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## Walter Hilton's *Mixed Life* and the Transformation of Clerical Discipline

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### *Introduction: Vernacular Theology for Clerical Readers*

Recent work on late medieval English manuscripts has emphasized the importance of the miscellany as a codicological form for transmitting vernacular texts, both secular and religious.<sup>1</sup> Vincent Gillespie has remarked upon the burgeoning of religious miscellanies for clerical and lay readers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, noting that although the Latin clerical miscellany was typically 'personal, practical, and occasional', of little possible use to lay readers, Archbishop Thoresby's 1357 translation of Pecham's parochial Syllabus 'stimulated the production of vernacular miscellanies by analogy with the earlier Latin collections'.<sup>2</sup> During the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, beyond translation of catechetical materials, new vernacular religious guides were being composed to respond to lay demand for more advanced religious education and self-discipline. These texts tended to blur boundaries between lay and professional religious knowledge, offering programs that combined basic Christian instruction with techniques of meditation and contemplation. Such guides include the anonymous compilation *Fervor Amoris*, the long spiritual guide *Book to a Mother*, and Walter Hilton's vernacular epistle on *Mixed Life*, written for a lay lord who had expressed a desire to pursue the religious life.<sup>3</sup>

As these works of vernacular theology were copied throughout the fifteenth century, they were widely read not only by the laity for whom they were originally intended, but also by members of the clergy who came, in Gillespie's words, 'to value and exploit the resources of this vernacular tradition of spiritual guidance'.<sup>4</sup> In this essay, I examine a curious instance of such clerical exploitation, speculating about the particular 'social logic'<sup>5</sup> and ideological meaning of an excerpt from Walter Hilton's *Mixed Life* which appears in a mid-

fifteenth-century northern priestly miscellany, now Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 751. This collection of Latin and English religious texts, copied primarily by a single scribe who was likely also the book's owner, has been characterized as a 'Yorkshire cleric's commonplace book'.<sup>6</sup> Although the scribe-owner's identity is unknown, many of the volume's texts, including Latin selections from Richard Rolle's commentaries, notes on performing the mass, instructions for parish priests on composing sermons,<sup>7</sup> and an English version of the ten commandments, may point to secular priestly ownership.<sup>8</sup>

The Ashmole manuscript also features a short extract from Hilton's *Mixed Life*: the selection includes part of Hilton's description of the three lives (active, contemplative, and mixed) and his discussion of Christ's mixed life as exemplary for both the lay lord and the prelate. Hilton's repeated references to aspects of clerical practice as exemplary for his lay addressee make it easy to see why the later priestly scribe was attracted to the *Mixed Life*. But in excerpting and editing Hilton's text, the Ashmole compiler creates a *Mixed Life* extract that effectively "exploits" Hilton's clerical focus, while removing any reference to the work's originally intended lay audience.<sup>9</sup> This textual suppression, as well as other changes within the extract,<sup>10</sup> are editorial decisions that strikingly change the function of the text, remaking it into a guide relevant solely to a priestly reader. For this scribe, it appears, the process of expanding his own devotional life implied a limit to the spiritual autonomy of the layperson, and required the redrawing of clear boundaries between priestly self and lay other.

This particular manuscript confirms that, as Jonathan Hughes has argued, in fifteenth-century Yorkshire, 'working priests were attempting to live mixed lives of contemplation and pastoral administration'.<sup>11</sup> But as I will show, the compiler's alterations to Hilton's work suggest a pastoral conservatism at odds with the spirit of the *Mixed Life*. Although, as Nicholas Watson has argued, even in the wake of Archbishop Arundel's restrictive Constitutions of 1409,<sup>12</sup> '[t]here was plenty of vernacular theological writing available in the fifteenth century for professional religious and lay people of rank',<sup>13</sup> we must examine manuscript context to ask whether that writing was used to efface or to reinforce conservative hierarchies of clerical/lay knowledge and practice. Consideration of the Ashmole compiler's *Mixed Life* extract against a fuller account of Hilton's *Mixed Life*, and in comparison with the better-known Lincoln Cathedral MS 91, a contemporary Yorkshire miscellany compiled by a

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layman pursuing his own mixed life, will help bring to light the conservative 'social logic' of this priestly excerpt from Hilton.<sup>14</sup>

*Hilton's Mixed Life and the Construction of the Lay Pastor*

In order to assess the function of this fifteenth-century Hilton extract in its manuscript setting, I will first consider the *Mixed Life's* particular form of lay pastoralism and set the relevant passages into their late-fourteenth-century context. Hilton's *Mixed Life* engages head-on with the widespread contestation of the clerical, and specifically the pastoral, ideal in the last decades of fourteenth-century England, when John Wyclif's arguments for clerical disendowment were beginning to create anxiety for the hierarchical church.<sup>15</sup> In constructing the life of the prelate as an ideal *imitatio Christi* for the powerful lay reader to emulate by virtue of his own worldly governance and material wealth, Hilton both endows the materially privileged layman with pastoral power and implicitly defends contemporary clerical life against the attacks of satire and religious polemic.

Walter Hilton, best known for his anchoritic guide *The Scale of Perfection*, seems to have specialized in advising people who wished to pursue the elusive *vita contemplativa*. Although his biography is sketchy, Hilton may have been, in succession, a civil lawyer, a canon lawyer, a religious solitary, and finally, for the last years of his life, an Augustinian canon: he died in 1396 at Thurgarton Priory.<sup>16</sup> Throughout his life, Hilton suggested that the monastic version of contemplative life was not appropriate for everyone and that the spiritually inclined might engage in contemplation without radically changing their social roles. Hilton was probably a religious solitary when he wrote the *Mixed Life* for an unidentified lay lord in the 1380s.<sup>17</sup> In direct response to a layman who wished to abandon the world in order to serve God without distraction, and in a more general response to contemporary visions of clerical lordship as a failure of charity, Hilton used the occasion of spiritual guidance to make the life of the lay lord an ideal vehicle for ordering charity.

In response to his spiritually ambitious lay addressee and implicitly to Wyclif's radical views of clerical propriety, which 'called into question the title of all clerics to property and all other assertions of dominion',<sup>18</sup> Hilton's *Mixed Life* embodies what Andrew Galloway has called 'a "new clericalism": an increasing emphasis on defining ways of life in terms of professional knowledge and a

widening extension of such knowledge beyond traditional religious or even necessarily any fixed institutional loyalties'.<sup>19</sup> Where Wyclif expresses concern about the way material possession threatens boundaries between lay and clerical status,<sup>20</sup> calling clerical pastoral authority into question, Hilton attempts to recuperate secular power and material possession as factors that enable spiritual authority for the layman and link the lay lord, the prelate, and Christ in a mutually productive cycle of *imitatio*.

Early in his epistle, Hilton strategically redirects his patron's spiritual yearning, which he calls 'þe desire of þyn herte, þat þou 3ernest greteli to serue our lord bi goostli occupacioun al holli, wiþoute lettyng or trobolyng of wordeli bisynesse',<sup>21</sup> into a new religious discipline founded on the combination of 'goostli occupacion' and 'wordeli bisynesse'. Glossing the Song of Songs' signal phrase 'ordinavit caritatem in me', Hilton explains,

oure lord, 3euynge to me charite, sette it in ordre and in rule, þat it schulde not be lost þoru3 myn vndiscrecioun. Ri3t so þis charite and þis desire þat oure lord haþ 3euen of his merci to þee is for to rulen and ordaynen hou þou schal pursue it aftir þi degree askeþ, and aftir þe lyuyng þat þou hast vsed bifore þis tyme, and aftir þe grace of vertues þat þou now hast. (ll. 82-88)

Bringing back the aforementioned 'desire' in order to yoke it with an Augustinian form of 'charite',<sup>22</sup> Hilton makes the layman's personal spiritual ambition inseparable from his wider charitable duty. By furthermore defining this 'charite and þis desire' as 'for to rulen and ordaynen hou þou schal pursue it', Hilton argues that this dual desire can only be fulfilled through the exercise of self-regulation. At the heart of this new discipline lies the reader's duty to reconcile his spiritual ambition to 'serve our lord' with his customary social 'degree' and form of 'lyuyng', which encompasses charitable responsibilities that must not be selfishly abandoned. Hilton's call to combine 'desire' and 'charite', 'worldly' and 'goostli', 'bifore' and 'aftir', together with his mandate to balance present spiritual desire with prior worldly life, prepare the lay reader to emulate the religious role of the prelate, whose balance of private devotion with public responsibility Hilton understands well.

But first Hilton must introduce the active and the contemplative lives in order to show how their combination might issue in what he calls the 'medled'

life. (This is the first passage that will be extracted by the Ashmole compiler). According to Hilton, the active life belongs to those who are 'lewed, [fleschli, rude and boistous] in knowyng of goostli occupacioun, for þei feelen no sauour [ne] deuocioun bi fervor of loue'. Yet they do 'haue drede of God and of þe peynes of helle' and share 'good wille to her euen-Cristene'. Such people should therefore focus on practising the 'werkes of actif liyf as bisili as þei mai in heelp of hem self and of hire euen-Cristene' (ll. 124-31).<sup>23</sup> At the opposite extreme, contemplative life belongs to those who 'for þe loue of God, forsaken alle open synnes of þe world and of here flesch, and alle bisynesse, charges and gouernances of wordli goodes, and maken hem self pore and naked to þe bare nede of þe bodili kynde, and fleen fro souereynte of alle oþere men to þe seruice of God' (ll. 133-37). In the search for absolute bodily and spiritual purity, contemplatives engage in 'grete exercise of bodi, and contynuel traueile of spirit in deuoute praieres, feruent desires, and goostli meditacions' (ll. 141-43).

But it is the third life, 'þat is medelid', which Hilton finds most appropriate to his addressee, the wealthy lord. Hilton takes the complementarity of material and spiritual power as the basis for the layman's *imitatio clerici*, offering not a rule, but a lay form of pastoral care inspired by the example of Christ's own life.<sup>24</sup> From the start, Hilton defines his reader's 'best life' as an effect of the mingling of material and social power. Through this combination, the reader may understand his degree as parallel to that of the prelate, whose regulatory authority over himself and others grows out of the desire to 'order' charity. Following Gregory the Great's *Regula Pastoralis* (as well as ideas from Gregory's *Moralia in Iob*), Hilton associates the perfect lay imitation of the mixed life with the prelate's ideal balance between contemplation and engagement in worldly affairs. Unlike Gregory, whose prelate must grudgingly endure worldly business, Hilton emphasizes the positive complementarity of worldly affairs and spiritual pursuits and depicts prelates as fruitfully engaged in both.

Hilton argues that the reader's material power entitles him to the same pastoral privileges as a prelate. (This is the next chapter that will be adapted and altered by the Ashmole compiler). The wealthy layman's responsibility for 'keping' and 'ruling' others closely recalls Gregory the Great's paradigm of the third life, which belongs, Hilton argues,

speciali to men of holi chirche, as to prelates and oþire curates  
which haue cure and souereynte ouer oþere men for to [kepe] and

for to rule hem, boþe her bodies and principali here soules [. . .]  
Vnto þise men it longeþ sumtyme to vsen werkes of actif lif, in  
help and sustenance of hem silf and of here suggettis and of  
opere also, and sumtyme for to leuen al manere of bisynesse  
outeward, and 3eue hem vnto praieres and meditacions, redynge  
of hooli writ, and to opere goostli occupacions.<sup>25</sup> (ll. 144-52)

Hilton places striking emphasis not only on 'cure' and sympathy, but also on 'souereynte', the ruling power that entitles the addressee to the hallowed pastoral alternation of action and contemplation. For Hilton's addressee, a 'temporal' man, sovereignty comes first, as a precondition to devotion, and in this 'souereynte', the layman's status overlaps with the 'degree' of the prelate. For as Hilton explains, the mixed life is proper not only to the rector in spiritual authority, but also to

sum temporal men þe whiche haue souereynte wiþ moche auere  
of wordli goodis, and hauen also as it were lordschipe ouer opere  
men for to gouerne and sustene hem, as a fadir haþ ouer his  
children, a maister ouer his seruauntes, and a lord ouere his  
tenantes, þe whiche men han also receued of oure lord[is] 3ift  
grace of deuocioun, and in partie sauoure of goostli occupacioun.  
Vnto þise men also longeþ [þis] medeled lif þat is boþe actif and  
contemplatif. (ll. 154-60)

Whereas Gregory had invoked Luke's warning that 'no man can serve two masters' to stress the incompatibility of earthly and spiritual duties, Hilton has innovatively expanded the 'medled lif' to the layman on the basis of his temporal possessions and responsibility to discipline others, making 'souereynte' and 'lordship' as well as care and teaching the bases for the wealthy lord's entitlement as well as the ground for similarity between the layman, the prelate, and Christ.<sup>26</sup>

If the lay lord's authority, derived from property and 'worldi goodis', parallels that of a prelate, who derives his authority from Christ via the keys given to Peter, then the lay reader's model for identification must be a model of infinite power and humility: Christ himself. According to Gregory, Christ embodied the first mixed life, and Hilton borrows Gregory's portrait of Christ's life with some notable adaptations. Hilton affirms that

oure lord, for to stire summe to vse þis medled liyf, *took upon him self þe persooone of sich manere men, boþe of prelates of hooli chirche and opere sich as aren disposid as I haue seid, and 3aue hem ensample bi his owen worchynge þat þei schulden usen þis medeled liyf as he dide.* (ll. 177-81, emphasis added).<sup>27</sup>

Working implicitly against polemical visions of corrupt prelates, Hilton works to revive the possibility, for bishop and layman, of a Christlike alternation of charitable action with God-loving contemplation. First Hilton constructs a parallel between the life of Christ and that of the holy bishop, showing Jesus dividing his earthly life between public teaching and private contemplation. At one time, he

comouned wiþ men and medeled wiþ men, schewynge to hem his deedes of merci, for he tau3te þe vncouþ and vnkunynge bi his prechyng, he vesited þe sike and heeled hem of here sooris, he fedde þe hongry, and he comforted þe sori. And anoþer tyme he lefte þe conuersacioun of alle wordeli men and of his disciples [also], and wente in to dissert upon þe hillis, and contynued alle þe ny3t in praieres aloone, as þe gospel sais. (ll. 181-88)

In his effort to posit the prelate's life as the model of Christlike perfection, Hilton presses the parallelism between 'spiritual souereynte' and 'temporal souereynte' as a function of charity, emphasizing the public 'cure and gouernance of opere' as forms, above all, of pastoral work to which their practitioners are bound. The mixed life of the bishop involves an oscillation between the lower and higher works of charity, a combination that fulfills the double commandment to love God and neighbour and links the prelate positively to the lord:

O tyme þei fulfilleden þe lowere part of charite bi werkes of actif lif, for þei were bounden þerto bi takynge of hire prelacies, and an oþir [tyme] þei fulfilleden þe hizere partie of charite in contemplacioun of God and of goosteli þynges bi praieres and meditacions, and so þei hadden [ful] charite to God and to hire euene-Cristen [. . .] þese men þat were in prelacie, *and opere*



also þat weren [hooli] temporal men. (ll. 206-20, emphasis added)

By adding 'hooli temporal men', Hilton emphasizes that this conjunction is no paradox, attributing to the worldly men the same fulness of charity as the prelates described before. He further blurs the line between men in these two states by noting, 'for sicke a man þat is in spiritual souereynte as prelacie, in cure [and] gouernaunce of oþere as prelates and curates ben, or in t[em]poral souereynte as wordeli lordes and maistris aren, I hoolde þis liyf medeled best, and most bihoofful to hem as longe as þei are bounden þerto' (ll. 223-27). These forms of service are the most crucial part for Hilton of this 'best' form of 'medeled' life, the *religio* of the lord and prelate, following Christ.

*Bodleian MS Ashmole 751 and the Priest's Mixed Life*

If Hilton's vision of the mixed life offers the powerful layman some of the rights and responsibilities of the prelate, then it is not altogether surprising to find the work reclaimed by clerical readers in the mid-fifteenth century. Hilton's *Mixed Life* was one of many vernacular works of spiritual guidance that were eventually copied for readers in religious life: those readers that we can identify were predominantly members of religious orders. Much fifteenth-century circulation of the *Mixed Life* substantiates what A. I. Doyle has termed 'that close dependence on religious communities, in which all vernacular devotional works, even those addressed more inclusively [i.e. to laypeople] tended to remain'.<sup>28</sup> Many *Mixed Life* manuscripts with known provenance can be linked to religious houses, having been copied for nuns or, just as often, for monks who were usually also priests. But what does seem surprising, in the case of the Ashmole 751 *Mixed Life* extract, which combines the passage describing the three lives with the passage comparing the prelate's life to that of Christ,<sup>29</sup> is that in describing the 'melled lyfe', as this scribe puts it, all references to the layperson are taken out, thus rendering the *Mixed Life* an exclusive definition of the priestly life.

In MS Ashmole 751, a miscellany of Latin and a few English contents, we find the *Mixed Life* excerpted in a manuscript that clearly belonged to a priest charged with ministering to others, and who may also have wished to deepen his own devotional practice through reading.<sup>30</sup> The volume includes theological

extracts attributed to Isidore, Hugh of St. Victor, and Innocent III, practical instructions on priestly duties such as composing sermons, administering extreme unction and confession, and devotional texts by Richard Rolle and St. Bernard, as well as excerpts from *Meditationes Vitae Christi* and St. Edmund's *Speculum Ecclesiae*. In addition to these Latin contents, the volume includes an eclectic group of English texts: the *Mixed Life* extract, penitential stories translated from several Latin sources, excerpts from *Mandeville's Travels*, a tract explicating the ten commandments, and a twelve-stanza lyric, entitled 'þo sauter of Jhesu' and 'þo sauter of charite'.<sup>31</sup> The vast majority of the contents are in Latin, and these few English texts are copied mainly at the ends of quires.<sup>32</sup> This miscellany is highly idiosyncratic: its lack of finding tools and discontinuous copying of several texts mean that, in Ralph Hanna's words, 'it is unlikely that anyone other than this scribe-owner could have moved through this compilation with facility'.<sup>33</sup>

In this manuscript, the short extract from Hilton's *Mixed Life*, which runs from fols 45r-45v, is the first English text after an initial series of Latin texts that ends with selections from *Meditationes Vitae Christi*. The *Mixed Life* extract begins a new folio and covers about 34 lines of the printed critical edition. This extract, unique to my knowledge, combines two passages from the *Mixed Life* into a new form that offers a short definition of the priestly life in terms of the life of Christ, while excising any reference to the lay lord for whom the *Mixed Life* was originally composed. I offer a transcription of the whole extract below:<sup>34</sup>

þer are thre <are> maner of lyfynges: on is actyfe, a noþer is  
contemplatyfe; þo thryd is made of bothe and is a melled lyfe.  
¶Actyfe lyf al only longes to wordly men and wymen wyche are  
fleschly and boystes in knowyng of gostly ocupacion, for þai fele  
no sauour ne deuocyon by peynez of lufe, as oþer men dose, þai  
kan no skyl of it. And 3it neuerþoles þai hafe dred of God, and of  
þo paynes of hell, and for þi þai fle syn. And þai hafe alway  
desyr to plese God and for to come to heuen, and a gode wyll to  
þair euencrysten. Vnto þese men it is nedful to vse werkes of  
actyf lyf alls bysely as þai mai in helpyng of þaim selfe and of  
þaire euencristen, for þai can do not elles. ¶Contemplatyf lyf alon  
longes to swylk men, or wymen, þat for þo lufe of God forsakes  
all opyn synnes of þo word and of þair flesche, and all bysenes,  
charge, and gouernans of wordly godes, and makes þaim pore

and nakyd vnto þo bare ned of bodely kynde and flees fro souerente of oþer men to þo seruyse of god. ¶Vnto þes men it langes for to trauayl and occupye þaim inwardly for to gete thurgh grace of our lord clennes of hert and pes in conscience, by distroying of synnes and getyng of vertues, and so for to com to contemplacyon, þo whylk clennes may not be had withoute gret bodely excersy and continuyl trauel of spyryt and deuote prayers, desyres and gostly meditacyonce. ¶Þo thryd lyfe þat is melled langes specially to men of holy kyrke as to prelates and oþer curates þat has cure and souerente ouer oþer men, for to kepe and to rewle þaim bothe þer bodys and principaly þer sawles, in fulfylling of þo werkes [of] mercy bodely and gostly. Vnto þes men it langas one tyme to vse þo werkes of actyfe lyfe in helpe and sustinance of þaim selfe, and of þaire sogettes and of oþer also, and sumtyme for to lefe all bysenes oute ward and gyfe þaim for a tyme to praiers, meditacions, redyng of holy wryt and to oþer gostly ocupacions, after þai fele þaim disposed. Oure lord, for to styr sum men to vse þis melled lyfe, toke vpon hym self þo offys of men of holy kyrk as prelates and curates, and gaf to þaim ensaumple by his awen werkes, þat þai [f. 45v] schuld vse þis melled lyf as he dyd. Ffor one tyme he comyned and meld, schewand to þaim his dedis of mercy, for he kynd þo vnkonyng by his prechyng; he vysyt þo seke and heled þaim of þair sores. ¶Another tyme he left þo conuersacion of all þo worldly men and of his disciples also, and went alon in to desert opon þo hyllys and continued al nyght in prayers as þo gospel sais.

In a striking omission, the Ashmole compiler has suppressed a considerable amount of Hilton's text, partially cited in my discussion above, which in the full text links the sentence ending '[. . .] fele þaim disposed' to the sentence beginning 'Oure lord, for to styr [. . .]' The missing passage is the very one that invites the lay reader into this privileged fraternity by virtue of his status as lay ruler. The suppressed passage reads as follows in Ogilvie-Thomson's edition:

Also it longeþ generally [to] sum temporal men þe whiche haue souereynte wiþ moche auere of wordli goodis, and hauen also as

it were lordschipe ouer opere men for to gouerne and sustene hem, as a fadir haþ ouer his children, a maister ouer his seruantes, and a lord ouer his tenantes, þe whiche men han also receuyed of oure lord[is] 3ift grace of deuocioun, and in partie sauoure of goostli occupacioun. Vnto þise men also longeþ [þis] medled lif þat is boþe actif and contemplatif. For 3if þise men, standynge þe charge and þe boond whiche þei han take, wolen leeuue vtirli þe bisynesse of þe world, þe whiche oweþ skilfulli for to be vsed in fulfillynge of here chaarge, and hooli 3yue hem to contemplatif liyf, þei doon not weel, for þei kepen not þe ordre of charite. For charite, as þou knowest weel, lieþ boþe in loue of God and of þin euene-Cristene, and þefore it is resonable þat he þat haþ charite vse boþe in worchyng, now þe toon and now þe toþir. For he þat, for þe loue of God in contemplacioun, leueþ þe loue of his euen-Cristene, and dooþ not to hem as he ou3te whanne he is bounden þerto, he fulfilliþ not charite. Also, on þe contrarie wise, who-so haþ [so grete] reward to werkes of actif liyf and to bisynesse of þe world þat, for þe loue of his euen-Cristene, he leeuueþ goostly occupacion vtirli aftir þat God [haþ] dispose[d] hym þerto, he fulfilliþ not fully charite: þis is þe seiynge of [Seint] Gregor. Forþi oure lord, for to stire summe to vse þis medled liyf [. . .](ll. 154-77)

In addition to omitting this passage from his extract, the Ashmole compiler has altered parts of the second passage included in the extract, recuperating the description of Christ's practice to enhance its relevance to the priestly subject. While Ogilvie-Thomson's critical edition records that Christ 'took upon him self þe persoone of siche maner men, boþe of prelates of hooli chirche and opere siche as aren disposid as I haue seid',<sup>35</sup> thus referring back to the layman in temporal 'sovereignty', the Ashmole text reads 'toke vpon hym self þo *offys* of men of holy kyrk as prelates and curates'. In what appears to be a variant unique among the manuscripts, the compiler has changed 'persoone' to 'offys', making clerical status a requirement for the practice of the mixed life and rendering the exclusion of the layman complete. Just as the layman was removed from the first section of the extract, the 'oper siche' men have been omitted from the second passage, so that

the notion of Christ providing an example both to 'prelates and curates' and to interested laymen has disappeared.

I believe that we can assume with Hanna that the scribe, compiler, and user of this book were one and the same person, an individual whose constantly changing 'sense of how much of any single text was wanted' resulted in his copying texts and then adding more of the same texts in later quires, in a process that 'rendered the quires incapable of being bound in any rational manner'.<sup>36</sup> It thus seems logical that this scribe, whether secular or religious priest, should have been responsible for creating an extract of the *Mixed Life* to suit his own specifications.<sup>37</sup> In removing all references to the layman as addressee, as well as the related lay-oriented argument for the need to observe charity through a balance of 'contemplacioun' with 'werkes of actif liyf' and 'bisynesse of þe world', this extract returns Hilton's Gregorian-inspired definition of the mixed life to the priest, shaping a definition of the priestly life that elides the overlap between priest, Christ, and layman that Hilton had stressed in his lay spiritual guide. This manuscript, with its practical aim of aiding the priest by improving his theological knowledge and supporting his daily pastoral care and sacramental duties, has with these other texts restored the specific professional knowledge that separates laity and clergy. Here the layperson is implicitly understood as the object of discipline and sacramental practice rather than the reading subject.

This clerical manuscript thus offers one partial answer to the question of what might become of Hilton's model of the mixed life when an individual fifteenth-century priestly user came, in Gillespie's terms, to 'value and exploit the resources of this vernacular tradition of spiritual guidance'. For this particular clerical reader, the *Mixed Life* had to be altered in order to reinforce not the similarity but the difference between lay and clerical practice and prerogatives. By redefining the mixed life as an exclusively clerical model, this manuscript suggests that we cannot assume that 'the pursuit of the mixed life as an imitation of Christ' was always shared between priestly and lay readers.<sup>38</sup>

The new exclusivity of the Ashmole compiler's *Mixed Life*, its construction as a text for the priest rather than the layperson, comes into sharper relief if we consider the priestly miscellany alongside a manuscript that does offer the layman access to such a mixed life. There is another mid-fifteenth-century Yorkshire compilation featuring Hilton's *Mixed Life*: the layman Robert Thornton's 'devotional book', which occupies fols 179-279 of Lincoln Cathedral MS 91.<sup>39</sup> Thornton was a gentryman from Lincolnshire whose devotional leanings and

worldly responsibilities may well have resembled those of Hilton's lay addressee.<sup>40</sup> As Hughes has argued, '[t]he most persuasive evidence that gentry householders consciously practised the "mixed life" and sought literature that articulated their own experiences is to be found in the library of Robert Thornton.<sup>41</sup> Like the Ashmole compiler, who evidently assembled his book gradually, Thornton seems to have gathered and copied his texts over a long period of time, c. 1420-c. 1450.<sup>42</sup> Thornton's copy of the *Mixed Life*, sandwiched between the devotional lyric 'Þi Ioy be ilke a dele to serue þi godd to paye' and the prose treatise *An Epistle of Salvation*, lacks ll. 1-218 and is thus missing the passages I have cited above. The text begins abruptly but characteristically, with a comparison of the layman to the prelate: 'men þat ware in prelacye, and oþer also þat ware haly temperalle men, had full charite in affeccione with-in, and also in wirkinge with-owtten: and þat is propirly þis mellide lyf, þat es made bathe of actyffe lyfe and of contemplatye lyfe'.<sup>43</sup>

Although Thornton may not have envisioned himself precisely as imitating Christ, he does seem to have compiled his book of penitential and contemplative texts, some of which resemble the contents of the Ashmole manuscript,<sup>44</sup> to elaborate his own version of the mixed life of action and contemplation. As George Keiser has argued, Thornton's combination of texts suggests that he was interested in educating himself in the essentials of the faith, especially in matters of 'schrift', and in exploring contemplative practices that might enhance his devotion to Christ's passion as well as give him a 'foretaste of the eternal'.<sup>45</sup> On catechetical matters, Thornton collected treatises on the Pater Noster, the ten commandments, the seven gifts of the holy spirit, and John Gaytryge's sermon, a Middle English expansion of Archbishop Thoresby's Catechism.<sup>46</sup> Thornton also copied texts covering a wide range of contemplative activity: from works focused on the passion, such as *The Previte of the Passion*, William of Nassyngton's *De Trinitate*,<sup>47</sup> and several passion lyrics, to works promoting somewhat more speculative approaches, including *The Mirror of St. Edmund*, originally written for enclosed religious. This last work offers guidance in affective meditation on Christ's life and on the godhead, as well as including theoretical discussion of contemplation. In treating questions such as God's 'schewing' of himself to humanity, the work treats not only 'reuelacyon' but also 'resonn':

By resonn, commes He till þe knawynge of man one þis manere:  
—Ilke a man may wele see in hym-selfe þat at he es, and þat at

he hase bene, bot he may wele wit þat he hase noghte bene ay,  
and for þat he wate wele þat sum tym he be-gan for to be; þan  
was þaire sum tym when he was noghte. Bot when he was  
noghte, þan moghte he one na wyese make hym-selfe; and þis  
seghe man in his creature

[. . .] For-þi, sen ilke thynges erre, and þay erre noghte of thayme  
selfe, þare-fore it behoues nede þat þare be ane to gyffe all  
thynges to be, þat is to saye of whaym alle thynges are; þare-fore  
it behoues of force þat He thurghe whaym alle thynges erre, be  
with-owtten begynnyng.<sup>48</sup>

Using the copying and compilation of his book to explore such questions as the proof of God's existence outside the boundaries of time, Thornton claimed access to techniques of theological speculation as well as to a range of penitential and contemplative modes.

Though it contains some of the same texts as Thornton's 'devotional book', MS Ashmole 751, both in its editing of the *Mixed Life* and its subsequent English contents, manifests the compiler's effort to return clerical terms and modes of practice to those in clerical office. The Ashmole *Mixed Life* extract is the first of a series of English texts: it is followed by a sequence of penitential stories and a unique set of extracts from *Mandeville's Travels*. In this new context, this strategically edited extract from Hilton, which aligns the priestly user of the manuscript with 'prelates and opire curates', installs a newly 'hierarchic relation' between priest and layman, striking the key notes for this set of English contents, which might have functioned as texts of self-education for the priestly compiler and/or texts for teaching lay listeners in sermons or private contexts.

I borrow the phrase 'hierarchic relation' from Nicholas Watson, who has argued that such a relation is absent from much vernacular theology of the late fourteenth century. For example, *Piers Plowman* and the didactic treatise *Pore Caitif* are works that 'evolve a "horizontal" mode of address' to depict relations of teaching and learning among clergy and laity.<sup>49</sup> As I have suggested, in its complete form, Hilton's *Mixed Life* creates similarly horizontal relations between clerical teacher and lay learner. Watson notes that in the wake of Arundel's Constitutions, new fifteenth-century vernacular theology, such as Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, installed explicitly hierarchical relations between laity and clergy. These boundaries are manifest in Love's

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depiction of lay readers as 'symple creatures þe whiche as childryn hauen nede to be fedde with mylke of lyzte doctryne & not with sadde mete of grete clargye & of hye contemplacyon'.<sup>50</sup>

It is intriguing to note that Love, who refers to Hilton's *Mixed Life* at the end of his own discussion of the active and contemplative lives,<sup>51</sup> offers an account of the lives that performs an act of clerical exclusion parallel to that of the Ashmole compiler. Love's three-part scheme, which is indebted, like Hilton's, to Gregory the Great, divides the active life into two parts and posits the contemplative life as a category lying between these two. The first part of the active life involves

amendynge of him self as wipdrawing fro vices & profetyng in vertues. [. . .] Þe seconde parte of actif life is, when a mannis occupacion & bisnesse, stant in þat exercise þat longeþ to þe profite of oþer men principaly, þouh it be also þerwip to his owne mede þe more þerby. As it is in gouernynge of oþer men & teching, & helping to þe hele of soule, as done prelates & prechours & oþer þat hauen cure of soule.<sup>52</sup>

Love shows his indebtedness to Hilton's *Mixed Life* in defining the exercise of the second degree of active life as involving 'gouernynge of oþer men & techynge, & helping to þe hele of soule, as done prelates & prechours & oþer þat haue cure of soule'.<sup>53</sup> The fact that Love offers this elevated state to prelates and preachers only, leaving out the pious layman whom Hilton had included in the analogy, suggests Love's concern to make certain that the teaching and preaching of the mixed life remain the preserve of the clergy only. As Michael Sargent observes, Love's vision 'presents a much more conservative treatment of the "mixed life", here attributed to bishops and prelates [. . .] than does Walter Hilton, whom he cites'.<sup>54</sup> Given the overtly anti-Lollard stance of the *Mirror*, Love's conservative recruitment of Hilton seems to stem from this ideology.<sup>55</sup> Love has read Hilton and, like the Ashmole compiler, improved upon his mixed life by re-clericalizing it.

Although there is no evidence in the Ashmole manuscript of anxiety specifically about Wycliffism, the striking parallel between his treatment of Hilton's work and Love's suggests that the Ashmole compiler's alterations to the *Mixed Life* may have been both practical and ideological. His desire to claim the



mixed life as his own might reflect a more generalized fifteenth-century clerical concern to reassert boundaries between lay and clerical status in the hopes of suppressing the heterodox view of religious discipline implied in the statement 'whoever is a good man, whether or not he is literate, is a priest', as one Lollard had written in 1388.<sup>56</sup> Although Love echoes and alters Hilton in a text expressly destined for lay reading, the nature of the Ashmole miscellany is such that its restrictive view of the mixed life was likely transmitted to laypeople who came into contact with the priestly owner.

In this clerical manuscript, then, a unique extract of the *Mixed Life* becomes part of a sequence of contents that focuses attention on priests as powerful ministers of penance. The concomitant emphasis on the layperson as penitent subject is conveyed, in combination with an insistence upon the orthodox doctrine of confession, by the rest of this sequence of English contents, notably in the next set of texts, on fols 45v-47v, a group of anecdotes excerpted from Caesarius of Heisterbach, James of Vitry, Innocent III, John Chrysostom, and the Venerable Bede. These stories, which would lend themselves readily to inclusion in sermons, focus on the effectiveness of penance, the necessity of clerical intervention, and the danger of falsifying contrition. For these stories, as for the Hilton extract, context is crucial to determining the 'social logic' of the texts. The first story, taken from Caesarius, also appears excerpted in Robert Thornton's manuscript (fol.194r), among a series of three tales relating to contrition. In the Thornton manuscript, compiled and used by a layman, the inclusion of this tale in a 'Rolle-related cluster'<sup>57</sup> followed by the English *Mirror of St. Edmund*, reinforces the layman's appropriation of penitential and contemplative vocabularies. But in the Ashmole sequence, the tales highlight the priest's sole control over the administration of penance.

The first story (fol. 45v) tells of a scholar 'at Paris' who

had don many foule synnes of þo whylk he had gret schame to schryfe hym. But at þo last gret sorw of hert ouer come schame, and when he was redy to schryfe hym to þo pryoure of þo abbay of Seynt Victor, so mykyl contricion was in his hert þat for sorow he myght [not] speke a word.

The wise prior advises the penitent to write his sins on paper; the prior reads them, understands their gravity, and proceeds to show the paper to the abbot. But

the abbot sees only a blank page: the conclusion, voiced by the abbot, is that 'God has sen his contricyon and has forgyfyn hym all his synnes'. Although the power of God to forgive sins constitutes the story's miracle, the tale insists upon the intervention of the priestly figures, both for initiating the process and for confirming absolution.<sup>58</sup> The necessity of confession, in a written form if oracular confession is not possible, seems the critical lesson of the story from the priestly point of view.

Even more strongly than this first story, the other tale from Caesarius (fol. 47r) stresses the necessity of special priestly insight and mediation for enabling lay spiritual purification. Notably, this anecdote also appears in the composite Northern volume BL MS Harley 1022, a codex combining Latin and English pastoral materials with English texts such as Book I of Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*.<sup>59</sup> In this story, 'a prest þat had cure of saules sagh a woman cled in diuers clothynges and had a longe taylor þat sche drogh after hyr, in þo whylk he sagh a multitude of fendes blake and smale [. . .]'. In response to his vision, the priest

bad hyr stand styll, sythen he called þo folk and coniuered þo fendes þat þai schuld fle, and prayed to god þat þo folk myght se þat, and so þai dyd. Þen þo womon sagh þat fendes dyssayued hyr in pryde of clothyng, scho 3ede home and chaunged hyr clothes and fro þat tyme scho was ensaumpell of mekenes.

This story emphasizes the superior discernment of the priest and the absolute necessity for detecting sin that remains invisible to those without the 'cure of saules'. One can see how readily these two English stories might be lifted and placed directly into a sermon to emphasize not only the necessity for confession but also the quasi-miraculous power of priestly insight.

Likewise, the unique set of extracts from *Mandeville's Travels* that appear directly following the moral stories, although not as explicitly disciplinary as the anecdotes cited above, feature a penitential focus on using the geography of the holy land to explain typological relations between Old and New Testaments. Although it has been suggested that these extracts were copied without 'any discoverable plan',<sup>60</sup> I would argue that they use the logic of pilgrimage to vivify the details of Christ's passion and death. For example, in the description of Christ's agony in the garden, the extract on fol. 48r includes the following: 'And ye schal vnderstond that Oure Lord, in that nyght that He was taken, He was led

into a garden and ther tho lewes scorned Hym and set a crowne vpon His hed so fast that tho blod ran down by many places of His vysage and His nek and His schuldres'.<sup>61</sup> Later selections, taken from the description of the 'roundnes of the erth', revisit Christ's cross in its legendary connection with the tree of Knowledge, depicting Christ's sacrifice as redeeming original sin while still implying the necessity for penance:

tho tre of tho croys that we calle cypres was of tho tre that Adam ete tho appul of, and so thai fynd wryten. And so tho tre of tho cros was made of iiii. trees that bare tho gode frute, thorgh tho whylke Adam and Eue and alle that come of thaim were safed, and delyuered fro deth withoute end but yf it were thaire owne defaute.<sup>62</sup>

These very selective excerpts suggest the real possibility of damnation if penance is not undertaken with proper priestly supervision.

There is a haphazard quality to the Ashmole miscellany, and we should not overstate the logic of its compilation of English contents. However, the inclusion of these texts after this unique extract of the *Mixed Life* argues for a degree of thematic unity in these pastoral extracts, and for their particular relevance not only to the situation of a priest, but perhaps also to a particular clerical mood of the mid fifteenth century. The material and social power enjoyed by Walter Hilton's late-fourteenth-century addressee enabled Hilton to take spiritual and disciplinary chances, to construct his reader as a sort of prelate, and thus to enter into a wider debate about lay religious practice and clerical propriety. But Hilton's challenging response to lay spiritual ambition proved more conducive, for this fifteenth-century priestly reader, to a selective and conservative reinforcement of his own pastoral discipline in a penitential context. For this particular scribe-compiler, Hilton's vision of lay *imitatio clerici*, however orthodox, was not to be shared with the laity.

NOTES

I would like to thank Matthew Giancarlo, Michael Sargent, and Lana Schwebel for helpful comments on various aspects of this paper.

<sup>1</sup> For discussion of miscellanies and anthologies, see Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson, 'Anthologies and Miscellanies: Production and Choice of Texts', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 279-315. Boffey and Thompson argue that 'miscellanies', which could overlap in form and function with 'commonplace books', tend not to be governed by a single logic, having perhaps been compiled in stages by individuals with different aims. Ralph Hanna finds 'miscellaneity' to be a major principle of Middle English literary culture, involving 'an oscillation between the planned and the random': Ralph Hanna III, 'Miscellaneity and Vernacularity: Conditions of Literary Production in Late Medieval England', in *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. by Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 37-51 (pp. 37-38). Any discussion of the late medieval English religious miscellany is indebted to A. I. Doyle, 'A Survey of the origins and circulation of theological writings in English in the 14th, 15th, and early 16th centuries, with special consideration of the part of the clergy therein' (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1953), which offers summaries of and commentary on hundreds of religious compilations.

<sup>2</sup> Vincent Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, ed. by Griffiths and Pearsall, pp. 317-44 (pp. 317, 318). Vernacular manuals such as Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS C.209 included translated versions of the syllabus, as well as other basic catechetical material, such as the sixteen conditions of charity and material on the name of Jesus (p. 318).

<sup>3</sup> For editions of these texts, see *Contemplations of the Dread and Love of God* [*Fervor Amoris*], ed. by Margaret Connolly, EETS o.s. 303 (London: Oxford University Press, 1993); *Book to a Mother: An Edition with Commentary*, ed. by Adrian James McCarthy (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1981); *Walter Hilton's 'Mixed Life' Edited from Lambeth Palace MS 472*, ed. by S. J. Ogilvie-Thomson (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1986).

<sup>4</sup> Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books of Religion', p. 321.

<sup>5</sup> This phrase has been coined by Gabrielle Spiegel, who argues for the need to consider texts 'within specific social sites that themselves disclose the political, economic, and social pressures that condition a culture's discourse at any given moment': Gabrielle

Spiegel, 'History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 59-86 (p. 85).

<sup>6</sup> Ralph Hanna, III, 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts', in *Pursuing History: Medieval Manuscripts and their Texts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 21-34 (p. 28).

<sup>7</sup> At fol. 94v, a heading reads, 'Hec sunt de quibus presbiter parochialis specialiter debet facere sermonem et docere parochianos' [these are some things from which a parish priest might particularly make a sermon and teach his parishioners].

<sup>8</sup> I will discuss the volume's contents and possible ownership in greater detail below. It is impossible to assign this book definitively to a secular or a religious cleric, given the wide appeal of most of its contents. In its combination of devotional and pastoral contents, the volume resembles some of the northern books that Jonathan Hughes has examined as part of his argument for a growing interest in devotional writings among Yorkshire priests. Hughes notes, 'Many of the surviving fifteenth century manuscripts of the *Scale* [Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*] and the *Epistle on the Mixed Life* are derived from the north-midlands and are found in volumes containing pastoral material, which suggests ownership by secular clergy in York': Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religious and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1988), p. 215. He speculates that the Ashmole volume was such a volume.

<sup>9</sup> Although Hilton emphasizes the pastoral duties that the layman shares with the clerical pastor, and although the work was later appropriated by clerical readers, the specificity of his address to a particular reader makes it unlikely, in my opinion, that Hilton's *Mixed Life* was also 'partially directed at secular clergy', as Hughes has asserted in *Pastors and Visionaries*, p. 211. As Hilary Carey points out, Hilton's particular definition of the mixed life 'can probably best be understood as a personal response to the needs and capabilities of the lay disciple for whom his treatise was written': see Hilary Carey, 'Medieval English Devout Laypeople and the Pursuit of the Mixed Life in Later Medieval England', *Journal of Religious History*, 14 (1987), 361-81 (p. 374).

<sup>10</sup> In her edition of Hilton's *Mixed Life*, at p. xxi, Ogilvie-Thomson describes the passage as 'two brief extracts (approximately ll. 199-53 and 177-88)'. She does not include variants from this manuscript in her critical edition, which is based upon Lambeth Palace MS 472.

<sup>11</sup> Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, p. 215.

<sup>12</sup> Article VII of the Constitutions decreed, [nobody [may] hereafter translate any text of sacred scripture into the English language or another language by his own authority, by way of book, pamphlet, or tract, nor may anyone read any such book, pamphlet, or tract now newly composed in the time of the said John Wycliff, or since, or to be composed hereafter, in part or in whole, publicly or in private, under pain of greater excommunication, unless the said translation be approved by the ordinary of the place, or if the matter should require it, by the

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provincial council; whoever acts against this [ruling] will be punished as a promoter of heresy and error' (my translation). The Latin reads, 'nemo deinceps aliquem textum sacrae scripturae auctoritate sua in linguam Anglicanam vel aliam transferat, per viam libri, libelli, aut tractatus, nec legatur aliquis hujusmodi liber, libellus, aut tractatus jam noviter tempore dicti Johannis Wycliff, sive citra, compositus, aut inposterum componendus, in parte vel in toto, publice, vel occulte, sub majoris excommunicatis poena, quousque per loci dioecesanum, seu, si res exegerit, per concilium provinciale ipsa translatio fuerit approbata: qui contra fecerit, ut fautor haeresis et erroris similiter puniatur': *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, ed. by David Wilkins (London, 1737), III, p. 317.

<sup>13</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 (p. 835).

<sup>14</sup> The Thornton manuscript, a major source of Middle English romances and devotional texts, has been the subject of numerous studies. See George Keiser's articles, "'To Knaue God Almyghtyn": Robert Thornton's Devotional Book', *Analecta Cartusiana*, 106 (1984), 103-29, and 'Lincoln Cathedral MS 91: The Life and Milieu of the Scribe', *Studies in Bibliography*, 32 (1979), 159-79.

<sup>15</sup> Wyclif's biblical literalism, combined with the theory that any form of dominion, or lordship, depended absolutely upon righteousness, implied that the sin involved in accepting superfluous goods automatically condemned all clerical possessions to disendowment. See John Wyclif, *De Civili Dominio*, ed. by Reginald Lane Poole (London: Wyclif Society, 1885), 4 vols; see II, chapters 1-14, for discussion of the lordship of the righteous.

<sup>16</sup> For a comprehensive effort to reconstruct Hilton's biography, see J. P. H. Clark, 'Walter Hilton in Defence of the Religious Life and the Veneration of Images', *The Downside Review*, 103 (1985), 1-25 (pp. 18-20).

<sup>17</sup> Although the dating of the text is uncertain, verbal echoes among Hilton's *Mixed Life*, *Scale of Perfection* Book I, and Latin letters *De Imagine Peccati* and *Epistola De Utilitate et Prerogativis Religionis* suggest that these works may have been written relatively close together in time. These four share a striking similarity in their exposition of Lev. 6.12 ('Ignis in altari meo semper ardebit, et sacerdos surgens mane subiciet ligna ut ignis non extinguatur'). See *Mixed Life*, II, 427-39, and *Scale of Perfection*, Book I, chapter 32 (edition forthcoming by Michael Sargent). *De Imagine* and *De Utilitate* are printed in *Walter Hilton's Latin Writings*, ed. by J. P. H. Clark and Cheryl Taylor (Salzburg: Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1987), 2 vols. For the relevant passage in *De Imagine*, see I, p. 77; for *De Utilitate*, see I, p. 168. Hilton's *De Utilitate* was written for his friend Adam Horsley, encouraging him to join the Carthusian order, which Horsley did in 1386; thus, the letter can be dated to c.1385. In that work, Hilton

suggests that he has not yet joined a religious order. If, as Michael Sargent speculates, *Scale I*, the *Mixed Life*, and *De Imagine Peccati* slightly precede the *Epistola*, then they may be roughly dated to the first half of the 1380s. I thank Michael Sargent for bringing these verbal echoes to my attention, providing these citations, and sharing the text of his edition in progress.

<sup>18</sup> Wendy Scase, *'Piers Plowman' and the New Anticlericalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 52.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Galloway, 'Langland and the Schools', *The Yearbook of Langland Studies*, 6 (1992), 89-107 (p. 98).

<sup>20</sup> Wyclif argues in *De Civili Dominio* (c.1376), that if 'after the endowment of the church', clerics had paid attention to the words of John the Baptist, when he said, according to Luke 3.14, 'be content with your stipends' (contenti estote stipendiis vestris), 'they would never have torn apart the realm of Christendom by insinuating themselves monstrously and presumptuously into temporal and civil lordship. Thus the rules of the Baptist in I Timothy 6.8 were obliterated': Wyclif, *De Civili Dominio* II, p. 21, ll. 17-23—the Latin reads, 'Et revera si permanerent in suis limitibus primitivis, contenti de stipendiis a communi erario secularie ministratis, nunquam tantum scidissent christianorum imperium temporale in civile dominium monstruose atque prepostere surrepentis'.

<sup>21</sup> Hilton, *Mixed Life*, ed. by Ogilvie-Thomson, ll. 73-75. Unless otherwise noted, citations from the *Mixed Life* will refer to this edition, with line numbers in parentheses.

<sup>22</sup> As Steele notes, 'Augustine had shown that the "lives" must be ruled by *caritas*. Whether inspired by Augustine or not, Gregory had, in effect, related the Lives to the Great Commandment of Charity, presenting the Active Life as specialising in the love of man, the Contemplative, in the love of God': F. J. Steele, *Towards a Spirituality for Lay-Folk: The Active Life in Middle English Religious Literature From the Thirteenth Century to the Fifteenth* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), p. 83.

<sup>23</sup> As established by Gregory, whose works strongly influenced Hilton, the works of the active life consisted of feeding the hungry, teaching the ignorant, correcting the erring, bringing the proud back to the way of humility, and offering care to the sick. The Latin reads, 'Activa enim vita est, panem esurienti tribuere, uerbo sapientiae nescientem docere, errantem corrigere, ad humilitatis uiam superbientem proximum reuocare, infirmantis curam gerere': Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Hiezechihelam Prophetam*, ed. by M. Adriaen, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 142 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), II.ii.8.187-89.

<sup>24</sup> In its constructive response to contemporary cynicism about the overlapping of temporal and spiritual lordship, the *Mixed Life* strikingly anticipates, and may perhaps influence, the arguments of the Dominican friar Roger Dymmok, who employs Latin to diffuse clerical authority as part of his own response to Wycliffite anticlericalism. In response to the

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Lollard *Twelve Conclusions* of 1395, especially the Lollard critique of 'clerical involvement in secular administration', Dymmok produced a lengthy Latin treatise entitled *Liber Contra XII Errores et Hereses Lollardorum*, ed. by H. S. Cronin (London: Wyclif Society, 1922). In responding to the Lollard accusations, Fiona Somerset argues, Dymmok invites laymen as well as clerics to consider themselves as battling the heretics in a *pastoral* capacity, including under the rubric 'shepherds of the church' not only 'holy doctors' but also 'kings and princes', implying that the category 'pastor' can include 'a mixed group of important laymen and clerics': Fiona Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 114.

<sup>25</sup> As Gregory had argued, the primary responsibility of the pastor (called *pastor*, *rector*, *praelatus*, or *praepositus* in turn) is to balance preservation and care of others with periods of contemplation—'Let the ruler be next to each one in sympathy, and soar above all in contemplation [ . . . ] that he may neither, while he seeketh things on high, despise the weakness of his neighbours, nor, being suited to the weakness of his neighbours, abandon the desire of things on high'. The Latin reads, 'Sit rector singulis compassione proximus, prae cunctis contemplatione suspensus, ut [ . . . ] ne aut alta petens proximorum infirma despiciat, aut infirmis proximorum congruens appetere alta derelinquat': *S. Gregorii Magni Regulae Pastoralis Liber*, trans. by R. H. Bramley (Oxford: James Parker, 1874), pp. 67-69.

<sup>26</sup> Hilary Carey has called the passage 'radical' because it implies that 'secular authority can be considered tantamount to a religious vocation' ('Devout Literate Laypeople', p. 373).

<sup>27</sup> Hilton models this passage on the *Regulae Pastoralis Liber* 2.5, where Gregory states, 'the Truth Himself, manifested to us by taking upon Him our manhood, in the mountain continueth in prayer, and worketh miracles in the cities, paving, that is, a way for good rulers to follow; that, although they even now long for the highest things through contemplation, they may, nevertheless, be mingled with the necessities of the weak by sympathy'. The Latin reads, 'Hinc ipsa Veritas per susceptionem nostrae humanitatis nobis ostensa, in monte orationi inhaeret, miracula in urbibus exercet, imitationis videlicet viam bonis rectoribus sternens; ut etsi jam summa contemplanando appetunt, necessitatibus tamen infirmantium compatiendo misceantur' (p. 71).

<sup>28</sup> Doyle, 'Survey', I, p. 218. Like the earliest witnesses to the *Mixed Life*, the Vernon manuscript (Bodleian MS Engl.theol.a.1), dating from the 1390s, and its sister manuscript, Simeon (BL, Additional MS 22283), also featuring the *Mixed Life* and compiled for a religious house, the *Mixed Life* is included in the parallel fifteenth-century volumes Bodleian MS Rawlinson C.894 and BL, Royal MS 17.c.xviii, probably made for London convents, the former for women and the latter for men (Doyle, 'Survey', I, p. 200). For a list of the *Mixed Life* manuscripts, see *Mixed Life*, ed. by Ogilvie-Thomson, p. iii. For a review of the circulation of



the *Mixed Life* in manuscript, see Doyle, 'Survey', I, pp. 198-204. The *Mixed Life* often travelled with one or both books of Hilton's more famous *Scale of Perfection*, a contemplative treatise for an anchoress, frequently returning to readers in religious houses who might make use of its guidance in their efforts to practise contemplation in the context of monastic community. The *Mixed Life* travelled with the second book of the *Scale* in BL, Harley MS 2397, which belonged to an abbess of the London Franciscan house: she bought the book in London and in turn bequeathed it to her successors at the house (Doyle, 'Survey', II, pp. 267-68).

<sup>29</sup> The extract covers approximately ll. 119-53 and 177-88 in Ogilvie-Thomson's edition, with the omission of ll. 154-76.

<sup>30</sup> Doyle suggests that the compiler might have been either secular or religious. He notes that the end of the manuscript features a note reading "'de clericis cuius ordines sint in congregacione terrenorum", and on the alienation of the goods of churches; some rough jottings seem to relate to cows and sheep and various payments, including one to or from "Archidiacon. Ebor.", but they are hardly legible. The volume shows clear pastoral interest but also strong devotional interests; in view of the accounts last mentioned, probably not a mendicant but possibly either a secular or monastic compilation' ('Survey', II, p. 77).

<sup>31</sup> This lyric is divided into two in the manuscript, with these two separate headings, although it is represented as a single work in the modern edition: see *Medieval English Lyrics, A Critical Anthology*, ed. by R. T. Davies (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), pp. 146-48. For descriptions of the English prose, see *The Index of Printed Middle English Prose*, ed. by R. E. Lewis et al. (New York: Garland, 1985), items 58, 126, 233, 564. Also see *The Index of Middle English Prose Handlist IX: Manuscripts containing Middle English Prose in the Ashmole Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford*, ed. by L. M. Eldredge (Cambridge: Brewer, 1992), p. 27. For printed editions of the stories from Caesarius, see 'De imperfecta contricione', in *English Prose Treatises of Richard Rolle of Hampole, Edited from Robert Thornton's MS in the Library of Lincoln Cathedral*, ed. by George G. Perry, EETS o.s. 20, rev. edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), pp. 6-7, and *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, An English Father of the Church and his Followers*, ed. by Carl Horstmann, 2 vols (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1895), I, p. 157. For the Mandeville extracts, see M. C. Seymour, 'Secundum Iohannem Maundvyle', *English Studies in Africa*, 4 (1961), 148-58.

<sup>32</sup> Hanna, 'Booklets', p. 28. For the full description of the manuscript, see *A Descriptive, Analytical, and Critical Catalogue of the Manuscripts Bequeathed unto the University of Oxford by Elias Ashmole*, ed. by William Henry Black (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1845), pp. 362-65.

<sup>33</sup> Hanna, 'Booklets', p. 29.

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<sup>34</sup> In citing from the manuscript, I have silently expanded abbreviations, capitalized proper names, and modernized punctuation.

<sup>35</sup> These are ll. 178-80 in the critical edition. Ogilvie-Thomson's textual notes indicate that the reading 'persones' as opposed to 'persoone' occurs in nine manuscripts (more than half), but 'prelates and curates' is an uncommon reading, attested in only three other manuscripts: Vernon, Simeon, and Plimpton (Columbia University MS 271).

<sup>36</sup> Hanna, 'Booklets', p. 29.

<sup>37</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, this is the only known extract of the *Mixed Life*. There are, however, two extant fragments of the text, found in London, Inner Temple, MS Petyt 524 and Yale University Library MS 324 (see Ogilvie-Thomson, p. xxi).

<sup>38</sup> Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, pp. 290-91.

<sup>39</sup> This phrase was coined by George Keiser, in "'To Knawe God Almyghtyn": Robert Thornton's Devotional Book'. Keiser argues that the 'devotional book' should be considered as an intentionally compiled religious volume, separate from the other parts of the Thornton manuscript, which also includes a volume of secular romances and a book of medical recipes. He notes that it is not clear whether Thornton himself, or a later owner, brought the three books together into the present large volume (p. 104). Also 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*, ed. by A. J. Minnis (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1994), pp. 169-88.

<sup>40</sup> According to Keiser, Thornton was 'a member of the minor gentry who in 1418 became lord of East Newton, in the wapentake of Ryedale, North Riding of Yorkshire': see George Keiser, 'Lincoln Cathedral MS 91', p. 160. Also see Keiser's follow-up article, 'More Light on The Life and Milieu of Robert Thornton', *Studies in Bibliography*, 36 (1983), 111-19.

<sup>41</sup> Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries*, p. 295.

<sup>42</sup> Keiser, 'Lincoln Cathedral MS 91', p. 160. Keiser notes in "'To Knawe God Almyghtyn'" that 'the incremental composition of Thornton's book precludes the possibility of any comprehensive design. Thus, whatever unity and coherence the book has derives not from the ordering of the texts, but from the fact that clearly discernible tastes and preferences governed the compiler's choice of texts' (p. 112).

<sup>43</sup> These lines are cited from *English Prose Treatises*, p. 27. Although Thornton's source for this incomplete copy of the *Mixed Life* is not known, Keiser has speculated, based on family connections and records, that some of Thornton's texts, including possibly his *Mixed Life*, which contains a few female address forms, were borrowed from the local nunnery of Nun Monkton: see 'More Light on the Life and Milieu of Robert Thornton', pp. 114-17.

<sup>44</sup> The Thornton and Ashmole manuscripts have several similar contents, of which only one is identical: a short instructive story on contrition. Other similar contents include Middle English explications of the ten commandments, the *Mirror of St. Edmund* (Thornton's in English, Ashmole's in Latin), and the fragments of the *Mixed Life*. Both compilations feature extracts from Rolle's Latin works and texts attributed to Rolle, although not the same ones. For details on Thornton's Rolle extracts, see Thompson, 'Another Look', pp. 180-81, and for details on Ashmole's, see the catalogue description and Hope Emily Allen, *Writings Ascribed to Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, and Materials for his Biography* (New York: MLA, 1927), pp. 94, 130, 192, 347.

<sup>45</sup> Keiser, "'To Knawe God Almyghtyn'", p. 123.

<sup>46</sup> These short catechetical items are included on fol. 196r-v, and the sermon covers fols 213v-218v: see Keiser, "'To Knowe God Almyghtyn'", pp. 112-14.

<sup>47</sup> See Keiser, "'To Knawe God Almyghtyn'", p. 117.

<sup>48</sup> *St. Edmund's Mirror*, from *Religious Prose and Verse from the Thornton Manuscript*, ed. by George G. Perry, EETS o.s. 26 (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), p. 46.

<sup>49</sup> Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', quoted phrases on p. 850 and p. 849.

<sup>50</sup> Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 853.

<sup>51</sup> Love writes, 'Whereof & oþer vertuose exercise þat longeþ to contemplatif luyng, & specialy to a recluse, & also of medelet life, þat is to seye sumtyme actife & sumtyme contemplatif, as it longeþ to diuerse persones þat in worldly astate hauen grace of gostly loue. who so wole more pleynly [be] enformed & tauht in english tonge. let him loke þe tretees þat þe worpi clerk & holi lyuere Maister Hilton þe Chanon of Thurgarton wrote in english': Nicholas Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ: A Reading Text, A Revised Critical Edition, based on Cambridge University Library Additional MSS 6578 and 6686 with Introduction, Notes and Glossary*, ed. by Michael G. Sargent (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2004), p. 122.

<sup>52</sup> Love, *The Mirror*, p. 118.

<sup>53</sup> Compare Hilton's statement in the *Mixed Life* that this life belongs 'speciali to men of holichirche, as to prelates and oþire curates whiche haue cure & souereynte ouer oþere men for to kepe & rule hem, boþe here bodies & principali heer soules, in fulfillynge of þe deedes of mercy bodili and goostli' (ll. 144-48).

<sup>54</sup> See Sargent's Explanatory Notes to Love, *The Mirror*, p. 252.

<sup>55</sup> See Sargent's Introduction to Love, *The Mirror* (pp. ix-xxi) for a discussion of the work's anti-Wycliffite purpose. As Watson notes, 'Love's *Mirror*, which was the first work to take advantage of the protection offered by the Constitutions, seems to embody their ideology

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so well that it is tempting to speculate (with Jonathan Hughes) that it was written in part to order' ('Censorship and Cultural Change', pp. 852-53).

<sup>56</sup> Cited in Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 325.

<sup>57</sup> Thompson, 'Another Look', p. 180.

<sup>58</sup> This story from Caesarius also appears in the moral treatise *Jacob's Well*, to illustrate the discussion of the sentence of excommunication. Here the story leads directly into an exhortation to obey one's confessor—'R3yt so, whanne þe articles of þe curs be schewyd before 3ou, goth no3t away, but pacyently heryth hem, and 3if 3e be vngylty, beth ware, & fleeth hem, and 3if 3e be gylty, be sory in herte, & dredeth hem, and louyth 3oure curate, þat warnyth 3ou of 3oure peryles! And 3erne, wyth full sorwe of herte, beeth schreuyrn, & makyth amendys, be þe counseyl of 3oure confessour': see *Jacob's Well, An Englisht Treatise on the Cleansing of Man's Conscience*, ed. by Arthur Brandeis, EETS o.s. 115 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1900), pp. 12-13. I thank the *Leeds Studies in English* anonymous reader for bringing this reference to my attention.

<sup>59</sup> This manuscript was probably a clerical collection, according to Doyle, who suggests that 'it may be either mendicant or monastic, some pastoral interest being almost inevitable in the case of the former, and not uncommon in the latter' ('Survey', II, p. 118). The story is printed as the first of the selection of English texts from BL, Harley MS 1022, in Horstmann, *Yorkshire Writers*, I, p. 157. Keiser notes a connection between MS Harley 1022 and the Thornton manuscript, with which it shares vernacular versions of Rolle's *Oleum Effusum* and a narrative piece. He speculates that a lost manuscript containing 'a compendious collection of Richard Rolle writings' provided the source for the Rolle texts copied into both the Thornton and Harley manuscripts ("To Knawe God Almyghtyn", p. 105).

<sup>60</sup> Seymour, 'Secundum Iohannem Maundvyle', p. 149.

<sup>61</sup> I am citing here from Seymour's edition of the Mandeville extract ('Secundum Iohannem Maundvyle', p.150, ll. 15-19). This selection appears on fol. 48r of the manuscript. Seymour has modernized punctuation, capitalization, and orthography.

<sup>62</sup> Seymour, 'Secundum Iohannem Maundvyle', p. 155, ll. 200-05. This selection appears on fol. 50v of the manuscript.