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An Edition and Study of *A Revelation Shown to a Yorkshire Woman*

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‘A priest’s private book’ is how A. I. Doyle has described Cambridge, University Library, MS li.6.43, a small parchment volume of 156 folios, which measures 115mm x 80mm, and which dates from the fifteenth century.¹ The text is laid out in single columns within a ruled frame, and pricking marks are visible at the outer edges of each folio; there are typically twenty-one lines to the page and catchwords at the end of quires, and in some places there are traces of quire signatures. The volume’s generous margins have been left blank, as have spaces for initial capitals where guide letters only have been supplied. In general there is little decoration beyond rubrication, though in some texts the latter is used extensively. The manuscript’s contents, which are mostly devotional, consist of a mixture of prose and verse in Latin and English. The first ten items together form a basic English devotional manual which offers commentaries on the ten commandments and *Pater Noster*, and expositions of the sins, works of mercy, virtues, and five wits. Most of these short texts survive elsewhere in similar contexts, often in several different versions, either as discrete pieces, such as the *Sixteen Conditions of Charity*, or as borrowings from longer works: two of those copied here are extracts from Edmund of Abingdon’s *Speculum ecclesie* or *The Mirror of Holy Church*.² These texts of religious instruction are followed by specific directions on how to pray, and a variety of prayers is offered, in both Latin and English, several attributed, rightly or wrongly, to various saints, including Anselm, Francis, Augustine, and Bernard. The intercessions range from the devout to the superstitious, amply demonstrating the full spectrum of medieval devotion: as well as straightforward prayers on the name of Jesus and invocations to Mary, the Trinity, and other saints including Christopher and Barbara, there are prayers which offer various rewards and indulgences, and a prayer-charm which promises protection against all dangers including childbirth.

¹ 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in English in the 14th, 15th and Early 16th Centuries with Special Consideration of the Part of the Clergy therein’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, 2 vols, University of Cambridge, 1953). See also C. Hardwick and H. R. Luard, *A Catalogue of Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, 5 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1856–67), III, 540–42.

² For full details of the manuscript’s English prose contents see Margaret Connolly, *Index of Middle English Prose*,

Amongst this devotional material are two short visionary texts written in English prose. The first has no specific title and for ease of reference I have entitled it *A Revelation Shown to a Yorkshire Woman*, following its descriptive incipit: ‘A reuelacion þat was schewid to a religyous woman of þe nonrye of Hampull’. The text (which is edited in the appendix to this essay) describes how the nun’s brother, a squire, was fatally wounded at the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403. After his death the nun prays for knowledge of the fate of his soul and receives a vision of him in purgatory. The brother thanks his sister for her prayers which have already been efficacious in reducing his torments; he also presents her with a letter detailing psalms and prayers which will wholly deliver him (and others) from pain. This short text is copied on fols 80v–82r by the main scribe. Red ink has been used throughout, except for various responses which are indicated towards the end of the text; these are given in black ink, as are the Latin prayers which follow. The second visionary text (on fols 82v–84r) is also copied entirely in red ink. This is *The Vision of St John on the Sorrows of the Virgin*, which relates how St John the evangelist had a vision in which he saw and heard Mary expressing her five sorrows to Jesus. In response Christ explains the rewards that will accrue to men and women who have compassion for each of these sorrows and pray for them; five Latin prayers follow the text.

The Vision of St John on the Sorrows of the Virgin is a comparatively well-known piece, extant in both English and Latin versions; the English versions, which differ considerably, survive in nine manuscripts and the Latin version in two manuscripts.³ By contrast, *A Revelation Shown to a Yorkshire Woman* seems to survive uniquely in MS Ii.6.43.⁴ The occurrence of the two pieces together in this context may be accidental, arising from the circumstances of copying and the availability of exemplars, but it is also possible that similarities in content led the scribe to place the two pieces together. Each consists of a vision which is the vehicle for the presentation of particular prayers, and the similar layout of both texts (particularly the extended use of red ink) suggests that the scribe regarded them as a pair.

The use of vision or revelation was a favoured technique in both secular and devotional literature of the later Middle English period; the popularity of the dream vision format in the works of all the major late fourteenth-century English poets is matched by the use of this convention in women’s devotional prose of the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. In the present instance the subject, a religious woman, is not asleep but is engaged ‘in here prayers’ (l. 5), and meditation, ‘þynkyng upon hyr broþer’ (ll. 5–6); she thus inhabits an intermediate state, neither sleeping nor fully conscious of the waking world. Prayer is the mode

Handlist XIX: Manuscripts in the University Library, Cambridge (Dd–Oo) (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009), pp. 237–43.

³ The English text is also found in London, British Library, Additional 37787, fol. 161r; Cambridge, University Library, Additional 6686, fol. 269v; Cambridge, St John’s College, H.5, fol. 60v; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson poet. 175, fol. 131vb; Tokyo, Takamiya 65, fol. 9v (*olim* Bradfer-Lawrence 8); Glasgow, University Library, Hunter 472 (V. 6. 22), fol. 2r, San Marino, Huntington Library, Hm 127, fol. 33r; a fragment of the text survives in Cambridge, University Library, Hh.1.11, fol. 136r. The Latin version is found in London, British Library, Additional 11748, fol. 138v and London, British Library, Arundel 506, fol. 28r. The text is edited from London, British Library, MS Additional 37787 by N. S. Baugh, *A Worcestershire Miscellany Compiled by John Northwood, c. 1400* (Philadelphia: s.n., 1956), pp. 151–52.

⁴ This text does not resemble any of the tales or exempla listed by Thomas D. Cooke in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050–1500* (New Haven, CT: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1993), IX, 3138–3328; of course, other copies of the text may emerge as greater numbers of manuscripts are surveyed for the *Index of Middle English Prose*.

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of communication with the spiritual world, and here that communication is made immediate and tangible by the appearance of the nun's dead brother. In earthly terms the choice of the male sibling invests the revelation with authority since, in real life, the nun's brother would be a figure of significance, akin to her father and other close male relatives; he is portrayed as someone whose voice is important, distinguishing the vision as a type of *oraculum*, according to the classification of medieval dream types made by Macrobius.⁵ However, since the brother was not a monk or holy man but a soldier who died in battle, he has no especial spiritual significance, which means that the spiritual credentials of the revelation need to be established by different methods. This was a general problem for medieval mystics, particularly women, who experienced spiritual revelations, and for those who recorded their visions: some means of reassurance that the source of the visions was godly as opposed to devilish had to be provided. The struggle to achieve this may clearly be seen in *The Book of Margery Kempe* which documents Margery's repeated examination by bishops and other members of the Church hierarchy, and in literary strategies adopted by writers such as Julian of Norwich.⁶ In *A Revelation Shown to a Yorkshire Woman* the woman's pedigree and credentials are briefly established as impeccable before the vision commences: she is 'a religyous woman' (l. 1), professed at a named house, and evidently from a family of some standing since her brother has the rank of squire. Her piety is underlined by repetition: 'þis holy woman þis nunne' (ll. 3–4), and her revelation is framed as the response to her prayers and her request 'to God' (l. 4) for knowledge of her brother's soul. Whilst the sight of the brother's battle wounds functions primarily as a means of physical recognition (the text specifies that these are 'þe woundys þat were upon hys body whar he was buried', l. 10), the wounds also unmistakably echo those on Christ's body, which were visible after the resurrection to the disciples, and used as proof of identity by the disciple Thomas; the image of the wounds is therefore another means by which the figure of the brother is assigned spiritual significance. The reader is thus reassured that the brother's message may be understood and trusted as proceeding from God, with God's blessing; to underline this, in each of the brother's three short speeches there is insistent reference to God (ll. 9, 13, and 16). The authority of the message conveyed by the brother is further emphasized by the token he bears: 'a greet letter wretyn conteynnyng vi salmes and orysons' (ll. 6–7). His gift of this letter is doubly authoritative, first because of its written format (the rest of the revelation is visual and aural), and secondly because of the specific text which it contains: the psalms, as part of the Bible, are indisputably God's word, and the prayers, in conjunction, take on some of same authority.

The 'vi salmes' are not identified further in the text, nor is the number six suggestive of any traditional group such as the seven penitential psalms or the fifteen gradual psalms. It is tempting to suppose that textual corruption might have altered an original seven (vij) to six (vj), suggesting that the penitential psalms were what was intended here.⁷ This would be an appropriate sequence, since its purpose was to express grief for sin and to obtain God's pardon,

⁵ For a brief explanation of the classification of dreams devised by Macrobius see A. C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 8–11.

⁶ See Nicholas Watson, 'Julian of Norwich', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 210–21.

⁷ More ingeniously, perhaps vj (6) might have been miscopied from an original iij (3), which was either itself an error for ij (2), matching the two psalm citations and prayers which follow the text here, or an indication that the full sequence was three, rather than six, implying that not much more is missing from the version given here. I am grateful to Michael Kuczynski for his suggestions on this matter, and for his advice about the identification and use of the psalms themselves.

but the psalm *incipits* themselves do not belong to this group.⁸ Only two psalm *incipits* are cited in the Latin which follows the Middle English text: *Deus, deus, meus respice* (Psalm 21), and *In te domine speraui* (Psalm 30), respectively first and last in the sequence of ten psalms known as the Psalms of the Passion. Here each incipit is followed by a Latin prayer addressed to Christ, and in each case the prayer contains an allusion to the preceding psalm: *et propter honorem vociferacionis qua inuocasti omnipotentem patrem tuum* ('on account of the honour of the outcry [that is, Psalm 21], by which you called upon your Almighty Father'); and *per hoc honorem comendacionis qua patri tuo omnipotenti animam tuam comendasti* ('through the honour of the prayer [that is, Psalm 30] by which you commended your soul to your Almighty Father'). A link is thus made between the words of the psalms, which are here imagined as voiced by Christ, and the suppliant's own pleas. If the number six specified by the text is correct, it is clear that the sequence is far from complete, and the fact that the lower third of fol. 82r has been left blank suggests some interruption or failure of textual supply.

The text is endowed with a dramatic immediacy by its focus on the personal relationship between the nun and the subject of her vision. Yet once the reader's attention has been gained by this device the text emphasizes that this is not merely a personal story. Not only the nun's brother, but others may be saved by her prayers. Repetition is used to convey the fact that the nun's own prayers for her dead brother have already been sufficient to gain him forgiveness for his sins; the further action of using the specific prayers outlined in the vision will deliver him from all pain 'wiþynne xx dayes' (l. 14). Clearly the nun is intended as an example for others, demonstrating the importance of praying for the souls of the dead; the power of prayer as a means of intercession is emphasized, at both a personal and universal level: 'And God of hys goodnes þat wyllþ all men to be sauýd schewþ þees prayers to þe, not only for me, but for innumerable þat schull be sayud þere by' (ll. 16–18). The closing lines of the text give particular instructions for the saying of the prayers including the stance to be adopted, proper responses, and the number of repetitions required (150); these features give the text the air of an indulgence and align it with other devotional texts in the manuscript which make similar promises. A Latin prayer attributed to St Bernard promises 'all þe indulgences of all þe stacions of Rome', and a plenary indulgence to anyone who uses the prayer every day.⁹ Another Latin prayer attributed to St Augustine promises protection from a violent death 'hooso euer say hit þat day he schall not be brente wiþ fyre nor perischid wiþ water and he schall not dye noon euill deef and þat day he seyþ it he schall haue warnyng afore of his deef'.¹⁰ And another, this time attributed to St Francis, guarantees continuance of worldly prosperity, remission of sins, and heavenly bliss.¹¹ Likewise, the English meditation on Christ's passion promises that the orator's prayer will be heard, though it cautions that the request must be lawful: 'take good hede þat þu pray no þynge þat is agayne þe feyþe'.¹²

The visionary text, along with many of the other devotional works contained in MS li.6.43, emphasizes the universal applicability of the prayers it prefaces. It utilizes the personal situation of the bereaved nun as a hook to catch the reader's attention and inspire devotion; beyond this, details of identity seem not to have been regarded as important. Whilst the names of the nun and her brother are not given, the text's opening lines do provide two key facts: first that the

⁸ The Penitential Psalms were 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142 (in the Vulgate numbering).

⁹ fols 78v–79r; following the English rubric, the prayer begins, 'Stabat mater dolorosa [...]'].

¹⁰ fol. 32v; following the English rubric, the prayer begins, 'Domine deus omnipotens [...]'].

¹¹ fol. 31v; following the English rubric, the prayer begins, 'Saluator mundi [...]'].

¹² fols 19r–20r.

nun was professed at the house of Hampole, and secondly that her brother died as a result of his involvement at the battle of Shrewsbury (1403). These points, which narrow the context of the text's stated origins to a particular place and date, invite further historical investigation. Unfortunately, scant details are available about the nuns professed at Hampole at the beginning of the fifteenth century. At this time the prioress was probably Elizabeth Fairfax, and the name of one other nun, the *hostilaria* Alice Lye, is given in Archbishop Bowet's injunctions after a visitation to the priory on 20 August 1411.¹³ Yet although a positive identification of the nun and her brother continues to remain elusive, rather more may be inferred about the cultural, political, and familial contexts of these individuals than is volunteered by the text itself.

The nun's stated affiliation to Hampole provides us with a location in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Hampole was situated on the high road (the present day A638) between Wakefield and Doncaster. It was the most southerly of the county's twenty-five nunneries, its nearest sister houses of Kirklees and Nun Appleton lying some distance to the north. Hampole's closest monastic neighbours were the Augustinian canons at Nostell to the north, the Benedictines at Monk Bretton to the west, and the Carmelite and Franciscan friars (who acted as the nuns' confessors) in Doncaster to the south; the nearest Cistercian abbey was at Roche. The priory of Hampole, founded by Avice de Tany and her husband William de Clerfai, was in existence by 1156; it was endowed with the revenues of nearby churches at Adwick le Street, Melton, and Marr, and was originally intended to support a small group of nuns.¹⁴ As numbers increased during the thirteenth century, successive visitations found that the house was exceeding its means and was burdened with debts. The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* records its gross annual revenue as £83 6s 11d, and its clear value as £63 5s 8d, but the house escaped suppression in 1536–37 and was not surrendered until 19 November 1539 when the prioress, Isabel Arthington, and eighteen nuns were granted pensions.

The fact that the nun was professed at Hampole is not proof that her family must have belonged to the surrounding area, but there is a strong likelihood that this was the case. A study of the origins of Yorkshire monks, friars and nuns in the sixteenth century has observed that 'recruitment to Yorkshire monasteries was local, in some cases extremely local'.¹⁵ The evidence for this statement largely derives from Rievaulx, one of the great Yorkshire Cistercian houses, where, at the time of the dissolution, almost all the monks seem to have derived from within a twenty-five to thirty-mile radius of the abbey. A similar pattern of distribution may be observed at Byland, another Cistercian house, in the sixteenth century, leading to the reasonable assumption that recruitment at the smaller, less prestigious, Yorkshire houses, would have been even more locally based. Local connections may certainly be established for some of the nuns named in the Hampole pensions list of 1539. Elizabeth Arthington (apparently not the same as the similarly-named prioress, Isabel Arthington) was remembered in the will of her mother, a widow of Adwick le Street, also named Elizabeth Arthington, in 1557, receiving clothing, household goods, and a cow. Jane or Joan Gascoigne, the sub-prioress, was bequeathed clothing in January 1540/1 by her brother, Humphrey Gascoigne,

¹³ Elizabeth Fairfax was the prioress after 1380; records between 1392–1414 name the prioress as 'Elizabeth' and once, in 1406, as 'Isabel', perhaps the same; see *Victoria County History of Yorkshire* (hereafter *VCH*), ed. by William Page (London: Constable, 1913), III, 164–65.

¹⁴ For a full account of the priory's foundation and history see *VCH*, III, 163–65, and more recently Janet Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire 1069–1215* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 134 and *passim*.

¹⁵ Claire Cross and Noreen Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth Century Yorkshire*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 150 (1995, for 1991–92), p. 3.

clerk, Master of Greetham and parson of Barnborough (less than five miles south of Hampole). And a little further afield, Agnes Frobyssher may have been the daughter Agnes remembered in the will of John Frobysher of Altofts in 1542 (Altofts lies north east of Wakefield, near to Normanton).¹⁶

Several of the nuns named on the pensions list had not been amongst the community in 1536 and may have transferred to Hampole as their own houses were suppressed. This was certainly true in the case of Katherine Stokes who was professed at Sinningthwaite, close to York, and who in the visitation of that house in 1536 was reported to have given birth to a child.¹⁷ At least five other nuns seem only to have joined Hampole shortly before the dissolution, and such movements may obscure the picture of the house's reliance on local recruitment. Detailed information for the fifteenth century is mostly lacking though some of the prioresses have surnames which are suggestive of origins that are reasonably close: these are Elizabeth Rawdon who resigned in 1483 (Rawdon lies north-west of Leeds); Isabella Wheteley, whose election was confirmed in 1483 and who resigned in 1503–04 (Wheteley may perhaps be linked with Wheatley, close to Doncaster, though there are other places similarly named); and Isabella Arthington whose election was confirmed in 1517 (Arthington, also the site of a sister house, lies north of Leeds, close to Bramhope).¹⁸ In the early fourteenth century the house had prioresses who came from Pontefract and Heck, both situated to the north of Hampole: Agnes de Pontefract succeeded as prioress in 1312, and was herself succeeded by Margaret de Hecke in 1319–20. A few ordinary nuns are named in the records of successive fourteenth-century visitations, usually for wrong-doing. In 1324, and again in 1326, Archbishop Melton wrote to the dean of Doncaster demanding that Thomas de Raynevill was to do public penance for committing incest with the nun Isabella Folifayt.¹⁹ Although Isabella's surname may signal that her family had originally stemmed from Follifoot in North Yorkshire (close to Spofforth, south of Harrogate), the stated sin of incest between her and Thomas de Raynevill points to some degree of family connection. The offending Thomas was to do penance at both the conventual church of Hampole and the parish church of Campsall; the latter was presumably his family's parish and was situated only three to four miles north east of Hampole. In the thirteenth century the masters of the house were also drawn from the local milieu, being vicars of Adwick le Street, Wath upon Dearne, and Conisbrough; similarly in the fourteenth century the custody of the house was given to the vicar of Arksey.²⁰

In certain monastic orders it was common practice for novices to change their surnames upon profession, substituting their place of birth for their own family name.²¹ This was the accepted tradition amongst Cistercian monks, and perhaps also amongst the nuns. This tradition of name substitution makes it difficult to establish the family connections of particular religious. It has been observed that the Anglo-Saxon nunneries were 'almost exclusively' the 'preserves of the great families', though recruitment became less exclusive in the later

¹⁶ For references to these bequests see the annotated pensions list given by Cross and Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth Century Yorkshire*, pp. 567–72.

¹⁷ Cross and Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth Century Yorkshire*, p. 571.

¹⁸ For a list of prioresses see *VCH*, p. 165 and D. M. Smith and V. C. M. London, *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales, II: 1216–1377* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 567–68, and D. M. Smith, *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales, III: 1377–1540* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 652.

¹⁹ See *VCH*, p. 164.

²⁰ Three thirteenth-century masters are listed by Smith and London, pp. 567–68. See also *VCH*, p. 163.

²¹ Cross and Vickers, *Monks, Friars and Nuns in Sixteenth Century Yorkshire*, p. 3.

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medieval period.²² Hampole's connections were with the De Cressy family of Melton: Joan de Cressy was the prioress in 1259; less happily Constance de Cressy, who was prioress in 1312, was transferred to Swine the following year for disobedience. Her crime had been to receive young girls, including her own niece, Jonetta, at the urging of her brother, Hugh de Cressy, as prospective nuns.²³ The name of a later prioress, Margaret Normanville (confirmed in 1445, resigned 1452), indicates a connection with another important family, the Normavale family; other significant families represented at Hampole in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the Ratcliffes, Fairfaxes, and Gascoignes.

The other piece of information about identity provided by the text is that the nun's brother died of wounds following the battle of Shrewsbury. This battle took place on 21 July 1403 at the place now called 'Battlefield', north of Shrewsbury in its modern day suburb of Harlescote. The forces of the king, Henry IV, numbering about 14,000, defeated the rebel forces of about 10,000, led by Henry Hotspur, son of Henry Percy, the first earl of Northumberland. The Percies had played a prominent military role in Henry IV's invasion in 1399 and their support had been a key feature in his success in seizing the throne from Richard II. However, by 1402 relations between the king and the Percies had worsened, and the following year Hotspur marched from the Scottish border, recruiting forces in Lancashire and to a much greater extent in Cheshire, the region which, since 1399, he had been charged with the task of securing. His rebel army was largely assembled in the north, but does not seem to have included many men from the Percy stronghold of Northumberland, nor from the Percy estates in Yorkshire, as might have been expected, even though his father, the first earl of Northumberland, was in Yorkshire in June.²⁴ Shrewsbury was garrisoned by the prince of Wales, later Henry V, and when the king's forces initially mobilized from the south it was with the intention of providing support for the defence of the Welsh marches against the insurrections of Owain Glyn Dŵr. Having learned of Percy's rebellion, the king ordered twelve counties to raise further troops and also arranged for the detention of prominent Percy retainers and sympathizers in Yorkshire.²⁵

An initial assessment might conclude, therefore, that the nun's brother was likely to have fought on the side of the rebels, since most of the rebel forces were drawn from the north, and Yorkshire is singled out by the king as a region where loyalties were suspect. Yet few Yorkshiremen are recorded as having joined the Percy rebellion, and there is not much evidence that action was taken against men of the county afterwards: exceptionally properties were forfeited by Randolph See who held property in York, Sir John Pudsey of Bolton, Thomas Scalby of Ottringham near Hull, and John Nowell of Shadwell near Leeds.²⁶ Yorkshire is a large county, and the distribution of Percy estates within it was largely confined to certain areas, namely the lordships of Topcliffe, Spofforth, and Leconfield. Although royal

²² As stated by D. M. Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales*, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 1971), p. 28.

²³ See Janet Burton, 'Cloistered Women and Male Authority: Power and Authority in Yorkshire Nunneries in the Later Middle Ages', in *Thirteenth Century England X*, ed. by Michael Prestwich, Richard Britnell, and Robin Frame (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), pp. 155–65 (p. 158).

²⁴ The Earl's failure to appear at Shrewsbury in support of his son is one of the reasons why the rebellion failed.

²⁵ Those named are John Bank, Leonard Dautre, William Mallom, Henry Preston, Alan Caterall, Robert Hilton, Gerard Salvayn, Randolph See, John Pudsey, John Colville of Dale, John Percy of Kildale, John Ask, and Richard Fairfax; see *Calendar of the Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office* (London: HMSO, 1891–); 1402–5, p. 297.

²⁶ As discussed by Peter McNiven, 'The Scottish Policy of the Percies and the Strategy of the Rebellion of 1403', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 62 (1979–80), 498–530; see also *Calendar of Patent Rolls (1402–5)*, pp. 242, 247, and 251–53.

holdings north of the Ouse were conspicuously weak, in the south of the county, through the duchy of Lancaster, the Crown had a strong presence. Hampole, lying equidistant from Pontefract and Tickhill, was situated in the heartland of a traditionally Lancastrian area; men from these districts had been retained by John of Gaunt since the 1370s, and the duke had been careful to ensure that after his death their loyalties would transfer to his son.²⁷ If it is accepted that the nun's family were county gentry, who probably derived from the districts surrounding Hampole, then the likelihood is that, if they enjoyed any connections at all, these would have been with the Lancastrian affinity. In 1403, therefore, it seems most likely that her brother, the 'squyer of 3oorkschy', would have fought at Shrewsbury as part of the force assembled by the Crown.²⁸

This essay has argued throughout that the circumstances of the composition of *A Revelation Shown to a Yorkshire Woman* were strongly rooted in the southern part of the West Riding of Yorkshire, in the area surrounding the priory of Hampole. It might therefore be expected that the language of the text would display clear dialect features associated with this region. Yet a comparison with some other manuscripts which have been localized to this part of the West Riding by *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* reveals a rather more mixed picture. Admittedly the basis for comparison is limited: the total number of English words in the text amounts to only 330, and this includes only fifty-seven of the terms surveyed in the *LALME* questionnaire.²⁹ These fifty-seven terms have accordingly been compared with their equivalents in the five linguistic profiles which *LALME* places closest to the site of Hampole.³⁰ According to this somewhat rough and ready comparison, the language of *A Revelation* most closely resembles that of LP 217 (London, British Library, MS Harley 2250, Hand B), and LP 591 (San Marino, Huntington Library, MS 139, Hand C), with twenty-nine shared features (not quite the same ones) in each case. The text shares only half as many linguistic features with LP 497 and 204 (again, not always the same ones), but it is harder to draw conclusions in these cases, and in the case of LP 1102, since fewer of the words used for comparison are attested in those profiles. Several other forms in the text which do not (on the evidence of the five linguistic profiles surveyed) occur in the districts closest to Hampole are evidenced in other parts of the West Riding: these are the forms *sche* ('she'); *here*, *hyr*, *hyre* ('her'); *yt* ('it'); *þere* ('their'); *blyssyd* ('blessed'); *but* ('but'); *fadyr* ('father'); *loue* ('love', *sb*); *modyr* ('mother'); *whye* ('why'); *seyde* ('said'); and the spelling '-ond' for '-and' as in *honde* ('hand'). The combination of these features supports a West Riding provenance, though there is a complete absence of the *3ow* and *3our* forms ('you', 'your') that would be expected in this region (the *Revelation* consistently has *þu* or *þou* and *þi*). At the same time the *Revelation* contains a number of forms which do not occur in the West Riding at all: *þees* ('these'); *the wheche* ('which'); *enye* ('any'); and *þynk-* ('think'); more diversely, the preterite singular form *sy3e* ('see' is only recorded by *LALME* for Worcestershire, and the spellings *sistryr* and *systyr* are only attested in profiles located in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Leicestershire).

²⁷ Exceptions were possible, of course: the lands of John Nowell of Shadwell, within the honour of Pontefract, were forfeited in August 1403 on account of his fighting alongside Henry Percy at Shrewsbury: *Calendar of Patent Rolls (1402-5)*, p. 252.

²⁸ 'The Soldier in Later Medieval England' (www.medievalsoldier.org), a project to produce a database of all English soldiers in the service of the Crown from 1369-1453, may eventually offer further scope for identifying the brother.

²⁹ *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, 4 vols, ed. by Angus McIntosh, Michael L. Samuels, and Michael Benskin (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986), I, 552-53.

³⁰ The comparison was drawn with LPs 217, 591, 497, 204, and 1102.

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More extensive linguistic investigation of the other texts contained in MS Ii.6.43 would help to assess to what extent dialect features might have been suppressed by scribal transmission. This is well beyond the scope of this essay, but the manuscript suggests a link for the text, however tentative, of a different kind with Yorkshire. The item which begins in English on fol. 20v, 'Thys lyf aboute fyftene tymys meten is þe lengþe of oure lord iesu [...]', continuing on fol. 21v with two Latin prayers, 'Salve decus par miliorum' and 'Deus qui gloriosis martiribus', is a measurement charm, a prayer based on the length of Christ's body. It is more often copied in the form of a roll, as in the examples preserved in MSS London, Wellcome Library, 632; New Haven, Yale University Library, Beinecke 410; and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, G. 39.³¹ The last copy, which was written at Coverham Abbey in c. 1484 by a scribe who names himself as canon Percevall, indicates that the charm was circulating in more northerly areas of Yorkshire in the late fifteenth century. Like this, the *Revelation* in MS Ii.6.43 may have a witness, as yet undiscovered, with evidence of a direct connection to Yorkshire and the region of Hampole.

³¹ G. R. Keiser, *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050–1500* (New Haven, CT: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1998), X, 3877–78 [366], notes seven copies but does not list the version in MS Ii.6.43.

APPENDIX

**Text of *A Revelation Shown to a Yorkshire Woman* in Cambridge University Library MS
II.6.43, fols 80v–82r**

Editorial Practice

One instance of partially erased text (in line 9) has been supplied, but otherwise editorial intervention has been kept to a minimum. The distinction between *u* and *v* is preserved. Abbreviations are all of a standard type and have been silently expanded, where possible in line with unabbreviated forms also found within the text. Capitalization and word division are modern. Punctuation is modern but takes into account the manuscript's own punctuation.

A Revelation Shown to a Yorkshire Woman

A reuelacion þat was schewid to a religyous woman of þe nonrye of Hampull, the wheche had a broþer, a squyer of 3oorkschyr. The wheche squyer was woundyd to þe deþ at þe bateyll of Schrowysbery and alyue caryed hoom, and in schort tyme after he dyed. And þan þis holy woman, þis nunne, prayed to God þat he wolde vouchesaf to schewe to hyre how yt stood
5 wip hyr broþer sowle. And in þe nyzt sewyng, as sche was in here prayers and þynkyng upon hyr broþer, anon apperyd to hyr here broþer holdyng in hys [fol. 81r] honde a greet letter wretyn conteynyng vi salmes and orysons þat ben wreten hereafter. And seyde to hys systyr: 'O swete systyr, blyssyd be þe fadyr and þe modyr þat þe brouzt so to þis worlde. For mercyfull God for loue of þi prayers haþ for3eue me all my synnes.' Than sche loked upon hym a[nd]
10 sy3e þe woundys þat were upon hys body whar he was buried. But hys face was blak and all brennyng a fyr. And þys woman was aferde and seyde: 'O dere broþyr, how my3tyst þou haue enye ioye þat art þus dyspytously tormentyd?' Than answeyd he and seyde: 'For þi deuoute prayers God haþ for3eue me my synnes.' And þan he took here þees vi salmes and orysons and seyde: 'Wip þees vi salmes & orysons wipþynne [fol. 81v] xx dayes þu schalt delyuer me
15 fro all maner of paynes. Whye schulde not Y þan be glad, for Y scholde abyden in peyne into þe worldys ende haddyst þu not prayed for me. And God of hys goodnes þat wyllyþ all men to be sauyd scheweþ þees prayers to þe, not only for me, but for innumerable þat schull be sayud þere by.'

And þees bee þe salmes þat schull be seyde stonyng, wyth *Gloria patri*, and þe orysons knelyng. And þees salmes wip þe orysons must be seyde an C sybys and fyfthe.

Psalmus. *Deus, deus, meus respice.*

Oracio sequens. *Domine Ihesu Christe, suscipe hos psalmos ad laudem et honorem sancti nominis tui, et propter honorem [fol. 82r] vociferacionis qua inuocasti omnipotentem patrem tuum, libera animam famuli tui .N. et animas fidelium tuorum, pro quibus, nomine tue, imploramus clemenciam adhuc in p[o]enis torquentes, Amen.*
25

In te Domine speraui non confundar in eternum, in iusticia tua libera me.

Domine Ihesu Christe, per hoc honorem comendacionis qua patri tuo omnipotenti animam tuam comendasti pietatem tuam humiliter imploramus, vt animas omnium benefactorum nostrorum per misericordiam Dei in pace requiescant. Amen.