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Elizabeth Salter's London M.A. thesis of 1949, eventually published in 1974, contains (almost as a bonus to her famous study of Nicholas Love) one of the most helpful listings of Middle English Lives of Christ. The two Lives that form the subject of the present essay are the *Southern Passion*, which has been edited by B.D. Brown, and the greater part (now known as the *Ministry and Passion*) of "the long poem in St John's College Cambridge MS B. 6" (Salter, p.89). Both are associated with the late thirteenth-century *South English Legendary* collection. Elizabeth Salter classifies the English Lives into five types "according to material and mode of presentation" (p.55), and she places the two poems in question in different groups: the *Ministry and Passion* (*MP*) in group (c), "Lives consisting of loose paraphrase of the Biblical account, with homiletic and legendary additions", and the *Southern Passion* (*SP*) in group (d), "Lives consisting of Biblical paraphrase, homily and emotional reflection" (pp.55-6). It is the new element of "emotional reflection" that distinguishes the second group, and which indeed separates groups (a)-(c) from (d)-(e). The whole of group (d), writes Elizabeth Salter (p.98), "illustrates a changed devotional attitude to the Life of Christ. In choice and treatment of material these Lives differ strongly from all those hitherto discussed. They contain, in varying degree, a vernacular expression of the vein of affective meditation on the Humanity of Christ which runs in Latin literature from the time of Anselm onwards".

Thus *MP* is grouped with (for example) *Cursor Mundi* and the *Northern Passion*, and *SP* with Love's *Myrour* and other versions of the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi*. But *MP* and *SP* are not to be so sharply contrasted. Elizabeth Salter notes (p.100) that they are both connected with the *South English Legendary*, but not that they are textually related, even though this had been clearly stated by B.D. Brown (p.viii). The absence of an edition of *MP* left scholars in doubt about the nature of the relationship until very recently," but detailed analysis of the two poems has now established that *SP* is a careful reworking of *MP*. This does not in itself mean that they could not be as contrasting as Elizabeth Salter's classification implies, but the difference between them lies elsewhere than in the element of emotional reflection.

*MP* is a poem of 3048 lines, ranging in its narrative from the
It is predominantly biblical in content, in effect a loosely-translated gospel harmony of unique arrangement. There are certain legendary insertions, and a considerable number of usually short passages of interpretative or homiletic comment. The 2588-line SP, which ends at the same point as MP but begins with Mary Magdalene's anointing of Christ's feet, is proportionately longer than MP. Its author's purpose was to create a narrative both more biblical and more didactic. His method is four-fold: he variously inserts close translations of gospel passages not found in MP; discards MP's paraphrases in favour of more accurate translations; rewrites MP (retaining many words and phrases) to bring it closer to the gospels; and yet again leaves MP's narrative as he finds it, particularly during the central events of the Passion. His procedure is the same with expository and homiletic material: some he keeps, some he adapts, some he replaces, and much is added. There are more explanations of liturgical and ecclesiastical practices, more exhortations to live a Christian life, and more criticisms of those who don't. It is a more serious and stringent poem than MP.

The emotional elements are found in both poems: there are more examples in SP, but not of a different kind. The passages in question stand out from MP and SP's normally restrained narrative in being apostrophes addressed to Christ. The opening lines of two such passages (together with another line in the same style) have recently been quoted as examples of SP's special qualities, but all three lines occur in identical form in MP. MP's wording of these two passages is as follows:

Ihesu, to þin opere wo wnat drynk was þe brou3t!
[For] þer was non of þi lymys withoutte but þat it hæp dere vs
bou3t,
Bøpe þi tunge & þi mouþ withinne þe Iewis han þorw3scou3t.
þi hed was þorwounded with [þe] crowne þei hadde þeron do,
þi chekis & erys al forebete, with buffatis smetyn also,
& al þi body benepeforth with scourgis harde bete,
Feet & handys þorwsmete with naylys blunte & grete.
þo was no lyne vnturmented but þi tunge allone
With þe qwecche þou deðlíst þi moder betake into þe warde of
Seynt Iohn.
3it wolde not þo læper Iewis þat [it] were withoute pyne,
Qwen þei þeuyn þe þat bitter drynk with vynegre medlyd fyne.
O Iheus, þou bouȝest vs dere not only with þi heueede
But wol sore with every lyms; þer was non beleuede.
þi deth [was deth] of alle ðeðis þat [to] ony man euere [come],
For as þe book seith, & scoþ is, it passede martyrdom.
(MP 2498-512)

O Ihesu, ho may þis here withoutte sorwe of herte?
Hard is þe herte þat þis herith but he wepe & smerte,
þat þou schuldist for vs wepe & so bitterlych grede,
& for vs lete þi swete lyf - allas oure wrecchedehede!
þe erþe myȝt not bere þi deth, þat is þing withoutte rede,
But þat it gryslyche quakede, as ho seith for drede.
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Allas, man, qwere is þin herte? How mayst þou here þis
But þou tremele & quake for drede, so reufull þing it is?
Trees & stonys suffred not þ[at] his herte brak in to,
Alle þat nyþ þe place were, but þat þel brustæ also.
Cloþis þat in þe temple were al toclæf in þe mydæ;
Dede mennys berylys brokyn eke, as [þif] mercy to bidde.
Ihesus, hard was þi deþ qwan harde trees & stonys
To brustyn þo þin herte brak & beryelis with mannys bonys.
Man, how mayst þou heryn þis [but] þin herte br[æ]ke anon?
Allas, man, and is þin herte hardere þan ony ston?
þi lord + deyde in so strong peyne & in so strong a deþ
For þe, & þou art his hyne and sory art vnneþe.
Sunne & erþ, stonys and trees, here vertu queneche,
þou for qwom he suffred his deth vnneþe wil on hym þenche.
(MP 2539-58)

These extracts correspond closely to SP 1524-38 and 1583-1602. There is also a third emotional passage common to both poems at MP 2579-612/SP 1645-78, on how the Jews shed every drop of blood in Christ’s body.

In addition to these shared emotional passages SP contains two others not in MP, namely 1109-16 and 1603-24. The first occurs in the middle of what in MP is a continuous narrative of the Agony in the Garden (SP 1105-08, 1117-20 are parallel to MP 2163-70), and reads as follows:

O Ihesu swete þing . whar is oure heorte now?
ffor to polye so strong deþ . lutel gult haddestou,
þat ar þou come þer-to . þe blody dropses rede
þou swattest, Ihesu, swete þing . strong was þi drede.
Bouȝtestou vs al wip nouȝt . nay, lemmæn ywis,
Strong was þi deþ atten ende . Ihesu kyng of blis,
Whanne þou ar þou come þer-to . swattest red blod.
How mijþou, man, þis yhure . bote þou chaunge þi mod?
(SP 1109-16)

It seems to have been inspired by the detail of the drops of blood in MP 2165-6 (1107-08), and it replaces the short devotional apostrophe with which MP ends its account of the Agony:

Lord Ihesu, mekil was þi loue þat þou schewedyst þere,
þat þou wendyst to þi deth & haddist þerto so gret fere!
(MP 2173-4)

The reviser was evidently capable of writing an emotional lament of his own in a style very similar to that of the shared passages.

SP 1603-24 is a more complicated matter. It follows immediately on the shared MP 2539-58/SP 1583-1602, quoted above, and describes Christ’s physical pain when hanging on the Cross:

A prophete spak of oure lord . longe byffore þis dede,
And þow oure lordes mouþ . þeose wordes he sede:
“A ffox him may ffynde a stey . and a turtle a nest al-so, 1605
Whar-ynte hi sitte mowe & walwy . & hare ese do,
Ak Ihesus nys on eorpe nou3t . so muche goed byleued
Wer-vp he mowe enes . reste his wery heued'.
O Thesu swete þing . were þou so pouere þou
Nere þou kynge of alle kynes . whoder was þi goed y-do? 1610
þe nas so muche goed ygraunted . ther-vpe þou miȝttest deye
Ne a wrecche torf of þe eorpe . bote henge in þe eyr heye;
Ne þi seli lymes . nere ygraunted to þe na-mo
þat eny miȝte ober helpe . how miȝte þer beo more wo?
þine armes were wyde ystreyt . þine hondes y-nayled ffaste, 1615
þat þou ne miȝttest in al þi wo . to þin heued ones caste.
Ne þou ne miȝttest bere vp þin heued . so strong was þi dép,
Ne whar-vp hit lenye . wel harde þou lete þi brep.
þei hit miȝte to þi shuldres come . þi croune of þornes þo
þer-on wolde deope wade . and þat hadde þut ybeo more wo. 1620
How miȝte so pouere dép . eny man here y-seo?
Bytey and strong and eke pouere . Ihesu yhered þou beo.
No wonder hit nas þei pe sonne . in derkhed were ydo,
Whanne treos and harde stones . and clobes to-borste al-so.
(Sp 1603-24)

The final couplet reverts to the subject-matter of the preceding
passage, which may suggest that SP has made an insertion, but
although there is no trace of 1603-24 in the extant MP there is a
Corresponding passage in another related poem, the Abridged Life
of Christ (ALC). The principal source of this composition is
unmistakably MP, which it drastically compresses, and it normally
agrees with SP only when the latter is following MP. In this case,
however, ALC 447-72 seem to be related to SP 1603-24. There is an
obvious difference in that the first part (447-54, 457-8) and the
last couplet are cast in the form of an address by Christ from the
Cross, and there are no apostrophes to Christ; but the sequence of
ideas is the same, and there are very similar phrases:

Oure lord sede womman lo here þy sone . ybrouȝt in grete pyne
For mannes gultes noub here . & nobyn for myne
Al þat gop by þe way . dwelleþ a luytel wyle
& loken he sede war any pine . ober sorwe be as myne 450
perfor he sede þe wolf haþ sty . ware he may lygghe & reste
& þe foul to legge . his breddes haþ neste
Ic bat am godes sone . me nys noȝt byleued
So mucho place ware ic may . legge on myn heued
þe gywes maden mowen on hym . & sayde if þou haddest myȝt
& if þou ert godes sone . wy nelt þou adon lyȝt
My body sede oure lord . is blody & wan
Alas sede oure swete lord . þat ic euer made man
Alas man wy nelt þou bis . vnderstonde in by þoȝt
Hou lytel ioie oure lord hadde . in þe rode ynayled so touȝt 460
His armes wer ystraȝt . fram hym so wyde
& faste ynailed to þe hard tre . bop in ayþer syde
þat he ne myȝt for no þing . to his heued hem fette
Ne in non half his heued . þerwith vndersette
þus he lyned his heued . vpon his sholdere adoune
He hadde also on his heued . of þornes ymade a croune

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Because of the correspondence with SP there is a strong possibility that MP originally contained a similar passage. In wording this would probably have been closer to SP than to ALC. MP and SP are careful not to attribute to Christ any non-canonical speeches ("Oure lord seyde to hem no more pat we owher don rede", MP 2493/SP 1519), but ALC, not subject to similar restraint, makes Christ speak the prophet's words in his own person, as part of an appeal from the Cross in the style of contemporary lyrics. It is therefore likely that SP 1605-08 are closer than ALC 451-4 to what MP may once have had, and (given that ALC's author is engaged in rewriting) SP 1615-20 closer than ALC 461-70. SP 1603-04, 1609-14, and 1621-4 are not paralleled in ALC but could well have existed in MP, if this poem ever contained the passage. 1609-14 are the lines most likely to have been added by the SP reviser.

The uncertainty about the origin of SP 1603-24 underlines the now evident conclusion that there is no essential difference in poetic mode between any of the emotional passages in MP and SP, whether or not they are common to the two poems. SP's author appears to write with a greater fervour, as may be seen from the epiphetes applied to Christ (although it is possible that these may be scribal in origin). In the passages not in MP we find leman (1113) and swete ping (1109, 1112, 1609), and in the shared passages Swete Ihesu (1645, 1667) where MP has Ihesu and Blissid Ihesu (2579, 2601). But this is not a difference in kind, only in degree. The authors of the two poems apostrophize Christ and Man in the same way, exclaiming at the former's sufferings and love, and admonishing the latter for his hardness of heart.

II

Beatrice Brown, the editor of SP, devotes a section of her invaluable discussion of the poem's sources to "The Meditationes Vitae Christi and the Lignum Vitae". The former, one of the best-known devotional works of the Middle Ages, is a spurious work of St Bonaventura (1221-74), the latter an authentic one. Mrs Brown claims that SP "is cast in the same general mould as the Meditationes, that of commented narrative interrupted with emotional apostrophe" (p.lxxix), and that "On the whole it would seem that the poet had been impressed by the general purpose and method of the Meditationes Vitae Christi, and had evolved a highly simplified work on the same lines" (pp.lxxx-lxxxii). In support of these claims of broad resemblance she adduces a number of detailed parallels, and notes, too, certain passages in SP which are especially close to the Lignum Vitae.

Mrs Brown's conclusion that SP was influenced by the Meditationes
(MVC) has been generally accepted by Middle English scholars. Less notice has been paid by students of MVC itself, but C. Fischer, writing in 1932, may have been influenced by the implications of her arguments for the dating of the Latin work and for the question of its authorship (first noted by Brown herself, pp.xci-xcii). MVC is usually dated c.1300, but SP can confidently be dated c.1275-85 (Brown, p.xii); and while a date of c.1300 means that MVC could not possibly be by Bonaventura, a date several decades earlier pushes it back into his lifetime. When for SP is substituted the older MP (for what Mrs Brown says about MVC and SP holds in almost every case for MP), the date of the Latin work in theory becomes earlier still. Fischer in fact argued on other grounds that the Passion section of MVC was authentic Bonaventura and thus pre-1274. His conclusions have largely been rejected by later MVC scholars, and Mrs Brown's must also be disputed. Both SP's supposed broad and particular correspondences with MVC can be called into question.

Mrs Brown divides the supposed detailed resemblances to MVC (and the Lignum Vitae) into five groups, which she calls "Explanatory comment", "Graphic detail", "Quality of feeling", "Themes and phrasing of emotional passages", and "Hortatory tone". But she assembles in support no more than thirteen passages from SP (eleven of which occur in MP), and only six of these are more than two lines long.

The seven short passages do not seem especially significant, and need little comment:

SP 1349 (MP 2333), an interjection on the shame that the Jews inflicted on Christ. The wording is close to the sentence that Brown (p.lxxxv) quotes from MVC cap. 77, but there it is placed during the Journey to Calvary, not, as in the poems, during the Trial before Pilate.

SP 1423 (MP 2399), "Sharpe and kene were þe þornes. hi wente to þe scolle". Brown (p.lxxxiii) claims that "not only the concrete detail but the narrative manner corresponds", but the Latin (cap. 76) reads "Perforabant namque caput ejus sacratissimum acerbissimae illae spineae", and continues (not quoted by Brown) "ac totum madere faciebant sanguine" (Peltier, p.604) - a "graphic detail" not in the poems.

SP 1438 (MP 2414), on the shame of carrying the Cross. The motif appears at the same point in MVC (cap. 77), but despite what Brown says (p.lxxxii) it was a common theme.

SP 1581-2 (MP 2537-8), the moment of Christ's death: "... and þo closede his eye, /And his heued heng adown . and myd bat word gan to deye". Brown (p.lxxxiii) claims that here, too, both the concrete detail and the narrative manner correspond, but the passage in MVC (cap. 79) reads: "Et ex tunc languere coepit more morientum, modo claudendo oculos, modo aperiendo, et caput inclinare" (Peltier, p.607), after which Christ speaks again before dying. The poems' simpler description is closer to the Gospels (cf. Jo. xix. 30).

SP 1583 (MP 2539), the first line of one of the shared emotional passages, quoted earlier ("O Ihesu who may þis yhure . wipoute wop of heorte?"). Brown (p.lxxxix) relates it to a rhetorical appeal
not in MVC but in the Lignum Vitae. The similarity undoubtedly exists, but the Latin sentence has the very different context of Christ's examination by the high priests (the paragraph "Jesus vultu velatus", Peltier, p.75). Again, the sentiment was common.

SP 1671 (MP 2605), "Namore schame pan hi dude . ne mi3te pe gywes pe do", from the third emotional passage common to the poems.

Brown (p.lxxxv) refers to MVC cap. 79, but the relevant phrase reads "et quantum poterant, nocuerunt" (Peltier, p.607), i.e. "did harm", not "did shame". As in other cases, the context is different.

Finally, SP 837-8, not in MP, are more significant than the other lines so far discussed, for they make the striking comment that if Peter, at the Last Supper, had known that Judas was the traitor, he would have torn him apart with his teeth. MVC cap. 73 makes the same point in the same context, but, as Brown allows (p.lxxxii), the writer explicitly cites Augustine as his authority. The comment was therefore not original.

The supposed resemblances so far discussed do not carry even sufficient cumulative weight to make it likely that MP/SP used MVC as a source, and of the six more substantial parallels cited by Mrs Brown and now to be examined, only two relate primarily to MVC itself.

Two of the six she admits are closer to Jacobus de Voragine's Legenda Aurea. The first of them (SP 1524-40, MP 2498-514) is also the first of the shared emotional passages, and was quoted earlier. The subject is the idea that tasting the vinegar and gall was the climax of Christ's physical suffering. This is briefly found in the paragraph "Jesus felle et aceto potatus" of the Lignum Vitae (Brown's reference to MVC cap. 79 is less close), but MP/SP's development resembles a passage, attributed to St Bernard, in Legenda cap. 53, as Brown shows (pp.lxxxvi-lxxxvii). The second parallel with the Legenda (SP 1645-70, MP 2579-604) comprises the greater part of the third of the shared emotional passages, describing how the Jews shed every drop of each of the three kinds of blood in Christ's body. As before, Brown finds the essence of the idea in the Lignum Vitae ("Jesus cruore madidus") and a more detailed exposition, closer to the poems, in Legenda cap. 53 (Brown, pp.lxxxvii-lxxxviii).

Another two of the longer parallels Mrs Brown refers wholly to the Lignum Vitae. They involve SP 1547-50 (MP 2521-4) and SP 1587-98 (MP 2543-54), which she considers together on pp.lxxxix-xc: the second falls within the second shared emotional passage, quoted above. The theme is the behaviour of natural phenomena when Christ dies. In the first case the sun hides its light, refusing to shine when its creator is suffering, and in the second the earth, stones, trees, and graves break open, showing more compassion than man, whose heart remains unmoved. There is undoubted similarity to passages in the paragraph "Jesus Sol morte pallidus" of the Lignum Vitae, but it must be said again that the ideas were also in general circulation.

The two remaining parallels, with MVC itself, deserve more
serious consideration. One of them is *SP* 2159-68, a passage which gives three reasons why Christ allowed his wounds to remain visible after the Resurrection. Exactly these explanations occur at the same point in *MVC* cap. 93, and Mrs Brown (p.lxxxiii n.55) was unable to trace the same three elsewhere. The passage does not, however, occur in *MP*. It was evidently added by the reviser, and therefore has no bearing on whether the original form of the poem was influenced by *MVC*.19

The other and final parallel is with *MVC*’s well-known description of the process of Crucifixion in cap. 78, where Christ is said to be nailed to the Cross after it has already been set upright in the ground. Mrs Brown (p.lxxxiv) quotes the following passage:

Hic modum crucis diligenter attende. Ponuntur duae scalae, una retrorsum ad brachium dextrum, alia ad sinistrum brachium, super quas malefici ascendunt cum clavis, et martellis. Ponitur etiam alia scala ex parte anteriori, attingens usque ad locum ubi deebant pedes affigi. Conspice nunc . . . compellitur Dominus Iesus ascendere per hanc scalam parvam . . . (Peltier, pp.605-06),

and compares it with *SP* 1459-61 (*MP* 2435-7):

Laddren hi hadde on eyper half . ours lord vp hi bere, And henge him heyour þan þan þo were. þorw eyper hond hi Smyte a Nayl . & þorw þe ffet þe þridde.

She claims that these descriptions are "virtually identical", and that the correspondence is particularly noteworthy because the *MVC* is "unique among Latin treatises on the Passion in thus describing the mode of crucifixion" (as opposed to the more familiar "prostrate" method)20 and is the ultimate authority for it.

But in fact the "upright" Crucifixion is attested long before the late thirteenth century. Earlier medieval art contains instances of Christ ascending the Cross by means of a ladder,21 and literary accounts, too, often leave it in no doubt that Christ was fastened to an already erect Cross: the Old English *Dream of the Rood* is an obvious case. For an example from the first half of the thirteenth century one need go no further than the Middle English *Wooing of Our Lord*:

A, nu have thai broht him thider. A, nu raise thi up the rode; setis up the warh-treo. A, nu macnes mon mi lef. A, nu driven ha him up with swepes and with schurges. A, hu live I for reowthe that seo nu mi lefmon up o rode and swa to drahen hise limes that I mai in his bodi euch ban tellen. A, hu that ha nu driven irnene neiles thurh thine feire hondes into hard rode, thurh thine freoliche fet.22

The mention of ladders is admittedly unusual in thirteenth-century literary treatments of the Crucifixion, but *MP/SP*’s few lines are far too generalised to be referable to *MVC*’s circumstantial description, which is much longer than the extract quoted by Mrs Brown and
which ends with a brief account of the alternative prostrate Crucifixion. In particular, MVC differs from MP/SP in having three ladders and in depicting Christ as climbing up by himself.

Even if some of the suggested resemblances between MVC and MP/SP were admitted to be significant, it must be asked whether MP's author would have picked from MVC only the few ideas and details in question, and left so very much more untouched. Only a memorial knowledge of the work could easily explain this procedure, and it then follows that he could be remembering from a range of sources, not just one. Mrs Brown (p.lxxx) allows that "a large proportion of the actual subject-matter of the Meditations does not appear in the Southern Passion", and she herself suggests that "certain striking passages . . . had impressed themselves on the poet's memory, while the bulk of information was naturally forgotten". SP, she admits, contains "none of the speculative discussion" and nothing of "the mass of apocryphal incident relating to the Blessed Virgin".

If this is the case, she is exaggerating when at the same time she claims that MVC "supplied the general norm" for SP and that there is a "general correspondence in structure" (p.lxxx). MP is predominantly biblical and SP even more so. They are continuous gospel harmonies with an arrangement of material found (so far as is known) nowhere else, and take as little from MVC in the way of design or structure as they do distinctive content. What can be said is simply that MP/SP and MVC independently represent a shift towards a consistent narrative account of the Life and Passion of Christ and away from the more fragmented approach commonly found in earlier works cast in other literary forms.23

Similarly, the "general mould" of the poems cannot be said, as in MVC, to be "commentated narrative interrupted with emotional apostrophe" (Brown, p.lxxix). In MP and SP the latter element is concentrated in the central sections of the Passion and forms only a tiny proportion of the whole. In particular, none of MP and SP's three shared passages of emotional apostrophe is derived from MVC. As we have seen, Mrs Brown refers two to the Legenda Aurea and the third to the Lignum Vitae. She makes no mention of SP's additional emotional passages, and these also do not depend on MVC.

Mrs Brown also makes much of what she claims are close similarities in SP and MVC's authorial attitude and purpose. She is right in saying that both are didactic and that they share (at least during MP/SP's emotional passages) "a note of reproachful exhortation" (p.lxxxix). But is it really true that "The relation of writer to audience is the same", and that the English poems reflect the same "urgent desire to move men to sympathetic meditation" (p.lxxxix)? One of MVC's most noticeable and appealing characteristics is the intimacy and tenderness with which each reader feels himself led personally through the book, as if by an individual guide. It exemplifies to perfection the "deictic" mode, in which the reader is made an eye-witness to the action and gently but consistently urged to "Imagine this" or "Look now".24 There is nothing of this in MP and SP, which generally inhabit an altogether less inspired world of plain narrative and impersonal exposition, and
this sharp contrast in authorial method makes irrelevant the occasionally similar "intensity of feeling" (Brown, p.lxxxv).

III

*MP* and *SP* are to some extent hybrid compositions. They fall between Elizabeth Salter's (c) and (d) groups of English Lives of Christ, in that they consist predominantly of "loose paraphrase of the Biblical account, with homiletic and legendary additions", but have also several passages of "emotional reflection" which fit somewhat strangely with the lower temperature of their surroundings. The source of these passages is almost certainly not to be sought in one particular work, such as MVC, but generally in the affective tradition of devotion to the humanity of Christ, which was well-established in England long before MVC was written. MP and SP's emotional passages show the influence of the exclamatory style popularised by St Bernard and St Anselm, and developed in the treatises and meditations that circulated under their names. For example:

> O lacrymae, ubi vos subtraxistis, ubi estis, fontes lacrymarum? Humectate maxillas meas, irrigate genas meas, fluite super faciem. Heu me miserum! omnis creatura compatitur Christo, et turbatur de morte sua, sed miserum cor meum non competitur Creatori suo morienti pro ipso. Flete me, coelum et terra; lugete me, omnes creaturae. Melius esset me non esse creatum, quam sic induratum cor meum remanere de tanta morte. O Domine! quantum humiliasti te!  

In terms of the English vernacular, MP and SP look back (though at a lower level of intensity) to the passionate utterances of the *Wooing of Our Lord* (quoted from earlier) and forward to Rolle's Passion meditations:

> Lord, þi swete passyowm reysyd þe dede of here gravys and þei walkyd abowte; hyt openyd helle þatys, þe erthe tremblyd þeperewith, þe sonne lost hys lyȝt, and my sory herte, þat is of þe develys kynde, hardere þan þe stonys þat cloyyn at þi deth, it may not of þi passyoun a lytel poynt fele, ne I ryse not with þe dede in reuthe þereoffe, ne I cleve not as þe temple, ne os þe erthe tremble, ne opene þe closyng þat is so harde speryd.  

But although these comparisons can be made, MP and SP are not "personal" in the same way as these classic devotional works. Although their authors write as if expressing their own response to Christ's sufferings (and certainly they are less self-effacing than MVC's author), they do not involve themselves as sinners in need of Christ's loving sacrifice, nor their audience as individuals to be appealed to personally. Anselm, Bernard, Rolle concentrate entirely on their own particular relationship to the Passion: "the appeal to the reader", as Mrs Brown remarks (p.lxxxix) "is not made through precept or direct admonition; it is inherent in the fervent
expression of the writer's own feeling". St Edmund's Speculum Ecclesiae, MVC; Pseudo-Bede's De Meditatione Passionis Christi\textsuperscript{28} represent a separate tradition in which the reader is conducted personally through the meditative process. \textit{MP} and SP are different from both. Their emotional apostrophes to Christ exclude all reference to their author's own personalities, and the "man" who is exhorted to have a change of heart is generalised mankind, not the individual reader or hearer:

Ihesu, hard was \textit{pi} de\textit{p} gwan harde trees & stonys
Tobrustyn \textit{bo} \textit{pin} herte brak & beryelis with mannys bonys.
Man, how mayst \textit{pou} heryn \textit{pis} [but] \textit{pin} herte br[e]ke anon?
Allas, man, and is \textit{pin} herte hardere \textit{ban} ony ston?
\textit{pi} lord + deyde in so strong pena & in so strong a debe
For \textit{pe}, \& \textit{pou} art his hyne and sory art vnnepe.

\textit{(MP 2551-56)}

Examples of this kind of apostrophe are scarce in contemporary Middle English writings,\textsuperscript{29} it being more usual (if the treatment of the Passion is not merely descriptive) either for the author to pray to the crucified Christ or for Christ to address mankind from the Cross. There is, it seems, nothing so heightened as \textit{MP} and \textit{SP}'s emotional passages in late thirteenth-century English religious lyric. The Harley lyrics "Iesu, for \textit{pi} muche miht" and "I syke when y singe" contain, respectively, a short reproachful address to man and exclamations of grief addressed to Christ, but their tone is gentle and restrained compared to the passages in \textit{MP} and \textit{SP}.\textsuperscript{30}
Closer in style is one of the renderings of "Respice in faciem Christi":

Loke to \textit{pi} louerd, man, \textit{par} hanget he a rode,
and wep hyf \textit{bo} mist terres al of blode.
Vor loke hu his heued biis mid pores bi-wnde,
and to his neb so bispet and to pe spere-wnde.
 Fauluet his feyre luer, and desewet his sicte,
drowepet his hendi bodi bot on rode biis itiht . . .\textsuperscript{31}

This poem has a deictic element, but otherwise it is impersonal in the same way as \textit{MP} and \textit{SP} in that it lacks a "meditating 'I'" and universalises the audience.\textsuperscript{32} Rosemary Woolf quotes it as an example of a Passion lyric cast in the form of "sermon address",\textsuperscript{33} and the same phrase can help us to categorise \textit{MP} and \textit{SP}'s emotional passages. Their devotional response to the Passion is also more akin to that of the sermon than to that of the meditative lyric, and seen in this light they do not fit so strangely with the didactic colouring of the surrounding verse.

Forthright but impersonal expression of feeling is also a characteristic of other \textit{South English Legendary} poems. Authorial apostrophe to Christ is a rhetorical feature found, for example, in \textit{St Lawrence}:

Louerd muche was \textit{pe} pine . \textit{bat} he bolede for \textit{pe} here (189);\textsuperscript{34}
in *St Mary of Egypt*:

Ou Iesus muche is pi miȝte . muche  þo ledestou þere (51)

and in the *Nativity of Mary and Christ*:

Welle, lord, muchel þo ledestou on erpe vs to lere (307).³⁵

Such interjections seem to be a natural part of the Legendary's uninhibited conversational style, a style which also allows Judas and Herod to be directly addressed, disapprovingly:

Wrecchid Judas, qwy askid þou not of mercy to affonge?  
Qwy þouȝttyst þou not on his grace or þou þiself þe honge?  
(MP 2377-8);

Awey, Heroudes, þou wrecche kyng, þou huntest aboute nouht!  
Sore þou drast þoru him to be of þi kyndom out ybrouht ...  
... Whi slowe þou for haterede of him þe children þat gultles were?  
Wel he wuste, wrecche, þi þouht; ne founde þou him nout [þere]:  
(Nativity of Mary and Christ, 669-70, 673-4)

There are also frequent appeals and asides to (so it would seem) a listening audience, for example at *All Souls* 191:

For ich wot non of ȝou nescholde . hem habbe so sore agaste.

The Legendary is not a collection of sermons and may not even have been written for recitation, but its poetic manner is nevertheless that of popular instruction and communication. *MP* and *SP*'s emotional passages are remarkable expressions of feeling, but they are publicly rather than privately devotional.
NOTES

1 Nicholas Love's "Myrrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ", Analecta Cartusiana 10 (Salzburg, 1974), Chapter IV, especially pp.73-118; referred to here as "Salter". The bibliographical references are up-dated from the 1949 thesis, which was submitted under the author's maiden name of Jones, and bore the title "Nicholas Love's Fifteenth-Century Translation of the Meditationes Vitae Christi: a Study, with Special Reference to the Passion Section".

2 EETS OS 169 (1927), referred to here as "Brown". All quotations from the Southern Passion are from this edition.

3 I am preparing a critical edition of the Ministry and Passion for publication in 1984 in the Middle English Texts series of Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, Heidelberg. The "long poem" to which Elizabeth Salter refers has also been known as the "Long Life of Christ", but the first part has now been recognised as a separate composition to which the Ministry and Passion forms a sequel: see The South English Nativity of Mary and Christ, ed. O.S. Pickering, Middle English Texts 1 (Heidelberg, 1975) pp.20-3.

4 See, for example, the uncertainty admitted in Manfred Görlich, The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary, Leeds Texts and Monographs, n.s. 6 (Leeds, 1974) p.19.


6 SP 1524, 1583, and 1349, in Derek Pearsall, Old English and Middle English Poetry (London, 1977) p.106.

7 Quotations from MP are from the text to be published in my critical edition (see fn.4 above), based on St John's College, Cambridge, MS B.6, ff.35r-69v. [ ] indicates an editorial addition or substitution, + an editorial omission.

8 See Pickering, "The Temporale Narratives", pp.446-8, and the introduction to the forthcoming edition of MP.

9 The poem is unprinted. I quote from Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.3.25, ff.185v-6r.

10 MS Harley 2247's text of SP 1604, reading As, i.e. "as if", instead of And (Brown, p.59), makes it clearer that Christ spoke through the prophet, not the prophet through Christ. The verse "Vulpes foveas habent, et volucres coeli nidos; filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput reclinet" was in fact spoken by Christ himself during his Ministry (Mt. viii, 20; also Lu. ix, 58), but SP is apparently referring to Ps. Ixxxiv, 3, "Etenim passer invenit sibi domum; et turtur nidum sibi . . . ."

11 Egerton 1993, the other principal manuscript of the Abridged Life, moves even further away from the presumed original form of the passage, and recasts 447-54, 459-64 into short couplets, e.g. "Alle þat gop bi þe weie. ibideb a while ich ou preije / And lokeb he seide whar eni pine. or eni serwe be ajen mine" (f.26v).
Convenient summaries of recent opinion about MVC's date and authorship are provided in Meditaciones de passione Christi olim Sancto Bonaventurae attributae, ed. Sister M. Jordan Stallings, Catholic University of America, Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Language and Literature, 25 (Washington, 1965), and in Walter Baijer, Untersuchungen zu den Passionsbetrachtungen in der 'Vita Christi' des Ludolf von Sachsen: ein quellenkritischer Beitrag zu Leben und Werk Ludolfs und zur Geschichte der Passionstheologie, Analecta Cartusiana 44, 3 vols. (Salzburg, 1977), II, pp.326-8. E. Collodge, in "Dominus uidam devotae suae: a Source for Pseudo-Bonaventura", Franciscan Studies 36 (1976) pp.105-7, has recently advanced fresh evidence for a date of composition not earlier than 1300. A. G. Little, English Franciscan History (Manchester, 1917) p.146, stated that the Latin preaching handbook Fasciculus Morum refers to "Bonaventura (Life of Christ)", a point taken up for dating purposes by Brown, p.iv, and Salter, p.41. Fasciculus Morum is usually dated c.1320, but Siegfried Wenzel, Verses in Sermons: "Fasciculus Morum" and its Middle English Poems (Cambridge, Mass., 1978) pp.26-34, has now re-dated it to the beginning of the fourteenth century. Professor Wenzel tells me, however, that he knows of no reference to MVC in the Fasciculus, and he suggests that Little may have been misled by the reference to the apocryphal Infancy Gospel in Book III.

I have used the edition by A.C. Peltier, Opera omnia S. Bonaventurae (Paris, 1868), XII, pp.509-630, and the translation by Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green, Meditations on the Life of Christ: an Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century (Princeton, 1961).

Cf. ultimately Ezechiel xxxii, 24, "et portaverunt ignominiam suam cum his, qui descundunt in lacurn". Mrs Brown does not record that the "less close analogue" she quotes from Pseudo-Bernard, Sermo de Vita et Passione Domini, PL 184, col.960, occurs with almost identical wording in the paragraph "Jesus cruci elevatus" of the Lignum Vitae (Peltier, ed.cit., XII, p.76).

Ed. T. Graesse (Dresden, 1846; 3rd edition, 1890).

See, for example, Meditations on the Life and Passion of Christ, ed. C. D'Evelyn, EETS OS 158 (1921) 11.1143-52. This work is a fourteenth-century translation of John of Hoveden's Philomena of the later thirteenth century.

It is notable that SP 837-8, the most striking of the short "parallels" with MVC (see above), also does not occur in MP. But the fact that SP contains two new passages (totaling twelve lines) that can be closely paralleled in MVC does not amount to proof that the work itself was known to the reviser any more than to MP's author. The chronology, too, remains difficult.

See the illustrations, in G. Millet, Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Évangile (Paris, 1916), chap. VI. I owe this reference (and some others) to Mr Peter Rees-Jones, who is making a study of the subject.


For example, Peter Comestor's Historia Scholastica, Vincent of Beauvais' Speculum Historiale, and the Legenda Aurea; the meditations and sermons of Bernard and his followers; and of course the liturgy.


Pseudo-Bernard, Lamentatio in Passionem Christi, PL 184, col. 772, here quoted from Gradon, Form and Style, p.301.


Among Latin works, it is noticeable that the Lignum Vitae also addresses mankind in a general way. To the passages quoted by Brown (pp.lxxxix and xc) and already referred to may, for example, be added: "Et tu, perdite homo, totius confusionis et contritionis hujus causa existens, quomodo non in fletum erumpis foras?" (Peltier, p.75, from the paragraph "Jesus morte damnatus").


For the concept of a "meditating 'I'" in religious lyrics, see Wenzel, Verses in Sermons, pp.129-30.


This, and the subsequent lines from St Mary of Egypt and All Souls, are quoted from The South English Legendary, ed. C. D'Evelyn and Anna J. Mill, EETS 235-6 (1956), II, p.364, 1, p.138, and II, p.470.

The South English Nativity of Mary and Christ, ed. Pickering, p.74, from where the subsequent quotation is also taken (pp.93-4).