

**Spatial Imagination and the Holy Land in Fifteenth-Century  
North Yorkshire: Robert Thornton's Practice of Reading  
Devotional Writings and Romances**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines key devotional writings and romances in Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 91 and London, British Library, MS Additional 31042, both of which were copied by the fifteenth-century Yorkshire gentleman Robert Thornton. Through a close reading of the texts and the manuscripts themselves, I explore how Thornton used space to envision Jerusalem and the Holy Land through a performative mode of reading. I argue that Thornton, likely through his collaborative relationship with his spiritual advisor(s), developed the knowledge and skill affectively and spatially to read a text and immerse himself in Christian versions of Jerusalem.

The thesis begins with Thornton's lived environments, which were fundamental to his imagining of Jerusalem as well as his spatial experience. Chapter 2, commencing the exploration of imaginative spaces, focuses on Thornton's annotations to the *Abbey of the Holy Ghost* and points out how he was trained to use imaginative space for spiritual reading. Chapter 3 investigates the ways in which the stylistic features of the *Privy of the Passion*, an extract from the *Cursor mundi*, and the *Siege of Jerusalem* engender spatiality and invite Thornton to Christocentric Jerusalems. Chapter 4 examines *Richard Cœur de Lyon* and the *Childhood of Christ*, the two texts which were paired by Thornton as a set of 'romances' and demonstrates that these texts' Palestines contributed to the formation of a religiously aggressive cultural fantasy and became a source of pleasure and laughter for Thornton. This thesis concludes that devotional literacy, the ability to read texts in a textually and devotionally required manner, was likely understood to demand of readers/audiences both affective engagement and spatial imagination. A pious, late-medieval northern English reader like Thornton was able skillfully to envision and enjoy imaginative Jerusalems through a regular practice of reading and by willingly embracing Christocentric piety and militant Christianity.

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis and the research upon which it is based are my own work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at the University of York or elsewhere. All sources are explicitly acknowledged and referenced in the text and the bibliography.

Yuki Sugiyama

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## Introduction

Sythyn sho [Mildor] dyede, I vndirstand;  
 He [Degrevant] made his ayere with his hand  
 And went to þe Holy Land:  
 Heuen be his mede!  
 Sertanly he was slayne  
 With þe justyng of a sowdane;  
 Now to God es he gane,  
 þat doghty in dede.  
 Jhesu, Lorde in Trinite,  
 Graunt vs all in Heuen to be  
 Thy worthy face for to see,  
 And gyff vs wele to spede. Amen  
 (*Sir Degrevant*, ll. 1909–20)<sup>1</sup>

Tak & gare gedir on Gude Fryday at v paresche kirkes fyve of þe firste penys þat er offrede at þe cros & say five Pater nosters in þe wirchip of þe v wondis & bere þam ouer on þe five dayes & say on þe same wyse ilk a day als mekill/& þan gare mak a ryngge þerof withowtten any oþer metall & write within þe ryngge: Iasper, Baltazare, Attropa, & write withowtten: Ihesus nazareus, & sythen tak it fra þe goldsmyth appon a Fryday & say v Pater noster als þou did byfore & vse it alway afterwarde, for it hase bene proued sothe. (*Liber de diversis medicinis*, pp. 42–43)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The quotation is taken from *The Romance of Sir Degrevant: A Parallel Text Edition from MSS. Lincoln Cathedral A.5.2. and Cambridge University FF.1.6.*, ed. by L. F. Casson (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 114. The title of writings that are examined in my thesis are based on Susanna Fein's list of the contents of the Thornton MSS. See Susanna Fein, 'The Contents of Robert Thornton's Manuscripts', in *Robert Thornton and His Books*, ed. by Susanna Fein and Michael Johnston (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2014) pp. 13–66.

<sup>2</sup> The quotation is taken from *The 'Liber de diversis medicinis' in the Thornton MS (MS Lincoln Cathedral A. 5.2)*, ed. by Margaret Ogden, EETS o.s. 207 (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

The first quotation is taken from the very end of *Sir Degrevant*, where the eponymous hero retires from his duties as a lord, goes to the Holy Land, and dies in jousting against a sultan. Although this end—the death by the hand of a Muslim—might seem humiliating and unsuitable for a romance hero to our modern eyes, in my view, it was understood by the late-medieval lay audience/reader as honourable and even desirable for a Christian knight. As I hope that this thesis will demonstrate, such a death during the battle against non-Christians—whether they are Jews or Muslims—could have been viewed even as a long-awaited ‘mede’ [reward] which guarantees him salvation. Here, the ‘mede’ is equated to the beatific vision (‘immediate knowledge or direct perception of God’, which is only allowed to angels and the souls of the just in heaven).<sup>3</sup> The second quotation is a recipe for a ring to ward off evil or cure the cramp, taken from the *Liber de diversis medicinis*, a collection of medicinal recipes. The process of making this ring is an eloquent witness of the medieval Christians’ fascination with the exotic sounds of the Magi’s names as well as their devotion to Christ’s passion, the five wounds, and the name of Jesus. Both *Sir Degrevant* and the *Liber de diversis medicinis* were copied by Robert Thornton (c. 1397–c. 1465), a fifteenth-century Yorkshire gentleman and amateur scribe, who left us the so-called Thornton MSS: Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 91 (the Lincoln Thornton MS) and London, British Library, MS Additional 31042 (the London Thornton MS). The reason why I started my thesis with the quotations above is that they testify to how both a secular romance and an apotropaic ring participated in and contributed to Thornton’s interest in and devotion to the Holy Land, the place where Jesus was believed to have been born, lived, died, and been resurrected. These quotations testify to how the gospel past, which is entwined with imageries of Palestine, permeated the everyday space of Thornton, the primary late-medieval reader of the texts that my thesis examines. From the open hall or chamber where *Sir Degrevant* was read to

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<sup>3</sup> John C. Hendrickson, ‘Beatific Vision’, in *Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Robert E. Bjork (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), <<https://www.oxfordreference-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/display/10.1093/acref/9780198662624.001.0001/acref-9780198662624-e-0782?rskey=591C1X&result=3>> [accessed 19 February 2023].

the altar of the parish church, where the ‘metall’ for the ring could be obtained, Thornton’s daily life was saturated with imaginings of the Holy Land.

### **The Thornton MSS and the Affective and Spatial Turns**

This thesis investigates how Robert Thornton used space and his spatial imagination in order to envision Jerusalem and the Holy Land as part of his regular practice of reading. I chose the Thornton MSS as the subject of my research because they allow me not only to think about rich, sophisticated ways of using spatial imagination in late-medieval English textual culture but also to situate Thornton, the compiler and reader of the manuscripts in a very specific, identifiable locality. We know that Thornton lived in the manor of East Newton in the parish of Stonegrave, Ryedale, a wapentake (or administrative division) in the North Riding of Yorkshire. Thanks to the work of Rosalind Field and Dav Smith (among others), the world of late-medieval Ryedale and the Thornton family’s conspicuous presence in Stonegrave Minster (Thornton’s parish church) are now familiar to us. We also know relatively well the local bibliophile networks, from which Thornton likely acquired the bulk of his source texts. While many amateur provincial scribes were not always guaranteed regular access to desirable exemplars, Thornton seems to have enjoyed rich access to a wide range of texts. Angus McIntosh and Ralph Hanna point out that two of Thornton’s exemplars were likely copied in the southern border regions of Yorkshire: one was copied in southwestern Lincolnshire and the other, the so-called Doncaster exemplar, was likely made in the area near the junction of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Nottinghamshire.<sup>4</sup> Also, George R. Keiser discovers that the *Liber de diversis medicinis* reached Thornton’s hands via the Pickerings of Oswaldkirk (the parish next to Stonegrave), the

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<sup>4</sup> Angus McIntosh, ‘The Textual Transmission of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*’, in *English and Medieval Studies Presented to J. R. R. Tolkien on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. by Norman Davis and C. L. Wrenn (London: Allen & Unwin, 1962), pp. 231–40; Ralph Hanna, ‘The Growth of Robert Thornton’s Books’, *Studies in Bibliography*, 40 (1987), 51–61 (p. 55).

neighbouring aristocratic family.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Joel Fredell suggests that the book trade in York contributed to the decoration of the Thornton MSS.<sup>6</sup> As these studies demonstrate, the scholarship of the Thornton MSS offers a great example of medievalists' attention to the 'local sitedness' of manuscripts.<sup>7</sup> This term, first coined by Hanna, is succinctly summed up by Michael Johnston as 'the sui generis and inherently local nature of manuscripts'.<sup>8</sup> The Thornton MSS, therefore, provide medieval literary scholars with the largest body of material in Middle English (with a couple of Latin writings), which were copied, compiled, and read by a single scribe that can be precisely locatable. Such local sitedness and the locatability of Thornton allow me to investigate a late-medieval spatial envisioning of the Holy Land from a specific, identifiable reader's perspective.

My approach is a close reading of both the texts that Thornton copied and the manuscripts themselves. I will pay considerable attention to Thornton's annotations, including *incipits/explicits*, notes, and *nota (bene)* marks as well as the process by which he compiled his two manuscripts. As the unique witnesses of a number of important Middle English poems, most notably, the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, the two English Charlemagne romances (*Siege of Milan* and *Duke Roland and Sir Otuel of Spain*), and the alliterative debate poem, *Wynnere and Wastoure*, the Thornton MSS have already merited the close attention of medievalists. John J. Thompson makes a thorough investigation of the London Thornton MS and clarifies Thornton's ways of compiling it.<sup>9</sup> Phillipa Hardman, in her analysis of Thornton's annotations, the order of these

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<sup>5</sup> Keiser's argument is based on his findings that the Pickering family retained a copy of the *Liber* in the sixteenth century and lent it to John Reed, a parson in Leicestershire who seems to have formerly worked as a scribe in Yorkshire and copied the *Liber* in MS. Rawlinson A. 393. See George R. Keiser, 'MS. Rawlinson A. 393: Another Findern Manuscript', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 7 (1980), 445–48.

<sup>6</sup> Joel Fredell, 'The Thornton Manuscripts and Book Production in York', in *Robert Thornton and His Books*, ed. by Fein and Johnston, pp. 109–29.

<sup>7</sup> Ralph Hanna, 'Middle English Books and Middle English Literary History', *Modern Philology*, 102 (2004), 157–78 (p. 163). The contents of the *Liber de diversis medicinis*, along with its provenance, offer another example of the 'local sitedness' of the Thornton MSS since the version of the *Liber de diversis medicinis* that Thornton copied mentions as medical authority a local clergyman, rector of Oswaldkirk, and William Appleton, probably a Minorite friar and physician of John of Gaunt (who owned Pickering Castle). See Ogden, *The Liber de diversis medicinis*, p. xviii.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry in Late-medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> John J. Thompson, *Robert Thornton and the London Thornton Manuscript: British Library MS Additional 31042* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1987).

manuscripts' texts, and the spaces left blank in the London Thornton MS, reveals how these manuscripts' texts served both for Thornton's personal spiritual pursuits and for various readers in his household, including children or uneducated readers who need to learn and demonstrate their skills in reading and adults who would need to 'giv[e] basic religious instruction to one or more children'.<sup>10</sup> George R. Keiser most thoroughly examines the texts, letter-forms, and annotations in the Thornton MSS as exemplified by his most recent study of the manuscripts.<sup>11</sup> Because the Thornton MSS, the second largest surviving collection of Middle English romance, contain a vast amount of texts, many of these close readings of Thornton's two manuscripts are, however, inevitably selective, and my reading is no exception.

What distinguishes my study from the other medievalists' reading is the selection of the texts to be analysed and the two scholarly paradigms on which my argument is grounded. My thesis will consider key texts selected from three literary genres, namely, texts of so-called vernacular theology, devotional literature, and romance. The texts of vernacular theology, which I will discuss in Chapter 2, are important for our understanding of Thornton's keen interest in reading as a spiritual practice, as well as his interest in the Holy Land. The latter two literary genres, i.e. devotional literature and romances are key expressions of the late-medieval readers', including Thornton's, fervent desire for Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Thornton's lifetime, i.e. the period from the end of the fourteenth century to the third quarter of the fifteenth century, witnessed, among laypeople, an increasing devotion to Christ's humanity and, as a logical consequence of it, an admiration for the Holy Land, which was believed to be setting dense with the events of the gospel narrative and sacrality. As a medium for these devotions, both

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<sup>10</sup> Phillipa Hardman, 'Domestic Learning and Teaching: Investigating Evidence for the Role of "Household Miscellanies" in Late-Medieval England', in *Women and Writing, c. 1340–c. 1650: The Domestication of Print Culture*, ed. by Anne Lawrence-Mathers and Phillipa Hardman (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2010), pp. 15–33 (p. 29); Phillipa Hardman, 'Reading the Spaces: Pictorial Intentions in the Thornton MSS, Lincoln Cathedral MS 91, and BL MS Add. 31042', *Medium Ævum*, 63 (1994), 250–74; Phillipa Hardman, 'Windows into the Text: Unfilled Spaces in Some Fifteenth-Century English Manuscripts', in *Texts and Their Contexts: Papers from the Early Book Society*, ed. by V. J. Scattergood and Julia Boffey (Dublin: Four Courts, 1997), pp. 44–70.

<sup>11</sup> George R. Keiser, 'Robert Thornton: Gentleman, Reader and Scribe', in *Robert Thornton and His Books*, ed. by Fein and Johnston, pp. 67–108.

devotional literature and secular narratives, in particular, the so-called crusading romances, were widely produced, read, and circulated in late-medieval England.

Another reason why I select the three genres is that the studies that analyse these three kinds of texts together are relatively scarce in scholarship on the Thornton MSS, and indeed on Middle English literature more widely. Although the generic boundaries between religious narratives and romances have been pointed out to be porous, many investigations of the texts in the Thornton MSS still often treat religious literature and romances separately. Concerning the imaginings of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, however, I contend, such separate treatment is not useful. We know that Thornton was attentive to the intertextual relationship of the texts in his manuscripts as he omitted many parts of the *Holy Boke Gratia Dei* because of the overlapping of its contents with the other religious instructions that he copied.<sup>12</sup> In addition, since Thornton's scribal activity started with booklets 2 and 3 of the Lincoln Thornton MS (respectively, the booklet of romances and that of '[r]eligious and devotional texts'), he was very aware of the distinction between secular and religious literature.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, as an extremely careful scribe, Thornton was likely conscious of the thematic proximity and links that the texts of affective devotion to Christ's humanity had with other texts in his collection of literary texts. Given this, my third chapter will pair two devotional texts, *Privy of the Passion* and the *Discourse between Christ and A Man*, with the alliterative poem that has been called a number of different things, including, as a crusading romance, a classical history, and a devotional narrative, namely, the *Siege of Jerusalem*. Equally, the fourth chapter will examine *Richard Cœur de Lyon*, an archetypal crusading romance, along with the *Childhood of Christ*, a Middle English verse adaptation of the apocryphal narrative of Christ's infancy. Thornton labelled the *Childhood of Christ* as 'romance' while it was often enjoyed by both lay and clerical audiences as a text for devotion as well as for

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<sup>12</sup> George R. Keiser, 'The Holy Boke Gratia Dei', *Viator*, 12 (1981), 289–318.

<sup>13</sup> Fein, 'The Contents', p. 33.

entertainment.<sup>14</sup> My close attention to spiritual advice, devotional writings, and romances in this thesis, thus, as I hope, will offer an important contribution to the scholarship on the Thornton MSS and Middle English literature more widely.

Other distinctive features of my reading come from my focus first on the ways in which the text urges the reader to have a particular emotional response, and also on the ways in which the text generates spatiality in an imaginative Jerusalem/Holy Land. In other words, affective and spatial turns in the studies of medieval literature will give a theoretical framework for my close reading. To take the affective turn first, my discussion will be based particularly on Sarah McNamer's proposition that medieval literary texts function as affective, or literal scripts. McNamer argues that medieval literary texts, devotional literature and secular narratives alike, functioned as scripts that encode cues for the reader to perform particular feelings. By urging the reader to respond to the cues and to perform the textually embedded feelings, medieval literary texts, in McNamer's view, endorse particular feelings as ethical, even 'invent' the feeling of compassion, and contribute to the formation of a self and communities that shared common emotional norms and ways to exhibit them.<sup>15</sup> McNamer's view of literary texts is, I have found, one of the most fruitful approaches in medieval affect studies. Since Barbara H. Rosenwein's ground-breaking study, medieval emotions have been viewed as cultural and social constructs that were shared and carefully expressed (or 'performed') in overlappingly existing 'emotional communities'.<sup>16</sup> The history of emotion has flourished among medievalists as a richly interdisciplinary field, where historical, philosophical, archaeological, linguistic, and literary approaches are creatively intersected.<sup>17</sup> What is fundamental for the medievalists working in this

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<sup>14</sup> Mary Dzon, *The Quest for the Christ Child in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), p. 26; Maija Birenbaum, 'Virtuous Vengeance: Anti-Judaism and Christian Piety in Medieval England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Fordham University, 2010), pp. 45–77.

<sup>15</sup> Sarah McNamer, 'Feeling', in *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature*, ed. by Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 241–57; Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Sarah McNamer, 'The Literariness of Literature and the History of Emotion', *PMLA*, 130 (2015), 1433–42.

<sup>16</sup> Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> For instance, Stephanie Downes, Andrew Lynch, and Katrina O'Loughlin, eds, *Writing War in Britain and France, 1370–1854: A History of Emotions* (London: Routledge, 2018); Juanita Feros Ruys, Michael W. Champion, and Kirk

field is an urge to historicise emotions. In other words, medieval affect studies are based on the recognition that ‘emotions are not biological, coming from inside [. . .] but historically contingent, arising out of a set of particular cultural and linguistic practices’ as Glenn D. Burger and Holly A. Crocker posit.<sup>18</sup>

In relation to Thornton’s reading practices, the tie that such literary scholars as McNamer, Crocker, and Anthony Bale have found between reading and the performance of particular feelings is notable. According to them, in medieval understanding, expressing feelings according to cultural and communal norms was a critical skill that should be learned and regularly performed in order to formulate a better moral self, and reading is an essential way to learn the skill. As Crocker argues, repetitive reading was understood to allow readers to intellectually recognise, practise and make morally desirable feelings into their habits.<sup>19</sup> Such a practice of feeling was essential to have a particular religious subjectivity. This view that the practice of reading is a means to form socially legible and religious, thus ethically desirable subjectivity seems to explain Thornton’s habit of reading and the much time that he spent on his spiritual pursuits.

The other scholarly paradigm that distinguishes my close reading from that of other scholars of the Thornton MSS is the so-called spatial turn. In a similar manner to the ‘affective turn’ that I have just explained, medievalists, from Jack Le Goff and Michael Camille to Margaret Goehring, Robert Rouse, and Matthew Boyd Goldie, among many others, have responded to the spatial turn by carefully historicising the ideas of space. The ‘spatial turn’ is the term that is first used by and now particularly associated to Edward Soja, who reevaluates Henri Lefevre’s idea of the social production of space.<sup>20</sup> Since Soja’s call for a more heightened engagement with the

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Essary, eds, *Before Emotion: The Language of Feeling, 400–1800* (London: Routledge, 2019); Glenn D. Burger and Holly A. Crocker, eds, *Medieval Affect, Feeling, and Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

<sup>18</sup> Glenn D. Burger and Holly A. Crocker, ‘Introduction’, in *Medieval Affect, Feeling, and Emotion*, ed. by Burger and Crocker, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Holly A. Crocker, ‘Medieval Affects Now’, *Exemplaria*, 29 (2017), 82–98 (pp. 93–94).

<sup>20</sup> Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989).



concepts and ideas of space in order to provide an essential corrective to the modern, i.e. before the 1980s', dominant critical trend, i.e. historicism (which, in Soja's view, developed by subordinating space to time), the term 'space' has become all the more multivalent. Space not only means the areas that surround and are perceived by a viewer but is also regarded as a social and cultural construction. Space is understood as something to be engendered through the practice of space. It acquires meanings through social representations and the engagement of those who live in and use it.

In the pre-Newtonian Middle Ages, the concept of space as an absolute homogenous void did not exist. Under the hegemony of Augustinian discourse, what is corporeally perceived as a geographical expanse—either through mathematical calculation or through human senses—was viewed to be inevitably imperfect, heterogenous, and subjective. Perceived realities were, in the medieval Augustinian paradigm, only a visible layer of the created world, which has and hides other layers, i.e. the invisible divine truth. The multi-layered world was thus conceived not only as a physical reality but also as signs or texts to be read and interpreted.<sup>21</sup> This does not mean that medieval societies did not generate and maintain complex ways of practising spaces. Rather, as Goehring argues as preparation for her analysis of painted landscapes, for the medieval mind, the world was 'conceived as a series of overlapping spaces, both real and imaginary, that were heterogeneous, the boundaries of which were mutable and flexible as required by shifting cultural patterns and social practices'.<sup>22</sup> The world was understood to comprise overlapping, not only physical but also imaginary spaces. In medieval understanding, spaces in the world were full of sensorily perceived objects and became places like forests, a city, and a garden, while such perceived spaces simultaneously had other layers, which can only be understood through intellectual, often also, imaginative approaches. Physical places functioned as 'powerful symbols',

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<sup>21</sup> Mary Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World: Encyclopaedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2012), pp. 45–46.

<sup>22</sup> Margaret Goehring, *Space, Place and Ornament: The Function of Landscape in Medieval Manuscript Illumination* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), p. 27.

or signs that signify both various social relations and the invisible divine providence as Jacques Le Goff posits.<sup>23</sup> As Michael Camille suggests through his careful analysis of signs that define genders, vocations, and social status in medieval Paris and make it a group of places, place (*locus*) might have been a more suitable concept than space to investigate and grasp richly complex medieval thoughts about lived environments.<sup>24</sup>

However, throughout this thesis, I will use the term ‘space’, along with place. Although Camille’s argument is convincing, on pragmatic grounds, space is the most useful word to grasp the connotation of a geographical expanse that spreads on the surface of the earth and contains various objects and human subjects. Also, more importantly, I think that, in each period, including the late Middle Ages, people had a spatial experience while a different mindset operates to explain and represent it. As J. B. Harley and David Woodward posit, map-like objects such as *mappae mundi*, portolan charts (sailing or navigational sea charts mainly of the Mediterranean Sea), and plans of a waterway of a monastery were ‘the product of decisions and actions taken by identifiable members of social groups in particular historical circumstances’.<sup>25</sup> In other words, such products of decisions and actions embody each medieval social group’s understanding of space as well as the area depicted in the products. The most recent, thorough exploration of later-medieval-specific ways of perceiving spaces is made by Goldie. Goldie’s study guides my examination of Thornton’s use of space and his imagining of the Holy Land throughout my thesis, especially in Chapter 3. According to Goldie, one of the most common medieval ways of approaching one’s local space, which he calls ‘estral space’, is to view it as an area bounded by ‘edges that tended to act as delimitations’.<sup>26</sup> While such edges could have been the boundaries of

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<sup>23</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Camille, ‘Signs of the City: Place, Power, and Public Fantasy in Medieval Paris’, in *Medieval Practices of Space*, ed. by Barbara Hanawalt and Michal Kobińska (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), pp. 1–36 (p. 9).

<sup>25</sup> J. B. Harley and David Woodward, ‘Concluding Remarks’, in *The History of Cartography*, ed. by J. B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 502–9 (p. 506).

<sup>26</sup> Matthew Boyd Goldie, ‘Spatial History: Estres, Edges, and Contents’, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 40 (2018), 379–87 (p. 383).

one's lands, parishes, and natural features like rivers, the most typical edge would be the horizon. Thus, in Goldie's view, a typical medieval understanding of space is based on what he calls 'horizontal space', the easily perceived space that 'spreads out to the horizon and ends there'.<sup>27</sup> Here, the idea of emplacement is key as the 'horizontal space' premises the presence of a viewer, who occupies, or is emplaced in, a place. The later-medieval spatial experience would have been dominated by such ideas of space perceived as intimate and local to human subjects who sensorily perceive where they stand, view, and move around.

My exploration of Thornton's imagining of the Holy Land, or Palestine, is thus grounded on his local, thus smaller-scale spatial experience, which, in Goldie's view, operated as 'different apprehensions and understanding of space and being than at the larger scales' such as the ones articulated by the *mappae mundi*, which were the cosmological representations of the Christian symbolic worldview.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, it is also necessary for me to bear in mind the medieval understanding of global spaces because the Holy Land, or more specifically, Jerusalem, lay at the centre of the late-medieval Christian geographical and cosmological understanding of the known world. Even if such large perspectives did not directly influence Thornton's daily experience of spaces around him, the Christian, Jerusalem-centred worldview offered the basis for his imagining of the Holy Land. In addition, such Christian symbolic understanding of the world likely had become part of common knowledge of the fifteenth-century English laity as suggested by *Sir Degrevant*, which casually references the *mappa mundi*.<sup>29</sup> As I will explain in Chapter 4 in detail, Thornton gathered and copied a set of roughly chronologically-arranged narratives of Christian spiritual history, which starts from the lives of the Virgin and Christ found in the excerpts from the *Cursor mundi* (the parts of the lives of the Virgin Mary and Christ) and ends in

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<sup>27</sup> Matthew Boyd Goldie, *Scribes of Space: Place in Middle English Literature and Late-Medieval Science* (Cornell University Press, 2019), p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> For instance, in *Sir Degrevant*, which was copied by Thornton and is counted as a gentry romance by Johnston, the narrator mentions to the *mappae mundi* as something that everyone knows: 'For-thi þay named [Degrevant] þat stownde | Knyghte of þe Table Rownde, | As it es made in mappemonde, | In story full ryghte' (ll. 29–32).

medieval Christians' battles against non-Christians (like the *Siege of Milan*, a romance on battles between invading Muslims and Charlemagne's men). As a devout scribe who had an immense interest in Christocentric history, Thornton's envisioning of the Holy Land would have been firmly based on the Jerusalem-oriented Christian spiritual view of the world although his spatial experience was simultaneously built upon his intimate, familiar relationship with his locality.

The methodology taken in my thesis is thus close readings backed by historicised views of feelings and spaces. In the specific context of the fifteenth-century north of England, Thornton would have regarded reading, or '*lectio*', as a key exercise to train feelings and formulate a socially respectable, spiritually better self. Along with this affective turn, the spatial turn in medieval studies will also guide my exploration of Thornton's affective and spatial engagement in key religious guides, devotional writings and romances that he copied. We are familiar with the late-medieval lay readers' affective engagement in devotional writings thanks to the studies of, most notably, McNamer, Bale, Michael Sargent, Allan Westphal, and Nicole Rice. On the other hand, the spatiality in late-medieval literary, in particular, devotional texts, have escaped deserved scholarly attention. In the recent scholarly discussions where the late-medieval English laity's devotional literacy has been highly celebrated, not enough attention has been directed to these readers' sophisticated manipulation of their spatial imagination. Yet, as I contend and hope that my thesis will demonstrate, late-medieval English literary texts often expect or demand of the readers not only affective engagement in the text but also their spatial imagination. To use Michael G. Sargent words, 'the imaginative picturing of the events' that many secular, as well as devotional texts urge readers to have was attainable only through the reader's ability to use their spatial imagination according to textual cues.<sup>30</sup> In other words, such ability on the part of the readers—which I will call spatial literacy—allowed them, including Thornton, to meet the expectation of the text and to sensorily, affectively, and intellectually immerse themselves in the

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<sup>30</sup> Nicholas Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ: A Reading Text*, ed. by Michael G. Sargent (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), p. x.

narrative world. Thus, the two scholarly paradigms supporting my close reading will, I hope, shed new light on a late-medieval layman's sophisticated mode of reading. Thornton's annotations to his two manuscripts as well as his way of compiling them, as I will argue, provide us with an excellent case study of how a late-medieval English reader was able skilfully to manipulate his/her feelings and use space both for spiritual enhancement and for pleasure.

### **The Representations of Jerusalem and the Idea of Crusading in Fifteenth-century England**

Before proceeding to the body of my thesis, it is necessary to explain the late-medieval Christian understanding of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. From the very beginning of Christianity, Jerusalem was repeatedly imagined and invested with various significations according to contemporary religious, political, and cultural needs, far long before the end of the eleventh century, which witnessed the First Crusade. As Joshua Prawer explains, Jerusalem had always been essential to Christendom. In the apostolic period, most notably, the Book of Revelation and Paul's Epistles try to dissociate Christianity from Judaism by introducing the idea of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is contrasted to the earthly, actual city, which had the Temple and was therefore, central to the Hebrew exegetical tradition. The earthly Jerusalem was understood as a man-made city, which was opposite to the true Christians' homeland, which they believed to be the city of God.<sup>31</sup> The binary between the earthly and heavenly Jerusalem, which is emphasised particularly in Paul's Epistles, the Book of Revelation, and the gospels of Luke and Matthew, was inherited by patristic authors and early medieval theologians. Because of the fall of Jerusalem in 1189 and subsequent unsuccessful attempts to recover it, the notion of the earthly and heavenly Jerusalems further developed an apocalyptic overtone. By Thornton's lifetime, Jerusalem came to

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<sup>31</sup> Joshua Prawer, 'Christian Attitudes towards Jerusalem in the Early Middle Ages', in *The History of Jerusalem: The Early Muslim Period, 638–1099*, ed. by Joshua Prawer and Ben-Shammai Haggai (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 311–48.

‘occupy myriad symbolic representations’, as Suzanne Yeager posits.<sup>32</sup> Then, the historical Jerusalem was understood not only as ‘the site of Christ’s earthly passion, his holy sepulchre, [and] the figure of the heavenly Jerusalem’ but also the city of the Jews, ‘the slayers of Christ, and therefore a place to be despised’.<sup>33</sup> These varied views of Jerusalem are all witnessed by the Thornton MSS as I will discuss in Chapters 3 and 4.

The notion of the ‘Holy Land’—encompassing the roughly present-day east part of Anatolia, Syria, Palestine, and also parts of Egypt and understood as Christians’ rightful, sacred possessions—was invented and solidified in the period between the beginning of the first crusade (1096–1099) and the end of the twelfth century. Before the establishment of the crusader states, including the county of Edessa (1098–1144), the principality of Antioch (1098–1263), the first Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1187), and the county of Tripoli (1109–1291), Christian devotion was instead directed to the tombs of saints and Christ. This means, according to Sylvia Schein, that before the first crusade, western Christians worshipped Jerusalem only ‘in liminal terms’ and did not perceive it ‘in terms of the geographical—topographical entity of a city’.<sup>34</sup> From the end of the eleventh century, the wars against the Muslims who occupied Palestine were justified through ecclesiastical effort and crusading preaching, which spread a belief that the Muslims persecuted the Byzantine Christians, destroyed, and profaned Christian holy sites. Theologians, preachers, and ecclesiastical elites employed Scripture and believed that such holy sites were originally sanctified and left to Christians as their righteous inheritance by Christ’s passion. As Katherine Allen Smith argues, such rhetoric was invented, exploited, and widely disseminated ‘through a dialogue with the biblical past’ in the twelfth-century chronicles.<sup>35</sup> Jonathan Riley Smith also points out that German and French songs participated in a similar

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<sup>32</sup> Suzanne M. Yeager, ‘The Earthly and Heavenly Jerusalem’, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the Crusades*, ed. by Anthony Bale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 121–35 (p. 123).

<sup>33</sup> Sylvia Schein, *Gateway to the Heavenly City: Crusader Jerusalem and the Catholic West (1099–1187)* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 2

<sup>34</sup> Schein, *Gateway to the Heavenly City*, p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> Katherine Allen Smith, *The Bible and Crusade Narrative in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2020), p. 9.

process that formulates the idea that the military campaigns against the Muslims were Christian warriors' sacred feudal duty as such songs present Palestine as their lost lands that should be owned by their lord, Christ.<sup>36</sup> Thus, Christian occupation and rule of Syria and Palestine, in conjunction with the crusading discourse that was spread by preaching, chronicles, and songs enabled western Christendom to imagine Palestine as a topographical space which was their inheritance full of sacrality. These fundamental ideas of crusading discourse, which I will further explain in Chapter 4, were crystallised and later became repeatedly commemorated as a result of the battle of Hattin (1187), which was decisive in the loss of the first Kingdom of Jerusalem and the holy cross. This traumatic loss urged subsequent generations of Christians to view and remember their Holy Land, in particular, Jerusalem, as the object of their long-lasting, 'righteous' desire.

Such desires or admiration for Jerusalem and the Holy Land were firmly embedded in the liturgy and church services and became central to Christian identity by the later-medieval period. As Christopher Tyerman argues, as a result of continuous papal efforts to produce 'a more effective military response and more comprehensive, coherent and popular religious participation' to 'recover' the Holy Land, by the mid-thirteenth century, the idea of a crusade, which can be defined as 'a form of Christian Holy War originally associated with the armed [penitential] pilgrimage summoned by Urban II to recover Jerusalem', became part of everyday Christian worship.<sup>37</sup> While such papal efforts were continually made for many decades after the battle of Hattin, the pontificate of Innocent III left a long-lasting, influential legacy. While the fifth crusade (1217–21), the military campaign that this pope long prepared for, ended in the unsuccessful march to Cairo, Innocent III's liturgical, fiscal, and educational reforms of the Church shaped the core of the late-medieval religiosity, which Thornton enthusiastically

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<sup>36</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'The State of Mind of Crusaders to the East', in *Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, ed. by Jonathan Riley-Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 66–90 (p. 88).

<sup>37</sup> Christopher Tyerman, 'What the Crusades Meant to Europe', in *The Medieval World*, ed. by Peter Linehan, Janet L. Nelson, and Marios Costambeys (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 146–59 (p. 149).

embraced. In order to make western Christendom spiritually worthy again of divine favour that would endow them with the Holy Land, Innocent III emphasised the need for penance, imposed an annual confession on every Christian who reached the age of discretion, established the doctrine of transubstantiation (the firm basis of Christocentric devotion), and used military force to remove heretics and Jews from western Europe. Furthermore, this pope procured the funds for crusading by expanding the crusader indulgences. He allowed those who were unfit or ineligible for militaristic actions to take the cross on a promise to redeem or commute the crusader vow by paying an appropriate amount of money. This expansion was hugely popular because it granted more Christian people with the most attractive of the crusaders' privileges, i.e. the remission of sins, thus consequently, offering them the prospect of salvation. Thanks to this expansion of the crusader vow and the inclusion of the supplicatory prayers for the recovery or defence of Jerusalem into the liturgy, crusading evolved as 'a religious exercise of the faithful', or something which every Christian should mentally support and believe in, rather than something which requires military action.<sup>38</sup>

Thornton had clear interests in penance and the humanity of Christ, which are, as mentioned in the paragraph just above, two important results of Innocent III's church reform. Thornton added to John Gaytryge's sermon (which he copied into the Lincoln Thornton manuscript) a heading 'A sermon þat Dan Iohn Gaytryge made þe | whilke teches how scrifte es to be made'. Prayers and hymns on the *arma Christi*, Christ's five wounds and his side wound, were also selectively copied probably from his book of hours into the Lincoln Thornton MS, thus, suggesting Thornton's Christocentric devotion.<sup>39</sup> Although Thornton probably did not know about Innocent III's reforms that ultimately aimed to recover the Holy Land, the two characteristics that marked his devotion—his keen concern for proper penance and his devotion to Jesus—resulted from the legacy of Innocent III's effort for crusading.

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<sup>38</sup> Tyerman, 'What the Crusades Meant to Europe', p. 156; Christopher Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 827.

<sup>39</sup> Fein, 'The Contents', pp. 41, 32, 45–47.



Another historical background that should be explained here is the late-medieval proliferation of textual, pictorial, and architectural representations or models of Jerusalem, which consisted of the stations of the cross and sometimes other places in the Holy Land. These western Christian copies of Jerusalem—from large, detailed paintings of the stations of the cross to abstract *arma Christi* rolls—were often called Calvaries and found throughout western Christendom, including in Thornton’s locality and even in his domestic space.<sup>40</sup> Every parish church had the easter sepulchre, a structure that imitates the holy sepulchre, either permanently or during Eastertide as part of the liturgical celebration. Thus, Thornton himself worshipped at his local version of Christ’s tomb every liturgical year, or throughout the year, in his parish church, Stonegrave Minster. Many devotional writings, most notably *Meditationes vitae Christi* and its vernacular translations, including the *Privy of the Passion* (the Middle English version that Thornton copied) offer graphically detailed descriptions of the passion and subsequent resurrection, a story that the easter sepulchre and other representations of Jerusalem convey. These Calvaries emphasise what Christians should remember as their versions of Jerusalem and enjoined the devotee to psychosomatically re-experience, feel, memorise and finally internalise the passion-centred gospel narrative and its significance to their past, present, and future. As Kathryn M. Rudy argues, late-medieval devotees, not only male and female religious but also devout laypeople, were often so well trained in spiritual exercises that they could use Calvaries for ‘a virtual pilgrimage’.<sup>41</sup> Such virtual pilgrimages served as ‘a substitute form of [physical] pilgrimage’ and enabled the viewer/reader of textual/visual Calvaries to project themselves into their own imaginative versions of Jerusalem.<sup>42</sup> In Bale’s view, this projection involved the viewer/reader’s affective engagement since such Calvaries generally urge them to imitate and

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<sup>40</sup> Kathryn M. Rudy, ‘Virtual Pilgrimage through the Jerusalem Cityscape’, in *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, ed. by Bianca Kühnel, Galit Noga-Banai, and Hanna Vorholt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 381–93 (pp. 382–83); Richard G. Newhauser and Arthur J. Russel, ‘Mapping Virtual Pilgrimage in an Early Fifteenth-Century *arma Christi* Roll’, in *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture with a Critical Edition of ‘O Vernicle’*, ed. by Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 83–112.

<sup>41</sup> Rudy, ‘Virtual Pilgrimage’, p. 381.

<sup>42</sup> Connolly, ‘Imagined Pilgrimage’, p. 598.

imagine Christ's suffering and the violence that was believed to be perpetrated against Christ by the Jews in Jerusalem. Thus, these 'recreations, simulacra and models of' Jerusalem were often 'a Jerusalem involving a sense of the self imperilled', or persecuted by Jews.<sup>43</sup> These simulacra were at the heart of late-medieval Western Christians' devotional imagination of the Holy Land, including Thornton's, as my thesis will demonstrate.

## Chapter Outline

As a study that investigates Thornton's use of space and spatial imagination in his envisioning of the Holy Land, I will begin my thesis with his locality, Ryedale, in the North Riding of Yorkshire. The first chapter explains the physical, real spaces and places where Thornton lived, following on from previous studies by Field and Smith, David Harrison, and Hanna, among others. My exploration of Thornton's locality starts from his immediate neighbourhood, namely, his home manor, East Newton Hall, and his parish church, Stonegrave Minster, both of which still stand in the same places as in Thornton's lifetime. After explaining his domestic space and his family's 'privatisation' or, exploitation of Stonegrave Minster as their family mausoleum, I will briefly consider the transportation, commercial, political, and religious networks that kept Ryedale open to a wider world, including Palestine. As indicative of Ryedale's tie to the Holy Land, I will pay particular attention to one of the two surviving medieval effigies in Stonegrave Minster, namely that of Roger de Stanegrave, the famous Hospitaller Knight. The last section of this chapter will have a brief look at York, the second capital of England and an important book trading centre in the north. As I will demonstrate, Thornton's locality was part of the dense web of commercial, political, religious, and cultural links that tied fifteenth-century Yorkshire to Europe and beyond, including the Holy Land.

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<sup>43</sup> Anthony Bale, *Feeling Persecuted: Christians, Jews and Images of Violence in the Middle Ages* (London: Reaktion Books, 2010), p. 121.

As a preparatory step for Chapters 3 and 4, where I will explore Thornton's imaginative visit to the Holy Land through his affective and spatial reading, in Chapter 2, I examine the reading practices that demanded of him both regular spiritual, performative reading and a complex, skilful use of spatial imagination. In the first part of this chapter, I investigate some key texts in booklet 3 of the Lincoln Thornton MS. In this booklet, Thornton copied a number of religious instructions, such as Walter Hilton's *Epistle on the Mixed Life*, key pieces of Richard Rolle's prose writings, and *Abbey of the Holy Ghost (Abbey)*. These texts suggest that Thornton was among late-medieval northern English lay elites who engaged in spiritual exercises, which were then adapted from monastic, religious discipline for lay use. Among these writings, I select two pieces of Rolle's Latin prose, the extracts from *Super canticum canticorum* and *Liber de amore dei contra amatores mundi* as indicative of Thornton's high spiritual aspiration. I will place them in the context of Thornton's 'dialogic and collaborative' relationship with his spiritual advisor(s), who, in Rob Lutton's words, neither had complete 'control' of nor could wholly 'filter' what Thornton read.<sup>44</sup> I also briefly examine an exemplum of a female anchorite, which is ascribed to Rolle, and a purgatorial vision, *A Revelation Shown to A Holy Woman*, in the context of northern devotional culture, where recluses such as anchorites and hermits were revered as imaginatively imitable models for laypeople's pursuit of a spiritually better self. In the latter part of this chapter, I focus on *Abbey*, the religious instruction most heavily annotated by Thornton. Through a close reading of the text and the annotations, I will explore how *Abbey's* framework of the quasi-anchoretic allegorical nunnery could have been readily used by Thornton as a way to employ a textually created imaginative locus for spiritual exercise.

Having suggested that Thornton's annotations to *Abbey* as indicative of his highly cultivated devotional, spatial literacy that allowed him to use imaginative spaces as a mental stage for performative reading, from the third chapter, I move on to imaginative versions of

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<sup>44</sup> Rob Lutton, '...But Have You Read This?': Dialogicity in Robert Thornton's Holy Name Devotions, *English Journal of the English Association*, 67.257 (2018), 119–40 (p. 138).

Jerusalem. These Christian Jerusalems are presented in many of Thornton's collection of devotional literature and crusading romances. Chapter 3 examines such Jerusalems, particularly the ones which are envisioned from the static perspective of a viewer, who stands on Calvary or somewhere in Jerusalem and casts an affective gaze on Christ's passion. For my investigation, I choose two devotional texts, i.e. *Privy of the Passion*, which is a Middle English adaptation of the *Meditationes vitae Christi*, and the *Discourse between Christ and a Man*, an allegorical dialogue extracted from the *Cursor mundi*. As an alternative to these affective meditations, the last section of this chapter will investigate the proto-crusading narrative, *Siege of Jerusalem*. Although these three texts (i.e. the *Privy of the Passion*, the *Discourse between Christ and a Man*, and the *Siege of Jerusalem*) have been rarely discussed together because of the difference in their generic identity, all of them present Jerusalem through the eyes of a viewer, whether the viewer is Christ's female follower, an allegory of a human (or more specifically, reader's) soul, or the Roman commander Vespasian. Employing Goldie's idea of 'horizontal space' (the space that is demarcated by an edge and described through the object relation centring around the viewer), alongside McNamer's proposition that medieval texts encode specific feelings for readers to perform them, I will examine how these texts operate both as affective and spatial scripts and facilitate Thornton's psychosomatic involvement in Christian versions of Jerusalem, through his performative reading.

Chapter 4 explores other imaginative Palestines, which, in this case, are imagined through continual movements of the eponymous hero of *Richard* and the Christ Child in *Childhood*. Thornton copied these two texts in booklet 4 of the London Thornton MS, the booklet that comprises only *Richard* and *Childhood*, both labelled as 'romance'. Bearing in mind Thornton's pairing of these narratives as a set of romances, I first try to clarify which texts were likely understood as 'romance' by Thornton through a close examination of his *incipit/explicit*. Then, the second section of Chapter 4 is based on the premise proposed by Rouse, who argues that the medieval romance 'participates in the articulation of geographical knowledge' through offering a narrative that emphasises 'a discourse about the significations that these places [the physical

places of the world, which are visited by the romance's characters] carry'.<sup>45</sup> I investigate the itinerary and battles of Richard and his men in *Richard*. In the final section of this chapter, I explore *Childhood*, particularly the Christ Child's peripatetic travel in quasi-biblical, quasi-imaginary Palestine, which is punctuated by the vengeful, antisemitic laughter of the Christ Child and the Virgin.

Jerusalem and the Holy Land were visually and textually imagined and played key roles in shaping Christian identity throughout the Middle Ages. My close readings of Thornton's key pieces of vernacular theology, devotional literature, and romances highlight how well Jerusalem was incorporated into his everyday life and how such imaginative Jerusalems/Holy Lands catered for the specific demands of Thornton, whether for his needs for spiritual enhancement or for his and his household members' entertainment. As a late-medieval English reader who had good devotional, spatial literacy, Thornton enjoyed his own imaginative Holy Land through the rich, intertextual relationships that he found between secular and religious texts (if such a distinction can hold) in his literary collection.

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<sup>45</sup> Robert Rouse, 'Walking (between) the Lines: Romance as Itinerary/Map' in *Medieval Romance, Medieval Contexts*, ed. by Rhiannon Purdie and Michael Cichon (Cambridge: Brewer, 2011), pp. 135–48 (pp. 135, 141).

## Chapter One

# From Ryedale to the Wider World: Thornton's Locality and the Political, Commercial, and Religious Networks of Fifteenth-Century Northern England

In my first chapter, I will set out Thornton's locality, or the spaces which he lived in and had intimate relationships with, as a preparation for the rest of the arguments of my thesis. My exploration of Thornton's lived spaces starts with his immediate neighbourhood as the first two sections focus on his home manor, East Newton Hall, and his parish church, Stonegrave Minster. In the third section, I will broaden my focus and explain the road and water systems in the north of England, the power bases of magnates and religious houses, which dominated Thornton's everyday landscapes. The fourth and final section will turn to York, the northern 'capital' of late-medieval England, which is a key place for Thornton's cultural experience. By describing these places as a preliminary step to the main body of my thesis, I will show him as someone who lived at the nexus of political, religious, and commercial networks, which placed his locality in turn within webs that tied it to a wider world, including the places that the rest of my thesis explores, i.e. Jerusalem and Palestine.

### **Thornton's Immediate Locality: East Newton Hall**

Thornton's home manor, East Newton Hall was located in the wapentake of Ryedale in the North Riding of Yorkshire. Ryedale lies between the North York Moors and the Howardian Hills, next to the southwestern edge of the Vale of Pickering. The Vale of Pickering, which stretches between the North York Moors and Wolds, was notably fertile and allowed market towns like Helmsley, Pickering, and Malton and large number of religious communities to thrive. Although the medieval North York Moors and the Pennines in North Yorkshire might have

seemed unforgiving and desolate enough to attract the Cistercians, who were eager to pursue their foundational ideal of ‘desert asceticism’ in the twelfth century,<sup>1</sup> in Thornton’s lifetime, his immediate locality, was no desert but rather prosperous enough to enable him and his family to enjoy rich, dynamic, and multifaceted daily lives.<sup>2</sup>

In this section, I will try to delineate the domestic space inside East Newton Hall as it is the very space where Thornton’s two manuscripts, probably in the form of separate booklets, were copied, edited, and read sometimes as part of his spiritual exercises and at times for entertainment. Since the extant building (still called East Newton Hall) dates back only to the early seventeenth century, we cannot know East Newton Hall’s fifteenth-century past exactly.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, given Thornton’s wealth and relatively high social standing, we can delineate his domestic space, at least to some extent, because medieval manor houses followed general rules with considerable flexibility according to their owners’ social class and taste.<sup>4</sup> As Michael Johnston discovers, Thornton was a gentleman with an annual income of more than £40 (the minimum income for one to be obliged to assume the office of knighthood or pay a fine to be relieved of the duty), who was likely counted within the top 1000 of the wealthiest men in England and the top forty-five richest in the North Riding of Yorkshire in the fifteenth century.<sup>5</sup> In addition, Thornton seems to have possessed lands that were scattered across Yorkshire, including in Stonegrave, Oswaldkirk, Sheriff Hutton, and even in Holderness (which stretches east of the Yorkshire Wolds along the coast of the North Sea in the East Riding). Thornton’s social distinction is further suggested by his close friendship with Richard Pickering of

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<sup>1</sup> Mette Birkedal Bruun, ‘The Wilderness as “Lieu de mémoire”: Literary Deserts of Cîteaux and la Trappe’, in *Negotiating Heritage: Memories of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Mette B. Bruun and Stephanie Glaser (Turhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 21–42 (p. 27).

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Daniell, ‘Communication’, in *Historical Atlas of North Yorkshire*, ed. by Robin Alan Butlin and Nick Staley (Otley: Westbury Publishing, 2003), pp. 101–4.

<sup>3</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *Yorkshire: The North Riding* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 151.

<sup>4</sup> For a tripartite plan in medieval greater houses, see, for instance, John Schofield, *Medieval London Houses* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 61–94; Jane Grenville, *Medieval Housing* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry in Late-medieval England*, p. 164. Also see Michael Johnston, ‘Romance, Distraint, and the Gentry’, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 112 (2013), 433–60.

Oswaldkirk, who was a local noble and retainer of the Nevilles. As Keiser discovers, Thornton was so closed to and highly valued by Richard Pickering that he appointed Thornton one of the executors of his will and, of special interest to my project, lent him the *Liber de diversis medicinis*.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the appearance of East Newton Hall likely would have exhibited the Thornton family's social status, like contemporary gentry's houses which were often equipped with stately architectural devices.<sup>7</sup>

The inside of a medieval manor house, whether a majestic royal house or a relatively impoverished landowner's house, was typically based on a tripartite plan, which consists of a central open hall, chamber(s)/solar(s), and services. This domestic plan is simultaneously 'hierarchical'.<sup>8</sup> A hall and chambers/solars (private rooms), which were essentially the space where a lord, a lady, and occasionally their guests resided, were located at the high end of a manor house. On the other hand, services (which were essentially used by servants), including a buttery, a pantry, and a larder, among others, were situated at the other, i.e. the lower end. In addition, the hall was often visibly demarcated from services by a screen while a dais at the opposite end of the hall from the screen emphasised the lord's dominance in the household. The lord's distinguished status was sometimes further underscored by a large, often oriel window, which was positioned close to the dais and illuminated those who sat there. This tripartite structure developed with considerable variety. Although a hall was the core of any building throughout the medieval period, later-medieval manor houses were often multi-storied, equipped with a couple of wings, and lighted with a number of windows.<sup>9</sup> East Newton Hall was likely

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<sup>6</sup> George R. Keiser, 'More Light on the Life and Milieu of Robert Thornton', *Studies in Bibliography*, 36 (1983), 111–19 (p. 114); Keiser, 'MS. Rawlinson A. 393', pp. 445–46.

<sup>7</sup> In the fifteenth century, the gentry often showed off their newly acquired high social status sometimes by adding stately gables and stair turrets to their manor houses or at times by rebuilding them in a symmetrical design. See Jill Campbell, 'A House Is Not Just a Home: Means of Display in English Medieval Gentry Buildings', in *Dwellings, Identities and Homes: European Housing Culture from Viking Age to the Renaissance*, ed. by Mette Svart Kristiansen and Kate Giles (Højbjerg: Jutland Archaeological Society, 2014), pp. 175–84.

<sup>8</sup> Campbell, 'A House Is Not Just a Home', p. 176.

<sup>9</sup> Like the example of Ockwells Manor in Berkshire (the double-winged, H-shaped manor house), the high end was often emphasised by more elaborately decorated windows, including the heraldic stained-glass window. See Jill Campbell, 'The Medieval Manor House and the Moated Site', in *The Oxford Handbook of Later-medieval Archaeology in*



passed by marriage from William de Newton to Thomas Thornton (probably either Robert Thornton the scribe's grandfather or great grandfather) sometime in the fourteenth century.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the Thornton family might have refurbished their newly acquired manor house to correspond with contemporary architectural trends, all the while retaining the central open hall.

What we do know about Thornton's home manor is that there was a family chapel, which was dedicated to Saint Peter at least from 1397/98 when Thornton's father acquired permission to celebrate a mass there.<sup>11</sup> By the fifteenth century, a manorial chapel with a license to administer mass had become such a standard feature of noble and gentry houses that the possession of such a chapel was treated as 'an outward and visible sign of gentility'.<sup>12</sup> Lay elites increasingly enjoyed spiritual benefits and comforts of private devotion, offered by their own chapel, altar, and often 'domestic chaplains'.<sup>13</sup> Reflecting their spiritual importance, these family chapels would typically be located at the higher part of the manor house. They were commonly situated close to the lord's private chamber, often directly accessed from it.<sup>14</sup> These chapels were not only furnished with essentials for the celebration of mass but were also often beautified and equipped with various 'objects of private ritual' according to the owner's power and wealth.<sup>15</sup> Such objects often offered the devotee, in this case, the lord, the lady, or their sons/daughters, a focus during their engagement in spiritual exercises. We do not have evidence about the inside of Saint Peter's chapel. Yet, given that late-medieval English household inventories often included painted panels, rosaries, diptychs/triptychs depicting biblical scenes, mass-produced paintings,

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*Britain*, ed. by Christopher M. Gerrard and Alejandra Gutiérrez (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 243–54 (p. 247).

<sup>10</sup> 'Parishes: Stonegrave', in *A History of the County of York North Riding*, ed. William Page, 3 vols (London: Constable, 1914), I, pp. 561–66, in *BHO* <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/north/vol1/pp561-566>> [accessed 29 November 2022].

<sup>11</sup> Keiser, 'More Light', pp. 111–12.

<sup>12</sup> Nigel Saul, 'The Gentry and the Parish', in *The Parish in Late-Medieval England: Proceedings of the 2002 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Clive Burgess and Eamon Duffy, Harlaxton Medieval Studies, 14 (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2006), pp. 243–61 (p. 246).

<sup>13</sup> Christine Carpenter, 'Religion', in *Gentry Culture in Late-Medieval England*, ed. by Raluca L. Radulescu and Alison Truelove (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 134–50 (p. 138).

<sup>14</sup> These family chapels were generally on the first-floor level and sometimes two-storeyed, especially in the fifteenth century. See Grenville, *Medieval Housing*, p. 118.

<sup>15</sup> Kate Giles and Aleksandra McClain, 'The Devotional Image in Late-medieval England', in *The Oxford Handbook of Later-medieval Archaeology in Britain*, ed. by Gerrard and Gutiérrez, pp. 658–78 (p. 668).

sculptures or figurines, and books of hours, Thornton could have stored his objects of private devotion in Saint Peter's chapel along with the basics for the celebrations of masses.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, we do know that Thornton almost certainly had his own book of hours, from which he copied his favourite prayers and psalms into the Lincoln Thornton MS.<sup>17</sup> Keiser speculates that this chapel is 'the likeliest place' that housed booklet 3 of the Lincoln Thornton MS, the booklet that contains devotional writings, prayers, and the abridged *Psalters of Saint Jerome*, among others.<sup>18</sup>

The presence of Saint Peter's chapel in East Newton Hall further suggests that Thornton could have had a small chamber, variously called an oratory, a closet, or a pew either within or somewhere overlooking the family chapel. Among the wealthy gentry, it was common to have such a small room so that a lord, a lady, or both could undertake spiritual exercises there.<sup>19</sup> As Andrew Taylor argues, in the later-medieval period, a chamber or solar—whether it was a deluxe space or a small pew or closet—was understood and increasingly used by literate, gentle lay readers as a counterpart to the monastic cell, i.e. a place for private, devotional reading.<sup>20</sup> If Saint Peter's chapel had such a small chamber, Thornton would have frequented it to pursue his spiritual ambition, which I explain in more detail in the next chapter.<sup>21</sup> It is tempting to imagine that Thornton, like the addressee of Walter Hilton's *Epistle on Mixed Life* (the spiritual

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<sup>16</sup> Many mass-produced devotional objects used in England were imported especially from the Low Countries. See Susan Foister, 'Private Devotion', in *Gothic: Art for England 1400–1547*, ed. by Richard Marks and Paul Williamson (London: V&A Publications, 2003), pp. 334–47.

<sup>17</sup> Some prayers and Psalm 50, the most iconic penitential psalm in the Lincoln Thornton MS could have been selectively copied from Thornton's book of hours. See John J. Thompson, 'Another Look at the Religious Texts in Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 91', in *Late-Medieval Religious Texts and Their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A. I. Doyle* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1994), pp. 169–87 (p. 174).

<sup>18</sup> George R. Keiser, "'To Knawe God Almyghtyn": Robert Thornton's Devotional Book', *Analecta Carthusiana*, 106 (1984), 103–29 (p. 121).

<sup>19</sup> Such closets could have been provided 'with its own altar and other paraphernalia for the celebration of mass'. See Nigel Saul, *Lordship and Faith: The English Gentry and the Parish Church in the Middle Ages* (Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 131.

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Taylor, 'Into His Private Secret Chamber: Reading and Privacy in Late-medieval England', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 41–61.

<sup>21</sup> Thornton might have been like the man, who received from his spiritual advisor a detailed instruction now preserved in Throckmorton Muniments 76. This man, possibly a lawyer, was encouraged to wake up 'with all swiftness' in the morning, to chant prayers, to hear a mass, and to 'go up into' his 'cell and pray' after or before supper. See William A. Pantin, 'Instructions for a Devout and Literate Layman', in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, ed. by J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 398–422 (pp. 398–400).

instruction Thornton himself copied), '[o]ne nyghtis aftir [his] slepe', either stayed awake in his own chamber, or went to Saint Peter's chapel or a pew attached to it, in order to 'dispose [himself] for to pray, or for to thynke some gude thoghte for to qwykkyn [his] herte to Gode'.<sup>22</sup> Saint Peter's chapel, along with Thornton's own chamber, thus likely served not only for family devotion but also for his personal spiritual pursuits.

The domestic space in East Newton variously functioned to fulfil the different physical and spiritual needs not only of Robert Thornton but also of the members of his household. The open hall was the place for the practice of 'family religion' as well as for meals and for welcoming guests.<sup>23</sup> Thornton, as 'the paterfamilias', might have sometimes read an edifying piece from his manuscripts 'and perhaps expound[ed] it' to his household members in the hall.<sup>24</sup> Equally, younger generations of his household could have read such edifying literature or sometimes romances for entertainment there. Also possibly, a clergyman or a friar might have shared meals with the Thornton family and had a spiritually beneficial conversation with them.<sup>25</sup> In one of this manor house's chambers or a closet somewhere close to Saint Peter's chapel, Thornton likely practised spiritual exercises. Though we do not have much evidence of East Newton Hall, the typical tripartite plan of a medieval manor house and the presence of Saint Peter's chapel allow us, at least to some extent, to speculate about the typical spaces which Thornton would have likely experienced and read his book of hours and the writings that are now preserved in the two surviving manuscripts.

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<sup>22</sup> This quotation is taken from 'The Two Ways of Christian Life', in *English Prose Treatises of Richard Rolle de Hampole*, ed. by George Gresley Perry, EETS, o.s., 20 (London: Oxford University Press, 1921; repr. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint, 1987), pp. 21–43 (pp. 37–38).

<sup>23</sup> As Nicholas Orme puts it, mealtime was 'a focus of family religion'. Some practices that were originally part of monastic observances, such as reading edifying literature and saying grace before and after a meal, were often emulated in lay gentle households. See Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 207.

<sup>24</sup> Carpenter, 'Religion', p. 139.

<sup>25</sup> Nicholas Orme, 'Education and Recreation', in *Gentry Culture in Late-Medieval England*, pp. 63–85.

### **Thornton's Immediate locality: Stonegrave Minster**

The church of the Holy Trinity, Stonegrave, or Stonegrave Minster, is located 1.2 miles south southeast of East Newton. The still discernible footpath between East Newton Hall and Stonegrave Minster indicates the tie between the Thornton family and their parish church today. Stonegrave Minster was another locus that was essential for Thornton's spatial experience not only for its social function but also for its role as a window onto a biblical, first-century Jerusalem and a medieval, crusading past. Before exploring Thornton's spatial experience in this church, it is useful to offer here a historical overview of this church and its architectural structure. Stonegrave Minster is one of the oldest churches in England, dating back to the late eighth century as we know that the letter from Pope Paul I to Eadberht (d. 768), King of Northumbria, and his brother Ecgbert (d. 766), archbishop of York, mentions this church.<sup>26</sup> We do not have much textual evidence revealing Stonegrave Minster before the Conquest except for the Domesday Book in 1086. However, as Victoria Whitworth argues, four small cross shafts, fragments of a cross base, and a tall cross (all of which can be traced back into the tenth century and were found during the Victorian rebuilding of Stonegrave Minster) attest to the commercial and cultural links between Ryedale and the southern and northern regions of the British Isles.<sup>27</sup> Thus, from the early medieval period, Stonegrave Minster stood amid important religio-political, commercial, and cultural networks. This parish church developed and was maintained first by the de Stanegrave family probably from the twelfth century, and then by the Thorntons from the late fourteenth century. After the male line of the Thornton family died out, the north aisle of Stonegrave Minster became the burial place for the Comber family in the seventeenth century.

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<sup>26</sup> 'Letter of Pope Paul I to Eadberht, King of Northumbria, and his brother Egbert, archbishop of York (757–758)', in *English Historical Documents, c. 500–1042*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 764.

<sup>27</sup> Victoria Whitworth, 'With Book and Cross: A Reading of the Sculptural Assemblage from Stonegrave, Ryedale, North Yorkshire', in *Islands in a Global Context: Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference on Insular Art*, ed. by Conor Newman, Mags Mannion and Fiona Gavin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), pp. 258–65. See also Margaret Firby and James Lang, 'The Pre-Conquest Sculpture at Stonegrave', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 53 (1981), 17–29.

As the over 1000-year history of this church suggests, Robert Thornton is only one but a significant piece of its rich past.

Despite the long history, however, what we see inside and outside Stonegrave Minster today comes mainly from the Victorian period, when Stonegrave Minster experienced an extensive refurbishment under the leadership of George Fowler Jones, architect and amateur photographer. Although the Victorian rebuilding demolished almost all parts of the church except for the tower and nave walls, it still generally follows the late-medieval plan.<sup>28</sup> Now, Stonegrave Minster, a single-storey masonry church, is comprised of a three-storey western tower, a central nave with a clerestory, a chancel, north aisle, a vestry, south aisle, and a southern porch with the entrance. The nave abuts the western tower and the chancel, adjacent to the north and south aisles with inconsistently distributed arcades. These arcades of the north and south sides of the nave are witnesses of the rebuilding in the twelfth century, when the earlier eleventh-century walls of the nave were cut into three arcades (the north side) and one arcade (the south side) to obtain access to the then-added north and south aisles.<sup>29</sup> Four windows on each side of the clerestory light the nave, which is occupied by nineteenth-century plain-timber pews. At the north-eastern corner of the nave, stands a seventeenth-century pulpit while the Victorian organ and a timber screen lie at the south-eastern corner. The north aisle is constituted by three nave bays and one chancel bay and is equipped with two lancet windows. Amid the central and eastern nave bays, there are two recesses that serve as a resting place for two tombs. One is a fifteenth-century tomb, which lies in the eastern nave bay, with the double effigy, likely of Robert Thornton the elder and his wife Jane, namely, Thornton the scribe's parents. On the base of this tomb and on the surface of Thornton the elder's left sleeve, we can find the coat of arms of the Thorntons, a chevron between three thorn trees. The other tomb is found in the

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<sup>28</sup> Pevsner, *Yorkshire*, pp. 359–60; Lawrence Butler, ed., *The Yorkshire Church Notes of Sir Stephen Glynne (1825–1874)* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), pp. 394–95.

<sup>29</sup> Elanor Pitt, 'Not All Those Who Wander Are Lost: Reconstructing the Post-Medieval Phase of Stonegrave Minster Using a Buildings Archaeology Approach' (unpublished MA thesis, University of York, Department of Archaeology, 2019), p. 18.

central nave bay. This dates to the early fourteenth century and is thought to be for a Hospitaller knight, Roger de Stanegrave (1280s–c.1332). The vestry is situated at the eastern end of the north aisle, namely, on the north side of the chancel. In the chancel, which is demarcated from the nave by a seventeenth-century screen, we can see the nineteenth-century oak altar, a reredos, and the east window. The south aisle comprises three bays, each of which has a Victorian pointed-arch window. The eastern bay of the south aisle is used as a chapel while the western bay serves as a baptistry and offers space to house various memorials, including the tenth-century fragments of a cross base and small crosses. The southern porch abuts this western bay, thus today, when entering Stonegrave Minster from the southern porch, we see a Victorian limestone font at the left-hand side and the memorials at the right-hand side.

As this description demonstrates, Stonegrave Minster does not much retain the fifteenth-century fabric, fixtures, and fittings. However, through a close analysis of the photos of this church taken just before the nineteenth-century rebuilding, Dav Smith reconstructs, at least to some extent, what Thornton the scribe saw in this church. When Thornton was still in his minority, some parts of the church would have been refurbished by his father. We know that, in the early fifteenth century, Robert Thornton the elder likely rebuilt the nave roof, the clerestory, while adding four perpendicular Gothic windows on each side of the clerestory wall.<sup>30</sup> Thornton the elder's contribution to the upper part of the nave of Stonegrave Minster is suggested by the remaining corbel which now supports a part of the timber roof structure. This corbel, which is carved with an angel holding the Thornton family's coat of arms, was likely relocated in 1862–63 probably from somewhere close to its current location. Also, according to Nikolaus Pevsner, the third storey and belfry of the western tower were added to the two-storey twelfth-century construction in the same period as the clerestory, thus likely by Thornton the elder.<sup>31</sup> Last but not least, we know that Thornton the elder constructed the Thornton family's tombs, or added

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<sup>30</sup> Field and Smith, p. 263.

<sup>31</sup> Pevsner, *Yorkshire*, pp. 359–60; Pitt, p. 23.

the tomb for him and his wife as I explained above. Although it is not extant, somewhere close to this tomb, i.e. in the nave bays of the north aisle was likely the site for the burial of Thornton the scribe himself.

What is implied by Smith's reconstruction of the fifteenth-century past of Stonegrave Minster is that the Thornton family used it as their 'gentry church'. According to Nigel Saul, a 'gentry church' is a parish church 'either built and furnished by members of the gentry or extensively embellished by them'.<sup>32</sup> In later-medieval England, in order to demonstrate their lordly identity, as well as to shorten their progress through purgatory, wealthy gentlemen sometimes became chief benefactors or proprietors of their parish church and beautified it often by rebuilding it or at times by paying for what was required for communal worship. Such gentlemen's contribution includes, as Duffy enlists, 'vestments, vessels, processional crosses, monstrances, [and in the case of the easter liturgy,] sepulchres'.<sup>33</sup> This beautification or rebuilding often resulted in the transformation of the parish church into these gentlemen's own 'family mausoleum'.<sup>34</sup> The Thorntons were no exception as they patronised Stonegrave Minster from the late fourteenth century, when this church's former noble benefactor, the de Stanegraves, declined. Thus, Thornton the elder's refurbishment of the nave roof, the clerestory, the upper stage of the western tower, and his building of the double effigy of him and his wife were expected to operate as the visible, architectural indicator of their prosperity, piety, and gentility. Thus, through the extensive 'privatisation' of Stonegrave Minster, the Thornton family used this church to demonstrate their social distinction in Thornton, the scribe's lifetime.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Saul, *Lordship and Faith*, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400–c.1580*, 2nd edn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 122.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 3, 65, 101.

<sup>35</sup> Colin Richmond and Pamela Graves suggest that the literacy and spatial distinction in manorial churches led to the 'privatization' of their religiosity. In other words, according to Richmond and Graves, powerful gentry's experience at the mass was so distinguished from that of the other congregants, including their tenants, that the gentry became devoted to private, contemplative religion at the expense of communal, parochial religion. See Colin Richmond, 'Religion and the Fifteenth-Century English Gentleman', in *The Church, Politics and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Richard Barrie Dobson (Gloucester: Saint Martin's Press, 1984), pp. 193–208; Pamela C. Graves, 'Social Space in the English Medieval Parish Church', *Economy and Society*, 18 (1989), 297–322.

Along with the architectural structure of Stonegrave Minster, liturgical practices and such social occasions as a funeral wake functioned as opportunities to manifest the Thornton family's gentility. Most notably, as Pamela Graves argues, social hierarchy was expressed at masses by the 'topography of good and poor visibility' namely, the position that one occupied when congregants witnessed the elevation of the host.<sup>36</sup> Those who enjoyed high social status like the Thorntons possessed their family pews close to the high altar, or somewhere from which one can easily see the elevation of the host. Also, funerals and intercessory masses for the deceased members of the Thornton family would have expressed their social distinction while drawing to this church their close local gentle families like the Pickerings of Oswaldkirk and the de Ettons of Gilling. According to Saul, gentlemen visited one another's manorial churches at least for attending funerals and baptisms, deepened their social ties, and learned 'the repertory of chivalric remembrance', which was exhibited in such rituals conducted in their manorial parish churches.<sup>37</sup> Thus, as the place for parochial religion, where both congregants and those outside the parish community gathered, Stonegrave Minster was crucial for the Thorntons' social display and socialising as well as devotion.<sup>38</sup>

Importantly for the rest of my thesis, the inner space of Stonegrave Minster was also a place to commemorate the biblical past and the local community's involvement in the crusades. The Thornton family likely made use of their status as the chief benefactor of Stonegrave Minster and tried to secure their salvation by situating their tombs close to the easter sepulchre (a structure symbolising Christ's tomb). This is suggested by Smith, who proposes that the canopy of Thornton's parents' tomb is possibly one which was recycled from a nearby easter sepulchre. This proposition is likely correct because the north side of the high altar, which symbolises the

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<sup>36</sup> Graves, 'Social Space', p. 317.

<sup>37</sup> See Saul, *Lordship and Faith*, p. 200.

<sup>38</sup> As Claire Cross and P. S. Barnwell point out, the parish church was also a place for socialising. In particular, the nave sometimes became 'the setting for much social activity, including funeral wakes and anniversary feasts, and feasts and "church ales" to raise money for the church'. See Claire Cross and P. S. Barnwell, 'The Mass in Its Urban Setting', in *Mass and Parish in Late-medieval England: The Use of York* (Reading: Spire Books, 2005), pp. 13–26 (p. 16).



right-hand side of the Father and where the church's easter sepulchre was customarily placed, was the most sought after burial place in the later-medieval period when people believed that their bodies' physical closeness to Christ's tomb ensured spiritual benefit.<sup>39</sup> Given this, Stonegrave Minster's easter sepulchre could have been important access to first-century Jerusalem, as well as heavenly Jerusalem for Thornton. In the fifteenth century, when the easter sepulchre was often created not as a seasonal but permanent architectural structure, it became, in Eamon Duffy's words, 'an intense and genuinely popular focus for lay piety and devotional initiative' as it 'inculcate[d] and g[a]ve dramatic expression to orthodox teaching, not merely on the saving power of Christ's cross and Passion but on the doctrine of the Eucharist'.<sup>40</sup> In other words, the easter sepulchre was both devotional focus for many laypeople and an essential vehicle for remembering the gospel narrative, which culminated at Christ's passion and resurrection and was visualised in the church fittings and various forms of devotional images. As the central part of the easter liturgy, the easter sepulchre was fervently worshipped by a pious laity. Therefore, Thornton would have felt and indeed was physically close to the Christian, local version of Jerusalem not only during the Easter week but also during the regular worship and the celebration of votive masses for his deceased family members.

There was, and remains an important reminder of and an evocative window onto the eastern crusades in Stonegrave Minster. In Thornton's lifetime, as I have mentioned above, the tomb of Roger de Stanegrave, the Hospitaller brother, probably lay close to the Thornton family's tomb. We do not know how Stanegrave joined the order, but he is thought to have arrived in the Holy Land with Edward I in 1271 and received the mission from this English king to Abaga Khan (the second Mongol ruler of the Ilkhanate, which roughly covered present-day Syria and Anatolia) in Acre.<sup>41</sup> After his ten-year station at his order's garrison, Stanegrave was

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<sup>39</sup> Nigel Saul, *Lordship and Faith*, pp. 182–83.

<sup>40</sup> Duffy, *Stripping the Altar*, p. 31.

<sup>41</sup> Jacques Paviot, ed., *Li charboclois d'armes du conquest precieux de la Terre sainte de promission* in *Projets de croisade, v. 1290–v. 1330*, Documents relatifs à l'histoire des croisades, 20 (Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 2008), pp. 35–36.

captured in Homs (a battlefield in Syria) in 1281, and imprisoned by Mamluks, first in Alexandria and later in Cairo until either 1315 or 1316.<sup>42</sup> This Hospitaller finally returned to his home and his parish via Rhodes in the company of Isaac the Jew, the financier of his release, and seems to have ‘cut a sensational figure’ at the York parliament of January 1320 in an audience with Edward II, as Timothy Guard puts it.<sup>43</sup> Stanegrave also wrote a crusading proposal, *Li charboclois d’armes du conquest precious de la Terre sainte de promission (The Carbuncle of Arms for the Important Conquest of the Promised Holy Land)*.<sup>44</sup> Although it is unlikely that Thornton had a chance to read this Anglo-Norman treatise specifically dedicated to Edward III (who was then urged to participate by Phillip VI in his crusade),<sup>45</sup> the anecdote of Stanegrave’s captivity in Cairo (or ‘Babylon’ to medieval audiences) and the presence of Isaac would have still been well known in Thornton’s local community and likely in elsewhere in England. As Rory MacLellan reveals, Isaac, who later converted to Christianity, aroused considerable royal, pious interest, suggesting that the memory of this converted Jew was long remembered throughout the kingdom.<sup>46</sup> Stanegrave’s effigy, which is carved as a man wearing a long surcoat and a coif with his legs on a lion, embodied Thornton’s local community’s engagement in the pan-western European campaigns against non-Christians in Palestine.

As Jonathan Hughes argues, devotion to the Holy Land and a desire to battle against non-Christians for protecting Christendom were so highly valued among late fourteenth- and

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<sup>42</sup> Julien Loiseau, ‘Frankish Captives in Mamlūk Cairo’, *Al-Masāq*, 23 (2011), 37–52.

<sup>43</sup> Timothy Guard, ‘Stanegrave, Sir Roger (fl. 1280s–1331), Soldier and Writer’, in *ODNB* <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/92443>> [Accessed on 14 April 2021].

<sup>44</sup> Stanegrave’s proposal offers detailed information on Egypt and suggests the plan of sieging Alexandria and Damietta (two strategically important ports of Mamluks) as a prerequisite for the Holy Land campaign. See Paviot, pp. 293–387.

<sup>45</sup> Stanegrave’s treatise is extant only in a fifteenth-century Anglo-Norman manuscript, London, BL, Cotton MS, Otto D. V. (fols. 1–15r), which also contains William of Tyre’s *Chronicle* (fols. 26r–69r). This treatise probably did not circulate widely but attracted some fifteenth-century readers who wished to obtain historical and geographical information about the eastern crusades. See ‘Roger de Stanegrave, *Le Charboclois d’armes* (1r–15r), and other works including William of Tyre, *Chronicle* (26r–69r)’, in BL, *Archives and Manuscripts*, <[http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/display.do?dscnt=1&doc=IAMS040-001102899&displayMode=full&dsmtp=1618467186731& ga=2.150085171.421910665.1618467131-2016385587.1616809456&xvid=IAMS\\_VU2&ct=display&tabs=detailsTab&fromLogin=true](http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?dscnt=1&doc=IAMS040-001102899&displayMode=full&dsmtp=1618467186731& ga=2.150085171.421910665.1618467131-2016385587.1616809456&xvid=IAMS_VU2&ct=display&tabs=detailsTab&fromLogin=true)> [Accessed on 15 April 2021]

<sup>46</sup> Rory MacLellan, ‘An Egyptian Jew in King Edward’s Court: Jewish Conversion, Edward II, and Roger de Stanegrave’, ed. by B. Z. Kedar and Jonathan Phillips, *Crusades*, 19 (2021), 143–53.

early fifteenth-century northern noble families that crusading, either to Prussia or Asia Minor, was regarded as ‘pious and gentlemanly activity’ which bestowed honour on its participants.<sup>47</sup> In Thornton’s locality, some members of the Roos family of Helmsley, including Thomas (1337–1384) and John Roos (1367–1393), were crusaders.<sup>48</sup> Along with such physical engagement in military actions, northern English laypeople also participated in the crusades through almsgiving, or donation to the military orders, in particular, to the Hospitallers. Indeed, after the suppression of the Templars at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem acquired many lands that were formerly possessed by the Templars. During Thornton’s lifetime, for instance, the northern English Hospitaller brothers still had disputes over Temple Newsam (Leeds) and Temple Hurst (Selby).<sup>49</sup> Moreover, in Lancastrian England, priors of the Hospitallers often served as royal councillors and royal justices at court, where many northern elites had also worked since the reign of Edward I.<sup>50</sup> Thus, to Thornton, crusading was not something that had already been forgotten. His local laypeople still contributed to the crusades in either a direct or an indirect way and harboured ongoing desire to fight both for the Holy Land and for Christendom.

Situated at the very heart of Thornton’s social life in his parish community, Stonegrave Minster invited him to the first-century, gospel past and reminded him of his locality’s tie with the crusades in Palestine. As the compiler who juxtaposed an apocryphal narrative of Christ’s infancy with *Richard Cœur de Lyon* (as I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4), the north aisle of this church, where the easter sepulchre and Stanegrave’s tomb rested, would have been particularly evocative space for Thornton. This parish church was not only an indicator of the

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<sup>47</sup> Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late-Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1988), pp. 20–22 (p. 20).

<sup>48</sup> Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, p. 21.

<sup>49</sup> Simon Phillips, ‘The Hospitallers’ Acquisition of the Templar Lands in England’, in *The Debate on the Trial of the Templars (1307–1314)*, ed. by Helen Nicholson, Paul F. Crawford, and Jochen Burgdorf (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 209–17.

<sup>50</sup> According to Jüegen Sarnowsky, in England, priors of the Hospitallers maintained ‘a direct, often personal relationship’ with kings until Henry VIII’s dissolution of the Hospitallers. See Jüegen Sarnowsky, ‘Kings and Priors: The Hospitaller Priory of England in the Later Fifteenth Century’, in *Mendicants, Military Orders, and Regionalism in Medieval Europe* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 83–102 (p. 96).

Thornton family's social status but also an important witness to how his locality was part of the wider, continuing crusading history of western Christendom.

### **'Far from a backwater': Roads, Rivers, and Other Networks in Ryedale and the North Riding**

This third section will explore the transportation networks, the local magnates and religious houses in the fifteenth-century north of England and demonstrate how Thornton's locality was situated at the nexus of commercial transactions, contemporary politics, and a web of cultural hubs, including the Carthusian charterhouses which then played a key role in disseminating religious writings and practices adapted for the laity. To take local communication first, the road networks in the north of England have been often studied in connection to York and the south of England. As David Harrison reveals, dense webs of road networks spread out from York: 'to Hull in the east; to Malton and Scarborough to the north-east; to Durham and the north, with roads to Richmond and the north-west branching off after crossing the Swale at Catterick; to the west to Knaresborough and through the Skipton Gap to Lancashire; to Wakefield and the south-west via Tadcaster; and the busiest of all to the south'.<sup>51</sup> Most notably, the Great North Road, which partly followed the Roman Ermine Street, connected northern towns, such as Durham, Darlington, Northallerton, Wetherby, York, Tadcaster, Wakefield, Pontefract, and Doncaster with London.<sup>52</sup>

In the more immediate locality of Thornton, the three market towns of Pickering, Malton, and Helmsley in the Vale of Pickering and religious communities at Arden, Rievaulx, Byland, Keldholme, and Malton (all of which stood within a ten-mile radius of East Newton Hall) indicate that Thornton's locality was covered by trackways and roads. Indeed, as Harrison's map of bridges in late-medieval Yorkshire reveals, all navigable rivers in this county were

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<sup>51</sup> David Harrison, 'Medieval Yorkshire Roads, Bridges and York Merchants', in *York: Art, Architecture and Archaeology*, ed. by Sarah Brown, Sarah Rees Jones, and Tim Ayers (London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 189–208 (p. 189).

<sup>52</sup> F. M. Stenton, 'The Road System of Medieval England', *Economic History Review*, 7 (1936), 1–21.

thoroughly covered with crossings, either a stone bridge or a ferry, suggesting that busy road communication flourished in this region, including Ryedale and the Vale of Pickering.<sup>53</sup> We know, for instance, that Hambleton Street, a ridgeway, long served as a ‘great cattle road’ on a north-south axis from Swainby to Oldstead.<sup>54</sup> Around Oldstead, Hambleton Street met a road that ran eastwards and led to Ampleforth, Oswaldkirk, Stonegrave, Hovingham, and Malton.<sup>55</sup> John McDonnell and R. H. Hayes suggest that another road led medieval travellers from Oldstead to Coxwold, Crayke, and finally York.<sup>56</sup> Helmsley, a market town under the rule of the Ros family, operated as a junction. From thence, a road ran eastwards to Scarborough via Kirbymoorside, Keldholme, and Pickering. Margaret Harvey has observed that a late-medieval man on horseback could travel about thirty miles in a day in winter and between thirty-six and forty in summer.<sup>57</sup> Thus, thanks to these roads, Thornton was able to easily go back and forth to Pickering, Malton, and, in summer, York, in a day’s journey while other large northern towns like Scarborough (25 miles east of East Newton) and Beverley (34.5 miles south east) were also reachable, though the travels to these places likely required Thornton to stay a night at his destination. Therefore, late-medieval Ryedale was at the centre of a dense web of routes in the northern English road system.

Thornton’s locality was also covered by river networks. Waterways offered cheaper and safer means for moving the bulk of products and raw materials, offering an infrastructure that sustained the wool trade, a key basis of this region’s commercial development. York was the

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<sup>53</sup> Harrison, ‘Medieval Yorkshire Roads’, p. 190.

<sup>54</sup> R. H. Hayes, ‘The Hambleton Street’, *Transactions of the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society*, 3 (1960), 21–28 (p. 21).

<sup>55</sup> John McDonnell, ed., *A History of Helmsley, Rievaulx and District* (York: Stonegate Press, 1963), pp. 69–70. It is also necessary to note that in late-medieval northern England, ‘street’ was used to call virtually all locally important roads, ‘whether of the Roman origin or not even, in some instances, un-metalled droveways’. See ‘Street’, in *The Roads of Roman Britain*, <<http://www.roadsofromanbritain.org/glossary/s.html>> [accessed 27 September 2021]. Also, King’s highways and common roads were not legally differentiated. See Paul Hindle, ‘Sources for the English Medieval Road System’, in *Roadworks: Medieval Britain, Medieval Roads*, ed. by Valerie Allen and Ruth Evans (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 33–49 (p. 34).

<sup>56</sup> McDonnell, pp. 69–70.

<sup>57</sup> Margaret Harvey, ‘Travel from Durham to York (and Back) in the Fourteenth Century’, *Northern History*, 42 (2005), 119–30 (p. 121); Stenton, pp. 16–18.

most significant international port in the north because it was connected by the river Ouse, ‘a great commercial highway’, to Hull, which was the largest east coast port outside of London in the late-medieval period.<sup>58</sup> The tributaries of the Ouse, including the Swale, the Ure, and the Nidd, carried wool, and later cloth and lead into the Humber and then overseas through Hull. Thanks to its status as the outport of York for coastal and international shipping, Hull had thrived since it was acquired by Edward I from Meaux Abbey, the Cistercian house in Holderness.<sup>59</sup> From thence, ships travelled the entire coast of Western Europe, from Iceland in the north to Bordeaux in the south while the largest group of ships arriving at Hull came from the Low Countries, especially from Veere (a town on the coast of the Western Scheldt, in Zeeland).<sup>60</sup> The ships departing from Hull returned with cargoes not only of woad and madder for the local cloth-dyeing industries but also of a wide range of wine, the osmund (a type of high-quality iron imported in bars) of Sweden, timber from Scandinavia and the Baltic, stockfish, and a miscellany of raw materials and products from the Low Countries, among others.<sup>61</sup> The Low Countries also supplied Hull with imports from Spain, Portugal, and regions in the eastern Mediterranean, such as almonds, ‘malvese’ (malmsey wine, originally obtained from Greece), pomegranates, and oranges, as Hull’s custom accounts in the late fifteenth century suggest.<sup>62</sup>

This wide variety of imports suggests that there were great demands for overseas produce and products in the north of England. For instance, as Miranda Threlfall-Holmes reveals, the monks of Durham Cathedral priory regularly purchased not only dried fruits and

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<sup>58</sup> Jennifer Kermode, *Medieval Merchants: York, Beverley, and Hull in the Later Middle Ages*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 4 (Cambridge: University Press, 1998), p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Medieval Hull’, in *A History of the County of York: East Riding*, 3 vols, ed. by K. J. Allison (London, 1969), I, pp. 11–85, in *BHO* <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/east/vol1/pp11-85>> [accessed 2 November 2019].

<sup>60</sup> Wendy R. Childs, *The Customs Accounts of Hull, 1453–1490*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 144 (Leeds: The University of Leeds Printing Service, 1986), pp. xi–xxvi. Although fifteenth-century Hull had already passed her peak and increasingly faced decline due to the pressures of her competition with London, she was still a bustling, prosperous port city.

<sup>61</sup> According to Wendy R. Childs, along with Lynn, Hull was the ‘most active provincial por[t] in timber trade’. English merchants imported timber also from Spain, Gascony, and Ireland, but the North Sea regions supplied more. See Wendy R. Childs, ‘Timber for Cloth: Changing Commodities in Anglo-Baltic Trade in the Fourteenth Century’, in *Cogs, Cargoes and Commerce: Maritime Bulk Trade in Northern Europe, 1150–1400*, ed. by Lars Berggren, Nils Hybel, and Annette Landen (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2002), pp. 181–211 (p. 186). Also see Kermode, *Medieval Merchants*, pp. 159–90.

<sup>62</sup> Childs, *The Customs Accounts of Hull*, pp. 51, 70, 72, 74, 78, 160.

nuts but also various spices, including liquorice, aniseed, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, mace, pepper, and saffron.<sup>63</sup> The river links contributed to Yorkshire's extensive trade networks that developed around large cities like York, Hull, and Beverley and exposed the local people, including Thornton, to the latest commercial trends and both necessities and luxuries from all over western Europe and beyond.

Behind the well-developed transportation and trade networks lay the power of local magnates, who possessed their landed estates and their war bases in the north of England 'as a buffer against the Scots' while often playing an important role in maintaining local transportation networks.<sup>64</sup> Thornton's locality is indeed densely packed with the castles and manors of northern magnates, who were immensely influential combatants in contemporary power struggles. Many Yorkshire noble families, both lower and higher aristocrats (such as the Scopes of Bolton and Masham as well as the Ros family), used their administrative and military skills in crown service from the time of Edward I. Alongside such crown service, talented Yorkshire gentlemen also served for the local magnates, such as the Duchy of Lancaster, the Percy dukes of Northumberland, and their rival family, the Nevilles, among others.<sup>65</sup> The power struggles and complex alliances among the crown and local magnates would have been felt particularly close to Thornton as East Newton was surrounded by the lands possessed and disputed by them. For instance, the earls and dukes of Lancaster had owned the honour, castle, manor, and forest of Pickering (ten miles northeast of East Newton) since 1267, when Henry III granted them to Edmund, his younger son, as part of the territorial settlement to create Earl of Lancaster.<sup>66</sup> The

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<sup>63</sup> Miranda Threlfall-Holmes, *Monks and Markets: Durham Cathedral Priory, 1460–1520* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 59.

<sup>64</sup> Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, p. 6.

<sup>65</sup> Ralph Hanna, 'Yorkshire and York', in *Europe: A Literary History, 1348–1418*, ed. by David Wallace (Oxford: University Press, 2016), pp. 256–78 (p. 260).

<sup>66</sup> Pickering Castle had been possessed either by the crown or the royal families because of its strategically important location. The crown confiscated Pickering and its adjoining territories from the Duchy of Lancaster for a short period of time from 1322 (when Thomas of Lancaster led the rebellion against Edward II) to 1327 (when Edward III ascended the throne). See Derek Rivard, 'The Poachers of Pickering Forest 1282–1338', *Medieval Prosopography*, 17 (1996), 97–144 (p. 103); G. T. Clark, 'Pickering Castle', *Archaeological Journal*, 30 (1873), 349–57; M. W. Thompson, *Pickering Castle, Yorkshire* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1958), p. 9.

Hastings, who loyally served the dukes of Lancaster from the early fourteenth century and owned the stewardship of Pickering, had a residence in Slingsby, four miles southeast of East Newton and 8.5 miles south west of Pickering.<sup>67</sup> The Ros family possessed the lordship of Helmsley, and their castle stood there, 3.5 miles northwest of East Newton. The Ros family, particularly Thomas of Ros (ninth Baron Ros from 1443), was a key Lancastrian noble as well as an ally of the Percys. The rival of the Percys, i.e. the Nevilles of Middleham, had one of their strongholds in Sheriff Hutton, which lay eight miles south of East Newton and was disputed among Ralph Neville (the second earl of Westmorland) and Joan Beaufort (the countess of Westmorland, Ralph Neville's stepmother).<sup>68</sup> The de Ettons of Gilling, a family siding with the Nevilles, owned a castle 2.7 miles southwest of Thornton's home manor.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the physical landscapes of the region of a ten-mile radius of East Newton were dominated by and crowded with these mutually hostile noble families' lands. The geographical proximity no doubt kept Thornton very aware of the contemporary political climates, which fluctuated according to these magnates' feuds.

The presence of the powerful nobles offered Thornton's locality not only political tension and military violence but also the basis of a rich, sophisticated culture. According to Rosalind Field, secular narratives like the *Awntyrs off Arthure* and also possibly, the Alliterative

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<sup>67</sup> The lands of the Hastings of Slingsby were temporarily forfeited because of Ralph Hasting's participation in 'the Percy-influenced rising of north Yorkshire gentry against Henry IV (1405), which cost his life. The family lands, however, were restored in 1410 thanks to their over seventy-year loyalty. See Simon Walker, 'Hasting family', in ODNB <[https://www.oxforddnb-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-54526?rskey=KT8ZCI&result=3#odnb-9780198614128-e-54526-headword-5](https://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-54526?rskey=KT8ZCI&result=3#odnb-9780198614128-e-54526-headword-5)> [accessed 10 November 2022]

<sup>68</sup> Over the possession of Sheriff Hutton (along with Middleham in North Yorkshire, Raby in Durham and Penrith in Cumberland) Ralph Neville disputed with Joan Beaufort. However, after Joan's death, in 1443, Richard Neville (a son of the first earl of Westmorland, Ralph Neville, and Joan), who was then the earl of Salisbury, confirmed his possession of the lordship of Sheriff Hutton and employed it as a key stronghold during the feuds between the Percys and the Nevilles in 1453–54. See A. J. Pollard, *North-Eastern England During the Wars of the Roses: Lay Society, War, and Politics, 1450–1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 245–65. In 1471, Sheriff Hutton was seized by the crown as a result of the Lancastrian effort to expand royal authority in the north of England. Ed Dennison, 'Sheriff Hutton Castle', *Archaeological Journal*, 154 (1997), 291–96.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas de Etton, who fought with Neville in Normandy in 1369, was granted a license to impark one thousand acres of land at Gilling, and then to build this castle. This castle was later inherited by the Fairfax family in 1492 after the short possession by the Nevilles because of the end of the male line of the de Ettons. See John Bilson, 'Gilling Castle', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 19 (1907), 105–92 (pp. 118–23).



*Morte Arthure*, might have reached Thornton's hands from the household of the Nevilles via Richard Pickering, who was a retainer of the Nevilles, as I mentioned above. Here, Field does not suggest that 'Thornton was on social terms with' the Nevilles, but according to her, 'Thornton's social sphere' could have been associable with such noble families via literate men, who worked in and made the local magnates' households local 'cultural hubs'.<sup>70</sup> In other words, the webs of Thornton's local book-circulating networks could have been inclusive enough to reach both a noble household and Thornton and to allow him to read secular narratives originally targeting noble audiences. Whether it was from the household of the Nevilles that the *Awntyrs off Arthure* was disseminated or not, the presence of the powerful local magnates undoubtedly enriched cultural lives in Thornton's locality.<sup>71</sup>

As the leading noble families often founded, sent their members to, and maintained an interdependent relationship with religious houses, the local religious houses also had a substantial presence both in the physical landscapes and mentality of the areas around Ryedale. They offered their noble patron hospitality and intercessory prayers, sometimes educating their small children, serving as witnesses of their wills, attending their funerals, and settling disputes among them. In return for these secular and spiritual benefits offered by religious houses, the noble patrons, whose family members often donned a habit of religious, endowed them with lands and offerings often as a form of bequests and served as 'their stewards and legal advisers'.<sup>72</sup> Since Walter Espec (the twelfth-century baron, justice, and ancestor of the Ros family) founded Rievaulx Abbey in 1132 near Helmsley on the bank of River Rye, other Yorkshire Cistercian male houses had been consecutively erected in the twelfth century.<sup>73</sup> As Hanna points out, marshy Holderness and many parts of the West and all the North Riding of Yorkshire was a

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<sup>70</sup> Field and Smith, p. 262.

<sup>71</sup> Rosamund Allen maintains that the *Awntyrs off Arthure* was written for the honour of the Nevilles and its original target audience was this family's entourage. See Rosamund Allen, 'The *Awntyrs off Arthure*: Jests and Jousts', in *Romance Reading on the Book: Essays on Medieval Narrative Presented to Maldwyn Mills* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), pp. 129–42.

<sup>72</sup> Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, p. 37.

<sup>73</sup> Fountains Abbey was founded in 1132. The Cistercian house at Byland started as the order of Savigny but was absorbed into the Cistercian order in 1147. Meaux was erected in 1151, Kirkstall in 1152, and Jervaulx in 1156.

region which was sometimes imagined as ‘a wilderness’ and attracted religiously aspiring Cistercians; they wished to pursue a simpler life and the stricter observance of Saint Benedict’s Rule somewhere, at least theoretically, deserted.<sup>74</sup> Two powerful Cistercian male houses—Rievaulx Abbey and Byland Abbey—were in close proximity to East Newton, and their granges were part of Thornton’s everyday landscapes. Rievaulx Abbey lay 5.4 miles northwest and kept one of its granges at Griff (4.5 miles northwest of East Newton). Byland Abbey, standing 6 miles west of East Newton, had the right to the fisheries at Cams Head (6.5 miles east).<sup>75</sup> While the Cistercians were particularly prominent in Yorkshire, other religious orders also maintained a considerable presence. A Gilbertine priory stood at Malton 10 miles east-southeast of East Newton. The Augustinians had four houses in the area between Ryedale and York, including a female house.<sup>76</sup> Cities like York attracted mendicant orders, offering them places to build their friaries.

Thornton was also able to find in his locality many female convents. In Hawnby, 10 miles northwest of East Newton, stood Arden Priory, a Benedictine priory which we know had a dispute with Byland Abbey.<sup>77</sup> Cistercian nuns, whose Cistercian identity was recognised by English ecclesiastical authority, not by the general chapter of the order, also resided at Rosedale (11 miles north northeast) and Keldholme (5.5 miles northeast).<sup>78</sup> Notably, since many Yorkshire female houses were founded often out of the personal connection between the lower aristocratic founder and the inmates,<sup>79</sup> they were poor and thus, inevitably, relied on their patrons, often

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<sup>74</sup>Hanna, ‘Yorkshire and York’, p. 258.

<sup>75</sup> Janet Burton, ‘Cistercian Granges’ in *Historical Atlas of North Yorkshire*, ed. by Butlin and Staley, pp. 94–95.

<sup>76</sup> There was a male house at Kirkham ten miles to the south-southeast of East Newton. About eight miles to the southwest, there were a pair of these Augustinian canons’ houses at Marton (men) and Moxby (women), which are the so-called double houses (in which monks and nuns often shared their liturgical celebrations and provisions while being segregated from one another). Also, at Coxwold, 6.4 miles west west-south of East Newton, another Augustinian male house stood.

<sup>77</sup> More Benedictine female houses were found at Yedingham, Nun Monkton, Wilberfoss, Nunburnholme, Thicket, and in York (i.e. wealthy Saint Clements Priory).

<sup>78</sup> As Elizabeth Freeman explains, the general chapter of the Cistercian order did not officially incorporate many English female houses into the order, but English bishops generally admitted the nunneries’ self-identification to the Cistercian order. See Elizabeth Freeman, ‘“Houses of a Peculiar Order”: Cistercian Nunneries in Medieval England with Special Attention to the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries’, *Cîteaux*, 55 (2004), 245–87.

<sup>79</sup> Janet Elizabeth Burton explains the reason why twelfth-century Yorkshire witnessed a considerable number of the foundations of nunneries is mainly ‘to fulfil a certain need’, and ‘perhaps [. . .] the desire of a father to provide for an

including the gentry. The dependence on and close relationship with the local secular community, however, do not mean that Yorkshire female religious houses were less spiritually valued. Rather, their local community often benefitted from them. Most notably for Thornton's scribal activity, these female religious houses often played a key role in local book circulation, which generally included nuns, female anchorites, literate laypeople like Thornton, and clergymen/friars who often worked as confessors and spiritual advisors for nuns and lay elites. Indeed, Keiser suggests that Thornton had such a connection. According to Keiser, some of the religious writings that Thornton copied reached his hands from (a) female religious house(s), most likely from the Benedictine Priory at Nun Monkton, where Joan Pickering, Richard Pickering's sister, became a nun.<sup>80</sup>

Concerning the spiritual benefits offered by the dissemination of books from religious houses which were local to Thornton, we cannot forget the Carthusians, along with female religious. Since Yorkshire clergy and aristocrats were active participants in contemporary religio-politics, the northern Charterhouses participated in Lancastrian religious authorities' attempts to control the educated laity's reading.<sup>81</sup> Most notably, Mount Grace Priory (which was founded in 1398 amid the Cleveland Hills, 17 miles to the northwest of East Newton), in close collaboration with their London charterhouse in Sheen (the house that was founded by Henry V),<sup>82</sup> engaged in translating religious texts both for the use of the religious and the laity, as testified by the most famous example of Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*. This English adaptation of the Latin *Meditationes vitae Christi* was distributed throughout England under the sanction of Thomas Arundel and contributed to the development of the practice of affective

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unmarried daughter'. See Janet Elizabeth Burton, *The Yorkshire Nunneries in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, Borthwick Papers 56 (York: Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, 1979), p. 19.

<sup>80</sup> Keiser, 'More Light', pp. 115–18.

<sup>81</sup> Along with the Mount Grace Priory, two charterhouses also stood at Hull and the isle of Axholme (a part of North Lincolnshire that adjoins South Yorkshire, near Scunthorpe).

<sup>82</sup> Jeremy Catto, '1349–1412: Culture and History', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism*, ed. by Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 113–132 (pp. 124–28).

meditation among literate laypeople, including Thornton.<sup>83</sup> Thus, here again, we find another indication as to how fifteenth-century North Yorkshire was entwined with contemporary national concerns. The areas around Ryedale and beyond were packed with many religious houses, male and female, monastic and mendicant alike. These houses not only claimed a considerable presence in the physical landscapes of Thornton's locality but also played key roles in Lancastrian England.

As I have discussed in this section, Ryedale, where East Newton Hall stood, was indeed 'far from a backwater' (to use Field's turn of phrase).<sup>84</sup> Thanks to the transportation and trade networks that connected northern market towns to one another as well as to the south of England, Thornton's locality was exposed to the latest commercial, cultural, and religious trends. The manors and castles of local magnates and the various orders' religious houses provided this region with cultural sophistication and kept it well-informed about contemporary political situations. These manors, castles, and monastic complexes served as indicators of the fluctuating religio-political power balance of fifteenth-century England. Thus, Thornton's locality was centred on commercial, cultural, political, and religious networks which ran throughout England and beyond.

## **York**

The final section of this chapter turns to York, the city that undoubtedly occupied an important place in Thornton's cultural and devotional life. In this section, I first explain his connection with York, and then try to delineate, at least some parts of, its cityscape by paying attention to the lively, complex interrelations among the crown, merchants, artisans, religious houses, and ecclesiastical institutions that animated this important, and for Thornton, local city. Thornton no

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<sup>83</sup> Michael G. Sargent, 'Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* and the Politics of Vernacular Translation in Late-medieval England', in *Lost in Translation?*, ed. by Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 205–21.

<sup>84</sup> Field and Smith, p. 258.

doubt frequented York and was exposed to its bustling urban space. We know that Thornton's son, 'William of Thorneton of York', asked to be buried before the altar dedicated to Saint Catherine at Saint Cuthbert's church on Peaseholme, York.<sup>85</sup> This implies that Saint Cuthbert's church was William's parish church. Although we do not know the reason why and when William Thornton moved from Ryedale and came to be called 'Thoreneton of York', but his father, Robert the scribe no doubt visited his son in the city.

Along with this family relationship, York's status as 'the fourth most important book-producing centre in England, behind London, Oxford, and Cambridge', surely attracted Thornton to the city.<sup>86</sup> As I suggest above, the source texts of Thornton's manuscripts likely circulated in the networks of local bibliophiles in the form of individual 'pamphlets' (which, in Fredell's definition, are 'small books of one or two quires circulating independently').<sup>87</sup> Alongside these avenues of source texts, Thornton (or possibly, someone of his social networks) seems to have used a certain commercial bookshop in York. As Fredell argues, some decorative features of the Lincoln Thornton MS, such as penwork initials dotted by small bubbles and the use of an unusual green wash, testify that 'a professional hand from York, or trained there', was involved in this manuscript.<sup>88</sup> Decorative sophistication of the Lincoln Thornton MS's Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and prose *Alexander's* ambitious, uncompleted plan of decoration equally indicate that Thornton had an opportunity to have a look at a deluxe exemplar that was made in York.<sup>89</sup> The role played by York as a centre of book circulation is also suggested by the 1468 probate inventory of Elizabeth Sywardby, a contemporary York gentlewoman. As this inventory details, Sywardby had an English translation of Saint Bridget's revelations, a Latin and English life of Christ, an English book of the mystery of the passion of Christ, which was likely very similar to

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<sup>85</sup> 'Testamentum Willelmi Thornton', in *The Autobiography of Mrs Alice Thornton, of East Newton, Co. York*, ed. by Charles Jackson, Surtees Society Publications 62 (Durham: Andrews, 1875), pp. 324–25.

<sup>86</sup> Stacey Gee, "'At the Sygne of the Cardynalles Hat': The Book Trade and the Market for Books in Yorkshire, c. 1450–1550" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, Centre for Medieval Studies, 1999), p. 15.

<sup>87</sup> Fredell, 'The Thornton Manuscripts and Book Production in York', p. 120.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p. 125.

Thornton's *Privity of the Passion*, and a treatise for meditation on the Passion composed by Richard Rolle. These books in her inventory suggests her distinctively 'feminine' mode of piety, which is almost identical to that which Thornton possessed.<sup>90</sup> This attests that York served as one of the links of religious book circulation, which tied such devout women as Sywardby to Thornton. Although we do not have much evidence that elucidates Thornton's activity in York other than the will mentioning his son and the two manuscripts that he copied (and including their distinctive illustration), York's book trade no doubt nurtured his bookish piety.

While York enriched Thornton's cultural life as England's fourth largest book-producing centre, it was the second city in England throughout the medieval period and an essential basis of the cultural, spiritual, and commercial wealth of the north of England. Possessing the northern see, York's spiritual authority rivalled Canterbury, and the cathedral church of Saint Peter, i.e. York Minster, was the centre of the episcopal administration. Notably, in the late-medieval period, from the archbishopate of John Thoresby (r. 1354–1373) through the following archbishops, i.e. Thomas Arundel (r. 1388–1396), Richard Scrope (1398–1405), and Henry Bowet (1406–1423), York clergy was at the heart of the pastoral reform of the whole English church.<sup>91</sup> These archbishops, being active proponents of enhanced pastoral care, viewed the education of parish clergy and laypeople as an effective way to outface Lollard, or unorthodox ideas and champion religious orthodoxy. Richard Scrope, the archbishop of York, also contributed to York Minster's popularity among pious pilgrims since many pilgrims revered not only William of York but also Scrope. He had become York's 'own Thomas Becket' since Henry IV's execution of this archbishop just outside the city walls in 1405.<sup>92</sup> The cult for Scrope

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<sup>90</sup> James Raine, ed., *Testamenta Eboracensia, or Wills Registered at York: Illustrative of the History, Manners, Language, Statistics, &c., of the Province of York, from the Year 1300 Downwards* (London: Nichols and Son, 1836), p. 163; see also Keiser, "'To Knawe God Almyghtyn'", p. 122.

<sup>91</sup> Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, pp. 129–96. I do not mention Alexander Neville (1373–1388) and Robert Waldby (1396–1397) here since the periods of both archbishops were so turbulent that their archiepiscopate is not generally characterised by the pastoral reform. See R. N. Swanson, 'Waldby, Robert', in *ODNB* <<https://doi-org.libproxy.york.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/28432>> [accessed 18 February 2023]; R. B. Dobson, 'Neville, Alexander', in *ODNB* <<https://doi-org.libproxy.york.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/19922>> [accessed 25 February 2023].

<sup>92</sup> Jeremy P. Goldberg, 'Saint Richard Scrope, the Devout Widow, and the Feast of Corpus Christi: Exploring Emotions, Gender, and Governance in Early Fifteenth-Century York', in *Authority, Gender and Emotions in Late-*

spread unofficially especially in the north of England in Thornton's lifetime through the association with Christ's passion, as witnessed by the Bolton Hours.<sup>93</sup> The Minster's spiritual authority, which would have been obvious to its visitors due to its magnificent appearance, was manifested by its archbishops, ecclesiastical elites, and saintly figures like Richard Scrope.<sup>94</sup>

The cityscape of fifteenth-century York was not, of course, dominated solely by York Minster. A great number of religious institutions and more than forty parish churches gathered around it. Most notably, near to the Minster, stood the huge Saint Leonard's Hospital and Saint Mary's Abbey, one of the most powerful and immensely rich Benedictine monasteries in England.<sup>95</sup> Along with this Benedictine house, York had two further monasteries: the Benedictine Priory of Holy Trinity, on Micklegate,<sup>96</sup> and Saint Andrew's Priory, which was a small Gilbertine house just outside the walls in Fishergate.<sup>97</sup> York also offered space not only for male religious but also for nuns, for, across the river Ouse, in the suburb of Clementhorpe, Saint Clement's Priory for Benedictine nuns had stood since around 1130. Thriving York further attracted, alongside these monastic orders, almost all the chief mendicant orders, who had their friaries there: Franciscans dwelled near the Castle, Dominicans on Toft Green, Carmelites close to the Foss in Hungate, and Augustinians between the Guildhall and Lendal Tower.<sup>98</sup> These religious institutions maintained jurisdiction over their lands and properties and often received

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*Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. by Susan Broomhall, *Genders and Sexualities in History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 66–83 (p. 68).

<sup>93</sup> Patricia Cullum and Jeremy Goldberg, 'How Margaret Blackburn Taught Her Daughters: Reading Devotional Instruction in a Book of Hours', in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late-Medieval Britain*, ed. by Diamond Arlyn, Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Rosalynn Voaden, Ann Hutchison, and Carol Meale (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 217–36.

<sup>94</sup> As the largest Gothic cathedral in northern Europe, York Minster boasted and embodied the northern see's spiritual authority.

<sup>95</sup> Claire Cross and Noreen Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth-Century Yorkshire* (Huddersfield: Charlesworth Group, 1995), p. 75.

<sup>96</sup> Cross and Barnwell, p. 21. This Benedictine house had a close tie with its neighbouring area as the nave of its monastic church served as a parish church.

<sup>97</sup> Cross and Vickers, pp. 407–11.

<sup>98</sup> Cross and Barnwell, pp. 22–23.

numerous bequests, even including the valued relic, the right hand of Mary Magdalene, which was given to the Dominican friary by Brian Stapleton in the fifteenth century.<sup>99</sup>

These houses also collaborated with the city's merchants and craftsmen, by offering them bases for their guilds.<sup>100</sup> Such relationships between laypeople's guilds and religious institutions ensured mutual support. The religious house enjoyed economic benefits while the guild gained religious and funeral advantages. This symbiotic relationship was not only economically but also spatially expressed in late-medieval York since many religious guilds maintained their chantry chapels in religious institutions. For instance, the Saint Christopher guild, to which many wealthy merchants and mercers belonged, was one of the three largest religious guilds in fifteenth-century York and founded a chantry at the altar dedicated to Saint Christopher in the Minster.<sup>101</sup> As the bustling religious centre of the north, the cityscape of York was punctuated by the buildings of various religious institutions, from a small parish church to the huge Minster, while being crowded with clergy, monastics, mendicants, and those laypeople who maintained interdependent ties with such religious.

York's flourishing urban space was also constructed through the city's civic elites' richly complex, collaborative and sometimes competing relationships with craftsmen, ecclesiastics, and the crown. Despite economic downturns, fifteenth-century York was still 'a centre of the English wool trade [. . .] and a major cloth-manufacturing city in its own right'.<sup>102</sup> While York's civic elites were comprised of mercers and wool merchants, who dominated the office of mayor from the 1360s, this does not mean that these mercantile classes monopolised the city government.

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<sup>99</sup> This Brian Stapleton is probably the grandson of Brian Stapleton (c. 1322–1394), the soldier of Wighill and Helough, Yorkshire, who served Edward II, Edward III, and Richard II. See 'Friaries: Friaries in York', in *A History of the County of York*, ed. by William Page (London: Victoria County History, 1974), III, pp. 283–296, in *BHO* <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/vol3/pp283-296>> [accessed 22 November 2022]; Carole Rawcliffe, 'Stapleton, Sir Brian', in *ODNB* <<https://www.oxforddnb-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26299;jsessionid=82E7A7A43182E64853B755890236F0E1>> [accessed 5 December 2022]

<sup>100</sup> David J. F. Crouch, 'Piety, Fraternity and Power: Religious Guilds in Late-medieval Yorkshire 1389–1547', (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 1995), pp. 186–250.

<sup>101</sup> Crouch, pp. 204–5.

<sup>102</sup> Christian D. Liddy and Jelle Haemers, 'Popular Politics in the Late-medieval City: York and Bruges', *English Historical Review*, 128.533 (2013), 771–805 (p. 774).



Rather, the ruling elites of merchants and mercers were in constant negotiation with craftsmen. Such a mixed ruling body is represented by the city of York's political system, which comprised a three-tiered system of conciliar government: the two inner councils of the twelve and the twenty-four (both of which comprised mainly merchants, mercers, and those who had held offices like bailiff, sheriff, chamberlain, or bridgemaster) and the outer council, which is known both as the council of the forty-eight and 'the craft searchers' (who were the representatives of the city's crafts).<sup>103</sup> As Christian D. Liddy and Jelle Haemers point out, the craft searchers, who were episodically summoned to advise the two inner councils, worked as the 'leaders and spokesmen' of their crafts and, when necessary, organised collective action, which resulted in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century riots and uprisings in York.<sup>104</sup> While the three-tiered system suggests the complex relationship between the mercantile elites and artisans (i.e. those who were engaged in the production of manufactured goods), the civic elites were also struggling for control over the city with religious houses in it and the crown. The mayor and aldermen strived to limit the ecclesiastical liberty in the city and 'harboured grievances against' the officials of the royal household like the marshal, the seneschal, and the clerk of the market, for such officials were licensed to suspend the city's jurisdiction when the royal household paid visits to York.<sup>105</sup>

As Sarah Rees Jones points out, because of such a constant competition with the crown, ecclesiastical institutions headed by the archbishop, and religious houses, York's mercantile elites and craftsmen often tried to exhibit their authority by ostentatiously demonstrating their piety.<sup>106</sup> Such a mixture of devotion and desires for authority was often architecturally, or spatially expressed as suggested by the Corpus Christi shrine, which was moved from the Benedictine priory, Holy Trinity, on Micklegate, to the civic chapel of Saint William on Ouse Bridge in 1432.

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<sup>103</sup> It should be noted that York took the form of government operating under the combination of two systems. One is this three-tiered system and the other is 'a hierarchy of elected officials, a mayor, or equivalent, sheriff or bailiff, and chamberlain or treasurer'. See Kermode, *Medieval Merchants*, p. 28.

<sup>104</sup> Liddy and Haemers, p. 779.

<sup>105</sup> Sarah Rees Jones, 'York's Civic Administration, 1354–1464', in *The Government of Medieval York: Essays in Commemoration of the 1396 Royal Charter*, ed. by Sarah Rees Jones (York: Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, 1997), pp. 108–40 (p. 118).

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, p. 137.

In Hanna's view, the procession of Mystery Plays' pageants of Corpus Christi Day equally manifested a similar desire of civic elites and craftsmen. The cycle of the mystery plays, according to Hanna, spatially articulated the city's 'independence from clerical authority, from supervision or imposition by the likes of archbishop, cathedral canons, or the abbot of St Mary's'.<sup>107</sup> The pageants' wagons deliberately followed a standard processional route followed by the royal greeting and emphasised what was reaffirmed by the royal visit, namely, York's status as an independent county and its urban rights against the crown and such powerful ecclesiastical institutions as the Minster canons and the Benedictine monks of Saint Mary's Abbey. Therefore, as a major trading centre that boasted wealthy merchants and more than fifty 'crafts or craft groups',<sup>108</sup> the urban culture of York thrived through the complex, collaborative, and sometimes antagonising interactions among merchants, artisans, the crown, clerics and religious houses.

As a provincial landlord, Thornton was not related to such competitive relationships in York. However, as a father who visited his son and as a consumer of York's book trade, as well no doubt of much else in the city, Thornton was exposed to this bustling cityscape. He would have been impressed by the magnificent Minster, Saint Mary's Abbey, and Saint Leonard's Hospital. The relic of Mary Magdalene's hand could have drawn him to the Dominican friary on Toft Green and kindled his devotional imagination about the gospel past, particularly the life of Christ as his manuscripts point to his immense interest in Christ's humanity. Thornton might also have heard about the struggle between craftsmen and mercantile elites as well as the relocation of the Corpus Christi chapel from the Benedictine Priory of the Holy Trinity to the Saint William chapel. Moreover, as a religiously keen devotee who had a marked Christocentric piety, Thornton probably came to York to see the mystery plays, which transformed the urban space into a version of Jerusalem and enabled him to immerse himself in the gospel narrative.

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<sup>107</sup> Hanna, 'Yorkshire and York', p. 264.

<sup>108</sup> According to the 1415 *Ordo Paginarum*, fifty-four 'crafts or craft groups' were associated with the production of a pageant in York's annual Corpus Christi play cycle. See Jeremy P. Goldberg, 'Craft Guilds, the Corpus Christi Play and Civic Government', in *The Government of Medieval York*, pp. 141–63 (p. 151).

thriving Fifteenth-century York was part and an important basis of Thornton's rich cultural experience.

### **Conclusion**

As the tomb of Roger de Stanegrave in Stonegrave Minster makes clear, Thornton's locality belonged to dense transportation, commercial, and political networks which tied it to a wider world, including both coasts of the Mediterranean Sea and the Holy Land. These networks, suggest that the complex web of various interrelations existed in Ryedale. Thanks to this well-placed locality, Thornton was able to copy, compile, and—as I will discuss in the following chapters—skilfully read a wide range of texts, including spiritual guidebooks, Rollean affective treatises, texts for affective meditation, an apocryphal narrative, alliterative poems, and romances. Without the highly developed transportation systems and commercial, political, and religious networks, he would not have been able to acquire such a rich variety of texts. The local magnates' households and religious houses, which were packed in the north of England, contributed to Thornton's local bibliophile circles, keeping Ryedale updated on contemporary devotional and literary trends. This culturally rich locality nurtured, as becomes clear, Thornton's spiritual ambition, aggressive Christocentric piety, devotion to the Holy Land, desires for both religious and secular narratives, and his skilled techniques in reading.

## Chapter 2

### The Translation of An Anchoritic Nunnery into Thornton's Manor House:

#### The *Abbey of the Holy Ghost* and Spatial Imagination

From this chapter onwards, I turn to imaginative spaces that the texts Thornton copied invite him to envision and use. In the first section, I will first explain the practice of *lectio divina* [spiritual reading, a monastic discipline] along with the notion of 'devotional literacy', i.e. the ability to read religious texts and devotional images in a spiritually desirable manner. I will suggest that Thornton was one of those late-medieval, spiritually ambitious lay elites who eagerly engaged in and viewed an adapted version of the *lectio divina* as an important means for spiritual betterment. The second section will focus on four texts related to eremitic and anchoritic devotion: the two Latin extracts from Richard Rolle's work (*Super canticum canticorum* and *Liber de amore dei contra amatores mundi*); an exemplum on a female anchorite, which is titled by Fein as *A Woman Enclosed for Love of Christ (A Woman)*; and a purgatorial vision, *A Revelation Shown to A Holy Woman (Revelation)*. These four writings will be examined as indicative of Thornton's spiritual ambition, which was pursued by imaginatively imitating the mode of devotion embodied by recluses (those who live a religious life in solitude, such as hermits and anchorites), in particular, anchorites. The latter part of this chapter, i.e. the third and fourth sections, will examine the imaginative spaces constructed through the architectural allegory in the *Abbey of the Holy Ghost (Abbey)*, which is a prose religious guide that was originally written to facilitate the pious, literate laity's engagement in spiritual practices. The third section will consider Thornton's performative envisioning of the allegorical, imaginative space created by the text of *Abbey* through a close investigation into his annotations, which have so far escaped scholarly attention. Then, the fourth, final section will focus on his brief marginal note, '*virtus vini*' [the virtue of wine] and discuss it in the context of his interest in Rolle's highest category of contemplative joy,

*canor* [song]. By examining *Abbey*'s quasi-anchoretic, allegorical nunnery and Thornton's extensive annotations to it, I will argue that *Abbey* was a key text that demonstrates his skill in creating an imaginative space for his devotional, performative reading. Thornton's notes, as it will become clear, are important witnesses to his devotional literacy that recognises *Abbey*'s distinctive approach to space, which provides him with a stage to envisage, enact, and internalise the teachings that he learned from his collection of devotional literature, including the highly ambitious, Rollean ecstatic experiences.

### **Northern Lay Devotional Culture and the *lectio divina* for Spiritual Betterment**

For my investigation of Thornton's reading of *Abbey* and his use of imaginative space, in this first section, I will explain Thornton's spiritual ambition, the idea of devotional literacy, and a version of *lectio divina* [sacred reading], which was adapted for laypeople as an essential means to obtain a spiritually better self. As I will suggest later, *Abbey* requires Thornton to conduct a complex, performative mode of reading, which would have been impossible for him to do without basic skills and knowledge about spiritual, meditative reading. I will also pay attention to the admiration for recluses, the feeling that is observable in Thornton's collection of religious writings in the Lincoln Thornton MS and is, in my view, indicative of the influence of the religious culture of northern lay elites on Thornton's religiosity. In the fifteenth century, northern English lay elite devotees often imaginatively imitated contemporary recluses through their spiritual reading and self-examination.

In late-medieval England, an essential exercise of monastic discipline, the *lectio divina*, was adapted for lay use thanks to the wide dissemination of religious guides and English translations of Latin spiritual advice, many of which were originally written for novices. These texts comprise what has been called vernacular theology, and they include, among others, *Abbey*, Walter Hilton's

*Epistle on the Mixed Life (Mixed Life)*, Rolle's *Form of Living*, and the *Mirror of Saint Edmund*.<sup>1</sup>

These spiritual guides should be differentiated from basic catechetical treatises and confessional manuals as they offer spiritually advanced teachings and techniques, which require laypeople to lead a 'mixed life', which is a form of living that was originally intended for secular clergymen but later expanded to cater for the spiritual ambition of literate laity. An increasing number of socially prosperous, literate laypeople eagerly emulated the religious life and introduced some aspects of monastic discipline into their daily life, while fulfilling their duties in active life. Vernacular spiritual guides were an essential tool for a mixed life and allowed these laypeople to obtain a better moral self and, thus, ultimately, they hoped, to secure future salvation.

In the process of adaptation that targeted such a spiritually aspirational lay readership, the monastic *lectio divina*, which consisted of *lectio* [reading], *meditatio* [meditation], and *oratio* [prayer], changed from 'the prayerful study of scripture' which was based on full Latin literacy and the systematic knowledge of biblical and patristic writings, to less systematised and more image-based devotional practices.<sup>2</sup> As a result of this adaptation, spiritually ambitious lay elites developed what Margaret Aston and Kathryn A. Smith calls 'devotional literacy', i.e. the ability to visualise, meditate on, and both affectively and intellectually understand what a religious text/image conveys.<sup>3</sup> Because such devotional literacy most often demanded of pious lay readers an affective visualisation of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, Vincent Gillespie posits that the *lectio divina*, which aims for the perfect internalisation of Scripture through the contemplation on its meanings, shifted into, to these lay readers, 'the *lectio domini*? [reading of God].'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409', *Speculum*, 70 (1995), 822–64; Nicholas Watson, 'Visions of Inclusion: Universal Salvation and Vernacular Theology in Pre-Reformation England', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 27 (1997), 145–88.

<sup>2</sup> E. Ann Matter, 'Lectio divina', in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, ed. by Amy Hollywood and Patricia Z. Beckman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 147–56 (p. 147).

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late-Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), pp. 101–33; Kathryn A. Smith, 'The Neville of Hornby Hours and the Design of Literate Devotion', *Art Bulletin*, 81 (1999), 72–92.

<sup>4</sup> Vincent Gillespie, 'Lukyng in Haly Bukes: Lectio in Some Late-Medieval Spiritual Miscellanies', in *Looking in Holy Books: Essays on Late-Medieval Religious Writing in England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 113–44 (p. 125).

The Thornton MSS indicate that Thornton was a lay reader who acquired devotional literacy by enthusiastically engaging in such a lay version of the *lectio divina*, which is the core of the mixed life. As Keiser observes, directions found in *Mixed Life*, which Thornton copied in the Lincoln Thornton MS (in particular, Hilton's emphasis on meditation on Christ's passion), seem to have strongly influenced the selection of the texts that Thornton copied.<sup>5</sup> He made a collection of religious guidebooks, including not only *Abbey* and *Mixed Life* but also other English prose religious guides, notably, the *Mirror of Saint Edmund* and the *Holy Boke Gratia Dei*. This collection points to Thornton's desire, similarly to contemporary prosperous lay readers, to lead a 'mixed life'. As the lord of East Newton, Thornton would have been exactly like the landed, male addressee of Hilton's *Mixed Life*, a man who makes time for spiritual, contemplative occupations alongside his numerous duties to the members of his family and household, his tenants, his neighbourhood, and a wider local society, impelled by his 'gastely desyre and sauour of his lufe' [spiritual desire and inclination for love to God].<sup>6</sup>

Thornton's engagement in spiritual practices, including the spiritual, or devotional mode of reading, is thought to have been guided by his clerical (or possibly, mendicant) advisor(s), who provided Thornton with these religious instructions. Keiser suggests one such spiritual advisor, who seems to have supported Thornton's scribal activity by supplying him with the source text of *Privity of the Passion* (*Privity*) and the other items that follow it in booklet 3 of the Lincoln Thornton MS.<sup>7</sup> According to Keiser, this advisor could have sometimes actively participated in Thornton's scribal activity because this advisor might have been the skilful hand that wrote the *explicit* of *Privity* and the following short verse on fol. 189<sup>r</sup> of the Lincoln Thornton MS. Such engagement of clerical advisors in pious lay elites was common in the late-medieval period. As

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<sup>5</sup> Keiser suggests that booklet 3 of the Lincoln Thornton MS, which comprise mainly devotional writings, and the first part of the London Thornton MS, which contain the extracts from the *Cursor Mundi* and the *Northern Passion*, were compiled because of Thornton's conscious effort to follow Hilton's directions found in the *Epistle on the Mixed Life*. See George R. Keiser, 'Robert Thornton: Gentleman, Reader and Scribe', in *Robert Thornton and His Books*, ed. by Fein and Johnston, pp. 67–108 (p. 103).

<sup>6</sup> 'W. Hilton's *Epistle on the Mixed Life*' in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, an English Father of the Church, and His Followers*, ed. by Carl Horstmann (London: Sonnenschein, 1895, pp. 270–92 (pp. 270, 271).

<sup>7</sup> Keiser, 'Robert Thornton', pp. 78–79.

Nicholas Watson argues in his influential article on vernacular theology, under the leadership of Thomas Arundel (1353–1414), the king-maker and successful fighter against the challenges of Wycliff and his followers, fifteenth-century English religious authorities demanded clerics to engage vigorously in spiritual care and to take a cautious line against the laity's over-ambitious spiritual pursuits, in particular, their reading of vernacular religious literature.<sup>8</sup> Given this generally restrictive religious climate, as John J. Thompson suggests, Thornton might have been discouraged from engaging in spiritual practice independently, or entirely alone, by his advisors who 'are likely to have played their part in filtering particular versions of writings by Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, and broadly related material'.<sup>9</sup> However, Thornton's relationship with his spiritual advisor(s) was not necessarily hierarchical. In Lutton's view, Thornton seems to have maintained greater agency than was formerly assumed and developed a 'dialogic', collaborative tie with the advisor(s), who encouraged him to widen his religious interests and to critically read a broad range of devotional writings, including those expressing contradicting ideas.<sup>10</sup> Nicole Rice equally argues that many English religious rules, including *Abbey*, while presenting a guide for less mystical and penance-oriented self-discipline, simultaneously provide a space where intended readers and clerical writers were able to negotiate and expand 'the boundaries of orthodoxy without breaching them'.<sup>11</sup> Thus, even though Thornton's spiritual reading, or his version of the *lectio divina*, might have been carefully kept within the territories of orthodoxy, his spiritual ambition was likely simultaneously nurtured and developed in his collaborative interaction and 'dialogue' with his clerical advisor(s).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> In Watson's view, the fifteenth-century English religious writings, or more precisely, the vernacular literature written after Arundel's 1409 decree, became less intellectually exploring and often more focused on the authoritative translation of the fourteenth-century texts. See Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England', pp. 822–64.

<sup>9</sup> John J. Thompson, 'Another Look at the Religious Texts in Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 91', in *Late-Medieval Religious Texts and Their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A. I. Doyle* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1994), pp. 169–87 (p. 186).

<sup>10</sup> Rob Lutton, '...But Have You Read This?': Dialogicity in Robert Thornton's Holy Name Devotions, *English*, 67.257 (2018), 119–40.

<sup>11</sup> Nicole R. Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline in Middle English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 50.

<sup>12</sup> Gillespie points out that the dialogue form that was often used in vernacular theological writings originated from disputations in the Latin, scholastic tradition at universities. In his view, the form and subjects of such dialogic



In late-medieval England, in particular, in the north of England, the practice of spiritual reading was strongly influenced by a widespread admiration for recluses. As Hanna points out, medieval northern spirituality embraced eremiticism, which is an ascetic, solitary mode of contemplative life embodied by a hermit, and viewed it ‘as a form of religious expression, both biographically and imaginatively’.<sup>13</sup> In Jennifer Bryan’s words, ‘the *idea* of solitude and bodily containment’ represented by recluses became imaginatively imitable models of devotion for both monastic and lay reading.<sup>14</sup> During their engagement of spiritual reading, late-medieval northern laypeople, as well as monastics, modelled recluses for a perfect devotional mode of examining one’s inner self as such a self should be explored as an internal space distinctively separated from the outer world and open only to God in its devotions.

It is evident that Thornton admired recluses and positioned them at the forefront of the search for the spiritually better self. This is suggested most obviously by his well-attested admiration for Richard Rolle, the so-called hermit of Hampole. Rolle was fervently revered in the north, as he was, for the late-medieval northerner, a local candidate for sainthood. This would have been particularly so to Thornton, for Rolle is understood to have been born in Thornton-le-Dale, a village just 12 miles east of East Newton, where Thornton’s home manor stood. Booklet 3 of the Lincoln Thornton MS contains a small but rich collection of works ascribed to Rolle, whose life and writings promulgate both biographical and imaginative forms of eremitic, solitary life. Thornton explicitly claimed Rolle’s authorship for almost all of the Rollean pieces in his collection by purposefully adding an *incipit* or *explicit* to each of them, which attributes the following or preceding item to the hermit. This collection, which comprises a wide range of

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debate provided vernacular religious literature with a useful, pragmatic medium and an incentive to develop their own voice. See Vincent Gillespie, ‘Vernacular Theology’, in *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-first Century Approaches to Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 401–20 (pp. 409–10).

<sup>13</sup> Ralph Hanna, ‘“So to Interpose a Little Ease”: Northern Hermit-lit’, in *Revisiting the Medieval North of England*, ed. ed. by Anita Auer, Camille Marshall, Tino Oudesluijs, and Denis Renevey (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019), pp. 73–89 (p. 73).

<sup>14</sup> Jennifer Bryan, *Looking Inward: Devotional Reading and the Private Self in Late-Medieval England* (Philadelphia, PA: 2008), p. 13.

religious writings,<sup>15</sup> testifies to Thornton's reverence for Rolle. Thornton thus likely pursued his spiritual ambition by regular spiritual reading, which encouraged him to find exemplary models in recluses like Rolle.

### **An Imaginative Locus for Thornton's Self-examination: A Solitary Rollean Wilderness and an Anchoritic Enclosure**

I focus, in this section, on two extracts from Rolle's Latin work and two anchoritic texts, *A Woman Enclosed for Love of Christ* and *A Revelation Shown to A Holy Woman*. To take Rolle's work first, the two texts were very short pieces of Latin prose in Thornton's collection of the Rollean writings, which were consecutively copied on fol. 195<sup>r</sup> of the Lincoln Thornton MS. The one is an extract from the second section of Rolle's *Super canticum canticorum*, and the other is an excerpt from *Liber de amore dei contra amatores mundi*. As I will demonstrate, the two texts attest that Thornton was spiritually ambitious enough to wish to both sensorily and intellectually experience the Rollean, mystical culmination. To take the excerpt from *Super canticum canticorum* first, in it, Rolle adds commentaries to the second verse of the Song of Songs: 'Quia meliora sunt ubera tua vino' [For thy breasts are better than wine]. In the extract, Rolle emphasises how spiritually rich the divine words are:

Dulciora et meliora sunt diuina eloquia quam humana, plus delectat verbum dei animam Christum deligentem, quam totus mundus regem illum possidentem.

Amplius autem *gaudio sedens in solitudine* quam rex in cuius omnes terrene diuicie veniunt potestate.

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<sup>15</sup> Thornton's collection of the Rollean writings from fols. 192<sup>r</sup> to 196<sup>v</sup> includes the English translation of an extract from Rolle's *Super canticum canticorum*, short exempla, a prayer, two commentaries on the decalogue and gifts of the holy spirit, a treatise on mystical desire and delight, and two Latin pieces which I discuss above. See Fein, 'The Contents', pp. 35–39.

[Divine words are sweeter and better than human words. God's word pleases the chosen Christian soul more than holding all the world as his own. Indeed, *sitting in joy and solitude* is more abundant than a king under whose control all the worldly riches come].<sup>16</sup>

Here, the phrase 'gaudio sedens in solitudine' is noteworthy as it presents such solitary, devotional concentration on 'divuina eloquia' [divine words] / 'verbum dei' [words of God] as spiritually richer and more joyous than any worldly wealth. In other words, this part concisely encapsulates the spiritual sweetness and joy felt by Rolle during his solitary contemplation of God's words. This specific part about spiritual joy obtained through eremitic devotion was likely selected by his clerical advisor since Thornton was probably not able to specify the part of particular interest for him from the *Super canticum canticorum*. Thus, Thornton's spiritual advisor was likely encouraging of his spiritual pursuits and eager to respond to his particular religious interests.

The extract from Rolle's *Liber de amore dei contra amatores mundi* is also revealing for my investigation into Thornton's spiritual ambition. According to Lutton, the extracted passage is the only part in the book where Rolle's attainment of the highest mystical experience, the *unio mystica* (the human soul's mystical union with God), is described with an invocation to God by the name of Jesus:

O quam delectabile gaudium et delicatum solacium, amare dei filium. O quam suaue et iocundum set istud non est modicum. [. . .] Non transit a me *fervor mellifluus, canor celicus, dulcor divinus*. Apperiendo & o bone Ihesu es mecum attrahendo spiritum, tantum gaudium de te sencio quantum exprimere non

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<sup>16</sup> 'Richardus heremyta', in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, an English Father of the Church, and His Followers*, ed. by Carl Horstmann (London: Sonnenschein, 1895), p. 194. Translation and italics are mine.

sufficio. *Dulcissimum* ascolto *canticum* et canens ascendo usque in domum dei. Cor meum increata repletur dulcedine, os meum divine laudis sonora iubilatione, & aures mee suavitate *celestis melodie*. [. . .] Verumtamen *tale gaudium* opto *in celo* quale *in carne sedens gustavi & sentivi*, nec volo ut alia gloria michi detur.

(Oh, what delicious joy and delightful pleasure, to love the son of God. Oh, how sweet and pleasant, how abundant. [. . .] It does not pass from me, *this sweet heat, this heavenly song, this divine sweetness*. When I open [my mouth to you] O good Jesus I pant. I know such great joy in you that I am not able to express it. I hear the sweetest song, and singing I ascend all the way into the house of God. My heart is filled with uncreated sweetness, my mouth with the resounding shout of divine praise, and my ears with the sweetness of *heavenly melody*. [. . .]. Nonetheless I look forwards to such a joy in heaven while *still in the flesh I have tasted and felt it*, nor do I want another glory to be given to me.)<sup>17</sup>

Rolle claims here that he tasted (*gustavi*) and felt (*sentivi*) heavenly joy (*tale gaudium in celo*) by loving God and praising the name of Jesus. According to Mary Carruthers, tasting was understood as a sensory way of knowing God throughout the medieval period, as attested by the writings both by medieval scholars and vernacular writers like Dante and Chaucer. In particular, in Carruthers's view, tasting the 'sweetness' of heavenly joy means that devotees obtain 'a fully phenomenal knowing of God', that is an understanding based both on human sensory, direct experience of the divine presence and intellectual thinking on God.<sup>18</sup> Given this understanding of tasting, this passage articulates the possibility that a full, direct understanding of God—that is, the most desired goal of spiritual exercises—can be attained through devotion to Jesus, particularly his

<sup>17</sup> 'Item inferius idem Richardus', in *Yorkshire Writers*, pp. 194–95. I quote Lutton's translation from his article, "'...But Have You Read This?', p. 129.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Carruthers, 'Sweet Jesus', in *Mindful Spirit in Late-Medieval Literature: Essays in Honour of Elizabeth D. Kirk*, ed. by Bonnie Wheeler (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), pp. 9–19 (p. 13). Also see Mary Carruthers, 'Sweetness', *Speculum*, 81 (2006), 999–1013.

name, and solitary contemplation on the love of God. This articulation of the most mystical experience with God in this world (here, the devotee remains *'in carne sedens'* [in his/her body]) is extraordinary and extremely spiritually advanced for a lay reader. Thus, Thornton's spiritual advisor, who—it has been suggested—chose these two Rollean extracts for Thornton, indeed, did not repress his spiritual ambition, as Lutton argues.<sup>19</sup>

The extract from *Liber de amore dei contra amatores mundi* is also notable for its vivid explanation of one of the three Rollean, 'particular physico-contemplative feelings'.<sup>20</sup> Among the three Rollean articulations of mystical ecstasy, namely, *fervor* [heat], *dulcor* [sweetness], and *canor* [song], here, the last category, i.e. the *canor*, or the heavenly music ('*canor celicus*', '*dulcissimum canticum*', and '*celestis melodie*') is repeatedly foregrounded. This emphasis on '*canor*' or heavenly music, probably resulted from the local cult of the holy name of Jesus. This devotion to the holy name was spread throughout Yorkshire where Rolle was the very icon of this cult. Therefore, this extract, while kindling the spiritual ambition of Thornton, simultaneously highlights the melodious spiritual joy that is caused and often merged with the name of Jesus (which, at least to the late-medieval devotee, is pleasant and musical).<sup>21</sup>

As I have suggested, the two densely copied extracts from Rolle's *Super canticum canticorum* and *Liber de amore dei contra amatores mundi* on fol. 195<sup>r</sup> of the Lincoln Thornton MS thus articulate specifically late-medieval northern English eremiticism. As Jennifer Bryan succinctly puts it, to northern English devotees, including Thornton, Rolle was the icon of 'lyrical longing for Christ', who sings his love to God 'in the northern wilderness'.<sup>22</sup> This Rollean eremiticism presents to Thornton an imaginative wilderness as a locus, where the faithful could

<sup>19</sup> Lutton, "'...But Have You Read This?', pp. 124–36.

<sup>20</sup> Denis Renevey, '1215–1349: Texts', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism*, ed. by Samuel Fanous and Vincent Gillespie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 91–112 (p. 105).

<sup>21</sup> It might be notable that Thornton also copied among the writings of his collection of Rolle's work two religious lyrics ('Thy Joy Be in the Love of Jesus' and 'All Vanities Forsake'), which foreground sweetness and song as distinctive expressions of a human soul's ecstatic love-longing for God. These two lyrics, which were copied as a single poem by Thornton, had neither *incipit* nor *explicit* attributing them to Rolle. Thus, Thornton might not have known that they were this hermit's work. 'X: Bi Ioy Be Ilke a Dele &c.', in *Yorkshire Writers*, pp. 370–72.

Horstmann, the editor, treated the two lyrics as a single poem, following Thornton.

<sup>22</sup> Bryan, *Looking Inward*, p. 16.

hope to hear the heavenly song through Christocentric piety and satisfy their ‘strong and anxious yearning for a foretaste of the eternal’; in Keiser’s view, this spiritual yearning lay behind Thornton’s compilation of devotional literature.<sup>23</sup>

However, it should be noted that, despite his reverence for the hermit and his spiritual ambition for the Rollean mystical culmination, Thornton’s spatial model for his own solitary, meditative reading was not that of Rolle’s wilderness. Except for a brief reference to Christ’s forty-day withdrawal into a desert in the English *Encomium nominis Ihesu*, Rollean writings in Thornton’s collection do not mention the wilderness even though they repeatedly emphasise the need to segregate oneself from worldly desires and societies.<sup>24</sup> Rather, booklet 3 of the Lincoln Thornton MS, i.e. Thornton’s ‘devotional book’ in Keiser’s words, points to another category of recluses, namely, anchorites, and the enclosed spaces represented by them.<sup>25</sup> In the medieval period, many anchorites were pious lay women although some secular priests and female religious also took up the vocation.

The reason why female, anchoritic enclosure, not eremitic wilderness, was chosen as an imaginative locus for Thornton’s devotional self-examination is probably partly because of the distinctive appeal of the late-medieval understanding of anchorites. As Michelle M. Sauer argues, medieval anchorites actively created their own solitude and became ‘a living metaphor of containment’ through their undertaking ritualistic performances like the ‘burying ceremony’ as well as their physical separation from the outer, worldly community.<sup>26</sup> Though, in reality, anchorites often kept their cells in urban centres with servants, sometimes even with either a cat or a cow (or both), they and their cells embodied physical and inner solitude.<sup>27</sup> The appeal for

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<sup>23</sup> Keiser, “‘To Knawe God Almyghtyn’”, p. 123.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Oleum Effusum’, in *Richard Rolle: Uncollected Prose and Verse with Related Northern Texts*, ed. by Ralph Hanna, EETS, o.s., 329 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 2–9 (p. 9).

<sup>25</sup> Keiser, “‘To Knawe God Almyghtyn’”, p. 104.

<sup>26</sup> Michelle M. Sauer, ‘Privacy, Exile, and the Rhetoric of Solitude in the Medieval English Anchoritic Tradition’, in *Rhetoric of the Anchorhold: Space, Place and Body within the Discourses of Enclosure*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), pp. 96–110 (p. 106).

<sup>27</sup> E. A. Jones, ‘Hermits and Anchorites in Historical Context’, in *Approaching Medieval English Anchoritic and Mystical Texts* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 3–18 (pp. 12–13).

Thornton of anchoritic space is also likely a result of his local book-circulating network(s). As Keiser points out, some of the devotional writings in booklet 3 of the Lincoln Thornton MS clearly address female religious, who often kept strong ties to local female anchorites.<sup>28</sup> This is not only because religious women and female anchorites often shared clerics who took their spiritual care but also because the anchoritic mode of devotion was, to female monastics, an advanced form of the fight against temptation and sins, as suggested by some female religious who became an anchorite as preparation for their death.<sup>29</sup> Many fifteenth-century English pious lay elites often enjoyed a similar devotional culture with these devout women, nuns and female anchorites alike. Nuns, female anchorites, and pious lay elites shared religious texts and advanced spiritual care offered by the clergy who served as their confessors.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, as a wealthy gentleman, Thornton likely desired to emulate some aspects of anchoritic self-regulation as well as monastic discipline attuned to female religious.

Thornton's devotional attachment to female, anchoritic spirituality is indicated by two anchoritic texts that he copied in the Lincoln Thornton MS: *A Woman Enclosed for Love of Christ* (*A Woman*) and *A Revelation Shown to A Holy Woman* (*Revelation*). Thornton ascribed the first text, *A Woman*, to Rolle and labelled it as an 'Ensampill'.<sup>31</sup> This short exemplum is about a maiden who encloses herself in 'sepulchre' (which here means an anchoritic cell) after a young man, struck with her beauty, is driven to sinful thoughts.<sup>32</sup> In *A Woman*, the maiden embodies an ideal model

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<sup>28</sup> Keiser, "More Light," pp. 114–119.

<sup>29</sup> Saint Benedict defined a hermit/an anchorite (he did not differentiate them) as a supplementary vocation that should be taken by monks who, after their coenobitic practices, became spiritually trained enough to fight against sins alone. See E. A. Jones, 'Introduction,' *Hermits and Anchorites in England, 1200–1550*, ed. by E. A. Jones (Manchester University Press, 2019), p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> For the literary culture shaped through mutual communication and conversation between nuns and devout gentlewomen in late-medieval England, see Felicity Riddy, 'Women Talking about the Things of God: A Late-Medieval Sub-Culture,' in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150–1500*, ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 104–27; Mary C. Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety in Late-Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>31</sup> Fein, 'The Content', p. 37.

<sup>32</sup> This calling of an anchorhold as a sepulchre is not only because of a recurrent metaphor of the solitary's cell as Christ's tomb and womb, but also because the medieval anchorhold often represented the occupant's tomb through the elaborate ceremonies of enclosure. See Alexandra Barratt, 'Context: Some Reflections on Wombs and Tombs and Inclusive Language,' in *Anchorites, Wombs and Tombs: Intersections of Gender and Enclosure in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy and Mari Hughes-Edwards (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), pp. 27–38; E. A. Jones,

of the spiritually perfect life since she dedicates herself to spiritual reading, meditation, and prayer, i.e. the three key monastic disciplines (*lectio, meditatio, and oratio*). This maiden's 'sepulchre' thus offers Thornton a vivid example of an enclosed solitary space for spiritual practices.

The latter, *Revelation* is a story of a set of purgatorial visions seen by a female anchorite in 1422. In these visions, a revenant Margaret, a former nun at the Benedictine Priory of Nunnaminster, Winchester, takes the visionary anchorite to purgatory, where many high-ranked ecclesiastics, as well as religious women, are tormented for their sinful conduct during their life. Thanks to the anchorite, the revenant Margaret obtains the intercessory help provided by the masses and prayers of five powerful well-connected Lancastrian ecclesiastics and a male anchorite, successfully proceeding from purgatory to heaven, where she is welcomed as the bride of Christ.<sup>33</sup> Suggested by these six religious elites' authorisation of her visions, *Revelation's* visionary anchorite, in Mary C. Erler's words, seems to have enjoyed 'a substantial contemporary reputation and elevated connections'.<sup>34</sup> We do know that her reputation was indeed high enough to bring her from Winchester to London for Richard Beauchamp (1382–1439), 13th Earl of Warwick, in 1421, to have a consultation with her about his lack of a male heir.<sup>35</sup>

Although the text of *Revelation* keeps the female anchorite anonymous, Thornton might have known of the connection between her and Richard Beauchamp, or at least, Beauchamp's reverence for female anchorites.<sup>36</sup> In 1421, when Thornton was a young man, Beauchamp

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'Ceremonies of Enclosure: Rite, Rhetoric and Reality', in *Rhetoric of the Anchorhold*, ed. by McAvoy (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), pp. 34–49.

<sup>33</sup> These men are identified: John Perey, a secular priest; Richard Bone, a priest who first attached to the nunnery of Nunnaminster and later became a rector of Saint Michael's parish in Kingsgate Street, Winchester; John Forest, a protégé of the bishop of Winchester, Henry Beaufort (son of John of Gaunt and uncle of Henry V); John Wynbourne, an Augustinian canon and former chaplain to Beaufort's brother Thomas; Peter Combe, a locally powerful priest; and John London, the anchorite to whom Henry V confessed on the night of his father's death. See McAvoy, pp. 21–27; Harley M. Powell, 'The Origin of *A Revelation of Purgatory*', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 12 (1986), 87–91.

<sup>34</sup> Mary C. Erler, "'A Revelation of Purgatory' (1422): Reform and the Politics of Female Visions', *Viator*, 38 (2007), 321–83 (p. 326).

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p. 325; Ann K. Warren, *Anchorites and Their Patrons in Medieval England* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), p. 203.

<sup>36</sup> According to Clark Drieshen, the anonymity of the female anchorite allowed *Revelation* to circulate widely across both religious and lay communities, including the one that Thornton belonged to, in conjunction with such mainstream devotional writings as the ones by Nicholas Love, Bridget of Sweden and Walter Hilton. See Clark Drieshen, 'English Nuns as "Anchoritic Intercessors" for Souls in Purgatory: The Employment of *A Revelation of*



received a reinforcement of his status as a chief guardian of Henry VI from Emma Rawghton, the recluse of All Saints Church, North Street, in York. Emma had a prophetic vision, in which the Virgin proclaims Beauchamp's suitability for the best protector of the young king, enabling him to secure his position.<sup>37</sup> As attested by the roll made by John Rous, the fifteenth-century, pro-Warwick antiquarian,<sup>38</sup> this prophetic vision was publicised and remembered to establish and sanctify Beauchamp's political power, which he accumulated through his role as the king's tutor from 1428 to 1436. Thornton thus no doubt knew of this incident and might even have heard some detailed pieces of information about it, along with the story of the Winchester anchorite, from his close friend, Richard Pickering of Oswaldkirk, who was a retainer of the Nevilles. Around the mid-1430s, Beauchamp made a marriage tie with the Nevilles via one of his daughters, Anne.

Therefore, as indicated by the figures of the female visionary anchorite in *Revelation* as well as Emma in York, Thornton enjoyed the devotional culture, in which enclosed women were revered and exerted spiritual authority. Thus, he might possibly have read *Revelation* while remembering some local female anchorites like Emma, whose spiritual reputation circulated throughout his locality. Whether Thornton actually knew the anchorite in *Revelation* or not, he belonged to precisely the kind of northern lay elite communities where members shared their desires not only to know and read about the spirituality of enclosed women but also, if possible, to use such women's mystical authority for their own political interest. Furthermore, if we

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*Purgatory* by Late-medieval English Nunneries for Their Lay Communities', in *Medieval Anchorites in Their Communities*, ed. by Cate Gunn and Liz Herbert McAvoy (Brewer, 2017), pp. 85–100.

<sup>37</sup> Emma also saw another vision relevant to Beauchamp and advised him to build a chantry at a hermitage of Guy's Cliffe at Warwick so that he could successfully produce a male heir. Beauchamp obtained his heir Henry, later fourteenth earl of Warwick. See Jones, *Hermits and Anchorites in England, 1200–1550*, pp. 10, 83–85. See Jonathan Hughes, 'Rawghton, Emma (fl. 1422–1436), anchoress', in ODNB, <<https://www-oxforddnb-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-57763>> [accessed 18 December 2021].

<sup>38</sup> Emma's prophetic vision on the Virgin's proclamation of Richard is mentioned in the so-called Rous roll, which was written by John Rous, a hermit, to commemorate the genealogical history of the earls of Warwick. The *Pageants of the Birth, Life and Death of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick* (the end of the fifteenth century) also highlights the same event with an illustration. See John Rous, *The Pageant of the Birth, Life and Death of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick*, K. G., 1389–1439, ed. by Viscount Dillon and W. H. St. John Hope, photo-engraved by Emery Walker (London: Longmans, 1914). Also see Nicholas Orme, 'Rous, John (c. 1420–1492)', in ODNB <<https://doi-org.libproxy.york.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/24173>> [accessed 23 December 2022].

remember that Rolle himself wrote his English instruction, the *Form of Living*, for a former nun and anchorite, Margaret Kirkby,<sup>39</sup> and that copies of *Ancrene Wisse* were written for women and adapted later for wider English audiences, including lay male readers,<sup>40</sup> an anchoritic cell would have readily been seen by Thornton as a spatial model for his devotional practices. The most suitable model for his spiritual reading, then, was arguably the female enclosed reader of Rolle's writings, not Rolle himself who wandered in a northern wilderness.

In addition, behind the prominence of female anchoritic piety in Thornton's collection of devotional writings likely lay the contemporary clerical authority's fear against the spread of oversimplified understandings of Rolle's teachings, in particular, the one about devotion to the holy name of Jesus. As Lutton shows, Thornton's spiritual advisor seems to have provided him with Walter Hilton's *Of Angels' Songs* (the short treatise attributed to Chapter 44 of Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, Book 1) as a counterbalance to the Rollean texts. In *Of Angels' Songs*, the devotee's spiritual joy aroused by the name of Jesus is stated to be different from 'angels' song', i.e. 'a reference to Rolle's highest mystical category of *canor*' [heavenly song].<sup>41</sup> This denial does not mean that Hilton advises against the devotion to the name of Jesus itself and the pleasant sensations elicited by it. He tries to flag up a caution against the simplistic view that the *unio mystica* and one of its fruits, Rolle's *canor*, can be gained only through the Jesus prayer. This reluctance to admit a mystical possibility of a devotee's passionate engagement of the name of Jesus is clearly articulated by Hilton's claim that a forceful concentration on the holy name can lead the devotee to vainglory and spiritual blindness.<sup>42</sup> By offering Thornton *Of Angels' Song*, his spiritual advisor would thus have tried to make Thornton mindful of the possible risk associated

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<sup>39</sup> As Elizabeth Freeman reveals, the conjecture that the *Form of Living* was written for Margaret is 'reasonable', but there are neither decisive evidence for this nor a clue that ties the same Margaret to Hampole. See Elizabeth Freeman, 'The Priory of Hampole and Its Literary Culture: English Religious Women and Books in the Age of Richard Rolle', *Parergon*, 29 (2012), 1–25 (pp. 5–11).

<sup>40</sup> Cate Gunn, 'Beyond the Tomb: *Ancrene Wisse* and Lay Piety', in *Anchorites, Wombs and Tombs*, ed. by McAvoy and Hughes-Edwards pp. 161–71.

<sup>41</sup> Lutton, '...But Have You Read This?', p. 133.

<sup>42</sup> 'Of Angels' Song', p. 182.

with Rolle's holy name devotion, especially when the cult was venerated during solitary, i.e. entirely unguided devotion. Compared to the reverence for Rolle and the holy name devotion, female anchoritic spirituality that premises the male clerics' supervision was likely viewed as a safer, though equally highly revered model for lay spiritual pursuits. Thus, the contemporary clerical authority's complex attitude to Rolle's doctrine might have been one cause of Thornton's predilection for a female anchoritic enclosure in place of the eremitic wilderness.

As I have explained, Thornton's bookish piety and devotional literacy developed within the sophisticated religious culture shared by northern lay elites as well as through collaboration with his spiritual advisor(s). That piety, aspirational enough to desire spiritual fulfilment, viewed anchoritic space as an imaginative model for his engagement in spiritual exercises. While Rollean mystical experiences offered Thornton a highly advanced model of affective contemplation and a possibility to obtain a mystical spiritual culmination, anchoritic space arguably provided Thornton with a more workable, more easily imitable spatial model for his engagement in spiritual practice. As I discuss in the next section, this enclosed space which was often associated with devout women gained an allegorical framework in *Abbey* and effectively served as a model for Thornton's performative, spiritual reading.

### **Thornton's Translation of an Enclosed Female Space**

*Abbey* is a prose spiritual guide, which teaches the reader how to read an allegorically constructed space devotionally. According to both Ralph Hanna and George R. Keiser, *Abbey* came into Thornton's hands as one of the texts in the so-called Doncaster exemplar in the middle of his career as a scribe.<sup>43</sup> By then, he had already copied the texts that I will discuss in Chapters 3 and 4, namely, the *Privy of the Passion*, the *Siege of Jerusalem*, *Richard Cœur de Lyon*, and the *Childhood of Christ*, though the latter two items could have been copied contemporaneously with *Abbey*.

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<sup>43</sup> Ralph Hanna, 'The Growth of Robert Thornton's Books', *Studies in Bibliography*, 40 (1987), 51–61 (pp. 59–60); Keiser, "'To Knawe God Almyghtyn'", pp. 109–11.

Thornton, who had much experience in affective, spatial reading when he copied *Abbey*, would have been able to recognise how useful a quasi-anchoretic, allegorical female convent in *Abbey* was for his spiritual reading. In this third section, by exploring how Thornton followed *Abbey*'s instructions to construct and use an imaginative space for spiritual enhancement, I will suggest that, through his scribal activity, Thornton acquired devotional literacy that encompasses not only the ability to visualise the inside of an allegorical female convent but also a skill to use his spatial imagination for a deeper understanding and memorization of the text. In order to do so, I will first introduce *Abbey* and its architectural allegory. Second, Thornton's extensive annotations of *Abbey* will be explained. Third, Thornton's active mode of reading *Abbey* will be explored with the reference to the work of Jessica Brantley and Boyda Johnstone, both of whom argue how well accustomed late-medieval northern English devotees were to performative reading/viewing of devotional texts/images. Then, finally, I will demonstrate that there is a resemblance between *Abbey*'s allegorical monastery and an anchoritic cell, arguing that the allegorical, quasi-anchoretic space appropriately served as a platform for Thornton's active engagement in an aspirational spiritual pursuit.

To introduce *Abbey* and its allegorical framework, it is useful to explain its narrative and briefly mention its French original. The English *Abbey* consists of three sections. In the first section, the reader is invited to use their spatial imagination, envisioning the conscience/soul/heart as an abbey which is built and maintained by Christian virtues and religious practices. The reader is first invited to imaginatively clear the site, i.e. their conscience, of any sins and build an allegorical convent there with help of Reightwynes [justice], Mekenese [meekness], and Bowsomenes [obedience], among others.<sup>44</sup> After the building is completed, the Holy Ghost visits it as a warden. In the second section, the allegorical nunnery's offices are described from the abbess Charite to Ielosity [spiritual love-longing]. Each personification is allocated to a suitable

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<sup>44</sup> All the following quotations are taken from 'The Abbey of the Holy Ghost' (hereafter *Abbey*) in *Yorkshire Writers*, pp. 321–37.

office and role. For instance, Oracione/Orysonne [prayer] builds a chapel and works there as a ‘chaunterese’ (chorister, cantor). In the last section, the allegorical convent is threatened by the invasion of Satan’s four daughters: Envye, Pride, Gruchyngre [grumbling/detraction], and False Demyngre of Oþer [false judgement]. All the diabolic threats are repelled by the Holy Ghost, who appears in reply to the allegorical nuns’ prayer and their singing of the hymn *Veni creator spiritus*.

The English *Abbey* developed relatively faithfully from a copy of one of the versions of the French *Abbaye du Saint Esprit* [*Abbaye*] for inclusive English audiences, including both religious and lay, women and men.<sup>45</sup> I concur with Janice Pinder’s opinion that *Abbaye* was almost certainly written in thirteenth-century north-eastern France or southern Flanders, in local communities where religious culture and texts were shared among gentle, cloistered and uncloistered women (most notably beguines).<sup>46</sup> Reflecting this inclusive, female target audience, *Abbaye* offers a version of religious discipline, which is adapted for those female readers who are eager to imaginatively emulate a monastic life in their hearts. Both English *Abbey* and French *Abbaye* exploit, as their narrative framework, an allegorical female religious house, which is a type of building allegory.

As the explanation in the paragraph above demonstrates, the nuns in the allegorical convent, which represents the reader’s soul, personify the virtues and practices which the reader should learn and internalise as their habit. As Aden Kumler posits, the allegorical convent in both French and English versions presents a basis of ‘a program for spiritual improvement that takes the space of the cloister as a paradigm for the reformed interiority’ of the reader.<sup>47</sup> The architectural space of a female convent thus offers a spatial framework, which allows readers to

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<sup>45</sup> Janice Pinder, *The Abbaye du Saint Esprit: Spiritual Instruction for Laywomen, 1250–1500*, *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts*, 21 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), pp. 132–36.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 41–48. Rice also suggests that the original target audience was groups of begin women. In her view, *l’Abbaye du Saint Esprit* was geared up for the demands of such gentle ladies who wished to mentally visualise themselves in a cloister while physically remaining in a wealthy, comfortable home. See Nicole R. Rice, ‘Spiritual Ambition and the Translation of the Cloister: *The Abbey* and *Charter of the Holy Ghost*’, *Viator*, 33 (2002), 222–60 (p. 234).

<sup>47</sup> Aden Kumler, *Translating Truth: Ambitious Images and Religious Knowledge in Late-Medieval France and England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 162.

organise and effectively memorise what the text instructs as well as to explore their spiritually better self.

It should be noted that the cloister allegory was originally developed for monastics who were able to find spatial overlapping between the allegorical text and their lived environments. Such spatial overlapping enables monastic readers to make meaningful associations between the information distributed by the text and each part of where they lived. Therefore, logically, such a cloister allegory as *Abbey* likely demanded a considerable imaginative effort on the part of lay readers as they had, at least in theory, to ‘assemble the framework that will structure [their] spirituality *from scratch*’ in Christiania Whitehead’s words.<sup>48</sup> In the case of Thornton, however, some parts of the archetypal interior and exterior of a convent complex might have been readily imaginable even though he likely never had seen the inside of any local nunneries. Many small nunneries in England, including those in Yorkshire, had common features with the gentry’s manor houses.<sup>49</sup> Analogies might have been drawn, for instance, between a manor house’s hall and the west range of a nunnery as well as between the nunnery church and the so-called gentry church.<sup>50</sup> However much imaginative effort was required by Thornton, a large number of the extant manuscripts and prints of *Abbey* attest to its popularity among the late-medieval English laity.<sup>51</sup> The fifteenth-century English lay readers, including Thornton, appreciated the cloister allegory and employed their spatial imagination to actively enact the text of *Abbey*.

Bearing in mind this programme for spiritual betterment offered by *Abbey*’s allegorical paradigm, I now turn to Thornton’s annotations. He entitled his manuscript’s *Abbey* ‘Religio

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<sup>48</sup> Christiania Whitehead, *Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), p. 79. Italics are original.

<sup>49</sup> According to Gilchrist, many small nunneries had architectural similarities to their contemporary gentry’s manor houses. Their garderobes, upper-storey kitchen, and spatially split churches likely bore strong resemblances to lesser gentry’s manor house. Most notably, the west range of a nunnery, which often consisted of a guest hall, a prioress’s lodge, storage facilities, and various officers’ rooms, tended to be modelled on a double-ended manor house of the gentry. See Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 125–27.

<sup>50</sup> Saul, *Lordship and Faith*, p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> Julia Boffey, ‘The Charter of the *Abbey of the Holy Ghost* and Its Role in Manuscript Anthologies’, *Yearbook of English Studies* (2003), 120–30 (pp. 120–21). Some manuscripts of *Abbey* attributed it to Rolle wrongly.

*sancti spiritus* | Religio munda' [Religion of the holy spirit | the worldly Religion] and added numerous annotations to it. Indeed, there is no text in his two manuscripts so thoroughly annotated by him as *Abbey*. Since 'religio' [religion] in this case means a way of life governed by a set of religious rules, this subtitle is no doubt a reference to the religious discipline adapted for the laity.<sup>52</sup> Thus, this subtitle and extensive annotations suggest that *Abbey* was regarded by Thornton as a key text for his engagement in the mixed life. To this text, Thornton added many annotations, which can be classified into three types. First, he wrote personified virtues and practices either in a single word in Latin or English even though the main text mentions each of them in English. For example, Thornton noted 'Justicia' [justice] at the right-hand side margin of fol. 271<sup>r</sup>, beside the part where the main text explains the virtue of justice represented by the nun Rightwysnes. The reason behind Thornton's switching between Latin and English is not completely clear as he wrote both 'contemplacio' and 'contemplacione' on the right-hand margin of fol. 272<sup>r</sup>. The second type of Thornton's annotations is to biblical authorities such as 'Salomone' and 'Paulus' as well as to the names of saints such as 'Bartholomeus'. These are annotated often adjacent to the quoted Latin sentences, which are boxed. The last, third type of annotation takes the form of brief notes or a word which mark out a part of the text that is seemingly important to Thornton. For example, on fol. 273<sup>r</sup>, we find a note 'Diabolus' [devil] and on fol. 275<sup>v</sup>, 'quatuor filis as diaboli' [four daughters of the devil]; both notes point to satanic invasions.

Concerning these annotations, Linda Olson maintains that they are not 'theological or mystical in intent', but function as 'concise marginal guides at hand'; in Olson's view, these guides allowed 'even new readers [in Thornton's household]' to 'easily find exemplary passages defining and elaborating various key principles of devotion, doctrine, and appropriate social and

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<sup>52</sup> MED, 'religioun', n. 1 (b) < [https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED36651/track?counter=2&search\\_id=21770212](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED36651/track?counter=2&search_id=21770212) > [accessed 15 January 2023]. Also see Pinder, p. 25.

moral behaviour'.<sup>53</sup> Thus, according to Olson, who considers that 'didactic clarity' and 'simple learning' are the principles of Thornton's entire compilation, his annotations to *Abbey* operated as the aid for 'novice' readers as they would prevent such readers from losing where each virtue/religious practice is explained.<sup>54</sup> In a similar vein, Susanna Fein observes that Thornton's annotations 'focus on basic concepts of Christian faith'.<sup>55</sup> In contrast to Olson and Fein, Keiser considers Thornton's annotations as indicative of the profound religious knowledge that he accumulated through his extensive copying and reading. In Keiser's view, *Abbey* likely served as 'a sort of ready-reference guide for use' with the other religious writings in booklet 3 of the Lincoln Thornton MS.<sup>56</sup> If we accept Keiser's suggestion, Thornton's annotations to *Abbey* would have functioned like headword entries in a dictionary, which supplied Thornton with concise definitions of key ideas that the other religious instructions he copied were teaching him.

I generally agree with Keiser's argument though Olson's notion that the annotations are 'concise marginal guides' is compatible with some parts of Keiser's claims. The single-word type of annotation such as 'Humilitas' [humility] and 'Contemplatio' likely function as finding aids for Thornton as such annotations arguably facilitated his selective reading. It is also plausible, however, to think that Thornton's complex marginal annotations were intended for his own spiritual reading, not for that of unexperienced readers. Moreover, concise allegorical references to Christian virtues, practices, and catechetical knowledge in *Abbey* assume that the reader already knows them and can consult, when necessary, other religious rules that would offer a more extensive guide for spiritual exercises. This expectation would have been applicable to Thornton, not younger members of his household, since he had already copied the *Mirror of Saint Edmund* and *Mixed Life* when he obtained *Abbey*. The likelihood that Thornton was accustomed to such

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<sup>53</sup> See Linda Olson, 'Romancing the Book: Manuscripts for "Euerich Ingliche"' in *Opening Up Middle English Manuscripts: Literary and Visual Approaches*, ed. by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, Maidie Hilmo and Linda Olson (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), pp. 95–151 (p. 136).

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 136, 134.

<sup>55</sup> Fein, 'The Contents', p. 45.

<sup>56</sup> Keiser, "'To Knawe God Almyghtyn'", p. 118.



finding aids is equally indicated elsewhere in booklet 3 of the Lincoln Thornton MS, by the numbers given to each commandment and gift in the margins of Rolle's *Commentary on the Decalogue* (fols. 195<sup>v</sup>–96<sup>r</sup>) and *Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (fol. 196), which was also ascribed to Rolle by Thornton. This Rollean section of booklet 3 of the Lincoln Thornton MS, according to Hana, was likely copied before Thornton acquired *Abbey*.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, whether they are single-word Latin/English glosses or numbers, Thornton would have readily used such finding aids for his selective reading *Abbey*. Another type of Thornton's annotations in *Abbey*, namely, biblical authors and saints, also likely functioned similarly (i.e. as a kind of index) while such authorities simultaneously testify to Thornton's desire to make his book more authoritative and culturally sophisticated. The subtitle and marginal annotations of *Abbey* thus point not only to this text's importance for Thornton's spiritual ambition but also to his sophisticated, repetitive reading of it.

If *Abbey* was deliberately chosen by Thornton as a kind of reference guide, or the material to remember and review what he learned through his extensive reading of religious instructions, why was this specific text regarded as more suitable than the others for this purpose? As Keiser points out, that is probably because of *Abbey*'s conciseness, which could have easily reminded him of religious knowledge and techniques required for spiritual practices. Nonetheless, as I will demonstrate in the rest of this chapter, it is the imaginative space offered by *Abbey*'s cloister allegory that, I argue, repeatedly attracted Thornton to this text. Through this imaginative space, he would have been able to learn how to use his spatial imagination and effectively 'perform' the religious discipline like an allegorical personification/nun in an imaginative, quasi-anchoritic nunnery.

Such performative enactment of the construction and life of the allegorical nunnery is embedded in the text of *Abbey*. To take the example of 'Contemplacione', the nun

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<sup>57</sup> Hanna, 'The Growth', p. 58.

Contemplation shows the reader how to make and occupy the ‘dourtoure [dormitory]’, which is furnished with a nuptial bed of the soul and God. This architectural, or spatial explanation allows the reader, in this case, Thornton, to visualise and capture the concept of contemplation. Since a dormitory, especially in female convents, is the place that should be most carefully secluded ‘owte ofe worldly noyse and of worldly angyrse [troubles, afflictions] and besynes’ (*Abbey*, p. 324), the association between contemplation and a dormitory would have enabled Thornton to understand the mystical, affective possibilities of contemplation. Through solitary, affective contemplation, the human soul can obtain an intimate and even sometimes erotic relationship with God, and such a mystical intimacy should be kept in a secret, private space like a dormitory. As this example illustrates, *Abbey*’s building allegory inherently invites the reader to put each allegorical personification in a suitable place in the cloister/the soul and facilitated the reader’s understanding of the text.

Before investigating how Thornton responded to this textual demand to spatially imagine the allegorical nunnery and plunge himself into it, it is useful to explain the reception of *Abbey* in the late-medieval north of England. *Abbey* was copied, often together with the *Charter of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost*, in 23 manuscripts. Among them, London, British Library, MS Additional 37049 and London, British Library, MS Stowe 39, are noteworthy. Both manuscripts are thought to have been read in fifteenth-century northern religious communities, which bore a resemblance to the one that Thornton had access to. Indeed, these two manuscripts exhibit some of the most distinctive characteristics of northern religiosity, including an admiration for Rolle and an interest in a solitary eremitic space, both of which, as I have pointed out, were shared by the Thornton MSS.<sup>58</sup> MS Additional 37049 was composed in a Yorkshire or

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<sup>58</sup> Late-medieval Yorkshire’s spirituality was noted for, for instance, its Christocentric piety (e.g., devotions to Christ’s life, blood and wounds), devotion to the holy name, keen interest in religious instruction, and admiration for recluses, especially, eremiticism, i.e. a penance-centered mode of devotion, which is embodied by hermits. See Anita Auer, Camille Marshall, Tino Oudesluijs, and Denis Renevey, ‘Setting the Scene: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Medieval North of England’, in *Revisiting the Medieval North of England: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. by Auer, Marshall, Oudesluijs, and Renevey, pp. 1–12.

Lincolnshire Carthusian monastery, either in Axholme, Mount Grace, or Hull. Although this manuscript points to a Carthusian readership, the fact that most of the writings in this manuscript were written in English also indicates that it could have been intended for the use of those outside the cloister.<sup>59</sup> Jessica Brantley, investigating the ‘imagetexts’ (the composite of texts and images found in this manuscript), argues that its readers were not passive, silent receivers of given texts, but active performers of an enlivened textual milieu. Even if the Carthusian readers of this manuscript stayed in a solitary, silent cell, they were able to imagine, from the imagetexts, places as different as a vast wilderness and a church full of the music and noise of liturgical celebrations.<sup>60</sup> The latter manuscript, MS Stowe 39, which was compiled for a Benedictine nunnery in West or North Yorkshire, possibly, Nun Monkton or Marrick,<sup>61</sup> points to a book circulating network among female religious, gentlewomen and possibly men.<sup>62</sup> Boyda Johnstone points out that the illustrations of *Abbey* in MS Stowe 39 function as ‘a dramatic counterpart to the text’, which offers the reader both a stage to enact the allegorical monastic community and ‘a conceptual artefact’ to scrutinise and reconfigure their spiritual self.<sup>63</sup> These two northern manuscripts suggest that a performative, devotional mode of reading became familiar and widespread among fifteenth-century northern devout readers, probably including laypeople. It is therefore not surprising that Thornton, who likely had a book-borrowing connection with female religious, possibly those in the Benedictine nunnery at Nun Monkton, was well accustomed to devotional performance and readily applied it to his reading of *Abbey*.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late-Medieval England* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 12–13.

<sup>60</sup> Brantley, pp. 79–110, 167–209.

<sup>61</sup> Peter Kidd suggests that a member of the Neville of Hornby family, who entered in either the Benedictine Priory of Nun Monkton or that of Marrick might have been the patron of MS Stowe 39. See Peter Kidd, ‘Codicological Clues to the Patronage of Stowe MS. 39: A Fifteenth-Century Illustrated Nun’s Book in Middle English’, *Electronic British Library Journal* (2009), 1–12.

<sup>62</sup> Boyda Johnstone, ‘Reading Images, Drawing Texts: Performing *the Abbey of the Holy Ghost* in British Library Stowe 39’, in *Editing, Performance, Texts: New Practices in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Jacqueline Jenkins and Julie Sanders (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), pp. 27–48 (p. 34).

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>64</sup> Keiser, ‘More Light’, pp. 115–18.

Because the Lincoln Thornton MS's version of *Abbey* did not receive any illustrations, which play a key role in the arguments of Brantley and Johnstone, some might wonder if Thornton was able to visualise and immerse himself in the allegorical monastic community. Yet the lack of illustrations did not seem to prevent him from using *Abbey* as a textual stage for his performance of religious discipline. We have at least three clues about his active enactment of *Abbey*. First, Thornton almost certainly imitated the abbey's inmates' way of warding off evil, namely, singing the hymn *Veni creator spiritus* (*Veni*). As I have already explained, regarding the narrative of *Abbey*, this hymn is presented as effective for eliciting help from the holy spirit against an invading demonic threat. Booklet 3 of the Lincoln Thornton MS (i.e. the very booklet that contains *Abbey*) contained *Veni*. Although the abridged *Psalter of Saint Jerome* now separates the hymn from *Abbey*, Thornton originally paired *Abbey* with a group of three texts: *Revelation*, Psalm 50, and *Veni*. According to Hanna and Keiser, codicological evidence suggests that Thornton first created a quire that contained these four texts (*Abbey*, *Revelation*, Psalm 50, and *Veni*), later added the abridged psalter, and then refolded the quire. To accommodate the psalter, *Abbey* was moved from the beginning to the end of the quire.<sup>65</sup> In other words, Thornton first planned to order in the quire *Abbey*, *Revelation*, Psalm 50, and *Veni*, and these four texts originally consisted of a single unit. Since both *Abbey* and *Revelation* mention *Veni* as the most spiritually meritorious hymn with apotropaic power to repel the temptation of 'the seuene dedly synnes' and 'wikkede sperites', grouping these texts into a single quire would have made sense to Thornton.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, his way of compiling these texts can be regarded as indicative of his wish to sing *Veni* in a similar manner to the allegorical personifications in *Abbey*.

The second clue to Thornton's performative engagement is found among one of his single-word type of annotations, 'Honeste *magister novicorum* [Propriety of behaviour, novice mistress/master]'. This annotation is found on the left-hand side margin of fol. 273<sup>v</sup> (Figure 1).

<sup>65</sup> Hanna, 'The Growth', p. 58; Keiser, "'To Knawe God Almyghtyn'", p. 111.

<sup>66</sup> Liz Herbert McAvoy, *A Revelation of Purgatory* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2017), pp. 88, 90.

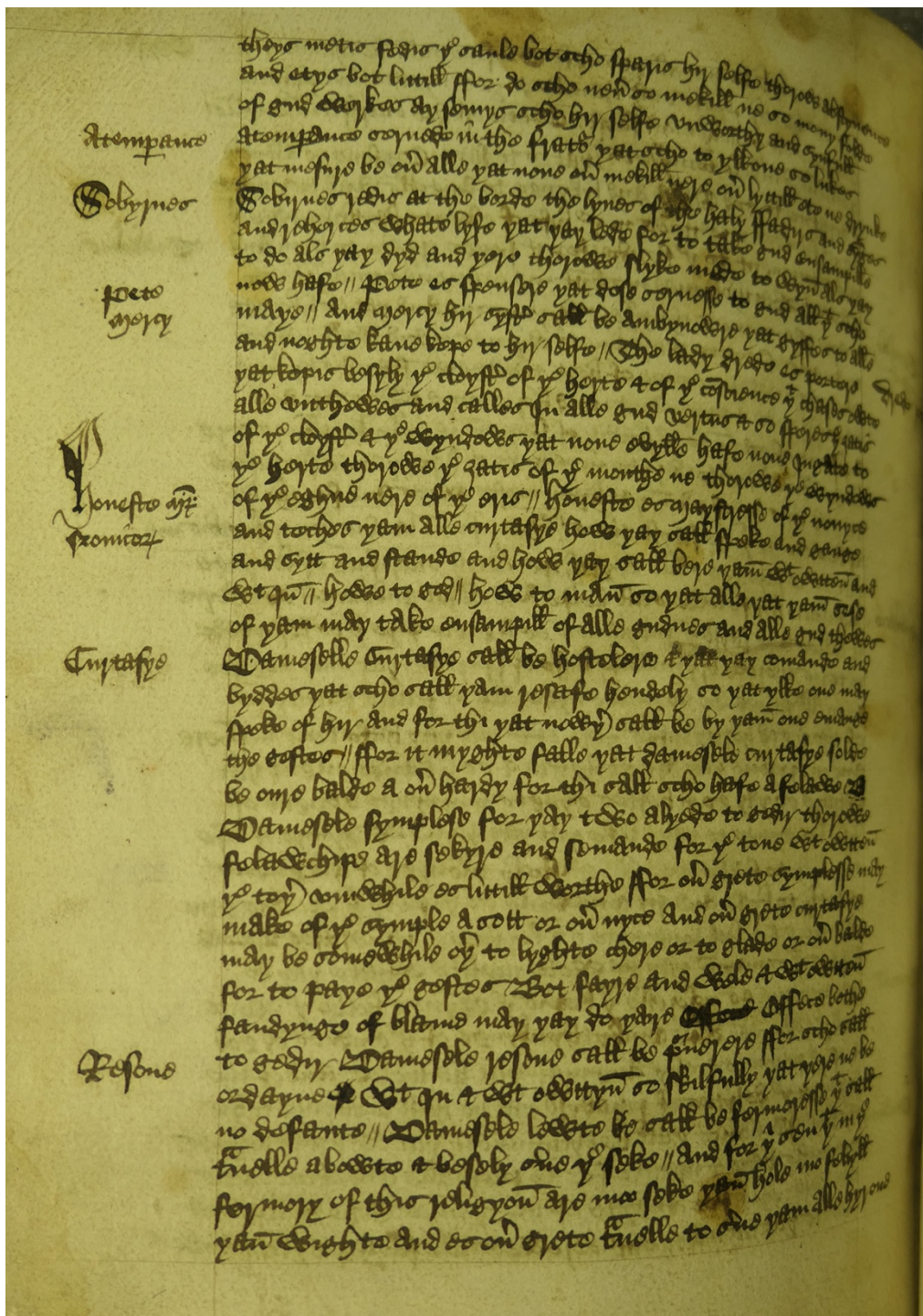


Fig. 1 An annotation of Thornton’s from the Lincoln Thornton MS, fol. 273v, with the permission of the Dean and Chapter for Lincoln Cathedral

The office of ‘magister novicorum’ is undoubtedly noteworthy to Thornton as there are only two instances when he glossed an allegorical personification with its office. Honeste’s role is described to teach novices ‘how þay sall speke and gange [go] and sytt and stande’, and ‘how þay

shall bere þame with-owttene and with-ine' (*Abbey*, p. 330). This focus on Honeste's role is also observable in an illustration in MS Stowe 39's *Abbey* (on fol. 9<sup>r</sup>), where Honeste and her novice are depicted at the centre of the folio page.<sup>67</sup> In Johnstone's view, this illustration encourages the reader/viewer to identify themselves with the novice, who is obediently instructed by Honeste.<sup>68</sup> Novices, who start to learn and try to internalise religious discipline, would have been great role models for devout readers of *Abbey*, including Thornton. Or possibly, the other way around; in Thornton's case, he was obliged as a lord to provide his household members with spiritual education and socially and morally acceptable behaviour, and may have identified himself to 'Honeste'. Thus, the interest in Honeste's role arguably reflected Thornton's desire to imaginatively put himself in the shoes of a novice or of the novice mistress Honeste.

The last clue that suggests Thornton's performative reading of *Abbey* is a function that his single-word notes likely assumed. As I suggested above, they could have operated as a kind of finding aid. If this was the case for Thornton, these marginal finding aids enabled him readily to choose the part where he wanted to read. Thornton would have been able to go inside the imaginative nunnery wherever and whenever he liked. Such selective reading works differently from reading a text without finding aids since literary texts generally present a sequential, linear narrative. Thornton's reading of *Abbey* with finding aids, on the other hand, would have been much closer to the experience of imagining the narrative world dominated by images like the version of *Abbey* in MS Stowe 39. As Johnstone argues, in the manuscript, images lead the reader directly to the part which they like, enabling them to 'traverse' the narrative at their own pace without being bound by the narrative sequence.<sup>69</sup> Thus, single-word annotations probably enabled Thornton to 'traverse', or wander in the imaginative monastery and enact the allegorical nunnery's life at his own pace.

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<sup>67</sup> 'Stowe 39 f.9 Nuns', in *British Library, Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts* <<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=14313>> [accessed 1 November 2021]

<sup>68</sup> Johnstone, p. 40.

<sup>69</sup> Johnstone, p. 35.

Before proceeding to the next and final section, it is noteworthy that the imaginative enactment of the foundation of and life in *Abbey*'s allegorical nunnery evoke not only a female cenobitic space but also an anchorhold. As I discuss in the first section of this chapter, anchorhold, or an enclosed space for recluses likely served as a spatial model for Thornton's spiritual exercises. The narrator of *Abbey* encourages the reader to situate their allegorical nunnery/soul on a 'reuer of teres', which cleanses the nunnery of sins. Here, an overlap between a monastic space and a solitary, anchoritic space becomes clear through the narrator's reference to 'Mary Mawdelayne', whose abbey/soul is presented to set its foundation on spiritually beneficial, penitential tears. Mary Magdalene was believed, in the French tradition, to have brought Christianity to Provence, later to have withdrawn to a desolate cave, and then to have become a recluse in her last days:<sup>70</sup>

This abbaye also sall be sett on a gud reuer, and þat sall be þe reuer of teres; for swylke abbayes þat ere sett one swylke gude ryuers, þay are wele at ese, and þe more delecuous duellyng es þer. One swylke a reuer was Mary Mawdelayne[']s abbey] fowndide, ffor-thy grace and rechesse come all to hir will. And for-thi sayde Daudid thus: Fluminis impetus letificat ciuitatem, þat es to saye, the gude reuer mase þe cete lykande; for it es clene, sekyr, & ryche of all gude marchandyse. And so þe reuer of teris clenses goddis cete, þat es mannes saule þat es goddess cete; and also þe holy man sayse of fylthe of synne þat it brynges owte þe reches of vertus and of alle gude thewes. (*Abbey*, pp. 322–23)

Although the Lincoln Thornton MS's version does not specify, existing French versions suggest that what 'Mary Mawdelayne' 'fowndide' on a 'reuer of [penitential] teres' is her abbey, which

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<sup>70</sup> For the figure of Mary Magdalene in the French tradition, see 'The Abbey of the Holy Ghost' in *Middle English Religious Prose*, ed. by N. F. Blake (London: Arnold, 1972), pp. 89–91.



represents her soul/conscience and here is further allegorised as God's city.<sup>71</sup> Mary Magdalene's tears are described as an indispensable tool to cleanse of her soul the 'fylthe of synne', which can bring out the soul's 'reches of vertus and alle gude thews' [wealth of virtues and all good habits]. Through the example of Mary Magdalene's penitential tears, therefore, a human's soul is imagined as an enclosed space that can wash away sins from it and keep its virtues within it. This imagery of a soul as a confined, lonely penitential space stands out when the passage above is compared to the  $\alpha_1$  group of French *Abbaye*. According to Pinder, Middle English versions of *Abbey* are based on the texts belonging to the  $\alpha_1$  group.<sup>72</sup> In the equivalent part of the  $\alpha_1$  *Abbaye*, the quotation from Psalm 45.5, 'Fluminis impetus letificat ciuitatem dei' [the stream of the river makes the city of God joyful], is interpreted as 'C'est li bruis de la riviere resbaudist et esleesce la cite, et si le fet nete et pure, et seure et habundant de marchandise' [That is, the sound of the river cheers and enlivens the city, and makes it clean and pure, and secure and abundant in trade].<sup>73</sup> Also, the last sentence in the Middle English quotation above (the one that starts with 'also þe holy man sayse [. . .]') is not found in the  $\alpha_1$  group. The site for the allegorical nunnery in the French  $\alpha_1$  version is thus envisioned as a clean space with plenty of spiritual pleasure and open to 'habundant de marchandise', i.e. spiritual benefits that the river brings. Thus, as Rice succinctly observes, in contrast to the French *Abbaye*, which presents 'a spiritual abbey' as 'an attractive retreat' that sometimes welcomes the 'marchandise' [trade] with the outside world and is designed 'for an aristocratic woman', the site of the allegorical nunnery in the English *Abbey* exhibits a reminiscence of 'the native disciplinary space of the anchorhold'.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Although the copies of  $\alpha_1$  and  $\alpha_2$  say that 'la Magdalainne fu fondée sor bone riviere', in  $\beta_1$  and  $\beta_2$  copies, 'l'abbaye la Magdalene Mary [the abbey of Mary Magdalene] is described to be founded on a river of penitential tears.  $\gamma$  copies instruct the reader to set their 'conscience' 'soit fondée sur la riviere de larmes et de cris et de gemissemens [should be build on the river of tears, cries, and moaning]'. See Pinder, pp. 140–200.

<sup>72</sup> Pinder, p. 10.

<sup>73</sup> 'La religion dou cuer de l'abbaye dou saint esprit ( $\alpha_1$ )', in Pinder, pp. 137–57 (pp. 142, 43). The translation here is Pinder's.

<sup>74</sup> Rice, *Lay Piety*, pp. 24–25.



English *Abbey*'s quasi-anchoretic, enclosed space is further intensified by the repeated emphasis on the need to spiritually enclose oneself by guarding one's senses, which are allegorised as (an) entrance(s) and windows of the soul. The reader's sensory organs are presented to be exposed to the consistent invasion from 'fowle syghtes', 'foule herynges', 'foule speche', and 'foule thoghtes' (*Abbey*, p. 324). The lesson from this analogy between sensory organs and the convent's apertures was heeded by Thornton. He annotated 'Claustrum' in the left-hand side margin on fol. 271<sup>v</sup>, where the narrator insists that a monastic complex is called 'a cloister' because it needs to be carefully closed and 'lokke'de' by the 'wardes' [guards] (*Abbey*, p. 324). Thornton's attention to this need to have a guard for one's inner self is further attested by his annotation 'Drede porterium' on the left-hand side margin of fol. 273<sup>v</sup>. Since this is the other instance in which Thornton marked the allegorical personification's office, Drede's role, 'porterium', i.e. the figure of the guard was evidently notable to him. This office is explained to be the one to take care of the allegorical nunnery's openings/the human senses, i.e. 'ʒatis of þe mouthe' and its 'wyndows of þe eghne [. . . and] of þe eris' (*Abbey*, pp. 329–30). Both 'Claustrum' and 'Drede porterium' thus highlight the text's instruction to enclose one's inner self in an anchoritic space, which is sealed off from secular temptation.

This model of the imaginative, anchoritic enclosure was no doubt an adaptable, easily imitable model for Thornton's devotional performance. Indeed, the resemblance of *Abbey*'s allegorical nunnery to an anchorhold would have been no surprise for late-medieval English lay readers. Although female religious did not live alone like a female anchorite, what these two professions embodied was overlapping, especially for those outside the cloister like Thornton. Since the papal bull *Periculoso* (1298) was issued, strict enclosure was enforced on all female religious.<sup>75</sup> Thus, in the later-medieval period, female religious more fully embodied the monastic ideal of stability than their male counterparts, who generally had long abandoned their physical

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<sup>75</sup> Marilyn Oliva, *The Convent and the Community in Late-Medieval England: Female Monasteries in the Diocese of Norwich, 1350–1540* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), p. 34.

enclosure.<sup>76</sup> Female religious were known to actively hide themselves away from secular, in particular, male gazes even though many small nunneries were essentially porous spaces, which priests, parishioners, lay brothers/sisters, secular lodgers, and children from local aristocratic and gentry families visited and stayed at.<sup>77</sup> In other words, the female convent, likewise the anchoritic cell, was a powerful architectural, or spatial expression of religious enclosure, which was open and visible only to God. In Yorkshire, many nunnery churches were often used as parish churches while the space for nuns and that for parishioners were often visibly separated. Even if churches were shared, nuns were, at least in theory, enclosed and invisible to secular eyes. Anchoritic cells were also situated in populated urban areas like York, which, I have explained, Thornton frequently visited. Thus, both nunneries and anchorholds were spatial expressions of the spiritual ideals of the religious enclosure while simultaneously being part of Thornton's everyday physical environment. When Thornton engaged in spiritual exercises, he could have enclosed himself in a small pew or in an oratory and read *Abbey*. On such an occasion, the allegorical, female enclosed space served as an effective framework for Thornton to enact what he learned through his *lectio divina*.

### **The '*virtus vini*' and the Rollean Mystical Culmination**

In the final section, I will consider another of Thornton's single-word annotations in order to examine to what extent *Abbey* was able to offer him an imaginative space to pursue his spiritual ambition. As will become clear, the text of *Abbey* could have allowed Thornton to effectively review what the devotee could achieve through the highest Rollean mystical experiences.

According to Rice, *Abbey* presents the reader's soul/heart as an imaginative disciplinary space

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<sup>76</sup> All members of the monastic orders operating under the Rule of Benedict of Nursia in theory made the vow of stability. See *The Rule of Saint Benedict in Latin and English with Notes*, ed. by Timothy Fry (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1981), p. 181.

<sup>77</sup> Anne Müller, 'Symbolic Meanings of Space in Female Monastic Tradition' in *Women in the Medieval Monastic World*, ed. by Janet Burton and Karen Stöber (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 299–325 (p. 318). In addition, the sacristy and the parishioners' part of a nunnery church were essentially male liturgical spaces, where nuns were excluded and confined into the part split from priests and parishioners.

monitored by their confessor, reflecting the contemporary English religious authority's desire to secure the reader's dependence on clerical authority represented by the holy spirit in the text.<sup>78</sup> Rice considers that the reduction of the references to mystical ecstasy is a hallmark of the English *Abbey*, for it offers the reader less detailed descriptions of ravishment and joy caused by affective contemplation than those found in the French *Abbaye*. Whitehead equally points out the English adaptor's similar tendency, suggesting that *Abbey* 'endorses the need for episcopal or other male oversight' of the devout laity's spiritual engagement.<sup>79</sup> I do not disagree with these observations since *Abbey* neither offers extreme mystical teachings nor challenges clerical intervention in the laity's spiritual ambition. It also does not present such a spiritually aspirational programme as that found in the French *Abbaye* in British Library, Additional MS 28162, the version that in Kumler's view, afforded its readers a potential for 'a theophanic encounter' through sacrament-based affective devotion.<sup>80</sup> Yet I contend that *Abbey*'s allegorical space—even though it might tone down ecstatic love-longing for God—still well served Thornton for his pursuit for the Rollean mystical culmination. Thornton, the attentive reader who had highly cultivated devotional literacy, was able to spot a few instances when the narrator of *Abbey* indicates a mystical possibility and could readily have successfully used them for his devotional performance.

Such a careful, anxious search for allegorical models of affective piety is again indicated by Thornton's note. In the left-hand margin of fol. 274<sup>v</sup>, there is a Latin annotation, 'virtus vini' [the virtue of wine] (Figure 2).

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<sup>78</sup> Rice, *Lay Piety*, p. 25.

<sup>79</sup> Whitehead, p. 79.

<sup>80</sup> Kumler, p. 235.

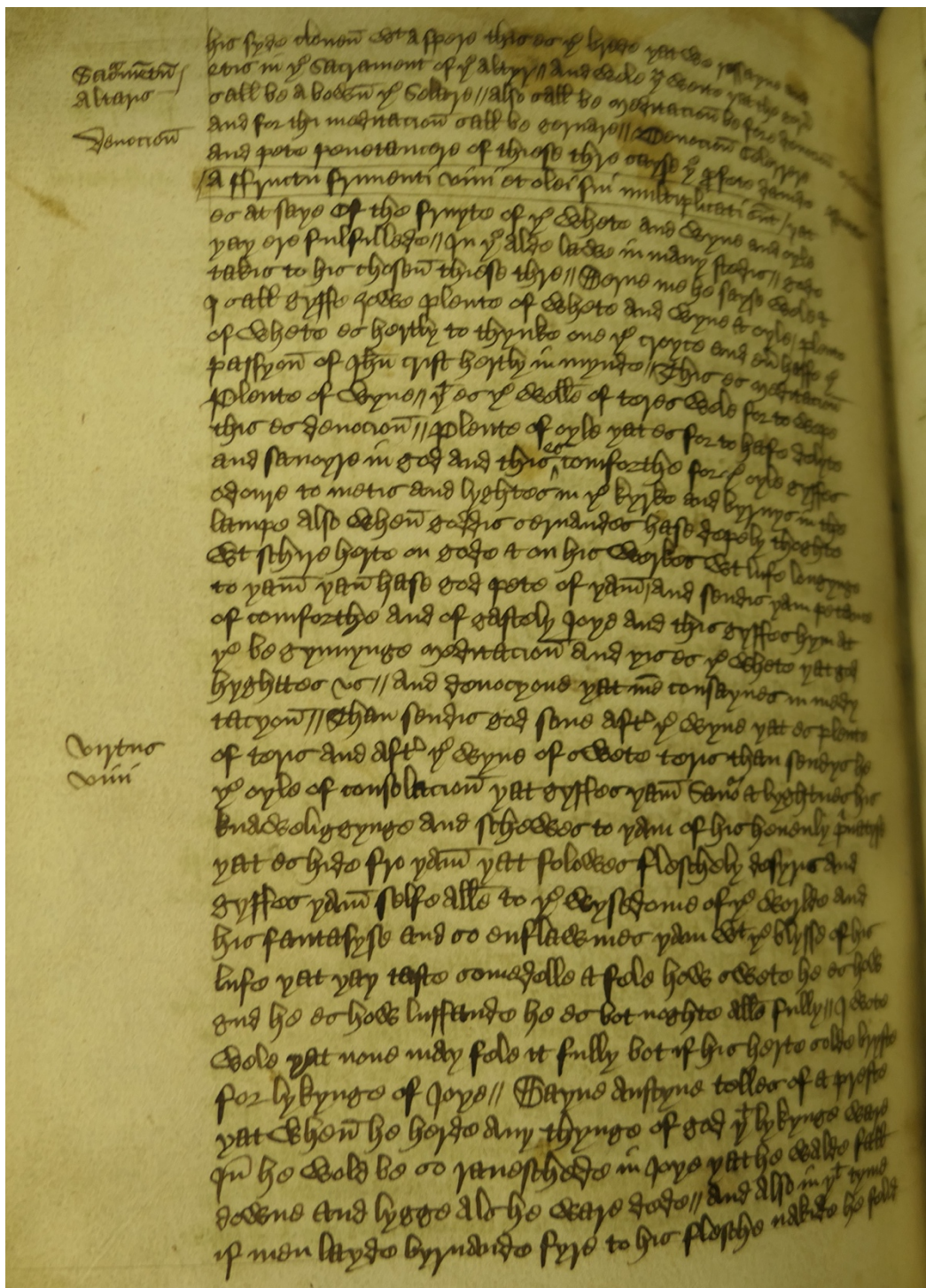


Fig. 2 An annotation of Thornton’s from the Lincoln Thornton MS, fol. 274v, with the permission of the Dean and Chapter for Lincoln Cathedral

Before having a look at the passage that this note highlights, it is necessary to explain this note’s context, especially what ‘wine’ means here. The highlighted passage is part of the allegorical interpretation of Psalm 4.8: ‘A fructu frumenti, vini, et olei sui, multiplicati sunt’ [By the fruit of

their corn, their wine and oil, they are multiplied]. This line is translated in *Abbey* as ‘Of the fruyte of þe whete and wyne and oyle þay ere fulfilled [full of]’ (p. 332). The wheat, wine and oil are allegorised here as Meditation, Devotion, and Pity, which served as, respectively, ‘gernare’ [a granary-keeper], ‘celerrere’ [cellarer], and ‘penetancere’ [pittancer] of the allegorical cloister. Pittancer is an officer of a religious house responsible for the administration of pittance, i.e. a charitable gift of money or food.<sup>81</sup> Meditation supplies the nunnery with bread since meditation on God is the best spiritual nourishment for a human soul. Devotion offers wine as devotional tears, moistens, and enriches the devotee’s faith. Oil/Pity here represents spiritual joy. Just as oil gives joyous ‘odoure’ to meat and delightful ‘lyghtes’ to the church, ‘petance of comforthe and gastely Ioye’ is sent by God who pities those who piously meditate, pray, and weep (*Abbey*, p. 333).

In *Abbey*, these three personifications are further construed as the devotee’s three-step sequential ascent to God. The first step is wheat, i.e. meditation upon ‘þe croyce’ and ‘þe passyone of Ihesu Crist’. This meditation on Christ’s humanity induces the next step, wine/Devotion, which is the devotee’s affective immersion in the love of God, as such emotional concentration is manifested as devotional ‘teres’ [tears], which flow out of the ‘wele for to wepe’ in a soul/heart. The oil/Pity is the final stage of this sequential contemplative practice, where the devotee is led to ‘comforthe’, or ‘delyte and sauoyre [agreeable flavor, sweetness] in god’ (*Abbey*, p. 333).<sup>82</sup> Here, as Carruthers points out, this set of delight and ‘sauoyre’, or sweetness, implies that the devotee’s soul/heart successfully gains full, both intellectual and experiential knowledge of God.<sup>83</sup> Thus, the wine is the step just before the

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<sup>81</sup> Pittance means more specifically ‘a donation or bequest to a religious house or order to provide an additional allowance of food and drink at particular festivals or on the anniversary of the benefactor’s death.’ ‘pitauncer(e), n. 1 (a) in *MED* <[https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED33520/track?counter=2&search\\_id=11067612](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED33520/track?counter=2&search_id=11067612)> [accessed 21 November 2021] and ‘pitaunce’, n. 1 (a) (b), in *MED* <[https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED33519/track?counter=2&search\\_id=11107866](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED33519/track?counter=2&search_id=11107866)> [accessed 23 November 2021].

<sup>82</sup> ‘savour n.’, in *MED* <[https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED38653/track?counter=25&search\\_id=22829612](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED38653/track?counter=25&search_id=22829612)> [accessed 28 March 2023].

<sup>83</sup> Carruthers, ‘Sweet Jesus’, p. 11; Carruthers, ‘Sweetness’, pp. 999–1007.

contemplative culmination. Bearing in mind this whole interpretive context, I quote the passage highlighted by Thornton's note, 'Virtus vini':

And th[us] gyffes [þam], þat þe begynnynge meditacione, and þis es þe whete þat god hyghttes vs; And deuocione þat men consayues in medytacione. Than sendys God sone after þe wyne þat es plente of teris and after þe wyne of *swete teris* than sendys he þe oyle of consolacione þat gyffes þame sauour & lyghtnes *his knaweliggyngge*, and schewes to þame of his *heuenly privatyse* þat es hide fro þame þat folowes fleschely desyris and gyffes þame-selfe alle to þe wysedome of þe worlde and his fantasysse, and *so enflawmes þam with þe blysse of his lufe þat þay taste somedelle & fele how swete he es, how gud he es, how luffande he es—bot noghte alle fully.* (p. 333, my italics)

The virtue of wine thus points out a potential that devotional, 'swete teris' can allow the devotee in contemplative prayer to have a partial 'kneweliggyngge', or experience of knowing of 'heuenly privatyse' [sacred mysteries, divine secrets]. Notably, this foretaste of heavenly, mystical secrets is here explained as the burning love of God, which is 'swete', 'gud', and 'luffande'.

Elsewhere in *Abbey*, this final contemplative joy and 'sweetness' (direct, experiential aspect of knowing of God) receive a more detailed explanation by another allegorical personification, Iubylacione. Here again, Thornton added a note 'Jubilacio' on the left-hand side margin on fol. 273<sup>r</sup>:

Iubylacione es a grete Ioye þat es consayuede *in teris thorow brynnande luffe of spirite* þat may noghte be in all schewede no in alle hyde. als it fallis somtyme of tho þat god hertly lufes; þere efter þat þay hafe bene in prayere and in orysonne, þay are so lyghte & so lykande in god, þat whare so *þay go þer hertes synge murnynge songes of*

*lufe-longynge to faire lefe, þat þay 3erne with armys of lufe semlyly to falde, and with gastely mourny[n]ge of his gudnes swetly to kysse; and 3it vmwhile so depely þat wordis þam wanttis; for luf-longynge so ferforthe rauesches thorow hertis þat somtyme þay ne wote noghte whate þay do. (Abbey, pp. 328–29)*

As the explanation that this joy is felt in devotional tears through the burning fire of love for God suggests, Iubylacione allegorises the same spiritual joy as that is represented by Pity, which is experienced after devotional tears/wine/Devotion. Since the French *Abbaye* names the final step to the spiritual ascent to God as ‘Jubilations’, not ‘Pete’, the English version might have undergone some changes or corruption at some time before the source text arrived in Thornton’s hands.<sup>84</sup> Whatever the reason for there being two allegorical personifications for the same concept of ecstatic joy in English *Abbey*, it is noteworthy that this ‘grete Ioye’ is expressed through the ‘murnynge songes of lufe-longynge’ to God. This joy, which is expressed through the songs of love, is presented here to ravish and deprive the devotee of words and consciousness, clearly echoing Rolle’s definition of contemplation as a ravishingly joyful song of divine love. As I explain above, some of Thornton’s collection of the Rollean texts promote the concept of *canor*, or heavenly song, as an iconic expression of Rolle’s mystical experiences.<sup>85</sup> His brief note, ‘virtus vini’, thus captures one of the most Rollean, mystical moments of religious discipline in *Abbey*. Even though the text itself inculcates the reader to internalise the clerical authority’s disciplinary control and reduces the descriptions of mystical experiences that the devotee could have, the spiritually ambitious Thornton was able to grasp the most mystical, spiritually aspirational teaching in *Abbey*. The allegorical, quasi-anchoritic abbey thus offered

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<sup>84</sup> Pinder, pp. 37–39.

<sup>85</sup> Concerning the concept of the ‘song of music’, see Denis Renevey, ‘Name Above Names: The Devotion to the Name of Jesus from Richard Rolle to Walter Hilton’s *Scale of Perfection P*’, in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition: England, Ireland and Wales*, ed. by Marion Glasscoe (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999), pp. 103–21 (p. 108).

Thornton an imaginative space where he was able to freely pursue the Rollean mystical culmination.

## Conclusion

Thornton's notes to *Abbey* testify to his recognition of the usefulness of *Abbey*, particularly, its most essential teaching, i.e. to read and use imaginative space for spiritual betterment. Even though the text of *Abbey* itself might have tried to confine the reader within the boundaries of orthodoxy, it taught Thornton how to use its allegorical, quasi-anchoritic convent as an effective spatial model for his version of *lectio divina*. This allegorical space served Thornton as a stage to visualise, perform, and review the teachings and practices that he learned from his collection of devotional literature and spiritual advice, including the expressions of Rollean mystical ravishment. His repeated, selective reading and enacting of the allegorical monastic community allowed him to create, see, and wander in an imaginative space for his spiritual pursuits. This spatial imagination, which was able to translate an enclosed religious space into a private space in the lay household—either an oratory/pew or a chamber—would have been an essential basis for Thornton's spiritual reading. As I mentioned above, when Thornton acquired *Abbey*, he had already copied the texts that I will discuss in the following chapters. As a highly trained, knowledgeable reader who repeatedly engaged in spiritual reading, Thornton would have reread the same text, retraced the same instructions that demanded of him spatial imagination, and revisualized the same imaginative space. *Abbey* is an eloquent witness to such repeated spiritual reading and Thornton's devotional, spatial literacy that enabled him to undertake such a mode of reading. *Privity*, *Discourse*, *Siege*, *Richard*, and *Childhood*—the texts that I will explore in the following chapters—no doubt also underwent such repetitive reading and participated in the development of Thornton's devotional, spatial literacy, for—as I will demonstrate later—these texts equally urge Thornton to use spatial imagination in order to envision and explore the Holy Land, particularly, Jerusalem, through his performative, active mode of reading.



### Chapter 3

#### Imagining Jerusalem through Affective, Spatial Scripts: Thornton's Devotional Performance of the *Privy of the Passion*, the *Discourse between Christ and a Man*, and the *Siege of Jerusalem*

As I argued in Chapter 2, *Abbey* is indicative of Thornton's sophisticated devotional, spatial literacy. His extensive annotations point to his skills to use spatial imagination, which allowed him to use *Abbey* as a kind of a reference book and information storage, through which he could position, memorise, and deepen his understanding of religious knowledge and devotional techniques. Through his scribal activity and repetitive reading, Thornton was trained to become a skilful reader who was able at once to generate and then perform within an imaginative space in response to textual cues. In this chapter and the next, I will examine another imaginative space and, arguably, the one that was most important to Thornton: recreations of Jerusalem. This chapter investigates some examples of such copies of Jerusalem, particularly, the ones that enjoin the reader to envision the holy city through a fixed, static gaze. Later-medieval pious English laypeople fervently revered Christ's humanity, and as a logical consequence, devotion to Jerusalem, the place that witnessed Jesus's last day in this world, became one of their devotional focuses. Reflecting this devotional trend, Christian copies of Jerusalem were repeatedly made and remade in a variety of forms, including, in the liturgy, in writings for affective meditation, in devotional images, and in church architecture, amongst other forms. These representations, as Anthony Bale posits, aimed to edify the viewer/reader 'through fantasies of fear, torture and persecution' of Jesus, all of which, as medieval Christians typically believed, were perpetrated by Jews.<sup>1</sup> Also, as Kathryn M. Rudy demonstrates, devotionally trained medieval readers/audiences

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<sup>1</sup> Bale, *Feeling Persecuted*, p. 128.

were often skilled enough to read and spiritually view such Christian representations of Jerusalem, in order to project themselves into them, and thereby gain an ‘intense empathetic experience’ of ‘being on a virtual pilgrimage’.<sup>2</sup> As an example of such virtual visits to Christian versions of Jerusalem, this chapter examines Thornton’s performative engagement with the representations of Calvary and Jerusalem in three texts: a Pseudo-Bonaventuran devotional text, the *Privy of the Passion (Privy)*; a short extract from the *Cursor mundi*, known as the *Discourse between Christ and a Man (Discourse)*; and an alliterative ‘proto-crusade’ narrative, the *Siege of Jerusalem (Siege)*. To investigate the spatiality generated by the descriptions of Jerusalem in these texts, I will employ the idea of ‘horizontal space’ proposed by Matthew Boyd Goldie. In the first section, I will explain this key concept, alongside Sarah McNamer’s proposition that medieval literary texts, whether they were secular or religious, served as ‘affective scripts’. The second section will consider the use of this horizontal perspective in the descriptions of Calvary and Jerusalem from a series of passages which are highlighted by Thornton’s careful annotations to *Privy*. I will suggest that the annotations are indicative of Thornton’s affective and spatial reading. Then, in the third section, I will examine Christ’s complaint in *Discourse* as another example of a text that demands its readers to immerse themselves in Calvary by imagining themselves as a woman, specifically the bride of Christ. The fourth and final section of this chapter will turn to *Siege*, particularly to two instances in which Jerusalem is explicitly looked down upon, first by the Roman legions led by Vespasian and second by the dragon depicted in the Roman standard. My exploration of *Privy*, *Discourse*, and *Siege*, through the idea of a horizontal space, will demonstrate that multiple Christian versions of Jerusalem were available for Thornton, the devotionally competent reader. The affective scripts in these three texts function also as spatial scripts by urging Thornton to employ his spatial imagination and, in turn, create his own versions of Calvary and Jerusalem. The stylistic features of these three texts prompt

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<sup>2</sup> Kathryn M. Rudy, ‘Virtual Pilgrimage through the Jerusalem Cityscape’, in *Visual Constructs of Jerusalem*, ed. by B. Kühnel, G. Noga-Banai, and H. Vorholt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 381–93 (p. 381). See too, Daniel K. Connolly, ‘Imagined Pilgrimage in the Itinerary Maps of Matthew Paris’, *Art Bulletin*, 81 (1999), 598–622 (p. 598).

Thornton to performatively envision his own versions of Jerusalem and to endow this city, according to an aggressive, late-medieval Christocentric religiosity, with significance as the place that witnesses Christ's passion and the subsequent retribution against its Jewish inhabitants.

### **The Idea of Horizontal Space**

First, it is useful for the later argument to explain the idea of 'horizontal space'. This is, according to Goldie, one of the most common understandings of space by medieval lay people, like Thornton. This spatial understanding (in Goldie's words, 'spatial hermeneutics'), can be well understood in contrast to modern, post-Newtonian view of space. We tend to understand space as an absolute, homogenous, immovable void. Or to put it another way, space, to many of us, is something single, abstracted, and dissociated from ourselves. In this spatial hermeneutics, space is often approached and represented by the overhead viewpoint as we see in many modern maps. Through the overhead viewpoint, we take it for granted that 'each point' of space, in theory at least, has 'identical importance' from the above.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, 'horizontal space' does not premise such a single, abstract space. This medieval spatial hermeneutics, which is based on the notion of the Greek '*topos* [place/space] (these two concepts are not clearly distinguished)', requires an embodied self, who views the space that s/he occupies. Greek '*topos*', as Aristotle explains, cannot exist without 'a physical substance' which occupies a specific *topos* and limits the boundaries of the *topos* 'with its own outer surface'.<sup>4</sup> In other words, space was explained and understood in conjunction with something or someone within, which has a form, occupies some space, and is emplaced in the space. According to Aristotle, 'whatever exists, exists "somewhere" [. . .], in contrast to things which "are nowhere" because they are non-existent'.<sup>5</sup> In other words, to exist means to be

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<sup>3</sup> Harley and Woodward, p. 505.

<sup>4</sup> P. H. Wicksteed and F. M. Cornford, 'Introduction to Book 4', in Aristotle, *Physics, Volume I: Books 1–4*, Loeb Classical Library 228 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 271.

<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, Book IV, 1, 208a.

somewhere. In Aristotelian understanding of place/space, the idea of emplacement, which ties existence and location, is fundamental. As Goldie explains, medieval scholars such as Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus questioned some parts of the Aristotelian understanding of place by pointing out its problematic premises, including the view of a place as immobile.<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, while undergoing various modifications, the idea of emplacement was an essential basis of spatial understanding throughout the medieval period. Space was not abstracted but depends on a subject and (an) object(s) in it. Or to put it another way, space was approached through the relations between viewers and objects within a space.

Goldie develops and posits the notion of ‘horizontal space’, which is partly based on this idea of ‘*topos*’ while also influenced by the twenty-first century philosopher, Edward Casey’s discussion about space and edges.<sup>7</sup> Since Casey and other modern philosophical arguments often approach space with an acute interest in a subject that perceives space from a specific orientation, according to Goldie, their discussions are useful and relevant to medieval spatial understanding. Goldie defines a space viewed through a ‘horizontal perspective’, which he calls a ‘horizontal space’, as ‘an area near earth and within the bounds of the horizontal edge’. The horizontal space is made up of ‘a set of relations between objects and viewers’, who see (an) object(s) ‘on the ground or within a zone near the ground but always within the horizon’.<sup>8</sup> Thus, like the idea of emplacement, the ‘horizontal space’ premises an embodied self, who is located in a space and sensorily, emotionally, and intellectually perceives the edges/boundaries of the space. In other words, the ‘horizontal space’ demands the individual location and identity of a viewer who exists in a space surrounded by the actual ‘horizon’ or a similar edge unlike the overhead perspective, which urges the viewer of maps or the person who is perceiving a space to dissociate themselves from the specific location and to abstract the location as well as

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew Boyd Goldie, *Scribes of Space: Place in Middle English Literature and Late-medieval Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), pp. 62–64.

<sup>7</sup> Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 50–71.

<sup>8</sup> Goldie, *Scribes of Space*, pp. 86, 96.

themselves. In the horizontal hermeneutics, space is relative and neither single nor uniform. This spatial hermeneutics approaches a place through the sensory and intellectual lenses of viewers, who are within the space with particular objects that they perceive. Thus, in this horizontal outlook, space is understood and also often represented in accordance with viewers' interests and sensory perception. These individuated, heterogeneous representations of space, whether they are *mappae mundi* or itineraries, generally have 'a strongly symbolic or didactic function' and endow certain parts of the representation 'with particular meaning and importance' as J. B. Harley and David Woodward posit.<sup>9</sup> Thus, although 'horizontal space' sometimes can be systematic and measurable in a mathematically correct way, the horizontal perspective generally 'affords a self-aware, self-situated objectivity', in Goldie's words.<sup>10</sup>

In the medieval period, the depiction of the world from an overhead perspective was sometimes found in pictorial expressions of the cosmological, or chorographical worldview like *mappae mundi* and zonal maps as well as in literary works such as the commentaries on *Scipio's Dream* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Also, late-medieval laypeople, including Thornton, were often knowledgeable about such cosmological views of spaces in the world. However, such cosmological perspectives were often based on the presence of the viewer like Troilus in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.<sup>11</sup> As Goldie points out, medieval representations of the overhead viewpoint probably did not express 'a fully abstract-homogeneous sense of physical space' since they could have just presented 'some variant on a heterogeneous [space]'.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the overhead perspective in medieval map-like objects and literary works often requires viewers. Even if the medieval overhead or elevated perspective sometimes invites viewers to remove themselves from a particular place/location on the surface of the ground and to take the whole space into view,

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<sup>9</sup> J. B. Harley and David Woodward, 'Concluding Remarks', in *The History of Cartography* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), I, p. 505.

<sup>10</sup> Goldie, *Scribes of Space*, p. 96.

<sup>11</sup> For example, such a perspective is taken by Troilus, who rises to the eighth sphere and looks down on the *oikoumene*. See *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book 5, 1807–20

<sup>12</sup> Goldie, *Scribes of Space*, p. 85.

the seen or represented space was not as abstracted as in modern maps. Again taking Troilus as an example, even if an elevated view seems to release him from particular places and remove affective attachment to the earthly things from him, the vista which is now available to him (as Troilus comes to regard the world as '[t]his litel spot of erthe' ,1815) is just another example of his sensory perception as well as a vehicle to manifest the transitoriness of the earthly world. Therefore, to the medieval spacious consciousness, space was rarely abstracted and approached mainly through the horizontal perspective, which expects the existence of emplaced viewers. Although the overhead perspective sometimes equally offered a means to view the world from more dissociated, homogenous lenses than the horizontal perspective, it was still different from modern equivalents.

Bearing in mind this idea of horizontal space, in what follows, I will consider how the horizontal space is exploited in the texts of *Privity*, *Discourse*, and *Siege*. However, before proceeding to my analysis of these texts, it is necessary to explain medieval 'affect'. As becomes clear, spatiality in Calvary and Jerusalem in these three texts is tied to the textual manipulation of the reader's affect. I use the word affect in the sense that scholars working on the history of emotions like Sarah McNamer, Holly Crocker, and Paul Megna use it. As the word 'emotion' did not appear until the sixteenth century, it is now scholarly standard to use not emotion but affect.<sup>13</sup> This English term connotes medieval understanding of the two Latin words, *affectus* and *affectio*. *Affectus* refers to the soul's intellectual faculty or function, which was believed to process, in conjunction with the will, the '*passiones animae* (the movements in the sensitive soul caused by what is perceived by one's senses)' into each manifestation of feeling, which was called *affectio*. Affect thus can mean both the function (*affectus*) and its result, i.e. each expressed feeling (*affectio*), such as sorrow and anger.<sup>14</sup> The later-medieval English equivalent to affect, that is, 'affeccioun',

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<sup>13</sup> 'emotion', n. in *OED*, < <https://www-oed-com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/Entry/61249?rskey=DkpUXD&result=1#eid> > [accessed 3 February 2022]

<sup>14</sup> Robert C. Miner, '*Affectus* and *passio* in the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas' in *Before Emotion: The Language of Feeling, 400–1800*, ed. by Juanita Feros Ruys, Michael W. Champion, and Kirk Essary (New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. 121–30 (p. 123).

equally covered both meanings of *affectus* and *affectio*.<sup>15</sup> This double meaning of affect could have been familiar to Thornton since some of the texts in his two manuscripts connotes both meanings. For instance, Hilton's *Epistle on the Mixed Life*, which Thornton copied in the Lincoln Thornton MS, uses 'affeccyon' to describe both intellectually processed feeling and the process that regulates the sensations in one's mind. In the *Epistle*, 'affeccyon' is first used to refer a feeling of love ('þe affeccyon of lufe'), but later it also designates a function of the human 'saul', which, along with 'reson', processes mental excitements caused by 'myditacyons' for spiritual enhancement.<sup>16</sup> Thus, I will use affect as the counterpart of Middle English 'affeccyon', which is a key to Thornton's spatial envisioning of Calvary and Jerusalem.

My following argument about spatiality and affect is based particularly on what McNamer calls 'affective scripts'. In her view, many medieval literary texts, including not only devotional literature but also secular narratives, often operate as affective scripts. These texts, through their exploitation of rhetorical techniques such as emplotment, rhythm, repetition, and narrative pace, manipulate the reader/audience to produce and perform textually scripted feelings so that they could have made culturally desirable, and socially legible feelings their own ethical habits.<sup>17</sup> In this view of literary texts, reading became an essential exercise to form a better moral self since readers were able to train themselves by regulating their affects through their performance of textual cues embedded in the affective script.<sup>18</sup> Through a detailed analysis of the descriptions of Calvary and Jerusalem in *Privy*, *Discourse*, and *Siege*, I will argue in the following three sections that these texts function not only as affective scripts but also as spatial scripts. The spatiality within these texts contributes to each text's selective presentation of Jerusalem as a

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<sup>15</sup> Paul Megna, 'Affecciuon in Middle English Devotional Writing' in *Before Emotion: The Language of Feeling, 400–1800*, ed. by Juanita Feros Ruys, Michael W. Champion, and Kirk Essary (New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. 142–55.

<sup>16</sup> 'The Two Ways of Christian Life', in *English Prose Treatises of Richard Rolle De Hampole*, ed. by George Gresley Perry, EETS, o.s., 20 (London: Oxford University Press, 1921; repr. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint, 1987), pp. 21–43 (pp. 33, 41).

<sup>17</sup> McNamer, 'Feeling', p. 248).

<sup>18</sup> Concerning the roles played by affect in the medieval understanding of forming one's subjectivity, see Holly A. Crocker, 'Medieval Affects Now', *Exemplaria*, 29 (2017), 82–98; Michael W. Champion, 'From *affectus* to Affect Theory and Back Again', in *Before Emotion*, ed. by Ruys, Champion, and Essary, pp. 241–55 (p. 249).

place which witnesses Christ's passion and awaits subsequent divine vengeance on its inhabitants, i.e. the Jews.

### ***Privity of the Passion and Virtual Pilgrimage to Calvary and Jerusalem: Thornton's Imaginative Construction of Calvary***

*Privity* is a Middle English prose text which belongs to the so-called Pseudo-Bonaventuran tradition. The texts belonging to this literary tradition were wrongly believed, throughout the Middle Ages, to originate from a work written by the Franciscan theologian and philosopher Bonaventure.<sup>19</sup> The version that Thornton copied in his Lincoln Thornton MS is no exception as its *explicit*, which was written possibly by Thornton's spiritual advisor, ascribed it to Bonaventura.<sup>20</sup> *Privity* provides an expanded, gospel-based story of the passion from the last supper to Christ's post-resurrection appearance to his mother and disciples. This passion narrative, which is structured around the canonical hours to form a one-day programme of passion meditation, employs 'the full rhetorical repertoire' such as direct address and visual focus on the Jews' torment of Jesus, to facilitate the reader's mental absorption in the gospel narrative and their affective, empathic response to it.<sup>21</sup> As McNamer argues, the Pseudo-Bonaventuran texts, including *Privity*, represent what she calls affective scripts. They exploit such literary techniques as direct address and graphic depictions of the sorrowful Virgin, enjoining the reader to perform the feelings of compassion, contrition, and compunction like a woman, specifically the Virgin. In the Pseudo-Bonaventuran texts, the Virgin, along with the other female followers of Christ, functions as an exemplary model for the reader's empathetic 'beholding' of Christ's

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<sup>19</sup> McNamer questions the scholarly premise that the pseudo-Bonaventuran tradition developed from the Latin *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, which was written by Friar Johannes de Caulibus of San Gimignano, Tuscany. In McNamer's view, the whole Pseudo-Bonaventuran tradition began from a text composed in Italian by a woman. See Sarah McNamer, 'The Origins of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*', *Speculum*, 84 (2009), 905–55.

<sup>20</sup> The hand that added this *explicit* is different from Thornton's, possibly his spiritual advisor's. See Lutton, '...But Have You Read This?', pp. 77–79.

<sup>21</sup> Allan F. Westphall, 'The *Privity of the Passion*', in *Geographies of Orthodoxy: Mapping English Pseudo-Bonaventuran Lives of Christ, 1350–1550* <<https://geographies-of-orthodoxy.qub.ac.uk/resources/?section=corpus&id=4>> [accessed 8 April 2022]



suffering.<sup>22</sup> According to McNamer, ‘beholding’ was understood in the later-medieval period as a mode of visual perception, which was not gender neutral but specifically feminine. It was the mode of seeing in which the viewer empathetically sees and holds the viewed in a protective, maternal manner.<sup>23</sup> Thus, to ‘behold’ the passion in a religiously desirable way, the reader, male and female alike, needed to ‘see like a woman’.

This programme of affective meditation was likely a fundamental spiritual practice to Thornton as he copied *Privy* as the first item in booklet 3, which is—as I have already noted in Chapter 2—the booklet identified by Keiser as Thornton’s ‘devotional book’. In Keiser’s view, this booklet ‘provide[d Thornton] himself and his family with the means for undertaking the exercise of devotional piety’.<sup>24</sup> This view of *Privy* as an essential text for Thornton’s spiritual exercise is also supported by the fact that it is one of the texts he most heavily annotated. In this section, I will have a close look at and analyse the passages highlighted by Thornton’s annotations, applying the ideas of the horizontal space and affective scripts to them. These two ideas were likely familiar for Thornton, who was not probably educated in a university but was knowledgeable about proper ways of reading literary texts. Through my close reading of Thornton’s annotations, I will demonstrate that the text of *Privy* not only encodes affective cues to ‘feel like a woman’, but it also spatially evokes Jerusalem so that Thornton, the affective reader, was able to mentally visit the sites of Christ’s passion.

Before focusing on the passages relevant to my argument, it is useful to give an overview of Thornton’s annotations on *Privy*. Thornton added thirteen *nota bene* marks (on fols. 179<sup>v</sup>, 180<sup>r</sup>, 182<sup>r</sup>, 182<sup>v</sup>, 183<sup>r</sup>, 186<sup>r</sup>, 186<sup>v</sup>, 188<sup>v</sup>, and 189<sup>r</sup>), four *nota* marks (on fols. 186<sup>r</sup>, 188<sup>v</sup>, and 189<sup>r</sup>),

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<sup>22</sup> McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, pp. 119–49.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 134–42.

<sup>24</sup> Keiser, “To Knawe God Almyghtyn”, pp. 103, 104. As Keiser reveals, Thornton, who acquired the Alliterative *Morte Arthure* and *Privy* at almost the same time, placed them at the beginning of two separate quires, which later became, respectively, the collection of romances (booklet 2) and that of moral and devotional texts (booklet 3) in the Lincoln Thornton MS. See George R. Keiser, ‘Lincoln Cathedral Library MS. 91: Life and Milieu of the Scribe’, *Studies in Bibliography*, 32 (1979), 158–79 (pp. 177–79).

and three cross-shaped scratches (on fols. 182<sup>v</sup>, 184<sup>r</sup>, and 184<sup>v</sup>).<sup>25</sup> Among the thirteen *nota bene* marks, five were written with a mark which Thornton used elsewhere as a stanza indicator (those on 182<sup>v</sup>, 183<sup>r</sup>, 186<sup>r</sup>, 186<sup>v</sup>, and 188<sup>v</sup>). The cross-shaped scratches, if we accept that they are Thornton's, were probably used to attract attention of the reader (in this case, either Thornton himself or someone in his household) to the adjacent passage. Similar cross-shaped marks underscore the reference to the apotropaic power of Christ's name in the *Revelation Shown to A Holy Woman* (fol. 251<sup>v</sup>). John J. Thompson points out that these annotations highlight mainly 'Christ's direct speech' or 'key narrative events' such as 'the details of Christ's physical suffering' and 'the sorrows of his mother the Virgin'.<sup>26</sup> In Thompson's view, these annotations show Thornton's appreciation of *Privity* mainly as 'a lively and engaged Passion narrative', suggesting too that Thornton could have regarded it as a 'short intensive self-contained programme of meditative reading'.<sup>27</sup> Although I generally agree with Thompson's observations, I contend that Thornton's annotations to *Privity* indicate that he mainly viewed it as a text for intense, affective immersion in Jerusalem.

What is striking about Thornton's annotations is that they attest to his knowledge of a key principle of Pseudo-Bonaventuran devotional literature, namely, an imperative to imitate the affective responses of Christ's female followers, particularly, those of the Virgin. This principle, which is called the *imitatio Mariae*, likely guided Thornton's practice of adding annotations. Among his thirteen *nota bene* marks, five marks were written beside the passages that depict the Virgin's sorrowful reactions to her son's suffering.<sup>28</sup> Equally, all the three cross-shaped scratches

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<sup>25</sup> Thornton sometimes added a few *nota bene* marks to the same folio page as in the case of folio 182<sup>v</sup>, where he wrote a *nota bene* mark with a stanza-indicator on the upper left-side margin and a *nota bene* mark on the lower left-side margin.

<sup>26</sup> John J. Thompson, 'Reading Miscellaneously in and around the English Pseudo-Bonaventuran Tradition', in *The Pseudo-Bonaventuran Lives of Christ: Exploring the Middle English Tradition*, ed. by Ian Johnson and Allan F. Westphall, *Medieval Church Studies*, 24 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 127–150 (pp. 138–39).

<sup>27</sup> Thompson, 'Reading Miscellaneously', p. 140.

<sup>28</sup> Five *nota bene* marks underscore the Virgin's behaviour: her swooning when she sees her child's running blood (fol. 182<sup>v</sup>), her feeling of sorrow and compassion to see the crucified Christ (fol. 183<sup>r</sup>), Christ calling her 'woman' (fol. 183<sup>r</sup>), her calling to Jesus (fol. 186<sup>v</sup>), and the disciples caring for her (fol. 188<sup>v</sup>).

highlight the Virgin's caring for Christ's body.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the three Marys' visit to the holy sepulchre was marked by a *nota bene* mark on fol. 186<sup>v</sup>, as I will discuss more in detail later in this section. Probably thanks to the guidance of his spiritual advisor(s), Thornton was familiar with the role of the Virgin and the three Marys in affective meditation. In the Pseudo-Bonaventuran texts, these women, particularly the Virgin, as the reader's 'greatest avatar[s]' in Rudy's words,<sup>30</sup> offered Thornton a model for seeing, feeling compassion with, and imitating the suffering Christ. Thornton's annotations, thus, demonstrate that he was a knowledgeable, devotionally trained reader, who was competent enough to specify the passages that would have facilitated his engagement in affective meditation.

Some of the passages marked by Thornton seem to encourage readers not only to feel particular feelings but also to employ their spatial imagination. For instance, the following quotation includes some locational adverbial phrases, which allow the reader to envision what one can see in Calvary. This passage on fol. 183<sup>r</sup> was highlighted by Thornton with a *nota bene* mark:<sup>31</sup>

He [Christ] sufferde mekill payne, 3a more þan herte may thynke or tunge tell. He hangged by-twyx two thefes as he þat hade bene fawty. One euery syde was repreues and paynes [disgrace and wounds]. And 3it whene he was so hard sette, 3itt wolde þey [the Jews] nott cesse of dispyssynge. [. . .] And all þis [the torture of Jesus] þey did *in presence of his sorowfull modir*, whas sorow & compassione was gretly þe cause of encressyng of hir dere sones passion, and þe sones passion eke de þe modire sorowe; ffor oure lady

<sup>29</sup> The first mark of the cross (fol. 182<sup>v</sup>) was inserted beside the Virgin's attempt to hide her son's naked body. The second (fol. 184<sup>r</sup>) underscores the Virgin, who swooned after seeing Longinus pierce her son's side. The last and faintest of the three cross marks (on fol. 184<sup>v</sup>) attracted the reader's attention to the textual pietà, the description of the Virgin washing Christ's body with her copious tears.

<sup>30</sup> Kathryn M. Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent: Imagining Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), p. 35. See also Allan F. Westphall, 'The Passion in English: *Meditations on the Life of Christ* in Michigan State University Library MS 1', *Neophilologus*, 97 (2013), 199–214.

<sup>31</sup> All the following quotations are taken from 'The Privity of the Passion', in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, an English Father of the Church, and His Followers*, ed. by Carl Horstmann (London: Sonnenschein, 1895), pp. 198–218.

hange *one þe Rode with hire dere childe* in soule, and rathere couett to dye with hym þene to lyfe. Þer was also *besyd þe crosse standyng by oure lady Iohn Ewangeliste, Marie Mawdelyne, & oþer two Marias* oure lady systers, & all þese wepede full tenderly for oure lorde Ihesu; þey had gret compassione of oure lord Ihesu and also of his modire. (*Privy*, p. 206)

This passage is almost iconic in its clear depiction of the mechanics of the *imitatio Mariae*. The reader is invited to look empathetically at and focus on the suffering of Christ through the eyes of the Virgin, who emotionally and physically shares her son's suffering and wishes to die with him 'in [her] soule'. While the detailed descriptions of the passion from the Virgin's perspective invite Thornton to the *imitatio Christi* (which was the ultimate goal of affective meditation), they simultaneously generate spatiality through a sense of the horizontal space. This affective space is experienced specifically through objects in relation to the Virgin as all the torture and passion are made 'in [her] presence'. Positional references here are viewed from and centre the Virgin. She imaginatively hangs herself 'one þe Rode' with Christ, and John the Evangelist and the Three Marys 'stand by' her as well as 'besyd þe crosse'. These descriptions, which are based on the locational relations between the Virgin and the things perceived by her, demanded Thornton to view the passion, plunge himself into Calvary, and stand there through the Virgin's gaze. This passage's textual cues are thus not only for the *imitatio Mariae*. They also enjoin Thornton to imagine Calvary as a horizontal space, which is sensorily and emotionally experienced by the Virgin. In this imaginative Calvary, Thornton the reader was able, like the Virgin, to be emplaced and affectively view Christ on the cross. Here, *Privy*'s affective script simultaneously functions as a spatial script.

Another passage in *Privy* which functions both as an affective and spatial script is also found in another passage that Thornton highlighted, the passage that is illustrated in Figure 3.

so & take away his body and saye it awaye to hys ... when come he ...  
 shot hys to his stans one ye fonde hoys at moxus and toke awaye his  
 his blisse body oset of ye stans & wente forthe tomythe his dycher ...  
 wat came home hoys at moxus wape mandeloryn & by the oystor ...  
 lone at ony lady & ony set veyr ornomentos to ye cupulys ...  
 oystor lady bod fytt at home and thade to ye ...  
 of nury & pite to knowe wold pat my sone or dode and ...  
 nygde be wery thowr & holpade to bory hym set my hander ...  
 wold pat so dye of mygite & poldys to jostore hym agayne to me ...  
 and sondo: And y fere hano mercy of me & be sode ...  
 wolde siffe me hym agayne: A lorde wery or ho: ...  
 longe sio me send hym to me & pte zelle for my sone may ...  
 to & hano hym: Am y fere oseto sone wylt or comw ...  
 dore thore wery tawpoo you so longe & pte the my dore sone: ...  
 lantare sio me: ffor you oard thi sotte you sille yse & thys ...  
 yre or & thys dore my dore sone pte zelle zystondar bot bo ...  
 wold pat it say wat but say wat werychid day the day of ...  
 my knesse ye day of werynyng & of hys dore y fere my dore ...  
 say or & thys day thys fere: wery oset noce my dore and all ...  
 forthe & come & awaye to me ffor ad all thys dore of to ...  
 ye wat thys awaye come stado me werychid & werynyng: hano ...  
 fytt & may comfortyd & solace me set thi blisse dore hano ...  
 thys dore hano mobil hobydo: Come awaye noce you my ...  
 bo lonode, come my lorde sio come you ony my hope come to me ...  
 dore thys: and werychid sio thys dore set lonode tope: ...  
 come ony lode of sio in clothe: werychid ac am swado hys ...  
 as ye sone all pte pte all stocome & all full of dore and ...  
 modys: hano hoby modys: And so sion sio thys hys & ...  
 you my dore sone sio & set wat sio knold dore & werychid ...  
 and ho lode & werychid and toke up & sion my dore modys: ...  
 set sone & am sion & am set zelle you sio they up to ...  
 sio halydo hym & werychid hym and condyly and londe ...  
 hym and ho condyly & mobil helde hys arpe: A fte dore ...  
 go dore and on sio wolyde one hys face and ye werychid in hys ...  
 & in hys foto & dore one all hys blisse body & werychid ...  
 payne & hys dore werychid passado & werychid hys then sion ...  
 my dore modys: hano on comon sion & do and of all no more ...  
 vey of wot & am & call be in endlesse dore & blisse you ...  
 werychid blisse be thys sion my dore sone & hano thys ...  
 me in honer & werychid pte and werychid be hys haly ...  
 yse of werychid set werychid hano dore sion sion ...  
 shot dore and stano of hys halydo vey sion all in dore & ...  
 dore of hys and ony lode sio toke hys modys haly do hys ...  
 noce hys papyl oset of haly & all ye werychid & werychid ...  
 done vey thys dore: lo vey or noce werychid werychid & ...  
 passado: haly mandeloryn & by oystor come to ye sion ...  
 werychid & werychid werychid come dore at moxus to ...  
 ye sion set veyr ornomentos as & oard bo fere & werychid ...  
 ye zator of ye werychid werychid veyn of ye payne & werychid ...  
 werychid & werychid of veyr werychid and in ony place & werychid

sond  
no

werychid

**Q**

Fig. 3 A nota bene mark beside the heading of 'How Maudeleyne & hir systers com to þe sepulcre' on the lower right-hand corner of fol. 186v of the Lincoln Thornton MS, with the permission of the Dean and Chapter for Lincoln Cathedral

This passage begins with the headline just beside a nota bene mark on fol. 186v:

How Maudeleyne & hir systers com to þe sepulcre  
 [. . .] *Withowtyn þe gates of þe Cete* they [Mary Magdalene and the two Marys, the sisters of the Virgin] vmbethoghte þem of þe paynes & affliccyounes & passiones of þeire maystere [Christ], and In euery place þat þey knewe þat he had sufferde any specyall payne knelyde doune kyssyng þe grownde, sorowynge & sygheyng togedire: *Here* mette we with hyme beryng his crosse whene his modire swounede for sorowe. And *here* turnede he hym agayne to þe womene of Ierusalem. And *here* laid he doune his crosse for werynes, and *oppone þis stone* lenede he hym a lyttill. And *here* was it þat þey schot hym forthe so felly & so cruelly and spytte in his face, and garte hym hye so fast. *Here* dispoylede þey hyme & nakynd hyme, and *here* did they hym one þe crosse,<sup>32</sup> and þene with gret wepyng and sorowynge þey ffell to þe grownde & wyrchipped þe crosse & kyssed it;—ffor it was all rede of þe precyouse blode of oure lorde Ihesu. Aftir þat, þey rose vp & wente *to þe sepulcre*. (*Privity*, p. 214, my italics)

In this passage, Mary Magdalene and the two Marys walk from ‘þe gates of þe Cete [of Jerusalem]’ to ‘þe sepulcre’, the road which is known today as the *via crucis*, the *via dolorosa*, and the stations of the cross. They stop ‘euery place’, or every station of this *via*, to reflect on Christ’s suffering, kneeling before the cross, and kissing it. Thornton’s careful addition of a *nota bene* to this passage is thus a manifestation of his ‘affective literacy’, which Mark Amsler defines as ‘ways we develop emotional, somatic, activity-based relationships with texts as part of our reading experiences’, including ‘somatic literate technologies’ such as running fingers on and kissing the page.<sup>32</sup> As a trained reader, Thornton no doubt had such a skill to imaginatively follow the Three Marys and gesture hands and eyes in a proper, expected manner. While the references to the

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<sup>32</sup> Mark Amsler, ‘Affective Literacy: Gestures of Reading in the Later Middle Ages’, *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 18 (2001), 83–110 (p. 83).



Three Marys' gesture are notable, positional references like 'oppon þis stone' and the repetition of an adverb of place, 'here', are also significant. They engender spatiality in this passage and urge Thornton to imagine the road of the cross from the perspective of the three Marys. In other words, this passage prompts him to imaginatively walk on the road with Christ's female followers in a sequential manner and employ his sense of the horizontal space. This passage is thus a spatial script for a virtual pilgrimage, as well as an excellent example of the passage for affective meditation. *Privity's* affective script, here again, encodes not only the performance of the feelings of sorrow and compassion but also the spatial enactment of a pilgrimage from a gate of Jerusalem to the holy sepulchre.

It should be noted that this empathetic, spatial enactment of Jerusalem may have been facilitated by devotional objects. Thornton likely possessed some physical images or visual prompts drawn from the gospel narrative such as the ones owned by his contemporary, the pious York widow Elizabeth Sywardby. Her probate inventory testifies that she kept in her chapel an image of the Virgin's lamentation, an image of the deposition, and two images of Saint John the Evangelist.<sup>33</sup> Such objects, if Thornton had similar ones, would have enabled his affective, spatial envisioning of Calvary and the *via crucis*. Even if Thornton never visited the real fifteenth-century *via crucis* like Bridget of Sweden and Margery Kempe, visual aids and his extensive knowledge of the gospel narrative readily supported his imaginary visit to Jerusalem.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, such pious imagining of the *via crucis* would have been easy to Thornton as he was extremely knowledgeable about the gospel narrative as he copied two extracts of the *Cursor mundi*, the *Northern Passion*, and the *Childhood of Christ* in the London Thornton MS. In the *Northern Passion*, for instance, we can see detailed descriptions of the same events as those are

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<sup>33</sup> Sywardby seems to have possessed similar devotional interests to Thornton (according to her will, she owned a psalter, the *Life of Christ*, and some writings of Richard Rolle). Thus, as a frequent customer of York's book trade and avid reader of devotional literature, Thornton could have had similar devotional props, which would have aided affective reading. See Raine, *Testamenta Eboracensia*, pp. 161–68.

<sup>34</sup> Bridget of Sweden and Margery Kempe visit Jerusalem and walked the *via crucis*. The descriptions of their pilgrimage are eloquent witnesses to late-medieval, extremely pious laypeople's 'subjective, almost psychosomatic, perceptions of the holy places'. See Sylvia Schein, 'Bridget of Sweden, Margery Kempe and Women's Jerusalem Pilgrimages in the Middle Ages', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 14 (1999), 44–58 (p. 53).

remembered by the Three Marys, including Christ's encounter with 'wyues' and 'maydenys owt of Ierusalem' (ll. 1531–32) and Christ's stopping on the way to Calvary for weariness (l. 1564).<sup>35</sup>

Before proceeding to the next section, it is also worthwhile to point out that such a meditative, horizontal imagining of Jerusalem could have been a regular practice of Thornton's. He added two *nota* marks in the left-hand margin and a *nota bene* mark in the right-hand margin of fol. 189<sup>r</sup>, where the narrator flags up the spiritual efficacy of a weekly Friday meditation on the passion. As it is only this passage, among Thornton's annotations to *Privity*, that is emphasised by three marks, the piece of advice offered here is undoubtedly noteworthy for Thornton:

I trow sothefastly þat if you couthe pete & compassione of his [Christ's] passione, and had þi herte and þi mynd gedirde togedire & nott distracte abowte in þe werlde abowte oþer thynges & oþer fantassies, þat þou sulde *fele* in euerylkone of þes apperynges a newe feste gostely and a new pasche. And euery sononday suldes þou hafe so, If þou wolde one ffryday before with hole mynde & feruent deuocyone hafe sorowe and pete of Cristes passione. (*Privity*, p. 218, my italics)

Affective meditation on 'Cristes passione' every Friday, so the narrator suggests, ideally, enables the reader to 'fele' every Sunday as 'a newe feste gostely and a new pasche'. In later-medieval English, '*felen*' does not only mean to have a sensory, emotional experience but also designates a cognitive understanding. To feel can mean 'to comprehend, understand, know'.<sup>36</sup> Thus, according to this passage, a weekly meditation leads to an affective, somatic, and *intellectual* understanding of the events of the passion. By skilfully responding to *Privity*'s textual cues during his spiritual exercise, Thornton would thus have wished to achieve such comprehension,

<sup>35</sup> The quotations are taken from the following edition: Frances A. Foster ed., *The Northern Passion*, EETS, o.s., 145 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1913; repr. 1971).

<sup>36</sup> 'felen' v. (1) in *MED*, <[https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED15520/track?counter=2&search\\_id=11960930](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED15520/track?counter=2&search_id=11960930)> [accessed 3 January 2022]



immersed himself in Calvary, and transformed his quotidian space, like his family chapel or oratory (if he had one), into his own Jerusalem.<sup>37</sup> To Thornton, the devotionally competent reader, decoding *Privity's* affective and spatial script, with the help of devotional objects, would have been a regular, relatively easy spiritual exercise.

### **The *Discourse between Christ and a Man* and the Affective, Spatial Reading of Sacred History in the London Thornton MS**

It is not only *Privity* in the Lincoln Thornton MS's devotional booklet which demands an affective and spatial engagement in the text. As I will suggest, such a short devotional lyric as the *Discourse between Christ and Man (Discourse)* in the London Thornton MS could have likewise worked as an affective, spatial script for Thornton. In this third section of this chapter, I take *Discourse* as another example of a text for a virtual, affective pilgrimage to Calvary conducted specifically through a feminine gaze. As I will demonstrate, in this very short poem, the horizontal perspective is again employed as a key to facilitate Thornton's affective immersion in Calvary. *Discourse* is a very short extract from the *Cursor mundi* and comprises an allegorical dialogue between Christ and a man. The text of *Discourse* enjoins readers to identify themselves with the man, who is continuously addressed by Christ crucified on the cross. In almost all of the 75-line poem, Christ complains about the man/the reader's sinfulness and urges him to love God and feel remorse. The man, remaining silent, only replies to Christ at the end of *Discourse* by inviting the reader to 'forsake' 'oure synnes' (l. 17181).<sup>38</sup>

The text of *Discourse*, like that of *Privity*, urges the reader, here Thornton, to feel like a woman again through its stylistic features and the descriptions of the Christ-centred object

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<sup>37</sup> Hanna suggests that an oratory, often situated in a family chapel, is 'a multi-use locale, a private retreat, certainly for spiritual purposes, but also for consultation and for recreation and recreational reading'. See Ralph Hanna, 'Medieval Lay Libraries: The Example of Thomas Stotevyle's Books', *Journal of the Early Book Society*, 22 (2019), 149–75 (p. 151).

<sup>38</sup> All quotations are taken from 'Appendix B', in *The Southern Version of Cursor Mundi*, ed. by Henry J. Stauffenberg and Sarah M. Horrall, *Ottawa Mediaeval Texts and Studies*, 13, 3 vols (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1985), III (1985), pp. 165–210.

relations. While Christ, who is the narrator of *Discourse* except for the last nine lines, at first addresses the reader as a ‘synfull man’, he later repeatedly calls upon the reader as his female lover, including as ‘my frende’, ‘my leman’ [a loved one of the opposite sex] and ‘birde’ [a woman of noble birth, damsel, lady].<sup>39</sup> These addresses imply the amorous relationship between the man/the reader and Christ. This implication would have been easily understood by the expected reader of *Discourse*, including Thornton, as the nuptial metaphor, which presents Christ as the heavenly bridegroom and the human soul as his bride was a devotional commonplace to fifteenth-century lay readers.

This nuptial imagery is further heightened in *Discourse* by Christ’s erotic but holy promise that he will ‘halse’ [embrace] (l. 17177), ‘kysse’ (l. 17177) and bring the reader to his ‘fadirs blysse’ (l. 17178). Here, from the mouth of Christ the narrator, what this set of nuptial metaphors signifies is articulated. This Christ urges the reader to be penitent, love Christ, and affectively and spatially present at Calvary:

Pou synfull man þat *gase by me*  
 Dwelle a while and þou may see  
 Dwelle a while and fonde to *stande*  
 Bihalde my fete and my hande  
 [. . .]  
 I hynge *appon this harde rode*  
 [. . .]  
 Byhalde & see my bloody syde  
 Þat for thi luffe es opyned wyde  
 Putt in thi hande & grape my frende  
 Take þou my herte bitwix þi hende  
 Than may þou with thyn eghne see

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<sup>39</sup> ‘lemman’ n. 1 in *MED* <[https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED25097/track?counter=7&search\\_id=23116366](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED25097/track?counter=7&search_id=23116366)> [accessed 13 April 2023]; ‘birde’ n (1), in *MED* <[https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED4711/track?counter=2&search\\_id=23116366](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED4711/track?counter=2&search_id=23116366)> [accessed 16 June 2022].

How trewly þat I hafe luffed thee  
 Fra my crown vnto my taa  
 Full I ame of pyne and waa  
*Bytwix twaa thefes* hang I *here*  
 Als I a thefe or traytoure were  
 Byfor my modirs eghne Mary  
 Suffre I all this velanye (ll. 17129–32, 17135, 17139–50, my italics)

This passage itself follows convention by enjoining Thornton the reader to feel contrition by emphasising Christ's loving, painful redemption. What is notable and should be emphasised here is that this demand simultaneously implies Thornton's necessary transformation from a careless passer-by to a devout, affective pilgrim to Calvary. This transformation is depicted through the horizontal perspective since the text describes this textual Calvary from the perspective of the reader/the man, who fixes his gaze on the crucified Christ. *Discourse's* affective script manipulates the movements not only of the eyes of the man/the reader but also of their bodies. Christ-the-narrator's prompt to the reader is not limited to his repeated demand to 'byhalde' his tormented bodies. Here, Christ asks the reader not to 'gose by' [go past] him without paying attention to him but to '[d]welle a while' and 'stande' 'here', at Calvary. These verbs of movement generate spatiality while adverbial phrases such as 'by me', on a 'harde rode' and 'Bytwix twaa thefes' contribute to the formation of the horizontal space by detailing the object relations in this Calvary. Furthermore, the demonstrative pronoun 'this' and the locative adverb 'here' emphasise the spatial dominance of the crucified Christ in the passage. *Discourse's* textual features for eliciting affective responses thus again evoke Calvary as a space, which Thornton was able to travel to, stay in, and re-experience. Thus, like *Privity*, the text of *Discourse* manipulates Thornton to use both his affect (in the sense of *affectio*, i.e. an intellectual faculty) and his spatial imagination to envision and construct Calvary as a devout pilgrim as well as a true bride of Christ.

As a bridge from this section to the next one, it is helpful to mention an *incipit* added by Thornton immediately after *Discourse*. He wrote: ‘Et Sic Procedendum ad Passionem | domini nostri Ihesu Cristi que incipit in folio | proximo sequente secundum | Fantasiam scriptoris &c’ [We must proceed to the passion of our lord, Jesus Christ, which begins on the following folio, according to the whim of the scribe].<sup>40</sup> In Phillipa Hardman’s view, this ‘Fantasiam’ [fancy, whim] articulates Thornton’s scribal intention to situate *Discourse* ‘as a preparatory exercise before reading th[e] most solemn part of the gospel narrative’, namely, Christ’s passion.<sup>41</sup> In the London Thornton MS, *Discourse* is followed by the *Northern Passion* and its companion piece, *Siege*. While I will explain the relationship between the *Northern Passion* and *Siege* later in the next section, what is notable here is that *Discourse* may have been expected by Thornton to set up the mode of reading required for these two writings of his sacred, Christian history. In other words, the mode of reading that demands the reader’s affective and spatial involvement in the text at hand may also have been employed by Thornton in *Siege*, which I will investigate in the following, final, section of this chapter.

### **Looking down from above: Horizontal Perspective and the Signification of Jerusalem in the *Siege of Jerusalem***

*Siege* is the late fourteenth-century alliterative poem that belongs to the so-called vengeance of Our Lord tradition, which presents the Romans’ conquest of Jerusalem in 70 CE as God’s righteous vengeance on the ‘deicidal’ Jews.<sup>42</sup> This alliterative poem was likely composed by the hand of a cleric, possibly that of an Augustinian canon at Bolton Abbey (Skipton, North Yorkshire) for a late-medieval west Yorkshire patron.<sup>43</sup> *Siege* was one of the most popular

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<sup>40</sup> Fein, ‘The Contents’, p. 49.

<sup>41</sup> Phillipa Hardman, ‘Reading the Spaces: Pictorial Intentions in the Thornton MSS, Lincoln Cathedral MS 91, and BL MS Add. 31042’, *Medium Ævum*, 63 (1994), 250–74 (p. 262).

<sup>42</sup> Stephen K. Wright, *The Vengeance of Our Lord: Medieval Dramatizations of the Destruction of Jerusalem* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1989).

<sup>43</sup> Ralph Hanna, ‘Contextualising *The Siege of Jerusalem*’, *Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 6 (1992), 109–21 (pp. 114–15); Elisa Narin van Court, ‘*The Siege of Jerusalem* and Augustinian Historians: Writing about Jews in Fourteenth-Century England’, *Chaucer Review*, 29 (1995), 227–48.

vernacular narratives in later-medieval England as the number of its existing copies suggests.<sup>44</sup> The surviving copies suggest that *Siege* was read variously. As David Lawton and Ralph Hanna point out, it was regarded at times as ‘a quasi-Scriptural narrative, a pendant to the Passion’, or ‘learned classical history, a tale of Roman conquest’ and in the London Thornton MS, as ‘crusading poetry’.<sup>45</sup> In *Siege*, the first-century Roman army who besiege Jerusalem is Christianised and depicted as if they were courteous, Christian knights. In the version of the London Thornton MS, Titus, a son of Vespasian, the powerful Roman lord, suffers from cancer of the mouth. This disfiguring disease is cleared from Titus’s face immediately after he feels sincere anger against the Jews who put Christ on the cross. His father, Vespasian, is also saved from both leprosy and the infestation of wasps in his nose thanks to the sudarium (or the handkerchief of Veronica, who asks for protection from Peter in *Siege*). These healing miracles convert Titus and Vespasian to Christianity. These Christian converts head to Jerusalem for a military campaign under the order of Emperor Nero. While Nero’s purpose is to secure tribute from the city, Titus and Vespasian’s chief intention is to avenge Christ and punish Jews. During the siege of Jerusalem, Vespasian returns to Rome to claim the throne of the Roman Emperor. Titus, by contrast, continues to besiege Jerusalem until the Romans destroy its walls and the Temple, selling its inhabitants as retribution for Judas’ betrayal of Christ. Then, the victorious Romans return to their homeland with precious relics and treasure.

As this summary indicates, Jerusalem in *Siege* is not viewed, like in *Privity*, as a place that affords its visitors, either imaginary or real, the visualisation of the gospel narrative through the compassionate, sorrowful gaze of Christ’s female followers. Instead, the narrative of *Siege* presents the earthly Jerusalem as the ‘*civitas perfida*’ [faithless city], which is, for typical medieval Christian readers, to be despised and punished with righteous anger for its Jewish inhabitants’

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<sup>44</sup> *Siege* survives in eight manuscripts and one short fragment. See ‘Siege of Jerusalem’, in Database of Middle English Romances <<https://www.middleenglishromance.org.uk/mer/48>> [accessed 13 September 2022].

<sup>45</sup> Ralph Hanna and David Lawton, eds, *The Siege of Jerusalem*, EETS, o.s., 320 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 18.

disbelief in and treachery against the ‘true’ God.<sup>46</sup> This view of Jerusalem was well known throughout the medieval period because of Luke 19.41–46 and equivalent synoptic gospel verses (Matthew 24.2, Mark 13.2, and Luke 21.6). In these verses, Christ foresees and laments the demise of Jerusalem, entering the Temple, and expelling the merchants and moneychangers from it. This so-called cleansing of the Temple underwent multi-layered interpretations by medieval Christian exegetes as they often viewed the falls of Jerusalem—whether this city’s enemies are the Babylonians of the fifth century B.C.E, the first-century Romans, or the medieval Franks—as the fulfilment of the same prophecy of Christ. In other words, the event depicted in *Siege*, i.e. the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, could have been understood by Thornton through the lens of late-medieval Christian typology, which construed the fall as part of divinely ordained Christian history. According to Susanne Yeager, the latter part of Luke 14.43–44, ‘they [Jerusalem’s enemies] shall not leave in you [Jerusalem] a stone upon a stone’ (Luke 19.44) had become a fundamental part of annual liturgical celebrations while the theme that is represented by this Lucan verse, namely, ‘the fictionalized theme of Christian Rome’s retribution’, ‘inspired’ medieval sermon writers.<sup>47</sup> Luke 19.44 is used as a leitmotif in *Siege*, and in the London Thornton MS’s version, this verse is twice alluded to.<sup>48</sup> Therefore, the text of *Siege* participates in the medieval homiletic reading, which regards the fall of Jewish Jerusalem in 70 CE as the fulfilment of Christ’s will, and Thornton was likely aware of this exegetical tradition.

This is suggested by Thornton’s way of compiling the first part of the London Thornton MS. He seems to have obtained *Siege* as a pendant and sequel to the *Northern Passion*, which is a religious narrative circulating in the medieval north of England and known for its

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<sup>46</sup> Schein, *Gateway to the Heavenly City*, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Suzanne M. Yeager, ‘The *Siege of Jerusalem* and Biblical Exegesis: Writing about Romans in Fourteenth-Century England’, *Chaucer Review*, 39 (2004), 70–102 (p. 78). According to Yeager, since the fourth century, this Lucan passage was included in the lectionary for the tenth Sunday after Pentecost.

<sup>48</sup> First, Titus promises to pillage Jerusalem: ‘I nolde this town were vn taken and thies towris heghe | For alle the glowand golde vndir god riche | Ne no stone in this stede standande were lefte’ (ll. 987–89). Second, Luke 19.44 is alluded to in the description of Jerusalem after the Romans’ devastating plunder: ‘Thay wastede [destroyed] clene at a wappe [all at once] þer [where] þe wallis stude | Bothe þe tempille and the toure and all the town after | there was no stone standande in the stede lefte’ (ll. 1252–54).

antisemitic rendering of the events in the gospel story.<sup>49</sup> Along with this pairing of the *Northern Passion* and *Siege*, an *incipit* added by him to *Siege* confirms and underscores the tie between Christ's passion and the fall of this Jewish city. The *incipit* presents Jerusalem's demise as Vespasian and Titus's act of vengeance for the death of Christ.<sup>50</sup> Thus, Thornton's way of presenting the *Northern Passion* and *Siege* indicates his intention to kindle the reader's (including his own) devotion to Christ's humanity and desire for the vindication of the passion by underlining the view of the vengeance of Our Lord tradition, which proposes, as Roger Nicholson puts it, that 'Jerusalem must perish to make good the evil done upon Christ's person by the Jews'.<sup>51</sup>

This Christocentric historiographical view of the fall of Jewish Jerusalem, moreover, seamlessly developed into the idea that the first-century Romans' battle and siege are a 'proto-crusade'.<sup>52</sup> To the typical medieval Christian reader, Titus and Vespasian were understood to have fought as *milites Christi*. They punished those who committed the most hideous sin, i.e. killing Jesus, their God's son; distributed divine justice; and what is more, cleansed Jerusalem of the 'deicidal, sinful' Jews. As Johnston argues, Thornton likely shared such a common view about Roman Titus and Vespasian.<sup>53</sup> Bearing in mind this association of *Siege* with crusading and Thornton's mode of compilation that highlighted the view of the vengeance of Our Lord tradition, in what follows, I will investigate affective, spatial scripts and the lack of a panoramic view of Jerusalem in *Siege*. First, I will examine Vespasian's address to his soldiers from a high place, where the Romans can look down on Jerusalem. Then, I will focus on the dragon standard of Rome which is situated on the top of the Roman army's bell tower.

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<sup>49</sup> Hanna, 'The Growth', p. 61.

<sup>50</sup> Thornton wrote that 'Hic Incepit Distruccio Ierusalem Quomodo Titus & Vaspasianus | Obsederunt & distruxerunt Ierusalem et *Vi[n]dicarunt mortem domini Ihesu Cristi* | The Segge of Ierusalem | Off Tytus And Vaspasyane [Here begins the destruction of Jerusalem; how Titus and Vespasian besieged and destroyed Jerusalem and *vindicated the death of the Lord Jesus Christ*; The Siege of Jerusalem of Titus and Vespasian]', my italics.

<sup>51</sup> Roger Nicholson, 'Haunted Itineraries: Reading the *Siege of Jerusalem*', *Exemplaria* 14 (2002), 447–84 (p. 455).

<sup>52</sup> Robert Rouse, 'Romance and Crusade in Late-Medieval England', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the Crusades*, ed. by Anthony Bale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 217–31 (p. 220).

<sup>53</sup> Michael Johnston, 'Robert Thornton and the *Siege of Jerusalem*', *Yearbook of Langland Studies* (2009), 125–62.

Through an exploration of these two instances of the elevated point of view, I will point out that the text of *Siege* chooses the horizontal outlook, not the abstract, overhead perspective, and emphasises the signification of Jewish Jerusalem as a place to be despised and destroyed. As I will demonstrate, as an alternative to the affective meditation on Christ's passion like the ones found in *Privy* and *Discourse*, the text of *Siege* offers Thornton a means to both affectively and spatially envision Jewish Jerusalem in a masculine, aggressive way.

In the London Thornton MS's version of *Siege*, there are at least two occasions where the text functions as an affective and spatial script that invites the reader to imagine Jerusalem. The first instance is found in Vespasian's speech to his soldiers. Vespasian, anticipating his first battle against the Jews led by Caiaphas, encamps near the Valley of Josaphat. Having pitched their tents, Vespasian and the Roman soldiers position themselves where they can look down on Jerusalem and the Jewish soldiers, who gather in the valley to protect the city. Vespasian urges the Roman men to look at their opponents:<sup>54</sup>

[T]han waspasiane *deuysede* [looked upon] *the vale* [of Josaphat] alle abowte  
 that was with baners brode *vn to the borowe zatis* [Jerusalem's gates]  
 To beryns [soldiers] and to bolde men þat hym abowte were  
 he sayde lordynngs one lowde lystenys to my speche  
 There ne es kynge ne knyghte comen to this place  
 Baron ne bachillere ne beryn that me folowes  
 that ne the cause of his come es *criste for to venge*  
 appon *zone* faytheles folke that falsely hym sloghe  
*Beholdis to the bethynge and to the harde wondis*  
*the buffettyng the betynge that he [Christ] one body hade*

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<sup>54</sup> All the following quotations are taken from 'Diplomatic Transcription of British Library, MS Additional 31042 (A)', in *The Siege of Jerusalem Electronic Archive*, ed. by T. J. Stinson  
 <<https://siegeofjerusalem.org/manuscript.html?manuscript=SJA&view=diplomatic>> [accessed 25 December 2022]



late neuer *zone laweles ledis* laughe at hir [*sic*] harmes [suffering]  
 that dere boghte vs fra bale with blode of his herte (ll. 469–80)

Here, the verb ‘deuys[en] (to look upon, inspect, observe)’ implies that Vespasian and the Roman legion stand somewhere high enough for them to take an overhead perspective. The spatial expansion is also indicated by the demonstrative ‘zone’ and the adverbial phrase ‘vn to the borowe zatis’. The description of the Vale of Josaphat further intensifies spatiality in this passage as it is envisioned as covered with ‘baners brode’. This depiction, moreover, simultaneously manipulates the eyes and feelings of his soldiers, along with those of Thornton. Here, Vespasian urges his men to ‘behold[e]’ not only the Jews in the valley but also the ‘harde wondis’, ‘the buffettyng’, and ‘the betyng’ that Christ ‘one body hade’. This, I would argue, suggests that Vespasian holds up a representation of and then maps some form of visualisation of the crucifixion onto the space that lies between the Roman soldiers and the Jews. This use of visually striking religious objects on the battlefield might have been familiar to the readers/audiences of *Siege*, including Thornton. Throughout the medieval period, banners that depict patron saints of the army were often brought to the battlefield while a pyx was sometimes raised on the top of a battle standard. Such banners and pyx were believed not only to inspire those who engaged in the battle but also to successfully obtain divine support.<sup>55</sup> Given this, Thornton might have imagined here that Vespasian brought either a hanging/a banner or a devotional image depicting the crucified Christ. While we cannot know exactly how Thornton visualised this scene, the description of Vespasian’s act—his forcefully pointing to a detailed crucifixion located somewhere between the soldiers and the Jewish army, which are located below on the ground of the valley—asks of considerable spatial imagination and affective engagement on the part of Thornton.

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<sup>55</sup> Robert W. Jones, *Bloodied Banners: Martial Display on the Medieval Battlefield* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), pp. 150–54.

Indeed, in the quotation above, the text of *Siege* also asks the reader affective engagement. Vespasian the narrator's juxtaposition of the crucified Christ and the Jews (who were believed to be responsible for the passion) is depicted to fire the Roman soldiers' anger against the Jews and their desire 'to venge' [take revenge] for Christ. Here, the reader is invited to use the figure of the Christian Roman as access to the textual world and models for their manipulation of feelings. The reader is enjoined to feel like the Roman soldiers and perform indignation at the 'wrongdoing', as the medieval Christians believed it to be, of the Jews. Therefore, *Siege* operates as an affective and spatial script, but this 'beholding' does not demand the performance of compassion and sorrow, but that of indignation, or righteous anger. The aggressive and simultaneously devout gazes of Christian Romans would thus have operated, for Thornton, as an alternative to *Privy*. According to Patricia de Marco, *Siege's* approach to Christ's suffering satisfies the male, aristocratic reader as it did not require him to 'feel like a woman' but rather to practise the feeling of zealous anger, or the desire for justice, thus maintaining 'manly forms of agency, control, and power'.<sup>56</sup> As Richard E. Barton argues, righteous anger (which is guided by reason rather than irrational '*furor*' [rage]) was believed to be an essential attribute of the male ruler, who has to employ and show anger to correct wrongdoers and demonstrate the legitimacy of his masculine, noble authority.<sup>57</sup> In a similar manner to compassion, contrition, and compunction, the feelings that the Pseudo-Bonaventuran texts inculcate, righteous anger was a feeling that should be learned and made a habit in order to be readily performed. The overhead view of Jerusalem in the quotation above thus offers Thornton the reader another script to devotionally gaze at Christ's passion and to prompt him to immerse himself among the Roman soldiers, who are eager to avenge Christ's passion in zealous anger. As

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<sup>56</sup> Patricia de Marco, 'Cultural Trauma and Christian Identity in the Late-Medieval Heroic Epic, *The Siege of Jerusalem*', *Literature and Medicine*, 33 (2015), 279–301 (p. 285).

<sup>57</sup> Richard E. Barton, 'Gendering Anger: *Ira*, *Furor*, and Discourses of Power and Masculinity in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', in *In the Garden of Evil: The Vices and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Richard Newhauser, *Papers in Mediaeval Studies*, 18 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005), pp. 371–92; Richard E. Barton, "'Zealous Anger' and the Renegotiation of Aristocratic Relationships in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century France', in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), pp. 153–70.

Christine Chism posits, the text of *Siege* evokes ‘a masculinized Christianity that inspires its proponents with a purgatory anger’.<sup>58</sup> As a competent reader, Thornton could have successfully use spatial imagination, imitate the Roman soldiers’ gaze, and feel the masculine feeling of zealous anger.

Vespasian’s address is also noteworthy because there is no description of the vista that should have been available from a high place. There is no mention of Jerusalem’s cityscape or Judaea’s mountains. Instead of a panorama describing every object viewed from a higher perspective, the text selectively depicts the Jews in the field and the crucifix that Vespasian seems to hold up. In other words, here, the text chooses the horizontal perspective, which is based on object relations of (a) specific viewer(s). This becomes all the more striking when considering the enthusiasm of the contemporary Christian West for the vista overlooking Jerusalem. In the later-medieval period, according to the development and expansion of the trans-Mediterranean trade and transport networks, a growing number of western pilgrims visited Palestine, most notably, Jerusalem. Those pilgrims were eager to look down upon the cityscape of Jerusalem from a hill, which was then called ‘the *mons gaudii/monjoie* (Mount Joy). In Thornton’s lifetime, it had long become a kind of ritual for Latin pilgrims to dismount, weep, kiss, and place a cross on Mount Joy to express their joy with their first sight of Jerusalem after a long exhausting journey.<sup>59</sup> Notably, the ground where the poetic Vespasian and his army look down upon Jerusalem is based on the very, historical Mount Joy. According to Benjamin Z. Kedar and Claude R. Conder, the twelfth and fifteenth legions of the Roman army, led by Titus in 70 CE, encamped on Mount Scopus, which was later known as Mont Joy especially after the twelfth century.<sup>60</sup> From the thirteenth century, however, as a result of Christians’ devastating defeat against Saladin, Mount

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<sup>58</sup> Christine Chism, *Alliterative Revivals* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), p. 165.

<sup>59</sup> As an example of the Russian Orthodox Abbot Daniel, who visited ‘a flat hill’, around 1106–1108, see John Wilkinson, ed. and trans., *Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099–1185* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1988), p. 127.

<sup>60</sup> Benjamin Z. Kedar, ‘Jerusalem’s Two *Montes Gaudii?*’, in *Crusader Landscapes in the Medieval Levant: The Archaeology and History of the Latin East*, ed. by Micaela Sinibaldi, Kevin J. Lewis, Balazs Major, and Jennifer A. Thompson (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016), pp. 3–19; Claude R. Conder, ‘On the Identification of Scopus’, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 6 (1874), 111–14.

Scopus seems to have ceased to be called Jerusalem's Mount Joy. Instead, Nabi Samwil likely became known as 'Mount Joy'. Even after this, the view of Jerusalem from Mount Joy was enthusiastically worshiped. Such a fervent desire for the vista of Jerusalem on the part of Latin Christians was witnessed by local hills that assumed the name of Mount Joy.<sup>61</sup> Thus, even though Thornton probably did not know the connection between the hill in *Siege* and Mount Scopus, as a devout fifteenth-century English reader, he might have readily associated the view of Jerusalem from a higher vantage point in *Siege* with Mount Joy. Indeed, Thornton could himself have been familiar with a local 'Munioie', a hill in Pontefract, which might have been an execution site that came to assume the name through the widespread conflation of the earthly and heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>62</sup> Given such widely shared, late-medieval Christian enthusiasm for Mount Joy and the view which it affords, it is indeed noteworthy that *Siege* does not have any descriptions of the vista of Jerusalem.

This is because, I suggest, in the narrative logic of *Siege*, the significance of Jewish Jerusalem lies solely in its singularity, as the place where the Jews are avenged for their torture and murder of Christ. The physical panorama of Palestine, in theory at least, presents each point in the viewed field with equal importance and allows viewers to freely cast their eyes on it. Such a panorama could have enabled the viewer to draw from Jewish Jerusalem a meaning beyond the expectations of the text of *Siege*. To avoid offering readers such an opportunity to unrestrictedly endow Jerusalem with meanings, here, the horizontal perspective is adopted. To emphasise the signification of Jerusalem as a city ordained to be destroyed, the overhead view gives way to the horizontal perspective. In other words, the horizontal perspective is appropriate here since the horizontal outlook guides Thornton's gaze to two objects—the Jews and the crucifix—and

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<sup>61</sup> Mount Scopus was two miles north of Jerusalem and founded by the Spanish crusader Rodrigo Álvarez (d. 1187). Nabi Samwil, which was located about 4.5 miles northwest of Jerusalem, was the site of the tomb of Samuel the prophet. See Anthony Bale, 'From Nidaros to Jerusalem, from Feginsbrekka to Mount Joy', in *Tracing the Jerusalem Code: The Holy City, Christian Cultures in Medieval Scandinavia (ca. 1100–1536)*, ed. by Kristin B. Aavitsland and Line M. Bonde (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021), pp. 191–97.

<sup>62</sup> Laura Slater, 'Finding Jerusalem in Medieval Pontefract', *Northern History*, 51 (2014), 211–20.

successfully incites hostility towards the Jews and, subsequently, situates the Romans' battle in 70 CE in the context of militant Christian historiography.

The second example of such a conscious selection of the horizontal perspective instead of an abstract, homogenous panorama is found in the description of the standard of the Roman army. As a literary topos, this banner, which is raised on the top of the Roman army's bell tower, merits a detailed description in *Siege*. As we find in Arthur's prophetic dream in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, the dragon here represents Rome in the narratives copied by Thornton:<sup>63</sup>

a dragone [standard] was thare dryssede and drawnen *appon lofte*  
 wyde gapande of golde gomes to swalowe  
 with arowes arghely [wickedly] armed in his mouthe & also he hade  
 a fawkone [falchion] vndir his fete with foure kene bladis [swords]  
 There [in the four swords] with the poyntes were pyghte in [put into] parties foure  
 Off this wankille [unstable] werlde that thay hade were fowndyn  
 In schewynge [in showing] of the folke the fawkon thay hangede  
 that thay hade wonnen with swerde alle the werlde Riche  
 a balle of byrnande golde the beste was one sett  
 his tayle takynede to be that torne solde þay neuer  
 whane he was *lyftede on lofte* thare lordis werrayde  
 Bot aye to *luke one* the lande till alle laughte [taken, removed] were

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<sup>63</sup> In this prophetic dream, the bear that embodies England/Arthur overcomes the dragon representing Rome/Lucius. According to Michael Livingston, who made the TEAMS's edition of *Siege*, despite the widely understood link between Arthur and the dragon, the 'swapping of the standard to represent' imperial power between Arthur/Britain and Lucius/Rome occurred probably because of the 'indebtedness of *Alliterative Morte Arthure* to *Siege*'. See note to lines 393–420 in *Siege of Jerusalem*, ed. by Michael Livingston (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publication, 2004) <<https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/livingston-siege-of-jerusalem>> [accessed 19 September 2022]. Also see 'The Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, Part I', in *King Arthur's Death: The Middle English Stanzaic Morte Arthur and Alliterative More Arthure*, ed. by Larry D. Benson and revised by Edward E. Foster (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publication, 1994), ll. 759–802. <<https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/benson-and-foster-king-arthurs-death-alliterative-morte-arthur-part-i>> [accessed 27 September 2022]

thare by the Cete [Jerusalem] myghte se no saughetillyng [agreement] wolde ryse  
 Ne no trete of trowse bot the town 3oldyn [surrender] (ll. 375–88, my italics)

Here, the Roman standard has a dragon which is armed with arrows and opens its mouth to swallow people. On its foot, there are a falchion and four swords that represent Rome's rule over all the world while the dragon itself stands on a golden ball, which its tail twines around. Along with these graphic details of the dragon and its meaning, the spatial relationship between the standard and Jerusalem is emphasised as well. As an embodiment of the Roman army's will, the dragon standard is 'lifted on lofte' [raised high] and continues to 'luke one [look down on] the lande', i.e. Jerusalem, until all the inhabitants and all that is inside the city are 'laughte' [taken away]. This reference undoubtedly reflects the Lucan verses, as I have explained above, where Christ prophesies that Jerusalem will be rooted out by its enemies, who leave no 'stone upon a stone' in it (Luke 19.44). Therefore, this dragon also participates in *Siege's* attempt to underscore the vengeance of Our Lord tradition, the view of the siege of 70 CE as a rightful consequence of Christ's passion.

Noteworthy, here again, the vantage point of this dragon standard does not offer a panorama of Jerusalem's cityscape. Even if the text suggests elevated spatial perception, it does not enable Thornton as the reader to cast an objective, homogenous gaze on Jerusalem. What is highlighted in the text of *Siege*, arguably, is not the vista afforded by an elevated position but the judging gazes that look down on Jewish Jerusalem. This is indicated by the repeated appearance of such gazes throughout the narrative. First, the Vale of Josaphat is explained as the place where 'Tesu sall Iuggen all thynges' (l. 413). This reference is based on the belief, which is supported by Revelation 21, that the earthly Jerusalem will be replaced by its heavenly counterpart at the second coming, when Christ would rule a kingdom on earth for one thousand years.<sup>64</sup> According

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<sup>64</sup> Praver, 'Christian Attitudes', pp. 311–48.

to this belief, the Vale of Josaphat will become a place, where all people, the living and the dead alike, will be under the last, divine judgement. In Yeager's view, *Siege* is a narrative text that expected its readers to be familiar with the contemporary homiletic tradition. In medieval sermons and liturgical celebrations, according to Yeager, the events narrated in *Siege*—including the Jews' 'wilful' ignorance of Christ's divinity, their repeated failure in conversion, their inability to read portents for their future demise, and their final destruction—were employed as 'a moral exemplum of divine justice', which allowed Christian audiences to imagine the apocalypse, specifically, the doom that unbelievers would face.<sup>65</sup> The overhead perspective towards Jerusalem in *Siege* seems to have worked in a similar manner to such uses of the first-century 'spiritually ignorant' Jews in sermons as Yeager suggests. In *Siege*, the divine judgement is repeatedly imagined as something that comes from above. Among the four portents that prophesy the destruction of Jerusalem, a 'bryghte bimande swerde' (l. 1193) and 'armede men' (l. 1195) appear 'ouer the Cete' long before 'the zatis [of Jerusalem] were zette [given over]' (ll. 1191–2). The above-mentioned, first portent, i.e. burning sword, is hung 'ouer þe burghe' (l. 1193) while the second one, the army, is witnessed in the ayere [air]' (l. 1195). As these two portents are described to appear above Jerusalem throughout the year, in *Siege*, the Jewish Jerusalem is looked down from the beginning to the end of the narrative. This imagery of Jerusalem under the gaze of the divine judgement is further emphasised by the fate of the Jews, who function as Jerusalem's metonyms. At the end of the *Siege*, the defeated Jews, along with Pilate, are summoned before Titus, who 'sett [sat] in setill [seat, chair] full riche |'To Iuggen thase Iewes als Iustice [a judge] hymseluen' (ll. 1262–63). This figure of Titus, who gazes down on the Jews from a dais as a judge, could have been understood to echo the enthroned God at the time of the last judgement, who would look down on those who await the final judgement. As these examples of the literal and fictional gazes on Jerusalem suggest, in *Siege*, an elevated position is

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<sup>65</sup> Suzanne M. Yeager, 'Jewish Identity in *The Siege of Jerusalem* and Homiletic Texts: Models of Penance and Victims of Vengeance for the Urban Apocalypse', *Medium Ævum*, 80 (2011), 56–84 (p. 75).

used to highlight the text's presentations of Jewish Jerusalem as a city awaiting God's righteous judgement.

According to Goldie, in the medieval period, the 'abstraction of space' was sometimes 'perceived from, or was enabled or accompanied by, an aerial or overhead perspective' even though such moments were 'exceptional'.<sup>66</sup> The 'abstraction of space' here means the process by which space is understood without the viewer being subjectively immersed in the scene. Or to put it another way, space can be abstracted when it is represented or understood without depending on a stable, subjective viewer, as in the portolan chart, which often represents the Mediterranean Sea and the coasts according to the rhumb line.<sup>67</sup> As I have argued, such an abstract view is clearly rejected in the depictions of Vespasian, the Roman soldiers, the dragon standard, and omens in *Siege* despite that these descriptions have the potential to abstract space through an overhead perspective. The text of *Siege* does not provide any descriptions that can allow the reader to envisage Jewish Jerusalem in an objective, abstract manner. Rather, the London Thornton MS's version of *Siege* demands of Thornton affective involvement in it by manipulating his 'inere eghe of his soul' (in the words found in *Privy*, p. 198). The text invites him to perform specific feelings like anger and indignation, which are provoked by particular objects, including the crucifix and the Jews who are responsible for Christ's passion.

Therefore, as an affective, spatial script, *Siege* does not evoke the abstract, homogenous space. The text of *Siege* prompts Thornton to affectively, intellectually, and sensorily engage with and immerse himself in this distinctively late-medieval, anti-Semitic version of Jerusalem. As the trained, affective reader who was aware of the role that he needs to play during his performative reading, Thornton would have responded to the textual cues to look down on Jewish Jerusalem through the horizontal perspective and felt at times zealous anger and at times a desire to take

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<sup>66</sup> Goldie, *Scribes of Space*, p. 102.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p. 83. For portolan charts, see Tony Campbell, 'Portolan Charts from the Late Thirteenth Century to 1500' in *The History of Cartography*, ed. by J. B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 371–463.



revenge against the Jews. Thornton lived in the fifteenth century, which has been viewed as the transitional period, when the modern, Newtonian concept of space and abstracted ways of representing the world gradually replaced the pre-modern understanding of space and ways of expressing geographical knowledge. Nonetheless, *Siege* does not allow Thornton to envisage Jerusalem in abstract, objective terms. Rather, it continually urges him to cast his affective, subjective gaze on the city, rather than through a self that was detached from the perceived space. The formulaic gaze encoded in the text of *Siege* plays a key role to foster a subjectivity which is anti-Semitic and aggressively pious.

## Conclusion

In *Privity*, *Discourse*, and *Siege*, Calvary and Jerusalem are spatially evoked through what Goldie calls the 'horizontal outlook', the most common way of understanding space in the medieval period. The three texts selectively present the signification and values of Calvary and Jerusalem through the descriptions of object relations that are perceived sometimes by the Virgin, the crucified Christ, or the Christian Romans. Equally, the use of locational adverbs, demonstratives, and the verbs of movement contribute to generating spatiality that is based on the horizontal outlook. In these texts, the significance of Jerusalem lies in its singularity, in it being the location where Christ suffers the passion and where the Jews were avenged for 'deicide'. While the other meanings of Jerusalem are refused in these narratives and the dialogue, Thornton's ways of responding to their affective, spatial scripts were sophisticated and had some variety: he sometimes virtually visited Calvary and Jerusalem through his devotional performance of feeling like a woman while at other times he envisioned the Jewish, doomed city through the figures of Titus, Vespasian, and the Roman soldiers led by them, all of whom embody masculine sufficiency and martial prowess as *milites Christi*. The affective and spatial scripts of *Privity*, *Discourse*, and *Siege* thus enjoin Thornton to perform the textually desirable feelings, plunge himself into the imagined, virtual Jerusalem, and learn the signification of this city in the

framework of late-medieval Christocentric, religiously aggressive devotional culture. Indeed, Jerusalem's limited meanings and values in these texts were firmly tied to what Johnston calls Thornton's 'militant fantasy of Christianity'.<sup>68</sup> This tie between Thornton's interests in Jerusalem and militarized, aggressive attitude to non-Christians is further investigated in the next chapter.

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<sup>68</sup> Johnston, 'Robert Thornton and the *Siege of Jerusalem*', p. 155.

## Chapter 4

### The Romance Geography of *Richard Cœur de Lyon* and the *Childhood of Christ*: Thornton's Vicarious Travel to Palestine

As I argued in Chapter 3, *Privy*, *Discourse*, and *Siege*—all of which offer Thornton narratives (in the case of *Discourse*, a complaint) related to Christ's passion—operated as affective and spatial scripts. These scripts invite Thornton to affectively envision the narrative world as spaces he can see, feel, and move around. Through such affective, spatial scripts, his affective devotion to Christ's humanity was seamlessly fused with his aggressive piety. This pious and simultaneously bellicose religiosity longed for Jerusalem, probably attracted Thornton to these texts, and allowed him to construct Christian versions of the city according to the textual cues. In Chapter 4, I will turn to two so-called 'romance' texts to further investigate how such pious violence is emphasised and how it contributed to Thornton's geographical imagining of Palestine. My argument in this chapter will be guided by the idea of 'romance geography', which is proposed by Helen Cooper and developed by Robert Rouse. The texts to be analysed are *Richard Cœur de Lyon* (*Richard*), the Middle English romance which takes as its subject matter King Richard I of England's semi-fictitious engagement in the Third Crusade (1189–92), and the *Childhood of Christ* (*Childhood*), the apocryphal, verse narrative of Christ's infancy, identified by Thornton as a 'romance'. These two narratives will offer us an important insight into how 'romance' texts might have operated as a kind of itinerary to Palestine and participated in Thornton's devotion to and his keen interest in the Holy Land. In what follows, I will first introduce the manuscript context of these two narratives, paying attention to Thornton's way of labelling his narratives as romance. The second section will explain the idea of 'romance geography'. The third section will then analyse Richard's campaigns in Palestine and the crusading discourse that is foregrounded in *Richard*. The fourth and final section will examine the holy family's peripatetic travel and the

antisemitic laughter of the child Jesus and his mother, the Virgin, in *Childhood*. I will demonstrate how the romance geographies of *Richard* and *Childhood* act as what Rouse calls ‘spatial itineraries’, which urge Thornton to learn and agree with the militant Christian historiography and, in turn, which satisfy his fantasy for a Holy Land where non-Christians are either cleansed or punished in a laughable way.

### **Thornton’s Pairing of *Richard* and *Childhood* as ‘Romance’ Texts**

In this first section, I will situate *Richard* and *Childhood* in the specific contexts of Thornton’s spiritual history in the London Thornton MS and his collection of Middle English romance. Booklet 4 of the London Thornton MS contains only *Richard* and *Childhood*, the two texts that this chapter explores. As suggested by Keiser, these two texts in booklet 4 seem to have been expected to conclude Thornton’s spiritual history, which he recorded in booklets 1, 2, 3, and 4 of his London Thornton MS. Booklet 4 is seemingly separated from the chronological history of Christianity found in booklets 1 and 2 since the intervening booklet 3 contains religious lyrics about divine mercy and justice, rather than narratives about the events of the Christian gospels.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, as Keiser suggests, we can find clear thematic connections across all four of these booklets. Booklets 1 and 2 provide the chronological development of Christianity from the life of Christ (found in two extracts of *Cursor mundi* and the *Northern Passion*) to Christian battles first against the first-century Jews who put Christ on the cross (the *Siege of Jerusalem*) and later against early medieval Muslims, who threatened Christendom as found in the two Charlemagne romances, the *Sege of Melayne* and *Roland and Otuel*. The main theme of the lyrics in booklet 3, namely divine mercy, is deeply related to Christian history, since mercy is, in medieval Christian belief, both what prompted Christ to suffer the passion for humanity and what would grant sinners forgiveness at the last judgement. The texts of *Richard* and *Childhood* in booklet 4 were,

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<sup>1</sup> Keiser suggests that the writings contained in booklet 3 are clear expressions of the themes of divine mercy and justice, which are the basis of all Christian history. See Keiser, ‘Robert Thornton’, pp. 67–108.

in John Finlayson's view, thus intended by Thornton to serve 'as a rounding off' of this spiritual history.<sup>2</sup> Booklet 4's texts repeat the two dominant themes of booklets 1 and 2: one is Christ's humanity and his passion, (i.e. the source of Christian salvation), and the other is the Christian holy war against those who are blind to divine grace. Indeed, as an apocryphal narrative of Christ's infancy, *Childhood* is nothing but the story of Christ's humanity, which is explained in booklet 1 and the first part of booklet 2, while *Richard* explores the latter part of booklet 2's key theme of the war against the putative enemies of Christianity. Therefore, *Richard* and *Childhood* represent and rearticulate the overarching interests of Thornton's compilation of Christian historiography in booklets 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the London Thornton MS.

Thornton labelled not only *Richard* but also *Childhood* as 'romances'. In other words, this 'rounding off' of Thornton's spiritual history was constituted by the two texts that he regarded as part of the tradition of romance. In the *explicit* to *Richard* he labels it the 'Romance | Of Kyng Richerd þe Conqueroure' while his *incipit* to *Childhood* designates it as 'the Romance | of the childhode of Ihesu Criste þat | clerkes callys Ipokrephum [apocrypha]'. This labelling, which transforms *Childhood* into a romance is noteworthy since *Childhood* is not otherwise categorised as a romance either by modern scholars or by medieval readers. The other two extant manuscripts of *Childhood* indeed suggest that it was regarded by late-medieval English readers as a devotional text, not a 'romance', even though the main readership of *Childhood* was precisely laypeople, who also enjoyed vernacular romances.<sup>3</sup> One might think that Thornton's labelling

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<sup>2</sup> John Finlayson, 'The Contexts of the Crusading Romances in the London Thornton Manuscript,' *Anglia-Zeitschrift für englische Philologie*, 130 (2012), 240–63 (p. 247).

<sup>3</sup> One of the other two extant witnesses of *Childhood*, London, BL, MS Harley 3954 contains catechetical and devotional writings. See 'Harley MS 3954: 1st half of the 15th century', in *Explore Archives and Manuscripts*, <[https://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&oc=IAMS040-002049791&indx=5&recIds=IAMS040-002049791&recIds=4&elementId=4&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&frbg=&&dscnt=0&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BL%29&mode=Basic&vid=IAMS\\_VU2&srt=rank&tab=local&vl\(freeText0\)=infancia&dum=true&dstmp=1643304716374](https://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&oc=IAMS040-002049791&indx=5&recIds=IAMS040-002049791&recIds=4&elementId=4&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&frbg=&&dscnt=0&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BL%29&mode=Basic&vid=IAMS_VU2&srt=rank&tab=local&vl(freeText0)=infancia&dum=true&dstmp=1643304716374)> [accessed 27 January 22]. The other witness of *Childhood* is compiled in the composite manuscript, London, BL, MS Harley 2399. The part containing *Childhood* (fols. 47<sup>r</sup>–64<sup>r</sup>) is thought to have been copied for the devotional purpose. The text of this version is closer to London Thornton MS's *Childhood* than the version of MS Harley 3954. See 'Harley MS 2399: c.1175–c.1625' in *Explore Archives and Manuscripts*, <[https://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&oc=IAMS040-002048230&indx=1&recIds=IAMS040-002048230&recIds=0&elementId=0&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&frbg=&&dsc](https://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&oc=IAMS040-002048230&indx=1&recIds=IAMS040-002048230&recIds=0&elementId=0&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&frbg=&&dsc)>

here is just an instance of the ‘heterogeneity’ and some of numerous ‘sub-genres’ of medieval romance since the generic labels provided by medieval scribes often challenge the modern scholar’s attempt to delineate a medieval idea of romance as a literary genre.<sup>4</sup> However, Thornton, who ‘used the word “romance” in the titles of the works he copied ‘with a frequency unique in such [Middle English] manuscripts’,<sup>5</sup> undoubtedly consciously labelled *Childhood* as both a ‘romance’ and an apocryphal narrative. Thornton’s conscious labelling is indicated by the annotations that he added beside the *incipit* to *Childhood*. An annotation ‘Jhesus Criste’, two *nota* marks, and a manicule were written by Thornton in the left-hand margin of fol. 163<sup>v</sup> of the London Thornton MS. Since these annotations are just below the *explicit* to *Richard*, which designates it as a romance, Thornton likely tried to draw his reader’s eyes, including his own, to this pair of ‘romance’ texts, *Richard* and *Childhood*.

This pairing, I suggest, would have been unexpected for the medieval reader and demanded of Thornton ‘a determined effort [. . .] to create in his reader’s mind some limited sense of continuity’ between *Richard* and *Childhood* as Thompson posits.<sup>6</sup> Although Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Julie Nelson Couch do not consider this pairing unlikely,<sup>7</sup> in my view, the *incipit* to *Childhood* deliberately flags up Thornton’s proposition that we read it as a romance in a similar manner to *Richard*. Certainly, Thornton sometimes used his *incipit* for an instructive purpose. For instance, in the *incipit* to an English translation of the Latin injunctions issued by John Thoresby, Archbishop of York in 1357 (the so-called *Lay Folke’s Catechism*), Thornton

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[nt=0&scp.scps](#)> [accessed 27 January]. Concerning the readership of *Childhood*, see Edward Wheatley, ‘A Dialogue of the Seven Cardinal Virtues and the Seven Deadly Sins in British Library MS Harley 2399’, *Journal of the Early Book Society*, 16 (2013), 203–11 (p. 209).

<sup>4</sup> Maldwyn Mills, ‘Generic Titles in Bodleian Library MS Douce 261 and British Library MS Egerton 3132A’, in *The Matter of Identity in Medieval Romance* (Brewer: Cambridge, 2002), pp. 125–38 (p. 138).

<sup>5</sup> Mills, ‘Generic Titles’, p. 135.

<sup>6</sup> Thompson, *Robert Thornton and the London Thornton Manuscript*, p. 48.

<sup>7</sup> Akbari suggests that Thornton’s pairing of *Richard* and *Childhood* is reflective of the medieval idea of the body politic, which regarded the body of a king/Christ was at the core of a Christian community building. See Suzanne Conklin Akbari, ‘Incorporation in the *Siege of Melayne*’, in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England*, ed. by Nicola McDonald (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 22–44 (p. 38). To Couch, this pairing draws on *Childhood*’s ostensibly romance-like features (i.e. its episodic framework and its use of the knightly honorific of Sir to the high-ranked Jews) but more importantly because Richard and the Christ Child share a common, inimitable ‘nonchalance’, which often manifests in their enthusiastic laughter. See Julie Nelson Couch, ‘Apocryphal Romance in the London Thornton Manuscript’, in *Robert Thornton and His Books*, ed. by Fein and Johnston, pp. 205–34 (pp. 211–17).

presented it as ‘a sermon’ that ‘teches how scrifte es to be made’ although the text itself explains all the seven sacraments, seven corporeal deeds of mercy, and seven deadly sins, among other key items of catechetical knowledge. In this case, Thornton’s *incipit* indicates his desire that readers turn to the text for their preparation for the sacraments of Confession and Penance. As another example, Thornton wrote ‘A Carolle For | Crystynmesse’ on the left-hand margin of fol. 110<sup>v</sup> of the London Thornton MS, where he copied a political carol alluding to Henry V and the Agincourt campaign.<sup>8</sup> As the carol is not explicitly related to Christmas, Thornton’s title could have functioned as an instruction to read it sometime during Christmastide. If Thornton used the *incipit* to *Childhood* in a similar manner to these two examples, then, I suggest the reader was purposefully expected to view *Childhood* as a romance.

Then, what kinds of texts and modes of reading were intended when Thornton called a text a romance? A careful exploration is necessary to answer this question as medieval romance is notoriously multivalent. Since romance is too elusive a term to define a single, narrow group of texts, modern scholars often offer definitions that point to a more capacious sense of the genre. For instance, Derek Pearsall proposed a broad definition of medieval romance: ‘the principal secular literature of entertainment of the Middle Ages’.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, Cooper argues that medieval romances should be understood as a series of texts that are loosely related by shared features including motifs, structures, and themes, which she calls ‘family resemblance’.<sup>10</sup> In the case of Thornton’s labelling of narratives as romance, as I will demonstrate, Yin Liu’s idea of ‘prototypical romance’ provides us with an important insight. In Liu’s view, among late-medieval audiences, there seems to have been, at least to some extent, a shared, flexibly expandable

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Leighton Green, ed., ‘427. The Rose on Branch’, in *The Early English Carols*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 258, 475.

<sup>9</sup> Derek Pearsall, ‘Middle English Romance and Its Audiences’, in *Historical and Editorial Studies in Medieval and Early Modern English for Johan Gerritsen*, ed. by Mary-Jo Arn, Hanneke Wirtjes, and Hans Jansen (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1985), pp. 37–47 (p. 42); Rosalind Field, ‘Romance in England, 1066–1400’ in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. by David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 152–76 (p. 152).

<sup>10</sup> Helen Cooper, *The Medieval Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 8–9.

understanding of Middle English romance as a literary genre, which was typified by *Bevis of Hampton*, *Guy of Warwick*, and the narratives of Charlemagne; in other words, the prototypical romance was broadly understood as a fantastic narrative of ‘imperial conquest’ engaged by the nobility.<sup>11</sup> If we accept Liu’s findings, along with Pearsall and Field’s broad definition of romance, a prototypical romance may be defined as a narrative about a knight, or a group of knights, who battle(s) in territorial struggles between his/their community and other lands, offering the reader/audience entertainment.

I posit that Liu’s approach to Middle English romance is indeed applicable to Thornton’s collection of romances. These include: *Octavian*, *Sir Isumbras*, the *Earl of Toulouse*, *Sir Perceval of Gales*, *Roland and Otuel*, *Richard*, *Childhood*, *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, *Sir Degrevant*, the *Awntyrs off Arthure*, and the *Sege of Melain*. The first seven narratives, namely, *Octavian*, *Sir Isumbras*, the *Earl of Toulouse*, *Sir Perceval of Gales*, *Roland and Otuel*, *Richard*, and *Childhood* are explicitly referred to by Thornton as ‘romances’ either in the *incipit* or *explicit*. The next two texts, *Sir Eglamour of Artois* and *Sir Degrevant*, are called ‘romances’ by their narrator, while Thornton’s *incipit* entitles them as ‘Sir Eglamour of Artasse’ and ‘Sir degreuante’, respectively. This kind of reference to romance narratives, i.e. referring to them by the protagonist, was common among medieval scribes. Finally, two more texts, the *Awntyrs off Arthure* and the *Sege of Melain*, should also be included in Thornton’s romance collection, although neither Thornton’s *incipit* and *explicit* nor the texts themselves call the narrative a ‘romance’. Nevertheless, these two texts are explicitly paired, respectively, with *Sir Perceval of Gales* and *Roland and Otuel*, two of the items formally labelled by Thornton as ‘romances’. As this consistent labelling suggests, Thornton had a clear idea of the kind of text that was generally understood as a romance among his contemporary readers. We can observe from this list that the category of romance is not, for Thornton, dependent on form. Although many of his romances are tail-rhyme stanzaic poems, he labelled a

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<sup>11</sup> Yin Liu, ‘Middle English Romance as Prototype Genre’, *Chaucer Review*, 40 (2006), 335–53, (p. 346).



miracle story of the Virgin on fols. 147<sup>r</sup>–148<sup>r</sup> of the Lincoln Thornton MS, which is written in 12-line tail-rhyme stanzas, as ‘De miraculo beate Marie [On the Miracle of Mary]’. Other verse forms, like couplets (*Richard Cœur de Lyon*) and 12-line stanzas (*Sege of Melain* and *Roland and Otuel*) are also employed in the narratives of his romance collection. Thornton’s criteria rather seem to depend on subject matter since many of these narratives are about knights errant, especially ones relating to imperial conquest. *Octavian*, *Sir Isumbras*, *Richard*, *Roland and Otuel*, and the *Sege of Melain* can all be counted as what Liu calls prototypical romances. Many other romances in Thornton’s collection, the *Earl of Toulouse*, the *Awntyrs off Arthure*, *Sir Perceval of Gales*, *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, and *Sir Degrevant*, are also mainly about adventuring knights, suggesting that these stories would have easily been numbered by Thornton among the variants of the prototypical romance.

It should be noted here that we likely cannot include the Alliterative *Morte Arthure* (*Morte Arthure*) in the list of Thornton’s romances even though it is a poem about Arthur’s imperial conquest. This is because Thornton seems to have regarded it as a text of ‘historical’ epic, rather than a romance which is primarily a fiction. This view is supported by the fact that he associated *Morte Arthure* with the *Sinner’s Laments* and the Prose *Life of Alexander* (*Alexander*). The latter was read by Thornton, according to Phillipa Hardman, as ‘a history of conquest and the establishment of empire’.<sup>12</sup> In Fein’s view, Thornton, who customarily ‘sought thematic development in the sequence of material’ in his manuscripts, could have added, after situating *Alexander* before *Morte Arthure*, the *Sinner’s Laments*, the penitential lyric about the post-mortem regret and suffering of the sinner, either as ‘a comment upon *Alexander* [. . .] or as a meditative prelude to *Morte Arthure*’.<sup>13</sup> As both narratives are about two of the Nine Worthies’ conquest, glory, and ultimate fall, it is no surprise that Thornton found a thematic connection

<sup>12</sup> Phillipa Hardman, ‘Reading the Spaces: Pictorial Intentions in the Thornton MSS, Lincoln Cathedral MS 91, and BL MS Add. 31042’, *Medium Ævum*, 63 (1994), 250–74 (p. 255).

<sup>13</sup> Susanna Greer Fein, ‘The Sinner’s Lament: Introduction’, in *Moral Love Songs and Laments* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998) <<https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/fein-moral-love-songs-and-laments>> [accessed 17 October 2022].

between these historical texts and tied them together by the *Sinner's Laments*. This pairing of historical narratives is further supported codicologically. Thornton seems to have planned to decorate *Alexander* as beautifully as *Morte Arthure* though this plan was not materialised.<sup>14</sup> Thus, Thornton did not treat *Morte Arthure* in a similar manner to *Sir Perceval of Gales* and the *Awntyrs off Arthure*, the two Arthurian narratives in his romance collection.

I would suggest that comedy, perhaps unexpectedly, figures prominently and notable in Thornton's romances—something that has to date been overlooked. As the most famous example, in *Richard Cœur de Lyon (Richard)*, Richard's cannibalism, which is a 'preferred trope [. . .] for figuring conquest and colonization' according to Geraldine Heng, is exploited first as an 'affectionate joke against' Richard and later as 'a collective hostile joke against the [Islamic] enemy'.<sup>15</sup> Laughter is also embedded elsewhere in Thornton's romance collection. For instance, Florent in *Octavian* and Perceval in *Sir Perceval of Gales* would have amused the audience/reader with their divergence from the ideas of gentility, including the ideal chivalric codes. Possibly because the Alliterative *Morte Arthure* does not offer such light-hearted, comic laughter as that which *Perceval of Gales* generates, it was not labelled as romance by Thornton though both of them are about the Knights of the Round Table. To give more examples, the uncourteous, frugal behaviour of Clement in *Octavian* and Melidor's maid in *Sir Degrevant* could also have invited the audience to laugh and encouraged them to recognise the different ethics operating among different social strata. Such comedy as created by Thornton's romances is exploited not only as part of the narrative's entertainment or for some kind of comic relief but also for educational purposes. As Albrecht Classen argues, comic occasions in literary narratives, namely, moments of 'a transgression, disharmony, shortcoming, failure, or an odd, unusual composition of objects or people' signalled and emphasised the shared standards and norms in the community which

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<sup>14</sup> Hardman, 'Reading the Spaces', pp. 250–56.

<sup>15</sup> Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 68, 75.

the reader, here Thornton, belonged to.<sup>16</sup> Thus, like the references to sacraments in *Sir Isumbras* and the *Earl of Toulouse*, which served as spiritual education for the reader, laughter urged Thornton to explore and know shared norms and ideologies that sustained social, political, and religious standards. The mode of reading, which was implied by Thornton's romances, would then have been entertaining, often full of light-hearted laughter, and didactic. Thornton's labelling of texts as a romance invited the reader to enjoy the knightly adventuring and battles for imperial conquest, to sometimes laugh at comic jokes, and to learn social, economic, and ethical discourses. Such a mode of reading, which is entertaining and also often intellectually rigorous, would have been encouraged by Thornton's suggestion to read a text as a 'romance'.

### **The Concept of Romance Geography**

I now turn to an investigation of how the pairing of *Richard* and *Childhood* in the London Thornton MS spatially evokes Palestine. To explore this, the idea of 'romance geography' is useful. This idea is proposed first by Cooper and is then developed by Rouse. In Cooper's view, romance geography is constituted not by 'spatial coordinates' like modern maps but by sequential places which harmonise and are meaningful for the protagonist's adventure. In medieval romances, places such as a castle, a spring, a hermitage, and a forest function as locales to satisfy the protagonist's particular need (for instance, a spring that calls a challenger knight offers the protagonist a test to prove his martial prowess).<sup>17</sup> In this functional, sometimes symbolic geography, according to Cooper, romance texts, most typically the quest romance, operate like itineraries, or textual guides, as they unfold geographical information about the places visited by characters, according to their linear movement to accomplish their quests.

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<sup>16</sup> Albrecht Classen, 'Laughter as an Expression of Human Nature in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period: Literary, Historical, Theological, Philosophical, and Psychological Reflections. Also an Introduction', in *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, Its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. by Albrecht Classen (New York: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 1–140 (p. 4).

<sup>17</sup> Cooper, *The Medieval Romance in Time*, pp. 45–72 (p. 70).

Following Cooper's observation, Rouse proposes that medieval romances have a distinct way of articulating geographical knowledge. While the romance text does not offer any mimetic representations of the surface of the earth like modern maps, it participates in distributing the commonly shared understanding of physical, as well as imagined, places in the world. The romance text often selectively presents pre-existing connotations of the places, lands, and regions that characters visit, while simultaneously adding new significations of the places through its narrative. These pre-existing meanings and interpretations of place are often firmly embedded in the dominant ideological discourses of the community to which the reader/audience belonged. Therefore, in Rouse's words, medieval romances have the '*potential to act*' as a kind of guide for the reader/audience.<sup>18</sup> Romance texts could allow such readers/audiences to explore the known but never actually visited places of their world. Like a *mappa mundi* which articulates to the viewer places and their meanings in accordance with Christian religious discourse, some romances such as *Guy of Warwick*, in Rouse's view, invite the reader to decode the 'spatial itinerary' embedded in the romance text, learn, and often agree with previous interpretations of the narrated places.<sup>19</sup> Through their performative enactment of the characters' journeying, which Rouse thinks of as 'a form of vicarious travel', readers/audiences learn selectively presented significations of the places of the world, whether the places are real or imagined. To put this another way in Yi-Fu Tuan's words, romance geography is constructed by the text's potential to operate as a spatial itinerary, which guides the reader/audience to 'pause' at, feel, and interpret the narrated places according to the ideological framework.<sup>20</sup> Even if romances offer vague, sometimes fictional geographical information and create a fantastical

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<sup>18</sup> Robert Rouse, 'Walking (between) the Lines: Romance as Itinerary/Map' in *Medieval Romance, Medieval Contexts*, ed. by Rhiannon Purdie and Michael Cichon (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), pp. 135–48 (p. 139). Italics are Rouse's.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>20</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, MI: University of Minnesota Press, 1977; repr. 2014), pp. 6, 138, 198.

‘imaginary space’, they participate in the medieval reader’s understanding of both real and imagined places and their learning of the significance of these places.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, romance geography, which is typically constructed through the characters’ constant movements through the romance (thus fictional) narrative, serves as a spatial itinerary which invites late-medieval readers like Thornton to participate in vicarious, or virtual, travel. By envisioning the protagonists (generally knights) of his romances as journeying, Thornton’s romance texts create imaginary spaces where he was able to learn ideological discourses that endow with meanings the places (historical and imagined alike) travelled by the romance’s characters. The romance geography of Palestine in *Richard* and *Childhood*, as I will demonstrate in the following two sections, works as one such a spatial itinerary and urges Thornton to kindle aggressive, religiously intolerant piety and internalise the worldview sustained by militaristic Christian historiography.

### **The Romance Geography of Palestine in *Richard*: Imaginative Space for a Fantasy of Successful Crusading**

To take *Richard* first, it offers a story of the life of King Richard I of England, from his parents’ marriage to his death, including several historical campaigns during the Third Crusade and the episode, which is famous now because of McDonald’s argument and in which Richard eats Muslim flesh twice (first unknowingly and second deliberately).<sup>22</sup> This romance has a complex textual history: it is thought to be based on an original text, now lost, and the extant text’s chronicle-based narrative developed by various recensions and interpolations into the current

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<sup>21</sup> In relation to Rouse’s idea of ‘a spatial itinerary’, it is noteworthy of Nicola McDonald’s argument, in which the romance texts are considered to invite the reader/audience to an ‘imaginary space’, where real and imagined places are intermixed. In her view, this imaginary space makes the social, cultural, and ideological conventions of the world available for the reader/audience’s ‘interrogation’ as the narrative of romance often foregrounds such conventions. See Nicola McDonald, ‘A Polemical Introduction’, in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 1–21 (p. 17); Nicola McDonald, ‘The Wonder of Middle English Romance’, in *Thinking Medieval Romance*, ed. by Katherine C. Little and Nicola McDonald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 14–35.

<sup>22</sup> Nicola McDonald, ‘Eating People and the Alimentary Logic of *Richard Cœur de Lion*’ in *Pulp Fictions of Medieval England: Essays in Popular Romance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 124–50.

romance.<sup>23</sup> *Richard* has two main variations, the so-called A and B versions.<sup>24</sup> As John Finlayson posits, the shorter B text, which is viewed to be closer to the original, was expanded by numerous added interpolations and developed into the longer A text. The London Thornton MS is counted as one of the representatives of the A text as it includes not only the ‘elements of adventure and the fabulous which were already present in the B version’ but also such interpolations as the fabulous birth of Richard from a fairy mother and fictional tournaments and battles, in a similar manner to other versions of A text in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 175/96, and two printed editions by Wynkyn de Worde.<sup>25</sup> Many scholars have shared the view that *Richard* is a manifestation of the burgeoning nationalist feelings of the late-medieval English reader and discuss this romance’s key features, such as anti-French or anti-Muslim invective and Richard’s cannibalism, in conjunction with ideas of England as a nation. For instance, Nicola McDonald and Suzanne Conklin Akbari, who calls this romance’s eponymous king ‘an aggressively English king’, focus on Richard’s consumption of Muslim flesh and consider it as a parallel to the eucharist, i.e. framing the eucharistic act as religiously sanctioned anthropophagy in Christianity.<sup>26</sup> In their view, communion was understood by medieval readers/audiences to have symbolic power to establish and maintain an idea of a community.

Other scholars like Heng, Yeager, Rouse, and Lee Manion, also agreeing with the premise that *Richard* offers a fantasy of English nationalism, place it more specifically in the context of late-medieval Christian readers’ obsessive longing for Jerusalem and their ongoing interest in the crusade long after the fall of Acre in 1291. Since Acre is the last mainland

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<sup>23</sup> Marcel Elias, ‘Violence, Excess, and the Composite Emotional Rhetoric of *Richard Cœur de Lion*’, *Studies in Philology*, 114 (2017), 1–38 (p. 11).

<sup>24</sup> ‘*Richard Cœur de Lyon*: Introduction’, in *Richard Cœur de Lyon*, ed. by Peter Larkin (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2015) <<https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/larkin-richard-coer-de-lyon-introduction>> [accessed 13 October 2022].

<sup>25</sup> John Finlayson, ‘*Richard, Cœur de Lyon*: Romance, History or Something in Between?’, *Studies in Philology*, 87 (1990), 156–180 (p. 160). The B version is represented by the so-called Auchinleck MS, i.e. Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.2.1; London, British Library, MS Egerton 2862; London, British Library, MS Harley 4690; London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 58; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 228.

<sup>26</sup> McDonald, ‘Eating People’, pp. 124–50; Suzanne Conklin Akbari, ‘The Hunger for National Identity in *Richard Cœur de Lion*’, in *Reading Medieval Culture: Essays in Honour of Robert W. Hanning*, ed. by Robert Stein and Sandra Prior (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), pp. 198–222 (p. 198).

possession of the crusader states in Outremer, its fall has often been viewed to mark the end of western Europe's collective endeavour to recover the Holy Land. *Richard* is numbered among the romances traditionally regarded as a crusading romance, which is defined by Manion as a narrative that follows a narrative pattern of the loss and recovery of Jerusalem and exhibits key features of crusade discourse, such as 'an ecclesiastically defined military campaign against non-Christians' and 'the combination of indulgences or penitence with the conversion of or conflict with non-believers'.<sup>27</sup>

In what follows, my argument will be based on these scholars' arguments. In particular, Manion's idea of the crusading romance will guide my exploration of the romance geography of Palestine in *Richard*. I regard this romance as an archetypal crusading romance which embeds many key ideas of crusading discourse and presents its eponymous hero's engagement in the Third Crusade as holy warfare. As a logical consequence of this widely shared scholarly view of *Richard*, I also suggest that the London Thornton MS's version is an expression of Thornton's pious but simultaneously militant devotion to the Holy Land and of his concern about Richard I's posthumous reputation. Due to the systematic ecclesiastical efforts since the First Crusade, by Thornton's lifetime, the most fundamental idea of crusading discourse, i.e. the belief that Palestine was the lost patrimony of Christianity was shared throughout western Christendom.<sup>28</sup> As the romance *Richard* posits, the 'Holy Londe' (l. 1382) is the 'kyndely heritage' [rightful inheritance] (l. 1385) of Christ, and thus its recovery, not conquest, is 'Goddis seruyce' (l. 1380), or Christians' most important duty owed to God.<sup>29</sup> To Thornton and many of his contemporary English readers, *Richard* must have

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<sup>27</sup> Lee Manion, *Narrating the Crusades: Loss and Recovery in Medieval and Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Miikka Tamminen, *Crusade Preaching and the Ideal Crusader*, Studies on Patristic, Medieval, and Reformation Sermons and Preaching, 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), pp. 91–108; Antony Richard Leopold, 'Crusading Proposals of the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Durham University, 1998), pp. 114–21.

<sup>29</sup> All the quotations are taken from Maria Cristina Figueredo, '*Richard Cœur de Lion*: An Edition from the London Thornton Manuscript', 2 vols (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, Centre for Medieval Studies, 2009), II, pp. 6–226.

been the iconic crusading romance since it is about Richard the lion-hearted, i.e. their fierce, exemplary crusader king, who is devoted to the ‘service of God’ and demonstrates his *‘prouesse’* through his engagement in the battle against non-Christians who ‘unjustly’ occupy and ‘defile’ Christian patrimony.<sup>30</sup>

In this section, I will investigate the romance geography of Palestine in *Richard*. First, I will examine the descriptions of the itinerary of Richard’s campaigns and consider how this romance text situates the ‘Holy Londe’ in an imaginary space that consists of both historical and fictional, imagined places. Second, I will turn to two interpolations. The first is the five fictional sieges conducted by Richard, his right-hand men, and Philip, the French king. The second is the subjugation of Nineveh and Babylon by Richard. Through these battles, which are inserted after the Christian army’s victory at Acre, I will examine Richard’s insistence on the use of forced conversion. Then, the narrator’s presentation of the Jaffa Campaign will be scrutinised in the context of this romance’s attempt to ‘rectify’, in Yeager’s words, Richard I’s return to England without seeing the holy sepulchre (the visit to it was considered to mark the fulfilment of the crusader vow).<sup>31</sup> Through my investigation of Richard’s itineraries and the descriptions of these battles and conquests, I will demonstrate that the text of *Richard*, by inviting Thornton to vicariously follow Richard’s successful but extremely violent campaigns, constructs Palestine as an imaginary space which offers a fantasy of militant Christianity in which parts of the Holy Land become purified of non-Christians. This imaginary Palestine, as becomes clear, plays a key role in generating pleasure by satisfying the expected reader’s, here Thornton’s, militant piety and nationalist desire to have a true English crusader king who is spiritually rewarded for his engagement in ‘a full playne crosyery’ [true crusade] (l. 1404).

In the London Thornton MS’s version of *Richard*, a fictional interpolation sees Richard and his right-hand men, Thomas of Multon and Fulk Doly, spy out the Holy Land as

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<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Riley-Smith, ‘The State of Mind of Crusaders to the East’, in *Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades*, ed. by Jonathan Riley-Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 66–90 (p. 88). Italics are original.

<sup>31</sup> Suzanne M. Yeager, *Jerusalem in Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 50.



pilgrims before commencing their military campaigns. The itinerary of this spying pilgrimage is a good starting point to think about the romance geography of this narrative as it demonstrates well how *Richard's* Holy Land is presented to be part historical and part imaginary. As Cristina Figueredo, the editor of the London Thornton MS's version of *Richard*, fittingly says, this pilgrimage functions as 'proleptic of the future conquests'.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, Richard and his two trusted commanders' first visit to Palestine loosely follows the trajectory of the historical English Third Crusaders. Richard, Thomas, and Fulk sail from England to 'Flawndirs' (l. 619), taking the land route up to 'Braundys' [Brindisi] (l. 623), the southern Italian port city. After embarking on a ship, they temporarily (for forty days) stay at 'Famagoste' [Famagusta] (l. 630), a city in Cyprus, and arrive in Palestine via the port of 'Acres' [Acre] (l. 634). Historically, Richard I and his army's fleet departed from England, entered the Mediterranean through Gibraltar, landed on the Continent at Marseille, travelled inland, and made an agreement with King Philip Augustus II of France at Vézelay. Richard I and Philip II promised to go to the Holy Land to 'win land and plunder as well as glory', and according to Ambroise (*fl.* 1188–1195), who wrote an eyewitness account of the Third Crusade, *L'Estoire de la guerre sainte*, the two kings agreed to equally share the acquisitions they made together.<sup>33</sup> Then, Richard I travelled to Lyon to board his fleet, following the Rhône, which led the English army due south to Marseille. After suppressing riots in Messina, Sicily, Richard I called at the Rhodes, conquered Cyprus, and finally landed at Acre. Thus, the eponymous hero of *Richard* generally follows the historical itinerary both in his first visit, or disguised pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and his later military campaign, the Third Crusade.

From Acre, however, the romance's itineraries, both that of the spying pilgrimage and that of the main military campaign, divert from historical sources and become a mixture of real and imagined places:

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<sup>32</sup> Figueredo, II, p. 152.

<sup>33</sup> John Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 128; Peter Damian-Grint, 'Ambroise', in *ODNB*, <<https://doi-org.libproxy.york.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/66813>> [accessed 1 March 2023]

And sythen *dide* þay [Richard, Thomas, and Fulk] *þam* vnto þe see,  
 Euen vnto Acres, that riche cite,  
 And so forthe þay *wente* vnto Macedoyne,  
 And also to þe cite of Babyloyne.  
 And fro thethyn vnto þe cite of Cesare,  
 Of Nynyve than were þay ware  
 And so to þe cite of Jerusalem,  
 And also to þe cite of Bedlem [Bethlehem],  
 And also þay *went* to Ȝebedy,  
 And to þe cite of Sudayn Turry,  
 And to þe Castelle Orgoylyus,  
 And to þe Cite of Appayrynous.  
 To Jaffeth [Jaffa] and also to Saffrane [Safita],  
 To Taboreth [Tiberias/Tabarie] & also to Archane.  
 And thus þay asspyede [spied] þe Holy Londe,  
 How þat þay myghte wynn it into þaire hande. (ll. 633–48, my italics)

This passage is a fine example of what Rouse calls a spatial itinerary. The verbs of movement, like ‘did [. . .] þam’ [brought themselves] (from *don*, which sometimes has a meaning similar to *wenden*) and ‘wente’ (from *wenden*), invite Thornton to vicariously follow the travels of the English crusaders and allows him to imagine Palestine as a space which Richard and his men can travel to.<sup>34</sup>

While the use of these verbs contributes to engendering spatiality in this romance’s Palestine, the passage above is also notable for the places that are on the route between Acre and ‘Archane’. Some of the cities and castles in this itinerary, like Acre, Jaffa, and the Castle of Safita (Chastel Blanc) are readily identifiable and are strategically important fortified cities.<sup>35</sup> On the

<sup>34</sup> ‘don’, 5d. refl. (a) To betake oneself, go; depart in *MED* <[https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED12367/track?counter=2&search\\_id=20150284](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED12367/track?counter=2&search_id=20150284)> [accessed 28 September 2022].

<sup>35</sup> These cities are identified by Figueredo, the editor of the London Thornton MS’s version of *Richard*. See Figueredo, ‘*Richard Cœur de Lion: An Edition from the London Thornton Manuscript*’, II, pp. 153–54.

other hand, other places like Macedonia and Nineveh are places that appear in Scripture, but they are neither the battlefields of the Third Crusade nor destinations of medieval western Christian pilgrims. In addition, Babylon, which was commonly understood as part of later Cairo in the medieval period, is situated here somewhere between Acre and Bethlehem. *Richard's* 'Holy Londe' thus seems not to be limited to modern Palestine but to be expansive enough to stretch into Egypt. Other cities such as 'Zebedy', 'Appayrynous', and 'Archane' are unidentifiable. Moreover, notably, the 'Castelle Orgoylyus' [Castle of the Proud] echoes the places in Arthurian legends such as the 'Castelle Orgoylyus' in Chrétien de Troyes' *conte du Graal* (in which Perceval visits the 'Chastel Orgueilleux') and the 'Castell Orgulus' in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* (in which Sir La Cote Male Tayle fights against the twelve knights of the castle).<sup>36</sup> Although Thornton might not have read a story in which the 'Castelle Orgoylyus' appears, the fictionality of this itinerary would have been easily recognised by him. In other words, the text of *Richard* here presents the geography of Palestine as explicitly fictional and constructs an imaginary space, which is conventional to medieval romances. It can be said that after Acre, the geography of the Holy Land in *Richard* switches from the chronicle-based, historical world to a more imaginary romance space.

Such quasi-fictitious, quasi-historical romance geography contributes to *Richard's* presentation of its eponymous hero as a successful, true crusader king. As Yeager points out, the fact that Richard I returned from Palestine before completing his journey to the holy sepulchre caused continual anxiety among the medieval English people as it means the king failed to fulfil his crusader vow, undermining his posthumous reputation as a great English crusader.<sup>37</sup> A crusader vow obliged the vowed person to reach the holy sepulchre and to fight for the recovery of Jerusalem in exchange for the so-called 'crusade indulgences', i.e. spiritual and material privileges, including, most

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<sup>36</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Le roman de Perceval: Ou, le conte du Graal, publié d'après le MS. Fr. 12576 de la Bibliothèque Nationale par William Roach* (Geneve: Droz, 1959), ll. 26827, 26966. Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur, or, the Hoole Book of Kyng Arthur and of His Noble Knyghtes of the Rounde Table: Authoritative Text, Sources and Backgrounds, Criticism*, ed. by Stephen H. A. Shepherd (New York: Norton, 2004), p. 282.

<sup>37</sup> Yeager, *Jerusalem in Medieval Narrative*, p. 66.

notably, the remission of penance for sins.<sup>38</sup> Bearing in mind this anxiety around Richard I, I now turn to five fictional sieges engaged by Richard, Thomas, Fulk, and Philip. The interpolation of these five sieges starts from the feast that celebrates the victory at Acre. In the feast, Richard suggests recommencing battle against ‘all the Sarazynes’ [the territory of the Saracens] (l. 3821). It is decided that the English army is separated into three while the French host is divided into two. Richard, Thomas, and Fulk lead a troop, besiege a Muslim city, and subjugate it: Richard vanquishes ‘þe cite of Sowdane Turry’; Thomas overcomes ‘Castle Orgolyous’; and Fulk subdues ‘Ebody/ 3ebedy’. On the other hand., Philip agrees to a truce and takes ransom from two Muslim cities, ‘Taborette’ and ‘Archane’. Neither the locations of these five Muslim cities nor the distance between them is mentioned as they are just described as conventional, rich fortified urban spaces full of ‘golde and siluere & riche tresoure’ (l. 4349). Noteworthily, all the five Muslim cities—which are unidentified except for Taborette (which probably refers to Tiberias/Tabarie)—appear in the itinerary above.<sup>39</sup> Thus, even though Taborette might have originally referred to a historical site, the five sieges of Richard, Thomas, Fulk, and Philip in *Richard* were likely understood by Thornton to take place in the narrative world conventional to romance.

According to Manion, these five sieges address a specific crusading issue, namely, the idea of forcible conversion as a means of reinforcing conquest.<sup>40</sup> In contrast to the well-known convention of the historical crusades of taking a ransom, this interpolation presents the practice of ransoming as something both strategically ineffective and morally deplorable. In their siege battles, the three English troops, namely, the ones led by Richard and his two right-hand men, defeat, show ‘no mercy’ (l. 4740) to, and exterminate all Muslim inhabitants of the three cities

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<sup>38</sup> For other privileges, see Riley-Smith, ‘The State of Mind of Crusaders’, p. 71. Also see Matthew E. Parker, ‘*Papa et pecunia*: Innocent III’s Combination of Reform and Fiscal Policy to Finance Crusades’, *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 32 (2017), 1–23.

<sup>39</sup> Tiberias is the site of one of the decisive battles fought between Saladin and Christian forces in 1187, located on the western bank of the Sea of Galilee. See Tyerman, *God’s War*, pp. 366–71.

<sup>40</sup> According to Manion, this extreme stance on conversion demonstrates *Richard*’s participation in fourteenth-century crusading discourse, which developed through, among others, the Baltic Crusades and the publication of the recovery treatises such as the ones written by Ramon Lull or Marino Sanudo. See Manion, pp. 56–63.

that they invaded, including children and women, if they do not convert to Christianity. While this sounds horrific to modern readers, this measure is presented as the right, favourable decision for the Christian army in the London Thornton MS's version of *Richard*. In this version's logic, as a result of forcible mass conversion, the three fictional Palestinian lands, i.e. þe cite of Sowdane Turry', the 'Castle Orgolyous', and 'Ebody' become the regions which are cleansed of non-Christians. As the romance *Richard* posits, 'Cristen men now alle ther bee' [there will be all Christians] (l. 4743).

Moreover, the rejection of ransoming here is understood to prove the military leader's sincere faith and demonstrate his status as a true crusader. This is suggested by the contrasting depiction of Philip's battles against Taborette and Archane. In opposition to the three English commanders, Philip shows 'pite' [pity] (l. 4770) and spares the life of the inhabitants of these two cities in exchange for ransom. This 'pite' is, in the narrative logic of *Richard*, nothing but a manifestation of the French king's inability to be a true crusader as well as of his lack of kingly virtue.<sup>41</sup> In *Richard*, as articulated through the mouth of the inhabitants of Archane, Philip's act is presented as something deserving of mockery:

þe folkes of þe townn [of Archane] þe 3atis þan schott

Kyng Philipe for to halde þer owte.

And sayd: 'Kyng cowarde, gaa thi waye,

Here hafe þou loste for euer thi praye [good name]

þou gaffe vs lyfe for oure tresoure,

And of this townn ne getis þou neuer more [will not get anymore]

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<sup>41</sup> As Catherine Nall argues, the appropriate performance of pity and violence underwent complex scrutiny as an essential attribute of 'noble, kingly, and indeed, Christian identity' in late-medieval writings of just wars and crusading treatises. Given her argument, Philip's pity is wrongly directed here. Kingly pity should be performed for those non-Christians who have sincere penitence and wish to peacefully convert to Christianity. See Catherine Nall, 'Violent Compassion in Late-medieval Writing' in *Writing War in Britain and France, 1370-1854 : A History of Emotions*, ed. by Stephanie Downes, Andrew Lynch, and Katrina O'Loughlin (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 73–88 (pp. 81–85).

*Alle at ones þan toke [ransom] thou,*  
*Here hafe þou loste thi lordechipe now;*  
 For þou arte *false* and fayntly wirkes [behave deceitfully/fowardly]  
 Of thy wrethe [anger], whatte deuyll who rekkes [cares]! (ll. 4843–52)

Here, ransoming causes first the loss of Philip's honour and 'lordechipe' [ownership and rule of land].<sup>42</sup> Thus, he fails to obtain and expand Christian lands. The act of receiving ransom is further interpreted to be indicative of Phillip's prioritisation of 'tresoure' over his God, thus demonstrating the French king's greed and untruthfulness. A similar idea is expressed also by Richard, who, after hearing Philip's taking ransom, accuses him of 'falsehede' [treachery, faithlessness] (l. 4778) to God and 'grete schame' (l. 4789) against Christendom. In *Richard's* logic, the Holy Land, or at least part of it, is regained only when crusaders follow the romance Richard's drastic stance on conversion. Or to put it another way, in this romance's extreme crusading discourse, a 'full playne croysery' [true crusade] (l. 1404) should aim to exterminate non-Christians in the Holy Land and to transform it into a completely Christian space. As Richard puts it, those who do not '[s]laa' (l. 6578) and 'dow[t] of þaire [Muslims'] manace' (l. 6579) are not true crusaders worthy of Jerusalem. Such crusaders, as this romance hero posits, shall be blamed as treacherous and fail to obtain the ultimate spiritual reward for crusaders, namely, the 'sighte of Goddes' (l. 6580), or the beatific vision synonymous with salvation. As crusading sermons repeatedly insisted, the fulfilment of a crusader vow, including death during the battle for the recovery of Jerusalem, was believed to be the gift from God and the gateway, or passport to salvation/heavenly Jerusalem, where its inhabitants see the face of God directly.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> 'lordship(e)' in *MED*, <[https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED26090/track?counter=1&search\\_id=18136432](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED26090/track?counter=1&search_id=18136432)> [accessed 16 July 2022].

<sup>43</sup> Christoph T. Maier, *Crusade Propaganda and Ideology: Model Sermons for the Preaching of the Cross* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 56–63.

Behind the radical idea that views ransoming as a manifestation of the sinfulness of an individual Christian, which ultimately leads to Christendom's loss of territorial possessions in Palestine, lies a long-lasting key idea of crusading discourse. As Gaposchkin argues through her careful investigation of the development of the liturgy designed to supplicate divine aid for crusading, crusaders' military success was believed to be endowed by God's grace, which could have been given or withdrawn according to the 'spiritual health' not only of crusaders in the Outremer but also of those in the Latin West.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the devastating failure of the crusaders, particularly their loss of the second Kingdom of Jerusalem and the True Cross (which triggered the Third Crusade) was viewed as indicative of the spiritual deterioration of western Christendom. Given this apparent tie between the military success of the crusaders and Christendom's spiritual health, the interpolation of these fictional five sieges spiritually exalts Richard while belittling Philip. The contrast between these two kings thus confirms the traditional key notion of crusading discourse. This contrast simultaneously represents the competition between the English and the French over which 'nation' gives birth to true crusaders, who are spiritually worthy of both the earthly Jerusalem and its heavenly counterpart in which the beatific vision is afforded to its inhabitants.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the romance geography of the fictional five sieges in *Richard* presents an imaginary Palestine, which allows Thornton to enjoy a pro-English, radicalised crusading fantasy. In this Palestine, part of the Holy Land is obtained and cleansed of non-Christians at the hands of the English crusaders, who are violently pious, uncorrupted by greed, and spiritually worthy of divine reward.

This fantasy of a completely Christianised Holy Land for the English reader is further developed in Richard's fictive subjugation of Nineveh and Babylon. As I pointed out above,

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<sup>44</sup> Cecilia M. Gaposchkin, *Invisible Weapons: Liturgy and the Making of Crusade Ideology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017), p. 14.

<sup>45</sup> According to Yeager, here medieval readers of *Richard* would have found a 'devotional resonance' between the relationship between Richard and Philip and that between Joshua and his Israelite soldiers. Like Richard, Joshua annihilates all those living in Jericho while his Israelite soldiers, like Philip, follow their greed and keep what they plunder against the will of God (Joshua 6–7). See Yeager, *Jerusalem in Medieval Narrative*, pp. 48–77 (p. 68).

these are numbered in the list of ‘Palestinian’ cities to which Richard, Thomas, and Fulk travel during their disguised pilgrimage. In the case of Nineveh, these three English commanders force every Muslim in this city, ‘[b]othe littill & mekill, lesse & mare’, to be baptized on pain of death (ll. 5454–55). The situation is similar to the conquest of Babylon since Richard forces the mass conversion here also:

And there was cristenyde, alls I fynde,  
 Maa thane ane hundrethe thowsande.  
 And kirkes garte he [Richard] make of Cristyn lawe,  
 And alle their Mawmettis he garte doun drawe.  
 And alle thase that wolde noghte Cristenyde beecome,  
 He garte swythe slaa thaym, alle and some. (ll. 5978–83)

Notably, Richard not only forces the entire population to choose to convert or die but also transforms Babylon itself. The city of Babylon, which is called the ‘prys of haythynesse’ [the best city of the heathen world] (l. 5924), is altered into a Christian city as ‘Mawmettis’ [pagan deities] are replaced by ‘kirkes’ [churches] ‘of Cristyn lawe’. This transformation of Babylon’s cityscape, in Heng’s view, successfully ‘displace[s] Saladin’s historic recapture of Jerusalem’.<sup>46</sup> In other words, the text of *Richard* here employs what Rouse calls a ‘therapeutic narrative strateg[y]’, which ‘recast[s]’ past traumatic crusading events into some forms of cultural fantasy.<sup>47</sup> Historically, as an inevitable result of the crusaders’ defeat by Saladin at the battle of Hattin (1187), ‘all the trace of the Latin presence’ was ‘remov[ed]’ from the second Kingdom of Jerusalem, including the relic of the true cross.<sup>48</sup> In *Richard*, reversing this loss for the Latin West, the Muslim presence is eradicated from Babylon, which was in the later-medieval period

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<sup>46</sup> Heng, *Empire of Magic*, p. 77.

<sup>47</sup> Rouse, ‘Romance and Crusade’, p. 218.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Lock, *The Routledge Companion to the Crusades* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 157.



understood as ‘the heart of Saladin’s empire’.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, here again, the text of *Richard* enables and encourages Thornton to fantasise about an expansive, unopposed Christianity, which is realised by Richard. Along with the sieges of the five cities, completely Christianised Nineveh and Babylon thus participate in the text’s attempt to present Richard as a pious, competent crusader. These fictional battles in quasi-real, quasi-imagined ‘Palestinian’ cities repeatedly offer Thornton a fantasy of a Holy Land, which is purified of non-Christians thanks to Richard, the ‘true’ English crusader king.

So far, I have discussed the battles in imaginary places in *Richard’s* Palestine and suggested such places as key constituents of a romance geography. However, it should be emphasised that historical sites are also part of romance geography and are key to generating ‘pleasure’ in *Richard*. As I will discuss through the rest of this section, Jaffa, arguably the most widely commemorated place in the history of the Third Crusade, contributes to the romance text’s formation of a bellicose pro-English crusading fantasy.

Historically, Jaffa was the place where Richard I and Saladin agreed to the Treaty of Jaffa in 1192, as well as being the battlefield where Richard I and his few troops fought throughout the preceding difficult negotiations. In its representation of Jaffa, *Richard* follows chronicle accounts: the romance Richard makes a virtually similar agreement with Saladin; they agree to a three-year ‘trewse’ [truce] (l. 6964); and during this three-year period Christian pilgrims are allowed to have free, secure passage to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and other recognised sites of pilgrimage (ll. 6964–72). While *Richard*, along with modern historians like Hans Eberhard Mayer and John Gillingham, values the treaty, Jaffa is and would have been remembered as the very place from which Richard I withdrew on his way to Jerusalem without fulfilling the crusader vow.<sup>50</sup> Probably

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<sup>49</sup> Heng, *Empire of Magic*, p. 77.

<sup>50</sup> Mayer suggests that thanks to the treaty of Jaffa, crusader states were able to ‘prolong’ their life ‘for another century’. See Hans Eberhard Mayer, ‘Henry II of England and the Holy Land\*’, *English Historical Review*, 97 (1982), 721–39 (p. 739); John Gillingham, ‘Richard I [called Richard Cœur de Lion, Richard the Lionheart] (1157–1199)’ in ODNB <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-23498>> [accessed access 23 August 2022].

because of this association between Jaffa and the ambiguity around Richard I's crusader vow, *Richard* situates the Jaffa campaign in the framework of romance by flaunting its fictionality. At the very beginning of the battle at Jaffa, the narrator introduces it as the one that ends with a 'faire victorye' (l. 6940) and urges the textual audience (and accordingly, Thornton the reader) to hear it:

Bot nowe herkyns my tale for it es *sotbe*,  
 Þof þat I swere 3ow þerto nane othe,  
 I will 3ow nenen [tell] *romauunce* now none  
 Of Partynope ne of Ypomedone,  
 Of Alexander ne of Charlemayne,  
 Of Kyng Arthoure ne of Sir Gawayne,  
 Ne 3itt of Sir Launcelott de Lake,  
 Of Beues ne of Sir Gy ne of Errake,  
 Nor of Vly nor 3itt of Sir Octouyane,  
 Nor 3itt of Sir Ectore, the strange man,  
 Of Jasone ne 3itt of Ercules,  
 Of Eneas ne 3itt of Achilles.  
 For I ne wene neuer, par ma faye,  
 Þat in the tyme of their daye  
 Did any of theym so many doughty dede,  
 Nor 3itt so strange batell in þaire nede  
 Als Kyng Richerde dide, saunce fayle,  
 Att Jaffe in this ilke bataylle  
 With his axe and his spere;  
*His saule now assoyle oure lorde so dere.* (ll. 6505–24, my italics)

Although the narrator says that Richard's deed is no 'romaunce' but 'soth' [a true thing], this list of heroes explicitly counts Richard's involvement in the Jaffa campaign among the great deeds of romance heroes.<sup>51</sup> The list of heroes here is a mixture of those appearing in classical epics, historical writings, and romances. While the stories of famous heroes such as Achilles, Hector, and Alexander the Great survive in both medieval epics and romances today, Partonope of Blois, Ipomadon, Bevis of Hampton, Guy of Warwick, and Octavian are and would have been understood as specifically romance heroes. Although the boundaries among epic, historical writing/chronicle, and romance were not clearly defined throughout the medieval period, the narrator here explicitly embeds Richard's 'bataylle' at Jaffa in the chronology of 'many doughty dede[s]' accomplished by romance heroes. In other words, this list deliberately foregrounds *Richard's* fictionality, while securely merging Jaffa into the romance geography of *Richard* and highlighting this space in the culmination of its protagonist's 'doughty dede[s]'. Such romance-ization of the Jaffa campaign is further strengthened by the events during the campaign itself. Like other heroes conventional in medieval romance, in Jaffa, the romance Richard defeats 'a towsande & maa' Muslim soldiers (l. 6894) 'on fote' (l. 6895) without any help, and even offers a single combat against 500 Muslim warriors in order to 'maytene Goddis ryghte' [law, rightful possession] (l. 6948) (though this proposal is rejected). In this romance, Jaffa is therefore specifically part of the romance geography that deliberately conflates historical and fictional places. This ostentatious fictionality generates room for the reader to fantasize about the part-historical, part-fictional successful campaign. To put it another way, here, the text of *Richard* offers Thornton 'the pleasure of fiction', which allows him to situate Jaffa in the romance geography as well as to negotiate and sublimate cultural anxiety about Richard I by successfully turning the Jaffa episode into a pleasurable event of the romance narrative.<sup>52</sup>

The last sentence of the quotation above, i.e. 'His saule now assoyle oure lorde so dere', is also notable. This sentence expresses a hope that Richard's soul should be granted the absolution of sin, that is, the ultimate spiritual reward given only to a true crusader. As suggested by the romance

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<sup>51</sup> As pointed out by Mills, this narrator's gesture might be regarded as an attempt to label *Richard* as a history, but I suggest that it rather situates Richard I among legendary romance heroes. See Mills, p. 128.

<sup>52</sup> McDonald, 'A Polemical Introduction', p. 14.

Richard's mention of the beatific vision (l. 6580), the fundamental idea of crusading as a militarized, penitential pilgrimage that grants those who take and complete a crusader vow the remission of sin (which leads to salvation) was shared by the late-medieval reader/audience of *Richard*. Given this tie between service as *militēs Christi* and individual salvation, the sentence above is arguably an articulation of the desire to rectify Richard I's unfulfilled crusader vow. As Yeager points out, a similar desire was indicated by the late-medieval English 'fascination with Richard [I]'s soul', which is expressed by those who actively presented him as the 'pious pilgrim and defender of Jerusalem'.<sup>53</sup> For instance, Richard of Wendover insisted that Richard I was granted ascension to heaven.<sup>54</sup> Equally, according to Nicholas Trevet, Edmund of Canterbury had a vision in which Richard I's soul entered heaven.<sup>55</sup> The sentence above is thus a manifestation of the commonly held late-medieval English desire, though the London Thornton MS's version arguably participates more emphatically in the justification of Richard I than do other expressions such as another B-version text surviving in the Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 175.<sup>56</sup> Thus, this sentence, which comes immediately after the narrator's call for attention to the story of the Jaffa campaign, points to the text's attempt to present Jaffa not as a place associated with Richard I's ambiguous crusader vow but as the culmination of this English king's martial and spiritual achievement.

In *Richard*, key features of crusading discourse—such as the idea of Palestine as the inheritance of God, the link between personal spiritual salvation and physical battle against non-Christians, and the attainment of salvation/heavenly Jerusalem/the beatific vision through the battles for the recovery of earthly Jerusalem—are articulated through the eponymous hero's sayings and the representations of the campaigns engaged by him and his right-hand men. The

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<sup>53</sup> Yeager, *Jerusalem in Medieval Narrative*, p. 67.

<sup>54</sup> John Gillingham, 'The Unromantic Death of Richard I', *Speculum*, 5 (1979), 18–41 (p. 26).

<sup>55</sup> Henry Gay Hewlett, ed., *Rogeri de Wendover Liber Qui Dicitur Flores Historiarum Ab Anno Domini MCLIV. Annoque Henrici Anglorum Regis Secundi Primo*, 3 vols (London: Longman, 1886), III, p. 21 <<https://archive.org/details/FlowersOfHistoryHewlett3/page/n107/mode/2up>> [accessed 19 October 2022]; Trivet, Nicholas, *Annales Sex Regum Angliae*, ed. by Thomas Hog (London: Bentley, 1845), pp. 228–29.

<sup>56</sup> The B version of *Richard* survives in the London Thornton MS, the Gonville and Caius College MS, and two prints. The equivalent line of the Gonville and Caius College MS's version does not mention absolution. Its narrator just prays for Richard's soul: 'His soule have Jhesu, oure Lord!' (6730) in *Richard Cœur de Lyon*, ed. by Peter Larkin (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2015), <<https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/larkin-richard-coer-de-lyon>> [accessed on 25 August 2022].

itinerary that these English commanders take invites Thornton to envision quasi-imaginary, quasi-historical Palestine. While such an imaginary space is arguably conventional to medieval romance, this Palestine is readily able to be transformed into a complete Christian region by a military campaign that is engaged by extremely violent, but true crusaders like Richard. Thus, the romance geography of Palestine in *Richard* emphasises a particularly aggressive brand of crusading discourse which urges Thornton to vicariously travel it while learning and internalising a religious mentality that is violently hostile to non-Christians. In the next, final section of this chapter, I will investigate the romance geography in *Childhood*, and discuss how it also participates in the construction of a Christian version of Palestine while serving Thornton's fantasy of militant Christianity.

### **The Anti-Semitic Laughter of Jesus the Child and the Merciless Virgin: Vicarious travel in *Childhood's* Palestine**

*Childhood* is a Middle English verse narrative of Jesus's 'barnehede' [infancy, childhood], which starts from his birth at Bethlehem and concludes with his baptism at the river Jordan. In the London Thornton MS's version, the baptism is presented as the beginning of Jesus's 'manhede' [the age of a mature man, adulthood] that 'lastes aye' [lasts eternally] (l. 919).<sup>57</sup> While Thornton presents his versions of *Childhood* both as an 'Ipokrephum' [apocrypha] and a '[r]omance' that is paired with *Richard*, it is nonetheless a Middle English adaptation of apocryphal gospels.<sup>58</sup> Because the canonical gospels of Matthew and Luke offer only brief, patchy episodes of Christ's infancy, apocryphal gospels such as the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Pseudo-Matthew* were adapted into vernacular sequential narratives like *Childhood* and catered for the increasing devotional needs of the late-medieval laypeople, who admired and were interested in Christ's early life.<sup>59</sup> For instance,

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<sup>57</sup> All quotations of *Childhood* are taken from Carl Horstmann, ed., 'Nachträge zu den Legenden: 1. Kindheit Jesu aus Ms. Addit. 31042', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 74 (1885), 327–39.

<sup>58</sup> Fein, 'The Contents', p. 59.

<sup>59</sup> The gospels of Matthew and Luke offered only the following events: Jesus's birth at Bethlehem, the massacre of the innocents, the Magi's adoration, and the twelve-year-old Jesus's disputation at the Temple. For the sources of

one of the other two extant witnesses of *Childhood*, London, BL, MS Harley 3954, places this apocryphal infancy narrative alongside catechetical and devotional writings, thus suggesting its reception as a piece of devotional literature.<sup>60</sup> Equally, the other witness of *Childhood* in London, BL, MS Harley 2399 is thought to have been copied for devotional purposes by 'John Arcuarus' [John the Bower/Archer], who was a canon of the Augustinian priory of St Petroc at Bodmin, Cornwall, in the second half of the fifteenth century.<sup>61</sup>

In Mary Dzon's view, these lay readers of vernacular apocryphal infancy narratives desired 'a counterbalance to the passivity of Jesus promoted by mainstream devotional culture'.<sup>62</sup> Jesus in apocryphal infancy narratives is generally presented as a vengeful child who punishes those who are blind to his divinity, such as Jewish schoolmasters and children. This aggressive, vindictive Jesus serves as an alternative to the suffering Christ, who was often imagined, according to Caroline Walker Bynum, as specifically feminine, particularly as a mother, in devotional literature like Pseudo-Bonaventura's *Meditationes vitae Christi*.<sup>63</sup> Instead of the feminine, helpless Christ, another Christ who does not humiliate himself but actively confronts the Jews' 'unjust' violence was demanded and, according to Dzon, Jesus the child meets this particular need. As I argued in Chapter 3, Thornton was a trained affective reader, who was able to skillfully respond both to the suffering of Christ and his female followers and to the indignant

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vernacular apocryphal Infancy narratives, see Maureen Barry McCann Boulton, *The Old French 'Evangile de l'enfance'* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), pp. 7–11.

<sup>60</sup> 'Harley MS 3954: 1st half of the 15th century', in *Explore Archives and Manuscripts*, <[https://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&oc=IAMS040-002049791&indx=5&recIds=IAMS040-002049791&recIdxs=4&elementId=4&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&frbg=&&dscnt=0&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BL%29&mode=Basic&vid=IAMS\\_VU2&srt=rank&tab=local&vl\(freeText0\)=infancia&dum=true&dstamp=1643304716374](https://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&oc=IAMS040-002049791&indx=5&recIds=IAMS040-002049791&recIdxs=4&elementId=4&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&frbg=&&dscnt=0&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BL%29&mode=Basic&vid=IAMS_VU2&srt=rank&tab=local&vl(freeText0)=infancia&dum=true&dstamp=1643304716374)> [accessed 27 January 2022].

<sup>61</sup> The text of MS Harley 2399 is closer to London Thornton MS's *Childhood* than the version of MS Harley 3954. See 'Harley MS 2399: c.1175–c.1625' in *Explore Archives and Manuscripts*, <[https://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&oc=IAMS040-002048230&indx=1&recIds=IAMS040-002048230&recIdxs=0&elementId=0&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&frbg=&&dscnt=0&scp.scps](https://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&oc=IAMS040-002048230&indx=1&recIds=IAMS040-002048230&recIdxs=0&elementId=0&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&frbg=&&dscnt=0&scp.scps)> [accessed 27 January 2022].

<sup>62</sup> Mary Dzon, *The Quest for the Christ Child in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), p. 167.

<sup>63</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 110–69; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 266–73.

Roman soldiers in a way required by the affective, spatial script at hand. Given that, it would be no surprise that he consciously chose to position the vengeful, bellicose Christ Child as an alternative to the Christ who is found in devotional literature like *Privity* and *Discourse*. While Vespasian, Titus, and the Roman soldiers in *Siege* also offer an alternative approach to the passivity represented by the crucified Christ, the child Jesus in *Childhood* works as a more comical, entertaining alternative. In this final section of this chapter, I will first examine the romance geography of Palestine in *Childhood*. Then, I will turn to the antisemitic comedy, which is provided by the laughter of Jesus the child and his mother. I will argue that the movement of the Christ Child and the Virgin in *Childhood* allows Thornton to vicariously travel and envision an expansive Palestine, which is here imagined as a space full of Jesus's enemies, who should have been laughed at and punished.

In *Childhood*, Palestine is spatially constructed by the holy family's continual flights from their 'fomene/faamene' [enemies] (ll. 21, 192)', i.e. the malevolent Jews, who are depicted as always plotting the death of the child Jesus. The sparse and vague geographical information about Palestine unfolds according to the movement of the family. The narrative begins with the 'kythe thare mene hire knewe' [country where people knew the Virgin] (l. 22), which probably refers to 'Bedleme' [Bethlehem] (l. 25). After the adoration of the Magi, the Virgin, Joseph, and Jesus escape from Herod and depart from the 'kythe' (l. 25), travelling into the wilderness. This so-called exodus into Egypt abruptly ends because of Jesus's miracle of shortening a 30-day journey to one second. In *Childhood*, 'Egipte' (l. 126) is reduced to a quasi-Palestinian 'riche cite' (l. 121), which is undistinguishable from the other Jewish cities in first-century Palestine. In the 'Egyptian' city where the family starts to live, Jesus plays with the child Judas and is taught by the schoolmaster Caiaphas. The city's Jews begin to suspect Jesus of being a 'wiche' [sorcerer] (l. 438), who would destroy their laws, and threaten him with execution. Therefore, the holy family must go to Nazareth (l. 444), where Jesus escapes from its 'Emperour' (l. 586), who tries to marry Jesus to his daughter. Then, Jesus, leaving Joseph and Mary, runs away from the marriage

to Jericho (l. 611), where he works as an apprentice for a Jewish dyer. After the Virgin and Joseph join Jesus, the family go to 'Nawfrike' (l. 810), which is depicted as close to the two fictional tributaries of the River Jordan, the River Jor and Dan. Lastly, the family goes to 'Galile' (l. 858), where Jesus transforms water into wine and is baptized by John the Baptist at 'þe flome [river] Jordane' (l. 912). As this outline of *Childhood* suggests, here, Palestine is constituted of well-known biblical places (except for Nawfrike, which is unidentified), such as Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jericho, and Galilee, all of which would have been readily understood by Thornton. In this biblical landscape of Palestine, the Christ Child neither battles against the Jews like Titus and Vespasian nor forces mass conversion on those around him like Richard (except for Egypt, where Christ Child destroys idols and kills those unwilling to believe him). The Christ Child sometimes alone and mainly with the holy family continues his peripatetic journeys throughout Palestine and effects various miracles sometimes to take revenge on the Jews as well as to help his mother. Jesus the child's continual movement thus invites Thornton to vicariously explore first-century, expansive Palestine, which is presented as a space full of the Jews who always persecute Jesus.

What is notable about the holy family's, or more specifically, Jesus and the Virgin's travel through Palestine in *Childhood* is that it is punctuated by their laughter at the Jews, who are embarrassed by Jesus the child's vengeful miracles. As I will suggest, Jesus and the Virgin's laughter, while triggering the next move, confirms the antisemitism on the part of Thornton and participates in an aggressive, militant Christianity that is similar to the one that the romance geography of *Richard* advocates for. As Dzon posits, many medieval apocryphal infancy narratives, including *Childhood*, afford readers primarily 'the opportunity to admire the Christ Child's power, and incidentally to *gloat over* the mean-spirited Jewish characters, who are never able to harm him seriously or truly understand the idiosyncratic divine child they are dealing



with'.<sup>64</sup> In the London Thornton MS's *Childhood*, this malignant pleasure is highlighted, punctuates the holy family's travel in Palestine, and, I suggest, produces comedy, which may have been one reason why Thornton labelled it as a romance. In *Childhood*, Jesus twice laughs at Jews.<sup>65</sup> A comedic laugh is first found in Nazareth, where Jesus 'loughe' (l. 478) at the Jewish children, who die in their attempt to sit, like Jesus, on a sunbeam. Despite the death, Jesus continues to 'playe' (l. 478) without alerting the children's parents. In this case, Jesus's laughter is likely directed at the children's wrong form of *imitatio Christi*, and their spiritual ignorance that causes such imitation. The children, leaping on a sunbeam, emulate Jesus's divinity, not humanity. Second, in Jericho, Jesus 'stode and faste [. . .] loughe' [stopped and emphatically laughed] (l. 694) at a Jewish dyer (then Jesus's master), who begs for mercy and forgiveness from Jesus. This dyer, knowing Jesus, his apprentice's disobedience, tries to chastise him but recognises his divine power at the sight of miraculously dyed pieces of cloth. The reason why Jesus laughs at the dyer is not as clear as it is in the case of the Jewish children. Jesus might laugh just in childish delight at his success in a prank in which he surprises and subjugates his master. Or alternatively, he might have malignant fun to see the dismay of the spiritually ignorant Jewish dyer, who cannot fully understand his divinity and just seeks forgiveness out of fear. Whichever interpretation we take, here, the Palestinian cities Nazareth and Jericho, which are presented as the stage for these two instances of Jesus's laughter, are imagined through the figure of the Christ Child, who is nonchalant to the Jewish parents and their children while playfully exerting his divine power.

According to Istvan Bejczy who examines laughter in the *Vita rythmica* (a Latin apocryphal narrative of Christ's infancy), and Maija Birenbaum, who investigates the Anglo-

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<sup>64</sup> Dzon, *Quest*, p. 178, my italics.

<sup>65</sup> Although I do not count it, Jesus the child 'loughe[s] one [at] Dismas and Barabas the thief (l. 47). This 'loughe' should probably be translated as something closer to 'smiles'. This is because Dismas, who was believed to be Barabas's son and later become the good thief, sees this 'loughe' and asks his father to be 'mylde [merciful]' to the holy family (l. 48). Concerning Barabas and Dismas in medieval apocryphal infancy legends, see Mary Dzon 'Out of Egypt, Into England: Tales of the Good Thief for Medieval English Audiences,' *Devotional Culture in Late-Medieval England and Europe: Diverse Imaginations of Christ's Life* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 147–241 (p. 183)

Norman versions of apocryphal Christ's infancy legends, the primary function of Jesus's laughter is not to generate a comedy or a joke. In their view, the figure of laughing Jesus provides the medieval reader with proof of this child's humanity.<sup>66</sup> Equally, Dzon argues that Christ's laugh was likely understood as indicative of Jesus's following of normal human development. In the medieval period, wantonness, or misbehaviour that finds pleasure and fun in pranks was viewed as childish while the particular type of laughter, which was associated with giddiness, was regarded as typical of children.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the Christ Child is depicted, through his laughter, as a typical boy even though he simultaneously enjoys exploiting his divine almightiness as suggested by his various miracles.<sup>68</sup> As a keen devotee of Christ's humanity, Thornton was likely among those who appreciated Jesus's laughter as a manifestation of his human nature. However, this appreciation would not have prevented him from joyfully joining Jesus's laughter, which is 'a mixed expression of jubilant triumph over his opponents', i.e. the Jews, 'and also of childlike mirth', in Dzon's words.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, the 'jubilant triumph over' the Jews would have been shared by adult readers of the apocryphal narrative, including Thornton. As the sense of superiority over the Jews had become a common source of mean-spirited laughter in later-medieval Christendom, Thornton would have 'gloat[ed] over' the comedy of Jewish spiritual incapability, which is played out in well-known biblical places.<sup>70</sup>

What is notable about *Childhood's* vicarious, comedic travel in biblical Palestine is that the Virgin, as she does in Pseudo-Bonaventuran texts, functions as a 'direct access' to the child Jesus for the reader, including access to antisemitic laughter.<sup>71</sup> As Julie Nelson Couch points out, in the London Thornton MS's version of *Childhood*, the Virgin gains a 'narratorial agency' that

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<sup>66</sup> Istvan Bejczy, 'Jesus' Laughter and the Childhood Miracles: The "Vita Rhythmica"', *The Southern African Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 4 (1994), 50–61; Birenbaum, 'Virtuous Vengeance', p. 59.

<sup>67</sup> Dzon, *Quest*, pp. 180–81.

<sup>68</sup> Mary Dzon, 'Boys Will Be Boys: The Physiology of Childhood and the Apocryphal Christ Child in the Later Middle Ages,' *Viator*, 42 (2011), 179–225.

<sup>69</sup> Dzon, *Quest*, p. 180.

<sup>70</sup> Birgit Wiedel, 'Laughing at the Beast: The Judensau, Anti-Jewish Propaganda and Humor from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period', in *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, Its Meaning, and Consequences* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 325–64.

<sup>71</sup> Couch, 'Apocryphal Romance', p. 228

exceeds Joseph's and sometimes almost equals Jesus's.<sup>72</sup> In *Childhood*, the Virgin commences the exodus to protect her child, blesses Jesus when his miracles ease the holy family's travel, and journeys to look for her son when he alone escapes from an undesirable marriage without alerting his parents. Along with this kind of narrative agency, the Virgin in the London Thornton MS's version provides a less merciful model to facilitate the reader's responses to the Christ Child's vengeful miracles. Indeed, as a mother compassionate to her son, she laughs at Jews in a surprisingly similar manner to Jesus. As I will discuss soon, she even suggests the earlier death of Jesus's 'faamene' [enemies] (l. 192). Although *Childhood's* Virgin repeatedly plays the role of a merciful intercessor and even asks Jesus to yield his divine power to resurrect the spiritually blind Jews, including Judas the child, this version's Virgin simultaneously operates as a model of laughter which is less merciful to Jews.

Such an active, less forgiving Virgin is first found in what Couch calls the 'forest prank'.<sup>73</sup> In a forest outside Jericho, the child Jesus and Jewish children play, but wild beasts slay them except for Jesus. Learning of this, their parents, while lamenting the loss, go to the forest and place their children's bodies on carts to bring them to the city of Jericho. However, wishing to play with the children, Jesus the child resurrects them, kills the beasts, and puts the dead bodies of the beasts on the carts. Not knowing what they carry, the Jewish parents arrive in Jericho to find their children's bodies gone. Understandably, this prank shocks the parents. At this moment, the Virgin, who finally arrives in her search for her son, soon realises who is responsible for the prank. To this, she responds gleefully:

*Marye stode and faste sho loughe.*

And thay [the Jewish parents] had selcouthe scho made slike chere;

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<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>73</sup> Couch, 'Apocryphal Romance', p. 234.

They sayde: ‘womane, whate, arte þow wode?’

Oure childire, we se, were the neuer dere’. (ll. 790–93, my italics)

The phrase that describes the Virgin’s reaction, ‘stode and faste sho loughe’, is exactly the same as the one that depicts Jesus’s laughter at the dyer. Here again, the Jewish parents’ baffled reply likely invites jubilant laughter from the reader/audience. The Virgin’s response to this prank would have encouraged the reader, here Thornton, to join in with her laughter. To medieval Christian readers, these parents are laughable as they blindly carry the beasts’ bodies and become indignant to the Virgin, the mother of the Christ Child, who resurrects the Jewish parents’ ‘dere’ children.

Another example of the less merciful Virgin is found in her intimate relationship with her son. In Nazareth, the Virgin asks her son to resurrect ‘Obet’, a Jewish boy and friend of Jesus’s, who is accidentally killed by another Jewish boy:

‘Lefe sone, lyfe late thou hym haue,

I praye the, if thi wille it bee!

Obet, þat was so faire a knaue,

If he ware thus dede, it ware pite’.

To his modire þane Ihesu gaffe ansuere:

‘Modir, for þour sake he sall lyfe als-so skete [very quickly, at once].

And þete þe childire þat are here

Salle stande by-fore me one thaire fete,

Agaynes me false witnessse for to bere,

[. . .]

And helpe at hange me one the Rode

And þour face salle be with blode by-wefede [covered].

Was neuer no womane so *sory* in mode [heart]’.

Whene scho [the Virgin] that herde, hir liste no sange [no song pleases her],

That þay [the children] hir dere sone so sold [shall] spille [kill].

‘The thare noghte late þame *lefe* [live] *so lange*,

My dere sone, if it be thi wille.’ (ll. 553–61, 566–72, my italics)

Here, Jesus allows the Virgin’s wish to be fulfilled and prophesies the future when the Jewish children who are in front of them, including Obet, will make false witnesses against him and ‘helpe’ his passion. Despite her role as an intercessor for sinners, the Virgin, hearing this, suggests that he might not need to let them ‘lefe so lange’. In *Childhood*, the Virgin makes a similar suggestion that Jesus might not let Caiaphas ‘so lange lyffynge’ (l. 266) when her son resurrects Caiaphas at the request of his mother and prophesies that Caiaphas will allow Jesus to be severely beaten (ll. 260–63). According to Dzon, the Virgin’s suggestion of the early death of the Jewish children and Caiaphas could have been understood as ‘näiv[e]’ and ‘rather presumptuous[s]’ since it denies Saint Augustine’s notion that Christ, not constrained by an inevitable fate, but voluntarily chose his passion for redemption of humanity.<sup>74</sup> Yet, even though the Virgin’s responses here seem naïve and presumptuous, the short prophetic description of the Virgin’s blood-covered face, her unrivalled sorrow, and her subsequent merciless suggestion no doubt aroused a compassionate response from Thornton and kindled his hostility to the Jews, who are continuously presented as the ‘faamene’ [enemies] of the Virgin and Jesus in *Childhood*. As Crocker posits, the intimate relationship between Jesus the child and the Virgin was often exploited in medieval arts and literary texts, as in the quotation above, in order to ‘legitimise violence against Jewish “others” as an integral part of identifying with Christ and his impending suffering’.<sup>75</sup> Jesus the child’s prophecy that there was and will be no woman feeling so ‘sori’ as

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<sup>74</sup> Dzon, *Quest*, p. 172.

<sup>75</sup> Holly A. Crocker, ‘Medieval Affects Now’, p. 86.

the Virgin in seeing her son's passion justifies her less forgiving suggestion and invites the reader to the feelings of sorrow, chagrin, and distress, all of which are easily turned to an aggressive wish to eliminate the enemies of Christ.<sup>76</sup>

As I pointed out above, Thornton's collection of romances often features comedy. The antisemitic, gleeful laughter and possibly the Virgin's merciless suggestion in *Childhood* are arguably some of the key factors that led Thornton to label it as a romance. These comic instances punctuate the holy family's continual travel in biblical Palestine and invite Thornton both to enjoy the travel and to envision the first-century Holy Land through the lens of aggressive, religiously intolerant piety. In this apocryphal, comedic 'romance' narrative, Palestine is quasi-imaginary and expansive enough to include Egypt. *Childhood's* romance geography thus selectively and continuously foregrounds antisemitic discourse through the figure of the Christ Child, who 'righteously' (to typical medieval Christian readers) and gleefully punishes and avenges his future enemy, under the eyes of his mother, who desires and relishes such vengeful miracles.

## Conclusion

*Richard* and *Childhood*, the two narratives labelled by Thornton as a pair or 'romances', as I have demonstrated, present Palestine as a quasi-historical and quasi-imaginary space, where Thornton the reader is enjoined to envision and enjoy either the annihilation or laughable punishment of non-Christians who occupy Palestine, whether they are medieval Muslims or first-century Jews. Thus, these two texts together kindle violent piety to the Holy Land, which was believed to be Christians' 'kyndely heritage' [rightful inheritance] (*Richard*, l. 1385). This pro-Christian, imaginary Palestine would have played an important role in the Christian, particularly English

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<sup>76</sup> In Jesus the child's prophecy here, the Virgin would not feel only sorrow and distress. In later-medieval English, the adjective 'sori' means that the person is distressed by intermixed feelings of sorrow, chagrin, anger, and remorse. See 'sori' adj. 1 in MED < [https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED41646/track?counter=9&search\\_id=20469586](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED41646/track?counter=9&search_id=20469586) > [accessed 16 October 2022].

fantasy that Thornton relished and tried to create in his sacred history, which is contained in the first part of the London Thornton MS. In Johnston's view, Thornton's sacred history comprises a 'fantasy of a militaristic, triumphant Christianity that stands alone in the world, unopposed'.<sup>77</sup> This is because Thornton's spiritual history consists mainly of the two extracts from the *Cursor mundi*, the *Northern Passion*, and the genocidal narratives of the first-century Jews (the *Siege of Jerusalem*) and medieval Muslims (*Roland and Otuel* and possibly also the *Sege of Melayne*) at the hands of Christian warriors. I agree with Johnston's suggestion, and in my view, *Richard and Childhood*, through the narratives and the geographical descriptions of Palestine, offer this sacred history a proper end. The Palestine in these two romances—which is imagined through the military campaign of Richard, the English 'true' crusader king, and the peripatetic travels of the vengeful Christ Child and the less merciful Virgin—allows Thornton the reader to enjoy a pro-English cultural fantasy, laugh at the Jews, and learn religiously intolerant, aggressive piety, which longed for such a Holy Land, in which nothing might oppose Christianity.

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<sup>77</sup> Johnston, 'Robert Thornton and the *Siege of Jerusalem*', p. 155.

## Conclusion

According to Rouse, in the late-medieval period, when it became increasingly impossible that Christians could recover territorial possession of the lands in Palestine, crusading romances appeared and gained popularity by engaging in the phenomenon of what Tyerman calls ‘recovery literature’. According to Tyerman, this literature comprises ‘books, pamphlets and memoranda concerned with the crusade, the restoration of Jerusalem and the advance of the Turks’.<sup>1</sup> This ‘recovery literature’ covers a similar but broader range of texts than what A. R. Leopold dubbed the ‘recovery treatise’, which he defines as a proposal which was written in the period between 1290 and 1336 and offers concrete advice and plans ‘for a *hypothetical crusade* conceived by the author’.<sup>2</sup> Whether these texts are labelled as recovery literature or recovery treatises, they were engendered out of a contemporary Christian desire to extend ‘a crusade temporality’, or to ‘recast crusade as something that flourished’ not only from 1095–1291 (i.e. from the beginning of the First Crusade to the fall of Acre), ‘but rather as part of the enduring Christian struggle against the heathen world’.<sup>3</sup> While Tyerman and Leopold’s discussions are mainly based on strategical treatises for a future, hypothetical crusade, Rouse argues that crusading romances also participated in a similar project to transcend the historical period of crusading by offering a narrative about a hypothetical, or imaginative battle against non-Christians who occupy Christian lands.

This thesis, in general, agrees with Rouse’s argument although my discussion foregrounds the interconnection that lies between the longing for the Holy Land expressed in crusading romances and Christocentric, affective devotion. I suggest further that my thesis offers

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<sup>1</sup> Tyerman, *God’s War*, p. 827.

<sup>2</sup> Leopold’s definition covers the prose treatises written in the period from the fall of Acre (1291) to French King Philip VI’s unwilling abandonment of his crusade to the Holy Land. See Antony Richard Leopold, ‘Crusading Proposals of the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries’ (Durham University, 1998), p. 9; my italics.

<sup>3</sup> Rouse, ‘Romance and Crusade’, p. 218.



Rouse's proposition a concrete, locatable case study and clarifies the intricately entwined ties between imaginings of the Holy Land and late-medieval affective devotion to Christ's humanity. Indeed, as Ian Macleod Higgins posits, 'the late-medieval Christian consciousness' and their local spaces were 'saturated with Orientalia', which means things and thoughts related to the broadly defined Eastern world, including relics of the biblical past, contemporary Muslim opponents found in the Mamluk sultanate of Cairo and Syria, and exotic monstrous races such as Gog and Magog.<sup>4</sup> By exploring religious and secular writings in Thornton's collection of literary texts through the lens of the affective and spatial turns, I have demonstrated how some of his devotional writings and romances operated as convenient textual vehicles to access Christian versions of Jerusalem and Palestine. These vehicles enabled Thornton to employ his spatial imagination, envision, and sensorily and intellectually experience the Holy Land as spaces he could approach Christ's humanity and enjoy militant Christianity, which is triumphant against those 'unjustly' (to medieval Christians) occupying the 'inheritance' left by Christ.

In the introduction of this thesis, I contended that my close reading of the Thornton MSS is distinguished from other scholars' reading first by the two scholarly paradigms that sustain my exploration, i.e. the affective and spatial turns; and second, my selection of the texts. In the conclusion, I am going to suggest and emphasise the originality of my close reading in relation to these two things. To take the affective and spatial turns first, they reveal that Thornton, as a late-medieval pious Christian reader, seems to have been accustomed to using his spatial imagination in order to sensorily, emotionally, and intellectually immerse himself in Christian, imaginative versions of Jerusalem and Palestine. In other words, one of the important findings of my thesis is the cooperation between affect and the spatial imagination in Thornton's practice of performative reading. As my discussions in this thesis demonstrate, Thornton was a competent affective reader who was equipped with devotional literacy, which demands of him

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<sup>4</sup> Ian Macleod Higgins, 'Shades of the East: Orientalism, Religion, and Nation in Late-medieval Scottish Literature', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 38 (2008), 197–228 (p. 198).

the skill to manipulate his feelings and to use spatial imagination. As my investigation of the stylistic features of and Thornton's annotations to *Privity*, *Discourse*, and *Siege* demonstrates, these texts function as affective, spatial scripts and invite him to spatially imagined, Christian versions of Jerusalem. The detailed descriptions of object relation in Calvary and Jerusalem guide Thornton's imaginative gaze, in the cases of *Privity* and *Discourse*, to Christ's tormented body and urge him to imitate the empathetic behaviour and movements of Christ's female followers, particularly, those of the Virgin. The horizontal perspective in these texts allows Thornton to envision Jerusalem as spaces in which he was able to affectively see, touch Christ's passion, and walk along the stations of the cross. In a similar manner, the narrator of *Siege* describes Jewish Jerusalem from the eyes of Vespasian, the Roman soldiers, and the dragon depicted in the Roman standard, presenting Jerusalem as a city which should be looked down upon and punished by these Christian male figures. In *Privity*, *Discourse*, and *Siege*, thus, spatiality is generated from the fixed perspective of a viewer—whether the viewer is imagined as one of Christ's female followers, an imaginative pilgrim to Calvary, or Roman Vespasian. Such textually created spatiality is essential to enable the reader, here Thornton, to construct distinctively Christian versions of Jerusalem, perform the feelings that are encoded in the text, and consequently, approach a morally better self.

Thus, by applying insights relating to the so-called affective and spatial turns to an examination of Thornton's practice of reading and imagining Jerusalem, I have elucidated his deep recognition of a principle for successful spiritual reading: Affective reading requires spatial imagination. Late-medieval devotional literacy implied not only 'affective literacy' but also 'spatial literacy', which can be defined as the ability to employ a spatial imagination according to textual cues and to psychosomatically experience the events described in the text. As a highly trained affective reader, Thornton was likely able to use both his feelings and spatial imagination for his engagement in *lectio*, spiritual reading. Thornton's annotations to *Abbey*, the text that was copied after *Privity*, *Discourse*, *Siege*, *Richard*, and *Childhood*, are, indeed, eloquent witnesses to how

skillfully Thornton was able to decode the textual cues to construct an imaginative, quasi-anchoretic nunnery with his excellent devotional, spatial literacy.

Now, I proceed to the second point that makes my reading distinguished from those of other medievalists, namely, my selection of texts from so-called vernacular theology (including *Abbey*, the Rollean treatises, and *A Revelation*), devotional literature (like *Privity*), and the texts that Thornton himself called ‘romance’. From this, I reveal the close interconnections that Thornton seems to have found between what we would classify into different categories of texts. My research suggests Thornton’s competence to find meaningful, thematic links between various kinds of writings and to select the text suitable for the purpose of his reading, whether the purpose is to obtain spiritual enhancement through an imaginative Calvary or to enjoy a fantasy of militant Christianity unopposed in the Holy Land. Thornton’s Christocentric devotion and his admiration for the Holy Land in which Christ spent his life were often at the heart of the textual intersection among these texts. In the case of *Privity* and *Siege*, the figure of the suffering Christ and the ways in which Jerusalem is presented in them create an obvious connection and contrast between them. *Privity* is the expanded version of the gospel narrative that centres on the passion and presents Jerusalem as an imaginative space that is optimised for affective meditation on Christ’s humanity. On the other hand, *Siege* emphasises the Jews’ culpability for ‘killing’ Jesus in order to arouse zealous anger from the reader. In *Siege*, first-century Jerusalem is envisioned as the place that should be punished and cleansed of Jews by the Roman proto-crusaders. Thornton’s careful compilation—as suggested most notably by *Siege*’s location at the middle of his ‘sacred history’ and immediately after the *Northern Passion* in the London Thornton MS—is thus a manifestation of his deep devotional literacy. Thornton would have been extremely knowledgeable about conventions of contemporary devotional literature and conscious of different approaches to the passion in *Privity* and *Siege*.

My selection of the texts also clarifies how profoundly Middle English narrative texts, in particular, popular romances, participated in shaping Thornton’s antisemitism and anti-Islamic

tenor. As my examination of the romance geography of *Richard* and *Childhood* suggests, imaginative, Christian copies of Palestine in these texts played a key role in the process of inculcating pious, but religiously aggressive discourse. I have indicated that the fast-paced continual movements of characters of these 'romance' texts operate as imaginative guides or kinds of itineraries and enable the reader, here Thornton, to vicariously travel to and around Palestine. Such imaginative guides often foreground then still dominant crusading discourse and antisemitism, and consequently, encourage Thornton to internalise religious intolerance. The distinctive feature of romance geography, namely, the conscious blurring of historical and imaginary places, is a source of pleasure and laughter, but the cultural fantasy offered by such a blurring simultaneously sustains the late-medieval Christian religious paradigm, which was essentially antisemitic and aggressive towards non-Christians. Most notably, *Richard* arguably offers Thornton a typical anti-Islamic fantasy as it presents a militaristic pro-English fantastical story, in which Palestine, at least part of it, becomes a completely Christian space, thanks to Richard the English king. Along with *Richard*, if we count *Siege* as a proto-crusade romance, it is also an example of the romance text's participation in the process of naturalizing antisemitism in late-medieval literary culture.

Another important finding that emerged from my selection of texts is the tie between comedy and romance, which could have been a defining feature of romance, at least for Thornton. As I have suggested through the discussion of the Christ Child's peripatetic wandering through the biblical East in *Childhood*, this apocryphal narrative that was labelled a 'romance' by Thornton offered him an antisemitic, devotional comedy. In *Childhood*, the Christ Child and the Virgin do not offer sources and models for affective devotion, which are similar to those we find in *Privy*. Rather, in *Childhood*, the holy child and mother, probably together with their medieval readers/audiences, desire the punishment of the Jews, laugh at their spiritual blindness, and invite the reader to gloat over the Jews' helplessness before the almighty Christ child. A similar gloomy (at least to us) humour is a key component of *Richard* as typified by the

romance Richard's cannibalism. Behind Thornton's pairing of *Childhood* and *Richard* as a set of romances, therefore, likely lies the comedic laughter that enabled readers/audiences to share religious, cultural, and social norms and mores dominant in their communities. As I have pointed out, Thornton seems to have had a clear view of what kinds of texts were understood as romances. Without a more detailed study of other contemporary manuscripts that contain Middle English verse romance texts, I cannot know whether Thornton's view of romances was shared with other readers. Nonetheless, this link between comedy and romances is an important insight that can broaden our understanding of Middle English verse romance as a literary genre.

Thus, my thesis reveals how skilfully a late-medieval northern English reader, Thornton, was able to use his spatial imagination, manipulate his feelings, and vicariously travel to and around Jerusalem and the Holy Land both for devotional performance and for entertainment. According to Keiser, Thornton was 'probably exceptional' since there seems to have been few amateur compilers who were able to collect and copy such writings as Thornton could in late medieval England.<sup>5</sup> However, both Keiser and Johnston suggest that the texts Thornton copied also embodied contemporary laypeople's devotional interests and reflected gentry's socioeconomic concerns.<sup>6</sup> Thus, even though Thornton might not have been representative of late medieval English readers, his two surviving manuscripts provide us with a glimpse of the rich literary culture enjoyed among fifteenth-century northern English elite lay readers and their sophisticated practices of reading. Part of my conclusion—the discussion about the didacticism and pleasure of imaginative Jerusalem and Palestine—might just confirm what literary scholars including Akbari, Heng, Bale, and McDonald have long pointed out about late-medieval English verse romances. However, the findings that I have emphasised above, I hope, will contribute to scholarly discussions on medieval romances, late-medieval English laity's various forms of literacies, and their practices of reading.

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<sup>5</sup> Keiser, "To Knewe God Almyghtyn", p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> Keiser, "To Knewe God Almyghtyn", pp. 122–23; Johnston, *Romance and the Gentry*, pp. 160–61.

So far, I have listed my findings, but parts of my thesis do not develop enough of the topics that are deserved either a closer or broader examination. First, it will be fruitful to have an even closer look at Thornton's collection of secular and religious texts and to explore their interconnection. For instance, an exploration that encompasses not only Christian historiography in Thornton's 'sacred history' (that consists mainly of the extracts from the *Cursor mundi*, the *Northern Passion*, *Siege*, and two Charlemagne romances) but also secular histories (like two epics of the *Prose Alexander* and the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, Lydgate's *Verses on the Kings of England*, and the lists of *exempla* offered by Elde in the *Parlement of the Thre Ages*) can offer us an interesting insight into how Thornton might have viewed the history of the known world, and consequently provide us with a window onto Thornton's spatiotemporal experience. Also, the alliterative *John Evangelist Hymn* and Thornton's invocation to this apostle along with Jesus and the Virgin (fol. 213<sup>r</sup> of the Lincoln Thornton MS) indicate his devotion to the apostle. These texts and this devotion can be studied in the context of the fifteenth-century English ecclesiastical effort to limit the laity's spiritual ambition and censor what they read, knew, and thought. According to McNamer, John the Evangelist provided a model for lay devotion, the model that was not only satisfying for lay elites but also convenient for ecclesiastical authority. John the Evangelist's traditional role in offering a model of pastoral care to clerics flattered educated lay devotees, who were often tempted to imagine themselves as a clergyman. On the other hand, this apostle's liminal status as 'a feminised man', who 'simply feels', 'seeking no temporal power, and engaging in no interpretive acts', allowed conservative ecclesiastics to contain the laity's potentially subversive devotional energies within the boundaries of orthodoxy.<sup>7</sup> Thornton's devotion and texts related to John the Evangelist will elucidate more richly complex relations and negotiations between Thornton and his spiritual advisor(s).

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<sup>7</sup> McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, p. 148.

My suggestions about Thornton's literacy also require further investigation. My idea of his devotional, spatial literacy develops mainly from the arguments of Gillespie, Aston, Smith, and Amsler's 1999 article.<sup>8</sup> However, as Amsler demonstrates in his more recent book, medieval literacies can be approached not as a 'single Literacy', but as 'a network of contested multilingual and multimodal practices', through which 'different literate groups reworked ideas of grammar and textual authority to create new relations of power, agency, and resistance from the production and reception of written texts'.<sup>9</sup> Given such an argument about the richly flexible and complex idea of medieval literacies, my argument of Thornton's knowledge and skills in reading require more careful consideration. In particular, Amsler's view of medieval English intellectual worlds as 'hyperliterate and contested multilingual fields' can shed new light on Thornton's ways of switching between Latin and English and more broadly, on the reception of and relationships among Latin, Anglo-Norman, and English texts in late-medieval household manuscripts.<sup>10</sup>

Also, while the sources of my thesis are literary texts, an exploration of late-medieval laypeople's devotional, spatial literacy will become more productive if we study literary texts and devotional objects together. As Bianca Kühnel argues, devotional images, or 'multimedia representations' of a set of Jerusalem-related places, which she calls the 'holy landscapes' (her definition encompasses the places not usually included in the stations of the cross), proliferated in late-medieval western Christendom.<sup>11</sup> These representations, including painted panels, diptychs, triptychs, sculptures, and church fittings, offered the faithful 'an optimal framework', in Kühnel's words, to learn and memorise the places which were significant both for their commemoration of the biblical past and for their future salvation.<sup>12</sup> As suggested by Thornton's

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<sup>8</sup> Gillespie, 'Lukyng in Haly Bukes', pp. 117–28; Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, pp. 101–33; Smith, 'The Neville of Hornby Hours', p. 72; Amsler, 'Affective Literacy', pp. 83–110.

<sup>9</sup> Mark Amsler, *Affective Literacies: Writing and Multilingualism in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), p. xxi–xxii.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. xxv. It should be noted that Thornton's Latin literacy was good enough to copy the abridged *Psalter of Saint Jerome* with a conventional set of abbreviations.

<sup>11</sup> Bianca Kühnel, 'Virtual Pilgrimages to Real Places: The Holy Landscapes' in *Imagining Jerusalem in the Medieval West*, ed. by Lucy Donkin and Hanna Vorholt, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 175 (Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 243–64 (p. 261).

<sup>12</sup> Kühnel, p. 264.

virtual pilgrimage to the *via crucis* in *Privity*, Christian viewers/readers of the holy landscapes were encouraged to allocate an event to each point of the sequential places in Jerusalem and to repeatedly trace them so that they can easily remember the gospel narrative and learn the significance of the places. Thus, we should view Thornton's spatial literacy in a broader context of contemporary devotional performance and use interdisciplinary approaches where a history of art, archaeology, and literary studies are fruitfully intersected.

Indeed, Thornton's everyday life was evidently full of various forms of recreations of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. For instance, at the altar of Saint Peter's chapel in East Newton Hall, Thornton could have found the sculpture or image of the crucifixion, which was probably flanked by the figures of the Virgin and John the Evangelist standing on Calvary. Stonegrave Minster, the Thornton family's parish church, also had the easter sepulchre, which was a locally accessible holy sepulchre and probably was 'a canopied niche set in the north wall of the chancel'.<sup>13</sup> Stonegrave Minster's easter sepulchre, equally the ones found in many other late-medieval English parish churches, would have invited Thornton to a local copy of Calvary. The panels and clothes that lavishly decorated such an easter sepulchre generally depicted a then-established set of images, including those of 'the sleeping soldiers, Christ rising or risen, the three Marys or St Mary Magdalene, [and] adoring angels', namely, a similar set of images that *Privity* presents.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, York's mystery plays, performed on the feast of Corpus Christi, were a communal attempt to translate Jerusalem to York. They would have offered Thornton a three-dimensional, dynamic version of Christian, imaginative Jerusalem. While the interdisciplinary, material-focused approaches to late-medieval devotional culture have developed and flourished among the disciplines of archaeology, history of art, and social material history, studies based on literary texts have not been much included in this recent scholarly trend.<sup>15</sup> Studies that pay

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<sup>13</sup> According to Eamon Duffy, late-medieval English parish churches had the easter sepulchre either in the form of 'a movable wooden frame, which was adorned with drapery and carved or painted panels' or a permanent architectural or sculptural feature of the church. See Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 31.

<sup>14</sup> Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 32.

<sup>15</sup> Giles and McClain, 'The Devotional Image in Late-medieval England', p. 659.



attention not only domestic space, churches, and urban spaces but also literary texts will elucidate processes through which Thornton could have developed skills to commemorate and affectively and spatially re-experience Christian versions of Jerusalem. Although such interdisciplinary studies have been made, most notably, by Bale, we still need to investigate more about devotional, spatial literacy through the scrutiny of locatable examples like Thornton's.<sup>16</sup>

While the local sitedness of the Thornton MSS will continue to be a fruitful source of studies of vernacular literary culture in the late-medieval north of England, Thornton's texts and the spatiality within them also need to be examined in broader contexts. A comparison of Thornton's case with the texts and spatial mechanics in other so-called 'household miscellanies' (manuscripts made and used for an inclusive group of household audiences) consumed in the other parts of England, for instance, is necessary. Such a comparison will enable us to situate Thornton's practice of reading more accurately in the wider context of late-medieval literary culture.<sup>17</sup>

To conclude my thesis, I would like to underscore again an important, logical implication of my research, namely, the ties between Christocentric piety and hostility to non-Christians. My investigation of imaginative Jerusalem in devotional texts and crusading romances indicates how affective devotion and religious intolerance were bound together in Thornton's lifetime, more than one hundred years after the fall of Acre. Long after Pope Innocent III solidified the doctrine of transubstantiation and the sacrament of penance as part of his efforts to make Christendom spiritually worthy of Jerusalem again, the devotion to Christ's humanity, including affective devotion to the passion and the fervent eucharistic piety, became leading features of late-medieval lay devotional culture. This focus on Christ's human body and, by its logical extension, a keen interest in Palestine, which was believed to be full of the sites of Jesus's life, came to characterise late-medieval English devotional writings. In this devotional trend, some

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<sup>16</sup> Bale, *Feeling Persecuted*.

<sup>17</sup> Hardman, 'Domestic Learning and Teaching', pp. 16–17.

medieval romances, in particular the so-called crusading romances, also participated. As often thematising the loss and recovery of the Holy Land, crusading romances were read as narratives about the battles of *miles Christi*, who fight for the promised holy lands that were celebrated and left for Christians by the humanity of Christ. Devotional literature and romances were widely demanded and read in fifteenth-century England by the gentry and urban elites (though the boundaries between these two social groups were often porous).<sup>18</sup> The gentry, including the Thornton family, gradually solidified their social position at a lower margin of the nobility, played a various administrative role in their locality, and enjoyed cultural sophistication. As such a locally important, prosperous gentleman with bookish piety, Thornton enjoyed rich literary culture and had religiosity which inherited the long-lasting legacy of ecclesiastical reform, which aimed to western Christendom spiritually worthy of Jerusalem again, even though he himself may not have known that. Thus, my research elucidates, by focusing on Thornton's imaginative, spatial construction of Christian copies of Jerusalem and Palestine, the longevity of crusading discourse and how this discourse was intricately related to Christocentric devotion and became part of the basis of fifteenth-century northern English religiosity, its literary culture, and even its Christian identity. In Tyerman's view, crusading 'did not make western Europe a violent place', but 'violent Europe created crusading'.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, crusading discourse and Christocentric devotion (which was tied to this discourse) did not make late-medieval Christians religiously aggressive. Rather, their bellicose religiosity willingly inherited crusading discourse and found it still useful 'to fulfil widely disparate and changing needs, temporal and spiritual'.<sup>20</sup> Religiously aggressive, pious readers embraced militant Christian discourse and employed it for their varying demands, whether they were spiritual enhancement or entertainment.

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<sup>18</sup> Johnston, 'Romance, Distraint, and the Gentry', pp. 436–39.

<sup>19</sup> Tyerman, 'What the Crusades Meant to Europe', p. 149.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 149.

Bearing in mind such a compound of affective, Christocentric piety and militant Christianity, I now cite a passage from *Sir Perceval of Gales*, which Thornton labelled as ‘romance’ and which has the almost same end as *Sir Degrevant*:

Than Sir Percevell in hy  
 Toke his modir hym by,  
 I say yow than certenly,  
 And *home* went hee.  
 Grete lordes and the Qwene  
 Welcomed hym al bydene [all toghether];  
 When thay hym on lyfe [alive] sene;  
 Than blythe myghte thay bee.  
 Sythen he went into the Holy Londe,  
 Wanne many cités full stronge,  
 And there was he slayne, I undirstonde;  
 Thusgatis [in this way] endis hee. (*Sir Perceval of Gales*, ll. 2273–84, my italics)<sup>21</sup>

Here, Perceval recovers his mother from the hands of a giant and takes her to his ‘home’, where great lords and his queen await him. However, after only a word, ‘sythen’, Perceval again travels to ‘the Holy Londe’, where he is ‘slayne’ and ‘endis’ his life. As I hope my thesis has demonstrated, this abrupt leap from ‘home’ to the ‘Holy Londe’ and to Perceval’s death at the hands of an anonymous non-Christian would in all probability have been regarded as an immensely satisfactory and spiritually desirable end for a romance hero by Thornton and his ilk. For Thornton and contemporary northern English lay men and women like him, Jerusalem and

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<sup>21</sup> Mary Flowers Braswell, ed., *Sir Perceval and Yvain and Gawain* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995).

Palestine were, even though having never been physically 'recovered' after the fall of Acre, enormously familiar, even local. Palestine was repeatedly copied in their familiar places, including Thornton's own 'home', and these Palestines invited late medieval northern English laypeople to affective, spatial immersion in imaginative, Christian versions of Jerusalem. Such copies of Jerusalem and Palestine were so malleable as to cater for various demands, including a wish to pursue spiritual perfection through affective meditation; the need to assuage English nationalistic concerns about Richard I's unfulfilled crusading vow; and a demand for pleasure and laughter, emotions which are generated by the figures of the Jews fooled by the holy terror of a Christ Child. Perceval's death in the Holy Land catered for the late medieval English audience's, here Thornton's desire to imagine a penitential battle by a Christian knight, who fights against Muslims and wins spiritual reward. Not only devotional literature but also the romances energetically partook in the process through which readers embraced Christocentric piety and militaristic Christian discourses, and consequently, celebrated antisemitism and anti-Islamic attitudes as an important aspect of Christian virtue, one which had the potential to lead the devotee to highly valued spiritual rewards.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

BHO	British History Online
EETS, o.s.	Early English Text Society, Original Series
MED	Middle English Dictionary
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
OED	Oxford English Dictionary

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