new stanza. At this point, the printed editions and the Type A apparatus mark a new chapter, with the title ‘A recapitulacion of the wordes of Gabriell to our Lady’ (*STC* 17025, sig. H.i<sup>b</sup>; Durham, MS Cosin V. ii. 16, f. 23v; p. 341), in a way that misreads the verse, hiding the intervention of the narratorial voice and the characteristically Lydgatean humility *topos*.

The scribe of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59, however, appears more ready to read the narratorial voice and to celebrate it, rather than to disguise it in the verse. Consequently, he divides up this section differently. Like the printed editions and the Type A scheme, he adds a title to signal the debt to St Bernard, with ‘Verba Sancta Bernardi’, which is akin to Redman’s ‘a lamentacion of Saint Barnard’ (*STC* 17025, sig. G.iii<sup>b</sup>; Durham MS Cosin V ii 16, f. 23r). However, one stanza later, in the section which follows, he adds a title ‘verba compilatoris’ (f. 152r), to signal the interjection of the narratorial voice. The scribe’s decision to refer to Lydgate as the compiler is intriguing. It is emblematic of his distinctive augmentation of the text that he chose the suggestively medieval term ‘compilator’ and not ‘auctor’. In drawing attention to the narratorial voice that is surfacing in this part of the poem, he displays a very early modern sensibility, yet he retains something of the medieval concept in the word ‘compilator’. His decision to flag up this section nonetheless signals the different way in which some seventeenth-century readers perceived the role of the author. In no other manuscript has a scribe altered the Type A scheme’s chapter titles (and their misreading of this section) to bring Lydgate’s authorial persona to the foreground. It is also telling that the scribe divides up the whole of the following prayer into mini chapters, each a stanza long, each with a summarising Latin title. In so doing, he draws special attention to this section of the text, which follows on from the ‘verba compilatoris’, privileging this part of the poem which seems to issue directly from the voice of a hitherto silenced narrator.

The final 47 folios of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59 are an intriguing testament to the continuing fascination that Lydgate’s Marian poem had for readers in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, and also to the often symbiotic relationship that manuscript and print cultures had in the centuries after print’s advent. The scribe’s choices indicate that the *Life* was

still relevant to readers some two centuries after it was composed, but this relevance relied on modifications to the text.

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Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B provides an insight into the *Life*'s changing function in the early modern period. An alternative view of this changing function is provided by the work of a late-sixteenth-century corrector in another manuscript of the *Life*. This corrector's work appears in BL Add. MS 19252 – a manuscript which itself seems to have been used as the source of the later chapter numbering in Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B. Here a late sixteenth-century hand has modified the verse from the start of Book II on f. 17r until around f. 40r when the correcting becomes less frequent and finally ceases around Book II, l. 1348, at the start of Chapter XXV (this would be Chapter XXVII in the Type A apparatus) on f. 40v.<sup>86</sup> The corrections are added to the part of the poem which deals with the Parliament of Heaven, the Annunciation, the Visit to Elizabeth and the start of the Apocryphal trial of Mary and Joseph. The pattern of annotation suggests that, perhaps, the scribe intended to use BL Add. MS 19252 as a copy-text. The scribe has underlined sections of text and then placed replacement text in the space above, below, or in the margins. He used this method because in many cases only half lines have been changed and the underlining indicates which part of the line is being replaced. Where an entire line is to be replaced, the scribe places an 'x' in the left-hand margin. In some places, an 'x' appears next to a whole stanza and there is no replacement text, seemingly indicating that these stanzas are to be excised completely. In my transcriptions of larger portions of text below, text enclosed in || indicates replacement text. The symbols ^, [V], > and < indicate, respectively, that replacement text appears above, below, to the left and to the right of the original, medieval text. Where text is underlined, as in: 'For what in sothe upon any side' this indicates rejected text that has been underlined in the manuscript. The use of '/' indicates a medieval virgule in the manuscript.

The corrector has made changes to the poem for various reasons. Many of the changes are lexical – the scribe seems to have wanted to excise old-fashioned words. Thus on f. 17r, Book II, l. 28 reads, 'And þerto abide, stokked | [V] locked | in prisonne' (f. 17r).<sup>87</sup> Overleaf on f. 17v we find, 'And whan þei were/al foure in fere | > there together |'. Here although the

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<sup>86</sup> The first part of the corrector's modifications overlap with the extract of the *Life* in HEH MS HM 144, discussed in the previous chapter and also – interestingly – align with the sections printed by Charles Tame in the 1872 partial edition of the poem.

<sup>87</sup> The line references here refer to the *Critical Edition*, for ease of reference, but the text quoted is a transcription from BL Add. MS 19252, which results in orthographic discrepancies between the two versions.

*OED* attests to the word ‘fere’ being still in use in the sixteenth century, its phrasal use seems to have fallen out of use after the medieval period.<sup>88</sup> The lexical changes continue on f. 18r, in the Parliament of Heaven, where Truth is discussing the transgression of mankind. Truth says that ‘But he me put oute of his bandome [sic]’ (II, 59). Here ‘Bandoun’ (n.) means ‘(a) ben in (at) bandoun, be in (someone's) power or under (his) control; be dominated by’.<sup>89</sup> The term is now obscure in modern English (although the word ‘abandon’ retains a vestige of its once common root). The *OED*’s last recorded usage of it dates from 1611.<sup>90</sup> It seems likely that the term looked antiquated to the corrector and so he modified the line to, ‘But he still followed his wicked inclination’ (f. 18r). We see this also on f.22v where the antiquated ‘of volunte’ (II, 305) becomes ‘of his owne will’.<sup>91</sup> Some changes are simply orthographic. On f. 22r, the Middle English phrase ‘her bothes axinge’ (II, 301) becomes ‘both ther two askinge’. Furthermore, some of the changes correct errors made by the medieval scribe. Thus on f. 18r, we find ‘Wherfor quod right/pletith w<sup>t</sup> hym no more (II, 71). The *Critical Edition* prints this as ‘Wherfore quod Right pletyth for hym no more’. The corrector modifies this: ‘pletith w<sup>t</sup> | ^ plead for |’.

At other times the changes are small-scale but are intended to clarify sense in view of the removed sections. We see this in a modified line in an episode in which Mercy and Peace are putting their case to God that mankind should be saved without delay. In this section of the poem, where there is a constant and often un-delineated shift in speaking voices, it is easy to lose track of who is speaking. (As we saw in the previous chapter, the scribe of HEH MS HM 144 sought to rectify this problem by highlighting the changes in speaking voice with a red initial.) As I have noted elsewhere, Lydgate’s syntax is expansive, with extensive use of subordinate clauses, such that main clauses are often lost in the verse. Mercy and Peace’s speech spans nine stanzas (sixty-three lines). It concludes with a plea to God to release mankind. The

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<sup>88</sup> “fere, n.1.” *OED* online, 1st edn, 1895, online, December 2016, Oxford University Press: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/69319?rskey=74cfF2&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid>, accessed 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

<sup>89</sup> *MED*, online edition: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED3568>, accessed 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

<sup>90</sup> “† ‘bandon | ‘bandoun, n.’. *OED* online, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, March 2016, Oxford University Press: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15164?rskey=MOtAm6&result=1&isAdvanced=false%20-%20eid>, accessed 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

<sup>91</sup> † ‘volunte, n. *OED* online, 1<sup>st</sup> edn, 1920, Oxford University Press: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/224573?redirectedFrom=volunte#eid>, accessed 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

vital verb, of the final sentence, appears ten lines before the end, when Peace begs ‘Grant of thy grace now a full relees’ (II, 166). The plea reads as follows:

Now lorde sithe, I am made to be Refute  
And to the wofull, comfort and encresse  
Graunt of thy grace, now a full Relees  
That I and mercy, may thy foon confonde  
Of thylke caytyffe, that lyeth in preson bounde

So that he may haue liberte  
To goo at large, and haue Remyssion  
Of his þraldom, and captiuite  
And be deliuered, ouȝt of his preson  
So that ther be made Redempcion  
For his seruage, and a fynall pay  
Lorde of thy mercy, with outyn more delay (II, 164–75)

The corrector has modified the conclusion of the long speech by Peace at line 175 (f. 20r):

So that he may haue / | ^ full | liberte  
To go at large/ and haue remission  
| both < | Of his þraldam/ and captiuite  
And be deliuered/ oute of his prisonne  
So þat þere be/made | ^ some | redempcion  
For his seruage | ^ vitude |<sup>92</sup> / and a final pay  
Lorde of thy mercy/ with oute more<sup>93</sup> delay | >grant this| (II, 169–175, f. 20r)

The corrector’s motivations are clear. The speech concludes with a series of subordinate clauses which amplify the point that mankind must ‘haue liberte’ (II, 169), must ‘haue remyssion’ (II, 170), must be released from ‘preson’ (II, 172), but the final line of the stanza and the whole speech reads ‘lord of þi mercy with oute more delay’, before Lydgate immediately shifts the focus with ‘And whan they had thayre mater full purposed’ (II, 176). It would be easy for the reader to miss the important verb, ‘grant’ which appears ten lines before the end. The corrector, therefore, modifies the line to supply a much-needed verb so that line 175 becomes ‘with oute delay grant this’, making it clear that a plea is being made.

In other places, the corrector’s modifications indicate that he was more interested in particular parts of Lydgate’s poem. He seems to have taken issue with a section of the text in which Lydgate embarks on an extensive narrative tangent listing a series of miracles which are proof of the Virgin birth (II, 722–946). The scribe places ‘x’s next to thirty-two consecutive stanzas in Lydgate’s digression (ff. 29v–33v). The digression ends when Lydgate segues back

<sup>92</sup> The insertion of ‘vitude’ above the line appears to indicate that ‘servage’ should read ‘servitude’.

<sup>93</sup> In this instance the word has also been crossed through by the corrector.

into a description of the Annunciation. At this point, the corrector ceases to place 'x's in the margin and begins in-line modifications to the verse once more. The corrector's interest is evidently in the basic line of the scriptural narrative and he appears uninterested in extra-scriptural material relating to the Virgin. Given the way Lydgate's syntax runs on over stanza breaks, the corrector has had to make modifications to the text to clarify sense in spite of the removed sections. To make the description of the Annunciation make sense, the corrector would have had to retain the final three lines of the last stanza that he rejected. They read:

X for of þis maide / as bokes seme expresse  
Whan Gabriel to heuen drough þe coste  
She replenisched/ of þe holy goste (II, 943–45, f. 34r)

Without these lines, there is no subject to the sentence which follows. So, the corrector makes the following modification to the first line of the next stanza: Roos vppe a noon | < then up she rose | & oute of Nazareth (II, 943–46, f.33v), to clarify that it is the Virgin who is being discussed here.

In other places, Lydgate's lyrical description of the Virgin has been modified, to fashion the poem as a more soberly theological work. On f. 26v, a stanza describing the Virgin has been altered:

She was þe castell/ of þe cristall walle  
þat neuer man /myȝt yit vnclose  
Which þe kyng /that made it & causyth all  
His dwellyng cheef/ | < place | by grace gan dispose  
And liche as dewe/ discendeth on þe Rose  
With siluer dropes/ and of the leves faire  
The fresche beaute/ ne may not apaire (II, 547-53, f. 26v)

This is altered so that ‘cheef’ becomes ‘place’ and the final three lines which figure God’s grace as ‘dewe’ are removed and replaced with two variants. The corrections are placed somewhat awkwardly in the margins either side of the stanza. The altered lines in the page gutter read:

Even for this Mary was the earthly rose  
That god did chose by volition  
To beare the fruit of our redemption (f. 26v)

To the left hand side of the stanza, the following line appears: 'that god hymselfe did appoint by election', with a { enclosing the final three lines. Here the corrector has supplied two possible variants. In each case, the changes render the stanza more explicit and more prosaic, emphasising the fact of Mary being chosen to be the mother of God.

Sometimes the modifications clarify a matter of theology or alter the emphasis of Lydgate's text. Thus, 'The gilt of man with rust of synne ymouled' (II, 308) becomes 'the

sinnes of man which causeth hym to dye' f. 22r, the line before 'and wiþ his blode shall was[h] undefoulid' becomes 'wash & purifie'. Mankind's transgressions are therefore positioned as being the direct cause of Christ's death. However, the corrector's vision of God is more kindly than Lydgate's. The description of the 'Wreches to releue' (II, 160) becomes the gentler, 'wreaches thou to love' on f. 19v.

### **Indifference to the narrative interjections**

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the BL Add. MS 19252 corrector's work, especially in relation to the work of the main scribe of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B, is the way he treats Lydgate's narratorial interjection in Book II (labelled 'verba compilatoris' by the Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B and discussed above). Every stanza from the start of Book II to l. 372 in BL Add. MS 19252 has some kind of modification. In many cases the alteration is minor, often only a word is replaced. However, there is a discernible change in the corrector's method at the start of Lydgate's narratorial interjection at l. 372, when Lydgate pauses the narrative of the Annunciation. Here Lydgate discusses Bernard of Clairvaux's vision of the burning orb above the altar and reflects on his own unworthiness to write about the Annunciation with appropriate reverence, through the medium of inherently labile language. This section is untouched (ff. 23v–25r) and instead every stanza has a large 'x' in the margin next to it, until the narrative of the Annunciation, as drawn from the Gospels, is picked up again at l.449.

The corrector's work resumes on f. 25r. There, he makes changes to the first four lines of the next stanza. The original opening of the stanza reads:

And full demurely, styl gan abyde  
And in hert, castyng vp and downe  
Full prudently, vpon euery syde  
The manere of this salutacion (II, 349–52)

The modifications are hard to read because they are cramped into the corner of the page (f. 25r):

She troubled was in looks and in visage  
When in her hart she casting up and down  
Of gabriel to hear this ---- [illegible] message  
She in manner of heavenly salutacion

In removing a large section of text in which Lydgate compares himself to the Virgin, the subject of this stanza is unclear and the corrector has had to clarify that it is the angel's message which is being discussed.

The corrector's modifications are highly significant, especially considering the way this episode is treated in other manuscript witnesses. At this point in the poem, Lydgate has made a daring comparison between himself and the Virgin, likening his terror at having to write with the Virgin's at the thought of bearing Christ, which allows him to segue back into the scriptural narrative. As I noted in Chapter Two, the designer of the Type A scheme reframes this part of the text, calling it 'a recapitulation of the words of the angel Gabriel to oure lady'. Equally, as I noted in Chapter Three, the scribe of Bodl MS Bodley 75 also glosses over this section, writing 'turbata' in the margin, drawing the reader's attention to the Virgin's fear not Lydgate's. Clearly for some readers, Lydgate's self-important digression with its characteristic humility *topos* was not worth drawing attention to. This phenomenon is exactly what we see in the modifications of BL Add. MS 19252, in the censoring 'x's which fill the margin. And this is part of what makes Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B's foregrounding of this section of the text so significant.

The corrector's work also shows that, although after the medieval period, some readers still took an interest in the poem, some appear to have found the language strange and old-fashioned. By this period, Lydgate's metre too was increasingly falling out of favour. By the turn of the seventeenth century it might have seemed quite antiquated. In his 1600 poetic anthology, *The Garden of Muses* (STC 3189.5), John Bodenham writes in his conclusion that:

In this first Impression, are omitted the Sentences of *Chaucer*, *Gower*, *Lidgate*, and other auncient Poets, because it was not knowne how their forme would agree with these of ten syllables onely, and that sometimes they exceed the compasse herein obserued, hauing none but lineall and couplet sentences, aboue and beyond which course, the Gentleman who was the cause of this collection (taking therin no meane paines him-selfe, besides his friends labour) could not be perswaded, but determinately aimed at this obseruation.<sup>94</sup>

The BL Add. MS 19252 corrector appears to have different motivations from the scribes of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B and Radcliffe MS 16. His area of interest seems to have been material directly relating to the Virgin. Lydgate's narratorial interjections are brushed over, as are some poetic descriptions of the Virgin. His is a more soberly instructive text, while the scribe of Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B seems to have had other concerns. That scribe appears to have been interested in Lydgate's authorial persona and in the poem as a literary artifact, rather than as a piece of Marian theology.

Yet, alongside Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B, we have Radcliffe MS 16 – an unmodified version of the text copied from Caxton's edition. The three manuscripts present, therefore,

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<sup>94</sup> John Bodenham, *Bel-vedere Or The Garden of Muses* (London: F.K for Hugh Astley, 1600), p. 235.

differing responses of post-Reformation readers and scribes. They testify to the continued relevance of the ‘*olde custome*’: both the old custom of scribal copying and the custom of Marian devotional literature.

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## CONCLUSION

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This thesis has explored how non-authorial figures have, in different ways, shaped the text of the *Life*, in manuscript and print. This exploration shines a light on the relative roles of authors and non-authorial figures. By way of conclusion here, I examine the way the concept of authorship itself is presented in the manuscripts of the *Life*. By this I mean the way authors are attributed in manuscript rubrics and the way Lydgate's eulogy to Chaucer is presented. Here I demonstrate that notions of authorial value are susceptible to specific, local conditions. I argue that the kind of authorship valued by a clerical scribe, in a regional location, in the latter part of the fifteenth century is a very different kind of authorship to that valued by – say – William Caxton, a commercial printer, working in London at the same time.

Writing about Foucault's famous question, 'what is an author?', Seth Lerer notes that 'an author is not so much the profession of an individual as it is the creation of society'.<sup>1</sup> This idea – that authorship is malleable – is not a novel observation.<sup>2</sup> In recent decades much important work has been done on the idea of authorship in the medieval period.<sup>3</sup> These works have pointed to the different models of authorship operating in late medieval English literature, and in particular to two models: 'the scholastic *auctor*' and 'the courtly laureate'.<sup>4</sup> Some of the

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<sup>1</sup> Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers: Imagining the Author in Late Medieval England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> The seminal texts on the idea of authorship are, of course, Roland Barthes' 1967 'The Death of the Author', printed in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Flamingo, 1977, repr. 1984 [Fontana]), pp. 142–48 and Michel Foucault's, 'What is an Author' in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. by Josue Hariri (London: Methuen, 1979), pp. 141–60. (There is a common misconception that Barthes' essay was published in 1968. In fact, it appeared in the autumn of 1967 in *Aspen* magazine, vol. 5–6.)

<sup>3</sup> See variously Olivia Holmes, *Assembling the Lyric Self: Authorship from Troubadour Song to Italian Poetry Book* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press 2000); Alisatir Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1984, repr. 1988); Stephanie Trigg, *Congenial Souls: Reading Chaucer from Medieval to Postmodern* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). On the use of prologues by vernacular authors as a means of strategic self-authorisation, see Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). On Lydgate and Chaucer more specifically, see Robert Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Wakelin, *Scribal Correction and Literary Craft: English Manuscripts 1375–1510* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 277.

most influential, for Lydgate studies, has been Seth Lerer's *Chaucer and His Readers*, which I quoted from above. Here, I take Lerer's broader argument about the shifting nature of authorial value in the fifteenth century and I use it to nuance his own conclusions about Chaucer's authorship in the fifteenth century.

Part of Lerer's argument is about the way fifteenth-century authorial fashioning laid the foundations of our modern valorization of authorship. Thus, to some degree, there is an interpretative hazard in his approach. As scholars, today, we are so invested in the idea of Chaucer's authorship that we can overlook texts and manuscripts which may suggest other kinds of authorship had value. It is also possible that an interest in the environment of London and its courtly networks has allowed us to miss the value that Lydgate's authorship had in the fifteenth century, in different (less courtly) cultural contexts.

The larger implication of what I say here is that we should examine what conceptions of authorship have upon our own critical practice. The different kinds of authorship that we see operating in the manuscripts and early prints of the *Life* remind us that our concept of authorship and its relative value is culturally conditioned, which might – in turn – prompt us to question why Lydgate has been so critically neglected.

As in the previous chapters, here I examine a series of local readings of the poem – in this case, in two of the poem's manuscripts. I return to BL Harley MS 2382, previously discussed in Chapter Three and discuss this manuscript alongside Chetham's MS 6709 – another manuscript previously examined, in Chapter Five. The two manuscripts have texts in common: alongside the *Life*, they both contain Chaucer's *Prioress' Tale* and *Second Nun's Tale*. As well as this, they also share details of physical construction. This final comparison is a microcosmic rendering of a problem the thesis has implicitly addressed – what is the role of the author as opposed to the role of non-authorial figures in the creation of the textual artefact, and why do we afford value to some roles and not others? And why has one role, traditionally, received more critical attention?

It is helpful, briefly, to revisit the descriptions of the two manuscripts under discussion here. Details about the codices' physical construction, as well as their similarities of content, have a bearing on the argument I make. BL Harley MS 2382 is a small paper manuscript, copied by a single unnamed scribe. Chetham's MS 6709 was written by a named scribe – William Cotson, a canon at an Augustinian Priory in Dunstable. It is also small. Charles Owen observes that BL Harley MS 2382 is the 'third smallest' of the manuscripts that contain all or part of *The*

*Canterbury Tales*, while Chetham's MS 6709 is 'the smallest'.<sup>5</sup> Both manuscripts have a spare decorative scheme and appear to have had a booklet compilation stage.<sup>6</sup> Both contain medieval foliation and – unusually – both contain internal references to other parts of the codex, made by the scribe. Charles Owen writes that these two manuscripts are 'amateur anthologies, almost certainly written out by clerics for their own use'.<sup>7</sup>

The manuscripts are of interest here because, tellingly, they both fail to name Chaucer as the author of the *Prioress's Tale* and the *Second Nun's Tale*, despite attributions of authorship elsewhere in the manuscripts. In both manuscripts, where Lydgate's texts appear, his authorship is attributed. The specific choices of these scribes have much to tell us about diverging attitudes towards literary texts and towards concepts of authorship in the period. They suggest that what Seth Lerer has called the 'cult' of Chaucer's authorship was not something which all scribes responded to, and possibly suggests that this cult was limited to a particular cultural context.<sup>8</sup> This was a cult which Lydgate did much to create and we find evidence of it in manuscripts and printed texts of both Lydgate and Chaucer's works. In Chapter Four, in my discussion of the excerpting of the Chaucer eulogy from Book II, in both print and manuscript witnesses, we saw evidence of this phenomenon, whereby Lydgate's valorizing eulogy to Chaucer was given currency in new contexts. There I noted that, in those instances, the relevance of the *Life* was contingent on the Chaucerian material it contains. The two manuscripts under discussion here, however, suggest that this cult of Chaucer's authorship, a cult in part fashioned by Lydgate, was not universal. They suggest – in their rubrics and in their choice of material – that for certain scribes the cult of Lydgate's authorship was a more powerful phenomenon than Chaucer's.

Both manuscripts were, or appear to have been, copied outside London. Chetham's MS 6709 was copied in Dunstable and there are several indications that Harley MS 2382 was copied in East Anglia.<sup>9</sup> Both manuscripts present evidence of what Thomas Prendergast calls

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<sup>5</sup> Charles Owen, *The Manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), p. 115.

<sup>6</sup> In BL Harley MS 2382, a booklet compilation stage is suggested by the fact that the outer leaves of each quire are soiled. In Chetham's MS 6709 the original foliation shows that the manuscript was made up of different sections. See *The Text of the Canterbury Tales Studied on the Basis of all Known Manuscripts*, ed. by John Manly and Edith Rickert, 8 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), I, p. 82. In addition to this, the outer leaves of each quire are vellum, while the inner ones are paper, which may suggest that Cotson wanted to offer some protection to his quires before they were bound together.

<sup>7</sup> Owen, *The Manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales*, p. 115.

<sup>8</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> There are hints of this in some of the works copied. Saint Erasmus was venerated especially in maritime communities in southern East Anglia, which may indicate that the hagiography had a local resonance. Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Stroud: Sutton, 2004), pp. 111–

‘the cultural tendency for local reading communities to reshape Chaucer’s text in their own image’. <sup>10</sup> They *might* suggest that the Chaucer-cult, evidenced in the manuscripts derived from Shirlean exemplars and in the editions of Caxton and Speght, was a phenomenon more commonly found in London.

### **Authorial attribution in BL Harley MS 2382**

BL Harley MS 2382 is selective in its attribution of authorship. The first text in the manuscript is the *Life*, which is missing a section of text at its start. The text begins at Book I, l. 427. One eight-leaf quire is missing and what now makes up the opening quire is missing its first two leaves. The *Life* is followed on f. 75r by *The Assumption of Our Lady* (NIMEV 2165), after which the scribe has copied a prayer to the Virgin from the *Speculum Christiani* (NIMEV 2119) on ff. 86v–87r, marked ‘Oracio ad’(underlined in red). What follows are some disordered leaves of Lydgate’s *Testament* (NIMEV 2464) ff. 88–96v, which because of the scribe’s haphazard planning, appears again on ff. 108–108v and 128v–129v. The *Testament* is announced on f. 87v by a rubric which reads, ‘The testament of Dan John’, and then ‘testamentum Lydgate’, in a running title throughout this text, at the top of each folio underlined in red. The *Prioreess’s Prologue and Tale* begins on f. 97r, with a rubric reading ‘ffabula monialis de sancta maria’, in *formata* script, underlined in red with a red paraph mark. The tale ends with ‘amen’ and ‘explicit’ on f. 100r. On ff. 100v–101r we find the beginning of the *Second Nun’s Prologue and Tale*, which appears with an *incipit* reading, ‘Vita Sancte Ceci li e’, straddling the double page spread. Beneath this is a rubric reading ‘prohemia’(underlined in red). This is followed by another section from Lydgate’s *Testament*, clearly added to fill the space left by the end of the previous text. On f. 109r, the *Life of Saint Erasmus* (NIMEV 173) appears, titled, ‘de sancto erasmo martre’, underlined in red and written in an *anglicana formata* script. It ends on f. 111r.<sup>11</sup> The next text is the *Long Charter of Christ* (NIMEV 4154), which is labelled ‘*Testamentum xpi*’ [Testament of Christ] on f. 112r. On f. 118v the *Childe of Bristowe* (NIMEV 1157) appears, titled in this way and with a running title underlined in red. The text ends on f. 127r with an ‘Amen’, an *explicit* and two Latin verse couplets. It is followed by an animal prophecy of Merlin

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13. The spellings indicate an East Midlands or Norfolk origin for the scribe and there are references to ‘kent’ and ‘Essex’ in NIMEV 2613.5, which may also be an indication of the text’s local significance (f. 128r). *The Text of the Canterbury Tales Studied on the Basis of all Known Manuscripts*, ed. by Manly and Rickert, I, p. 247

<sup>10</sup> Introduction, *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture Authority and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400–1602*, ed. by Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> *Sammlung Altenglischer Legenden*, ed. by Carl Horstmann (Leipzig: Heilbronn, 1878), pp. 198–201.

(NIMEV 2613.5) on ff. 127v–128r, with a rubric which reads ‘prophecia merlinus’ (f. 127r). The final two folios are another section from Lydgate’s *Testament*. The text ends on f. 129v with: ‘Explicit Testamentum Johannis Lydgate de Bery, Deo gracias Jesus Maria’ [Here ends the testament of John Lydgate, monk of Bury, Thank God, Jesus, Mary]. While the scribe attributes the *Testament* to Lydgate in both rubrics and running titles, Chaucer is not named as the author of the texts by him. This might be unremarkable. Perhaps the scribe did not know the texts were Chaucer’s. It is possible that he was copying from an exemplar that recorded the two tales as separate poems not part of the *Canterbury Tales*.<sup>12</sup> However, in concert with other details of this manuscript, the silence on the matter of Chaucer’s authorship appears to be a conscious choice. Furthermore, it follows a similar pattern that is also visible in Chetham’s MS 6709, which suggests that these two clerical scribes only valued a particular kind of authorship.

### The Chaucer eulogy

As I noted in Chapter Four, the Chaucer eulogy from Book II is often given special treatment in the manuscripts of the *Life*. As I noted there, the eulogy – in different forms – had an afterlife of its own. The scribe of BL Harley MS 2382, however, bucked the trend of highlighting the reference to Chaucer. His treatment of this part of the poem is different. He has simply written ‘*nota bene de nobilium | rhetorum*’ [Note the noble rhetoricians] (f. 27v) in the margin. The gloss appears next to ll. 1621–27, one stanza earlier than where the chapter title appears in the Type A scheme. The words are written beside the mention of ‘petrak Fraunces’ and ‘Tullyus with his wordys white’ (II, 1624–25). Here, the scribe is not even highlighting the name of Chaucer, who is the subject of this passage and is instead merely indicating the other poets mentioned by Lydgate. He appears uninterested in the idea of Chaucer’s authorship, preferring to refer, generically, to noble rhetoricians.

The scribe’s disregard for the idea of Chaucer’s authorship is also in evidence in the text of the poem itself. He indicates this disregard in a textual error he makes in the midst of the Chaucer eulogy. The text should read, ‘The noble Rethor, poete of Brytayne/ That worthy

<sup>12</sup> The *Second Nun’s Tale* appears to have been composed before the rest of the *Canterbury Tales*. Mary Giffin suggested that it was written for the Benedictines of Norwich to honour Adam Easton’s being named Cardinal Priest of Sancta Cecilia in Trastevere in the early 1380s. See Mary Elizabeth Giffin, ‘Hir House Hir Chirche of Seinte Cecilie Highte’, *Studies on Chaucer and His Audience* (Québec: Éditions L’Éclair, 1956), pp. 29–49. See also Sherry L. Reames, ‘The Cecilia Legend as Chaucer Inherited It and Retold It: The Disappearance of an Augustinian Ideal’, *Speculum*, 55 (1980), 38–57. Also by Reames, ‘The Second Nun’s Prologue and Tale’, in *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. by Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel (Woodbridge, Brewer, 2002), I, pp 491–528. It is possible that, a century later, the BL Harley MS 2382 scribe was working from an exemplar in a textual tradition that pre-dated the tales’ inclusion into the *Canterbury Tales* as a whole.

was the laurer to haue/ Of poetrye, and the palme atteyne' (II, 1629–31). However, the scribe in fact wrote, on f. 27v: 'the noble rethor poete of Britayne/that worthy was the laurer to haue/of poetrye and the psalme atteyne'. This minute error, the misreading of 'palm' – the laureate's palm – for 'psalme' is a metaphor for the way the scribe responds to different models of authorship.<sup>13</sup> In this tiny error, in this errant 's', the scribe betrays something of his biases and preferences. He was probably used to copying material of a religious nature and with this little slip of the eye and the pen we see his disregard for the idea of laureate authorship and a possible bias towards religious material. This sits in stark contrast to BL Add. MS 19252 and BL Harley MS 4260 which both identify the significance of the 'laurer' and the 'palme' by adding 'a garland' in the margin next to this stanza (f. 45v and f. 45v respectively).<sup>14</sup>

This small-scale error is part of a pattern we see in the codex as a whole. We might say that this is a scribe more interested in psalms than laureate palms. Chaucer is never named and the original context of the *Prioreess's Tale* and the *Second Nun's Tale* is never hinted at. Chaucer's texts have a specific and limited relevance for the scribe – their value is not contingent on their being authored by Chaucer. This limited relevance is revealed in the glossing of the Chaucerian texts. The parts of the *Prioreess's Tale* which appear to be of interest to the scribe are those parts which contain liturgical material or which may be allied to liturgical material. The first gloss appears by the third stanza of the *Prioreess's Tale*, next to the line reading, 'O bush vnbrent brennyng in Moyses syght' (f. 97r). Beside these lines, the words 'Rubrum quem vidit Moyses' [the bush which Moses saw] appear.<sup>15</sup> As, I noted in Chapter Three, in reference to a similar gloss in Bodl. MS Bodley 75, this is from the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin.<sup>16</sup> The next gloss appears next to the following lines:

This litell child as he come to 7 frou  
Ful murily wold he synge 7 crie  
O alma redemptoris euer moo (ll. 552–54)

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<sup>13</sup> The scribe has copied the word 'palme' correctly on f. 54r, so his error cannot be attributed to some kind of unfamiliarity with the word.

<sup>14</sup> BL Harley MS 4260 reads 'Garlond', to which Samuel Knott, rector of Combe Raleigh (d. 1687), has added 'of Laurel' and written 'Franciscus Petrarcha'. See Appendix 2 and brief discussion in Chapter Five.

<sup>15</sup> *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Benson and others, p. 209, l. 468. All subsequent references are to this edition cited in-text by line number, although the quotations are transcriptions from BL Harley MS 2382, with the *Riverside* line numbers provided for reference only.

<sup>16</sup> See *A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer: The Canterbury Tales, Part Twenty, The Prioreess's Tale*, ed. by Beverly Boyd (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), p. 159 and Madeleva, *Chaucer's Nuns*, p. 32.

The gloss reads, ‘Infans cantabat alma redemptoris mater’ (f. 98r). As in other places in the volume, the scribe is keen to draw attention to sections of the text which have a liturgical resonance (other instances of this are noted in Chapter Three). The *Alma Redemptoris* is, of course, a liturgical chant.<sup>17</sup> The next gloss appears next to the prayer of the boy’s mother, the ‘poure wydwe’ (586), by the line, ‘O gret god that performed thi laude’ (607). It reads, ‘nota bene de laude deus’ (f. 99r). Perhaps the scribe thought this part of the text might be suitable as a prayer. We see this in his glossing of the *Life* as well. Several times in that text his glosses mark prayers. Sometimes they are prayers uttered by characters in the text, as in Book II, during an episode in the poem in which the Virgin offers up a prayer: ‘All opynly to god, thus she sayde’ (II, 1529). There the scribe has written, ‘orison sancte maria’ f. 26v. At other times, however, passages of the *Life* appear to have been glossed as prayers so that they may be used in prayer by the scribe (or a later reader). In these instances, the original text does not contain a prayer, but has been re-purposed. Next to the final stanzas of the *Life*, the scribe has written ‘orison opificer’ [prayer of aid-bringing] (f. 74v), by the following stanza:

Now criste þat art the sothefast holi light  
The hert of man for to enlumyne  
Vpon vs wrecches fro þy se so bright  
Lete þe sonne of thi mercy shyne  
For loue of hir that is a pure virgyne  
Whiche on this day to the temple wente  
Of mekenes only the for to present (VI, 435–41)

The final gloss in the *Prioress’s Tale* appears next to the lines which read,

My throte is kut vnto my nekbon  
Seid this child 7 as by way of kynde  
Y shuld haue dyed long tyme agon  
But Jhesu crist as ye in bokes fynde  
Woll that his glorie laste 7 be in mynde  
And for the worship of his moder dere  
Yet may y synge o alma lowed 7 clere (ll. 649–55)

The gloss which accompanies it reads: ‘responsio pueri occisi’ (f. 99r). As in previous glosses to other texts – including the *Life* – the scribe highlights the instance of a miracle in the text, as well as drawing attention to the liturgical *Alma Redemptoris*. Indeed, each of the stanzas which are glossed by the scribe contain the Latin words ‘alma redemptoris mater’. So, in sum, the

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<sup>17</sup> See the CANTUS database, University of Waterloo: <http://cantusdatabase.org/id/001356>, accessed 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

scribe's glossing covers a liturgical image at the start of the poem, the child's singing of the liturgical *Alma Redemptoris*, the prayer of the murdered child's mother and the miraculous words of the child after death.

Much the same pattern appears in the glossing of the *Second Nun's Prologue and Tale*, where the scribe picks out instances of miracles and highlights possible prayers. The scribe marks 'oracio ad sancta maria' (f. 100v) next to the beginning of the prayer to the Virgin in the *Prologue* (ll. 29–35). He also writes, 'exposicio nominis cecilie' (f. 101v) next to the section of the *Prologue* which contains the reference to the *Legenda Aurea*'s interpretation of the name of Cecilia (ll. 85–91 ff.) The final gloss to this text is 'nota miraculum' (f. 107v), next to l. 519 ff., which describes how Cecilia miraculously felt no pain or cold: 'al coold and feelede no wo' (l. 521).

It would seem that for this scribe (who from the pattern of his glossing appears to be clerical, as Charles Owen<sup>18</sup> and Manly and Rickert suggested<sup>19</sup>) Chaucer had a specific and limited relevance. Chaucer's texts were only useful for the spiritually nourishing material they might contain, for the possible prayers which might be lifted from them, or for the links to the liturgy which might make them appropriate for devotional reading. In Bodl. MS Bodley 75 – a manuscript discussed in Chapter Three with many similarities to BL Harley MS 2382 – we see the same pattern of apparent disregard for the idea of Chaucer's authorship. The section of the text which contains the eulogy to Chaucer is unmarked (ff. 35v–36v), which is highly unusual. The sense that the idea of Chaucer, and the cult of his authorship (and in particular the idea of laureate authorship) is of minimal interest to what appear to be clerical scribes in regional locations is compounded when we compare Bodl. MS Bodley 75 and BL Harley MS 2382 with Chetham's MS 6709.

### Chetham's MS 6709

Chetham's MS 6709 is a manuscript of a comparable date to BL Harley MS 2382 which shares similar features with that manuscript.<sup>20</sup> It appears to have been made for personal use or for circulation amongst a learned (probably clerical) milieu. As in BL Harley MS 2382, the way in

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<sup>18</sup> Owen, *The Manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales*, p. 115.

<sup>19</sup> *The Text of the Canterbury Tales Studied on the Basis of all Known Manuscripts*, ed. by Manly and Rickert, I, p. 82.

<sup>20</sup> A full digital facsimile of the manuscript is available at the University of Manchester Rylands Medieval Collection online:

[http://enriqueta.man.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/view/search?q=Reference\\_Number=%22Chetham%22s%20MS%20Mun.A.4.104%22](http://enriqueta.man.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/view/search?q=Reference_Number=%22Chetham%22s%20MS%20Mun.A.4.104%22). See also, Neil Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, Volume III: Lampeter–Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 345–47.

which the scribe, William Cotson, labels the texts is significant, so I give each of his rubrics below.

After the text of the *Life*, on f. 160r, the *Second Nun's Prologue and Tale* appears, marked by Cotson with 'vita sancte cecile sic incipit'. This text concludes on f. 173r with 'explicit vita Sancte Virginis et Martiriis Cecilie. | scripta per manibus | Dompni Willemi Cotson Canonici | In Mense Marcii Anno domini Millesimo cccclxxxx<sup>mo</sup>'. Below this, the *incipit* of the next text appears, 'Hic Incipit miraculum Beate Marie Virginis | Dominus noster. Quam admirabile est nomen tuum | in vniversa terra'. After this text, another text seems to be missing. In a table of contents at the start of the volume Cotson refers to a *Life of Saint Thomas* at this point in the manuscript, but it seems the folios have now been lost. There is a blank folio at f. 179r, while on the verso of this leaf, there are two extracts from Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, with book references. On f. 180 Lydgate's *Life of Saint Margaret* (NIMEV 439) appears, rubricated with: 'Hic incipit vita Sancte Margarete C[...] Compilata Dompnum Iohanennem Lydgate Monarchum de Bury Anno viii<sup>o</sup> Henrici Sexti'. This is followed on f. 193r by Lydgate's *Life of Saint George* (NIMEV 2592), specified by 'Incipit vita Sancti Georgii', this text concludes on f. 198v with 'explicit secundum lydgate scripta per | manibus dompni Willelmi Cotson Canonici in mense | Julii Anno domini Millesimo cccclxxxv'. This is followed on f. 199r by Lydgate's *Legends of Saints Edmund and Fremund* (NIMEV 3440), which is announced with the words: 'Vita Sancti Edmundi Regis et Martiris'. The text concludes on f. 284r with 'Explicit quod Willelmus Cotson | Goode grawte us grace | Anno Domini millesimo ccc<sup>mo</sup> lxxxv<sup>to</sup> Anno | Ricardi Tercij post conquestum secundo finem feci | In Die Sancte Barnabe Apostoli. Amen'. On f. 284v 'Stella celi extirpauit' (NIMEV 3673) appears, with that title and concludes on f. 285v with 'Amen & Explicit | secundum lydgate'. On the next folio, f. 286r 'De sancta Maria contra pestilenciam' (NIMEV 2459, *O Heavenly Star Most Comfortable of Light*) appears. The collection concludes on f. 287v with, 'Explicit secundum Lydgate God grawnte vs grace quod | Willelmus Cotson Canonicus'. In many of the rubrics to his texts, Cotson names himself. He also often names Lydgate and sometimes he names both himself and Lydgate in the same rubric. This is highly significant. It suggests that he wished to signal their co-participation in the creation of the textual object.<sup>21</sup>

The most significant texts for my purposes here are those labelled by Cotson as 'Vita Sancte Cecilie' and 'Miraculum Beate Marie Virginis'. These two texts are, of course,

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<sup>21</sup> We also see this in an *explicit* on f. 119r of BL Harley MS 4011, where the words 'Etto Gobeth | Explicit Johannes lydgate monke of Bury | quod. W. Grauell' appear.

Chaucer's *Second Nun's Tale* and *Prioress's Tale*. Yet there is nothing in the manuscript which names Chaucer nor the poems' original context amongst the *Canterbury Tales*. This might not be striking in itself. As I noted in Chapter One, many manuscripts of this date frequently do not name the authors of the texts they contain. However, this is not the case with Cotson's manuscript, which consistently names Lydgate as the author of the Lydgatean texts, throughout the manuscript. The *incipit* and the *explicit* of the *Life* both mention Lydgate. Cotson's omission of Chaucer's name is significant in light of his careful authorial attribution elsewhere. It becomes even more significant, however, when we consider his exemplar for the Chaucerian texts. In the light of the exemplar, Cotson's disregard for Chaucer's name appears to be a conscious choice. Cotson copied his text from Caxton's 1484 second edition of *The Canterbury Tales* (STC 5083). In this edition, Chaucer's authorship of the *Canterbury Tales* is highly visible. It contains a long proem which frequently names the poet, valorizing him and situating him in a noble literary tradition, as a laureate poet. In it, we see Caxton using phrasing very similar to Lydgate's in the Chaucer eulogy in Book II, ll. 1628–34 of the *Life*. He says that the 'noble | grete philosopher Geffrey Chaucer the whiche for his ornate wrytyng in our tongue may wel haue the name of laureate poete' (A ii<sup>a</sup>).

In Chapter Four we saw the way Chaucer's laureate authorship was something apparently valued by John Shirley and in Caxton's proem we see the same interest in Chaucer as a laureate poet of national renown. Cotson's responses to Chaucer appear to be quite different. N.F. Blake writes that to 'modern scholars it may seem remarkable that Cotson should suppress any reference to Chaucer, but seize every opportunity to refer to Lydgate. This cannot be attributed to ignorance because Caxton's second edition has an elaborate encomium of Chaucer'.<sup>22</sup> To me it seems obvious why Cotson should have suppressed any reference to Chaucer. Like the scribe of BL Harley MS 2382, Cotson is uninterested in the idea of Chaucer's authorship, preferring to quarry devotional material from the *Canterbury Tales* to suit his own ends. By contrast, the idea of Lydgate's authorship is attractive to him. In each of his mentions of Lydgate, Cotson specifies that Lydgate was a monk. This might be unremarkable – Lydgate is often cited thus in manuscript rubrics, including in the introductory rubric of the *Life*'s Type A apparatus. Yet crucially Cotson also identifies himself as a canon regular. He signals that he and Lydgate share an ordained identity. He is also, I suggest, seeking to signal that they have shared

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<sup>22</sup> N.F. Blake, 'MS Chetham 6709 and Some Manuscript Copies of Caxton Prints', in *Language and Civilization: A Concerted Profusion of Essays and Studies in Honour of Otto Hietsch*, ed. by Claudia Blank (with the assistance of Judith Gilbert, Donald Gutch and Teresa Kirschner), 2 vols (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1992), II, pp. 239–54 (p. 254).

in the creation of the textual object. The figure of laureate Chaucer is perhaps a distant prospect to Cotson, but the figure of Lydgate the monastic *auctor* is possibly a familiar one and one with a direct relevance for Cotson himself. For Cotson, Lydgate had a value as an author that was contingent on his monastic identity. In Chapter Four I argued that the *Magnificat* paraphrase in Camb. Gonville and Caius MS 230/116 was another instance where we see Lydgate's authorial value being partially contingent on his monastic status. There, Lydgate's vernacular version of the canticle appears in amongst an almost exclusively Latin, monastic miscellany possibly associated with John Whethamstede. The text would appear anomalous, if it were not attributed to Lydgate – a monastic poet who makes a confident claim for the value of the vernacular as a language of literary and religious expression.

The scribe of Harley MS 2382 may have been copying his texts from an exemplar which did not name Chaucer, and Cotson may have been copying from an exemplar which was missing both its start and its end, where Chaucer is named (STC 5083, f. 2r–v and f. 311v), or from a manuscript exemplar derived from STC 5083 which did not name Chaucer. However, the pattern of the two manuscripts in tandem suggests that, in both cases, it was a conscious choice.

Different models of authorship are inscribed in the *Life*. One is the model of the vernacular author – the courtly laureate – modelled on Chaucer, and the other is the Latin *auctor*. Lydgate capitalised on both models in his own authorial self-presentation. Arguably, he sought to fashion a new form of vernacular authorship – one in which he drew a kind of spiritual authority from his monastic status, but also a kind of cultural prestige from his debt to Chaucer. In the *Life* he makes frequent references to the frame narrative of the poem, calling attention to the process of writing and often claiming his own unworthiness to write, as I noted in Chapters Two and Five. Yet, in his use of Latin *auctores* – in his wide use of source material – he confers some of the *auctoritas* of these authors on himself, while simultaneously signaling his place in a newly founded literary tradition that follows in the footsteps of the 'poete of Brytayne'. Furthermore, his choice of style performs much the same function. Aureation is, in some senses, a stylistic expression of Lydgate's status as an author. In writing in an aureate diction that is a Latinate version of the vernacular, Lydgate also signals his dual status. Linguistically, aureation draws on two traditions: a tradition of divinely sanctioned Latin *auctores*, but also a newly founded native tradition.

The point about Lydgate's dual model of authorship is important because scribes and readers sometimes responded to one model but not the other. In BL Harley MS 7333 and TCC R.3.19, we see a section of Lydgate's *Life* excerpted and repurposed as a biographical

addendum to the *Parliament of Fowls*. In Chetham's MS 6709 and BL Harley MS 2382, we see the opposite phenomenon: a section of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* excerpted and added to devotional anthologies of primarily Lydgatean texts. I have argued that in BL Harley MS 2382 and Chetham's MS 6709 we see scribes responding appreciatively to Lydgate's presentation of himself in the tradition of divinely sanctioned *auctor*, but not recognizing or responding to a concept of Chaucerian or laureate authorship.

What marks out Cotson and the BL Harley MS 2382 scribe from Caxton and John Shirley before him is that Caxton and Shirley appear to have been making their printed editions and manuscripts for commercial purposes. Shirley (whose work was copied by Stow) copied the Chaucer eulogy from the *Life* in its re-purposed form. Caxton provided a long proem to the second edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, which valorizes Chaucer. Both show a very different response to the idea of Chaucer's authorship than the clerical scribes making codices for personal use or for circulation amongst a learned milieu. For those scribes, the kind of authorship that has more value is a kind more akin to the model of the Latin *auctor*.

Our own modern-day fascination with Chaucer has perhaps allowed us to forget the value that scribes and readers placed in Lydgate's authorship in the fifteenth century – a period in which models of authorship were subject to change and reconfiguration.

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This thesis set out to investigate the form and transmission of Lydgate's *Life*, but in so doing it became a piece of work which examined the way non-authorial figures have shaped the text of the poem. Here, by way of conclusion, I have discussed the way non-authorial figures have configured the concept of authorship itself in the manuscripts of the *Life*. The way the poem's manuscripts present authorship has floated below the surface of my discussion in each of the previous chapters. In the opening chapter, I sought to lay out some of the thorny questions of textual completeness, date, patron and authorial attribution. Many of these questions hinge on a non-authorial introductory rubric added to many of the poem's manuscripts. The rubric seeks to situate the poem within a particular context, to locate it in a system of royal patronage, and to signal that it is the work of a known author, an author vested with a particular kind of authority by dint of his monastic status and courtly connections. In this introductory rubric, Lydgate's authorship has a particular value: he is both 'monke of Bury' and also a writer who works at 'thinsatunce of the most cristeyn kyng prince harry the fifth'.

I would argue that there is often an agenda behind forms of authorial attribution. As Seth Lerer notes, late-medieval attributions are not necessarily ‘the articulations of knowing biographers or friends’ and may instead be ‘ideologically motivated, textual manipulations for specific literary ends’.<sup>23</sup> In a pertinent example, Vincent Gillespie notes that a large number of vernacular religious texts were attributed to Richard Rolle in the aftermath of the Wycliffite Heresy: ‘the ubiquity of Rolle as a privileged *auctor* suggests that he was a convenient guarantor for texts’.<sup>24</sup> I do not mean to suggest that the *Life* is not the work of Lydgate, but that the way the rubric frames Lydgate’s authorship may tell us more about the scribes who created it, than the actual circumstances of the poem’s creation.

The desire to attribute authorship and the complex biases that inform that desire is something we see in medieval manuscripts, as well as in the modern period. Early twentieth-century scholarship often sought to attribute anonymous medieval texts to known authors. Thus, in 1904, in his *History of English Literature*, Horace Kennedy attributed the authorship of some anonymous lyrics to the poet of the *Owl and the Nightingale*. In the burgeoning field of Middle English studies, authorship was an index of quality. As Roger Dalrymple observes, ‘the historicist temper of scholarship at this time meant that Middle English studies drew validation from attributing anonymous texts to historical authors’.<sup>25</sup>

The claims of the *Life*’s introductory rubric are not alluded to or echoed within the poem. In other poems by Lydgate we often find internal references to the circumstances of a poem’s occasion or commissioning. There are no such references in the *Life*. And there is no external, documentary evidence to support the rubric’s claims. What we know of the historical context would certainly support the idea that the poem was commissioned by Henry V, but the evidence is circumstantial.

Whether the content of the rubric is true or not is, in some ways, irrelevant. The more important point is what it tells us about the way scribes and readers measured the value of the literary texts in the period and the way they sought to advertise that value in manuscripts. Given that a significant number of manuscripts contain this rubric, a high number of medieval readers would have approached the poem through the prism of the rubric. Indeed, that pattern has persisted to the modern day – the rubric’s wording has shaped the critical discourse on the

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<sup>23</sup> Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers*, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Vincent Gillespie, ‘Fatherless Books: Authorship, Attribution, and Orthodoxy in Later Medieval England’, in *The Pseudo-Bonaventuran Lives of Christ: Exploring the Middle English Tradition*, ed. by Ian Johnson and Allan Westphall (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 151–96 (p. 163).

<sup>25</sup> *Middle English Literature: A Guide to Criticism*, ed. by Roger Dalrymple (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 2.

text. Perhaps because of the paucity of evidence about the circumstances of the poem's creation, scholars have often taken its claims at face value.

In fact, as I sought to demonstrate, the circumstances of the poem's creation are especially murky as I believe the poem to be unfinished. I argued that the Type A apparatus (of which the rubric is a part) is the work of several non-authorial figures intent on framing the text in a specific way – making it more navigable and more readable. The different parts of the apparatus have different agendas. While the Latin glossing weds the poem to the Old Testament scriptural text, the vernacular chapter titles have a different aim. They seek to reshape the text as a work of theological instruction. As I noted, the Type A scheme frequently effaces the poem's narratorial interventions. Throughout the text, the narrative voice surfaces to mediate on the difficulties of composing a poem about the Virgin and yet these interventions are glossed over in the chapter titles. Thereby the text is presented as a work of pious didacticism, rather than a sometimes self-consciously literary work.

In the third chapter I explored divergences from the Type A scheme and the way in which non-authorial figures sought to reframe the poem for different audiences and different purposes. While the divergences from the Type A chapter titles and divisions in HEH MS HM 115 seem to shape the text for a female audience, BL Add. MS 19252 stresses the text's theological authority, seeking to separate out the poem's borrowings from apocryphal and scriptural sources. Two smaller-scale, more learned, probably clerical manuscripts – Bodl. MS Bodley 75 and BL Harley MS 2382 – wed the text to the liturgy and highlight the parts of the text which deal with miracles. In these codices, we see a cross-pollination between acts of private, readerly devotion and the reading of the text. At times, liturgical text and literary text meld into one and the poem's marginal space becomes, seemingly, a space for devotional reflection. Each of these different frames for the text demonstrates how its meaning might be reshaped in different contexts.

In the fourth chapter I examined each of the extracts of the poem and discussed the way these excerpts present the poem in radically different ways. I argued that, in explicit and implicit ways, the Chaucer eulogy from Book II and the *Magnificat* versification both demonstrate Lydgate making a claim for the value of vernacular authorship. Lydgate's *Magnificat* is a confident, expansive paraphrase of the Latin text in self-consciously aureate diction. In its form and scope it suggests that the vernacular can compete, stylistically and authoritatively with its Latin source text. The inclusion of the *Magnificat* paraphrase in a monastic, Latin manuscript suggests that Lydgate's vernacular had a certain cultural prestige, perhaps even *auctoritas*. That manuscript is one of the rare examples of an extract of the *Life*

being attributed to Lydgate. Lydgate's status as a Benedictine monk must surely have conferred value on his vernacular text. And it is striking that the other witness of the *Magnificat* to name Lydgate as the author is John Stow's copy, BL Add. MS 29729, where Lydgate's authorship has a different kind of value. There, in a very different cultural context, his authorial value lies in his status as a dead, vernacular author, whose works are relics of a distant literary past.

In the final chapter I examined the poem's afterlives. The text had a surprisingly muscular afterlife. This is evidenced both by ownership inscriptions in the manuscripts (which testify to a varied readership, over several centuries), but also by the way the poem was printed, copied and corrected in the post-medieval period. I examined the complete print editions of the poem, produced in 1484 and 1531, as well as manuscripts copied from these prints. Although one of these late manuscripts – Radcliffe MS 16 – is an unmodified copy of Caxton's print, Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B, by contrast, shows evidence of a scribe making unique alterations to the *Life* to suit his contemporary cultural sensitivities. This manuscript, and the early modern corrections made to BL Add MS 19252 illustrate how the text could be moulded. These manuscripts also witness changing attitudes towards authorial personae. In Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B we see the scribe foregrounding the narratorial voice previously silenced in the chapter titles of the Type A apparatus, while in the sixteenth-century modifications to the text in BL Add MS 19252, we see a very different response to the poem: the urge to modernize the language and the same desire to efface the narratorial voice that is discernable in the Type A chapter titles.

In each chapter, the role of non-authorial figures is writ large. But we have also seen the abiding fascination these figures themselves have with shifting notions of authorship and authority. We see this concern for authorship in attribution rubrics and in the extracts. We see this across the historical period which the manuscripts represent: from the Type A introductory rubric, which frames Lydgate's authorship in specific terms, to the work of the antiquarian Thomas Wilson who copied the Chaucer eulogy into the final leaves of Houghton MS Lat. 394.

### **Directions for future research**

Writing this thesis, it has become clear that a new edition of the poem is sorely needed. Ideally, such an edition would be more accurate in its reporting of textual variants and would take into account the scholarship undertaken on the poem since 1961. It could also clarify the relationship between the text and the textual apparatuses witnessed in the manuscripts.

An aspect of the *Life*'s manuscripts, which it was beyond the scope of this thesis to explore, is the text's collocation amongst other texts. The way the text appears alongside other

works is something which I discussed in relation to HEH MS HM 144 and the Heege manuscript in Chapter Four and here in this Conclusion. However, a fuller study – which would be a thesis in itself – would be possible. Such a study would probably need to examine individual multi-text manuscripts.

In general, the texts collected together with the *Life* are of a heterogeneous type. As discussed in Chapter Four, they are largely Middle English. Similar kinds of texts do occur in the manuscripts, but they are often short, making up only a small proportion of the manuscripts as a whole. Thus we find the final sermon from Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Christ*, in Harley MS 4011, which is a treatise on orthodox sacramental theology. The same interest in sacramental theology is also in evidence in TCC MS R.3.21, *IPMEP* 572, *The Sacrament of the Auter*. This text, translated from Latin, contains instructions for receiving the eucharist. In addition we find Lydgate's *Virtues of the Mass* (*NIMEV* 4246) in John's MS 56, ff. 75v–83v; Bodl. MS Hatton 73, ff. 205v–214; Lambeth MS 344, ff. 1r–8r and TCC MS R.3.21, ff. 205v–214r. But these are short texts in the context of these manuscripts as whole entities.

The only recognizable trend in textual collocation in the poem's manuscripts is the appearance of hagiographic material.<sup>26</sup> Aside from hagiographies, there are few obvious patterns of collocation in manuscripts of the *Life*. Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes* (*NIMEV* 2229), appears with the *Life* three times in manuscripts containing near-complete copies of the *Life*.<sup>27</sup> Written for Henry V, the perceived Lancastrian associations of both texts may account for this collocation. I do not mean to suggest that these questions are not valid and important, but my primary concern here has been to address the way the *Life* itself has been susceptible to non-authorial intervention and, thus, the collocation of texts in manuscripts of the *Life* was beyond the scope of my research.

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<sup>26</sup> CCC MS 237 contains a *Life of Saint Catherine* (*IPMEP* 28). Chetham's MS 6709 contains Lydgate's *Life of Saint Margaret* (*NIMEV* 439), ff. 180r–189v, which was also copied by John Stow in BL Add. MS 29729, ff. 170v–77v. Lydgate's *Lives of SS Edmund and Fremund* (*NIMEV* 3440) appears in Chetham's MS 6709, ff. 199r–282v, as well as in BL Harley MS 7333, ff. 136r–146v and Lydgate's *Prayer to Saint Edmund* (*NIMEV* 2445) also appears in Chetham's MS 6709, ff. 282v–284r. TCC R.3.21 contains a *Life of Saint Anne* (*NIMEV* 2392, ff. 221–30. CCC MS 237 contains the prose *Lyf and Martyrdom of Saint Kathryn* (*IPMEP* 28), ff. 1–12, TCC R.3.21 also contains a prose *Life of Saint Anthony*, ff. 257r–261r alongside *þe Fyndyng of the Glorious Confessour Antone* (*IPMEP* 68), ff. 261r–271v, followed by 'The translacion of the gloryous confessour and heremyte seynt Antony of Vienensis', ff. 217v–274r. BL Harley MS 5272 contains a *Life of Saint Dorothy* (*NIMEV* 2447), ff. 99r–104v. This text also appears in BL Arundel MS 168, ff. 5r–6v. BL Arundel 168 contains Capgrave's *Life of Saint Katherine* (*NIMEV* 6), ff. 16r–65r and a *Life of Saint Christina* (*NIMEV* 2877, ff. 2r–4v. This collocation of specific texts suggests a particular audience. A.S.G. Edwards says of this manuscript that, 'its subject matter obviously suggests a female audience'. A.S.G. Edwards, 'Fifteenth-Century English Collections of Female Saints' Lives', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 33 (2003), 131–41 (p. 136).

<sup>27</sup> CUL MS Kk 1.3, Antiquaries MS 134, TCC MS R.3.22 and BL Harley MS 7333. In CUL Kk. 1.3, the *Regiment* appears in a contemporary but different hand to the text of the *Life*.

More broadly, my approach in this thesis might be applied to other Middle English literary texts. The influence of non-authorial figures on the transmission of vernacular texts of the late-medieval period is something which requires further investigation. Some work has been done in this field. In *Diverting Authorities* – a rich and thought-provoking study of the extra-textual material accompanying English literary texts in print and manuscript – Jane Griffiths points to the way glosses and other kinds of extra-textual material seek to locate particular kinds of authority within and without a text.<sup>28</sup> Her work illustrates the importance of this burgeoning field of investigation. However, further work on the way textual apparatuses shape Middle English texts and how they seek to demarcate shifting forms of textual and spiritual authority in the period is necessary, not least because Griffiths' work solely concerns extra-textual material composed by authors themselves and does not cover extra-textual material developed by non-authorial figures. This kind of research might be applied not only to medieval manuscripts, but also to modern editions. In some ways, there is an unbroken line of intellectual descent from the non-authorial glosses and chapter titles that appear in manuscripts of Lydgate's works, to the paraphrasing side-texts in modern editions, like Bergen's edition of the *Fall of Princes* or MacCracken's edition of the *Minor Poems*.<sup>29</sup>

I have come to wonder why authorship is sometimes valued as the primary interpretative vehicle for literary study. A privileging of the work of non-authorial figures might be equally fruitful and I would argue that this would be especially profitable in the production of editions of Middle English texts. Given that so many texts of this period come down to us in forms best described as scribal approximations, perhaps we should be producing editions which witness scribal, not authorial intent? The manuscripts produced by John Shirley, with their chatty rubrics and thought-provoking juxtapositions of texts might make valuable editions.

I would argue that now is a vital time to reconsider questions of authorship and the role of non-authorial figures in the creation of the textual artefact. The digital age is presenting us with a host of new ways of thinking about these concepts. A Wikipedia page – open-sourced, unauthored and vested with a sometimes dubious authority – bears a certain likeness to a medieval manuscript.

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<sup>28</sup> Jane Griffiths, *Diverting Authorities: Experimental Glossing Practices in Manuscript and Print* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>29</sup> *Lydgate's Fall of Princes I-IV*, ed. by Henry Bergen, EETS, E.S. 121–24 (London: Humphrey Milford for EETS, 1924–27); *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. by Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS, E.S. 107, 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1911).

Michael Foucault, in his famous definition of the ‘author-function’ noted that an author is simply a body of work with a definable set of attributes, ‘when we say “Aristotle” we are using a series of definite descriptions of the type (...) the proper name and the name of the author oscillate between poles of description and designation’.<sup>30</sup> Foucault’s point is about the way these attributes are shaped by other figures. In the case of Lydgate, and the *Life*, those other figures are scribes, compilers, rubricators, illustrators, readers and – latterly – critics.

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<sup>30</sup> Michael Foucault, ‘What is an Author?’, in *Textual Strategies*, ed. by Harari, p. 146.

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## APPENDIX 1

### THE TYPE A APPARATUS CHAPTER HEADINGS AND THE THREE VARIANTS

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The following table compares the Type A chapter headings with the three variant chapter schemes; it is intended to illustrate the different foci of each scheme of headings. This table relates to the discussion in Chapter Two and Three. HEH MS HM 115 and BL Add. MS 19252 are discussed, at length, in Chapter Three, while Chapter Two contains a general discussion about the types of apparatus in all the manuscripts of the *Life*. Of the schemes outlined below, only the Type A scheme, with eighty-seven chapters, appears more than once. That scheme appears in eighteen manuscripts. Given the similarity of the Type A and Type A(ii) scheme, I decided not to include the Type A(ii) scheme, as there is a difference of only one chapter.

The chapter headings from Durham MS Cosin V. ii. 16, which contains the Type A apparatus, are printed in the *Critical Edition*. However, Durham MS Cosin V. ii. 16 is the only manuscript in its group, Group *b*, to contain the Type A apparatus and is something of an anomaly. Therefore, I have chosen TCC MS R.3.22 as the representative manuscript for the Type A headings because it is a ‘metropolitan group’ manuscript and belongs to Group *c*. This is a somewhat arbitrary choice. Manuscripts with the Type A apparatus are very similar to each other and are largely all produced in the mid fifteenth century, in London.

Group <i>c</i>		Group <i>b</i>	
TYPE A			
Eighty-seven chapters	Seventy chapters	Thirty-six chapters	Fifty-eight chapters
TCC MS R.3.22	C.U.L MS Mm 6.5 <sup>1</sup>	HEH MS HM 115	BL Add. MS 19252
This booke was compilid bi Iohn Lidgate Monke of Bury at the excitacion & sterynge of oure worshipful prince kyng herry þe fifte in the honour glorie and worship of the byrthe of the moste glorious maide wife and modir of our lord Ihesus crist Chapterede and markyde aftir this table.	Tabula capitulorum libri precedendum	These bene þe notable matiers þat bene contynede in thys booke	Here bigynneth a table compendiously reheresyngh the notable matiers written in this booke suyng after this nouembrarie
i Ffirste a proloog	1 First þis is a prologue	Prologue [unmarked]	i first thee prolog of þe birth of our lady
ii	2	primo	ii

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<sup>1</sup> The manuscript does not have chapter headings in the body of the text. The titles here refer to those found in the table at the end of the manuscript, ff. 142v–45r.

The Nativite of oure lady	the nativite of our lady	The natiuite of oure lady	Howe þe aungell apperid to Joachim at þe ȝate of gold
<b>iii</b> Howe owre lady was offrid into þe Temple	<b>3</b> how our lady was offeride in þe temple	<b>secundo</b> How oure lady was offered in to þe temple	<b>iii</b> How are lady was offrid in to temple: at thre yere/ Of þe conuersacion /and commendacion of our lady : abiding in the temple
<b>iv</b> Of the conuersacion of oure lady in þe temple	<b>4</b> of þe conersacion of our lady in þe temple	<b>iii</b> of þe conersacion of oure lady	<b>iv</b> Howe our lady was replenischid: wiþ þe seuen yiftes of the holy gost
<b>v</b> howe our lady resseyuede þe vii gifteȝ of þe holy gast	<b>5</b> how oure lady receyuede þe vii ȝiftes of þe holy goste	<b>iv</b> How oure lady reseyuede vii ȝiftes of þe holy Gooste	<b>v</b> Howe our lady was replenissnid / wt seuen principall vertues
<b>v</b> howe oure lady prayede to god for vii petycions	<b>6</b> how our lady preied to gode for vii peticions	<b>v</b> how oure lady axede of gode for vii peticions	<b>vi</b> Of þe seuen peticions of our lady
<b>vi</b> how abiathar þat was bishoppe of the lawe þe ȝeere that oure lady was weddid to Joseph wold han hadde oure lady weddede to his sonne	<b>7</b> how abiathar þat was bischop of þe law þe ȝer þat our lady was weddie to Ioseph wolde had our lady weddie to hi sonne	<b>vi</b> How þe Bischope whose name was Abiathar wolde haue had oure lady wedded to hys sonne	<b>vii</b> Howe a bisschop named abiathar wolde haue had our lady weddid to his son
<b>vii</b> howe our lady answerid þe bisheppes that she wolde nat be weddede	<b>8</b> how our lady answeryd to þe bischope þat come fro abiathar		<b>viii</b> Howe our lady ansuerid to þe bisschoppis and comendid did more Chastite þan wedlock
<b>viii</b> how Ioseph was weddid to oure lady	<b>9</b> how Joseph was weddie unto our lady	<b>vii</b> How Joseph wedded oure lady	<b>ix</b> How þe bisschoppes made a convocation to haue our lady weddid/ for sche nolde obeie hir councell

<b>ix</b> Howe Iosephe aftir he had weddid oure lady went to Bedleme and usid þe crafte of Carpentre	<b>10</b> how Ioseph after he had weddide our lady went to bedlam and uside þe uside þe crafte of carpentrye		<b>x</b> Howe Joseph wedded our lady by ordinaunce and signe of the holy goste
<b>x</b> How oure lady is sett for an ensamplere off alle virginyte	<b>11</b> how our ladi ys sett for a ensampl of virginite	<b>viii</b> How oure lady may sche be set for an Ensaumple of all virgyninte/and worthy ys þat	<b>xi</b> How þe bisshoppes assigned our lady fyue maidens to be attendant vp on hir
<b>No Book division</b>	<b>No Book division</b>	<b>No Book division</b>	<b>xii</b> A commedndacio n of þe religious lyvyng of our lady
<b>xi</b> Howe mercy pees rightwisnesse and trouthe disputiden for þe Redempcion of mankynde	<b>12</b> how mercy & pees riȝtwisnes & trouþe disputide for redempcion of mankynde	<b>ix</b> Howe þe counsel of the Trinitate þat ys to seye mercy pees Ryhtwysnesse and Trouthe dipsutyden for þe redemption of mankynde	<b>Decorated Border</b> <b>xiii</b> Howe mercy and pees disputeden for þe redempcion of man ayenst rightwisnesse and trouthe
<b>xii</b> Howe mercy and pees brouȝten þis ple before the hiȝ luge	<b>13</b> how mercy & pees brouȝt þis ple to for þhiȝe juge		<b>xiiii</b> Howe the fadre of heuen answerid to this foure sistren /and full benignely accordid hem
<b>xiii</b> howe god the fadre of heven answerid to mercy and pees	<b>14</b> how god þe fadir of heuen answeride to mercy & pees	<b>x</b> howe god þe ffadir omnipotent of þe plente of hys bounteous goodnesse accordyd þyse foure sistren Ca decimus	
<b>xiv</b> Howe the fader of heuene ooned þise iiiij sustryns	<b>14</b> how þe fader of heuen oued þe four susteris		
<b>xv</b> Howe the fadir of heuene telde þise iiiij sustren howe his sone schulde take mankynde	<b>14</b> how his son scholde take mankind	<b>xi</b> Howe criste toke mankynde by vertu of þe worde of god þe ffader	
<b>xvi</b>	<b>15</b>		<b>xv</b>

How Gabriell þe aungel was sente to oure lady	how Gabriel þe angel was sent to our ladye		Howe Gabriel grett our lady
<b>xvii</b> A lamentacion of Seint Bernard	<b>16</b> A lamentacion of seynt bernarde	<b>xii</b> A lamentation of Seynt Bernard	<b>xvi</b> A meditacion of saint Bernard
<b>xviii</b> A recapitulacion of the wordes of Gabriel to oure lady	<b>17</b> A recapitulacion of þe wordis of gabriel to our ladye in comedacion of her	<b>xiii</b> Howe Gabriel was sente to oure lady	<b>xvii</b> A recapitulacion of þe words of Gabriel to our lady
			<b>xviii</b> A commendacioun of þe vertuous lownesse & mekenesse of our lady [begins l. 498]
<b>xix</b> Howe holy men by dvyne liknessis wrot of oure lady in commendacion of hir		<b>xiii</b> How holy men by divine lyknesse wrott of oure lady in commendacion of hire	
<b>xx</b> Autike conclusiouns aȝens unibilefull men þat seyen þat Criste myȝte not be borne of a maide	<b>18 19}</b> Autentike conclusions aȝente unbeliefull men þat seyn þat criste myȝt not be bor of a maide	<b>xv</b> Autentike conclusiouns aȝent vnbylefull men þat seyne þat Criste myȝt not be born of a mayde	<b>xix</b> A rehersayle of stronge auctoritees grounded vpon stronge reson/ to reforme hir wittes that bileuen not þat crist was bore of a maide
<b>xxi</b> howe our lady wente to Saint Baptist modir	<b>20</b> how our lady went to John baptistis modir	<b>xvi</b> how oure lady aftir þe concepcion of Crist wente to Seynt John baptist moder <sup>2</sup>	<b>xx</b> Howe oure lady went to Elizabeth the modre of saint John Baptist
<b>xxii</b> howe our lady made <b>magnificat</b>	<b>21</b> how our ladi made Magnificat	<b>xvii</b> how oure lady made magnificat	<b>xxi</b> Howe and where our lady made <b>Magnificat</b>
<b>xxiii</b> howe our lady aftir þe birthe of Seint Iohn Baptiste returnede to Naȝareth	<b>22</b> how our lady after þe birthe of John baptiste retornyde to naȝareth	<b>xviii</b> how our lady after þe berthe of Joon Baptiste returned to naȝareth	
<b>xxiv</b> howe Ioseph returned to Naȝareth and was in maner doutefull whanne he seye marie greefe with childe	<b>22</b> how Ioseph returnde to naȝareþ and was in maner douȝtful when he sey mary gret w <sup>th</sup> childe	<b>xix</b> Howe Joseph returned from Galilee to Nazareth where <sup>3</sup> oure lady was & whenne he saye hyr gret he merveyled how & in what kynde <sup>4</sup>	<b>xxii</b> Of þe sorwe þat Joseph made whan he fonde our lady wiþ child
<b>xxv</b> howe þe maidens þat wheren attendaunt to our lady comfortiden Ioseph	<b>23</b> how þe maidens attendant to our lady comfortid Ioseph	<b>xx</b> How þe maydens that wheren attendaunt to oure lady comforteden	<b>xxiii</b> How the maidens þ <sup>t</sup> wheren wiþ our lady con

<sup>2</sup> Variant heading in the body of the text reads, 'how our lady after þe birthe of John baptiste retornyde to naȝareth'.

<sup>3</sup> Variant heading in the body of the text reads, 'where fore'.

<sup>4</sup> Variant heading in the body of the text reads, 'she was so gret wyth chylde'.

			Iosephe of hys doutfulnesse	tynuelly counsaulit comforted Joseph <sup>5</sup>
<b>xxvi</b> howe þe aungel warned Ioseph to abide with oure lady	<b>24</b> how þe angel warnede Ioseph to a bide w <sup>th</sup> our lady		<b>xxi</b> howe joseph wolde haue forsaken oure lady <sup>6</sup> bot god sente an angel to hym and bade hym a byde	<b>xxiiii</b> Howe þe angell warned Joseph þ <sup>t</sup> he shold not leue our lady/ þough she were w <sup>t</sup> childe
<b>xxvii</b> howe þe Bisshoppe made sompne Ioseph for our lady was with Childe	<b>25</b> how the bischop dide do somny Ioseph for our lady was w <sup>t</sup> childe		<b>xxii</b> how þe bischoppis dydden sommen oure lady and Joseph for sche was wyth chylde [one stanza later]	<b>xxv</b> howe þe bisschoppis didden in sommen Joseph for our lady was with childe
<b>xxviii</b> howe Ioseph answerde þe Bisshopes excusyng hym & oure lady	<b>25</b> how Ioseph ansewerd the Bisshopes excusyng hym and oure lady			
<b>xxix</b> howe þe Bisshopes made Ioseph & our lady to taaste a watir to preve hem by	<b>26</b> how the Bischopes made Ioseph and our ladi to taste þe water to preve hem by		<b>xxiii</b> Howe þe bischoppis tastden oure lady to preue hir clennesse and purid virginite	<b>xxvi</b> Howe the bisschoppis maden Joseph and marie to drinke of a water   to preue hir virginite
<b>xxx</b> howe our lady was brouȝt furthe affore the Bisshoppes to tast the water of Ielosye	<b>27</b> how our lady was brouȝt a for the bischopes to taste the water of Ielosye			
<b>xxxi</b> howe our ladies frendis waileden & morneden whan the Bisshopes maden so strong a preef of hir virginite	<b>28</b> how our ladies frendis waylide and mornyde when þe bischope made so stronge a preef of her virginite			
<b>xxxii</b> howe our lady preied to god to shewe hir virginite	<b>29</b> how our lady preiede to gode to schewe her virginite			<b>xxvii</b> A deuoute preier þat our lady seid to god whan she sholde taste þe water
<b>xxxix</b> <sup>7</sup> howe the Bisshopis & þe peple dredden hem ful sore of the grete preef and assay þat was done to oure lady	<b>29</b> how þe bischope and pepule dradded sore of þe preef þat was do to our lady			
<b>xxxiiii</b> A commendacion of Chaucers	<b>30</b> A commendacioun of chauceris	Omits, but 'chauceris' in the margin	'commendacion of chauceris' in the margin	
<b>No demarcation</b>	<b>No demarcation</b>	[Full page decorated border] 'incipit lib tercius'	<b>Removed leaves, suggesting decorated border</b>	<b>xxviii</b>
<b>xxxv</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>xxiiii</b>		

<sup>5</sup> Variant heading in the body of the text reads, 'of his douȝtfulnessse'.

<sup>6</sup> Variant heading in the body of the text reads, 'and þe angel had hym a byde'.

<sup>7</sup> Mis-numbered as 'xxxix' in the table of contents.

Howe criste was born aftir þe makynge of the worlde v mli C	how criste was bore after þe making of þe worlde a vi m C lxxxx I x ȝere	howe where and whenne criste was borne	Howe and where   crist was borne
<b>xxxvi</b> howe Ioseph and oure lady went to Bedleme to paie her tribute	<b>31</b> how Ioseph & our lady went to Bedlem to pay her tribute		
<b>xxxvii</b> howe Iosephe went to seche mydwives to oure lady	<b>31</b> how Iosephe went to seche mydwyues to our lady	<b>xxv</b> howe joseph brouȝte þe mydeswyves to þe dore wher þat criste was borne and þey durst not entre for a gret light þat schone wyth ynne	
<b>xxxviii</b> A deuoute praiere þat oure lady made whanne Criste was borne	<b>32</b> A deuote preier that our lady made when criste was bore		
<b>xxxix</b> howe þe mydwyfeȝ durst not entre in with Ioseph into the house for the grete soden light that apperyde within	<b>32</b> how the midwyfis durst not entre wiþ Iosephe into þe house for the grete soden liȝt that apperyde wiþin		
<b>xxxx</b> Howe Balam prophesied of the sterre þat shewid Cristes birthe	<b>33</b> how Balahmus profeciede of þe sterre þat schewide cristis birþe		
<b>xli</b> How our lady resceived the midwives	<b>34</b> how our lady receyuede þe midwifis		<b>xxix</b> The names of the midwives al thowe þey were not at cristes birth
<b>xlii</b> Howe the hande & arme of Salame wexe drie for sche wȝ oute drede & reuerence touchid crist	<b>35</b> how þe honde & þe arme of Salome wexide dry for sche wiþout drede & reuerence touchide criste		
<b>xliii</b> Howe þe aungel apperid to the schepperdis and tolden the birthe of Criste	<b>36</b> how þe angele apperide to þe scheperdis & tolde þe berþe of criste		<b>xxx</b> Howe the aungell tolde þe birth of crist to þe shepherdes wechynge hir shepe
<b>xliij</b> Howe þe schephirdis fondyn criste with our lady	<b>37</b> how the scheperdis fonde criste wiþ our ladye		
<b>xlv</b> Howe god wolde not be bourne but of a maide moder & wif	<b>38</b> how god wolde not be bore but of a maide moder and wif		
<b>xlvii</b>			<b>xxxii</b> Howe prophetes propheciden the birth of Crist New chapter, beginning 1.575
	<b>39</b>		

how Isaak prophiced þe birthe of criste by towchynge of the clothes of his sone	how Isaak propheciede þe biþ of criste bi touchinge of þe cloþis of his sone		
<b>xlvii</b> how the Garnet appill is likened to oure lady	<b>40</b> howe þe garnat appli is liknede to our lady		
<b>xlviii</b> how Ioseph <i>prefigurid</i> þe birthe of Criste	<b>41</b> how Ioseph figurid þe birþ of criste		
<b>xlix</b> how nature obeied to virginitie	<b>42</b> how nature obeide to virgynyte		
<b>1</b> howe the chef templi of Rome fel þe nyȝte of cristis birth & othir wondirfull tokenys	<b>43</b> how the chefe temple in Rome fel doune þe nyȝt of cristis birþ & oþ <sup>ir</sup> tokenys		<b>xxxii</b> Howe þe chief temple of Rome fell þe nyȝt of cristes birth
<b>li</b> How þe nyȝte of cristes birthe a welle in Rome ran oyle	<b>44</b> how þe nyȝt of cristis birþe a welle in Rome b ranne but oyle		<b>xxxiii</b> Howe the chief well in Rome ran oyle þe nyȝt of Cristes birth
			<b>xxxiv</b> How iii sonnes were seen þe day of cristes birth [begins l.1156]
<b>lii</b> howe the Senatis of Rome wolde haue holden Octauyan her emperour as for her god	<b>45</b> how Senatis of Rome wolde a haue Octouian þe Emperour as for her gode		<b>xxxv</b> Howe the worthy citizenis of Rome wolde haue deified hir Emperour
<b>liii</b> howe wines schedde bawme in stede of wyne the nyȝt of cristis burthe	<b>45</b> how vynes schede bawme in-stede of wyne þe nyȝt of cristis birþe		<b>xxxvi</b> How vines bare Bawme in stede of grapes
<b>liiii</b> howe the Romaynes whanne þay hadden domynacion ouer alle the worlde maden to hem an ymage and callud it here goddesse	<b>46</b> how þe Romayns when þei hade dominacion in al þe worlde made to hem a Image & callit it her goddess		<b>xxxvii</b> how an ymage was made of brasse and cleped goddesse of Rome/ fel and brest þe nyȝt of cristes birth
<b>lv</b> howe wise Sibille tolde to the Senatis of Rome the birthe of criste	<b>46</b> how wise Sibile tolde to þe senatis of Rome of þe birþe of Jhesu criste		<b>xxxviii</b> how Sibille prophecied þe birth of crist
			<b>xxxix</b> how proba þat was wif of adelphus wrote of þe birþe of crist
<b>lvii</b> howe the prophetis prophecied þe birthe of criste	<b>47</b> how prophetis propheciede þe birþ of criste	<b>xxvi</b> Howe þe holy prophytis prophecyeden a for þe incarnacion the holy and blessed birth of Crist	
<b>lvii</b>	<b>48</b>		

A question assoyled which is worthyest, of kyng wyne or woman Esdre orta questio <b>lviii</b> howe oure lady ouȝte worthili to be comendid and worshiped for þe birthe of criste	A question assoilide whiche is wurþieste of kynge. wyne or woman <b>48</b> how our lady auȝt wureþly to be commendyd & wurshippide for þe birþe of criste		
			<b>xl</b> A commendacion of þe joie þat our lady had whan crist was borne [begins l.1639]
			<b>xli</b> how þe reynyng of manna figured þe birth of crist [begins l.1723]
<b>lix</b> Off likenessis of oure lady in commendacion of hir	<b>49</b> A liknes of our ladi in comendyng of her		
<b>No demarcation</b> <b>lx</b> Howe crist was circumcisid	<b>No demarcation</b> <b>50</b> how criste was I circumciside	<b>No demarcation</b> <b>xxvii</b> The circumcision of criste	<b>Missing leaves</b> <b>xlii</b> How crist was circumcised þe viii day afte his Natiuite
<b>lxii</b> How in Fowre maner of wisis crist was circumciced	<b>51</b> how criste sufferide circumcision in his chosin peple		<b>xliii</b> how fals men circumcised in trewe lyuyng men
<b>lxiii</b> How crist schedde his blode five tymes	<b>52</b> how criste schade his blode v tymes		<b>xliii</b> Howe crist in his manhode shed his blode fyue tymes
			<b>xlv</b> Howe þe pece of incision of crist was brouȝt to Charles by an angell [begins l. 120]
<b>lxiv</b> how the peple of god þat duke Iosue hadde in gouernaunce weron savyd by þe stedfast bileue of þe name of Ihesus	<b>53</b> how þe peple of god þat duke josue lade in gouernaunce wer sauð bi þe stedfast bileue of þis name jhesu	<b>xxviii</b> a commendacion of þe worthy name of Jhesus	<b>lxvi</b> A commendacion of þe name of Jhesu
<b>lxv</b> how the name of Ihesus is moste souerayne medycyne aȝens all manere of maladye	<b>53</b> how þis name Jhesu is moste suffereyne medycyne aȝenste al manere of maladies		
<b>xlvi</b>	<b>53</b>		

	howe the name of Ihesus is likenyd to iiij stremys that refressheth all reelmys	how þe name of Jhu is likened to þe iiiij stremys þt refreschib al remysse	
<b>xlvi</b>	<b>54</b> how martiris & prophetis sufferide deþ for þe name of Jhu		
Misplaced below, lxxv	<b>55</b> how prophetis kyngis and kyngis [sic] & myȝti men wer a oyntide		
			<b>xlvi</b> Hou four manner of men weren some tyme anȝnoynted for her worthinesse
<b>xlix</b>	<b>56</b> how ihu criste was boþ prophete preste kyng and myȝthi champiou		
<b>lxv</b>	<b>57</b> how bi þis name JHU synners beþ made riȝtfulle		
<b>No demarcation</b>	<b>No demarcation</b>	<b>No demarcation</b>	<b>Leaves missing</b>
<b>lxxi</b>	<b>58</b> how bi þe propheci of balahum wache was made on a hille to a spie þe sterre þat betoknede þe birþe of criste	<b>xxix</b> Howe the thre kyngys offriden to Criste	
<b>lxxii</b>			<b>xlix</b> Hou heroude was ameyued and desturbed whan the iii kynges enquereden where crist was borne þat was kyng of Jewis
<b>lxxiii</b>	<b>59</b> how þe þre kyngis come to Jerusalem & axide wher criste was bore		
<b>lxxiiii</b> howe kyng heroud sente for the thre kyngis to enquire off cristis Birthe	<b>61</b> [sic] kyng heroude sent forþ þe iii kyngis to enquire of cristis birthe		
<b>lxxv</b>	<b>61</b> As a serpent courereth him under floris to stinge and schede his venyme when he may hurt. So false heroude shewide fals fenynede wordis to haue deceyuede þe þre kyngis.		

How prophetis & martirs suredon deth for the name off Ihesus			
<b>lxxvi</b> Of the Joie þat bees kyngis hadde whanne they fondn criste	<b>62</b> of þe joy þat þes kyngis hade when þei fonde criste		<b>I</b> Of þe joie þat the iij kynges hadden whan þey comen to Cristes presence <sup>8</sup>
<b>lxxvii</b> howe the offeryng these þre kyngis schal ben vndirstondon goostly	<b>62</b> how þe offering of þes þre kyngis schal be undirstonde gostely	<b>xxx</b> Howee kyngis offering schal be undirstonden goostley to þe edificaion of simple soules ca	<b>li</b> A declaracion of the offryng of þe iij kynges what it signified
<b>lxxviii</b> Of vertuose pouerte & mekenesse of owre lady	<b>63</b> of þe vertuose pouert and mekenes of our lady	<b>xxxii</b> howe our lady was virtuous pouere and of þe commendacioun þer of	<b>liij</b> Of the virtuous pouert & lowly mekenesse of our lady sittyn a fore þe þre kyngis
<b>lxxix</b> howe the aungell warned the thre kyngis to passe nouȝt by heroude but by another wey	<b>65</b> how þe aungell warned þe þre kyngis to passe not bi heroude but bi anoþer wey	<b>xxxii</b> Howe the angell warnet þe thre kyngis to passe not by herowde/ but by a nother wey	<b>liij</b> Howe the aungell warned þe iij kyngis to passe not bi heroude/ but bi an oper wey
			<b>liij</b> A commendacioun of þe feste of the Epiphanie
<b>lxxx</b> A notabil declaracion of these thre ȝiftis of these thre kyngis	<b>65</b> a Notable declaracion of þes þre ȝiftis of þes þre kyngis		
<b>lxxxi</b> Howe we shullon pray to god to do this offeryng goostly.	<b>65</b> how we scholde prei to gode to do þis offering gostly & wþreþely		
	<b>65</b> how þe iii kyngis perseyuede þe sterre þat schewide cristis birthe		
<b>No demarcation</b>	<b>No demarcation</b>	<b>No demarcation</b>	<b>Decorated border</b>
<b>lxxxii</b> howe owre lady was purifieide.	<b>66</b> how our ladi was purifieide	<b>xxxiii</b> of þe Purificacion of oure lady	<b>lv</b> Hou our lady come to þe temple to be purified [later hand in text: cap 45]
<b>lxxxiii</b> how Symeon resceyved criste of oure lady in the temple	<b>66</b> how symeon receyuede criste of our lady in þe temple		
<b>lxxxiiii</b> howe where & whan Symeon made [missing: Nunc Dimittis]	<b>67</b> how wher & whan Symeon made nunc dimittis	<b>xxxiiii</b> how and whenne symeon made Nunc Dimittis	<b>lvi</b> How and whan Symeon made <b>nunc dimittis</b>

<sup>8</sup> Variant heading in the body of the text reads, 'Of þe joie þat þe iij kynges had whan þey founden crist'.

<b>lxxxv</b> Of the Joie þat Anna þe douȝter of phanel whanne crist was offrid in to þe teple	<b>68</b> of þe joy þat Anna hade þe douȝter of Phanel when crist was offerid in þe temple		
<b>lxxxvi</b> A profitable declaracion of þe propurteis off the Turtıl & the dowve	<b>69</b> A profitable declaracion of þe propheteis of þe turtıl & of þe doue	<b>xxxv</b> Of two propertees þat longen to offeryng	<b>lvii</b> how euery man ouȝt to take ensample of þe turtıl & þe doue whan he wolde make his offring
<b>lxxxvii</b> how Candilmasse day firste toke the name	<b>70</b> how Candelmasse day toke firste þe name	<b>xxxvi</b> Howe and be whom Candilmasse day was ordeyned	<b>lviii</b> Howe candilmasse day was translated from an hethen riȝt [...] (erasure) <sup>9</sup>
Amen	Amen	Modern leaves, with modern imitation hand.	
Pees maketh plente	Explicit vita beate Marie virginis et matris dei		

<sup>9</sup> Variant heading in the body of the text reads, ‘Howe candilmasse day was first foundid’.

## APPENDIX 2

### The Manuscripts of the *Life of Our Lady*

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#### 1) Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS 21242C, ff. 1–102

**Description:** A mid-fifteenth-century, vellum manuscript of 102 folios, containing the *Life* only. The manuscript measures 250mm by 170 mm. The binding is much damaged and all that remains is the final wooden board with a small scrap of calfskin and the remainder of the stitching along the spine. The text is written in a single *anglicana* hand, in a single column, with twenty-eight lines to a page. There are roughly four stanzas per page, but the text is not divided into spaced stanzas. The written area measures 90mm by 150 mm. Secundo folio reads: 'o thoughtfull herte'. There are no braces, but there are paraph marks.

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup> (wants 1, 3, 6, 7), 2<sup>8</sup>, 3<sup>8</sup>, 4<sup>8</sup> (wants 6, 7, 8), 5<sup>8</sup>–13<sup>8</sup>, 14<sup>8</sup> (wants 6, 7, 8, probably blank). Catchwords throughout.

**Decoration:** On f. 2 is a ten-line historiated initial O (birth of the Virgin, the picture somewhat rubbed) with a full-page frame and border of foliage, flowers and sprays (gold, mauve, blue, white, green, orange), reproduced in the Christie's catalogue (see below). Blue initials for chapters, with red penwork, mostly two-line, a few three- or four-line. Alternating red and blue paraphs marks with contrasting penwork at the opening of each stanza, but this ceases after twenty folios. Chapter numbers are written in red at the head of each page, with blue paraph mark and red penwork. Authorities and marginal glosses in red with blue paraph marks.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text of the *Life* is divided into eighty-seven chapters, according to the Type A scheme. It contains part of the table of contents (the initial folio is missing). The manuscript almost certainly once contained the introductory rubric. There are no book divisions, but some divisions have enlarged initials. The start of Book II has an enlarged four-line initial (f. 16r), Book III, a three-line initial (f. 42v), Book IV a three-line initial (f. 74v), Book V a four-line initial (f. 82r), Book VI a four-line initial (f. 94v). The poem is followed by *NIMEV* 2742, *Pees Maketh Plente*. (This particular witness of *Pees Maketh Plente* is not recorded in the *NIMEV*.)

**Provenance:** Appears to have been in Wales by the sixteenth century, as several Welsh names are inscribed throughout in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century hands. There is a line from Cato's *Distichs* on f. 98, 'Cum [te] aliquis te laudat, iudex tuus esse memento'. Opposite the Chaucer commendation (Book II, ll. 1628–34), on f. 41v 'Robert Humpherey is my nam and with my penn I wrot þe sam' appears (f. 42r). The manuscript is *olim* Mostyn Hall MS 85. It appeared as lot 1480 in the Mostyn sale at Christie's 24<sup>th</sup> October 1974 where it was bought for the National Library of Wales. It previously appeared as lot 75 in the Mostyn Sale at Sotheby's 13<sup>th</sup> July 1920. It evidently did not sell in 1920 and was returned to the consigners.

**Scholarship:** The manuscript was unknown to Lauritis et al. It belongs to *c*-Group, the *d*-subset on account of a transposed stanza on f. 53v, where Book II, ll. 666–672 appears in place of 610–16. For a description of the manuscript see Christie's catalogue noted above. See also Kathleen Scott, 'Caveat Lector: Ownership and Standardization in the Illustration of Fifteenth-Century English Manuscripts', in *English Manuscript Studies*, 1 (1989), 19–63 (pp. 23–7) and the online catalogue of the National Library of Wales: <http://cat.llgc.org.uk/>.

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## 2) Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 230/116, ff. 54–55v

**Description:** A small, vellum manuscript of the early fifteenth century, comprised of 164 folios, containing the *Magnificat* only. Written in a single, formal secretary hand with some *anglicana* features, measuring 100 mm by 135 mm. Bound in its original binding. The text is written in a single column, with twenty-three lines to a page, comprising around two and a half stanzas to a page. The written space measures 90 mm by 70 mm. There are no braces. The secundo folio reads: facem nec habebit.

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup>, 2<sup>10</sup>, (7 canc.) 3<sup>8</sup>, 4<sup>8</sup>, (7 canc.) 5<sup>8</sup>, 6<sup>10</sup>, 7<sup>8</sup>, 8<sup>8</sup> (8 canc.), 9<sup>8</sup>, 10<sup>8</sup>, 11<sup>8</sup> (wants 1–4) 12<sup>8</sup> (2 quires missing?) 13<sup>8</sup> (6 canc.) 14<sup>8</sup>–21<sup>8</sup>

**Decoration:** Alternating paraphs in blue and red, red touching on some of the first letters of each line. The initial of the *incipit* is written with elaborate strap-work. The initial of the poem is written in blue ink.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** Only the *Magnificat* appears in this manuscript. It is, apart from a few recipes, the only vernacular text in the manuscript. ‘Magnificat etc’ appears at the top of f.113r. The poem concludes, ‘And of alle his werkis/ to be souereyne. j. lytgate.’ (f.115v). The other items in the manuscript are Latin, scholastic texts, including extracts from the *Granarium* of John Whethamstede.

**Provenance:** Appears to have been made at St. Albans Abbey, and is associated with John Whethamstede (see Montague Rhodes James catalogue cited below). Given to Gonville and Caius by William Moore (bap. 1590, d. 1659), librarian and collector.

**Scholarship:** Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907–08), I, pp. 268–76. See also George Keiser, ‘John Lydgate’s Magnificat: Magnifying Scribal Difficulties’, in *Tributes to Kathleen L. Scott: English Medieval Manuscripts: Readers, Makers and Illuminators*, ed. Marlene Villalobos Hennessy (London: Harvey Miller, 2009), pp. 115–23 (p. 118). On Moore, see R. Julian Roberts, ‘Moore, William (bap. 1590, d. 1659)’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., Jan 2008  
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19152>, accessed 12 Dec 2015]

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## 3) Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.19, f. 25

**Description:** A paper manuscript of the late fifteenth-century (probably after 1463 when George Ashby’s poem [ff. 41r–45v] is said to have been written). Comprised of 255 folios, measuring 270 mm by 203 mm, bound in eighteenth-century, red, morocco over boards. The text is written in a secretary hand with roughly forty-two lines per page, sometimes in a single column and sometimes in a double column. The number of lines per page varies, although on the folio immediately preceding the *Life* stanza, there are forty-two lines. The written area measures 200 mm by 90 mm. The secundo folio reads: ‘beauteuous branche flour’. As well as the *Life*, the manuscript contains an extensive collection of Chaucerian, pseudo-Chaucerian and Lydgatean verse. The *Monk’s Tale* appears to have been copied from Caxton’s second edition of the *Canterbury Tales* (STC 5083).

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup> (foliated 1–8), 2<sup>8</sup> (foliated 32–39), 3<sup>8</sup> (foliated 1–9), 4<sup>8</sup>, 5<sup>8</sup>, 6<sup>8</sup> (wants 8, foliated 1–23), 7<sup>6</sup> ( foliated 1–6) 8<sup>12</sup> (foliated 1–12) 9<sup>8</sup> (6 canc.) 13<sup>8</sup> (foliated 1–31), 14<sup>8</sup>, 15<sup>8</sup> (foliated 1–16), 16<sup>8</sup>–20<sup>8</sup> (foliated 1–40), 21<sup>8</sup>, 22<sup>8</sup> (foliated 9–23 wrongly numbered: follows quire 1), 23<sup>10</sup>, 24<sup>10</sup> (1 canc.) 25<sup>8</sup>, 26<sup>8</sup> (foliated 1–35), 27<sup>8</sup>, 28<sup>6</sup> (wants 4 blank) (foliated 1–14), 29<sup>8</sup>–31<sup>8</sup> (1 canc.: foliated 1–23), 32<sup>8</sup> (7 canc., foliated 1–7), 33<sup>8</sup> (foliated 2–9).

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** Manuscript contains only a single stanza of the *Life*: the Chaucer eulogy from Book II, ll. 1628–34. It appears tacked onto the end of the text of the *Parliament of Fowls*, under the words ‘verba translatoris’, in red ink. On this, see Chapter Four and the notes to BL Harley MS 7333, below.

**Decoration:** The decoration in the manuscript is spare, largely restricted to the use of red ink braces.

**Provenance:** Owned by John Stow, who used it as a copy text for his edition of Chaucer’s *Woores* (STC 5076), see Chapter Four.

**Scholarship:** Montague Rhodes James, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge: A Descriptive Catalogue* 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901), II, pp. 69–74. A full digital facsimile of this manuscript is available online at <http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/browse.php>. There is also a printed facsimile: *Trinity College MS R.3.19: A Facsimile*, ed. by Bradford Y. Fletcher (Norman, Oklahoma: Pilgrim Books, 1987). Linne R. Mooney, ‘Scribes and Booklets of Trinity College, Cambridge, MSS R.3.19 and R.3.21’, in *Middle English Poetry: Texts and Traditions: Essays in Honour of Derek Pearsall*, ed. by Alistair Minnis (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2001), pp. 241–66.

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#### 4) Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.21 (601), ff. 85–156v

**Description:** A paper manuscript of the third quarter of the fifteenth-century, of 320 folios, measuring 276 mm by 200 mm. The manuscript is a Middle English poetic anthology containing mainly verse of a religious nature. Bound in eighteenth-century, red, morocco over boards. The text is written in a secretary hand in a single column. Other items in the manuscript contain coloured paraphs, but the *Life* text does not have them. There are no braces. There are forty-two lines to a page and six stanzas to a page in the section containing the *Life*. The secundo folio reads: ‘here begyn the’. Copied in part by the Hammond Scribe (ff. 34r–49v), although the part containing the *Life* was not copied by him.

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup>–4<sup>8</sup>, 5<sup>18</sup>, 6<sup>8</sup>–8<sup>8</sup>, 9<sup>10</sup>, 18<sup>8</sup>, 19<sup>8</sup>, 2<sup>18</sup> (6–8 blank), 22<sup>8</sup>–25<sup>8</sup>, 26<sup>8</sup> (5–8 blank), 29<sup>16</sup>, 30<sup>8</sup>–35<sup>8</sup>, 36<sup>8</sup> (wants 8, 5–7 blank), 37<sup>8</sup>–45<sup>8</sup>

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The poem is divided into six books by stanza-sized spaces left between the book divisions, although the scribe has only labelled and numbered the divisions of Books III–VI as book divisions. Stow has added a rubric at the start of Book II, ‘howe merci & pees Ryghtwissness & truthe dysputyd for the Redemption of mane kynde’ (a title he likely took from HEH MS HM 144 (see Chapter Four), on f. 95v. The scribe has labelled Book III in red ink in a formal hand on f. 115v, Book IV in black ink on f. 138r, Book V in black ink on f. 143, Book VI in black ink on f. 151v and the *explicit* in black ink on f. 156v. There are no chapter titles or divisions, although there are some enlarged initials in places which sometimes correspond to the eighty-seven chapter scheme. There is a small amount of Latin glossing, corresponding to the Type A apparatus, which appears in a decorative script, in black ink in the margins.

**Decoration:** The text of the *Life* is completely unadorned, apart from one book division title in red ink, noted above. Elsewhere in the manuscript there is decoration, including alternating red and blue paraphs, yellow infilling, flourishing spray-work, decorative strap-work script and red underlinings and braces. Decoration varies greatly depending on the text. Contains eight pen drawings, although none of these appear in the text of the *Life*: f. 1r next to the *Pater Noster* an image of the Agony in the Garden, next to the Ave Maria, an image of the Annunciation, next to the Creed, an image of the Twelve Apostles. On f. 34 next to *Parce Michi* (NIMEV 561, also extant in Bodl. MS Bodley 596, ff. 21–24v) there is an image of a man asleep in woods. On

f. 28r next to the Nine Lessons, there is an image of Christ and Job. On f. 51 there is an image of the Trinity next to *NIMEV* 3406, *The Court of Sapience*. Next to William Lichfield's *Complaint of God* (*NIMEV* 2714) on f. 182r (this text also appears alongside the *Life* in Adv. MS 19.3.1 and CCC MS 237), there is an image of the creation of Eve, while f. 238r contains an image of the *Pieta*.

**Provenance:** Derived from exemplars copied by the scribe John Shirley (b.1366, d.1456). See notes to BL Harley MS 7333 below. The manuscript belonged to John Stow, who inscribed his name on f. 1r and wrote on f. 320v 'John Stowes boke'. 'Tho. Griffith 1650' appears on f. 1v. Also contains the name of London mercer Robert Thorney on f. 245v. See Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson, 'Anthologies and Miscellanies: Production and Choice of Texts', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 279–316 (pp. 288–9).

**Scholarship:** James, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College*, II, pp. 83–95. A full digital facsimile of this manuscript is available online at <http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/browse.php>. On Shirley, see Jeremy Griffiths, 'Shirley, John (c.1366–1456)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25428>, accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2015.

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## 5) Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.22 (602), ff. 1–110

**Description:** An early fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 210 folios containing the *Life* and Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes* (*NIMEV* 2229) ff.111–208, which also appears alongside all or part of the *Life* in CUL MS Kk. 1.3, Antiquaries MS 134 and BL Harley MS 7333. Bound in eighteenth-century, red, morocco over boards, measuring 241 mm by 165 mm. The text is written in a single column, with no braces. There are twenty-eight lines to a page, and four stanzas to a page. It is written in an *anglicana* hand with some secretary features. The secundo folio reads: 'whanne þe Bisshopis'.

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup>–13<sup>8</sup>, 14<sup>6</sup>, 15<sup>8</sup>–26<sup>8</sup>, 27<sup>8</sup> (3, 4, 6, 8 canc.).

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete and preserves the Type A apparatus of no books and eighty-seven chapters. There is the suggestion of a book division system in the shape of enlarged initials for Books II (four-line), III (three-line), IV (three-line) and VI (three-line), ff. 19v, 49v, 81v and 101v. It contains the introductory rubric and table of contents and the Type A scheme of Latin rubrication. The poem is followed by *NIMEV* 2742, *Pees Maketh Plente*.

**Decoration:** Alternating red and blue initial letters. The initials at the start of each chapter appear in two-line coloured initials with alternating red and blue spray-work borders. Certain words in the text are underlined in red. Chapter headings appear in red in the margins. There are running chapter numbers at the top of each page in red with blue parphs. The opening page has a three-line red and blue initial with red and blue spray-work and bar border. The initial of the prologue contains a faded five-line initial containing an image of the birth of the Virgin (on which see Scott, 'Caveat Lector', cited below).

**Provenance:** James, cited below, states that the manuscript was given to the college by Wilmer. The manuscript belonged to John Stow, it contains an inscription reading 'Regimine principum' (f. 111r) in his hand. 'Rogerus' and 'Margareta thom-' both appear on the f.209r–v

**Scholarship:** James, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College*, II, p. 95. Kathleen Scott, 'Caveat Lector: Ownership and Standardization in the Illustration of Fifteenth-Century English Manuscripts'. A full digital facsimile of this manuscript is available online at <http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/browse.php>. The latter part of the manuscript was printed by the Roxburghe Club: *De Regimine Principum a Poem by Thomas Occleve, written in the Reign of Henry IV*, ed. by Thomas Wright (London: Roxburghe Club, 1860).

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## 6) Cambridge, University Library MS Kk.1.3, ff. 2–94

**Description:** A mid-to-late fifteenth-century paper manuscript of 94 folios, containing the *Life* bound with the *Regiment of Princes* (NIMEV 2229), in a contemporary but different hand. Other texts bound into the manuscript are of a later date. The manuscript measures 200mm by 290mm. It is damaged by water on its upper edges and is bound in a modern binding. The text is written in a single column in an *anglicana*-secretary admixture, with no parphs or braces. The secundo folio reads: ?serpentyne?, but this is hard to decipher due to water damage. There are between thirty-three and thirty-five lines to a page and approximately four and a half stanzas to a page. The text is written in a single column and the written space measures 130 mm by 200 mm.

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup> (wants 1), 2<sup>8</sup>–11<sup>8</sup>, 12<sup>8</sup> (wants 8). Final leaf very damaged. Catchwords throughout.

**Decoration:** No decoration. Red ink is used for the chapter titles.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is defective at the start due to accidental loss of leaves. There are forty-one unnumbered chapters. There are no book divisions, although headings appear in some places: f.15 'Here endithe the first book of the Nativite of our lady | And begynethe the second book of the counsel of the Trynyte', which corresponds to the start of Book II. On f.41, 'Here endith the counsel of the Trynyte – And followith þe begynnyng of þe Nativite of Cryste', which corresponds to Book III. The scribe begins the text straight after, then decides to start a new leaf, and adds in red ink: ~~Here begynnyth a book of the Nativite of our Lady~~<sup>2</sup>. There is no demarcation of Book IV, no demarcation of Book V (f.76r) and the start of Book VI (f. 87) has a blue initial.

**Provenance:** Originally bound with seventeenth-century papers concerning the Earl of Essex. Provenance unclear.

**Scholarship:** *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, 5 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1858), III, pp. 554–55

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## 7) Cambridge, University Library MS Mm. 6. 5, ff. 1–142

**Description:** A small, ornate, vellum manuscript of the mid fifteenth-century which feels in some ways like a Book of Hours, containing the *Life* only. It is bound in a seventeenth-century, brown, morocco binding, with a new spine. Comprising 147 folios, it measures 125 mm by 180mm. The text is written in a single, formal *anglicana* hand, in a single column, with twenty-three lines to a page. There are spaces between stanzas, three stanzas per page and no braces. The written space measures 70mm by 120mm. The secundo folio reads: ffor þis is þe sterre þ<sup>t</sup>.

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup>–7<sup>8</sup>, 8–18<sup>10</sup>, 19<sup>4</sup>(wants 4). Manuscript has been rebound. Each quire has a set of guard leaves.

**Decoration:** Alternating coloured blue and red parph marks, red touching on the first letter of every line. Initial letters of each chapter are in gold on a mauve and blue background with foliage sprays and bubbles touched in green, red and blue

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete. There are no book divisions and the text is divided into seventy chapters, although eighty-seven chapter titles are given in a table of contents at the back of the manuscript. The chapters are numbered, but not titled in the body of the text. Contains a variant introductory rubric to the table of contents: ‘*Tabula capitulorum libri praecedant*’ (f. 142v).

**Provenance:** Contains the book plate of Richard Holdsworth D.D, Master of Emmanuel College, 1664

**Scholarship:** *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, IV, p. 383. On the idiosyncratic chapter arrangement, see George Keiser, ‘Serving the Needs of Readers: Textual Division in some Late-Medieval English Texts’, in *New Science Out of Old Books: Studies in Manuscripts and Early Printed Books in Honour of A.I. Doyle*, ed. by Richard Beadle and A.J. Piper (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), pp. 207–226.

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## 8) Champaign-Urbana, University of Illinois MS 85, ff. 2–83v

**Description:** A mid fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 85 folios in a binding of nineteenth-century morocco. The *Life* is the only text in the volume, although ‘Edward Fulford’ has written a previously undocumented witness and a hitherto an unpublished Middle English translation of the twelfth century Latin poem *Ecce Mundus Moritatur*, sometimes integrated into the *Visio Philberti* (which appears in different forms across several manuscript witnesses). The verses are in alternating vernacular rhyme royal stanzas and Latin monorhymed quatrains. Fulford’s hand is later than that of the rest of the manuscript. The manuscript measures 193 mm by 270 mm. The text is written in a single column, which measures 118 mm by 171 mm. There are thirty-five lines to a page and five stanzas to a page. There are no braces and no paraphs. The secundo folio reads: ‘ful prudently awaytynge at the 3ate’.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is defective at the start and begins at l. 356. The manuscript contains part of the table of contents (missing the opening leaf), and the Type A textual apparatus of eighty-seven chapters and no book divisions. Not all the chapters are numbered.

**Collation:** ii + 1<sup>8</sup> (wants 1, 3, 4) 2<sup>8</sup>–10<sup>8</sup>, 11–12<sup>4</sup>

**Decoration:** There is some decoration. The initial letters of new chapters appear in gold, red and blue. Marginal rubrication has coloured paragraph marks. Decorative catch words. There are paragraph marks for marginal rubrication and chapter titles, in gold, red and blue.

**Provenance:** *olim* Mostyn Hall MS 85. This manuscript was lot 76 in the Mostyn sale at Sotheby’s 13<sup>th</sup> July 1920, sold for £200 to Quaritch. Thence sold by them to Sir Leicester Harmsworth, before being sold again at Sotheby’s, 16<sup>th</sup> October 1945, lot 2019. Bought by C.A. Stonehill of New Haven, CT for £110, thence sold to the University of Illinois in 1947.

**Scholarship:** Christopher Faye and William Bond, *Supplement to the Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada* (Bibliographical Society of America, 1962), p. 171.

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## 9) Chicago, University Library MS 566, ff. 4–107v

**Description:** A mid fifteenth-century, vellum manuscript of 108 folios, containing the *Life* followed by *NIMEV* 2742, *Pees Maketh Plente*. The manuscript measures 160 mm by 240 mm and is bound in a twentieth century binding (rebound in 1905). The text is written by a single

scribe, in a single column, with twenty-eight lines to a page, comprising four stanzas per page. The written space measures 90mm by 150 mm. There are no braces and no parphs. The secundo folio reads: 'to taste the'.

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup> (wants 1, 4, 5), 2<sup>8</sup>–13<sup>8</sup>, 14<sup>6</sup>

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The manuscript preserves the Type A apparatus of eighty-seven chapters, no books and a programme of Latin glossing. The text is defective at the start, beginning Book I, l. 112. Given the system of textual division and the Textual Apparatus, the manuscript probably once contained the introductory rubric and the table of contents. Text contains an extra line on f. 82, (l. 17).

**Decoration:** Alternating red and blue initials for each stanza with alternating red and blue bordering. Glosses in red ink in the margins. There is no space between the stanzas, as we find in other 'metropolitan group' manuscripts. Certain apparently arbitrary words are underlined in red, as we find in other 'metropolitan group' manuscripts.

**Provenance:** E.B. 1578 (f. 23); W battes (f.23r), Humphrey Carrew (ff. 69v, 76v, 90r). Latterly owned by Sydney Cockerell, who wrote extensive notes in the front fly leaves in his tiny and distinctive hand (dated 28<sup>th</sup> June 1905), says he bought the manuscript from 'Chaucer Book Co., St Martin's Court, cat. No. 7, p. 5'. They had previously bought it from Putticks (Dec 21<sup>st</sup>, 1904, lot 179, £18). There the consigner was Colonel Taylor of Newton Priory in Gloucestershire, who also sold a copy of *Piers Plowman*, now CUL MS Add. 4325. De Hamel notes that it was sold by Cockerell in 1931 and came to Chicago through an anonymous donor.

**Scholarship:** Seymour de Ricci, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, 2 vols (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1935), I, p. 592. See also, for suggestion on the provenance of the sixteenth-century hand on f.23r, M.C. Seymour, 'MSS Douce 261 and Egerton 3132A and Edward Banyster', *Bodleian Library Record*, 10 (1980), 162–5. Christopher de Hamel, 'Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts from the Library of Sir Sydney Cockerell (1867–1962)', *Electronic British Library Journal*, 1987, 186–210 (no. 34, p. 199), <http://www.bl.uk/eblj/1987articles/pdf/article12.pdf>, accessed 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

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## 10) Dublin, Trinity College Library MS 423, f.103v

**Description:** A paper manuscript of second half of fifteenth-century of 149 folios. The manuscript measures 262 mm by 202 mm, the written space measures 210 mm by 162 mm. The texts are written in a single column. Written by several scribes in a secretary-*anglicana* admixture. Secundo folio reads: 'To serue'.

**Collation:** 1<sup>24</sup> (wants 2,3,5), 2<sup>32</sup> (wants 1), 3<sup>30</sup>, 4<sup>24</sup> (wants 23, 24), 5<sup>10</sup>–6<sup>10</sup>, 7<sup>12</sup>, 8<sup>14</sup>

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** Contains only a short extract of the *Life*, Book III, ll. 1–6, with a unique 7<sup>th</sup> line to conclude the stanza. The partial stanza is written on f. 103v, on a blank folio amongst various inscriptions and pen-trials of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

**Decoration:** Elsewhere, initials in blue or red and capitals marked with yellow or red, or initials in red with capitals in yellow.

**Provenance:** Numerous ownership inscriptions, on which see Colker, cited below. Amongst the more informative is: 'bought of Rycherd Over of Coventry mercer the xiii daye of merche 1564' (f. 81v), 'Jhon Sussans (lelar ?) of covent(ry) 1546 (f.97r).

**Scholarship:** Martin L. Colker, *Trinity College Library Dublin: Descriptive Catalogue of Renaissance Latin Manuscripts*, 2 vols (Aldershot: Scolar Press for Trinity College Library Dublin, 1991), II, pp. 839–44. Rossell Hope Robbins, 'A New Lydgate Fragment', *English Language Notes*, 5 (1968), 243–47.

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## 11) Durham, University Library MS Cosin V.ii.16, ff. 5–90v

**Description:** A vellum manuscript of the second quarter of the fifteenth-century, written in a secretary hand, in a seventeenth-century, brown morocco binding, over boards. The codex comprises 94 folios, measuring 190 mm by 285 mm. Contains the *Life* and the Martyrology of Usuard, written in a contemporary, but different hand. Written in a single column, with thirty-five lines to a page, with a variable number of stanzas in an area measuring 105 mm by 190 mm. Secundo folio reads: 'how the hande'.

**Collation:** iii (vellum: 1+2 medieval)+ 1–10<sup>8</sup>, 11<sup>8</sup> (wants 8 ?blank) after f. 90; 12<sup>4</sup>+i (foliated) Quires 1–11 signed a–k in bottom right-hand corner of recto.

**Decoration:** Opening initial (five-line) blue and red O, with red in-filling with blue and red border extending outwards. The following initials are three-line, in blue with red flourishing.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** This manuscript is the base text for the *Critical Edition*. It is the only manuscript in Group *b* to have the Type A apparatus of eighty-seven numbered and titled chapters, a programme of Latin glosses and no books. One of only two manuscripts in this group to have eighty-seven chapters (the other being Bodl. MS Bodley 120). Contains the introductory rubric and table of contents. The initials of Books II and III are four lines long, as opposed to three lines long as we find for the openings of other chapters. A sixteenth-century humanist corrector has modified the chapter scheme so that the chapter numbering begins afresh at the start of Book III. See George Keiser, 'Serving the Needs of Readers: Textual Division in some Late-Medieval English Texts', esp. p. 218. This corrector used Lambeth MS 344. The corrector has added book divisions and also running book numbers at the top of each folio. The text contains at the end, following on from the end of the poem, Undecima kalendas may luna vicesima tertia, sections from the Martyrology of Usuard for 21<sup>st</sup>–27<sup>th</sup> April.

**Provenance:** Belonged to William Browne of Tavistock: his inscription 'W.Browne' on f. 3r. (See notes to Bodl. MS Ashmole 59). Also inscribed: Geo Davenport 1664 (f. 1v). Davenport also wrote an inscription lifted from Ioannis Pitsei, *Angli, S. Theologiae Doctoris, Liverduni in Lotharingia Decani Relationum Historicarum de Rebus Anglicis* (Paris: Rolinum Thierry & Sebastianum Cramoisy, 1619), p. 634. f. 2v: Pitsopus | Johannes Lidgatus scripsit S. Mariae ad Henricum Quintum. Moero | re ae vario contactum MS Oxonii in bibliotheca publica' f. 3r (at top of table of contents, above the W.Browne inscription), 'Liber Ecclesica-Bibliotheca Episcopalis Dunelm II. 16. A further inscription that may be by Davenport appears on f. 38v: 'Numb: 5:15', next to Book II, l. 1423

**Scholarship:** Durham University Library Special Collections catalogue, <https://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/theme/medmss/apvii16/> and Keiser, noted above. On Browne, see A.S.G. Edwards, 'Medieval Manuscripts Owned by William Browne of Tavistock (1590/1?–1643/5?)', in *Books and Collectors 1200–1700*, ed. by James P. Carley and Colin G.C. Tite (London: British Library, 1997), pp. 441–49.

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## 12) Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.3.1 [Heege], ff. 176–210

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century, paper manuscript of 216 folios, measuring 210 mm by 145 mm in a twentieth-century red morocco binding (rebound in 1964). The text is written in a single column with messy braces and stanza-markers. The text of the *Life* is a partial copy, written with approximately twenty-one lines to a page (although this varies). The written space

measures 120 mm by 170 mm. The written area almost touches the edge of the pages, such that the pages appear to have been trimmed. As well as the *Life*, the manuscript contains a variety of items including romances like *Sir Gowther* (NIMEV 973, ff. 11r–27v), *Sir Ysambres* (NIMEV 1184) on ff. 48r–56v, a prose life of Saint Katherine (ff. 30r–47r), medical recipes (f. 62v, f. 64v), lyrics like *Omnis Caro Fenum Est* (NIMEV 358), ff. 95v–96r, an extract from the *Fall of Princes* (f. 61v) devotional verse like the *Vision of Tundale* (NIMEV 1724), ff. 98r–157v and courtesy texts such as *Stans Puer ad Mensam* (NIMEV 4153), ff. 28r–29v. Several scholars have noted that the manuscript looks like an instructional anthology. See Chapter Four for discussion. The secundo folio reads: 'hob andrew y bynke'.

**Collation:** 1<sup>10</sup>, 2<sup>20</sup> (wants 20), 3<sup>10</sup>, 4<sup>20</sup>, 5<sup>20</sup>, 6<sup>12</sup> (wants 12), 7<sup>24</sup>, 8<sup>16</sup>, 9<sup>20</sup>, 10<sup>18</sup>, 11<sup>12</sup>, 12<sup>16</sup>, 13<sup>14</sup> (wants 14).

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** Comprises Books IV–VI only, marked as different thematic units 'the circumcision, the epiphanie, the purificacioun'. There are no chapters and almost no glossing (a few short *notae* in the margins, see Chapter Four.)

**Decoration:** There is almost no decoration. Some flourishes are added to the braces, new items in the manuscript begin with an initial decorated with pen flourishes.

**Provenance:** See Chapter Four for full discussion.

**Scholarship:** Phillipa Hardman, 'Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*: A Text in Transition', *Medium Aevum*, 65 (1996), pp. 248–68 (esp. pp. 260–62) and edited by Hardman, *The Heege Manuscript: A Facsimile of National Library of Scotland Ms Advocates 19.3.1* (Leeds: Leeds Studies in English, 2000). Also by Hardman, 'Domestic Learning and Teaching: Investigating Evidence for the Role of "Household Miscellanies" in Late Medieval England', *Women and Writing, c.1340–c.1650: The Domestication of Print Culture*, ed. by Phillipa Hardman and Anne Lawrence-Mathers (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010), pp. 15–33 (esp. pp. 28–31).

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**13) Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 1.1.6 [Bannatyne], pp. 22–24, ff. 25v–26v**

**Description:** A mid-sixteenth-century paper manuscript written and compiled by George Bannatyne in 1568, when Edinburgh was hit by the plague and Bannatyne had fled the city. Bound in two volumes of green morocco. The dimensions of the manuscript's pages vary, but roughly measure 290 mm by 190 mm. Bannatyne did not rule or mark his pages. There are a variable number of lines per page, although on the pages which contain the *Life* there are approximately thirty-two lines. The secundo folio of both the draft and main manuscript reads: 'Quhen golden phebus'.

**Collation:** The collation of this manuscript – including the draft and main manuscript – is complex and is discussed extensively by Fox and Ringler, cited below, pp. ix–xii.

**Decoration:** The manuscript is spare, with no decoration. Bannatyne may have wished to print his collection and saw it simply as a copy text.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** Solely comprises the *Magnificat* from Book II, ll. 981–1060, in both the draft manuscript (pp. 22–24) and the main manuscript (ff. 25v–26v). In the main manuscript, the poem appears under a rubric reading 'the song of the virgin mary' and contains the Latin verses initially in the left-hand margin and then in the inter-stanza space. The Latin verses are in a slightly less cursive script.

**Provenance:** Written by George Bannatyne. Presented to the Advocates Library by 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Hyndford in February 1772. It was Walter Scott who was responsible for generating much of the early interest in the codex, founding the Bannatyne Club in honour of the manuscript and its compiler in 1823.

**Scholarship:** *The Bannatyne Manuscript: National Library of Scotland Advocates' M.S.1.1.6*, ed. by Denton Fox and William A. Ringler (London: Scolar Press in association with the National Library of Scotland, 1980). For information on Bannatyne's milieu, see Theo van Heijnsbergen, 'The Interaction Between Literature and History in Queen Mary's Edinburgh: the Bannatyne Manuscript and its Prosopographical Context', in *The Renaissance in Scotland: Studies in Religion History and Culture* ed. by Ian B. Cowen, Michael Lynch and A.A MacDonald (Leiden: Brill, 1994) pp. 183–225, also by Heijnsbergen, 'The Bannatyne Manuscript Lyrics: Literary Convention and Authorial Voice', in *The European Sun: Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Scottish Language and Literature*, ed. by Graham Caie et al (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2001), pp. 423–44.

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#### 14) Glasgow, University Library, Hunterian MS 232 (U.3.5), ff. 1–104v

**Description:** A mid to late fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 104 folios. Bound in a twentieth century binding (re-bound in 1952), eighteenth-century spine reads 'SACRED | POEMS | M.S.'. There are twenty-eight lines to a page and four evenly-spaced stanzas to a page. The text is written in a single column, with no braces and no parphs. The *Life* is the only text in the MS. The secundo folio reads: 'the luycwre of thyn grace shede'.

**Collation:** iv (paper, unfoliated)+ 1<sup>8</sup>–13<sup>8</sup>+iv (paper, unfoliated)

**Decoration:** Alternating initials in blue and red, with alternating red and blue flourishing extending into the margins.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** There is no table of contents nor introductory rubric. There are twenty-two decorated initials or spaces for initials, which largely correspond to the openings of chapters in the Type A eighty-seven chapter scheme. The text is incomplete. It begins at the prologue and ends at Book VI, l. 309. There are no running titles or glosses. A different, later hand has added seven section titles, these correspond to the six-book structure, but has added an additional section for the Annunciation. (As a result of these section divisions, Young and Aitken – cited below – thought the text was several discrete poems.)

**Provenance:** The manuscript contains numerous inscriptions by the Golding family of Essex (see Young and Aitken cited below). Some of the marginalia is dated to 10<sup>th</sup> March 1549. It was originally part of the collection of William Hunter (b. 1718, d. 1783). Hunter was Physician Extraordinary to Queen Charlotte, 1764–83. Rev. Joseph Stevenson S.J. (b.1806, d.1895), the Catholic writer and archivist, signed his name on f. 1r. The binding was repaired by Sydney Cockerell, see notes to Chicago MS 566 above.

**Scholarship:** John Young and P. Henderson Aitken, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of The Hunterian Museum in The University of Glasgow* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1908), pp. 183–85. See also Glasgow University Special Collections catalogue:

[http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/manuscripts/search/detail\\_c.cfm?ID=34770](http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/manuscripts/search/detail_c.cfm?ID=34770). On Hunter as a collector see Neil Ker, *William Hunter as a Collector of Medieval Manuscripts: the first Edwards Lecture on Palaeography delivered in the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 1983). (This manuscript is not mentioned in the lecture.) In the 1890s George Fiedler began work on an edition of the *Life* for EETS based on the Hunterian manuscript. See 'Contributions to a Life of John Lydgate, Monk and Poet of Bury St. Edmund's', *Proceedings of Birmingham Philosophical Society*, 8 (1891), 273–282 (p. 282). A German version of this article appeared in *Anglia* in June of that year.

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## 15) Harvard, Houghton Library MS Lat. 394, ff. 29r–31v

**Description:** An early fourteenth-century vellum Psalter of thirty-three folios containing the extracts from the *Life* added to the final flyleaves, by Thomas Wilson, dated to 1750–55. The manuscript measures 210 mm by 300 mm and is bound in a nineteenth-century, green velvet binding. The extracts written by Wilson are written in an imitation medieval hand, in a single column. There are a variable number of lines to a page, but usually thirty-five and five stanzas per page. The text is written in an imitation secretary hand with some *anglicana* features. There are no braces and no paraphs at the openings of each stanza. The secundo folio reads: ‘Astiterunt reges terre’.

**Collation:** Not applicable.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The manuscript contains two extracts in the hand of Thomas Wilson, a Leeds schoolmaster. The extracts comprise the Chaucer commendation, Book II, ll. 1628–34 and the final chapter of the poem, Book VI, ll. 309–460. Wilson copied the sections from Bodl. MS Rawlinson 140. At the end of his additions, he wrote in red ink, ‘By this it appears that Lydgate wrote the abovesaid MS containing eighty-seven Chapters, curiously written upone Vellum painted & Gilt about the year 1400 when Chaucer died’. A different hand, in black ink, presumably that of Rawlinson, has added ‘penes T.W which I gave to Rich. Rawlinson L.L.D., FRS & FSA 1750’.

**Decoration:** In the first of Wilson’s extracts, from Book VI, the initials of every other line appear in red ink. Some capitals are written in an imitation gothic script. Some complete words are written in red. The second extract, the Chaucer commendation, is written completely in red ink.

**Provenance:** An inscribed note on the last leaf says the manuscript is from Whitby Abbey, ‘Abbatia de Whitby in Com Ebor’. Latterly owned by Colonel William E. Moss, sold by him at Sothebys 8<sup>th</sup> March 1937, lot 1172. (Sold for £25 to Dulan.) Contains the bookplate of Katherine Blanche Starkie, granddaughter of Thomas Whitaker, the early *Piers Plowman* editor.

**Scholarship:** Neil Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1941) p. 198. Michael P. Kuczynski, ‘The Facsimilist’s Tale: Thomas Wilson, Schoolmaster and Antiquary, and Harvard University, Houghton Library MS Lat 394’, forthcoming. Harvard Library Online Catalogue:

<http://id.lib.harvard.edu/aleph/009890328/catalog>

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## 16) Liverpool, Radcliffe Library MS 16, ff. 1–105 (copied from print)

**Description:** An early seventeenth-century, paper manuscript of 119 folios copied from William Caxton’s printed edition of the *Life* (STC 17023). It is bound in nineteenth-century, green morocco over boards. The manuscript measures 145 mm by 190 mm.

There are twenty-eight lines per page and four stanzas per page. There are no braces and no paraphs. The written area measures 110 mm by 150 mm. The manuscript also contains Lydgate’s *Testament* (NIMEV 2464).

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup>–14<sup>8</sup> (wants 8).

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete. It contains the textual apparatus of the Caxton edition: eighty-seven numbered and labelled chapters (actually eighty-seven appear in the table of contents and eighty-two appear in the text), no book divisions and no marginal Latin glosses. Concludes ‘finis | emprynted William Caxton’

**Decoration:** The manuscript is undecorated.

**Provenance:** Bookplates of 'Foley', motto: 'ut prosiam' and the armorial bookplace of John Lee of Hartwell (1783–1866), with his motto 'verum atque decens'. For more on Lee, see H.A. Hanley, *Dr John Lee of Hartwell* (Buckinghamshire Record Office, 1989) and also Anita McConnell, 'Lee, John (1783–1866)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2014 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16297>, accessed 6 Jan 2016].

Also signed by a 'J A S C Woods' in a nineteenth-century hand, underneath their bookplate.

*Bibliotheca Anglo-Poetica; or a descriptive catalogue of a rare and rich collection of early English Poetry: in the possession of Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown* (London: Thomas Davison 1815), No. 414, pp. 187–88, describes a 'quarto paper volume bound in Morocco, 236 pp' and states that the manuscript contains 'other metrical lines entitled Lydgats testament and last will'. This must be the manuscript sold at Sotheby's, 21<sup>st</sup> April–1<sup>st</sup> May 1902 (Henry White Sale), lot 1394. Sold to Maggs for £2 2s 0d. Annotated sale catalogue describes it as '7.75 inches X 5.5 inches in Old English cursives temp. Henry VIII(?), at end in large letters "Explicit Testamentum Johannes Lydgate", modern blue morocco gilt g.e. sm 4 to XVI cent'. Radcliffe Collection is named after its chief donor, Sir Frederick Radcliffe (b.1861, d. 1952). Radcliffe 'aimed to buy exemplars of every book printed for liturgical use in England during the Tudor and Stuart reigns, both Roman Catholic and Anglican, to be brought together alongside medieval manuscripts to document and observe the liturgical transition during this period. Indeed the collection houses Missals dating from the pre-Reformation era, some 15th century European manuscript books of hours, 16th and 17th century bibles and early commentaries, hymn books and ecclesiastical music, and a large number of early printed books chiefly of liturgical and scholastic interest'.

[See <http://www.hope.ac.uk/lifeathope/libraryandlearningspaces/hopecollections/specialcollections/#Radcliffe>].

**Scholarship:** N.F. Blake, 'Manuscript to Print', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. by Griffiths and Pearsall, p. 423. Mary Wellesley, 'A Previously Unrecorded Manuscript Version of Lydgate's *Testament*', *Notes and Queries*, 62 (2015), 27–28.

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## 17) London, British Library, Additional MS 19252, ff. 4–104

**Description:** A mid fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 104 leaves, measuring 195 mm by 275 mm, bound in nineteenth-century, blue morocco. The text is written in a single column measuring approximately 195 mm by 100 mm. There are no braces, but there are paraphs. There are 4 evenly spaced stanzas to a page (except for the *Magnificat*), and twenty-eight lines to a page. The secundo folio reads: 'A rehersayle of stronge'.

**Collation:** v (5 modern paper, unfoliated) + 1<sup>6</sup> (wants 3 leaves at least), [missing quire – may have been a quire of 10], 2<sup>8</sup> (wants 1, 2), 3<sup>8</sup> (wants 8), 4<sup>8</sup>, 5<sup>8</sup>, 6<sup>8</sup>, 7<sup>8</sup> (wants 6), 8<sup>8</sup>, 9<sup>8</sup>, 10<sup>8</sup>, 11<sup>8</sup> (wants 7), 12<sup>8</sup> (wants 6), 13<sup>8</sup>, 14<sup>8</sup>, 15<sup>3</sup> + iii (modern, paper)

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is defective as decorative borders have been cut from the manuscript. Contains a variant form of the table of contents with fifty-eight chapters, with a unique introductory rubric. After the table of contents, the text begins at Book I, l. 113. Wants 8 leaves throughout, see above.

**Decoration:** See Chapter 3 for extended discussion. Where the decorated borders survive, they are comprised of a five-line length enlarged initial of blue, pink and green on a gold ground. Extending out of the initial letters on a pink, blue and gold border are curlicue vines with green lobes on golden balls, trumpet flowers with stamens in blue, green and pink, from which blue, pink and green leaves blossom. In the other places where borders likely once existed, there are missing leaves just before f. 46r, f. 78r and f. 84r. Alternating blue and red paraphs with flourishing penwork.

**Provenance:** Inscribed 'T.B', opening paper flyleaf. The text contains modifications in a late sixteenth-century hand. See Chapter Five. Signed 'Robb Parker' f. 1r (added note, 'of Browsholme Hall, Yorkshire'). Acquired by BL 11<sup>th</sup> December 1852 from Mr Boone. Previously sold Sotheby's 8<sup>th</sup> March 1817, lot 697, in a sale of 'The Duplicates of a Nobleman's Library' (Henry Pomeroy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Harberton). Sold for £3, 19s to 'Bell'.  
**Scholarship:** *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum 1848-1853* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1857) p. 208. On the unique chapter division scheme, see Keiser, 'Serving the Needs of Readers'.

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#### 18) London, British Library, Additional MS 19452, ff. 2-89v

**Description:** An early-to-mid fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 89 folios, bound in nineteenth-century, blue morocco. Written in a very upright, gothic *anglicana*. Measures 190 mm by 280 mm. Written space measures 103 mm by 190 mm. Written in a single column, with thirty lines to a page and a variable number of stanzas. Contains original quire numbering and foliation, numbering to 99 (number of folios indicated above are the surviving leaves). The secundo folio reads: 'ffor this of Jacob'. There are no braces, but there are paraphs.

**Collation:** iv (2 modern paper, 2 vellum, unfoliated)+ 1<sup>6</sup> (wants 2), 2<sup>nd</sup> quire of 10 leaves entirely missing, 3<sup>8</sup> (wants 6), 4<sup>8</sup>-12<sup>8</sup>, 13<sup>8</sup> (wants 1, 6, 7, 8). Missing 27 stanzas at the end, which would be equivalent to a 4-leaf quire.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text contains the introductory rubric and part of the table of contents, but is missing the second leaf of the first quire, so does not contain the rest of the table. The text has several lacunae. It breaks off in Book I l. 327, picking up again in l. 800. ends imperfectly at Book IV, l. 277. A later hand has added book numbers in Latin, eg. 'Liber secundus' (f.8v).

**Decoration:** Alternating red and blue paraph marks with red and blue flourishing. Occasional top-line strap-work (eg. ff. 38v-39r). Chapter titles appear in red ink in the inter-stanza space. Chapter initials have enlarged, two-line initials with more extensive flourishing work. Glosses appear in the marginal space, with blue decorated paraph marks. The opening folio contains a highly decorated border (much damaged), with an enlarged, decorated gold initial extending into a full red and gold border with acanthus clusters with blue, pink and green flowers. Similar in lay-out to BL Harley MS 629.

**Provenance:** Sold Sotheby's, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1853, lot 901, bought for £9, 10s by Mr Boone, who sold it to the BL. Boone also sold BL Add. MS 19252.

**Scholarship:** *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum 1848-1853*, p. 242.

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#### 19) London, British Library, Additional MS 29729, f. 122r-123r

**Description:** A paper manuscript of 288 folios completed in 1558 by the antiquarian John Stow. Bound in nineteenth-century, red morocco and measuring 185mm by 270 mm. The text of the *Life* is written in a single column, the written area measures 110 mm by 230 mm, with approximately thirty-eight lines to a page. There are no braces or paraph marks. The secundo folio reads: 'That every man in his degree'.

**Collation:** Bound tightly – difficult to collate, no catch-words. ii (modern paper)+ 1<sup>14</sup>, 2<sup>14</sup>, 3<sup>14</sup>, 4<sup>8</sup>, 5<sup>12</sup>, 6<sup>12</sup>, 7<sup>12</sup>, 8<sup>6</sup>, 9<sup>12</sup>, 10<sup>18</sup>, 11<sup>14</sup>, 12<sup>14</sup>, 13<sup>10</sup>, 14<sup>10</sup>, 15<sup>12</sup>, 16<sup>14</sup>, 17<sup>10</sup>, 18<sup>14</sup>, 19<sup>6</sup>, 20<sup>6</sup>, 21<sup>14</sup>, 22<sup>14</sup>, 23<sup>12</sup>, 24<sup>16</sup>

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The manuscript contains only the *Magnificat* paraphrase from Book II, ll. 981–1060. The Latin verses appear in red in the inter-stanza space. There is an enlarged red initial opening and the text concludes with, ‘AMEN lidgate | FINIS John Stowe’ on f. 123r.

**Decoration:** In the text of the *Magnificat* there is none, except for a small five-dotted symbol next to the word ‘FINIS’ on f. 123r. Elsewhere Stow occasionally uses red ink for marginal glossing and enlarged initials.

**Provenance:** Acquired by the BL in 1872 from Puttick’s, 15<sup>th</sup> July 1874, lot 207. Puttick’s describes the MS as ‘an interesting relic of the famous chronicler’. It was sold for £6 2 s. 6 d.

**Scholarship:** *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum 1861–1875* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1877, repr. 1967), pp. 696–701. A. S. G. Edwards, ‘John Stow and Middle English Literature’, in *John Stow and the Making of the English Past*, ed. by Ian Gadd and Alexandra Gillespie (London: British Library, 2004), pp. 109–118 (p. 114).

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## 20) London, British Library, Arundel MS 168, ff. 66–85

**Description:** A mid-to-late-fifteenth-century, paper century paper manuscript of 85 folios, bound in an early twentieth-century binding. The manuscript measures 350 mm by 245 mm; the written area measures 195 mm by 310 mm. The text is written in a double column. The secundo folio reads: ‘seynte crysten was amade brighten’. In the part of the manuscript containing the *Life*, the scribe begins with five stanzas to a page, but as the quire progresses, he begins to compress more material into the folio, progressing to six and half stanzas per page. There are no parphs or braces.

**Collation:** ii (modern, paper, unfoliated) +1<sup>8</sup> (wants 6,7,8), 2<sup>12</sup>, 3<sup>20</sup>, 4<sup>10</sup>, 5<sup>14</sup>, 6<sup>8</sup>, 7<sup>12</sup>, 8<sup>4</sup> + ii (modern, paper, unfoliated)

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is incomplete, beginning Book I, l. 414 and ending Book III, l. 1208. There are spaces left for initials which correspond to twenty-three chapter openings in the Type A apparatus.

**Decoration:** The manuscript is spare, with barely any decoration. The opening page contains alternating red and blue initials. The opening blue initial has the remnants of a small, blue face inscribed in it, now much soiled and hard to decipher. In the text of the *Life*, there are spaces left for initials.

**Provenance:** The Arundel collection at the British Library was put together by Thomas Howard, 2nd Earl of Arundel (b. 1586, d. 1646). In 1666, his grandson, Henry Howard, divided the collection between the Royal Society and the College of Arms. In 1831, the manuscripts held by the Royal Society were purchased by the British Museum.

**Scholarship:** *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the British Museum: Part I, the Arundel Manuscripts* (London: Printed for the Trustees of the British Museum, 1840), p. 46.

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## 21) London, British Library, Cotton MS Appendix VIII, ff. 2–108

**Description:** A mid fifteenth-century, vellum manuscript of 112 folios. The manuscript measures 165 mm by 215 mm and is bound in a nineteenth-century brown morocco binding. It is a British Museum binding dated to 1864. The text is written in a single column, the written area measures 153 mm by 110 mm, with twenty-eight lines to a page, with four stanzas per page. The hand is a formal *anglicana* with some secretary features. There are no braces, but there are coloured parphs. The secundo folio reads: ‘and the lycour of thy grace’. Alongside

the *Life*, Geoffrey Caldwell, the sixteenth-century owner, has written a pilgrimage guide to the East on ff. 108–112.

**Collation:** iv (2 paper, 2 vellum, only 2<sup>nd</sup> vellum is foliated) + 1<sup>8</sup>–13<sup>8</sup>, 14<sup>8</sup> (wants 8).

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete, beginning at the prologue.

There is no table of contents and no introductory rubric. There is no textual apparatus: no rubrics, no division into chapters or books. However, there are some decorated borders at f. 2 (start of the prologue), f. 24r – the Annunciation (Chapter XVI), f. 35v – the start of the *Magnificat* (Chapter XXII), f. 37r – the conclusion of the *Magnificat* (Chapter XXIII), f. 40v – the description of the angel warning Joseph to stay with the Virgin (Chapter XXVI), f. 49v – the opening of Book III, f. 65r – the description of how nature validates the idea of the Virgin birth (Chapter XLIX), f. 80r – the opening of Book IV and f. 100r – the start of Book VI. See Chapter Two for a discussion of this decorative programme.

**Decoration:** Stanza initials are in alternating red and blue ink. Initial letters of each line are touched in red. Some borders in red and blue, with decorated three-line initials with spray-work and red and blue leaf designs.

**Provenance:** f. 40v: Geoffrey Caldwell, 1553. Later owned by antiquary Robert Cotton (b.1571, d.1631). The manuscript is mentioned in the list of books given by John Marsham the younger to Sir John Cotton, third baronet (d. 1621, d. 1702), see Kent County Archives Doc. U. 1121, Z.19, f. 129r. A seventeenth-century hand has written: ‘Johanes Lydgate ad Edmundi sanum Buriansis coenobii monachus omnium sui temporis in Anglia Poetarum absit invidia dicto facile primus floriuit. Clariut sexagenarius a°D 1440 sub Rege Henrico VI° | Serepsit Vitam S<sup>ac</sup>e Mariae ad Henricum V & alia multa. | Balae: p. 586’ on the opening flyleaf. This refers to John Bale’s *Scriptorum Illustrum Maioris Brytannie* (Basileae: Apud Ioan nem Oporinum, 1559) [Introductory rubric at the end of the volume states it is ‘Ex Officina Ioannis Oporini’], pp. 586–87.

**Scholarship:** On the pilgrimage guide to the East, see Carl Horstmann, ‘Rathschläge für eine Orientreise’, *Englische Studien*, 8 (1885), 277–84. *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library* (London: Printed by command of King George III, 1802), p. 615. In the manuscript index of the *NIMEV*, the records for Cotton MS Appendix VI and VIII are conflated.

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## 22) London, British Library, Harley MS 629, ff. 4v–97

**Description:** An early-to-mid-fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 98 folios containing the *Life* followed by *NIMEV* 2742, *Pees Maketh Plente*. The manuscript measures 209 mm by 290 mm and is bound in a nineteenth-century, red, morocco British Museum binding, bearing the Harley crest. The text is written in a single column, the written area measures 118 mm by 180 mm. There are thirty-two lines per page, with approximately four and a half stanzas per page. The hand is a formal *anglicana*. There are no braces, but there are coloured and decorated paraphs. The secundo folio reads: ‘howe criste was borne’.

**Collation:** iii (2 paper, 1 vellum, unfoliated) + 1<sup>10</sup> (wants 1, canc.), 2<sup>8</sup>–12<sup>8</sup> + iii (1 vellum foliated, 2 paper). Traces of folio numbering left at the bottom right hand corner of each verso.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete and contains the table of contents and the introductory rubric. The manuscript preserves the Type A apparatus of eighty-seven numbered and titled chapters, no books and a programme of Latin marginal rubrication. However, some ‘book’ divisions have enlarged initials perhaps indicating the vestiges of a system of book division (on this see Chapter Two). The opening of Book II (f. 18r) has a four-line initial (as opposed to the standard two-line of the chapter openings), we find the same at Book III (f. 44v), Book IV (f. 72r) and Book VI (f. 90r) has an enlarged initial. The opening of Book V has a standard two-line initial.

**Decoration:** Stanza initials appear in alternating red and blue, with alternate red and blue flourishing. There are running chapter numbers at the top of each page in red ink with blue paraphs and red flourishing. Chapter titles and marginal glossing in red ink with blue paraphs and red flourishing. Single words in most lines are underlined in red ink. There is a full-page miniature (f. 1v), depicting the nativity of the Virgin, touched with gold, surrounded by green and gold leaf designs. Large pink initial on a gold background with a full border of acanthus clusters in green, blue, and pink (f. 2) for the introductory rubric and the beginning of the table of contents. There are partial borders with large initials on gold backgrounds (ff. 4v, 5v), for the opening of the prologue and the first chapter. Border decoration similar to Plate XVIII, Kathleen L. Scott, *Dated and Datable English Manuscript Borders c. 1395–1499* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 2002), pp. 64–65. The decoration is attributed to the Master of the Eng. 1, on which see, Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390–1490, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles*, 6, 2 vols (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), II, 262. See also Chapter One and Two for brief discussion of the similarities between the *Life's* introductory rubric and that the introductory rubric of Manchester, Ryland's Library MS Eng. 1 and the similarities between Rylands MS Eng. 1 and the metropolitan group manuscripts. See notes to Beinecke MS 281: the owners of that manuscript also owned Ryland's MS Eng. 1.

**Provenance:** See Chapter Five for full discussion of sixteenth-century owners. Obituary note on the final folio reads, 'In the yere of our lorde god mliV xxxi the iiii day of December was master Rysse behedded at the towre hyll in London and one Wylliam Hewsse byng hys frand was drawne throwe London to tyborne and there hangeth for tresson'. (f. 97v). This refers to Rhys ap Gruffyd (anglicised as Griffith), a Welsh nobleman and his associate, William Hughes, who were executed by Henry VIII for treason in December 1531. The manuscript was in the family in the sixteenth century, as is evidenced by a note on f. 98v. Manuscript was part of the collection of Sir Simonds D'Ewes (b. 1602, d. 1650), 1st baronet, diarist, antiquary, and friend of Sir Robert Cotton, see *The Diary of Humfrey Wanley 1715–1726*, ed. by C. E. Wright and Ruth C. Wright, 2 vols (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1966), I, 1715–1723, p. xviii. Sir Simonds D'Ewes (d. 1722), 3rd baronet and grandson of the former inherited this manuscript and later sold the D'Ewes library to Robert Harley on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1705 for £450. See Andrew G. Watson, *The Library of Sir Simonds D'Ewes* (London: British Museum, 1966), no. A293.

**Scholarship:** See Scott (1996; 2002) cited above. See also British Library catalogue of illuminated manuscripts:

<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=5056&CollID=8&NStart=629>. *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 4 vols (London: Printed by Command of King George III, 1808), I, p. 392. Cyril Ernest Wright, *Fontes Harleiani: A Study of the Sources of the Harleian Collection of Manuscripts Preserved in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1972), pp. 131–37. J. M. Blatchly, 'D'Ewes, Sir Simonds, first baronet (1602–1650)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7577>, accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015]. On the obituary note, see Mary Wellesley, 'A Tudor Inscription in London, British Library Harley MS 629', *Notes and Queries*, 63 (2016), 376–77.

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### 23) London, British Library, Harley MS 1304, ff. 4–99

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century, vellum manuscript of 104 folios, containing the *Life* alongside *The Master of Oxford's Catechism* (IPMEP 589, ff. 100–102), see *Reliquiae Antiquae*, cited below. Manuscript also contains *ABC of Aristotle* (NIMEV 4155, f. 103), written in a different,

later hand. The manuscript measures 200 mm by 285 mm and is bound in a battered, brown, morocco British Museum in-house binding of the eighteenth-century, with some blind tooling on the cover. The secundo folio reads: ‘- ow the aungell warned’. The text is written in a single column, the written area measures 100 mm by 175 mm. There are thirty lines to a page and roughly four and a half stanzas per page. The text is written in a secretary hand. There are no braces but there are red parahs at the openings of each stanza.

**Collation:** i (vellum, unfoliated) + 1<sup>12</sup> (wants 1), 2<sup>20</sup>, 3<sup>12</sup>–7<sup>12</sup>, 8<sup>14</sup> (wants 14) + i (vellum, unfoliated)

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete, concluding with ‘explicit vita beate marie’ (f. 99r). It contains the Type A apparatus: the table of contents, introductory rubric, eighty-seven numbered and titled chapters, no book divisions, a programme of Latin glossing. There are no apparent vestiges of a system of book divisions. There are no running titles.

**Decoration:** Initial letters at the top of each page are decorated with strap-work in black ink. There are red parahs at the initial letter of every stanza. Chapter titles and Latin glossing in red ink, either in the marginal or the inter-stanza space.

**Provenance:** Johannes Hall, grocer (fifteenth-century hand), verso of opening flyleaf. ‘W-Flet’, in a seventeenth-century hand (f. 1r). Belonged Peter Le Neve (b. 1661, d. 1729), herald and antiquary. On the recto of the opening flyleaf he has written: *Liber Petri Le neve | Rouge croix per ?locutoribus Armour 1695*. He has also removed the final leaf of the last quire and transferred the text he removed (*ABC of Aristotle*) to f. 103v. Next to the transferred text he wrote: ‘this was on the other leafe but I took it out & writ it here | Peter Le Neve 1695’.

**Scholarship:** *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, I, pp. 654–55. Thomas Woodcock, ‘Le Neve, Peter (1661–1729)’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16440>, accessed 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015]. Cyril Ernest Wright, *Fontes Harleiani: A Study of the Sources of the Harleian Collection of Manuscripts Preserved in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1972), pp. 219–221. For *The Master of Oxford’s Catechism*, see *Reliquiae Antiquae*, ed. by James Halliwell and Thomas Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge Antiquarian Society Publications, 1841), pp. 230–32 (this text is taken from BL Lansdowne MS 762).

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#### 24) London, British Library, Harley MS 2382, ff. 1–74v

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century, paper manuscript of 129 folios, containing the *Life* alongside a collection of Lydgatean and devotional texts, including Chaucer’s *Prioress’ Tale* and *Second Nun’s Tale*. (For full discussion, see Chapter Three.) The manuscript measures 150 mm by 220 mm and is bound in a worn brown, nineteenth-century, morocco British Museum in-house binding. The text is written in a single column, the written area measures 90 mm by 168 mm. There are thirty-five lines to a page and five stanzas per page. The hand is a rushed and cursive secretary. There are no braces, but there are red ink parahs. The secundo folio reads: ‘and lord on me also’.

**Collation:** iii (modern paper, unfoliated). The manuscript is missing 10 leaves at the start (60 stanzas of text are missing – probably a quire of 8, followed by the first, defective quire).

1<sup>8</sup> (wants 1, 2), 2<sup>10</sup> (wants a folio, but text is badly garbled, it is unclear which is missing), 3–5<sup>12</sup>, 6<sup>12</sup> (wants 1, now BL Sloane MS 297, f. 88), 7–8<sup>12</sup>, 9<sup>10</sup>, 10–11<sup>12</sup>, 12<sup>4</sup>, 13<sup>8</sup> (wants 6, 7, 8 canc.) + ii (modern paper, unfoliated)

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is incomplete at the start, beginning at Book I, l. 427. The manuscript contains an idiosyncratic programme of glossing. It does not

contain the introductory rubric nor the table of contents. It does not divide the poem into chapters. It has a partial book division. It labels five books (omitting Book V and marking Book VI as the fifth book), and marks a spurious sixth book, in the shape of *The Assumption of Our Lady* (NIMEV 2165). Despite the fact that it is in rhyming couplets and of a clearly different quality to the poem that precedes it, it is marked 'Explicit sextus liber sancte marie' (f. 86r). This rubric is underlined in red and placed in the middle of the page. The openings of certain book divisions within the text of the *Life* are more soiled than the following folios, suggesting a booklet copying stage in the genesis of the text of the *Life* itself.

**Decoration:** The manuscript is barely decorated. The initial letters of each new stanza are touched in red. There are some enlarged red initials and the occasional attempt at flourishing work in brown ink as on f. 7r, for the opening of Book II. Stanzas have an unusual paraph mark. Running titles and some marginal glossing is underlined in red ink.

**Scholarship:** *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, II, p. 675. *The Text of the Canterbury Tales Studied on the Basis of all Known Manuscripts*, ed. by John Manly and Edith Rickert, 8 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), I, p. 247. Mary Godfrey, 'The Fifteenth-Century Prioress's Tale and the Problem of Anti-Semitism', in *Rewriting Chaucer*, ed. by Kline and Prendergast, pp. 93–115. Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Anti-Semitism, 1350–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 96–97.

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## 25) London, British Library, Harley MS 3862, ff. 1–107

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 107 folios. The manuscript measures 185 mm by 270 mm and is bound in a worn, brown, eighteenth-century morocco binding. The text is written in a single column, the ruled written area measures 125 mm by 200 mm. There are twenty-eight lines to a page and four stanzas per page. The hand is a neat, formal secretary. There are no braces and no paraphs. The secundo folio reads: 'and lord on me also'. The *Life* is the only text in the manuscript.

**Collation:** 1<sup>16</sup>, (f. 5 and f. 4 are disordered), 2<sup>8</sup>–7<sup>8</sup>, 8<sup>16</sup>, 9<sup>8</sup>–10<sup>8</sup>, 11<sup>12</sup> (12 canc.) Catchwords encased in scrolls.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text begins at the prologue. There is no table of contents and no introductory rubric. The manuscript preserves a form of the Type A apparatus: seventy-four of the eighty-seven chapters from that scheme, which are numbered and titled. It contains no books and no marginal Latin glossing. The opening of what might be Book II in another witness has an enlarged, decorated initial (f. 17r), but there is no other suggestion of vestigial book division.

**Decoration:** Initial letters of each stanza in alternating red and blue, and the opening of each chapter appears in blue with red flourishing spray-work borders. Chapter titles in red in the inter-stanza space. Decorated initial 'O' in blue with a full border of pink, green, and blue acanthus leaves with gold and foliage spray; John de Vere's shield partially covers the top portion of the decorated 'O' (Thoughtful) (f. 1). Miniature of the Tree of Jesse with the Virgin and Child and gold crowns on a pink background (f. 2).

**Provenance:** John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford (b. 1442, d. 1513); his arms (f. 1). Inscribed in a sixteenth-century hand: 'Edwardus Sextus, Dei Gratia, Anglie, Francie, et Hibernie, Rex, Fidei Defensor, et in Terra Ecclesie Anglicane et Hibernice Supremum Caput' (f. 1). Inscribed, sixteenth or seventeenth century: 'Robert Wimor, Simon Wilson, Giles Hamton, William Gibonne' (f. 1). Thomas Hearne, antiquary and diarist (bap. 1678, d. 1735) inscribed the inside upper cover with, 'pervolutavi, mini accommodante amico egregio Thoma

Rawlinson, armigero. Tho. Hearne, Oct. 21, 1719<sup>1</sup>. Bought by Edward Harley at the sale of Thomas Rawlinson, book collector (b. 1681, d. 1725) in 1734. It is manuscript 'no. 644'.

**Scholarship:** Kathleen Scott, 'Caveat Lector: Ownership and Standardization in the Illustration of Fifteenth-Century English Manuscripts', p. 57 n. 38. *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, III, p. 88. On the De Veres and their interest in vernacular literature, see Ralph Hanna, III and A. S. G. Edwards, 'Rotheley, the De Vere Circle, and the Ellesmere Chaucer', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 58 (1995), 11–35.

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## 26) London, British Library, Harley MS 3952, ff. 2–105

**Description:** A mid-to-late fifteenth-century paper manuscript of 105 folios. The manuscript measures 205 mm by 290 mm and is bound in a worn, brown, eighteenth-century morocco binding. The text is written in a single column, the ruled written area measures 112 mm by 175 mm. There are twenty-eight lines to a page and four stanzas per page. The text is written in a secretary hand with some *anglicana* features. There are no braces but there are red paraphs at the openings of each stanza. The secundo folio reads: 'off virtuous pouerte'. The *Life* is the only text in the manuscript, although *Lamentation of Ladyes for the Death of King Edward IV* (NIMEV 1505), survives in fragmentary form on the final leaf of the final quire, in a contemporary but different hand. The manuscript's pages are very ragged at the edges.

**Collation:** ii (modern paper, unfoliated) +1<sup>8</sup> (wants 1, 2), 2<sup>8</sup>–6<sup>8</sup>, 7<sup>4</sup>, 8<sup>4</sup>, 9<sup>8</sup>–12<sup>8</sup>, 13<sup>6</sup>, 14<sup>8</sup>, 15<sup>8</sup> (wants 6, 7, 8 ?canc.)+ii (modern paper, unfoliated). Quire signatures in red ink.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete, beginning at the prologue. The first two leaves of the first quire are missing, but the manuscript very likely contained the introductory rubric and table of contents. It contains the Type A apparatus: eighty-seven titled and numbered chapters, no book divisions and a programme of Latin glossing. There are running chapter numbers at the top of each page. There are vestiges of a scheme of book division: there are squiggly tendrils drawn around the red initials that might designate the openings of Books III–VI (ff. 46v, 79v, 86v, 97r).

**Decoration:** The decoration is limited to the use of red ink. The initial letters of each chapter have enlarged amateurish red capitals. There are red paraph marks at the start of each stanza and the initial letter of each stanza is touched in red. Chapter titles are written in red. There is the occasional attempt at red ink decorative in-filling in the enlarged capitals, and the opening initial of the prologue has an attempt at flourishing.

**Provenance:** No marks of later ownership, apart from an inscription on the inside cover. There a nineteenth-century hand has written, 'The Birth of Christ' which is replaced below with 'Lydgate's Life of the Virgin Mary' (f. 1r).

**Scholarship:** *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, III, p. 98. On the fragmentary verse on f. 105v, see Helen E. Sandison, *The Chanson d'Aventure in Middle English* (Pennsylvania: Bryn Mawr College Monographs, 1913), xii, pp. 128–9.

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## 27) London, British Library, Harley MS 4011, ff. 23–119

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century paper manuscript of 189 folios containing the *Life* alongside a collection of secular and religious prose and verse texts. The manuscript measures 220 mm by 280 mm and is bound in a worn, red nineteenth-century morocco binding, stamped with the Harley crest. The text is written in a single column, the ruled written area measures 130 mm by 200 mm. There are thirty-three lines to a page and four and a half stanzas per page. The text is written in a secretary hand with some *anglicana* features. There are large straight-

ruled red ink braces, the fifth line, the 3<sup>rd</sup> B line has a zig-zagging decorative line, which does not connect with any other lines. There are no paraphs. The secundo folio reads: 'that annoynyt youre'. Written by a named scribe: on f. 119r, the words 'Etto Gobeth | Explicit Johannes lydgate monke of Bury | quod. W. Grauell', appear in a large decorative banner. Both A. I. Doyle and Simon Horobin note the existence of this inscription, but neither of them translate it. A. I. Doyle, 'Publication by Members of Religious Orders', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 109–124 (p.119); Simon Horobin, 'Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the Work of Osbern Bokenham', *Speculum*, 82 (2007), 932–49 (p. 948). The motto is Welsh (modern spelling 'Eto Gobaith'). The phrase translates as 'There's hope yet'.<sup>1</sup>

**Collation:** 1<sup>74</sup> (wants 1, 2), 2<sup>4</sup>, 3<sup>14</sup>, [text of the *Life* begins] 4<sup>16</sup>–9<sup>16</sup>, 10<sup>6</sup>, 11<sup>4</sup>, 12<sup>6</sup>, 13<sup>4</sup> (wants 1). Here the text of the *Life* ends (f. 119v) and catch-words are no longer visible. Collation of the remainder of the manuscript not necessary for the purpose of this Appendix.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete but for the loss of a leaf in the final quire. The manuscript preserves the Type A apparatus of eighty-seven numbered and titled chapters and the standard programme of Latin marginal glossing. There are no book divisions or any apparent vestiges of book division. In some places there is more Latin marginal glossing of a liturgical kind than we find in other manuscripts. The manuscript contains the introductory rubric and the table of contents. Other texts in the volume include the *Libelle of English Policy* (NIMEV 3491), Lydgate's *Stans Puer ad Mensam* (NIMEV 2233), a section from the *Fall of Princes* (NIMEV 1168), Lydgate's *Rammeshorne* (NIMEV 199, also extant in Adv. MS 1.1.6 and BL Add. MS 29729), as well as Skelton's lament for the death of Edward IV (NIMEV 2192).

**Decoration:** The decoration is amateurish but exuberant. The initial letter of every page is decorated with amateurish strap-work which extends into crude foliage sprays with red infilling. Initial letters of each chapter are realised as enlarged red ink capitals. The opening 'O' of the prologue has an amateurish face drawn within it. The initial letters of each line have red ink touchings and some important words in each line are touched with red. Each page is dominated by the thick, straight red-ink braces.

**Provenance:** William Pothar, sixteenth-century: inscribed 'This ys william pothar boke...' (f. 125).

A sixteenth-century hand has written 'ffrances lawley ?ownes this bok..' (f. 70v). Inscribed 'John ?' and other partly erased inscriptions, ?sixteenth century (f. 182). Illegible signature in a sixteenth-century hand (f. 2). John Batteley (b. 1647, d. 1708), Church of England clergyman and antiquary sold this manuscript to Edward Harley with the rest of his collection, through his nephew John Batteley on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1723. See *The Diary of Humphrey Wanley 1715–1726*, ed. by C. E. Wright and Ruth C. Wright, II, p. 263.

**Scholarship:** *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, III, p. 103. British Library online catalogue of illuminated manuscripts:

<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=4495&CollID=8&NStart=4011>. Cyril Ernest Wright, *Fontes Harleiani*, pp. 66–8. C. S. Knighton, 'Batteley, John (bap. 1646, d. 1708)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004  
[http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1709, accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015].

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## 28) London, British Library, Harley MS 4260, ff. 2–108

<sup>1</sup> Private communication with Professor Helen Fulton.

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century, paper manuscript of 108 folios containing the *Life* only. The manuscript measures 276 mm by 215 mm and is bound in a worn red eighteenth-century morocco binding. The text is written in a single column, the ruled written area measures 235 mm by 110 mm. There are twenty-eight lines to a page and four stanzas per page. The text is written in an upright, formal *anglicana formata*. There are no braces and no paraphs. The secundo folio (partially damaged) reads: ‘... the licour of thi grace’. The conclusion of *NIMEV* 2742, *Pees Maketh Plente*, ‘grace growth aftir gouernaunce’ appears on f. 108r, at the end of the *Life*. (This text appears seven times with the *Life*, in Bodl. MS Rawlinson 140, Harley MS 629, Hunterian MS 232, TCC MS R.3.22, Chicago MS 566 and NLW MS 21242C.)

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup>–13<sup>8</sup>, 14<sup>4</sup> (traces of quire signatures, catchwords throughout).

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete (apart from the leaf missing in the first quire). The poem ends with the refrain from *NIMEV* 2742, *Pees Maketh Plente*, ‘grace grewith aftir goueraunce’ (f. 108r). In keeping with manuscripts in the *b* Group, the codex diverges from the Type A scheme. The poem is divided into six books, with fifty-nine chapters numbering afresh at the start of each book, these chapters largely correspond to the chapters of the standard scheme. There is some Latin marginal glossing, but substantially less than in the Type A scheme. There are running book and chapter numbers, and titles at the top of each page in red ink. There is no table of contents and no introductory rubric. This does not appear to be the result of the loss of leaves, as the manuscript has an idiosyncratic system of book and chapter division.

**Decoration:** There is little decoration in the manuscript. The initial letters of each stanza are written in red ink. Chapter titles are written in red ink in the inter-stanza space. The initial letters of new chapters have enlarged two-line red ink initials.

**Provenance:** Humphrey Wanley has inscribed the opening folio, ‘126 B.4 | 17 May 1715’, f. 1r. This refers to the acquisition of the manuscripts of Robert Burscough (b. 1651 d. 1709), prebendary of Exeter and Archdeacon of Barnstaple. See *The Diary of Humfrey Wanley 1715–1726*, ed. by C. E. Wright and Ruth C. Wright, I, p. 11. Inscription in a late seventeenth-century hand on f. 1v reads ‘Vitae B. Virg. Authorem Johannes Lidgate fuisse ?testant MS exempla Bodl. Bibl’. A different hand, in purple ink, has added ‘Vita B Mariae Virg. S Metris Anglicis | MS S. 6.7 ?Far?? [illegible] Catal. B. Bodl. Oxo’. This hand is that of Samuel Knott (d. 1687), Rector of Combe Raleigh. Using purple ink, he has also added annotations to the text, which make further references to other manuscripts and point out allusions in the poem.

**Scholarship:** *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, III, p. 130. Cyril Ernest Wright, *Fontes Harleiani*, pp. 87–88, 211.

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## 29) London, British Library, Harley MS 5272, ff. 1–98v

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century, paper manuscript of 137 folios containing the *Life* alongside *NIMEV* 2447, *The Life of Saint Dorothy* and the *Abbey of the Holy Ghost*. The manuscript measures 240 mm by 165 mm and is bound in a nineteenth-century blue morocco British Museum in-house binding stamped with the Harley crest. The text is written by two scribes in a single column. The written area differs in size, but roughly measures 100 mm by 160 mm. There are a variable number of lines to a page, usually around twenty-eight or twenty-seven and just over four stanzas per page. The text is written in a secretary hand with some *anglicana* features. There are thick, square red braces and red stanza markers at openings of each stanza. The secundo folio reads: ‘And lord also w<sup>t</sup>’. The second scribe names himself in the *explicit*, ‘Here endith þe life of oure lady. Quod Johanes ffoster’ (f. 98v).

**Collation:** ii (modern paper)+ 1 quire missing, likely of 8, 1<sup>8</sup>–6<sup>8</sup>, 7<sup>8</sup>(wants 1), 8<sup>8</sup>–17<sup>8</sup>, 18<sup>10</sup>. Some catchwords and occasional quire signatures.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is defective at the start and begins at Book I, l. 419, and is missing a leaf in the seventh quire. The first scribe supplies some chapter titles (although these are not numbered). He also supplies some rubrication and marks and labels Books II–III (ff. 9v, 39r) – the start of Book I is, obviously, missing. The second scribe marks the divisions between Books IV–VI (ff. 70v, 78r, 90v) with red ink headings in the text and decorated initials, but does not label the divisions as book divisions.

**Decoration:** There are red ink braces and occasional red ink chapter titles. There are red ink stanza markers of different kinds, depending on the scribe. Some textual divisions are marked by four-line blue ink initials with red penwork in-filling and flourishing. There is occasional strapwork on the top text lines and the initial letters of each sentence are touched in red in the *Abbey of the Holy Ghost*.

**Provenance:** John Cradock of Bedminster (ff. 31v, 32r, 33r, 74r, 98r). Inscription in an amateurish sixteenth-century hand which reads, ‘Thys ys Elisabeth daness boke/he that stelyng soll be hanged by a noke’ (f. 42r). Also in sixteenth-century hands are: ‘John Dane’ (f. 59v) and ‘John Mellowes’ (f. 33r). Note on f. 1r reads ‘5 dis Novembbris A.D. 1723’, indicating that this manuscript also belonged to John Batteley (b. 1647, d. 1708), Church of England clergyman and antiquary, see reference to *ODNB*, cited above in BL Harley MS 4011. Batteley sold his collection to Edward Harley, through his nephew John Batteley on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1723. See *The Diary of Humphrey Wanley 1715–1726*, ed. by C. E. Wright and Ruth C. Wright, II, p. 263.

**Scholarship:** *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, III, p. 257. Cyril Ernest Wright, *Fontes Harleiani*, pp. 66–68, 118.

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### 30) London, British Library, Harley MS 7333, f. 132

**Description:** A mid-to-late fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 211 folios containing a single stanza from the *Life*, attached to the *Parliament of Fowls*, alongside a collection of Lydgatean and Chaucerian and verse texts as well as texts by Gower and Benedict Burgh. The manuscript measures 455 mm by 330 mm and is bound in a nineteenth-century, dark blue British Museum in-house binding stamped with the Harley crest. The text is written in two columns. The ruled written area measures 330 mm by 230 mm. There are a variable number of lines to a page, depending on the text in the manuscript. On the page which contains the stanza from the *Life*, there are fifty-six lines and eight stanzas, in each column, per page. The text is written in a secretary hand. There are no braces but there are alternating red and blue paraphs for important textual divisions, although not at the opening of every rhyme royal stanza on the page which contains the *Life* extract. The secundo folio reads: ‘And aftir mas he was’.

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup>–3<sup>8</sup>, 4<sup>10</sup>, 5<sup>8</sup>–14<sup>8</sup>, 15<sup>8</sup> (7 canc, 8 blank), 16<sup>8</sup>, 17<sup>8</sup> (7 and 8 canc.) 18<sup>8</sup>, 19<sup>8</sup>, 20<sup>6</sup>, 21<sup>10</sup> (wants 9), 22<sup>8</sup>–25<sup>8</sup>, 26<sup>8</sup> (8 canc.), 27<sup>8</sup>. Catchwords and some quire signatures.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** Contains only an extract from the *Life*: the Chaucer eulogy from Book II, 1628–34, appended to the *Parliament of Fowls*, on f. 132v. (See notes to TCC MS R.3.19, above, for a similar manuscript.) The stanza appears after a blank stanza space, where the *Parliament* ends imperfectly. It is followed by Chaucer’s *Complaint of Mars* (NIMEV 913), labelled as ‘The broche of thebes as of love | of mars and venus’.

**Decoration:** In the manuscript as a whole there are five marginal sketches in brown ink of a stock in a tun, a rebus for the name ‘Stoughton’, some with fish (ff. 32v, 45v, 189, 190, 192). Throughout there are running titles, rubrics and chapter division in red ink, often with blue paraphs marks. On the page containing the *Life* stanza, there is an enlarged blue initial with red penwork flourishing.

**Provenance:** The manuscript was written by or associated with the scribe John Shirley (b. c.1366, d.1456), on which see Chapter Four. Written at, or owned by the abbey of St Mary de

Pratis, Leicester. See Timothy A. Shonk, 'B.L. Harley MS 7333: The 'Publication' of Chaucer in the Rural Areas', *Essays in Medieval Studies: Proceedings of the Illinois Medieval Association*, 15 (1988), 81–91 and Lister M. Matheson, *The Prose 'Brut': The Development of a Middle English Chronicle* (Tempe, Arizona: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998), pp. xxv, 13, 15, 74, 215, 226, 228, 268–71, no. 155. William Stoughton, fifteenth-century cellarer of the abbey of St Mary de Pratis, Leicester: inscribed, 'Stoughton' (f. 41). Inscribed, 'quod Ipingham' (f. 122). Inscribed, c. 1500: 'Doctor Peni writ this book' (f. 150). Belonged to Sir Joseph Jekyll (b. 1663, d. 1738) Master of the Rolls, latterly also to his brother-in-law, John Somers, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Somers (b. 1651, d. 1716), pressmark 'H. 10' (f. 2).

**Scholarship:** *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, III, p. 526. Cyril Ernest Wright, *Fontes Harleiani*, pp. 204, 308–09. Jeremy Griffiths, 'Shirley, John (c. 1366–1456)', ODNB. Barbara Kline, 'Scribal agendas and the text of Chaucer's tales in British Library MS Harley 7333', in *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority, and the Idea of the Authentic Text, 1400–1602*, ed. by Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), pp. viii, 116–44, 301. Full bibliography available on the British Library's online catalogue:

<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6337&CollID=8&NStart=7333>

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### 31) London, British Library, Sloane MS 1785, ff. 14–29v

**Description:** A mid fifteenth-century, vellum partial manuscript of 16 disordered leaves containing a section of the *Life*, bound with unrelated items: a thirteenth-century *Letter to Alexander* and a fourteenth-century fragment of NIMEV 245, William of Nassington's *Speculum Vitae*. The manuscript measures 168 mm by 230 mm and is bound in a twentieth-century, canvas and morocco binding, stamped with the Sloane crest. The text of the *Life* is written in a single column; the ruled written area measures 85 mm by 170 mm. There are twenty-eight lines to a page and four stanzas per page. The text is written in a formal, upright secretary hand with some *anglicana* features. There are no braces and no parphs. The secundo folio of the manuscript reads: 'Semper tum memorum'.

**Collation:** (collation of the *Life* section) 1<sup>2</sup>, 2<sup>2</sup>, 3<sup>6</sup>, 4<sup>6</sup>. Traces of quires signatures.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is incomplete and disordered. The first leaf contains Book I, ll. 435–83; 2<sup>nd</sup> leaf, Book I, ll. 799–847; 3<sup>rd</sup> leaf, Book II, ll. 442–97; 4<sup>th</sup> leaf, Book II, ll. 708–63. The text on the 5<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> leaves jumps back to Book II, ll. 8–343. The 11<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> leaves jumps back again to Book I, ll. 484–798. There are spaces left between sections of text which correspond to the chapter divisions in the Type A scheme of eighty-seven chapters.

**Decoration:** There is no decoration. There are some spaces left for decorated initials, but these are unfilled.

**Provenance:** Formerly belonged to the antiquary Sir Henry Spelman (b. 1563/4, d. 1641), whose name is inscribed on f.2r, although it is unclear when the items in the manuscript were bound together and therefore whether he actually owned the part containing the leaves from the *Life*.

**Scholarship:** E.J.L. Scott, *Index to Sloane Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London: Clowes, 1904), p. 327. *Catalogue of Sloane Manuscripts*, unpublished, handwritten catalogue, 22 vols (London: British Museum Department of Manuscripts), V, Nos. 1778–1899, p. 541. On Spelman, see Cyril Ernest Wright, *Fontes Harleiani*, p. 310.

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### 32) London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 344, ff. 14v–99v

**Description:** A mid fifteenth-century, vellum manuscript of 99 folios containing the *Life* alongside a collection of Lydgatean and Chaucerian short poems. The manuscript measures 170 mm by 255 mm and is bound in a nineteenth-century, calfskin binding. The text is written by two scribes (the second takes over on f. 49r) in a single column. The ruled written area measures 100 mm by 175 mm. There are thirty-one or thirty-two lines to a page and a variable number of stanzas per page. The text is written in a secretary hand with some *anglicana* features. There are no braces and no paraphs. The secundo folio reads: ‘allelulia yn ordre nexte so lewyng’. The flyleaf at the end is from a thirteenth-century service book with musical notation.

**Collation:** iv + 1<sup>8</sup>(wants 1,2,3), 2<sup>8</sup>–7<sup>8</sup>, 8<sup>8</sup>, 9<sup>8</sup> (2 canc., wants 7), 10<sup>8</sup>, 13<sup>8</sup> (wants 8) +i.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete. The manuscript contains the Type A(ii) apparatus: the poem has eighty-six numbered chapters, which are not titled in the text, but titled in the table of contents. The text is divided into four numbered and labelled books, which are numbered in Arabic numerals. There are running book numbers at the top of each page. There is no marginal Latin glossing. The table of contents divides the eighty-six chapters into four books and is preceded by the introductory rubric. This manuscript and Bodl. MS Hatton 73 were copied from the same exemplar. They both contain the same division of the text into eighty-six chapters and four books. They also both share, alongside the text of the *Life*, NIMEV 222, 808, 2483, 2791, 3190 and 4246. On this see Henry Noble MacCracken, ‘Notes Suggested by a Chaucer Codex,’ *Modern Language Notes*, 23 (1908), 212–14. (See Chapter Two for an explanation of how Type A(ii) differs from Type A.)

**Decoration:** Red touching on the initials of each line. Initial letter of each new chapter is blue with red flourishing.

**Provenance:** A late fifteenth-century inscription reads, ‘Iste liber constat domino Johanni brehyll de shotteley (f. 38r). James (cited below) says this is ‘probably Shotley in Suffolk’.

**Scholarship:** Montague Rhodes James, Claude Jenkins, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Lambeth Palace*, 2 parts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), I, pp. 454–55. See also:

<http://archives.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=MSS%2f344&pos=8>. On the form of textual apparatus, see George Keiser, ‘Serving the Needs of Readers: Textual Division in some Late-Medieval English Texts’ and also by Keiser, ‘*Ordinatio* in the Manuscripts of John Lydgate’s *Lyf of Our Lady*: Its Value for the Reader, Its Challenge for the Modern Editor’, *Medieval Literature: Texts and Interpretations*, ed. by Tim Wiliam Machan (Binghampton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), pp. 139–58.

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### 33) London, Society of Antiquaries MS 134, ff. 1–30

**Description:** A mid fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 297 folios containing the *Life* alongside texts by Hoccleve, Walton and Gower. The manuscript measures 385 mm by 280 mm and is bound in a sixteenth-century, tooled morocco binding, which has been restored and re-backed. The text is written in two columns; the two ruled columns of the written area each measure 280 mm by 110 mm. There are forty-one lines to a page and approximately six stanzas per page. The text is written in an upright formal *anglicana*. There are no braces but there are alternating red and blue paraphs at the openings of each stanza. The secundo folio reads: ‘that arte to god so acceptable and dere’.

**Collation:** The collation is extremely difficult as there are no catchwords and no quire signatures and the binding is tight. 1<sup>10</sup> (wants 1, 4, 5: two folios are missing between f. 3 and f. 4, from Book II, l. 673–991), 2<sup>6</sup>, 3<sup>10</sup> (1 canc.) 4<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>8</sup> [end of the *Life* text on f. 30r, further collation deemed unnecessary].

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is incomplete. It begins at Book II, l. 222 and is missing 318 lines between f. 3 and f. 4. It is followed by *NIMEV* 2742, *Pees Maketh Plente*. It preserves the Type A apparatus of eighty-seven labelled and numbered chapters, a standard programme of Latin marginal glossing and no book division. Before the loss of the opening quires, the manuscript very probably contained the table of contents and the introductory rubric. There are no book divisions, but there are the vestiges of some book divisions, in the form of sumptuous borders (see below for description) at the start of Books III, IV and VI, but not – curiously – for Book V, which begins on f. 22v. Although these borders clearly demarcate a change within the text, they are not labelled as books. Another interesting feature of the textual division is the appearance of a border and a space for illustration on f. 11r (for the episode of the appearance to the shepherds). Latin glossing of more than a word or two is integrated into the stanza-space, albeit in red ink to signal its difference.

**Decoration:** Spaces left for illustration on f. 1v for the Annunciation, for the appearance to the shepherds on f. 11r also at the start of Book IV (f. 20r), which describes the circumcision of Christ. There are a number of large and beautiful full-page borders. There is the remnant of a border, now cut away on f. 8v (for the start of Book III). Borders survive for the episode of the appearance to the shepherds (f. 11v – overleaf from the space left for the illustration) as well as at the start of Book IV (f. 20r) and at the start of Book VI (f. 26r). The cut away border on f. 8v appears to have encircled the entire page, the borders at f. 11 and f. 20r fill the left-hand side of the page and extend outwards horizontally across the top and bottom of the text space. The border at f. 26r fills the central division between the text columns and extends horizontally across the top and bottom of the page. The borders are gold, orange, blue, mauve and green bars attached to initials, with braided sections sprouting acanthus leaves. From the bars foliage sprays in green with black ink hair sprays terminate in gold bubbles. This spray-work also terminates in three-lobed flowers in blue and green or large mauve, blue and green leaves or mauve and blue upturned flowers where the green stem is visible from behind.

There are alternating red or blue parishes at the start of every stanza with either red or blue flourishing sprays. The initial letters of every chapter are in gold on a mauve and blue ground with white tracery in-filling and foliage sprays extending from the letters which terminate in gold bubbles and small, green leaves. Chapter titles are in red with blue parishes and red foliage sprays, as is the Latin marginal glossing.

**Provenance:** A number of names are inscribed: Edmund Hardy (f. 101v), Katherin Vine (f. 123r). Bromley (f. 180r), Francis Felton (f. 266r). Bridget Littleton [sic] (f. 103r). The beginning of a charter relating to Thomas Caton of ?Bennsted appears on f. 129r. Numerous inscriptions in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century hands, some associated with the Lyttleton family. An anonymous note of f. 2v reads, ‘I praye go to the screvener in feter lane and desire him to Come to the flete and bringe the leter of atturneye... I praye do not fayle for my m<sup>r</sup> trusteth to you’. Bequest of Charles Lyttleton FSA, who thought the manuscript came from Halesowen Abbey (as he notes on f. ii, ‘It formerly belonged to Halesowen Abbey in Coun. Salop and seems to have been wrote about the time of K. Henry the 5<sup>th</sup> – C.L.’). It is unclear why Lyttleton thought this.

**Scholarship:** Pamela J. Willetts, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Society of Antiquaries* (Woodbridge: D.S Brewer for the Society of Antiquaries, 2000), pp. 60–61. On the tooled leather binding, see Basil J. Oldham, *English Blind-Stamped Bindings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), plates XLV (HE.b.5) and LIV (TC.a.7).

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#### 34) Manchester, Chetham's Library MS 6709, ff.6–159 (copied from print)

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century vellum and paper manuscript of 287 folios copied by William Cotson, a canon at the Augustinian priory in Dunstable. It was copied at various points between 1485, 1490 and 1493. It contains the *Life*, copied from Caxton's 1484 print of the poem (STC 17024) alongside a collection of Lydgatean and Chaucerian hagiographic texts copied from both print and manuscript sources. The manuscript measures 140 mm by 195 mm and is bound in a seventeenth-century, dark red, morocco binding made by the Restoration bookbinder Samuel Mearne (b.1624, d.1683). The text is written in a single column; the written area measures 90 mm by 110 mm. There are twenty-one lines to a page and three stanzas per page. The text is written in a secretary hand with some *anglicana* features. There are braces in some places and no paraphs. The secundo folio is much damaged, but reads: 'worce  
?capitulo nono'.

**Collation:** iii + 1<sup>28</sup> (wants ?1,2,3), 2<sup>20</sup>–9<sup>20</sup>, 10<sup>14</sup>, 11<sup>20</sup>, 12<sup>20</sup> (wants 1), 13<sup>18</sup>+1, 14–15<sup>10</sup>, 16–17<sup>20</sup>+iv. The outer leaves of each quire are vellum, while the central ones are paper. In quires 2–16 every leaf has quire and leaf numbers, which refer back to a table of contents at the start of the volume, with quire and leaf references.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete, largely preserving a form of the Type A apparatus as is found in the printed editions of the poem. This comprises eighty-seven chapters in a table of contents and eighty-two numbered and labelled in the text itself. There are no book divisions and no Latin marginal glossing. Cotson's text diverges from the Type A scheme, however, in that Cotson marks the division of Book I and II. This is something which also occurs in Bodl. MS Ashmole 59B. The text has an idiosyncratic introductory rubric: 'This boke was compyed by Dan John Lydgate monke of Burye and wrytn in the hondis of William Cotson ?de dunstable canonici the honoure, lawde worshyppe of almighty godde and of owre blessed ladye his modir and all the saynts whos lyvis shall [...] folowe as hitte shall be shewyd so [...] as hitte is chaptired'. The text concludes with, 'Explicit libellous de vita beate virginis marie compilatus per Domnum Iohanem lydgate...[illegible]... et scriptus manibus domini wilhelmi Cotson Canonici... die Aprilis hoc anno domini Milesimo ccc nonagesimo tercio calamum relaxaui... [illegible]'. A fuller account of this manuscript appears in the Conclusion.

**Decoration:** The decoration is spare, confined to enlarged two-line initials in red ink.

**Provenance:** Presumably acquired by Humphrey Chetham (bap.1580, d.1653) after the library of Dunstable Priory was dispersed in the dissolution of the monasteries. On Chetham, see Alan G. Crosby, 'Chetham, Humphrey (bap. 1580, d. 1653)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5243>, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> December 2015].

**Scholarship:** Ralph. A. Klinefelter, 'Lydgate's "Life of Our Lady" and the Chetham MS.6709', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 46 (1952), 396–97; Neil Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, Volume III: Lampeter-Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 345–46; N.F. Blake 'MS Chetham 6709 and Some Manuscript Copies of Caxton Prints', in *Language and Civilization: A Concerted Profusion of Essays and Studies in Honour of Otto Hietsch*, ed. by Claudia Blank (with the assistance of Judith Gilbert, Donald Gutch and Teresa Kirschner), 2 vols (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1992), II, pp. 239–54.

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#### 35) New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library MS 281, ff. 4–114v

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 114 folios containing the *Life* only. The manuscript measures 200 mm by 305 mm and is bound in eighteenth-century, blind-tooled goatskin binding (bound by Francis Bedford). The text is written in a single column; the ruled written area measures 120 mm by 195 mm. There are twenty-eight lines to a page and four stanzas per page. The text is written in a formal, bastard *anglicana*. There are no braces (except in the table of contents) but there are alternating blue and gold parphs with red flourishing at openings of each stanza. The secundo folio reads: 'How the angel warned Joseph'.

**Collation:** ii (modern vellum), i (medieval vellum)+ 1<sup>8</sup>–14<sup>8</sup>, 15<sup>2</sup>. Catchwords enclosed in scrolls throughout.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete. It preserves the Type A apparatus: eighty-seven numbered and labelled chapters, a programme of Latin glossing and no book division. However, there are borders and enlarged, decorated initials for the openings of Books I–IV (ff. 6r, 21r, 52r, 85v).

**Decoration:** On f. 5v is a large coat of arms, Carent quartered with Toomer, in a green, orange, and gold frame, against a dark green ground. On f. 6r, there is a small coat of arms of Carent enclosed by scrolls, in the lower margin, on a gold ground. Beneath are two seated (grumpy-looking) dogs, in black pen, set in an oblong landscape, edged heavily in black. One eight-line (f. 6r), four six-line (ff. 1r, 21r, 52r, 85v) and one four-line (f. 106r) initials, blue and red with white highlights, filled with large four-lobed flowers and acanthus leaves, orange, green, pink, blue, and light blue, against irregular gold grounds, edged in black, with full (ff. 1r, 6r), three-quarter (ff. 52r, 85v) or single marginal (ff. 21r, 106r) borders.

**Provenance:** Belonged to William Carent, who also owned Manchester, Rylands Library MS Eng. 1 (see Chapter One and Two for brief discussion of the links between Rylands MS Eng. 1 and the 'metropolitan group' manuscripts of the *Life*, and on Carent, see Edwards, cited below). On the verso of the original front, an inscription reads, 'thys boke yevyn | to the quene our souereyne | lady ffor to se the converssacyon | off our moost blessed lady off | hebyn ffor to conffort | and to passe tyme in | redyng and ovyr | seying thys lyttll | trety off hyr blessed', with the motto [?] 'aymer<sup>z</sup> et a tandyr'. 'Thomas Colley' signed his name in an imitation *textura formata* hand on the verso of the original front. Bookplate indicates that it belonged to Hannah D. Rabinowitz. The manuscript was bought by Yale in 1960 from C. A. Stonehill as the gift of Edwin J., Frederick W. and Walter Beinecke. It was previously sold at Hodgson's 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1953, lot 200, from the property of F. T. A. Ashton-Gwatkin, Esq. I thank Professor Edwards for this information. The annotated copy of the sale catalogue at the BL indicates that it was sold for £555.

**Scholarship:** Barbara Shailor, *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Beinecke Library, Volume II: MSS 251-500* (Binghampston, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1987), pp. 48–50. Christopher Faye and William Bond, *Supplement to the Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, p. 49, no. 281. A. I. Doyle, 'English Books In and Out of Court from Edward III to Henry VII', in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by V. J. Scattergood and J. W. Sherborne (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 163–82 (p. 174). On the Carent family, see *The Text of the Canterbury Tales Studied on the Basis of all Known Manuscripts*, ed. by Manly and Rickert, I, pp. 614–15. On this manuscript as a part of the 'metropolitan group', see Kathleen Scott, 'Caveat Lector: Ownership and Standardization in the Illustration of Fifteenth-Century English Manuscripts', esp. pp. 23–7. On the bookbinder, see W. Y. Fletcher, 'Bedford, Francis (1799–1883)', rev. Amanda Girling-Budd, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1928, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> December 2015].

**Description:** A mid fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 91 folios containing the *Life* alongside *The Privy of Passion*. The manuscript measures 150 mm by 205 mm and is bound in a worn, brown, eighteenth-century, morocco binding. The text is written in a single column, the ruled written area measures 100 mm by 160 mm. There are thirty-eight lines to a page and a variable number of stanzas per page; the stanza divisions are not demarcated. The text is written in a secretary hand. There are no braces but there are very small brown ink markers at the openings of each stanza. The secundo folio reads: 'her light daweth to avoid alle offence'.

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup> (wants 1) 2<sup>8</sup>–11<sup>8</sup>, 12<sup>6</sup> (wants 1 and 6). There are catchwords and the occasional quire signature.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is defective at the start and begins at Book I, l. 71. There is no textual apparatus: no chapters, no book division and no glossing. There are nineteen spaces left in the text for initials. These correspond to chapter openings in the Type A eighty-seven chapter scheme. There are only two small glosses, each pointing to 'de nomen Jhu', next to Book IV, ll. 246, 267. The text concludes with 'Thus endeth the purification of oure lady trewe Cristen men she is mene for mercy'. (f. 76r)

**Decoration:** There is no decoration. Some space has been left for initials, but they are unfilled.

**Provenance:** 'William Sende' in a fifteenth-century hand in the lower margin, f. 48v, written upside-down and in the same hand 'Thomas'. 'Robert Prestone bok' on f. 91v, equally upside-down. On the front pastedown is the bookplate of 'Sr. William Dudley of Clapton in the County of Northampton Baronet 1704' with the motto 'Galea spes salutis'. William Dudley (1696–1764) did not become baronet until 1721. This is the bookplate of his father Mathew, see Arn, cited below, p. 184.

Manuscript was presented to the Beinecke Library by Mr. and Mrs. H.P. Kraus in 1985. It was previously part of the collection of the Marquess of Bute. Sold at Sotheby's 13<sup>th</sup> June 1983, lot 9. Sold to Kraus for £16, 500.

**Scholarship:** Albert Derolez, Beinecke Library Online Catalogue: <http://brbl-net.library.yale.edu/pre1600ms/docs/pre1600.ms660.htm>, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> December 2015. Barbara Shailor, *The Medieval Book* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 86. Mary-Jo Arn, 'The Bute Manuscript of *The Privy of the Passion* (Yale University, Beinecke MS 660)', *Manuscripta*, 34 (1990), 177–89.

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### 37) Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 39, ff. 3v–109

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century paper manuscript of 109 folios containing the *Life*, and some short Middle English verses added to the final flyleaf by later hands: *NIMEV* 2245.4 – a unique couplet on love – a couplet on women's inconstancy *IMEV* 3914.5 (this does not appear in *NIMEV*) and *NIMEV* 3656, Lydgate's *Doublenesse*. The manuscript measures 210 mm by 290 mm and is bound in smooth, pale seventeenth-century calfskin over boards. The text is written in a single column, the written area measures 110 mm by 175 mm. There are twenty-eight lines to a page and four stanzas per page. The text is written in an elegant *anglicana* hand. There are no braces but there are red stanza markers at the start of the manuscript. The secundo folio reads: 'howe Joseph and oure'.

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup> (wants 1), 2<sup>8</sup>–4<sup>8</sup>, 5<sup>6</sup>–10<sup>6</sup>, 11<sup>8</sup>–13<sup>8</sup> (1 canc.) 14<sup>8</sup> (7 canc.) 15<sup>6</sup>, 16<sup>6</sup>. Binding strips of a ?thirteenth-century, vellum Latin manuscript are still visible between some of the quires.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete. The manuscript preserves the Type A apparatus of eighty-seven numbered and titled chapters (although in the second half of

the manuscript these are not filled in, see below) and a standard programme of Latin marginal glossing. There are no book divisions nor any vestiges of a system of book division. There are no running titles or running numbers.

**Decoration:** The decoration is spare. It most resembles that in BL Harley MS 4011. At the start of the manuscript the initial letters of each line are touched in red. The opening letters of each new chapter are decorated in red with professional-looking strap-work. Chapter titles are in red. After f. 55v, however, there is no more red ink in the manuscript, although chapters are numbered and spaces are left for chapter titles.

**Provenance:** Belonged to the Bourchier family. The names of Anne, Sir Thomas, and Isabel Bourchier or 'Bourghier' appear on the front and back inside covers. 'William Rous' also signed his name twice on the inside cover. Anne Bourchier, Countess of Stafford (c.1382, d.1438), née Anne of Woodstock, was the wife of Sir William Bourchier, Count of Eu (b.1374, d.1420). Sir Thomas was their grandson. William had a brother called Thomas (b.1411, d.1486), who was Archbishop of Canterbury, but it is unlikely he would have styled himself 'Sir' and the hand is a sixteenth-century hand.

**Scholarship:** H.H. E. Craster and Falconer Madan, *Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), no. 6919. William Henry Black, *A Descriptive, Analytical and Critical Catalogue of the Manuscripts Bequeathed Unto the University of Oxford by Elias Ashmole* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1845), p. 62. *Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliæ et Hiberniæ* (Oxoniæ: Theatro Sheldoniano, 1697), 6919, p. 319, also 7486, p. 334, which appears to be a duplication of the same record.

On the owners, see Ethel Seaton, *Sir Richard Roos, c. 1410–1482: Lancastrian Poet* (London: R. Hart-Davis, 1961) pp. 486–7 and Carole Rawcliffe, 'Bourchier, Sir William, count of Eu (c.1374–1420)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50242, accessed 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015] and 'Anne of Woodstock, countess of Stafford (c.1382–1438)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/54430, accessed 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015].

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### 38) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 59B, ff. 135–82

**Description:** An early seventeenth-century paper manuscript of 49 folios containing the *Life*, a short extract from the *Fall of Princes* (NIMEV 1168) and Lydgate's *Song of Vertu* (NIMEV 401). This manuscript is now bound with a fifteenth-century manuscript copied by the scribe, John Shirley (part A). The manuscript measures 200 mm by 280 mm and is bound in a worn, brown, eighteenth-century, morocco binding. The text is written by two scribes in a single column, the ruled written area measures 240 mm by 100 mm. There are a variable number of lines to a page and between five and six stanzas per page. The text is written in an Elizabethan secretary and then an italic-secretary admixture. There are no braces and no parphs. The secundo folio of the discrete *Life* manuscript reads: 'This is to say'.

**Collation:** Part B of the manuscript: i (paper)+ ?1<sup>8</sup> [Hand B takes over], 2<sup>10</sup> (wants 1), 3<sup>26</sup> (1 canc.) 4<sup>26</sup> (wants 1–21) [substantial section missing of 130 stanzas and 1 line], 5<sup>14</sup> (wants ?3,4 – only two leaves left in this quire).

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The manuscript has a complicated textual history. The final section is copied from Redman's STC 17024, while the earlier sections appear to have been copied from a manuscript witness. The poem is divided into books in the earlier sections, while the final part – a short extract from Book VI – appears to be a separate item, but is not. A seventeenth-century reviser, Reviser C, has numbered the chapters according to the scheme found in BL Add. MS 19252. Although Hand B (responsible for all of the text after the first

quire of eight) has supplied idiosyncratic Latin chapter titles, the chapters are not numbered. There is no marginal glossing, no table of contents and no introductory rubric. Hand A has numbered and titled the chapters according to the Type A scheme in the first quire. The text concludes with Caxton's epilogue verses. For a full discussion of this complex manuscript, see Chapter Five.

**Decoration:** There is no decoration. The idiosyncratic Latin chapter titles are written in a decorative humanist hand, otherwise the manuscript is completely unadorned.

**Provenance:** The provenance of the discrete *Life* section of the manuscript is not clear. It is unclear when the Shirley codex and the *Life* manuscript were bound together. William Browne of Tavistock, sometime owner of Durham MS Cosin 16.V. II, inscribed his name on f. 133v. The inscription reads: 'W Browne Inter Templi | 1614' and appears at the end of the Shirleian part of the codex.

**Scholarship:** William Henry Black, *A Descriptive, Analytical and Critical Catalogue of the Manuscripts Bequeathed Unto the University of Oxford by Elias Ashmole*, p. 104. *Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliæ et Hiberniæ*, nos. 6944, 6945, p. 320: extract from Book VI marked as a separate item. [Craster and Madan, *Summary Catalogue*, no. 6943]. On the first part of the manuscript see Eleanor Prescott Hammond, 'Ashmole 59 and other Shirley Manuscripts' *Anglia* 30 (1907), 320–48. Margaret Connolly, *John Shirley: Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth-century England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), esp. pp. 150–69; Cheryl Greenberg, 'John Shirley and the English Book Trade', *The Library*, Sixth Series, 4 (1982), 369–80; A. S. G. Edwards, 'John Shirley and the Emulation of Courtly Culture', in *The Court and Cultural Diversity: International Courtly Literature Society 1995*, ed. by Evelyn Mullally and John Thompson (Cambridge: D.S Brewer, 1997), pp. 309–19.

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### 39) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 75, ff. 1–83v

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century, paper manuscript of 84 folios containing the *Life* only. The manuscript measures 190 mm by 130 mm and is bound in a smooth, pale eighteenth-century calfskin binding. The text is written in a single column, the ruled written area measures 150 mm by 75 mm. There are thirty-five lines to a page and five stanzas per page. The text is written in a small, neat secretary hand. There are no braces but there are alternating red and blue parphs at the openings of each stanza. The secundo folio reads: 'lett me departe'.

**Collation:** iii (modern paper) +1<sup>8</sup> (wants 1, 8), 2<sup>8</sup>, 3<sup>10</sup> (1 canc.), 4<sup>8</sup> (1 canc.), 5<sup>8</sup>–10<sup>8</sup>, 11<sup>6</sup> + iii (modern paper)

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is defective at the start and begins at Book I, l. 71. The poem is divided into three books, marked with *incipits* and *explicits*. Additionally, there are three 'chapters', which designate what would be the boundaries between books in other witnesses. The start of Book IV is marked by a three-line enlarged initial, and a heading which reads 'de circumcisio domini capitulum' (f. 61v). Book V is marked by a similar initial and 'de epiphania dominum capitulum' (f. 67r). Book VI is unmarked by an initial, but has 'de purificacione beate marie capitulum' (f. 77r). Other than these 'chapters' there are no other chapters demarcated in the text, although there are thirteen decorated initials which correspond to thirteen of the eighty-seven chapter openings in the Type A scheme. The text contains idiosyncratic marginal glossing in Latin. A full discussion of this manuscript can be found in Chapter Three.

**Decoration:** The decoration is spare. There are red and blue parphs at the openings of each stanza, while the openings of books have red flourishing around enlarged blue initials. Marginal glossing has red or blue parphs and is underlined in red.

**Provenance:** 'Wyliam tomas boynton' (f. 84r, also ff. 7r, 50v, 66r). 'John clarkson in rychmond' (f. 84r). At the end of the poem, an eighteenth-century hand has written, on f. 83v: 'Here endeth y<sup>e</sup> Poem entitled y<sup>e</sup> Life of our Lady by John Lydgate there wants a leafe in ye beginning which may be supplied out of MS NE F. 3.9.' This note points readers to the entry for Bodley MS 596 which appears as F. 3.9 (2376) in *Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliæ et Hiberniæ*, p. 122. Sections of a sixteenth-century letter trial on the verso of the final folio. *Summary Catalogue* (cited below) suggests that 'the MS probably reached the Library in 1603 or 1604'.

**Scholarship:** Craster and Madan, *Summary Catalogue*, no. 2253, II, p. 280. *Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliæ et Hiberniæ*, E.1.6, p. 117.

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#### 40) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 120, ff. 1–94v

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century, vellum manuscript of 105 folios containing the *Life* only. The manuscript measures 175 mm by 270 mm and is bound in a seventeenth-century, morocco binding with a repaired spine. The text is written by at least two scribes, with different hand styles. It may have been a stationer's copy: in several places there are stationer's notes directing the scribes to fill in chapter headings and other extra-textual material. The hand styles change from the recto to the verso of a folio (see, for example, f.7), suggesting that the scribe was testing out styles. The poem is written in a single column, the ruled written area is of variable size depending on the hand, but measures approximately 111 mm by 200 mm. There are between twenty-eight and forty-five lines to a page. One scribe copies four stanzas per page, while another has a variable number of around six stanzas per page. Hand A writes in a spiky, gothic secretary with some *anglicana* features, there is strapwork at the top of the page, chapter titles in red and no braces and no paraphs. Hand B (possibly Hand A in a different style) uses a highly formal *textura quadrata*. On pages copied by this hand, the initial letter of every stanza is exquisitely decorated with a small human face and touched in pale yellow ink. (In his printed edition of the *Life* [STC 17025], Robert Redman printed decorative letters of a similar kind.) This hand does not supply braces or paraphs. Hand C, who copied more than four stanzas per page, writes in a secretary with some *anglicana* features, this hand supplies both red ink braces and stanza markers. The secundo folio reads: 'And the licour of thy grace'. The manuscript in its current binding contains its original binding fragments as flyleaves. These are parts of four vellum leaves from a late eleventh-century sacramentary, a paper leaf written in the late fifteenth-century containing sections of Middle English verse and some leaves from a twelfth-century breviary with musical notation.

**Collation:** i (modern paper) + ii (vellum) + i (paper) + 1<sup>10</sup>(1,2 canc.), 2<sup>8</sup>, 3<sup>8</sup>, 4<sup>8</sup>, 5<sup>8</sup> - 12<sup>8</sup>, 13<sup>4</sup> (wants 2,3,4?) + i (paper, numbered), ii (vellum, numbered). Catchwords, when they appear, usually on the pages copied by Hand B, are in decorative banners, sometimes with human faces.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text begins at the prologue and ends imperfectly in the penultimate stanza (Book VI, l. 454). The text preserves a form of the Type A apparatus: eighty-seven chapters and a standard programme of Latin marginal glossing. Unusually, however, for manuscripts with eighty-seven chapters, the poem is divided into six books. Because of the variability of the hands, the titling and numbering of the chapters is highly variable. Often titles do not appear, although there are notes in a very small, very faint stationer's hand. There is no table of contents or introductory rubric.

**Decoration:** The decoration is variable depending on the hand. Hand B's pages are beautifully decorated with human faces in the initial letters of each stanza. The Latin marginal glossing

copied by this scribe is in a tiny, neat *textura*, with the names of biblical authorities placed in decorative banners, sometimes with small human faces attached to them.

**Provenance:** An erased inscription on f. 1 read 'Theo Myllr?1687'. Inscription on the opening paper flyleaf in an eighteenth-century hand reads 'May 7<sup>o</sup> MDCCXV Bibliothecae Bodleiana dono dedit Vir pererudi-tus Guilielmus Brewster, de Herefordia MD'. Next to this is a note reading, 'NE F. 9. 6'. This refers to a handwritten addition to the Bodleian library's open-shelf copy of *Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliæ et Hiberniæ*, added between p. 128 and p. 129, which reads 'poem on the life of the B Virgin in Vi books by an unknown author fol. Bodl. 120.' Above this a contemporary, but different, hand has written 'A Poem of y<sup>e</sup> Virgin Mary'. On the recto of the opening leaf there is another note, reading 'NE F.9. 16', which appears to be an error for '9.6' as no entry exists for '9.16'.

**Scholarship:** Craster and Madan, *Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, no. 27643, V, p. 318. F. C. Morgan, 'Dr. William Brewster of Hereford (1665–1715)', *Medical History*, 8 (1964), 137–48.

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#### 41) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 596, ff. 86–174

**Description:** A mid fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 89 folios (ff. 86–174), now bound with three other discrete manuscripts containing miscellaneous pieces ranging in date from the eleventh- to the fifteenth-century. The manuscript measures 161 mm by 240 mm and is bound in a seventeenth-century, brown, morocco binding. The text is written in a single column, the written area measures approximately 90 mm by 170 mm. There are a variable number of lines to a page, but usually thirty-five with approximately five stanzas per page. The text is written in a small, neat *anglicana*-secretary admixture. There are no braces but there are red parphs at the openings of each stanza. The secundo folio of the *Life* manuscript reads: 'And the licour'.

**Collation:** Catchwords and traces of quire signatures, some now trimmed. 1<sup>8</sup>–10<sup>8</sup>, 11<sup>10</sup> (wants 10)

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** Contains the Type A(ii) apparatus of eighty-six numbered and titled chapters and four book divisions, with red ink *incipits*: Book II (f. 100r), Book III (f. 124r), Book IV (f. 151v). However, the end of Books IV–V are marked with an 'amen' at the end of the section, indicating that they are discrete sections (ff. 157r and 167v). This also occurs in John's MS 56, which also contains the Type A(ii) apparatus. The manuscript probably once contained the table of contents and the introductory rubric, but the opening folio is now the opening of the prologue. The text concludes 'Explicit Vitam Beate Marie Virginis' (f. 174v).

**Decoration:** Chapter initials of three-line length are in gold on a blue and mauve ground with white tracery infilling. Chapter titles and marginal glossing in red ink. Two decorated borders at f. 96r and 97r for the opening of the prologue and the opening of the first chapter. The first is a gold initial of four-line length decorated at its centre with a red rose, with blue and white infilling. This extends into a floral border with red, orange, green and blue holly leaves, green and gold bubbles and foliage sprays. Amidst these are distinctive flowers with striped petals, trumpet flowers and acanthus. The second border is similar, with a gold initial and spotted acanthus flowers. There are spaces left for small illustrations of a stanza's length, but these are only filled in with pen and ink drawings in four places. The images depict the presentation of the Virgin in the Temple (f. 89r), the marriage of Mary and Joseph (f. 96r), Joseph as a carpenter returning to Bethlehem (f. 98r) and the Annunciation (f. 104v).

**Provenance:** Belonged to John Stow, see notes to TCC MSS R. 3.19, R.3.21 and BL Add. MS 29729 above and HEH MS HM 144 below. Stow wrote, ‘Compiled by John Lydgate | monke of berry on whos soull god haue mercy amen’ on f. 174v, at the end of the poem after the *explicit*.

**Scholarship:** Craster and Madan, *Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, no. 2376, II, p. 336. *Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Anglice et Hiberniae*, F.3.9, p. 122.

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#### 42) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 73, ff. 10–116v

**Description:** A mid fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 124 folios containing the *Life* alongside a collection of Lydgatean and Chaucerian short poems. The manuscript measures 205 mm by 295 mm and is bound in a worn, eighteenth-century binding of marbled paper over boards. The spine is damaged and the stitching is visible, the spine covering of pale calfskin is now almost entirely lost. The manuscript is written by several hands, although the text of the *Life* is written by a single hand, in a single column. The ruled written area measures 110 mm by 190 mm. There are twenty-eight lines to a page and four stanzas per page. The text is written in a neat, upright *anglicana*-secretary admixture. There are no braces and no paraphs. The secundo folio reads: ‘Sey first this psalme’.

**Collation:** iii (one paper, two vellum) + 1<sup>6</sup>, 2<sup>8</sup> -13<sup>8</sup>, 14<sup>8</sup> (wants 8) 15<sup>4</sup>, 16<sup>8</sup> (wants 1,2) + ii (vellum, numbered). Some catchwords.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** Text is complete. The final three leaves of the poem (ff. 113–116) are copied by a different scribe. The manuscript contains the Type A(ii) apparatus. It has eighty-six numbered chapters, which are not titled in the text, but titled in the table of contents at the end (ff.117–18). Unusually, the text is divided into four numbered and labelled books, the divisions of which are also demarcated by decorative borders. There are running book numbers at the top of each page. There is no marginal Latin glossing. The table of contents, unusually, divides the eighty-six chapters into four books and is preceded by the introductory rubric. This manuscript and Lambeth MS 344 were copied from the same exemplar. They both contain the same division of the text in eighty-six chapters and four books. They also both share, alongside the text of the *Life*, NIMEV 222, 808, 2483, 2791, 3190 and 4246. On this see Henry Noble MacCracken, ‘Notes Suggested by a Chaucer Codex’.

**Decoration:** There are decorated borders at the openings of each of the books (ff. 10r, 25v, 55v, 87v). These consist of three-line initials in gold on a blue and mauve ground with white tracery in-filling, which extend out into foliage sprays with green bubble leaves, small gold flowers, and blue, green and pink trumpet flowers with red stamens, alongside larger mauve, green and blue leaves. The openings of chapters have two-line blue initials with red flourishing borders and red tracery infilling.

**Provenance:** Apparently owned by Margaret Roper, née More (b. 1505, d.1544), daughter of Sir Thomas More. In sixteenth-century hands the following inscriptions occur: ‘Thys is my lady more boke and sumtym it was Quene margarete boke’ (f. 121v); ‘Thys ys my lady Dame Elizabeth Wyndesor boke, the xiiijth day of December | In the iiij yere of the reyne off kyng harry the viiith (f.122r); ‘Thys boke was late my lady dame Elizabeth Windesore who dessesed owte of thys wourlde the xviith day of January in the yere of oure lord god mdxxxii and the yere of the reyne of kyng henry the viiith on whose sowll Jhesus haue mercy amen’ (f. 123r). The names, ‘Margareta More’ and ‘Elyzabeth Wyndesore’ (f.1v) also appear, as does ‘Marya Gertrude’ (seventeenth-century), f. 9v.

*Summary Catalogue* (cited below) suggests that the manuscript was acquired by Lord Hatton from Thomas Windsor, 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Windsor of Stanwell.

**Scholarship:** H.H. E. Craster, N. Denholm-Young and Falconer Madan, *Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), III, pp. 850–51, no. 4119. *Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae* (Oxoniae: Theatro Sheldoniano, 1697), p. 185, 4119. George Keiser, 'Serving the Needs of Readers: Textual Division in some Late-Medieval English Texts', and also by Keiser, *Ordinatio in the Manuscripts of John Lydgate's *Lyf of Our Lady*: Its Value for the Reader, Its Challenge for the Modern Editor*'.

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#### 43) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson poet 140, ff. 4–108v

**Description:** An early fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of 110 folios containing the *Life*, followed by NIMEV 2742, *Pees Maketh Plente*. The manuscript measures 230 mm by 160 mm and is bound in a worn, brown, suede, eighteenth-century binding. The text is written in a single column; the ruled written area measures 100 mm by 165 mm. There are twenty-eight lines to a page and four stanzas per page. The text is written in a boxy *anglicana formata*. There are no braces and no parath. The secundo folio reads: 'to taste the water of ȝelousie'.

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup>–3<sup>8</sup>, 4<sup>8</sup> (wants 1), 5<sup>8</sup>–13<sup>8</sup> (wants 6,7,8) + ii

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete. The manuscript preserves the Type A apparatus of eighty-seven numbered and titled chapters. There are no books but the vestiges of a six book divisions exist, with three-line enlarged initials for Books I–VI (as opposed to two-line for chapter openings). There are running chapter numbers at the top of each page, in red ink with a blue parath.

**Decoration:** In keeping the pattern found in the central cluster of the metropolitan group manuscripts, important words in each line are underlined in red (cf. BL, Harley MS 629). First letters of new stanzas are written in alternating blue and red. New chapters have blue and red flourishing around initial letters which are gold, red and blue. Chapter titles and marginal glossing are written in red ink with a blue parath mark. The opening folio has a blue, gold and mauve border extending out from the enlarged initial letter of the introductory rubric. It has gold and green bubbles and a flourishing floral motif.

**Provenance:** Opening vellum flyleaf contains: 'N. Mawnsell' (fifteenth-century) and also in the same hand: 'Cest livre apelle la nativite de notre dame et apartiente a cest arms' [this book is called the nativity of our lady and belongs to these arms] beneath a coat of arms, crudely drawn. On the opening paper flyleaf is an inscription in a large, messy, eighteenth-century hand which reads, 'MS Thoresby'. This may be the signature of the Leeds antiquary Ralph Thoresby (b.1658, d.1725). The *Summary Catalogue* states that 'this is probably wrong, though many of the Thoresby MSS came to Rawlinson through Wilson'. In private communication with me Professor Michael Kuczynski says he believes this to be Thoresby's hand, or that of his son. An inscription on the second vellum flyleaf states that the manuscript was 'Tho. Wilson's purchased | out of the Library of the Reverend Mr Jo Briggs MA | later Vicar of Kirkburton in Yorkshire'. What follows is a biography and bibliography of Lydgate based, apparently, on John Bale's *Scriptorum Illustrum Maioris Brytannie* (Basileae: Apud Ioan nem Oporinum, 1559), pp. 586–87 (see Chapter Five for brief discussion). Thomas Wilson (b.1703, d.1784) also copied sections of the *Life* – the non-authorial introductory rubric, the final chapter of the poem (VI, 309–462) and the Chaucer commendation (Book II, ll. 1628–55) – onto the final leaves of an early fourteenth-century Psalter, now Harvard, Houghton Library MS Lat. 394.

**Scholarship:** H.H. E. Craster and Falconer Madan, *Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, III, p. 312, no. 14634. On Thoresby, see P. E. Kell, 'Thoresby, Ralph (1658–1725)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2006

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27334>, accessed 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015]. See also the entry for Houghton MS Lat. 394 above.

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#### 44) Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 237, ff. 158–240

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century paper manuscript of 245 folios containing the *Life* alongside a collection of devotional and penitential texts, including a life of Saint Catherine, a verse life of Saint Margaret, Lydgate's *Danse Macabre*, William Lichfield's *Complaint of God* and the English version of the *Pélerinage de l'âme*. The manuscript measures 300 mm by 210 mm and is bound in a contemporary, pink tawed skin binding. The text is written in a single column, the ruled written area measures 210 mm by 100 mm (that is for the *Life* – the dimensions of the written area for each text vary). There are approximately thirty-five lines to a page and a variable number of stanzas per page. The text is written by several scribes in *anglicana* hands. There are no braces and no paraphs. The secundo folio reads: 'spedfull to þe need of oure'.

**Collation:** iv + 1<sup>16</sup>, 2<sup>10</sup>, 3–6<sup>8</sup>, 7<sup>10</sup>, 8<sup>8</sup>–14<sup>8</sup>, 15<sup>10</sup>, 16<sup>8</sup>, 17<sup>20</sup>, 18<sup>22</sup>, 19<sup>20</sup> (wants 19), 20<sup>16</sup>, 21<sup>22</sup> + iv

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete. There are some chapter titles, but not all of them. Only some of them are numbered, often by a later hand, who has also added occasional book divisions: 'libro secundo' f.170v. The same scribal hand has added 'explicit liber' at the start of Book III, f.194r. There is no division for Book IV (f.219r) and no division for Book VI (f.233v), although the chapter title, 'how owre lady was purfyed' appears. The text concludes with 'Explicit vite Marie', (f. 240r).

**Decoration:** The manuscript is spare, there are occasional spaces left for initials. There are some rubrics, red touchings and marginal ornamentation.

**Provenance:** On the front paste-down, 'iste liber constat Edmondus Carpenter', in a fifteenth-century hand. The first scribe signs himself 'E.C', presumably they are one and the same. On f. I 'Iste lyber constat Thome Langley', also 'TLL' on f. i. On f. i<sup>v</sup> 'Henfeld' (erased), in a large fifteenth-century hand. Several members of the 'Langley' family inscribed their names on the verso of the first flyleaf, including 'Margery', 'Rycharde' and 'John'. Also 'John Gotstone', 'Thomas smyth', 'Edmond Chessoll, gentyllman', 'Iste lyber constat Jamys Benytt' and 'T. Caley'. On f. 241v and f. 244v is 'Barker'. (Thomson suggests that Barker may be the second scribe, see citation below, p. 122.) Also on f. 244 is 'Her is John Powntersone'. On f. 242 'Jamys Benytt | partinet yste liber'. On f. 243 '[hic] est lybar Roggar'. On f. 244v, 'John Smythe myrser de Wyllyn' and 'Mr Iohanne Pownterstone'. Owned by John Dee, his ladder symbol appears on f. 1. Appears to have been bequeathed to the college by the antiquary Brian Twyne (b.1581, d.1644). On f. ii<sup>v</sup> is 'W.C.3.14', referring to *Catalogi Librorum Manuscriptorum Angliae et Hiberniae* (Oxonii: Theatro Sheldoniano, 1697), no. 1704, p. 237.

**Scholarship:** Rodney M. Thomson, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of Corpus Christi College, Oxford: Western Manuscripts* (Cambridge: D.S Brewer for Corpus Christi College, 2011), pp. 121–22. On Twyne, A. J. Hegarty, 'Twyne, Brian (1581–1644)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27924>, accessed 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2015]

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#### 45) Oxford, St. John's College MS 56, ff. 1–71

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century paper manuscript of 85 folios containing the *Life* alongside Lydgate's *Interpretation of the Mass* (NIMEV 4246) and *Lamentacioun of Our Lady Maria* (NIMEV 4099). The manuscript measures 295 mm by 215 mm and is bound in a twentieth-century, morocco binding. The text is written in a single column, the ruled written area measures 203 mm by 120 mm. There are forty-two lines to a page and six stanzas per page. The text is written in a secretary hand. There are no braces and no parphs. The secundo folio reads: 'yiffe for the ffirste'.

**Collation:** i + 1<sup>12</sup>, 2<sup>12</sup> (12 is torn away), 3<sup>12</sup> 7<sup>12</sup> (11 and 12 fragmentary) + ii. Catchwords and quire signatures.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** Like Lambeth MS 344 and Bodl. MS Hatton 73, the text has eighty-seven chapters but is divided into four books. It contains a table of contents in which the chapters are divided across book divisions, at the end of the poem on ff. 71r–73r, running on from the text. The table of contents contains a variant conclusion to the introductory rubric which reads: 'Divided into foure books chapetred and marked afftyr this table / The ffyrste book haþe x chapetres/ The secunde Book . xxiiij. Chapetres. The thyrdde Book . hathe xxiiij . The ffourthe . Book hathe . xx[?c/i]ij chapetres'(this should read xxvij). The numeration in the text is in Arabic numerals, although the table has Roman numerals. There are ten chapters in the first book, twenty-four in the second, twenty-four in the third and twenty-eight in the fourth. The text begins 'Here be gynethe the Prolog of the bok? [illegible] ke of oure lady' (f. 1r) and concludes with 'Amen'.

**Decoration:** Very little decoration. There are three- and four-line spaces left for initials. Some marginal glossing is underlined in red. All other textual division markers are in the main text ink.

**Provenance:** 'Thomas Pope' (f. 56v), 'Allgernon? Togess?' (f. 74r) in late fifteenth-century hands. Note on f. 1 identifies the text in a seventeenth-century hand: 'Lydgate of the Birthe of oure Lady in four Books, the interpretation of the canon of the mass'. On f. 1 in the margin, 'Liber Collegii Sancti Joannis Baptistae Ex dono Venerabilis Viri Richardi Tilesly Sacrae Theologiae Doctoris Archidiaconi Roffensis et Quondam Socij'. On ff. 86r–87r there are two letters in sixteenth-century hands from Thomas Elmes in Cambridge to Mr Bachouse, Dean of Oundhill and to Robart Andrewe in Peterborough.

**Scholarship:** Ralph Hanna, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Medieval Manuscripts of St John's College, Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) pp. 74–75. On the unusual chapter arrangement, see George Keiser, 'Serving the Needs of Readers'.

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#### 46) Rome, Archivum Venerabilis Collegii Anglorum de Urbe, Liber 1405 (formerly known as Venerable English College MS 1306), ff. 1–65

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century, paper manuscript of 160 folios containing the *Life* alongside a collection of courtly prose and verse texts, including Burgh's *Parvus Cato* (NIMEV 3955) and *Cato Major* (NIMEV 854), and Lichfield's *Complaint of God* (NIMEV 2714), all of which appear in other manuscripts containing the *Life*. The manuscript measures 190 mm by 260 mm and is bound in a pale eighteenth-century, calfskin binding. The text is written in a single column, the ruled written area measures 100 mm by 200 mm (for the *Life* text). There are approximately thirty-five lines to a page and five stanzas per page in the text of the *Life*. The text is written in a secretary hand with some *anglicana* features. There are no braces and no

paragraphs. The secundo folio reads: 'My rude tonge exlite'. The scribe names himself at the end of the manuscript as 'J. Preston'.

**Collation:** 1<sup>8</sup>–10<sup>8</sup>, 11<sup>8</sup> (wants 7,8), 12<sup>8</sup>–14<sup>8</sup> (8 blank), 15<sup>8</sup> (4 blank, 5, 6, 7, 8 canc.) 16<sup>8</sup>–20<sup>8</sup>, 21<sup>6</sup> +i (medieval vellum)

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is defective at the start and begins at Book II, l. 365. The manuscript preserves the Type A apparatus of eighty-seven titled and numbered chapters and no book divisions. There seems to have been the suggestion of six vestigial book divisions. There are enlarged initials for the start of Books III–VI (ff. 18v, 44r, 50v and 60v). As the manuscript is missing an opening section of the text, it does not contain the introductory rubric or table of contents, but probably once had them.

**Decoration:** Initial letters of each stanza in alternating red and blue, rubrication and glossing in red in the marginal space for *Life* (for the other texts, it is sometimes in the inter-stanza space). Initial letters of new chapters have flourishing pen-work tracery borders extending around them.

**Provenance:** Manuscript has been in the English Hospital (as it was then known) since the sixteenth century. 'This is Rychard Turbyll's bocke Recorde of Sir Thomas Carne and many more of the hospitale in Rome', f. 121v. Thomas Carne (d. 1602) was the son of Sir Edward Carne, who was first a legal advisor to Henry VIII in the 1530s in the deliberations over his divorce from Katherine of Aragon and latterly the ambassador to the Holy See under the reigns of Mary I and Elizabeth I. Later he was governor of the English Hospital from 1559 until his death on January 11<sup>th</sup> 1561.

**Scholarship:** Ralph A. Klinefelter, 'A Newly Discovered Fifteenth-Century English Manuscript', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 14 (1953), 3–6, also Rossell Hope Robbins, 'A Middle English Diatribe against Philip of Burgundy', *Neophilologus*, 39 (1955), 131–46. The in-house journal of the Venerable English College has occasionally printed sections of the college's extensive records of visitors, amongst the list of pilgrims for 1484 were 'Richard Turburyle' (April 11<sup>th</sup>) and 'D.J.Preston', 6<sup>th</sup> March, either of these might have brought the book to Rome, or it might have been Carne. See George Hay, 'Pilgrims and the Hospice', *The English Hospice in Rome: The Venerabile, Sexcentenary Issue*, printed by Exeter Catholic Records Press, 21 (1962), 99–144 (pp. 115, 123). On Carne, see L. E. Hunt, 'Carne, Sir Edward (c.1496–1561)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press 2004; online edn, Jan 2008  
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4712>, accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013]

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#### 47) San Marino, Huntington Library MS HEH HM 115, ff. 2v–112

**Description:** An early-to-mid fifteenth-century, vellum manuscript of 113 folios now containing the *Life*. The manuscript was originally part of a larger codex, now Cambridge, St John's College MS 250 [N.17] Cambridge, St John's College MS 249 [N.16] and Harvard University MS Richardson 44. The complete codex once contained a *Life of Saint Jerome*, a prose *Life of Saint Katherine of Alexandria* and a *Life of Saint John the Evangelist and Saint John the Baptist*. On this see Keiser, cited below. The manuscript measures 150 mm by 220 mm and is bound in a late eighteenth-century, blue, morocco binding by the binder Christian Kathloeber. The text is written in a single column, the ruled written area measures 90 mm by 140 mm. There are approximately twenty-six lines to a page and under four stanzas per page. The text is written in an upright *anglicana formata*. There are no braces but there are alternating red and blue paraphs at the openings of each stanza. The secundo folio reads: 'of simple soules'.

**Collation:** i (contemporary vellum flyleaf) + 1–9<sup>12</sup> + iii (modern leaves with a modern imitation hand concluding the text, from f. 110r).

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text is complete until f. 110r, when a modern imitation hand takes over. This manuscript has a unique textual system of division, in it are thirty-six chapters and the vestiges of three book divisions. It contains a unique introductory rubric, reading, ‘These bene þe notable matiers þat bene contynede in thyss booke’(f. 1r). For a full discussion of the system of division, see Chapter Three.

**Decoration:** Alternating red and blue paraph marks at the openings of each stanza, with alternating red or blue flourishing penwork. The openings of chapters have two-line initials in gold lettering on blue or mauve background with white tracery in-filling and foliage sprays of green leaves and gold bubbles. The opening initial of the poem and the opening initial of Book III (the vestige of a book division system) on f.2v and f. 52r are three-line enlarged initials of pink with white in-filling on a gold ground with red, blue, green and red leaves terminating in pale, green leaves with small trumpet flowers with spotted stamens and gold motifs of barbs and double crosses.

**Provenance:** The Harvard and John’s manuscripts were sold together as lot 3597 at the Missenden Abbey sale on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1774 by Samuel Paterson. See *Bibliotheca Monastica Fletwodiana* (London: Samuel Paterson, 1774), p. 205. The manuscript was acquired by the bibliographer William Herbert (b.1718, d.1795). It has pencilled notes collating the text against STC 17024, by Herbert. He discusses this manuscript and the print in his enlarged edition of Joseph Ames’ *Typographical Antiquities*, later revised by Dibdin. It can only be this manuscript because his discussion concerns a manuscript with thirty-six chapters and HEH MS HM 115 is the only manuscript with this arrangement. See Joseph Ames, William Frognall Dibdin, William Herbert, *Typographical Antiquities or, the History of Printing in England, Scotland and Ireland, begun by the late Joseph Ames*, 4 vols (London: William Savage, 1810), I, p. 340. Subsequently sold at his sale by Arrowsmith and Bowley, 21<sup>st</sup> November 1798, lot 909. At this point the texts were still bound together, it seems. The Arrowsmith and Bowley catalogue describes the ‘beautiful MS.’ as containing all four. All four texts belonged to John Towneley (b.1731, d. 1813). It was probably at this time that they were rebound, separately, by Kathoeber. Sold in Towneley’s sale by Evans 8<sup>th</sup> June 1814. They were lots 879 (*Jerome*), sold for £5, lots 880 and 881 (*Lydgate’s Life*), sold for £6 11 d and £14. I am unsure as to why the *Life* appeared as two lots. Each of these lots were sold to ‘Longman’. Lot 882 (*Life of Saint Katherine*) was sold for £11, 11d to ‘Triphook’, while lot 883 (*Lives of John the Baptist and John the Evangelist*) were sold for £16 6 d to ‘Prest’. The *Life* section belonged to William Bragge (b. 1823, d. 1884), sold Sotheby’s 7<sup>th</sup> June 1876 to Ellis and White for £47. Latterly in the collection of Robert Hoe, see Carolyn Shipman, *A Catalogue of Manuscripts Forming a Portion of the Library of Robert Hoe* (New York: privately printed, 1909), p. 126. Shipman clearly thought this MS to have to authorial textual division, describing Caxton’s divisions of the poem as ‘arbitrary’. Sold by Hoe through Anderson, New York, part I, 1911, lot 2148. Sold to G.D. Smith for \$1025. Acquired by Henry E. Huntington before 1916.

**Scholarship:** Seymour de Ricci, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, I, p. 52. C. W. Dutschke (with the assistance of R.H. Rouse, Sara S. Hodson, Virginia Rust, Herbert C. Schulz, Ephrem Compte), *A Guide to the Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, 2 vols (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1989), I, pp. 152-53. A full digital facsimile of the Harvard manuscript is available at: [http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/early\\_manuscripts/bibliographies/richardson.cfm](http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/early_manuscripts/bibliographies/richardson.cfm). On the sister manuscripts, see George Keiser, ‘Serving the Needs of Readers’, p. 215.

**48) San Marino, Huntington Library MS HEH HM 144, ff. 11–20 and 77v–79 (two extracts: II, 1–501; II, 981–1060)**

**Description:** A late fifteenth-century paper manuscript of 152 folios containing two extracts of the *Life* alongside a collection of secular and religious prose and verse texts, including William Lichfield's *Complaint of God*, some Lydgatean texts and Chaucer's *Monk's Tale*. The manuscript measures 290 mm by 200 mm and is bound in a ledger-style, sixteenth-century binding. The text is written in a single column, the ruled written area measures 185 mm by 130 mm. In the parts of the manuscript containing the *Life*, there are twenty-eight or thirty-two lines to a page and four stanzas per page. The text is written in a secretary hand. There are no braces but there are red paraphs at the openings of each stanza. The secundo folio reads: 'Man I haue'.

**Collation:** 1<sup>10</sup>, 2<sup>12</sup>, 3<sup>16</sup>, 4<sup>8</sup>, 5<sup>16</sup>, 6<sup>6</sup>, 7<sup>14</sup>, 8<sup>16</sup>, 9<sup>18</sup> (wants 4), 10<sup>10</sup>, 11<sup>12</sup>, 12<sup>12</sup> (wants 10), 13<sup>10</sup> (wants 5, 7, 8, 10).

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The manuscript contains two extracts: a section from Book II, 1–504 (ff. 11–20), describing the 'Parliament of Heaven' and the *Magnificat* paraphrase (II, 940–1060), ff. 77v–79r, inserted into the *Stasys of Jerusalem* (NIMEV 986), a Middle English pilgrimage text.

**Decoration:** The decoration in the manuscript is spare, restricted to the occasional use of enlarged initials in red ink. Some spaces are left unfilled (ff. 120v, 125v, 129). There are some paraphs marks in red and corrections and underlinings in red ink too. There are running titles in brown ink.

**Provenance:** On the inside of the front and back covers are various inscriptions: 'John tylly owth for ii bowsylles of wy... the pres xxiii d' and 'Iste confessor domyni. Iste lyber pertenethe nicolaus serll'. Also 'Th. Sayer me tenet 7 decembris 1617' (f. ii) and 'Th. Sayer' (f. i). 'John Skynner' and 'John Skynner of farnham'. Manly and Rickert identified possibly candidates (as they did for BL Harley MS 2382, on which see Chapter Three) *The Text of the Canterbury Tales Studied on the Basis of all Known Manuscripts*, ed. by Manly and Rickert, IV, pp. 152–214. They also suggested that a note on f. 81 was in the hand of William Thynne (d. 1546), in preparation for his 1531 edition of Chaucer's *Works* (STC 5068). The manuscript was owned by John Stow, see the notes above for BL Add. MS 29729 and TCC MS R. 3.21, Bodl. MS Bodley 596, TCC MS R. 3. 19, BL Harley MS 7333. It was from HEH MS HM 144 that he copied the *Magnificat* paraphrase into BL MS Add. 29729. Belonged to a member of the Savile family, although not Henry Savile of Banke (b. 1568, d. 1617), it is not listed amongst his manuscripts, see Andrew G. Watson, *The Manuscripts of Henry Savile of Banke* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1969). Sold in the Savile sale, Sotheby's 6<sup>th</sup> February 1861, lot 34 to Ellis for £88. Subsequently sold by Ellis to Henry Huth (b. 1815, d. 1878). The manuscript appears in *The Huth Library: A Catalogue of the Printed Books, Manuscripts, Autograph Letters, and Engravings Collected by Henry Huth*, 6 vols (London, 1880), IV, pp. 1158–59. Sold in the sale of Alfred H. Huth, Sotheby's, 11<sup>th</sup> July 1917, lot 5871. Sold to Quaritch for £255. Acquired by Henry E. Huntington before 1925.

**Scholarship:** C. W. Dutschke et al, *A Guide to the Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, pp. 197–203. Seymour de Ricci, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, pp. 58–59.

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**49) Somerset, Longleat, Marquess of Bath MS 15, ff. 5v–104v**

**Description:** A mid-to-late fifteenth-century paper manuscript of 104 folios containing the *Life* only. The manuscript measures 150 mm by 220 mm and is bound in a nineteenth-century,

green, morocco binding. The text is written in a single column; the written area measures 104 mm by 160 mm. There are twenty-eight lines to a page and four stanzas per page, although the chapter titles appear in the inter-stanza space and disrupt the ordering of four stanzas per page. The text is written by two scribes in a formal *anglicana*. There are no braces but there are red parphs at openings of each stanza. The secundo folio reads: 'howe our lady was brouȝte'.

**Collation:** ii + 1<sup>8</sup>–13<sup>8</sup> +iii (paper, unfoliated). Some quire signatures some ends of quires are rubbed and worn, indicating that it may have spent some of its history in separate booklets.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** The text ends imperfectly at Book VI, l. 128. The text preserves the Type A apparatus of eighty-seven numbered and titled chapters, a standard programme of Latin glossing and no book division. There is a table of contents and the introductory rubric. There is no suggestion of vestigial book division in the form of enlarged initials or decorated borders.

**Decoration:** The chapter titles are written in red, in the ruled space. There are running chapter numbers at the top of each page, surrounded by red paraph marks. Catchwords have decorated borders, with red touching. The table has alternating blue and red initial letters, opening initials in blue with red flourishing. Here the chapter numbers are in black ink and there is some strap-work at the top and bottom of the writing area. The manuscript is spare in appearance. The margins are small, although there are red ink chapter titles, the marginal glossing is all in brown ink.

**Provenance:** Appears to have been in the family of the Marquess of Bath since the sixteenth century. f. 5r inscribed: 'Liber Joannis Thynne | Jon Thynne Jon Thynne' (sixteenth-century hand), much scribbling on the flyleaves, 'ave maria gracia' [fifteenth-century, gothic hand]. On f. 107 r, 'Benedicte Omnia opera domini? Dominus? Laudate et suprem exaltate omnis secula/cecula'. On f. 106r–v, 'ave maria gracia, ave maria gracia'. On f. 107r, 'revenerendo in xpi ?justicia'.

**Scholarship:** The manuscript is almost entirely neglected by scholarship. There is a cursory description of it in *Third Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, 3 vols (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1872), II, p. 180.

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## 50) Dismembered, fragmentary MS:

- a) Columbia, Missouri, University of Missouri *Fragmenta Manuscripta*, f. 178
- b) Cambridge, Gonville and Caius 804/808, fragment 1, f. 1
- c) Cambridge, University Library, Additional 3303 (7) ff. 1–4

**Description:** Three fragments of a dismembered manuscript. Each fragment varies in dimension. Fragment a) measures 95 mm by 145 mm, b) measures 81 mm by 163 mm and the leaves of c) measure 110 mm by 210 mm (f.1), 95 mm by 180 mm (f.2), 165 mm by 185 mm (f.3) and 165 mm by 210 mm (f.4). The text is written in a single column, the ruled written area measures 110 mm by 185 mm. On the Cambridge University Library fragments, there are 28 lines to a page and 4 stanzas per page. The text is written in an upright *anglicana*. There are no braces but there are red parphs at the openings of each stanza.

**Collation:** not applicable.

**Text (Completeness and Apparatus):** a) represents Book V, ll. 344–364 and 372–392, b) represents Book IV, ll. 77–87 and 105–115, and the leaves of c) represent Book III, ll. 1037–1092 (f.1), Book III, ll. 1099–1141 (f.2), Book III, ll. 1378–1428 (f.3) and Book III, ll. 1429–1484 (f.4). The manuscript, which is textually related to Lambeth MS 344 and Bodl. MS Hatton 73, also appears to have preserved the system of textual division found in those manuscripts: four books and a chapter sequence numbering afresh at the start of each book. We

can infer this because the Gonville and Caius fragment contains a ‘ca<sup>m</sup> iij’ in the top right hand corner of the recto.

**Decoration:** Red paraph marks and enlarged, two-line initials at the openings of a new chapter.

**Provenance:** Folios 1 and 4 of the Cambridge University Library fragments were acquired in 1898 and folios 2 and 3 in 1902. Fragment a) was acquired in an album of miscellaneous leaves by the University of Missouri in 1968. Fragment b), the Gonville and Caius fragment, was given to the college by Henry Swete (b. 1835, d. 1917), see Joanna Hawke, ‘Swete, Henry Barclay (1835–1917)’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36386>, accessed 9<sup>th</sup> December 2015].

**Scholarship:** Montague Rhodes James, *Supplement to the Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), p. 47. Harold G. Jones III, ‘An Unedited Manuscript of John Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*: Book V, verses 344–364 and 372–392’, *English Language Notes*, 7 (1969), 93–96 (p. 94); A.S.G. Edwards and A.W. Jenkins, Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady*: An Unedited Manuscript of Part of Book III, *English Language Notes* 9 (1971), 1–3; Stephen R. Reimer, ‘A Fragment of John Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady* in Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge’, *English Language Notes*, 33 (1995), 1–14. The Cambridge University Library fragments are incorrectly cited in *NIMEV* 2574, 46 (ii) as ‘Add. 3077 (7)’.

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#### **Unlocated: Quaritch, General Catalogue, no. 291, October 1873, no. 18781**

[the following is a transcription of the Quaritch catalogue description]

LYDGATE’S LIFE OF OUR LADY, folio, very neat MS. in an Elizabethan hand, containing almost the entire second half of the above celebrated poem, inlaid, hf. bd. £9 9s

This valuable MS. consists of 32 pages with sixty-one lines upon each. There appears no titles either at beginning or end, and it is therefore with hesitation that the authorship is attributed as above. The poem is in seven-line stanzas, which begin with the last three lines of one that must be close to the opening of the third book. The Liber Tertius ends on the fifteenth page; and the fourth book begins –

When Janus Bifrons in cold Januarey  
With frosty beard entred had the yere  
And Phebus chayre neygheth to Aquarye.

The last four lines upon page 32 stand as follows:--

And unto thee this day we clepe and call  
Thou blessed Quene, of Kynges Emperesse  
That gavest thy sonne sowcke within that stall  
That chast mylk of virginall cleanness.

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