Late Medieval Devotional Compilations in England

Edited by

Marleen Cré, Diana Denissen, and Denis Renevey

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Introduction

Marleen Cré, Diana Denissen, and Denis Renevey

This book is a collection of essays with late medieval devotional compilations in Middle English as their common focus. The term 'devotional compilation' is a term we use to designate what Michael Sargent has termed 'minor devotional writings', 'works of religious devotion that cannot be attributed to such major writers as Rolle, Hilton, the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Julian of Norwich, Nicholas Love, or Margery Kempe'.[1] These predominantly anonymous works, such as *Speculum christiani*, *The Three Arrows on Doomsday*, *Pore Caitif*, *A Talkyng of the Love of God*, *Þe Pater Noster of Richard Ermyte*, Edmund of Abingdon's *Speculum ecclesie*, *Life of Soul*, *Book to a Mother*, *Disce mori*, *The Chastising of God's Children*, and *The Desert of Religion*, all of which are discussed in this book, are in origin derivative. All of them incorporate fragments from existing texts that, in many cases, have been translated from a Latin original, yet, as compilations, they transcend '[their] limitation[s] as a collection of snippets from other works and took on an identity and a literary form of [their] own',[2] and thus became unique new texts. 'Devotional' is used here to refer to 'the entire range of piety from simple, affective prayer to works describing or inciting to contemplative union'.[3] These devotional compilations often also have ascetic, catechetic, penitential, and diagnostic characteristics.[4]

Because of the sheer numbers of copies in which some of these texts were transmitted — *Pore Caitif*, for instance, survives in full or in fragments in fifty-

[1] Sargent, 'Minor Devotional Writings', p. 147.

[2] Sargent, 'Minor Devotional Writings', p. 157.

[3] Sargent, 'Minor Devotional Writings', p. 147.

[4] Gillespie, 'Anonymous Devotional Writings', pp. 128–29.

Late Medieval Devotional Compilations in England, ed. by Marleen Cré, Diana Denissen, and Denis Renevey, MCS 41 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), pp. 1–24
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four manuscripts — and the long list of texts that could be called devotional compilations, they make up an important part of literature in English and are intriguing objects of literary analysis in addition to the canonical religious as well as secular texts in English of the late medieval period. Yet strength does not only lie in numbers. Precisely because of their derivative nature, compilations help us understand medieval forms of authorship and of textual transmission, both of which are closely connected. Indeed, the evidence of compilatory agency (*compilatio*) that can be found in the selection, translation, and recontextualization of the fragments by compilers is similar to decisions made when texts are selected and ordered within a manuscript.[5] This shows in the frequent use of the word 'compilation' not only to designate derivative texts that developed into new, unique texts, but also to refer to multi-text manuscripts. We term these multi-text manuscripts anthologies, defined by Margaret Connolly as 'a collection of texts in which some organising principles can be observed', or miscellanies, which are manuscript books 'bringing together texts which do not present a coherent set of organising principles, among which one might find disparate, incomplete or jumbled notes of a personal nature alongside full-length texts'.[6] This is why nearly all essays in this volume also focus on the manuscript context of the compilations discussed: on variations between versions of a particular compilation in different manuscripts, or on the functioning of a compilation or text (fragment) within an anthology or miscellany, as can be seen in the descriptions of the essays below. In its focus on late medieval devotional compilations in England, this book maps another segment of late medieval religious literature and culture in England and is complementary to Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh's useful essay collection *After Arundel*, as well as Ian Johnson and Allan Westphall's *The Pseudo-Bonaventuran Lives of Christ*.

This book reflects a most crucial issue at the centre of our thinking about devotional compilations in the Swiss National Science Foundation project 'Late Medieval Religiosity in England: The Evidence of Late Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Devotional Compilations', carried out at the University of Lausanne from 2013 to 2017: the intriguing relationship between the corpus texts and the various versions in the manuscripts in which they survive. The

[5] The theoretical side of medieval and scholarly thinking about *compilatio* has been laid out in detail in Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio*', Minnis, *Medieval Theories of Authorship*, Hathaway, 'Compilatio', and Minnis, '*Nolens auctor sed compilator reputari*'. Also see Gillespie's essay in this volume, and Renevey, 'The Choices of the Compiler'.

[6] Connolly, 'Understanding the Medieval Miscellany', p. 5.

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focus in the project was on eight devotional compilations as texts with their own new identity and literary form, but that — though in some cases more so than in others — prove to be texts with identities less fixed than their presentation in edited form suggests.[7] *The Chastising of God's Children*, for instance, has been transmitted relatively stably from one manuscript to the next. Variations between manuscripts are minor, which might explain the fact that Joyce Bazire and Eric Colledge could choose as the base text for their 1957 edition of this compilation a version that in many instances has a reading different from any other manuscript in which the text survives.[8] The compilation known as *Þe Holy Boke Gratia Dei* survives in its longest form in one manuscript only, and in fragments and abbreviations in three others. Mary Luke Arntz's edition of this text is a plausible reconstruction of what could have been the full version of this text.[9]

The devotional compilations in our corpus or parts of them were often subject to recontextualization and recompilation. Fragments from *The Chastising*, a compilation itself built out of fragments from earlier texts, were recompiled in *Disce mori*, which shows that *The Chastising*'s integrity is not absolute.[10] In Lincoln, Lincoln Cathedral, MS 91, Robert Thornton has excerpted *Þe Holy Boke* and copied the fragments in a different order to how they figure in the longer, more complete version found in San Marino, Huntington Library, MS HM 148, and interspersed them with excerpts from texts by Richard Rolle to form a new whole that, arguably and effectively, functions as a new compilation within his family book.[11] *The Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God* survives in its full form in sixteen manuscripts, but fragments of this compilation, most often its final chapter, the AB chapter on prayer, occur on their own in a further fifteen manuscripts.[12] *Pore Caitif*, another compilation in the project corpus, survives in so many constellations that it is hard to tell whether its full version — a grouping of fourteen treatises in a fixed order attested in

[7] The devotional compilations in the project corpus were *The Chastising of God's Children*, *Þe Holy Boke Gratia Dei*, *Pore Caitif*, *The Tretyse of Loue*, Richard Rolle's *Oleum effusum* compilation, *A Talkyng of the Love of God*, *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*, and *Disce mori*.

[8] *The Chastising of God's Children*, ed. by Bazire and Colledge, and Cré and Rohrhofer, 'An Introduction', pp. 168–69.

[9] Rolle, *Þe Holy Boke Gratia Dei*, ed. by Arntz.

[10] *The 'Exhortacion'*, ed. by Jones, pp. xxxviii–xlii.

[11] Rolle, *Þe Holy Boke Gratia Dei*, ed. by Arntz, pp. vi–ix. Also see Cré, 'Miscellaneity, Compiling Strategies, and the Transmission', pp. 135–36.

[12] Connolly, 'Mapping Manuscripts and Readers', pp. 277–78.

twenty-nine manuscripts — is its initial form that the fragmentary attestations descended from in a process of selecting and borrowing, or whether the fragmentary attestations document earlier stages in the formation of the text that over time, with accretions and rewriting, was shaped into the fourteen-treatise form.[13]

Whatever the ad hoc character of the production stage of a compilation, anthology, or miscellany, the meaning of the text or multi-text manuscript for its intended reader(s) and its later, wider audience lies in 'its utility in context'.[14] The compilations and anthologies had a religious aim, which most of them express explicitly. As the *Disce mori* compiler spells it out in the prefatory poem addressed to 'my best beloued sustre Dame Alice',[15] the book teaches its reader how to live well by avoiding the vices and embracing the virtues:

> Þough *Disce mori* called be þe booke,
>
> Hit techeth wele to lyue, and to eschewe
> Vices, whiche hit declareth sufficiently
> The seuen capital; and also to sue
> Þe vertues contrarie to þe seuen, ...[16]

The prologue to the *Pore Caitif* points out the aim of the virtuous life it teaches: 'This tretyse [...] shal teche simple men and wymmen of gode wille the right way to hevene, yf they wille besye hem to have it in mynde and to worche therafter'.[17] *The Chastising of God's Children* teaches its addressee, a 'religious sister' about temptations, 'Of this matier ȝe han desired to knowe in comfort of ȝoure soule', adding how she should respond to them: 'medeful it were to ȝou, pacientli and gladli to suffre suche gostli chastisynges wiþ ful feiþ and sad hope, and abide his ordenance til he sende comfort bi grace and mercy'.[18] Often compilations and anthologies started from a compiler's specific focus or thematic concern, and this compiler would select and rearrange fragments from

[13] Denissen, 'Without the Multiplication of Many Books?', pp. 99–104. See also ch. 2 of Denissen, *Middle English Devotional Compilations*.

[14] Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion', p. 326.

[15] *The 'Exhortacion'*, ed. by Jones, p. ix. In Oxford, Jesus College, MS 39, 'Dame Alice' has been crossed out to accommodate another reader, in Bodl. Lib., MS Laud misc. 99, the name has been kept.

[16] *The 'Exhortacion'*, ed. by Jones, p. ix.

[17] See the Prologue to the *Pore Caitif*, in *The Idea of the Vernacular*, ed. by Wogan-Browne and others, p. 240, ll. 2–5. Also see '*The Pore Caitif*', ed. by Brady, p. 1, ll. 1–5.

[18] *The Chastising of God's Children*, ed. by Bazire and Colledge, p. 95, ll. 4–7.

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existing texts in accordance to his aim. Many compilations and anthologies are confident of their readers' capacities; they 'rely on an informed and developed sense of self-awareness on the part of their readers, and an embracing by them of spiritual autonomy and responsibility'.[19]

In this book, as in the project that led to it, then, compilatory agency is approached both from the compilers' point of view, as an authorial activity, and from the audience's point of view, that is, in its effect on the readers of a compilation or anthology. Contributors investigate how compilers have dealt with their source texts, which can be compilations themselves, and how the new compilations have been transmitted in the manuscript tradition by looking at variation, co-texts, and marginal annotations. In addition, compilations and manuscripts are literary texts and artefacts that readers would have used as part of their religious lives. Thus, contributors also focus on readerly reception of the compilations, anthologies, and miscellanies. They investigate how variation between versions of the same compilation and its interaction with additional textual or visual material may have influenced the readers' understanding of the texts' religious message. As Jill C. Havens put it, devotional compilations 'invoke an immediate response and assume an interactive audience'.[20]

Part I. The Dynamics of Devotional Compilations

Techniques and strategies of compilatory composition are at the heart of Vincent Gillespie's essay. 'Building a Bestseller' bestows an accolade to Parkes, Minnis, and Richard and Mary Rouse for their pioneering work on compilatory composition. At the same time it shows the extent to which the field has been moving in the last three or four decades. Gillespie's discussion of the *narracio* of the priest and the pear tree in *The Book of Margery Kempe* elucidates the demands made by the laity to the Church for good quality teaching and preaching. The *narracio* overtly challenges the Church's failure to provide pastoral support to a well-educated laity, and in that respect it is perfectly in line with other Latinate texts sharing similar concerns. Indeed, the confident tone used by Margery in her rebuttal of Archbishop Bowet can be accounted for by the fact that it relies on the Latin pastoral and catechetical tradition that circulated similar requests for reformist and constructive teaching strategies which had been neglected by the official Church. Although the *Speculum christiani*

[19] Gillespie, 'Anonymous Devotional Writings', p. 129.

[20] Havens, 'A Narrative of Faith', p. 70.

was not translated before *The Book* was completed in the 1430s, Gillespie, on the basis of similar concerns and requests in both texts, argues for a knowledge of the *Speculum* by Margery by means of instant translation, a practice that was also possibly used by the priest who read aloud to her for seven or eight years. His reading included a Latin Bible with glosses, 'Hyltons boke, Boneventur, *Stimulus Amoris*, *Incendium Amoris*, and swech other'.[21] Despite the fact that the *Speculum christiani* was put together by trial and error — a process of compilatory composition one needs to keep in mind for some of our devotional compilations, it proved to be immensely successful, with sixty manuscripts of the complete text, a European circulation, and seven printed editions between 1484 and 1517. Although produced by initial haphazard experimentation, the success of the *Speculum* may have been due to its subtle blending of Latin and vernacular *pastoralia*.

Gillespie, together with Ralph Hanna, reminds us about the need to focus on Latin catechetical material in order to understand bilingual *pastoralia*. The *Speculum* itself is a tour de force of compilatory activity: it borrows its Latin material from a late fourteenth-century *summa* of pastoral proof texts known as the *Cibus anime*; but the complexity of compilatory activity does not stop here, as *tabula* 8 of the *Speculum* contains a sequence which is made up of a treatise on priestly duties (BL, MS Royal 5 A VI) which borrows both from a text called *Pupilla oculi* and from *Cibus anime*. It is impossible to argue for a descent from a single copy in the case of the *Cibus/Speculum* family of texts: the dynamics of transmission are marked, in the words of Gillespie, by restless compilatory experimentation, cross-fertilization, and dissemination. If the dissemination of the *Cibus/Speculum* family of texts may have been generated from a Carthusian centre, possibly the Beauvale and/or Axholme charterhouses, Gillespie does not exclude other, non-Carthusian centres more focused on *pastoralia*. The fact that the *Speculum* attracted the attention of priests associated with York Minster may offer a clue to further investigation. Gillespie returns to the *narracio* of the priest and the pear tree to suggest that it does not only function as a warning against priestly sloth, but that in fact it encapsulates the process of compilatory activity that may have been part of the reformist spirit of the Church up to 1430.

Trial-and-error method and restless creative compilatory activity also characterize the very brief (three printed pages long) but popular (thirty copies)

[21] See Kempe, *The Book*, ed. by Windeatt, p. 280. Bonaventure, the *Stimulus Amoris*, and *Incendium amoris*, like the Bible, could have been in Latin, and therefore requiring instant translation as part of the priest's reading process.

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Three Arrows on Doomsday, a compilation with a tripartite sermon structure that Ralph Hanna defines as an original compilation ultimately derived from a Latin text whose version he has so far traced only in Alexander Carpenter's *Destructorium viciorum*, completed in 1429 and postdating the *Three Arrows* compilation. Originality is marked by substantial substitution, complementation, and insertion. The *Three Arrows* compiler uses a large variety of sources, for instance Robert of Basevorn's *Forma praedicandi*; he also deals intelligently with both Rolle's Latin and Middle English psalters when adding to the text. The suppression in the body and soul dialogue of the speech of the body modifies the tenor of the text importantly, with a substitute part that emphasizes forgiveness.

Hanna identifies five different versions of *The Three Arrows*. Some of these versions complement the 'original' version with additional citations. However, in Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 520, further compilatory activity takes place with the use of a translation from the Wycliffite Later Version of the Bible. Perhaps even more daringly, the compiler of Bodl. Lib., MS Tanner 336 inserts in his own translation a passage from Job (Job 3. 3, 11–13) which also appears in a similar context in another Middle English compilation, *Þe Holy Boke Gratia Dei*. Although the compiler had no need of this book as he had the full Latin source and a library, he seems to conform to the authority-giving of compilatory activity. As stated by Hanna in the case of the fifth version, compilers sometimes show a creative ease that compares well with their sources. However, when the compiler has a good text to fill his segments, he will use this text, rather than composing a new one. Evidence of compilatory activity in the middle of the fifteenth century suggests that it should not be regarded as the weaker descendant of original composition, but as an authority-giving activity preferred over original composition. Late medieval textual culture and activity are defined by their compilatory agency and should be assessed as such, against modern culture's affirmation of literary originality.

The last version of *The Three Arrows* explored by Hanna shows the text to be absorbed into *A Treatise of Ghostly Battle*, a text that is itself, for most of its parts, compiled as well. Indeed, the text is made up of 'The Horse or Armour of Heaven', one of the *Pore Caitif*'s tracts, an abbreviated version of *The Three Arrows*, and an extract from *The Prick of Conscience*. Compilation as the gift that keeps on giving is well attested in this case study. As a final demonstration, *The Three Arrows* joins with *The Mirror of Sinners* in sixteen manuscript occurrences, quite often next to it, thus possibly forming a new compilation in the eyes of the scribe, readers, and listeners. Even more intriguing, combined together, these two texts are sometimes found with the Middle English *Pore*

Caitif and identified as two additional tracts to the fourteen that make most of its versions. The many instances of compilatory activity linked to *The Three Arrows* show the extent to which the attempt to render coherent what may often be the result of serendipity or of forms of coherence restricted by practical and material circumstances that can no longer be unearthed is vain.

It is this ideological problem that Ian Johnson's contribution addresses: How can one grasp and conceive of miscellaneity without bending medieval reality and medieval literary production according to modern concepts? Although Johnson's starting point is the miscellaneous codex, his interest is in the investigation of miscellaneous textuality and miscellaneity as a concept, a 'force of consignificance'. As in the examples provided by Hanna, Johnson argues that randomness can be explained in some cases as a collateral consequence of exemplar poverty; and yet it should not be dismissed when scrutinizing textual productions. Although it escapes neat rational conformation, it is an essential element in the making of most manuscript textual productions. After a brief reference to the notions of the polythetic and dialogics, both of them shedding light on the structure of compilations and miscellanies, Johnson proposes 'heterarchy', more specifically heterarchic structures, as a way of conceptually understanding the way in which miscellanies and compilations function. Indeed, according to Johnson, the concept of heterarchy 'accommodate[s] the changing interrelations and variable groupings of textual items and perspectives in and across medieval manuscripts'. It makes possible the recognition of loose structural principles within miscellanies and compilations that therefore do not rely on hierarchical patterns in any significant way, even if these are not completely absent from miscellaneity.

The use of Middle English biblical paratexts makes for a powerful case study as it demonstrates the heterarchical structure of the ultimate Book, the Bible. Compilers and scribes producing biblical miscellanies are aware of the various functional modes of biblical books which make it possible for them to produce necessarily incomplete but profitable *sentence* as part of their biblical paratexts. Thinking heterarchically when dealing with medieval texts allows one to situate miscellaneity and compilatory modes at the heart of medieval culture, as part of a nexus of textual connections from which hierarchical structure has a very moderate role to play. Opening ourselves to the sensibility of the miscellaneous and the compilatory is one of the ways forward in medieval studies.

Annie Sutherland displays that particular sensibility in her reading of *A Talkyng of the Love of God*. As in the case of *The Three Arrows on Doomsday*, heterarchy structures the way by which the compiler of *A Talkyng* sorts out his segments, made up of antecedent texts in many cases, interwoven with new

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material. Whereas Hanna shows that *The Three Arrows* has different compilers in the five extant versions of the text, Sutherland is able to argue for a single compiler on the basis of textual evidence. Indeed, the degree of affective and intellectual cohesiveness in the way in which *A Talkyng* is compiled supports her hypothesis. Careful amplification of the material seems to be at the heart of his compilatory activity, with significant differences based on personal engagement with his thirteenth-century source texts, *On Wel Swuðe God Ureisun of God* and *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*. In the case of the latter, the compiler shows more personal, critical but ruminative engagement with the text, therefore sometimes appropriating hermeneutic and translation skills as part of his responses and re-rendering of the text. Occasionally giving in to aesthetic considerations at the cost of logical considerations, the compiler nevertheless seems to be under the influence of Anselmian rhetoric as part of his process of amplification, or when adding passages that are considered to be original contributions.

As in the case of the *Three Arrows* compiler who seems to have a library to work with, the compiler of *A Talkyng* equally has knowledge of, and possible access to, Anselmian treatises when producing original prose. This case of extensive borrowing from several Anselmian treatises, another compilatory act within compilation activity, displays the signs of heterarchic thinking as posited in Johnson's essay. Reading *A Talkyng* in the informed way suggested by Sutherland involves becoming a witness to heterarchy. That is, becoming aware of a compiler accommodating a variety of texts and rhetorical stances, as well as being aware of the changing and imperfect functions of the new sequences that he has created in a new manuscript context. In contrast to God's perfect act of creation 'ex nihilo', compilatory activity addresses the question of creativity and originality based on what already exists head-on and is by its very postlapsarian nature imperfect.

The dynamics of devotional compilations are approached from a readerly perspective in Margaret Connolly's essay. However specifically addressed intended readers can be in devotional compilations, such as 'suster, Dame Alice' in *Disce mori*, and however seemingly impossible it is to identify medieval readers by more than just a name, it often remains difficult to assess which was the compiler's priority: addressing the compilation to a specific reader or rather to a global, universal, audience. Connolly is able to identify sixteenth-century readers of the compilations *Pore Caitif* and *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*. The religious instability of the period would have triggered different ways of reading devotional writings, so the annotations by Thomas Roberts (d. 1542) in his personal copy of the *Pore Caitif* (BL, MS Harley 2322) offer useful infor-

mation about devotional reading practices. His annotations, unevenly distributed among what he considers to be a treatise made up of twenty(!) tracts, show the attention paid to the tract on the Ten Commandments for instance; also, the addition of the Latin text to the articles of the Creed reflects a concern for the provision of the original Latin to this part of the treatise.

Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 520 contains extensive inscriptions, some of which have been identified as written by Henry Cobham (1537–1592), an Elizabethan diplomat. In several other cases mentioned by Connolly, annotations do not lead to a particular individual, but they nevertheless reveal that the compilation was actively read and in addition provide information about patterns of devotional reading.

The *Pore Caitif* and *Contemplations* are found together in eight manuscripts. They both address a 'simple' audience and are organized for selective reading as part of a heterarchy allowing a loose arrangement of texts that can be connected to one another in a multiplicity of ways. Although the dissemination of devotional compilations can be assessed by looking at the number of manuscript copies, annotations, and identification of a variety of hands, the ultimate circulation success of such works in the early modern period depends on their being selected or not for print. Although circulating together in manuscript form, the fate of these two texts took opposite directions with the advent of print. *Pore Caitif* manuscript fragments only served as binding material for an early printed book, while *Contemplations* went through two print runs in the sixteenth century.

Part II. Compiling the Compilation: Manuscript Transmission

Because they are often loosely structured, and because they have been transmitted in various manuscript contexts, many devotional compilations are dynamic texts, that is, they can be found in diverse attestations. Diana Denissen's essay extends Connolly's assessment of the transmission of *Pore Caitif* and *Contemplations* within two specific manuscript settings. She highlights the importance of distinguishing between textual and manuscript compilations. Her case study considers two manuscript compilations, Bodl. Lib., MS Bodley 423 and MS Bodley 938. As stated by Connolly, the common manuscript circulation of *Pore Caitif* and *Contemplations* can be attributed to their hospitable attitude towards an inexperienced audience, as well as by their loose structural configuration, which allows for either a faithful re-rendering of the compilation or an ad hoc selection of some of their parts according to the needs of a

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specific audience. While of course readerly needs are well attended to with the wish of the compiler to represent the social and co-dependent spiritual situatedness of his readers positively, Denissen also points to the spiritual benefits that the compilers accrue as part of the composition process.

Both *Pore Caitif* and *Contemplations* occur in MS Bodley 423, and belong to units B and C of this manuscript, which were copied by the Carthusian Stephen Dodesham (d. 1481/82). Interestingly, certain sections of *Contemplations* appear more than once in the manuscript. While Marleen Cré understands circular reading as a form of *ruminatio* which is physically inscribed in the manuscript context by the inclusion of the same text or themes within a manuscript book (*in casu* BL, MS Additional 37790),[22] Denissen suggests that the production context of sections B and C of MS Bodley 423 could also have been less intentional.

Compilation activity is carried on further in MS Bodley 423 with the addition of five unidentified tracts from *Pore Caitif* to the abbreviated chapters X-Y-Z of *Contemplations*. One is therefore witness to the making of yet another compilation from two combined compilations. Whether labelled 'recompilation' or 'the gift that keeps on giving', in late medieval culture compilatory composition is characterized by endless reshaping and recompiling as part of a dynamic compositional process. What takes place in MS Bodley 938 is, however, quite distinct from what has been described so far. Red ink annotations in MS Bodley 938 show awareness of the transformed structure of *Pore Caitif* in this manuscript, a phenomenon that can be expected from a compilation that invites non-sequential reading of some of its parts. And yet the red ink annotator seems to hesitate to let go of the original structure of *Pore Caitif* by offering readers the tools to reconfigure it, so that two forms of reading can be experienced: one that follows the 'original' fourteen-tract structure of *Pore Caitif*, and another one that integrates the non–*Pore Caitif* material. Denissen notes the paradox of the version found in MS Bodley 938, where the transformed structure is recognized and allowed to be disseminated, while an annotator points out what is and what is not *Pore Caitif* material.

If the examples of compilation activity so far seem to be marked by combination, addition, and expansion, some of the versions of *The Life of Soul* that Sarah Macmillan discusses are marked by abbreviation. *The Life of Soul* compiles a variety of material prescribed for instruction to the laity in a dialogic structure, inviting readers to take the part of the inquisitive interlocutor.

[22] Cré, *Vernacular Mysticism in the Charterhouse*, pp. 278–79 (quoted by Denissen).

Half of the compilation is made up of biblical quotations, so that one could align this compilation with the biblical paratexts discussed above by Johnson. Macmillan stresses the overall ascetic, non-affective characteristic of this compilation, with for example a reference to Christ not as object of love, but as exemplar of how to love. Additionally, spiritual experience is presented here in a non-visual form, with insistence upon the word of scripture, which invites comparison with the Wycliffite versions of the Bible as pre-Reformation texts as discussed by Johnson. The argument continues with an analysis of a version of *The Life of Soul* within its manuscript context. Macmillan argues that compilatory composition is in itself a form of ascesis, which is the main theme of *The Life*. The version of this compilation in BL, MS Arundel 286 represents an ultimate instance of textual ascesis: the text is stripped of the few remaining affective images and words that its longer version contained. This version is shorter by half than most of the other existing versions. What is more, the ascetic quality of *The Life* is shared by all the other devotional compilations found in BL, MS Arundel 286. Macmillan argues that suppression of excessive imagery and words serves to refine the readers' thoughts and is part and parcel of the ascetic practices of the scribe.

Compilatory agency seems to be fairly easy to identify in the case of *The Life of Soul*, although different levels and nuances occur in different manuscript contexts. This point is also raised by Marleen Cré's essay, which points to the loss of such nuances and fruitful instability when the compilations are fixed and read in modern editions. Cré suggests that reading compilations as part of the 'whole', that is, as part of all the textual items of any anthology and miscellany, offers a different experience and allows for a better understanding of compilatory agency. The unique versions of three compilations found in CUL, MS Ii.6.40 (C), which was at some point owned by Johanne Mouresleygh, a nun of Shaftesbury Abbey from 1441 to 1460, attest to the instability of compilations in general.

Indeed, *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*, 'A Tretis of Pater Noster', and 'A deuout meditacioun of Richard Hampole' as they occur in the Cambridge manuscript differ from all other attestations of these texts. Compiling activity seems to be motivated at times by the interest shown by the compiler in common sources, such as Birgitta's *Revelationes*, which is one of the source texts of *Contemplations*, and which is also a source of the text called *An Information* that the compiler adds to *Contemplations*. Elsewhere, compilatory agency and *intentio* are less easy to appreciate, as with the inversion of doublets in *Contemplations* or with abbreviations that have been made in both *Contemplations* and 'A Tretis'. The third idiosyncratic text, a transla-

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Cré insists on reading compilations as part of a whole, while at the same time inviting an examination and understanding of compilatory activity that is in operation at various levels and at various times in a process of transmission that a single manuscript fixes in a temporality that conveys it only partially. She also points to the fact that our scholarly perspective, with access to multiple versions of a text, allows us to account for various compilers' voices that a medieval reader, in possession of a single textual version, would not necessarily hear.

Part III. Compilation and Devotional Practice

Although loose structure is guaranteed by *sanctorale* and *temporale* cycles, the genre of hagiography, which is intrinsically compilatory, allows hagiographers substantial freedom in the selection and organization of material. After showing the extent to which recent scholarship on the *South English Legendaries* confirms that its various manifestations are based on an organizational heterarchic principle and each form a unique anthology, Mami Kanno's essay focuses on Bodl. Lib., MS Bodley 779, itself unique in the way it includes five native female saints' lives not found in other manuscripts. A reading of the content of the 'whole book', as endorsed by Cré, allows Kanno to note the specific interest of this anthology in the condition of women in general, which it discusses with the text *Defence of Women*, women's religious lives in particular, and the inclusion of the largest collection of native female saints' lives in the whole of the *South English Legendaries*. The essay looks at *compilatio* and *ordinatio* and argues that more attention should be given to the latter, as Kanno notes that the liturgical calendar, although a significant structural principle, is not the only one to be considered. In the case of MS Bodley 779, nationality, gender, and the spiritual status of 'holy confessors' in part dictate the *ordinatio* of the manuscript. Indeed, even if at times groups of saints are placed in a random order, one can detect other organizational patterns shaped by saints' feast days and categories of saints.

The English identity of these female nuns turned saints begs the question of a possible readership of enclosed women for the manuscript. However, internal evidence indicates an intention to feminize the ideal reader, without narrowing this readership down to nuns. The provision of models of female piety would have appealed to a (female) religious and lay audience.

Audience and readers are also at the heart of Nicole R. Rice's investigation of BL, MS Additional 30897, which she considers to be a lollard production made from different texts with particular relationships to lollardy. Her concern is not so much with the identification of sources of the various compilations that make up this anthology, but with the devotional meanings these texts may have had for mid-fifteenth-century lollard readers. One of the themes carried over by the entire anthology is the launch of models or examples of sanctity for a lollard ideology, with the Virgin Mary present in the three compilations under investigation: the *Pore Caitif*, the commentary on the Ave Maria, and *Book to a Mother*.

Thirteen extant copies of *Pore Caitif* contain lollard comments on lollard topics such as images, oaths, and preaching. BL, MS Add. 30897 is one of them, but Rice points out that, in this manuscript, even sections with no lollard content, especially those insisting on meekness and self-sacrifice, as well as imitation of saints' patient suffering, would appeal to lollard readers. This particular appeal is not surprising, considering that *Pore Caitif*, if initially not a lollard text, as a reformist work would express concerns shared by orthodox and lollard readers. The essay offers evidence for the flexibility of compilations and their adaptability to suit different ideologies. As in the case of *The Life of Soul* discussed by Macmillan, *Pore Caitif* invites its readers not to look at Christ and his mother as objects of love, but as models of meekness and patient suffering, which would appeal to the lollard ideology and way of life. Like *Pore Caitif* and the Ave Maria commentary, the truncated version of *Book to a Mother*, near the end of the work, makes the Virgin Mary a more central figure. The Virgin Mary's characteristics of meekness and humility are blended with persecution and Saint Lucy's acts of generosity. The lollards as a persecuted minority would have been particularly receptive to such characteristics.

As with *The Life of Soul*, the texts considered here point to a form of devotion away from images and more strongly grounded in textuality, which again characterizes reformist and lollard textual productions in the mid-fifteenth century. The malleability of compilation as a form allows the transmission of new ideologies, sometimes distinct from and even clashing with those that their source texts initially conveyed.

Sheri Smith's essay focuses on BL, MS Additional 37787, a composite miscellany made up of devotional material in Latin, French, and English, with hierarchy suspended in relation to the supremacy of Latin over the two vernaculars. John Northewode, who was a Cistercian monk at St Mary's Abbey, Bordesley, near Worcester, initially owned the manuscript. Although the miscellany is often labelled as Northewode's prayer book, some of its components, especially

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the parts on confession, are written for the attention of a confessor persona, rather than the penitent. Indeed, the texts in this manuscript oscillate between instructional and devotional modes, while inviting the reader to ponder the self. Contrary to several other penitential manuals, the penitential part, explicitly stated to be based on compilatory composition, does not identify the self with the sins, but rather shows the self to be participating in them, which is a subtle but important nuance in the exploration of the language of subjectivity in this miscellany in particular, and late medieval penitential literature in general. The essay by Smith raises further questions about miscellaneity as a productive textual ground from which new explorations of subjectivity are made possible.

Brandon Alakas's analysis of Richard Whitford's *Dyuers Holy Instrucyons and Teachynges* brings us back to the turbulent religious world of the sixteenth century also explored by Connolly. *The Dyuers Holy Instrucyons* is an anthology made up of four texts written by Whitford. It is the only Syon text produced after the expulsion of the community and dissolution of the abbey, and as such Alakas argues for a reading of the anthology as a powerful boost to a beleaguered readership. As another form of biblical paratext, its anxious yet determined resolve to use medieval allegorical interpretation for its reading of the Old Testament figures of Job, Susanna, and Naboth exposes the change in reading modalities in the sixteenth century.

Whitford's anagogical reading of his chosen narratives has an autobiographical touch that would not have escaped the attentive eye of Thomas Cromwell's visitors and representatives who visited and then suppressed the monasteries. Job as a model of patience, Susanna as an exemplum of fortitude, Naboth as a model of patient resistance, all point to the complex political situation of Syon in 1541. The publication of the anthology in 1541 indicates Whitford's purposeful recommendation of patience and tenacity in the expectation of changing views towards Catholicism. The compilation of this anthology by Whitford, author of its four texts, shows the way in which ideological considerations can be funnelled and circulated in an anthology designed to be read as a 'whole book', as a powerful devotional as well as political tract carefully and purposefully organized.

Part IV. Mystics Compiled

The adaptability of compilations and miscellanies to suit different ideologies is also discussed in Denis Renevey's essay. The essay examines the compilatory

composition of Richard Rolle's works and the complexity of the transmission of his authorial voice in texts and passages linked to the devotion to the Name of Jesus in the fifteenth century. The essay first looks at Rolle's *Expositio super primum versiculum Canticum Canticorum* and the Latin *Oleum effusum* compilation, which is made up of part four of *Super canticum* with a section of a letter by Saint Anselm as well as Chapters 12, 15, and the opening paragraph of Rolle's *Incendium amoris*. The role played by the practice of the devotion to the Name in the *Oleum effusum* compilation illustrates the importance of this devotion as part of Rolle's spiritual practice.

The essay then assesses the spread of the devotion to the Name of Jesus in two compilations that integrate it into their devotional programme: *The Chastising of God's Children* and *Disce mori*. These two compilations are connected to each other, because half of *The Chastising*, including Chapter 24 on patience, was selected as one of the source texts for *Disce mori*. Chapter 24 of *The Chastising* makes reference to the Name as a remedy against wicked spirits. The chapter, moreover, references Anselm and Bernard of Clairvaux as authorities, while references to Rolle are completely absent. Renevey suggests that the absence of Rollean passages in *The Chastising* could be read as a conscious effort to erase Rolle's most affective passages.

Disce mori, however, offers a different perspective on the authorial affiliations linked to the Name of Jesus. Although this compilation faithfully incorporates the Holy Name passage found in Chapter 24 of *The Chastising* with no reference to Rolle, the compilation's final treatise, 'Exhortacion', gives Rolle a significant authoritative position. Therefore, Renevey wonders whether the compiler of the 'Exhortacion' is the same as the compiler of the rest of *Disce mori*, or whether references to Rolle are more appropriate in a section of the compilation that encourages contemplative practice.

While Renevey connects the incorporation of affective Rollean material in compilations — or the absence of such passages — to the compilations' different devotional functions, Michael G. Sargent's essay enables a new perspective on the affective possibilities of Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* II. By reading Hilton as a writer in the affective instead of the 'cognitive' tradition, the essay allows us to see Hilton's texts in a whole new light. A discussion of the critical limitations of the consideration of affect in late medieval devotional writing is followed by a characterization of what Sargent names 'Hilton's affective turn': Hilton's use of the terms 'affect', 'affection', 'devotion', and, most prominently, 'feeling'. The *Scale* II refers to 'feeling' a remarkable 213 times (as opposed to 42 occurrences of the word in *Scale* I), which signifies a major shift in the way Hilton describes the contemplative life.

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The text of the *Scale* occurs in several devotional anthologies, and sentences or passages drawn from the *Scale* are included in a number of compilations. In the second part of his essay, Sargent offers a partial overview of the ways in which the *Scale* is embedded in these late medieval English devotional anthologies and compilations. The complete text of the *Scale* occurs in surviving medieval manuscripts together with other contents eleven times out of twenty-two originally complete examples. Another group of manuscripts of the *Scale* all share the characteristic that they read 'God' where the other manuscripts read 'Jesus' in more than a hundred instances. The 'theocentric' form of *Scale* I circulated in the north and west of England at the end of the fourteenth century in manuscripts in which it is compiled with other works, particularly those of Richard Rolle. The 'theocentric' form of *Scale* II occurs only in manuscripts already containing this version of *Scale* I, to which it was added in the fifteenth century in copies with more southerly connections. The small number of compilations comprising material drawn from the *Scale* also occur in manuscript anthologies of contemplative writings. One of these is the 'Westminster Compilation' (London, Westminster Cathedral Treasury, MS 4), which has been edited by Marleen Cré. The *Scale* is also one of the source texts in a pair of related short compilations: *Of Actyfe Lyfe and Contemplatyfe Declaration* in the anthology BL, MS Additional 37049, and *Via ad contemplacionem* in BL, MS Additional 37790.

By offering a partial overview of the ways in which the *Scale* is embedded in devotional compilations, anthologies, and miscellanies, Sargent illustrates that the *Scale* was transmitted in the company of other important late medieval devotional texts, such as Hilton's other English writings and the works of Richard Rolle. Sargent's essay therefore reinforces Cré's perspective on compilatory activity as occurring on various levels and various times in a process of manuscript transmission.

Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa's final essay in the 'Mystics Compiled' section discusses an anthology that contains passages of Mechtild of Hackeborn's *Liber specialis gratiae*: BL, MS Harley 494. In addition to short extracts, BL, MS Harley 494 contains three more substantial extracts from Mechtild's *Liber specialis gratiae*, which are abbreviated and modified from the Latin original texts. This manuscript, dated between 1532 and 1535, is an anthology of devotional texts written in a variety of late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century hands and was owned by Anne Bulkeley, a Hampshire widow. It is very likely that Richard Whitford, the Syon monk we encountered in Brandon Alakas's essay, supervised the compiling process of BL, MS Harley 494. Yoshikawa's essay focuses on the three extracts from the *Liber* in the manuscript in order

to illustrate how Mechtild's text was transformed to satisfy the needs of late medieval English audiences.

Yoshikawa asserts that BL, MS Harley 494 uniquely presents Mechtild as a familiar figure of orthodox piety and an expert on prayer, who will offer a good example of holy living to its readers. The compiler Richard Whitford was very familiar with the Latin *Liber* and probably also with its Middle English translation, the *Booke*, which was translated in a Carthusian/Birgittine milieu. Yoshikawa illustrates that, comparable to what we see in Renevey's discussion of *The Chastising of God's Children*, the Mechtildian materials contained in BL, MS Harley 494 reveal that Whitford (and other translators) concentrated on reducing the affective elements of the mystic's revelations. While this might undermine the uniqueness of Mechtild's revelatory experience, Yoshikawa shows that this form of compiling activity also made Mechtild an approachable devotional model for a wider readership.

Part V. Texts, Images, and Affect

'Compilations demonstrate how medieval literary traditions acutely challenge any modern notions of homogeneity or consistently hierarchized canon formation.' These are the opening words of Laura Saetveit Miles's essay in the final fifth part of the volume, and they interconnect with Johnson's notion of heterarchy. Miles focuses on the resonances between a little-studied Middle English compilation usually known as *Meditaciones domini nostri* and several other texts: Richard Rolle's *The Commandment*, the devotional compilation *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God* (discussed earlier in this volume by Connolly, Denissen, and Cré), and the Latin literary visionary accounts of the Monk of Eynsham and Tnugdal in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.15.42.

In MS B.15.42, Richard Rolle's *The Commandment* is accompanied by graphic images representing Christ's side wounds. Miles states that these visual reminders of Christ's body set up a parallel between the book and Christ's body as a fundamental framework for approaching the rest of the codex. In this way, the manuscript invites access to Christ through visual and tactile engagement. This type of access to Christ as a lover, which also occurs in *A Talkyng of the Love of God*, discussed by Sutherland, is very different from the compilation *Life of Soul*, discussed by Macmillan, in which Christ is not represented as an object of love, but as an exemplar of how to love. In a related kind of participatory piety, two gaping holes in the vellum towards the end of *Meditaciones*, which focuses on Mary's role in Christ's life, resonate with the

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text itself. The words surrounding the 'parchment wounds' describe how Mary possessed a special understanding of the Incarnation of Christ, which the compilation connects to her (mothering) body and her heart. The red writing visible through the parchment holes, in turn, is what Miles names a 'special table of contents or calendar' for the devotional compilation *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*. Then, Miles notes that the two Latin purgatory visions that follow provide the kind of consequences that make the manuscript's spiritual guidance texts seem particularly urgent for its readers. The essay concludes that when reading MS B.15.42 as a whole, various visionary voices emerge as reminders of the thin boundaries between the past of Christ's life and the present of our material world. The manuscript facilitates a layered interlacing of vision and body, while at the same time reminding its readers that this body must be regulated.

The Desert of Religion, a 943-line poem of rhymed couplets that is richly illustrated in all its surviving manuscripts, is another example of a textual as well as a visual compilation. It survives in three British Library manuscripts: MS Additional 37049, MS Cotton Faustina B VI, pars ii, and MS Stowe 39, all of which are believed to have come from monastic houses in the north of England. Anne Mouron illustrates that the compiler of *The Desert of Religion* gathers catechetical doctrine into an allegory of a forest, which gives the poem its very shape. Moreover, the allegory of the forest is given a more literal interpretation in the manuscripts in that each section of the poem is accompanied by the illustration of a tree. While the tree-diagrams emphasize a conceptually progressive and hierarchical structure by repeating the information given in the text in an easily memorable form, providing extra information, or offering further subdivisions, the reader can also go from one tree to another, like wandering in a forest. Mouron therefore illustrates that the concepts of 'heterarchy' and 'hierarchy' are not always mutually exclusive. In addition to the tree-diagrams, *The Desert of Religion* offers its readers a second series of illustrations, mostly of saints and hermits. In the final section of her essay, Mouron suggests that *The Desert of Religion* can also be seen as a 'spiritual horticultural treatise', developing from garden treatises, which describe trees and their medicinal powers.

The final paper of the volume takes us back to the devotional compilation *The Chastising of God's Children*. Just like Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, discussed by Sargent, *The Chastising* is another text that is often not considered to be part of the affective tradition. For instance, as Renevey has noted, any references to Rolle's affective writings are completely absent from *The Chastising*. However, Ayoush Lazikani sheds new light on *The Chastising* by examining the

affective reading practices readers are invited to adopt when approaching this text, by focusing on the grace found in God's presence and the anguish felt in his absence. Lazikani argues that this hide-and-seek game of intimacy with the Lord, which functions as the basis of understanding temptation in the text, responds and contributes to the advanced 'affective literacies' of its readers.

With Miles and Mouron, Lazikani's essay shares a focus on the visual aspects of compilations. The second section of the essay turns to three church wall paintings with a *Virgo lactans* image and Doom scenes as examples of the kind of images that might have been available to the readers of *The Chastising*. Lazikani interprets text and image as inseparable components of devotional semiotics and describes how the game of absence and presence is also vivified for devotees on the painted walls.

* * *

Nicholas Watson's concluding afterword offers further reflections on devotional compilations, based on the distinction between the textual history of *compilatio* as a term and compilation as literary practice. Watson also identifies and comments on the challenges of studying these texts in their pastoral, devotional, and literary contexts and makes suggestions on how to approach *compilatio* and compilations in the vernacular. He suggests that the range of this long-standing 'strategy of mediation' is broader than the narrow use of the term *compilatio* in scholastic Latin, and that looking for coherence in compilations and anthologies, while also acknowledging the difficulties of that critical approach, advances our understanding of these derivative texts and the varied purposes they may have served.

It may be argued that the decision of whether a text (and in some cases a text with accompanying images) as it occurs in a manuscript is a compilation or whether a manuscript can be called an anthology or miscellany depends on the scholar's interpretation of the evidence. This interpretation itself depends on the scholar's assessment of the anthology as random or planned (unless there is enough material evidence to decide on either option), bearing in mind both Pearsall's caveat that to retrace and reconstruct the compiler's intentions is an exercise that should be carried out with great caution and Bahr's point that 'where traces of intentionality can be discerned, they are often interpretively valuable'.[23] It is worth pointing out here that Pearsall's essay does not deal with

[23] Pearsall, 'The Whole Book' and Bahr, 'Miscellaneity and Variance in the Medieval Book', p. 187.

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religious anthologies or compilations,[24] but has as its main argument that 'it is possible, and all too possible, to overestimate the activity of the controlling or guiding intelligence of the scribe-compiler in the making of late medieval English *secular* miscellanies'.[25] Pearsall's observation that 'collections of religious writing made in monasteries' shared in some of the characteristics of Latin anthologies is borne out by the evidence of the anthologies and compilations discussed in the essays in this book.[26] Thus we can see that certain texts were transmitted together, and that compilers and scribes often seem to have had books at their disposal from which they could select related material to insert in the compilation or anthology, or against which they could compare the text they were copying. In addition, Pearsall points out that these practical conditions favoured the more careful organization of anthologies, and — we would add — compilations.[27]

The essays in this volume bear out that many late medieval religious anthologies and compilations indeed possess thematic coherence as a result of compilatory activity, whether as an act of authorial creation or as a response to the needs and demands of a very specific and concrete audience or of an envisaged wider readership beyond the compiler's immediate circle. They also show that readerships varied: compilations were owned and read by the literate laity, members of the secular and regular clergy, noblemen and women who wanted to lead better lives and sought out texts that could help them get closer to God.

However difficult it may be to categorize some of the manuscripts and texts produced for these readers, in order for scholars to discuss devotional compilations, anthologies, and miscellanies in a meaningful way, the working definitions of 'compilation', 'anthology', and 'miscellany' quoted at the beginning of this introduction are useful, and this is why they are used throughout this

[24] 'I shall make no further mention of [compilations of an exclusively religious nature] in this essay.' See Pearsall, 'The Whole Book', p. 22. Pearsall argues that it is not always possible to find a 'guiding intelligence' or a 'unifying set of principles' in a miscellaneous collection (p. 27), and 'speculations about compositorial intention' (p. 29) should not be confused with discussions of how an anthology or miscellany could have been read.

[25] Pearsall, 'The Whole Book', p. 29, italics ours.

[26] The characteristics of Latin anthologies are 'availability of a wider range of exemplars, circulation of exemplars, and the possibility of long-term borrowing from other houses, well trained scribes, and some measure of traditional agreement on what would constitute fixed canons, genres, periodizations, and forms for selection'. See Pearsall, 'The Whole Book', p. 27.

[27] Pearsall, 'The Whole Book', p. 26.

book.[28] Compilations indeed function as texts with their own identity and literary form. They are frequently signalled by their titles, introduced by prologues and tables of contents, and in many manuscripts rubrics also mark their subdivision into chapters as well as the end of the text. Yet, as many of the essays in this book make clear, the manuscript evidence also shows the flexibility with which compilations could be appropriated, recontextualized, and recompiled, how plans may have been changed during the production stage of a book, how certain texts tend to be transmitted together, and how omission of rubrics from one manuscript to the next could turn an anthology into a compilation. It is the very flexibility and pragmatism of compilatory agency (in compilations, anthologies, and miscellanies) that makes general conclusions about compilatory composition and agency difficult, and that necessitates case studies with a focus on the texts/compilations in their manuscript context, looking at both textual production and reception.

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[28] For the sake of convenience, the definitions are repeated and rephrased here. Compilations are texts that incorporate fragments from existing texts that, in many cases, have been translated from a Latin original, but that have taken on an identity and a literary form of their own. Anthologies are multi-text manuscripts in which there is evidence of organizing principles. Miscellanies are multi-text manuscripts in which few organizing principles can be seen at work; miscellanies contain disparate, incomplete material or personal notes.

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Compilers' Voices in Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.6.40

Marleen Cré

Cambridge, University Library, MS Ii.6.40 (C) is an intriguing anthology because it contains a number of compilations, each in a version unique to this manuscript. The transmission of texts in a manuscript culture is always subject to variation, whether as the result of deliberate editorial decisions or by chance. A manuscript culture, then, is effectively also a compilation culture, in which texts are most often transmitted with some kind of variation, and in which scribes and editors borrow from the texts they have available and adapt them, as in the case of C, freely and abundantly. In the manuscript transmission of texts, some scribes or editors make decisions that can be described as authorial, or as Malcolm Parkes aptly puts it: 'inside many a scribe there lurked a compiler struggling to get out'.[1]

In this essay, the acts that led to three compilations in C will be discussed. The anonymous agents of these processes of adaptation and transmission will be called compilers, as they responded creatively to the compilations they

[1] Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio*', p. 138. Though Parkes talks about the compiler here as someone who adds an apparatus to the text he copies, the statement is also applicable to compilers of texts and manuscripts.

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Late Medieval Devotional Compilations in England, ed. by Marleen Cré, Diana Denissen, and Denis Renevey, MCS 41 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), pp. 193–212
BREPOLS PUBLISHERS 10.1484/M.MCS-EB.5.118423

transmitted in order to write a new, unique compilation with its own nuances of religious content and message.

C is a small volume measuring 120 × 75 mm, written in one hand on vellum.[2] It is dated to the mid-fifteenth century, and its dialect has been located on the north-east Cambridgeshire-Huntingdonshire border. The current binding of the volume is from the late sixteenth century, yet the uniform appearance of the script and layout suggest that it was produced in its present form. Only the Latin prayer that opens the volume has seemingly been added later, though apparently by the same scribe, on what initially were flyleaves:

a. fols 2ᵛ–3ᵛ: A prayer in Latin, 'Domine Iesus Criste qui videns Ierusalem pro peccatis civium lacrimatus es'

Booklet 1

1. fols 5ʳ–58ᵛ: *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God*, 'Here bygynneþ holy mater þe which is clepid xii Chapiters'[3]
2. fols 58ᵛ–74ʳ: *An Information of the Contemplative Life and Active*, 'I fynd as I rede by doctors and holy mens lyues þat twey maner of lyuinge ben here in þis world most plesing to god'[4]

Booklet 2

1. fols 75ʳ–76ᵛ: *A Treatise of Perfect Love*, 'her folowiþ a tretis of parfyt loue'
2. fols 76ᵛ–95ʳ: *A Treatise of Tribulation*, 'her byginniþ a tretis of tribulacion'[5]
3. fols 95ʳ–191ᵛ: *Þe Pater Noster of Richard Ermyte*, 'here bigynniþ a tretis of pater noster'[6]

[2] The description of C is based on Hanna, *The English Manuscripts of Richard Rolle*, pp. 37–38. The titles in italics represent the accepted titles of these works. The incipits or titles of the texts as they occur in C are between single quotes. The titles as they occur in C will be used for 'A Tretis of Pater Noster' and 'A deuout meditacioun'.

[3] See *Contemplations*, ed. by Connolly. References to this edition are by chapter letters and line numbers.

[4] This is a translation of Birgitta of Sweden, *Revelaciones*, VI. 65. See Gilroy, 'English Adaptations of Revelations 6.65'.

[5] Healy Murphy, '*A Tretis of Tribulation*'. References to this edition are by line numbers.

[6] *The Pater Noster of Richard Ermyte*, ed. by Aarts. References to this edition are by page and line numbers.

4. fols 191ʳ–198ʳ: 'The C remissioun'[7]
5. fols 198ʳ–207ᵛ: *The Co* þis tretis we are tauȝt h
6. fols 207ᵛ–220ʳ: 'A deuo from Saint Edmund R cioun of Richard Hamp

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[7] '*The Pore Caitif*, ed. by Bra

[8] Rolle, *Prose and Verse*, ed. edition are by line numbers. The in Warminster, Longleat House, MS Rawlinson A. 389 (Hanna's breaks off after the opening lines. 15 and pp. 171–74. The reference MS 32's item 5 ('A tretice of cont Takamiya, MS 66) in Hanna's ca meditacioun', a rewriting of Edm

[9] Robbins, 'An English Versi by page and line numbers. As h Longleat House MS 32. For a dis in Longleat House MS 32, see G Version(s)', pp. 432–37.

[10] Doyle, 'A Survey of the Or Worth (fol. 1ʳ) and Annys Dawn pp. 273–75. Note that the wordi common'. Wakelin, '"Thys ys my the manuscript changed hands.

[11] Joanne Mouresleygh must h 1441, and one of fifty-one nuns w *Houses*, pp. 255 and 265.

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4. fols 191^{r}–198^{r}: 'The Charter of Heaven' a tract from *Pore Caitif*, 'A charter of remissioun'[7]

5. fols 198^{r}–207^{v}: *The Commandment*, with a passage from *The Form of Living*, 'In þis tretis we are tauȝt how we shul loue god on al wise'[8]

6. fols 207^{v}–220^{r}: 'A deuout meditacioun of Ric' Hampole'; translated excerpts from Saint Edmund Rich, *Speculum ecclesie*, 'her byginniþ a deuout meditacioun of Richard Hampol'[9]

As is pointed out in all descriptions of this manuscript, it belonged to Johanne Mouresleygh, as can be seen from two inscriptions — one on fol. 2^{r} and one on fol. 4^{v}, both erased, but visible under ultraviolet light, as reported by Ian Doyle in his 1954 thesis: 'Iste liber constat domine Johanne Mouresleygh'.[10] Johanne Mouresleygh was recorded as a Benedictine nun at Shaftesbury Abbey (Dorset) in 1441 and 1460.[11] As her dates fit the period to which the manuscript is assigned, it is possible that she was the manuscript's first owner, though *Contemplations* and the other texts in the manuscript were

[7] '*The Pore Caitif*, ed. by Brady, pp. 128–37.

[8] Rolle, *Prose and Verse*, ed. by Ogilvie-Thomson, pp. 34–39 and p. 18. References to this edition are by line numbers. The same *Commandment-Form of Living* combination also occurs in Warminster, Longleat House, Marquess of Bath MS 32 (Hanna's MS 115), and in Bodl. Lib., MS Rawlinson A. 389 (Hanna's MS 93), though in this manuscript the fragment of the *Form* breaks off after the opening lines. See Hanna, *The English Manuscripts of Richard Rolle*, pp. 212–15 and pp. 171–74. The reference on p. 214 to 'another Norfolk Book' that shares Longleat House MS 32's item 5 ('A tretice of contemplacioun') should not be to MS 111 (Tokyo, Prof. Toshiyuki Takamiya, MS 66) in Hanna's catalogue, but to MS 19 (C), on pp. 37–38, as C has 'A deuout meditacioun', a rewriting of Edmund Rich's *Speculum ecclesie*, and Takamiya, MS 66 does not.

[9] Robbins, 'An English Version of St. Edmund's *Speculum*'. References to this edition are by page and line numbers. As has been pointed out earlier, the same version also occurs in Longleat House MS 32. For a discussion of this version of the *Speculum ecclesie* extant in C and in Longleat House MS 32, see Goymer, 'A Parallel Text Edition of the Middle English Prose Version(s)', pp. 432–37.

[10] Doyle, 'A Survey of the Origins and Circulation', pp. 90–91. Later owners were Thomas Worth (fol. 1^{r}) and Annys Dawns (fol. 222^{r}). Connolly, 'Mapping Manuscripts and Readers', pp. 273–75. Note that the wording of this ownership note is 'unexceptional and familiar' and 'common', Wakelin, '"Thys ys my boke"', p. 13. The ownership note was probably erased when the manuscript changed hands.

[11] Joanne Mouresleygh must have been one of the fifty-five nuns who elected a new abbess in 1441, and one of fifty-one nuns who did so in 1460. Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, pp. 255 and 265.

not necessarily revised and/or copied specifically for her. Indeed, the north-east Cambridgeshire-Huntingdonshire dialect of the manuscript makes this unlikely. In addition, the way *Contemplations* refers to its audience in C is inconclusive and does not suggest revision of the text for a female religious. Among the many minor omissions from the text, a striking one occurs at the very end, suggesting instead that the text was customized for a male religious:[12]

> And þan good broþer prey for me, whiche by þe teching of almiȝti god haue write to þe thes few wordys in helpe of þi soule. (fol. 58^{v})
>
> Goode broþer *or suster* preie þan for me, whiche bi þe techyng of almiȝti god haue write to þe þese fewe wordis in help of þi soule.[13]

However, earlier in the text, advice is given to 'eche man and woman' (fol. 9^{v}, B 88), and in this phrase, the addition 'and woman' cancels the later omission.[14] Inconclusiveness about the intended audience can be seen throughout C. Though it has been argued that 'A Tretis of Pater Noster' was written for male lay readers,[15] the subheadings in 'A deuout meditacioun of Richard Hampole' point to an audience of religious, as they refer to the hours of the office.[16] Thus, inconclusiveness translates as inclusiveness: this kind of manuscript was open to a variety of readers, as was the religious life it supposes and supports. One can imagine a situation in which a female reader is one of the agents in the production of a volume such as C, as she may have voiced her wishes to the scribe about the volume she was to own. Yet in the case of C there is not enough evidence to name Johanne Mouresleygh, this one-time owner of the manuscript whose name was erased, as either the instigator or the intended

[12] Connolly, 'Mapping Manuscripts and Readers', p. 267.

[13] *Contemplations*, ed. by Connolly, Z 127–29; italics mine.

[14] The manuscript's tenor with regard to the position of women in the spiritual life would be worth further attention. Additions to Birgitta of Sweden's *Revelaciones*, VI. 65, in *An Information* seem to suggest that women are better suited to Martha's part (the active life) than Mary's (the contemplative life). In the description of Mary's part, all references are to men who will follow Mary (though women may have been subsumed under the general term 'men' as 'people'), whereas in the description of Martha's part, women are included explicitly and urged to follow Martha: 'I counceile neytheles *wifis and widows maydyns and oþer* to folow martha as miche as þei mow in wil and dede' (fol. 71^{v}; italics mine).

[15] Vulić, '*þe Pater Noster of Richard Ermyte*', pp. 15–24.

[16] 'Contemplacioun afor matyns' (fol. 214^{r}), 'contemplacioun bifor pryme' (fol. 214^{v}), 'contemplacioun byfor þe sixte oure' (fol. 215^{r}), 'Contemplacioun by fore vndern' (fol. 216^{r}), 'Contemplacioun bifor mydday' (fol. 216^{v}), 'contemplacioun bifore none' (fol. 218^{v}), and 'Contemplacioune bifore complyne' (fol. 219^{v}).

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first receiver of the compilatory activities that shaped the anthology. As in so many cases, we cannot put a name to compilatory agency in this anthology.

Instead, however, 'the whole book' that is MS C can be read as a good example of literary production in a compilation culture.[17] The scribe of C copied nine texts into the two booklets that make up this manuscript and decided to place the booklets in the order in which we have them now. This scribal agency is the surface level of agency; it operates at the level of the compilations and texts as we see them, and as Johanne Mouresleygh and later readers would have encountered them. Meaningful coherence in the manuscript as a whole can be found through an act of compilatory reading, which is the reading of texts within a manuscript 'so as to disclose an interpretably meaningful arrangement', even when the combination and ordering of its texts may be the result of ad hoc decisions.[18] Compilatory reading is a reading practice that scholars can be said to share with the earliest readers of the manuscript, who would also have approached the collection and combination of texts as meaningful.

Yet the coherence in C is not just the result of interpretation. There is thematic coherence in the anthology, so that 'a narrative of faith' can be found in the manuscript book.[19] All texts and compilations in C present and discuss guidelines to follow when living a life devoted to God: they list things readers have to keep in mind, and do not teach advanced contemplation — that is, they do not discuss or evoke mystical union between the believer and God — but they keep readers grounded in more concrete devotions directly related to catechetical instruction (such as the seven deadly sins, or how to prepare yourself to receive the Holy Ghost).[20] These devotions — it is implied — will enable readers to lead a life in God's service. The texts and compilations repeatedly invite readers to imitate Christ: they are invited to identify with the suffering Christ in the Latin opening prayer, in 'A tretis of tribulacion', and in 'A deuout meditacioun'.[21]

[17] The term derives from Nichols and Wenzel, *The Whole Book*.

[18] Bahr, *Fragments and Assemblages*, p. 3.

[19] Havens, 'A Narrative of Faith', pp. 68–70.

[20] See for instance how the subdivisions of the first degree of love in *Contemplations* are linked to the avoidance of the sins of gluttony, pride, and covetousness (fols 15v to 18r, cf. *Contemplations* E 1 to F 44), and the five ways in which to prepare for the coming of the Holy Ghost in 'A tretis of parfyt loue' (fols 75r–76v): to make oneself clean from sin, to be humble, to have love and charity, to be devout in prayer, to be discrete in abstinence.

[21] In the opening prayer in Latin, the speaker addresses Jesus, remembers how his eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, and heart were hurt during the Passion and Crucifixion, and prays that Jesus would heal the wounds in his own eyes, ears, tongue, etc., and would make sure that the speaker

Beneath the surface level of what has been called scribal agency, there is another, most likely prior level of agency at work in this manuscript. Indeed, C draws our attention because three of its nine texts — *Contemplations*, 'A Tretis of Pater Noster' and 'A deuout meditacioun' — are unique or rare, if not to say idiosyncratic versions, each differing in some way from their other attestations. These compilations as they occur in C make us aware of the compilers who left alterations in the texts that were then copied in their altered form by the scribe of C. They abbreviated *Contemplations* and incorporated *An Information of the Contemplative Life and Active* into it, paraphrased *Þe Pater Noster* into 'A Tretis of Pater Noster', and creatively translated (or added to a previous translation of) the *Speculum ecclesie* in 'A deuout meditacioun'. Scribes and compilers may have worked in close proximity.[22] That the shorter texts in C have not been revised to the same degree as the three compilations focused on here suggests that it is the longer texts that are most likely to be revised, which may mean that the size of the manuscript may have been one of the factors leading to revision prior to the copying of the manuscript.

Let us first turn to *Contemplations* and what is unique about the text version in C. In the 1993 EETS edition of *Contemplations*, Margaret Connolly points out that C was unsuitable as a base text for the edition, as it contains 'a heavily abbreviated version of the text'.[23] Indeed, C does not present the text in what Nicole Rice has called its 'monumental form':

> Literally organized to resemble a rule, [*Contemplations*] is divided into a series of chapters, with a table of contents preceding the main text. The text is prefaced with this advertisement: 'This schorte pistel þat folewith ys diuided in sundrei materes, eche mater bi himself in titlis as þis kalender scheweþ. And þat þou mowe sone finde what mater þe pleseþ, þese titles ben here and in þe pistil marked wiþ diuerse lettres in manere of a table'.[24]

uses the senses 'non [...] ad opera mala, sed ad opera bona, sancta et salutaria et tibi placenda' (not towards bad works, but towards good, holy, and beneficial works that please you) (fol. 3r). 'A tretis of tribulacion' teaches the reader three degrees of patience in the face of tribulation, and elaborates on the last degree of patience so that it becomes an exhortation to the imitation of Christ (fols 94v–95r, *Tribulation* 838–40). As we will see, in 'A deuout meditacioun' the compiler adds many passages that focus on Christ's Passion. The reader is invited to enter into Christ's suffering in these meditations, which evoke excessive pain (see, for instance, fol. 218v, 'A deuout meditacioun' 250/9–14).

[22] It is of course possible that the scribe is the same person as the compiler of one or all of these texts, but this cannot be proved.

[23] *Contemplations*, ed. by Connolly, p. xxxiv.

[24] Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline*, p. 32.

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In C *Contemplations* lacks the table of contents, in which all chapters are identified by a letter of the alphabet, the chapter headings, and the marginal signposting that many full text manuscripts do have. Recapitulatory passages have also been left out. C adds *An Information*, the translation of Birgitta's *Revelationes*, Book VI, Chapter 65, as if it were another chapter of *Contemplations*. There is no *explicit* for *Contemplations*, nor is there a heading to mark *An Information* as a separate text. Like any other chapter of *Contemplations*, the beginning of *An Information* is marked by a coloured initial.

The abbreviation of *Contemplations* may have been a response to the small format of C, or may have been done exactly because the reader of C was not a 'busy reader in the world', and so did have 'the monastic or anchoritic *otium* necessary to read an entire text from start to finish',[25] and thus did not need headings to help him or her navigate the text. The abbreviation of the text is of the kind that could have been scribal, or the scribe could be following instructions in the copy text about what to leave out.[26] Alexandra Barratt has pointed out the occurrence of the same sequence *Contemplations – An Information* in Bodl. Lib., MSS Bodley 423 and Bodley 197. It seems likely, as Barratt suggests, that the scribe of C 'made his copy from a manuscript in which [both texts] were already closely associated'.[27] However, it is also possible that the C scribe's copy text presented both texts as separate, as is the case in MS Bodley 423,[28] and that the decision to copy *An Information* as if it were part of *Contemplations* was his. The decisions he would have made to incorporate *An Information* in this way mirror the decisions made when revising *Contemplations*. Incidentally (or not), Birgitta of Sweden's *Revelationes* is one of the source texts for *Contemplations*. If the scribe (or compiler) recognized *An Information* as being also by Birgitta, this might have been a reason for him to present the text as a constituent part of *Contemplations*.

[25] Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline*, p. 32.

[26] On manuscripts that have such instructions, see Jones, 'Jesus College Oxford, MS 39' and Cré, 'Spiritual Comfort and Reasonable Feeling'.

[27] Aelred of Rievaulx, *De Institutione Inclusarum*, ed. by Ayto and Barratt, p. xxix.

[28] On fol. 150ᵛ of MS Bodley 423, *Contemplations* ends with an explicit: 'here endith þe tretyse that we clepen fferuor amoris'. The opening of *An Information* is signalled with a heading in red ink: 'These wordes and this matere whiche is folewynge is an Informacion of contemplatif lyf and actif. as it is drawe oute of the Revelacioun of seint Bride'. It needs to be pointed out here that the dialect of MS Bodley 423, dated to the fifteenth century, is south-east Cambridgeshire, not all that far removed from the Cambridgeshire-Huntingdonshire dialect of C. The argument that size matters in the revisions in C could be made here, too, as Part 2 of MS Bodley 423 (the part that has *Contemplations* and *An Information*) measures 270 by 200 mm. How the texts are laid out in MS Bodley 197 remains to be examined.

Contemplations does keep its subdivision in four sections according to the four degrees of love — a subdivision deriving from Birgitta of Sweden, *Revelationes*, Book III, Chapter 28[29] — 'ane ordeyne loue' (fol. 15r, cf. *Contemplations* D 73), 'a clene loue' (fol. 20r, cf. *Contemplations* I 27), 'a stedfast loue' (fol. 22v, cf. *Contemplations* M 31), and 'a parfite loue' (fol. 27v, cf. *Contemplations* S 1) — and signals subdivisions by two-line initials decorated by penwork.[30]

Yet *Contemplations* in C is not just an abbreviation. The text has also been altered in small ways in many places, and nearly all these alterations are unique to C. One type of change that occurs repeatedly is the inversion of doublets. C inverts the order in which the words in the doublet occur in the other manuscripts, the only rationale for which would seem to be the scribe showing his playful side:[31]

> Neuerþeles what euer þou be þat herest or redist þis. (fol. 8v)
> Neþeles whateuer þou be þat redist or herest þis.[32]

> if þou loue god þou schalt not loue ne desiren þe vanites of þe world. (fol. 16v)
> ȝif þou loue God þou schalt not desire ne loue vanites of þe world.[33]

> se þan how þei profer him to drynke eysil and galle. (fol. 55v)
> Se þan how þei profre him to drinke betir galle and eisel.[34]

[29] *Contemplations*, ed. by Connolly, p. 103.

[30] On the four degrees of love in *Contemplations* and how they are also linked to the treatment of the topic of the degrees of love in Rolle's *Form of Living* and *Ego dormio*, see Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline*, pp. 28–39. All medieval treatments of this topic are of course indebted to Richard of St Victor's *De quatuor gradibus violentae caritatis* (*On the four degrees of violent love*): wounding love, binding love, languishing love, and weakening love. For a recent translation and introduction to this text, see Kraebel, 'Richard of St Victor: *On the Four Degrees*'.

[31] The inversion of doublets also occurs in the C version of Richard Rolle's *The Commandment*. See fol. 200v: 'ordeyne þi wakynge and þi prayinge', cf. *Commandment* 62: 'ordeyn þi prayinge and þi wakynge'; fol. 200v: 'but loue is al wei þe best, wheþer þou do penance muche or litil', cf. *Commandment* 66–67: 'bot loue is euer þe best, wheþer þou do penaunce litel or mych'; fol. 202v: 'an hert þat is feire and clene in vertus', cf. *Commandment* 116–17: 'a hert þat is clene and faire in vertuȝ'; fol. 204r: 'so þat þou miȝt haue sauoure and reste in his loue', cf. *Commandment* 147–48: 'so þat þou may haue reste and sauour in his loue'. This version is closely linked to the same *Commandment–Form of Living* combination in Bodl. Lib., MS Rawlinson A. 389 and Longleat House MS 32, with which C also shares 'A deuout meditacioun'. This rewriting activity was most likely carried out by the scribe. It could be explained as a way in which he stayed alert and avoided tedium.

[32] *Contemplations*, ed. by Connolly, B 56–57.

[33] *Contemplations*, ed. by Connolly, F 2.

[34] *Contemplations*, ed. by Connolly, AB 48–49.

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> þerfor I wil conceil *no ma*
> maner of lyuing come to þ
> (fols 6v–7r, italics mine)
> I wol nat counsaile *þe* to li
> come to þe loue of God, a

> in þis maner eche man bel
> conceile *al men and wome*
> hiȝer degre. (fol. 9v, italics
> In þis manere eche man bi
> counsele *þe* to haue and ke

> I say nat þat þou schalt fle
> þes be pryncipal occasions
> þe lust of al suche vanytes
> or wyf *he* may haue as stab
> cloistre. (fol. 52r–v, italics n
> Y sey not þou schalt fle boc
> ben principal occasiones, b
> suche vanites, for þay *þou* b
> haue as stable an herte and

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[35] Other passages in which this sh
ed. by Connolly, C 31–46); fol. 12r, 2
(cf. *Contemplations* C 60–65); fol. 40
(cf. *Contemplations* X 65–68).

[36] *Contemplations*, ed. by Connol

[37] *Contemplations*, ed. by Connol

[38] *Contemplations*, ed. by Connol

[39] In the Latin *Revelationes*, the

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he scribe. It could be explained as a

Another change that stands out is the substitution of a second person singular address ('þou', 'þe') with a generalizing third person singular, 'a man' and 'he', especially in chapters B and C, and at the end of the text, in chapters V, X, and Z, as can be seen in the following examples.[35]

> þerfor I wil conceil *no man* for to leuen as þei diden for *men* mow by oþer maner of lyuing come to þe loue of god as ȝe schullen here aftirward. (fols 6v–7r, italics mine)
> I wol nat counsaile *þe* to liue as þei dude, for *þou* maist bi oþer maner liuinge come to þe loue of God, as þou schalt see afturward.[36]

> in þis maner eche man behouiþ to loue his god þat he wil be saued. Þerfore I conceile *al men and women* to kepe þis degre of loue er *þei* clymben to ony hiȝer degre. (fol. 9v, italics mine)
> In þis manere eche man bihoueþ to loue his god þat wil be saued. Þerfore y counsele *þe* to haue and kepe þis loue or *þou* climbe to any hiere degre.[37]

> I say nat þat þou schalt fle bodyly frome þe world or from þi wordeli godis for þes be pryncipal occasions but I conseile þe in hert and in wil þou withstond þe lust of al suche vanytes for þouȝe *a man* be a lord or a lady hosbond man or wyf *he* may haue as stable an hert and will and som religious þat sittiþ in þe cloistre. (fol. 52r–v, italics mine)
> Y sey not þou schalt fle bodily from þe world or from þi wordeli goodis for þes ben principal occasiones, but I counsele þe in herte and in wil þat þou fle al suche vanites, for þay *þou* be a lord or a laidi, housbond-man or wif, *þou* maist haue as stable an herte and wil as some religious þat sitteþ in þe cloistre.[38]

It is unclear why the pronoun shift is happening at this precise point in the text and why the second person singular address is kept elsewhere. It is possible the compiler was thinking of his audience more consciously at the beginning and at the end of his editing work — provided he was working sequentially. The personal pronoun change may also derive from *An Information*, as it does not address the audience directly using a second person singular, but refers to 'he also þat wil folow mary' (fol. 59v) throughout this text.[39] The use of the third

[35] Other passages in which this shift occurs are fol. 11r, 22 to fol. 11v, 23 (cf. *Contemplations*, ed. by Connolly, C 31–46); fol. 12r, 2–23 (cf. *Contemplations* C 48–56); fol. 12r, 23 to fol. 12v, 8 (cf. *Contemplations* C 60–65); fol. 40r, 7–13 (cf. *Contemplations* V 107–10); and fol. 43r, 8–15 (cf. *Contemplations* X 65–68).

[36] *Contemplations*, ed. by Connolly, B 8–10, italics mine.

[37] *Contemplations*, ed. by Connolly, B 68–70, italics mine.

[38] *Contemplations*, ed. by Connolly, Z 34–38, italics mine.

[39] In the Latin *Revelationes*, the phrase 'he þat wil folow mary' (e.g. fol. 59v) is lacking, as

person in these passages does have the effect of distancing, of shying away from teaching one's audience directly. It is possibly also an effect of caution and — perhaps — even diffidence. In the first two of the passages quoted above, the phrase 'I conceile / I wil conceil' occurs, and it seems that in these passages the compiler of *Contemplations* in C does shy away from addressing his audience directly when giving moral advice. In the passage on fol. 52r–v (cf. Z 34–38), the pronoun change may have been made because the 'þou' in this passage addresses a layperson, and neither the compiler nor the intended reader of C may have been laypeople. Yet, as has been argued earlier, in the whole of the manuscript these passages are swept up in the general inconclusiveness of address, which alternates between direct second person singular, general third person singular, and inclusive first person plural.

It would appear that, in addition to the evidence of the pragmatic condensing of *Contemplations* and the incorporation of *An Information* in C, both possibly because of the small size of the manuscript, the compiler/scribe also shows a less functional and more creative side in the reversing of doublets and the ad hoc adjustment of personal pronouns.

'A Tretis of Pater Noster' also presents a text version of *Þe Pater Noster of Richard Ermyte* unique to the manuscript. Aarts, the editor of *Þe Pater Noster of Richard Ermyte*, points out throughout the edition 'how thoroughly C frequently differs from the other MSS'.[40] As in *Contemplations*, the compiler omits introductory enumerative passages, cuts quotations of biblical and patristic sources in Latin, and abbreviates and rephrases passages.[41] The compiler also adds two long passages, and in what follows the focus will be on these longer additions.

The first addition occurs in the introduction to the compilation, where, after the discussion of five impediments to prayer (the wicked life of the one who prays, that people at prayer do not ask what they should ask for, idle and foul thoughts, hardness of heart, and lack of real desire for the thing prayed for), C adds three more impediments: doubt, the unworthiness of the person prayed for, and the lack of perseverance in prayer.[42]

this text refers to 'Maria' throughout. Also, Birgitta is taught by Jesus rather than by 'doctors and holy mens lyues' (fol. 58v), who teach the reader of the translated text. See *Revelaciones*, VI. 65.

[40] *The Pater Noster of Richard Ermyte*, ed. by Aarts, p. 70.

[41] A good example is the abbreviation of a story attributed to Jerome in *Vitae Patrum* about a knight, a lady, and a falcon as metaphors for the soul, God, and the world. The passage in C has been printed in the appendix to *The Pater Noster*, ed. by Aarts, p. 159 (equivalent to the longer story in the full text, *Pater Noster* 25/34 to 26/21).

[42] See fol. 100r, cf. *Pater Noster* 7/5; fol. 100v, cf. *Pater Noster* 7/26; fol. 102r, cf. *Pater*

In a 1999 article, F. N.
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fols 104v–106r.

[43] *Holy Boke* presents six things
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and idle thoughts (C 3), hardness o
pray for and lack of perseverance (C
Gratia Dei, ed. by Arntz, pp. 52–57

[44] For a concordance of this ma
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[45] Diekstra, '*The XII Lettyngis*
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[46] Diekstra, '*The XII Lettyngis*

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In a 1999 article, F. N. M. Diekstra points out the overlap of material between the fourteenth-century prose treatise *XII Lettyngis of Prayer*, *Þe Holy Boke Gratia Dei* and *Þe Pater Noster of Richard Ermyte* (C's 'A Tretis of Pater Noster').[43] Diekstra traces this material back to Peraldus's *Summa virtutum et vitiorum*, Book V, Chapter vii, Section 5 ('De impedimenta orationis') and concludes that not just this section, but a lot more material from Peraldus's *Summa* has been used by the compilers of *Holy Boke* and *Pater Noster*.[44] As such, he is the first to have identified Peraldus as an important source for these two compilations, as well as for the *Book for a Simple and Devout Woman*.[45] He also analyses how Peraldus's Latin is rendered in *Holy Boke* and *Pater Noster*, and concludes that the differences between the texts preclude the one having been copied from the other. The similarities between these compilations can only be explained by the existence of 'an adaptation of Peraldus's "De oratione" in English, either by itself or as part of a compilation, that served both compilers independently'.[46] Thus, in *Holy Boke* and *Pater Noster* compilers can be seen working creatively with a common source. In C's 'A Tretis of Pater Noster' the compiler creatively responds to *Pater Noster* as well, as he adds three more impediments to prayer, using the original source from which the impediments were selected in the first place.[47] This not only means that he recognized Peraldus's *Summa* as the source text, but also that he had access to a copy of this text and used it to write 'A Tretis'. The similarity of the compilation strategy used here to the incorporation of *An Information* into *Contemplations* is intriguing: material added or

Noster 9/14; fol. 103v, cf. *Pater Noster* 10/6; fol. 104r, cf. *Pater Noster* 10/25 for the first five impediments. Impediments 6 to 8 in C follow on to *Pater Noster* 10/33 and can be found on fols 104v–106r.

[43] *Holy Boke* presents six things that 'lettes prayere to be herde of God' as follows: the sins of those who pray (impediment 1 in C), the unworthiness of those for whom men pray (C 7), foul and idle thoughts (C 3), hardness of heart against the poor (C 4), little desire for the things men pray for and lack of perseverance (C 5 and 8), and foul and idle speech (not in C). *Þe Holy Boke Gratia Dei*, ed. by Arntz, pp. 52–57.

[44] For a concordance of this material in the *Summa Virtutum*, *The XII Lettyngis*, *Holy Boke*, and *Pater Noster*, see Diekstra, '*The XII Lettyngis of Prayer*', pp. 130–45.

[45] Diekstra, '*The XII Lettyngis of Prayer*', pp. 106–12. Also see *Book for a Simple and Devout Woman*, ed. by Diekstra. Arntz, the editor of *Holy Boke*, argued that *Pater Noster* may have been the compiler's source, just as Aarts, the editor of *Pater Noster*, thought *Holy Boke* was the source for *Pater Noster*.

[46] Diekstra, '*The XII Lettyngis of Prayer*', p. 111.

[47] This revisiting of source material also occurs in other anthologies and compilations. See Denissen, 'Without the Multiplication of Many Books?', pp. 188–95.

appended is related to the material already used in the text. This suggests that scribes and compilers sometimes recognized a source of the compilation with which they were working and added more of the same. Thus, they seem to have been working in situations where collections of books were available to them.[48] The additions betray the compiler's interest in the content of the text and in the accretion of useful advice: the more impediments to prayer listed, the more of them the reader will be able to recognize and remedy.

The second long passage C adds occurs in the exposition of the verse 'Fiat voluntas tua sicut in celo et in terra' (*Pater Noster* 35/32–33). Where the *Pater Noster* treatise discusses two advantages of living according to God's will, by his grace, C adds a long discussion of banishing wrath from the heart as the first advantage (fols 150r–159r).[49]

> The first auantage is ȝif þou wolt feiþfulli be conformed to godes will, wilfully þou schalt put out of þine hert al enuye and wraþe, mevynge þe at no þinge þat may fall to þe saue only synne & most aȝene þine owne. Ffor of al þinge þat may fall contrarie to þe, þou schuldist ioy saue only for synne, seþen 'bi tribulacion vertu is preuyd', as poule seiþ. For wit þou wele: ȝife oþer in hert, mouþe, or werke þou schew any wraþe but onyly at syne, þou art proud and settist þi wil bifor godis wil. (fol. 150r)

As Diekstra has shown, the passage translates and adapts material from pseudo-Chrysostom's *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum*, Homilies X and XI, another source *Pater Noster* shares with *Book for a Simple and Devout Woman*, though in this case the compilers of these texts translate independently rather than borrow from an intervening English translation.[50] Again, the compiler of 'A Tretis

[48] Proof of the presence of collections of books where scribes and compilers were working can also be found in a copy of *The Prickynge of Love*, a translation of James of Milan's *Stimulus amoris* in New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS Osborn fa46 (*olim* Taunton, Somerset Record Office, MS Heneage 3084 and, next, Oslo and London, Schøyen and London, MS 1701). The scribe of this manuscript, noticing that Chapter 33 of *The Prickynge* was missing, seems to have translated this chapter from the Latin to insert it into the text. This means that, while copying the English translation, the scribe also had access to a copy of the original Latin text. *The Prickynge of Love*, ed. by Kane, pp. xiii–xiv and pp. 573–76 (Appendix B, which offers a transcription of Chapter 33). In the compilations in C, however, books seem to have been consulted to add extra material to the compilation, not to remedy omissions from the text.

[49] In *Pater Noster*, the two advantages are (1) the absence of sorrow or wrath about anything that happens in the world except sin, and (2) being Lord of the world and all that is in it except sin.

[50] Diekstra, '*The XII Lettyngis of Prayer*', pp. 122–24. For the Latin text of the *Opus Imperfectum*, see Pseudo-Chrysostomus, *Opus Imperfectum*, Homilia decima and Homilia undecima.

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[51] Robbins, 'An English Version
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[52] Lagorio and Sargent, 'English
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[53] Lagorio and Sargent, 'English
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of Pater Noster' in C adds to *Pater Noster* using *Opus imperfectum*, from which the first compiler of this text selected as well. This means that the compiler recognized *Opus imperfectum* as a source and creatively expanded 'A Tretis' using fragments from *Opus* — most likely a work available to him at the time of writing — so that the readers would have at their disposal additional information that he deemed useful.

The third idiosyncratic compilation in C is its closing text, a translation of Edmund of Abingdon's *Speculum ecclesie*, which is, as Harry Wolcott Robbins puts it, 'noteworthy on account of the considerable additions which it includes'.[51] 'A deuout meditacioun of Richard Hampole' is a stage in the very complex transmission of the *Speculum*. It is commonly assumed that the *Speculum* was first written by Edmund of Abingdon in the thirteenth century as *Speculum religiosorum*, and afterwards translated into Anglo-Norman as *Le merure de seinte eglise*. When Anglo-Norman went into decline, the text was retranslated into Latin as *Speculum ecclesie*. This text survives in 'as many as six or seven different translations of the expanded text, drawn from the Anglo-Norman translation, or from the intermediate Latin version'.[52] 'A deuout meditacioun of Richard Hampole' is one of two copies of 'a heavily interpolated version, bearing an attribution to Richard Rolle'.[53]

'A deuout meditacioun' presents a severely abbreviated version of the text, as it leaves out Chapters 1, 8 to 19, and 27 to 30 of the *Speculum ecclesie*. This means that the text opens with a discussion of the Christian life in general (Chapters 2 to 5), selects the chapter discussing contemplation of God in his creatures (Chapter 6) and the first of eleven chapters addressing contemplation of God in the Scriptures (Chapter 7). The text skips Chapters 8 to 18, and does not select Chapter 19, which introduces the contemplation of God in his humanity. Borrowing resumes with the chapters detailing which episodes and aspects of Christ's humanity are appropriate for meditation during the hours

[51] Robbins, 'An English Version of St. Edmund's *Speculum*', p. 241. For editions of both *Speculum religiosorum* and *Speculum ecclesie*, see Edmund of Abingdon, *Speculum religiosorum*, ed. by Forshaw. All references to this edition are by page and line numbers.

[52] Lagorio and Sargent, 'English Mystical Writings', p. 3116. Also see *Vernacular Literary Theory*, ed. by Wogan-Browne, Fenster, and Russell, pp. 212–22.

[53] Lagorio and Sargent, 'English Mystical Writings', p. 3116. As pointed out above, the other copy of this text survives in Longleat House MS 32. On the basis of Hanna's description and dating of the Longleat copy to the middle or the third quarter of the fifteenth century, it is hard to say which is the later copy of the two. It needs to be noted here that, like C, Longleat House MS 32 is a small manuscript measuring 145 by 118 mm. Further research of this text will have to establish whether and in what way the two copies are related.

of the office (Chapters 20 to 26). All chapters on the contemplation of God in his divinity have been left untranslated, as have the first and last chapters, which frame the text in an opening and closing discussion of what it means to live honourably, amicably, and humbly. 'A deuout meditacioun' cuts material within the chapters it does translate, and though it is translated from the *Speculum ecclesie*, the second Latin version, it does share two readings with the *Speculum religiosorum*, which suggests that hybrid versions of both Latin translations may have circulated.[54]

Many of the additions to the *Speculum ecclesie* in 'A deuout meditacioun' are very graphic Passion meditations focusing on the gruesome aspects of Christ's suffering.[55] In addition, the compiler more narrowly refocuses statements about pure contemplation on to the readers as sinners, and on to the redemption of their sins through Christ's suffering on the cross.

> to knowynge of þi silfe þou miȝt come on þis maner: *to have compassioun and mynd of Ihesu Crist, what he sufferd for þe.* (fols 208^{r-v})[56]

> Ad cognicionem tui ipsius potes venire *per frequentem meditacionem; ad cognicionem Dei per puram contemplacionem.*[57] (You can come to knowledge of yourself through frequent meditation; to knowledge of God through pure contemplation)

This focus is in keeping with the compiler's omissions as discussed earlier, which show that he decidedly favours devotion to the Passion over the more abstract and theology-based contemplation of God in his divinity, and text-based contemplation of God in the Scriptures. Where the phrase 'ad cognicionem Dei per puram contemplacionem' occurs in the *Speculum ecclesie* for a second time, however, it has been replaced in 'A deuout meditacioun' with a longer passage that stresses God's eternal greatness, wisdom, and justice without reference to the Passion. This passage is the closest the text — and the anthology — gets to

[54] '& seiden to him, "Heile, sir kynge of Iewis"' (fol. 216^{r}, 'Meditacioun' 248/16) is missing in the *Speculum ecclesie* 89/16 and would seem to derive from *Speculum religiosorum* 88/15, as does the exchange of the fourth and fifth of Christ's last words (fol. 219^{r}, 'Meditacioun' 250/22–26, cf. *Speculum religiosorum* 92/18–19 and *Speculum ecclesie* 93/22–24).

[55] A good illustration of this is in the 'Contemplation byfore undern', where the additions to the *Speculum* describe how a silk cloth is thrown over Christ's bleeding body. When the blood dries, the cloth sticks to the wounds. 'And when þei had þus scornid him þie drow of þat clope of sile, and it clevyd so fast to his body þat þei drew þerwiþ moche of his skynne and of his flesche also, and whanne þei saw þat blissid body so foule to here siȝt þei blerid on him and spitted in his face as þei wold have done on a tode' (fols 216^{r-v}, 'Meditacioun' 248/17–21).

[56] 'Meditacioun' 242/5–7, italics Robbins's.

[57] *Speculum ecclesie* 35/17–18.

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> by þis maner contemplacion þ
> *to serve him, for we schuld trow*
> *iust þat any man may þinke o*
> *Knowynge al þinge he may not*
> *ordiniþ a þinge þat is gode.* (fol

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> *ies ad cognicionem Dei per pur*
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[58] 'Meditacioun' 244/29–35, ita

[59] *Speculum ecclesie* 43/30–32, it

[60] Levy, *Antisemitism*, p. 169.

[61] The other instances can be
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[62] 'Meditacioun' 247/19–20.

[63] *Speculum ecclesie* 85/24.

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evoking a form of contemplation that goes beyond meditation on the events of the Passion, though it keeps a focus on the readers' smallness and God's awareness of all their actions.

> by þis maner contemplacion þou schalt lerne to know þi silfe *and to love God and to serve him, for we schuld trow þat he is þe best þing þat may be, þe wisest and þe most iust þat any man may þinke on, and so he is ever wiþout bygining and without end. Knowynge al þinge he may not forȝet, ne no þing may aschappe him; but evermore he ordiniþ a þinge þat is gode.* (fols 211v–212r)[58]

> Isto modo potes venire ad tui ipsius cognicionem *per sanctam meditacionem; venies ad cognicionem Dei per puram contemplacionem.*[59] (In this way can you come to knowledge of yourself through holy meditation; you will come to knowledge of God through pure contemplation)

'A deuout meditacioun' also adds to the story in the *Speculum* repeated references to 'þe fals Iewys' as the agents in the Passion story, reflecting a popular medieval anti-Semitic positioning of the Jews as the murderers of Christ.[60] The first of these instances is interesting, as it is a neutral reference that does not have the adjective 'false', but the compiler changes the Latin original to fit his agenda.[61] In the sentence 'hou Petir forsoke him sone after þre tymes for þe wiked wordis of þe Iewis' (fol. 215r),[62] 'wordis of þe Iewis' translates the Latin 'verba cuiusdam ancille maledicte' (the words of a certain cursed servant).[63] This version of the *Speculum* may be rousing (for better or worse), but it is not exactly subtle.

In one instance, however, the compiler responds to the text in a subtly poetic way. Again, the compiler can be seen as a reader, who responds to the text he reads with additional text derived from his reading. Whereas in 'A Tretis' this additional text comes in the form of material from the original sources of the text, in the following fragment from 'A deuout meditacioun' the compiler's response is triggered by the very text that he is revising:

[58] 'Meditacioun' 244/29–35, italics Robbins's.

[59] *Speculum ecclesie* 43/30–32, italics mine.

[60] Levy, *Antisemitism*, p. 169.

[61] The other instances can be found on fol. 216r, 'Meditacioun' 248/8; fol. 216v, 'Meditacioun' 248/29; fol. 218v, 'Meditacioun' 250/10; and fol. 219r, 'Meditacioun' 250/22.

[62] 'Meditacioun' 247/19–20.

[63] *Speculum ecclesie* 85/24.

> Also bihold his moder, what sorow sche had *whan sche saw here swete son suffer al þat peyne, and for his sorow and wo sche becam blake and blo*, as sche seiþ of hersilf, 'Ne clepe ȝe me no more faire, lesse ne more, but clepiþ me fro hense forþ ward woman ful of sorow and wo, *and colore boþ blake and blo*.' (fol. 218r)[64]

The compiler's addition to this meditation is clearly triggered by the reference to Canticles 1. 5 included just after this passage: 'Ne merueile ȝe þat þouȝ I be broune and pale, for þe sunne haþ miscoloured me (fols 218r–v).[65] The 'black and blue' expression is a common one and is also reminiscent of Julian of Norwich's description of Christ dying on the cross.[66] The compiler, in adding the colour reference to Mary's locution, might also be responding to the famous quatrain that follows in the *Speculum*:

> Now goþ de sonn under wode;
> Mary, me rewiþ þi faire rode.
> Now goþ þe sone under þe tre,
> Mari me reweþ þi sonne so fre. (fol. 218v)[67]

The words that Mary speaks of herself can also be seen as verse, with the last two lines working especially well as a couplet.

> Ne clepe ȝe me no more faire, lesse ne more,
> but clepiþ me fro hense forþ ward
> woman ful of sorow and wo,
> *and colore boþ blake and blo*. (fol. 218r)[68]

The compiler may have been inspired by the 'Sunset on Calvary quatrain' to add a rhyming line. (In C, both poems are written as prose.)

The anthology found in C illustrates the operation of compilatory agency on various levels and at various times in the transmission of the compilations it presents. It remains difficult to pinpoint a clear agenda for the compiling activity in C, but we can see the effects of compilers' decisions in this manuscript.

[64] 'Meditacioun' 249/31–35.

[65] 'Meditacioun' 249/36–250/2.

[66] *A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman*, in Julian of Norwich, *The Writings*, ed. by Watson and Jenkins, p. 83.

[67] 'Meditacioun' 250/3–6. Most versions of this quatrain have 'Me rewiþ Marie þi son and þee' (*Speculum* 93/7). In a movement counter to the earlier addition, in which the compiler focuses on how Mary suffers like Christ, in this last line he moves his compassion away from her and settles it exclusively on Jesus.

[68] 'Meditacioun' 249/31–35.

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The need to fit a long text into the first booklet of a small-size manuscript seems to have occasioned the condensing of *Contemplations*. The revisions in 'A Tretis of Pater Noster' and 'A deuout meditacioun' seem to result from the compilers' eagerness to make texts their own, and not just their audience's, in a process of transmission more creative than mere copying. In all three longer compilations, condensing and abbreviation have been counterbalanced by expansion of the text. The effect of these seemingly contradictory impulses on the part of the compiler is that *Contemplations* and 'A Tretis' in particular read like a list of spiritual guidelines to follow, expanded with subject matter which the compiler deemed important. When *An Information* is appended to *Contemplations*, the readers get more instruction on the active and contemplative life in the examples of Martha and Mary. In 'A Tretis' the compiler listed extra impediments to prayer and inserted the passage from the *Opus imperfectum* on how wrath can be avoided. In a similar way, the severe curtailing of the *Speculum ecclesie* has been counterbalanced by the addition of graphic Passion meditations. In the portrayal of the Jews as the perpetrators of the violence that causes Christ's pain, the compilation adds an anti-Semitic undertone absent from the original Latin text.

This essay has addressed various ways in which compilers and scribes played an active role in the reshaping of devotional compilations in transmission. They responded to the compilations by appending or inserting materials from the compilations' sources, or by creatively weaving material from the compilation itself into their additions. Though these compilers and scribes remain anonymous and elusive, and though we cannot say exactly where they worked, how many they were, what collections of books they had at their disposal, or how they collaborated, they can be seen openly making their mark in associative additions, in the playful reversal of doublets, and even in verse.

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