

'HEREDITAM ET ORDINIS CARMELITARUM'

**A STUDY OF THE VERNACULAR THEOLOGICAL
LITERATURE PRODUCED BY MEDIEVAL ENGLISH
WHITEFRIARS, PARTICULARLY
RICHARD MISYN, O. CARM.**

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*M. Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford
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Hilary Term 2002

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PREFACE

I would like to thank the many people who have made this project possible, and enjoyable. Thanks are due in first place to Dr. Vincent Gillespie for his unfailing support, knowledgeable direction and enduring patience. Equally important have been the role of my course supervisor at Oxford, Prof. Anne Hudson, and support of my college advisor, Dr. Helen Barr.

I am most grateful to the British Province of the Carmelite Order; its provincial, Very Rev. Fr. Piet Wijngaard and his Council; Fr. Antony Lester, for continual encouragement and friendship; and the constant tap of knowledge provided by Fr. Richard Copsey and Fr. Kevin Alban. I am indebted to the advice and stimulation of Fr. Joachim Smet of the Carmelite Institute in Rome. The Carmelite communities of More House in York and Aylesford Priory in Kent provided warm hospitality and welcome.

I am indebted to the various academics who have given me pointers along the way. Dr. Valerie Edden, formerly of Birmingham University, and Prof. David Smith of the Borthwick Institute in York both suggested new lines of thinking. I am especially thankful to Dr. Eddie Jones of Exeter University, who made available to me some of Rotha Mary Clay's unpublished research notes on solitaries. Prof. Karl J. Jost of the Sociology department of the University of Tennessee made available his research notes on the same topic. My thanks must go to Dr. Yoshikawa of Hokkaido University for permission to read a chapter of her thesis, and likewise to Dr. Marleen Cré. Dr. Joan Greatrex of Robinson College, Cambridge kindly provided information about Richard Lavenham. Chris Bradley gave constructive editorial advice.

I would like to thank the staff of various libraries and research institutes who have been of great assistance; Sarah Newton, and the library of Corpus Christi College Oxford; the librarians and staff of the British Library in London, and the Bodleian Library in Oxford; the research assistants at the Borthwick institute and the Minster Library in York; and the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London. The staff at Lambeth Palace Library were also of great assistance. I am especially indebted to Ms Judith Taylor for her help in the use of the Carmelite provincial library at Aylesford.

I am grateful to all those who have suggested additions and corrections – for any remaining errors, as Richard Misyn would say, ‘to myne vnconnyng wyet itt’. This work is really only a beginning. Any suggestions for improvement would be gratefully received.

Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, March 2002.

I DEDICATE THIS STUDY TO MY CARMELITE FAMILY.

*Come, let us praise the Virgin Queen
Who called her sons from earthly strife
To Carmel, ever since the scene
Of silent eremitic life.*

First verse of 'Laudemus omnes Virginem'
Traditional, author unknown.

[Used as the opening hymn of the Office of Readings,
Feast of All Carmelite Saints, November 14th.]

ABBREVIATIONS (full references in the bibliography)

<i>BMK</i>	Kempe, <i>Book of Margery Kempe</i> , (ed.) Windeatt, (London, 2000).
<i>BRUC / BRUO</i>	Emden, <i>Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge / Oxford</i> .
<i>CC</i>	Smet, <i>Cloistered Carmel</i> .
<i>CIB</i>	Fitzgerald–Lombard, (ed.), <i>Carmel in Britain</i> .
<i>CLMN</i>	Tanner, <i>The Church in Late Medieval Norwich</i> .
<i>CPL</i>	<i>Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers... Papal Letters</i> .
<i>CTC</i>	Egan, 'The Carmelites Turn to Cambridge'.
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> .
<i>ECD</i>	Copsey, <i>Early Carmelite Documents</i> .
<i>ECP</i>	Smet, <i>The English Carmelite Province</i> .
EETS, OS/ES	Early English Text Society, Original/Extra Series.
<i>EIA</i>	Copsey, 'Establishment, Identity, and Papal Approval'.
f. / ff.	Folio(s).
<i>HBC</i>	Fryde, Greenway, Porter & Roy, (eds.), <i>Handbook of British Chronology</i> .
<i>IMEP</i>	<i>Index of Middle English Prose</i> .
<i>IMEV</i>	Brown & Robbins, <i>Index of Middle English Verse</i> .
<i>IPMEP</i>	Lewis, Blake, & Edwards, (eds.), <i>Index of Printed Middle English Prose</i> .
<i>LALME</i>	McIntosh <i>et al</i> , (eds.), <i>Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English</i> .
<i>Manual</i>	Severs, Hartung & Wells, (eds.), <i>Manual of the Writings in Middle English</i> .
<i>MCH</i>	Staring, <i>Medieval Carmelite Heritage</i> .
ME	Middle English.
<i>MM</i>	Lawrence, <i>Medieval Monasticism</i> .
MS(S)	Manuscript(s).
<i>NCE</i>	<i>New Catholic Encyclopedia</i> .
O. Carm.	Order of Carmelites.
<i>PR</i>	Hudson, <i>The Premature Reformation</i> .
<i>PV</i>	Hughes, <i>Pastors and Visionaries</i> .
Reg.	Bishop's Register.
<i>RHME</i>	Knowles, <i>The Religious Houses of Medieval England</i> .
<i>RMPP</i>	Maidstone, (ed.) Edden, <i>Richard Maidstone's Penitential Psalms</i> .
<i>ROE</i>	Knowles, <i>Religious Orders in England</i> .
<i>Scriptorium</i>	Bale, <i>Scriptorium</i> .

SW(A) Copsey, 'The Carmelites... Surviving Writings' (Additions and Corrections 1).

TC Smet, *The Carmelites*.

Test. *Testamenta Eboracensia*.

INTRODUCTION: RECLAIMING MEDIEVAL CARMELITE LITERATURE

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the *Brethren of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, also known as the *Order of Carmelites* or *Whitefriars*, produced a number of religious texts. These Latin and vernacular works merit a higher profile than they currently enjoy, both among the present-day order and among medievalists of several disciplines.

This thesis enquires into the sorts of devotional literature written and preserved by friars, the traditions and contexts in which this literature was written and read, and who its audience was. The first chapter is an overview of Carmelite writings that somehow engage with 'vernacular theology'. From this, outstanding and characteristic features of medieval Carmelite writings emerge, such as the Whitefriars' interests in eremitism, lay spirituality, and the suppression of heresy.

The second chapter focuses upon the work of one fifteenth-century Carmelite, Richard Misyn, and shows how he was influenced by the spiritual and literary agendas established by previous Whitefriars. Misyn's writing, and interaction with an anchoress in York, will be put in its social and literary context. Lay interaction with the Whitefriars has a long and mutually beneficial history, and in the late medieval period a strong relationship existed between Carmelites and solitaries in particular.

The thesis concludes with a summary, and suggestions for further research.

It is my hope that, in a small way, this study will shed more light upon the literary contributions of the medieval Carmelites. Medievalists have rightly given much attention to the literary activities of Carthusians, Bridgettines, Dominicans and Franciscans. However, it is now important to reclaim the Carmelite textual community from the shadows.

CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF CARMELITE LITERARY ACTIVITY IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

Most studies of the medieval English Carmelite province neglect the Whitefriars' literary efforts.¹ By far the largest proportion of Carmelite texts in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries consisted of scholarly works, produced especially at Oxford and Cambridge universities.² However, the 'Order of the Brethren of Our Lady of Mount Carmel' also exhibited an interest in 'devotional' literature, written in the vernacular as well as Latin, and aimed at an enthusiastic lay (sometimes female) audience. A number of original texts and translations show that Carmelites engaged with the notion of 'vernacular theology'.³

Modern scholars have largely overlooked the literary contribution of the medieval Carmelite community's corpus of writings, partly because of its overshadowing by the larger and more celebrated mendicant orders of Dominicans and Franciscans. Much study has also been done into the role of the Bridgettines and the Carthusians as major producers of religious texts in medieval England.⁴ However, though the Carthusians were undeniably a 'major force in the translation and dissemination process'⁵ and the Bridgettine library at Syon was

¹ The historical studies of the order by Smet, Egan, Copsey and others are invaluable, but the literature of the English Carmelites is rarely the focus of sustained enquiry, notable exceptions being the studies undertaken by Dr. Edden, formerly of Birmingham University, and Rev. Clark. Some study has been made of literature in other provinces. Useful background reading on the order's history and distinctive spirituality includes *TC*; Edden, 'The Mantle'; Edwards, *The Rule*; early chapters of McGreal; Leclercq *et al*, p. 477; Flood; Steggink *et al*; *ROE*, II, pp. 196–9; *NCE*, III, p. 118; articles by Egan and Copsey. In his annotated bibliography [*CIB*, I, pp. 205–250], Copsey justifiably laments the lack of a 'comprehensive, scholarly account' of the Carmelite province, as exists for the other mendicant orders. Useful for the study of convents, individuals are omitted from Copsey's bibliography in anticipation of a biographical register of medieval Whitefriars, a draft copy of which Fr. Copsey has given me access to.

² Medievalists have devoted most attention to the friars' scholastic writings [Fleming, in Wallace, p. 352].

³ A term employed as a catchall by Watson to denote 'any kind of writing... that communicates theological information to an audience' ['Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 823 n. 4; 'The Middle English Mystics', in Wallace, p. 544; 'Visions of Inclusion', pp. 166–73]. This term – which incorporates the broad spectrum of devotional, mystical, and para-mystical writings – enables 'a far larger body of texts than the usual group of four or five Middle English mystics to be incorporated within the canon of Middle English religious literature' [Renevey & Whitehead, p. 1]. Vernacular theology (as opposed to scholastic and monastic theologies) is discussed by McGinn, *The Flowering*, pp. 19–24; Nuth, pp. 23–4.

⁴ I have not the scope to elaborate, as I would wish, on the striking similarities between Carmelites and Carthusians. On Carthusian and Bridgettine literary activities see Sargent, 'The Transmission', *James Grenehalgh*; Cré, in Renevey & Whitehead, p. 45 ff.; Savage & Watson, p. 16; Gillespie, 'Dial M', 'Cura Pastoralis in Deserto', 'The Book and the Brotherhood'.

⁵ *Manual*, IX, p. 3050.

certainly an ‘intellectual treasure house’⁶ in its later years, such views have underestimated the bibliographic credentials of the Whitefriars.⁷

The low profile of the Carmelites is surprising, since England was the largest of the order’s twelve medieval provinces, approaching a thousand friars at its height, about thirty-nine houses, and sub-divided into four administrative ‘distinctiones’, London (house founded 1247), York (1253), Norwich (1256), and Oxford (1256). The Carmelites enjoyed particularly strong links with England ever since their enforced migration from Palestine in 1238, and presentation at the English court in 1241.⁸ Two of the order’s earliest general chapters were held in England (Aylesford in 1247 and London in 1254). It was at the first that the Carmelites decided to petition the Pope for a mitigation of their eremitical *formula vitae*, which had been given to them sometime between 1206 and 1214 by St. Albert, Latin patriarch of Jerusalem.⁹ The *formula vitae* had stated that each hermit was to live a life of prayerful contemplation [Ch. 7] in solitary places [Ch. 2], occupying a single cell [Ch. 3] in a community with other hermits [Chs. 1 & 9].¹⁰

After the move to the west, the order tried to adapt the spirit of the Albertine Rule to the mendicant life. As Lawrence observes of the Carmelites, ‘their conversion into orders of friars bears witness to the powerful impact of the mendicant idea upon the consciousness of religious people in the thirteenth century.’¹¹ This conversion, in response to the twelfth century ‘evangelical

⁶ Gillespie, ‘The Book and the Brotherhood’, p. 186, ‘Dial M’, p. 253.

⁷ The role of the Carthusians in disseminating vernacular theology has been somewhat over-emphasized, given the fact that ‘English Carthusians are more notable for carefully controlling and limiting the circulation of mystical books... than they are for broadcasting their book-making activities’ [Gillespie, ‘Dial M’, pp. 248–9]. Sargent admits that the significance given to their role may result from the disproportionate number of extant Carthusian manuscripts [‘The Transmission’, p. 240]. Hanna joins the ranks of ‘a developing, but still very nascent, group of voices urging a reassessment of the religious orders and vernacular composition’ [p. 27]. Courtenay describes the English Carmelites and Benedictines as ‘the two most active and prominent groups in both church and university’ in the second half of the fourteenth century, but they ‘have not been credited with any significant role in late medieval intellectual life’ even though their ‘changing patterns of interest and writing best reflect some of the larger cultural changes going on in the late fourteenth century’ [p. 371]. Doyle acknowledges the Carmelites’ role as spiritual counsellors and writers [‘Publication’, pp. 113–4]. Fleming’s chapter [in Wallace] acknowledges the literary contribution of friars, and describes the traditional critical approaches to mendicant writing.

⁸ Turner, Abstract of Chapter 2; Copsey, ‘Simon Stock’, p. 652; Egan, in *CIB*, I, p. 2; *RHME*, pp. 113–4 & 146; *TC*, pp. 10–28; *ROE*, II, p. 144; Courtenay, p. 70; *EIA*; *MM*, pp. 270–1. On the order’s administration see Poskitt, in *CIB*, I, pp. 149–165.

⁹ The Carmelites gained papal acknowledgment in 1226. Albert’s *formula vitae* was referred to as a ‘rule’ (though not officially a *regula* in the sense of Canon Law) by Gregory IX in 1229 [*TC*, p. 8]. On the Albertine Rule, see Edwards, *The Rule*; Steggink *et al*; Waaijman; McGreal, pp. 17–31; *TC*, pp. 6–7, 270 n. 27; *CTC*, pp. 158–9; *MM*, p. 270; *ROE*, II, p. 198.

¹⁰ McGreal’s chapter numbering.

¹¹ Lawrence, *The Friars*, p. 100; *MM*, p. 274.

awakening',¹² radically altered their way of life, from eremitic solitaries to coenobitic mendicant friars. Conventional historiography has seen the Carmelite integration of the eremitical and mendicant lifestyles as a smooth progression. However, the conversion was not without practical and spiritual difficulties. Mendicancy required the Carmelites to abandon their early rural hermitages, in favour of Europe's urban centres, where the Carmelites could minister to the growing populace, and gain income and recruits.

Necessary and fruitful as the change in lifestyle was for the order, it eventually provoked questions amongst the Carmelites (particularly its writers) as to how their contemplative roots could be squared with their active urban pastorate.¹³ Despite adopting the *Vita Apostolica* by papal sanction, Carmelites still regarded themselves as contemplative desert hermits.¹⁴ The *Rubrica Prima* of 1281, the summary of the order's early history, emphasised its reclusive nature, and instructed young Carmelites that they were continuing the spirit of Elijah and Elisha's contemplative solitude.¹⁵ Many of the writings produced by the order in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries reflect the Carmelite struggle between preserving their identity as semi-monastic solitary contemplatives, and mendicants committed to an active pastoral mission in the world.¹⁶

In their early history, the hermits of Carmel seem to have lacked a literary culture. Early Carmelite spirituality was conveyed by word of mouth, rather than by circulated writings. Bernardo Oller, prior general of the Carmelites until his death in the early 1380s, explained the early brethren's lack of books by stating 'Nec alia documenta antiqui religiosi habere curaverunt; sufficit enim eis bona fides et praescriptio antiquitatis'.¹⁷ Since the original hermits living on the

¹² *MM*, pp. 238–43.

¹³ Principal Carmelite ministries included preaching, teaching, hearing confession, and writing works of religious instruction – the *ars artium* of the Fourth Lateran Council [*CTC*, p. 162].

¹⁴ The Carmelite prior provincial Thomas Netter made no distinction between hermits and religious when speaking of the origins of the order [*Doctrinale*, (ed.) Blanciotti, Tome III, p. 575]. The order retained the name 'hermits' in its title well into the Middle Ages. The 'Reconstructed Carmelite Missal' (British Library MS Additional 29704–5, f. 130) illustrates a Carmelite dressed as a hermit [Rickert, p. 52; Plate XIII]. Pointing out the eremitic stipulations of the Albertine Rule on solitude, fasting, silence, and perpetual abstinence, Yoshikawa states 'the Carmelites maintained the pre-eminence of contemplation at the root of their spirituality' [p. 69].

¹⁵ *MCH*, pp. 33–43; *TC*, p. 15–6; McGreal, p. 37.

¹⁶ Carmelite contemplative life continued after the change to mendicancy [*TC*, pp. 18–19]. Whitefriars lived the contemplative life amongst the people they served. All medieval religious were, in a sense, contemplatives, but as Egan points out [anniversary lecture], Carmelite contemplative identity remained distinctive. Literature played an important part in this. Extant records of Carmelite book collections show the friars read a wide range of genres including scholastic texts, *legendae*, canon law, sermons, patristics, theology, music, histories, grammars, and 'mystical' texts. Some of the texts read by Carmelites at Aylesford are listed by Egan (2000).

¹⁷ '...Good faith and prescription were sufficient for them' [*MCH*, p. 404, lines 83–85, translated in *TC*, p. 15].

mountain range of Carmel were probably mostly lay penitents,¹⁸ the Carmelites only developed a clerical culture from the mid-1200s when their ministrations to the growing numbers of literate laypersons exposed the need for ordained – and therefore literate – members.¹⁹

From the second half of the fourteenth century the order made up for its early dearth of literature by becoming the most active and prolific in literary terms of all the orders in England.²⁰ In particular, Carmelites wrote a number of legends and histories concerning their origins on Mount Carmel, which allowed the Whitefriars to distinguish themselves from the other mendicant orders. In an age when Marian devotion flourished generally, the *Fratres Beatae Mariae de Monte Carmeli* perceived themselves as enjoying a special relationship with the Virgin.²¹ Moreover, the legends encouraged the Whitefriars to perceive themselves as hermit descendents of the prophet Elijah (and thus the oldest of the Church's orders), a privilege confirmed by the chancellor of Cambridge University at a *determinatio* in 1374.²²

Such disputes were one aspect of feverish Carmelite activity in the schools of Europe. The Carmelites quickly became a student order, devoting themselves to the pursuit of academic excellence.²³ As has been observed, 'Without the towns the friars would never have come into existence; without the universities they would never have become great'.²⁴ Carmelites became prominent in towns and universities across Europe.²⁵ Emden records some 225 Carmelites connected in some way to Cambridge University in the Middle Ages, and a further 244 at Oxford,²⁶ though of course the number will have been higher than records can reveal. The Carmelites' pursuit of academic excellence was necessary to sustain their pastoral provision, and stimulated their role as sermon preachers.²⁷

¹⁸ *TC*, p. 20.

¹⁹ For a general history of the mendicant movement, and its need for educated clergy, see *MM*, pp. 251–64.

²⁰ *ROE*, II, p. 152.

²¹ Edden, 'The Mantle', pp. 77–82; *NCE*, III, p. 118.

²² Clark, in *CIB*, II, pp. 1–34; 'Late Fourteenth', pp. 8–9; Fleming, in Wallace, p. 374; *TC*, p. 55; Crompton, p. 35. On the claims for Elijah as founder and Albert as 'Legislator', see Egan, in *CIB*, I, p. 107; *EIA*, p. 47; *TC*, pp. 7–8.

²³ The Carmelite academic drive was needed to prove the order's usefulness to the church so as to avoid the annulment that had destroyed so many fraternal orders at the Second Council of Lyons in 1274. Whilst most Carmelites did not progress much beyond the local distinction, a significant minority became an educated elite. On the friars' academic drive in the schools (and opposition to it), see *CTC*, p. 165; *MM*, pp. 261–8.

²⁴ Southern, p. 273.

²⁵ On the scholastic theologians and philosophers to emerge from amongst the Whitefriars see Xiberta; Zimmerman, 'Les Carmes'; Smalley.

²⁶ Egan derived this information from Emden's *Biographical Registers* [*CTC*, p. 168].

²⁷ The Carmelites became renowned preachers, though scholars debate how much Carmelite sermon literature survives. The sermon cycle Edden believed to be of Carmelite authorship [*Carmelus* 43] has been shown by Nold to be a copy of a Franciscan cycle, though the Carmelite scribe purported the contents to be

The Carmelite system of education and book ownership was the bedrock of their literary activities. In England, each Whitefriar (who could begin his novitiate from the age of fourteen) received initial instruction at his *filial* convent, that is, the house in which he entered the order, and to which he was (at least nominally) attached for life.²⁸ There was no central house for instruction in the novitiate, but even small provincial convents such as Hulne seem to have had substantial libraries for this purpose.²⁹

The brightest Carmelite friars in England continued their study in one of the province's *studia particularia* in London, Oxford, York and Norwich (established in 1281 for the largest cities in the kingdom, one in each 'distinction'). The antiquary, Protestant polemicist, and former Carmelite John Bale (1495–1563), a source of so much information about the medieval province and its books, described the early sixteenth-century library of the *studia* at Norwich (also his filial house) as 'noble and fair'.³⁰ Bale became the first literary historian interested in studying Carmelite texts, observing 'That so many learned divines and erudite writers should have followed each other so quickly and within so short a time and from within such a small fraternity seems almost miraculous'.³¹ Bale was one of

by a Carmelite bishop and show strong 'Carmelite sympathy for mysticism' [Edden, 'The Mantle', p. 82]. Another sermon cycle is preserved in the Bodleian Library [Edden, 'Marian Devotion']. On medieval preaching see Spencer; Fleming, in Wallace, pp. 359–62; *PV*, pp. 49–50; Pantin, pp. 235–9; D'Avray; Owst.

²⁸ On the Carmelite education system see Poskitt, *CIB*, I, pp. 155–165; *TC*, pp. 29–38; Gallyon, p. 132; Flood. On the medieval university curriculum and the mendicant variation see Courtney, pp. 3–55, pp. 56–87; and in Biller & Dobson, pp. 77–92; *ROE*, II, pp. 144–5; Cobban. Much study of Carmelite education is based on assumptions from the other mendicant orders and therefore inaccurate, though Copsey's forthcoming article 'The Formation of the Medieval English Friar' should address this.

²⁹ Little is known about Carmelite libraries because not one medieval catalogue survives. Humphreys provides information about some books held at the convents of Aylesford, Boston, Lincoln, London, Norwich, Oxford and Hulne, [pp. xv–xvi, xviii, 155–92] the final being 'a reasonable picture of a complete library but... probably very different from the libraries at eg. London, Oxford and Cambridge', [p. xv]. The convents that housed *studia* had a library separate from the students' library. Library growth was ensured by a corporate copying enterprise, and the fact that each friar left his books to the order when he died (such property was owned communally). Notably generous bequests include Robert Bale's donation to his own friary of Burnham Norton in 1503 [Gallyon, p. 133], and Robert Ivory, donor of the London convent [Clark, 'Late Fourteenth', p. 10]. Laity also donated books to the Whitefriars in their wills [*PV*, p. 107]. On mendicant libraries, see Courtenay, p. 86; Fleming, in Wallace, p. 369; Bell, in Hellinga & Trapp, pp. 230–31; Parkes, in Catto & Evans, pp. 431–45. Humphreys's work is being revised by Prof. Richard Sharpe of the University of Oxford.

³⁰ *Scriptorum*, I, pp. 468–9, quoted in Harris, p. 14; McCaffrey, p. 263.

³¹ Bale, MS Harley 3838, f. 5, translated by Copsey, *SW*, p. 175. Bale's interest in book production led to the keeping of notebooks, and his major printed work, the two-volume *Scriptorum*. Amongst his manuscript writings on Carmelite matters are British Library MSS Harley 1819, Harley 3838, and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Bodley 73, Selden supra 41, Selden supra 72. Clark gives a description of each in 'Late Fourteenth', p. 8 n. 47. Bale's works have to be treated with an awareness of his theological and political bias. Amongst numerous critical studies of Bale, see Hudson, 'Viseo Baleii'; Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, pp. 234–5, 244, 272 n., 328; Leland, pp. 434–5; Brett & Carley's introduction to Bale's *Index* [pp. xi–xviii]; *SW*, pp. 181–3; Sharpe, Entry 576, pp. 210–11; W. T. Davies.

several Carmelite scholars to study abroad, and the international nature of the order facilitated the circulation of books and ideas amongst the friars. University graduates could participate in the spread of Carmelite texts thanks to their right to teach in any Christian university, (*ius ubique docendi*).³² Just as English Carmelites copied texts whilst studying abroad,³³ it is more than likely that Whitefriars from the continent (such as those from Lombardy and Tuscany studying in Cambridge) copied English works.³⁴ Several continental confreres came to study at the *studium generale* (study house for philosophy) established in London.³⁵ The Carmelites were the only order not to have a *studium generale* in Oxford,³⁶ largely because an influx of international students would have precluded English friars from taking the doctorate (which was limited to one Whitefriar a year), and also because so many Carmelite academics were at court. Though neither Oxford nor Cambridge ever became official *studia generalia* of the order, and only a few Whitefriars were ever sent for a university degree, Carmelites became heavily involved in the faculties of those towns,³⁷ producing a disproportionately high number of friars who reached the highest levels of academia, such as Stephen Patrington (d. 1417), and John Baconthorpe (c.1280–1348), and many of the writers included in this survey of Carmelite literature.³⁸

Copsey puts the total output of Carmelite writings in England at over 1,200 titles, some of which were once catalogued by Bale and others.³⁹ Since many have been lost, and Bale did not visit all Carmelite houses (especially in the north and west), the number must have been higher. The large number of books suggests that the Carmelites had well sustained libraries. Many of these texts came from

³² Courtenay, p. 23.

³³ Richard Paston copied a catalogue of Carmelite saints whilst studying at Paris [Copsey, 'Simon Stock', p. 672; Egan in *CIB*, I, pp. 93–4].

³⁴ Emden points out the international attraction of the Cambridge convent [*BRUC*, p. xxii]. Oxford was not generally open to Carmelites of other provinces [Courtenay, p. 70].

³⁵ For information on *studia generalia*, see Pantin, p. 119; Lawrence, *MM*, p. 303; *TC*, pp. 29–30; Flood, p. 157. Courtenay [pp. 70, 72] claims the London house was designated a *studium generale* in 1294, whereas Egan [*CTC*, p. 169] pointing to the Constitutions dates it to 1321.

³⁶ Sheehan, in Catto, p. 198.

³⁷ The Carmelites founded a Cambridge convent in 1247 [*TC*, p. 27; Courtenay, p. 70], and had a house of study there from c. 1251. They set up in Oxford in 1256. On the university houses, see Knowles & Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, p. 236; Egan, in *CIB*, I, pp. 70–3; *BRUC*, p. xxii; Sheehan, in Catto, pp. 193–223; Dobson, in Catto & Evans, pp. 539–79; *CTC*, pp. 155–170; studies listed by Copsey, in *CIB*, I, pp. 226–7, 245–6.

³⁸ Patrington influenced the production of vernacular literature by leading the committee that drew up the *Additiones* to the Bridgettine Rule at Syon [Gillespie, 'Dial M', p. 252 n. 31; Deanesly, pp. 111, 121, 124]. On Patrington, see Kennedy, in *CIB*, II, pp. 168–200; *DNB*, XV, pp. 492–3; *BRUC*, pp. 1435–6. On Baconthorpe, see Kennedy, in *CIB*, II, pp. 256–61; Etzwiler, in *CIB*, II, pp. 262–319; Sharpe, Entry 574, pp. 208–10.

³⁹ *SW*, p. 175. Copsey's listing (of both Latin and vernacular writers) provides the basis for the Carmelite entries in Sharpe's *Handlist*.

Oxford, where the number of identifiable Carmelite authors is considerably larger than their Dominican counterparts.⁴⁰ This corpus of Carmelite literature can be divided into various generic groups: scholastic and logical texts such as doctrinal controversies, almost certainly by far the largest portion of medieval Carmelite libraries,⁴¹ Latin devotional texts, and works of ‘vernacular theology’.

This last category offers an insight into the medieval Carmelite interest in lay vernacular spirituality. The circulation of English compositions by Carmelites was more widespread than their academic works, which remained within educational institutions.⁴² The circulation of texts of spiritual guidance to the laity shows that Carmelites attempted to widen the readership of contemplative literature beyond the confines of the convent.

Many fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Carmelite texts merit analysis. It is my intention to study only the work of Richard Misyn in detail, but an overview of the writings by some of his predecessors and contemporaries is required to appreciate fully Misyn’s place in the Carmelite literary canon. Because the wide spectrum of Carmelite vernacular theological writing is hard to compartmentalise, the basic taxonomy I have followed is to present authors individually, illustrating thematic links between them.

Richard Lavenham

Richard Lavenham (d. 1399+) was an exceptionally prolific writer on numerous topics, including Scripture, discussions of logic and physics, sermons, anti-Lollard treatises, lectures on the *Revelations* of St. Bridget, and the history of the Carmelite order. Lavenham acted as confessor to Richard II, and was a close friend of Simon Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, showing Carmelite influence in the highest political and religious circles of Ricardian England.⁴³

Lavenham gained his doctorate in Oxford before 1384, lecturing as a *magister regens* at the height of the Wycliffite controversy. Amongst the mendicant orders, ‘the Carmelites in particular, became firm opponents of Wyclif and his followers’,⁴⁴ perhaps because of Wyclif’s strong opposition to the Carmelites’ eremitic claims.⁴⁵ Nowhere were the Carmelites more dedicated to upholding

⁴⁰ Courtenay, p. 71.

⁴¹ Humphreys, ‘The Libraries of the Carmelites’, p. 128.

⁴² Doyle, ‘Publication’, p. 114.

⁴³ Sharpe, Entry 1349, pp. 487–91; *SW*, pp. 193–200; *SWA*, pp. 195–6; *BRUO*, pp. 1109–1110; *DNB*, XI, pp. 652–3; *Scriptorium*, I, pp. 508–9; McCaffrey, p. 137.

⁴⁴ Clark & Dorward, p. 19. On the Carmelites’ opposition to the Lollards, see *TC*, p. 35.

⁴⁵ Aston, *Faith and Fire*, p. 98.

orthodoxy than in Oxford, the ‘seedbed’ of Lollardy, and Lavenham took it upon himself to compile the heretical beliefs of John Purvey.⁴⁶

Probably written in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, Lavenham’s *Litil Tretys on the Seven Deadly Sins*⁴⁷ may similarly be seen as a Carmelite’s vernacular assertion of orthodox morality and church doctrine against ‘he þt bringeth vp or ellis folwith eny newe opynyon azen þe feyth of holycherche’ [9/5–6]. A work on the ‘vices and virtues’, a genre in which the friars were especially prominent,⁴⁸ Lavenham’s text provided parochial clergy with the basic religious instruction necessary for the *cura animarum* and celebration of the sacraments.⁴⁹ Initially read by clergy as an aid to priests in the confessional and pulpit,⁵⁰ such books gradually came to be read by devout laypersons as meditative tracts.⁵¹ In teaching orthodoxy, such texts simultaneously suppressed heresy.

The fact that Lavenham’s treatises on logic, physics, and the Bible were written in Latin reserved them for a university environment, which deemed such subjects inappropriate for a wider lay audience. Likewise, whilst Lavenham’s writings on Bridget’s *Revelations* demonstrate an interest in contemporary female spirituality, his decision to lecture on them in Latin is again indicative. Lavenham composed the *Litil Tretys* in English, showing a desire to instruct the *illiterati* (those unable to read Latin). However, Lavenham’s only vernacular text was ‘devotional’ and didactic theology, rather than academic and speculative.

Though Lavenham’s ‘vernacular theology’ was largely conventional, his decision to write the *Litil Tretys* shows that he was aware of a market for such texts, and the potential use of English in asserting orthodoxy, as well as in challenging it. The sixteen extant manuscripts of the *Litil Tretys* indicate that it was a popular piece of vernacular theology, which enjoyed ‘considerable currency

⁴⁶ *Haereses et errors domini Johannis Purvey sacerdotis*, in *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, (ed.) Shirley, pp. 383–99. On Lavenham’s anti-Lollard activities see Van Zutphen, p. xxx; Hudson, *PR*, pp. 159, 174, 292, 340; *Lollards and their Books*, pp. 85–110. The *Fasciculi Zizaniorum* is the title given to a collection of documents relating to Wyclif and the Lollards, compiled by an anonymous Whitefriar in East Anglia in 1439, and now preserved as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Musaeo 86, a manuscript once owned and annotated by Bale. On the *Fasciculi*, see Shirley; Crompton; Van Zutphen, pp. xxx–xxxii, xxxv; *PR*, pp. 44, 67; Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, pp. 19, 85–6, 236; *Wyclif and his followers*, no. 19, p. 18; *ROE*, II, p. 148; Turner, Ch. 5; Alban, *John Wyclif*, p. 1; Edden, ‘Marian Devotion’, p. 101; Copsey, in *CIB*, I, p. 212.

⁴⁷ Joliffe, pp. 79–80; *IPMEP* entry 789. The text is edited by Dr. Van Zutphen.

⁴⁸ On this characteristically ‘fraternal’ genre, and Lavenham’s success in it, see Fleming, in Wallace, pp. 357–8.

⁴⁹ On the need for pastoral manuals in the church, see Gillespie, ‘The Literary Form’; Pantin, pp. 189–219.

⁵⁰ It is apposite that Lavenham’s *Litil Tretys* should be placed alongside sermons in some manuscripts (such as Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 750), suggesting a deliberate compilation of pastoral material [Spencer, p. 216; Van Zutphen, p. xii].

⁵¹ Van Zutphen, p. xii. The devotional materials in one of the manuscripts containing the *Tretys* (Norwich, St. Peter Hungate Museum of Church Art, MS 48.158.926) reveal its potential as a contemplative text.

and varied ownership in and beyond East Anglia'.⁵² Manuscript evidence further asserts the perceived orthodoxy of the *Litil Tretys*, which was compiled alongside notably orthodox vernacular texts.⁵³ Indeed, the base text of Van Zutphen's edition (London, British Library MS Harley 211), a demonstrably Carmelite manuscript, seems to have been written in a similar hand, and in the same year (1439), as the anti-Wycliffite *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*.⁵⁴

Richard Maidstone

At Oxford Lavenham is likely to have known, and probably taught, Richard of Maidstone. A Carmelite of academic repute, Maidstone composed a Latin poem, Latin prose treatises and theological commentaries, as well as a vernacular theological work, the *Penitential Psalms*, a meditation in verse upon the seven penitential psalms.⁵⁵

Maidstone was probably born in the 1340s.⁵⁶ He joined the order's friary at Aylesford, Kent, and it was in the cloister there that he was buried on 1 June 1396. In Aylesford he came into contact with the classic texts of medieval theology, since the *librarium* there contained about 75 volumes in 1381.⁵⁷ Maidstone was sent to the order's *studium* at London where he was ordained priest on 20 December 1376. During the late 1380s, Maidstone was made a Bachelor of Theology at Oxford and eventually became a Doctor of Divinity before 1390.⁵⁸

Maidstone divided his energies between Oxford and London, where the Carmelite house was ideally located for intercourse with the governing classes.⁵⁹ Several Carmelites preached at court, such as John Swaffham, Thomas Peverel,

⁵² Doyle, 'Publication', p. 114. Doyle identifies two Lavenham manuscripts ['Publication', pp. 114, 121 n. 24] that are not listed by Van Zutphen, pp. xxxiii–xlix, or Copsey, *SW*, pp. 199–200.

⁵³ London, British Library MS Harley 1288 is a florilegium which contains both an imperfect copy of the *Litil Tretys* (ff. 64–75v), and chapters xxiv and xxv of *The Chastising of God's Children* (ff. 81v–86v) which assert traditional teaching on the Eucharist and recapitulate the seven deadly sins. On the manuscript's contents, and the aggressive orthodoxy of *The Chastising*, see Bazire & Colledge, pp. 5, 35; Van Zutphen, p. xxxvii–xxxviii; *Manual*, IX, pp. 3131–2, 3468–9.

⁵⁴ Van Zutphen, p. xxxv.

⁵⁵ *IMEV*, Entries 1961, 2157, 3755; Brown, *Register*, II, Entries 1215 & 2421; *Manual*, II, pp. 388, 540–1. On Maidstone's writings see *SW*, pp. 201–3; Sharpe, Entry 1352, p. 492; *RMPP*, pp. 9, 11. Edden's is the most recent edition of the *Penitential Psalms*.

⁵⁶ *RMPP*, p. 10; *DNB*, XII, pp. 783–4; *BRUO*, p. 1204.

⁵⁷ Copsey, *English and Scottish Medieval Carmelite Libraries*, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Edden, in *CIB*, II, p. 120 n 2.

⁵⁹ The Carmelite house in London was close to palaces and Episcopal residences in the western suburb, between Fleet Street and the Thames [Courtenay, pp. 70, 95; Poskitt, in *CIB*, I, p. 151; McCaffrey, pp. 129–71].

and Stephen Patrington, all eventually receiving bishoprics.⁶⁰ Probably during the 1390s Maidstone acted as confessor to Richard II's uncle, the Lancastrian John of Gaunt, a position held by a number of Whitefriars, including the court preacher William de Reynham, John Badby, Walter Dysse, the preacher and controversialist Richard Mardisley, and John Kynyngham, another prominent opponent of Wyclif's teaching.⁶¹ Many of Maidstone's Whitefriar contemporaries were instrumental in the condemnation of Wyclif's beliefs at the Blackfriars 'Earthquake' Council in London in May 1382,⁶² and when the friars were accused by Wycliffites of stirring up the insurgents of the so-called 'Peasants' Revolt' of 1381, the heads of the mendicant orders beseeched Gaunt's support.⁶³ Gaunt founded the Carmelite priory at Doncaster in 1350, and as well as supporting hermits and anchorites he left more money to the Carmelites in his will than to the other orders.⁶⁴ As a member of Gaunt's entourage, Maidstone was part of a powerful political set and cultural milieu, where poets such as Chaucer found audience.⁶⁵

Maidstone was himself 'an accomplished metropolitan writer,'⁶⁶ whose literary aspirations were evident in a long Latin poem, written in 1393 to celebrate the reconciliation of Richard II and the City of London the previous year, the detailed description of the festivities suggesting that Maidstone took part.⁶⁷ Copsey calls the ode competent laudatory verse, but marked more by good intentions and length rather than by any poetic skills.⁶⁸

⁶⁰ For sees and dates, consult *ROE*, II, p. 153. Maidstone was noted as a preacher of sermons at Oxford and at court in the catalogue of Carmelite writers (*Viridarium*) compiled by John Grossi, the order's prior general, who visited England in 1413 [Xiberta, pp. 48–9]. Sadly, none of these sermons survive, except that preached against Ashwardby, though Bale recorded some incipits [*Scriptorium*, I, pp. 498–9; MS Selden 41, f. 174; MS Bodley 73, ff. 39v, 40v, 51v, 71v, 113, 196v, 197v.]. See *BRUO*, p. 1204; *PR*, pp. 95–7.

⁶¹ Sheppard, p. 42–3; *ROE*, II, pp. 145, 153; *PV*, pp. 49–50.

⁶² Sheppard, pp. 43–4.

⁶³ Sheppard, p. 44; *DNB*, XV, p. 492. The Carmelites' relationship with Gaunt is a complex one that deserves further study, especially since the Duke was also protective of Wyclif. On the accusations flying between Carmelites and Wycliffites in the wake of 1381, see Green, p. 192.

⁶⁴ Egan, in *CIB*, I, pp. 32–4; *PV*, p. 67.

⁶⁵ The Whitefriars influenced Chaucer in a number of ways. The *Kalendarium* by Nicholas of Lynn (1386) features in Chaucer's *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, and in *The Canterbury Tales* [Lynn, (ed.) Eisner, pp. 29–34; *Scriptorium*, I, p. 468]. The view of Elijah as founder of the Whitefriars was mocked in *The Summoner's Tale*, lines 2116–8.

⁶⁶ John Thompson, p. 41.

⁶⁷ Smith, *Concordia Facta inter Regem Riccardum II et Civitatem Londonis*; Federico, pp. 126–9, 144–55; Bowers, *passim*; Strohm, pp. 107–11; Fleming, in Wallace, p. 370; Rigg, pp. 242, 285–6, 309, 313. For an extended account of the divide between Richard II and the citizens of London, see Kipling, pp. 11–21 (on Maidstone, p. 12 n. 16.) Though their political verse is generally poorly rated, the Carmelites' involvement at court as religious and political 'scriptwriters' is an important aspect of their ministry, deserving further study. Maidstone was not the first English Carmelite political writer. Robert Baston, prior of Scarborough, wrote verse on the battle of Bannockburn (1314) [*TC*, pp. 59–60; Rigg, pp. 244–5].

⁶⁸ Copsey, *Carmelite Register*. More study is needed into how mendicants learnt the art of poetry. All Carmelite graduates would have learnt rhetoric and composition as part of the grammar school curriculum.

Maidstone's poetic skills are better displayed in the metre, rhyme and imagery of his *Penitential Psalms*, written during the 1380's or 90's.⁶⁹ Since the recitation of the Psalms was the traditional prayer of hermits, Maidstone's text may well have had special appeal to a Carmelite readership. However, the Whitefriars recited the monastic Office (which combined the Psalms with other texts), and the Penitential Psalms were generally more popular with laypeople that did not recite the full *opus dei*.⁷⁰

Whilst a large number of surviving manuscripts (in Maidstone's case 27) is not necessarily a guarantee of wide readership in Ricardian England, the fact that (unattributed) excerpts from Maidstone's *Penitential Psalms* were added to prayer books used by both secular clergy and laity stands testimony to the fact that Carmelite texts were circulated beyond the immediate confines of the order.⁷¹ Maidstone's decision to write on the Penitential Psalms shows a Carmelite responding to the growing demand for devotional material in the vernacular in the later Middle Ages.⁷² As well as being confessor to John of Gaunt, Maidstone was licensed to hear confessions in Rochester Diocese in 1390.⁷³ Maidstone's 'seven salmes' may have been read in a penitential context, and recommendation of his text by 'clerical intermediaries' to penitents would ensure its popularity.⁷⁴

As with Lavenham, it is striking that Maidstone should have written his *Penitential Psalms* in direct and accessible English. When John Ashwardby, vicar of St. Mary's, Oxford, preached against the mendicant ideal of voluntary poverty, Maidstone wrote his major theological work, *Protectorium Pauperis* ("In defence of poverty") probably in 1392.⁷⁵ In his treatise, Maidstone accused Ashwardby of preaching controversy openly to the laity in English, whereas Maidstone himself

Larger mendicant libraries held copies of *arts poetica* (guides to poetry). Even though the 1433 Hulne cartulary had no books recorded in the category 'Rhetorica cum Poetria', its inclusion suggests that Carmelites were familiar with such works [Humphreys, *The Friars' Libraries*, pp. xvi, 166]. It was not unknown for mendicants to enjoy pecuniary benefits from writing for patrons [*PV*, p. 26].

⁶⁹ *RMPP*, pp. 10 & dating of base text, p. 12.

⁷⁰ On the tradition of the seven Penitential Psalms, their use as private lay devotion during the low mass, who read the Psalter, and when it was used, see Leroquais; Harper, pp. 67–72; Dix, p. 599; *PV*, p. 36.

⁷¹ *RMPP*, p. 11; Doyle, 'Publication', pp. 114–5; John Thompson, p. 42.

⁷² John Thompson, p. 40.

⁷³ Kent County Archives Office, Reg. Bottlesham, Rochester, DRc/R5, II, f. 2v.

⁷⁴ Doyle, 'Publication', p. 115; John Thompson, p. 42.

⁷⁵ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e. Mus. 86 (the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum* MS), ff. 160–175v, and MS e. Mus. 94, ff. 1–5 (only the last third). Edited by Williams, in *CIB*, II, pp. 35–83. On Maidstone's opposition to Ashwardby, see Edden, in *CIB*, II, pp. 84–105; *RMPP*, p. 11; *PR*, pp. 95–7; Clopper, p. 178, n. 26; *TC*, p. 35. Since they show us how the friars viewed themselves, defences by the order are useful in sketching the parameters of Carmelite interest. On the dating of Maidstone's *Protectorium* and his *determinatio* against Ashwardby, see Scase, p. 10.

had debated *'in scolis et coram clericis in lingua Latina'*.⁷⁶ Like Lavenham, Maidstone believed that the university was the proper forum for debate, in Latin, and like Lavenham, Maidstone's vernacular text is devotional rather than speculative, and entirely orthodox.

Maidstone's dislike of vernacular theological debate was symptomatic of his order's opposition to Lollardy. It is therefore ironic that on a number of occasions Maidstone is indebted to the later version of the Wycliffite Psalter.⁷⁷ His text may even have been the provocation of, or response to, the (undated) Lollard appropriation of Rolle's psalm commentary.⁷⁸ The structure and language of Maidstone's *Penitential Psalms* acknowledges the laity's desire for an understanding of the Scriptures, but restricts it. Rather than providing his audience with a full translation of the Penitential Psalms, Maidstone followed each Vulgate Bible verse with a stanza of commentary in English that translated the sentiment of the verse and expanded upon its meaning. This macaronic structuring allowed readers with a basic grasp of Latin to improve their understanding of the Psalms from the adjacent English commentary. In the Prologue to his own English Psalter Commentary,⁷⁹ Rolle declared that *'In this werke i seke na straunge ynglis, bot lightest and commonest and swilk that is mast like til the latyn swa that thai that knawes noght latyn by the ynglis may com til mony latyn wordis.'*⁸⁰ Maidstone's *Penitential Psalms* may similarly have functioned as a teaching device, for either the *illiterati*, or young Carmelite novices developing their knowledge of the Office.

Studying the codicology of extant manuscripts containing Maidstone's work brings to light further evidence about the use of fifteenth-century Carmelite texts. Maidstone's *Penitential Psalms* appear in widely different compilations, due to differences in taste and interpretation.

Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson A 389 is an interesting mixture of religious texts, which includes two versions of Rolle's *Ego Dormio*.⁸¹ The manuscript is entirely written in Latin, apart from Maidstone's *Psalms*, the second version of *Ego Dormio*, some English prayers and a love-song to Jesus. The manuscript also contains works that Misyn chose to translate, Rolle's *Emendatio*

⁷⁶ MS e Musaeo 94, f. 5v, quoted by Hudson, *PR*, p. 96. See Edden, in *CIB*, II, p. 120 n. 2; 'The Debate between Richard Maidstone and the Lollard Ashwardby'. For information on the so-called 'Oxford Translation Debate', see Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change'.

⁷⁷ *RMPP*, p. 109, n. 52.

⁷⁸ *Richard Rolle*, (ed.) Allen, p. 65; Deanesly, p. vi; *PR*, pp. 27, 259–64, 421–2.

⁷⁹ *Manual*, IX, pp. 3055–6.

⁸⁰ Rolle, (ed.) Bramley, p. 4; Allen, p. 68.

⁸¹ Ogilvie-Thomson, (1988), p. xliv.

Vitae and the long text of his *Incendium Amoris*.⁸² It is not unusual to find Carmelite materials compiled alongside Rolle. Indeed, Maidstone's *Penitential Psalms* were usually ascribed to Rolle,⁸³ though an additional stanza in the Rawlinson manuscript correctly supplies the author's name as 'frere Richarde Maydenstoon' (a fact independently corroborated by Bale).⁸⁴ The opening of the *Penitential Psalms* in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 18 states 'Here bigynneþ þe prologe of þe seuene salmys in englysche by Richard Hampole heremyte'.⁸⁵ The different attributions are striking, since they demonstrate the dominance of the Rolle cult by the late fourteenth century, and show that Carmelites and the 'hermit of Hampole' were perceived as sharing a number of stylistic similarities.⁸⁶

Another *florilegium* containing Maidstone's *Penitential Psalms* is London, British Library, MS Additional 39574 (the so-called 'Wheatley manuscript').⁸⁷ This early fifteenth-century portmanteau miscellany of entirely 'devotional' materials places Maidstone's work alongside such vernacular verse and prose texts as the *Life of Adam and Eve*, and prayers to the Virgin and St. John. Carmelite material was thus read alongside other theological works in the vernacular.

Probably the most intriguing of the manuscripts to contain Maidstone's *Penitential Psalms* is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 102 [ff. 128r–136r].⁸⁸ This manuscript, written by one hand in the mid-late fifteenth century, contains a diverse mix of texts alongside Maidstone, including the C-text of *Piers Plowman*,⁸⁹ political poems referring to dates up until 1418, and the *Debate of Body and Soul*. The dialect of the scribe is that of Worcestershire, perhaps predictable in a manuscript containing *Piers Plowman*, and shows the dissemination of Carmelite texts to an area apparently unconnected with

⁸² Deanesly, p. 23; *RMPP*, pp. 13–14; Allen, p. 251; Pearsall, pp. 7–9, 65; Kuczynski, p. 261 nn. 10, 15, p. 274; Mossé, p. 377; Coote, p. 277; Hanna, *Pursuing History*, pp. 281, 288–9, 461, 463, 470; Horstman, pp. 3, 50–57, 61–71, 106, 368; Brown, p. 262; Robbins, p. 329; Hudson, *Lollards and their Books*, p. 220n; Blanchfield, pp. 465–7.

⁸³ *RMPP*, pp. 9, 10, 12, 21.

⁸⁴ On the opening verse, see Day, pp. 103–4; *RMPP*, pp. 47, 109; Edden, in *CIB*, p. 119 n. 2.

⁸⁵ Day, p. 103 (n. 1).

⁸⁶ Labelling the work as Rolle's may have been a deliberate mistake, to avoid the restrictions placed upon vernacular writings after 1409 (a fuller discussion of this follows in Chapter Two).

⁸⁷ *RMPP*, p. 19; Day.

⁸⁸ Hunt & Watson, pp. 116–7; References to this manuscript are legion (and can be consulted in the card index of Duke Humfrey's library), including Kail; *RMPP*, p. 18; *Manual*, V, p. 1418; Edden, in *CIB*, II, pp. 106–124; Robbins, *Historical Poems*, pp. xxvi, xxviii, xlii, 39–53. I acknowledge my debt to Jenni Nuttall of Magdalen College, Oxford, for information on this manuscript.

⁸⁹ The C-Text of *Piers Plowman* is perhaps the most interesting in terms of Langland's self-presentation. As Hanna points out, the figure of Will seems to explore the vocation of a hermit, whose contemplative lifestyle might seem to contrast with that of the labourer ['Will's Work', p. 54 n. 5], and 'Will evokes the practice of hermits... in order to claim that his poeticizing might be licit activity' [Hanna, in Minnis, p. 89]. As Chapter Two will illustrate, Carmelite writings attempted to reconcile the active and contemplative lives.

Maidstone. Maidstone's inclusion alongside texts which, if not seditious, could certainly be read as offering criticism of the status quo and arguing for justice and good government shows that Carmelite theological material in the vernacular was not restricted to compilations of orthodox devotional material.⁹⁰

Thomas Fishlake

The writings of Maidstone's Carmelite contemporary, Thomas Fishlake (fl. 1377), were compiled in manuscripts that could not be considered in any way heterodox. Fishlake translated Walter Hilton's *The Scale of Perfection* from English into Latin, about 1400 (within a very few years of Hilton's death in 1396).⁹¹ This act demonstrates a Carmelite's interest in making vernacular English theology available to an international Latinate audience. Indeed, thanks to Fishlake, the *Scale* ranks 'together with Gower's *Confessio Amantis* as the only works originally composed in Middle English which are known to have circulated on the continent during the medieval period.'⁹² The fifteen extant Latin manuscripts show the wide dispersal and obvious popularity of the text, and since five of these are of continental provenance, English Carmelite texts were demonstrably copied across the Christian world.⁹³

The Bridgettines copied Carmelite writings. They possessed several copies of Fishlake's translation, one at Syon, and two at their motherhouse at Vadstena; one of which (now Uppsala University Library MS C 159) was copied at Syon by a Bridgettine deacon Clement Maydstone (d. 1456).

The Carthusians (linked to the Bridgettines in many ways and also highly active in the collecting of religious texts) were also responsible for the gathering and dissemination of Carmelite works. The Fishlake translation in Bibliothèque Municipale de Marseille, MS 729, was written 'in carthusa Vallisbenedictionis secus avinionem' (Villeneuve-les-Avignon), and the Charterhouse of Sheen owned another manuscript.⁹⁴

Fishlake's translation shows a Carmelite attraction for texts originally written for solitaries, an attraction that was particularly influential upon Misyn. Hilton's incipit of Book One dedicates the *Scale* to a female recluse. Fishlake's translation

⁹⁰ The debates over the content of *Piers Plowman* and Langland's religious leanings continue. The ambiguities of the text (particularly with regard to mendicant religion) are discussed by Fleming, in Wallace, pp. 372-3; Clopper; *PR*, pp. 398-408. 'Misappropriation' of Langland's text is discussed by Kerby-Fulton.

⁹¹ Hussey, 'Latin and English'; *SW*, pp. 186-7; Sharpe, Entry 1748, pp. 656-7; Tanner, *Bibliotheca*, p. 282; *Manual*, IX, pp. 3075-76 & 3430-3433; Gardner, pp. 11 & 22. The EETS is preparing an edition of Book I of the *Scale*, which will place Fishlake's Latin text (edited by Hussey) and Hilton's ME text (edited by Sargent) on facing pages.

⁹² *Manual*, IX, p. 3076.

⁹³ Hussey, 'Latin and English', pp. 456-7.

⁹⁴ Hussey, 'Latin and English', p. 457; Sargent, 'The Transmission', pp. 235-6.

attracted the energies of the Carthusian recluse John Dygon at Sheen, who annotated and copied texts now in Oxford colleges,⁹⁵ and the Carthusian textual critic James Grenehalgh.⁹⁶ As we shall see, copying by Carthusians and Bridgettines is a recurrent phenomenon in the circulation of Carmelite texts.

One Fishlake manuscript in particular illustrates that Carmelites also circulated devotional texts amongst themselves. Once at the Carmelite library in Cambridge, this manuscript was owned by another of Hilton's probable university contemporaries, Fishlake's friend, John Pole, O. Carm.⁹⁷ This *constat*, or gifted copy, is a compilation of materials on the eremitic life, of particular interest to the Carmelites, who saw themselves as maintaining Elijah's solitary contemplative tradition.

Fishlake was a good and careful translator, who made few errors, and used a good English manuscript as his source, so good that the York manuscript provides a good (though not 'learned') base text for the English ones.⁹⁸ Like all the other Latin manuscripts bar one, the York manuscript ascribes the *Scale* to Hilton, and like six others (though one is erroneous) it has a colophon about Hilton's death, suggesting that it was written soon after the Augustinian canon's demise, and especially concerned with authorial attribution.

On the face of it, translating the *Scale* into Latin may seem to work against the principle of having theological texts in the vernacular. On the contrary, it shows a desire amongst English Carmelites to increase access to the English brand of vernacular theology across the church at large, and Hussey interprets Fishlake's translation as 'the ultimate medieval accolade' for the writer of the 'eminently sane, moderate and balanced treatise'.⁹⁹ Alternatively, translating Hilton's vernacular theology into Latin may have been a way for an academic's lexical mindset to test its orthodoxy in the language with which theologians felt more comfortable. This would seem likely, given the milieu of orthodoxy in Cambridge in the late fourteenth century (particularly in contrast to Oxford).¹⁰⁰

Fishlake is known to have been an active member of the university and convent in Cambridge between at least c.1375 (when he became a bachelor of theology)

⁹⁵ Hussey, p. 457.

⁹⁶ Sargent, *James Grenehalgh*, p. 10.

⁹⁷ This manuscript, written in a fifteenth-century hand, is now in York Minster Library, MS XVI.K.5. Book I of *The Scale* occupies the first 13 quires, and the colophon [f. 36r] is reproduced in Ker & Piper, IV, pp. 725–7. John Pole was at the Cambridge house in 1377, incepted as D. Th. in 1381, and died at the Coventry house [Hussey, 'Latin and English', p. 457; *Scriptorum*, I, p. 568; *BRUC*, p. 456].

⁹⁸ Hilton, (eds.) Clark & Dorward, pp. 56–7; (ed.) Bestul, pp. 7 & 14; Hussey, 'Latin and English', pp. 456, 457 n. 6, 464.

⁹⁹ Hussey, 'Latin and English', p. 476.

¹⁰⁰ As Clark points out, 'Cambridge men are regularly to be found on the side of orthodoxy while Oxford men appear on both sides' ['Late Fourteenth', p. 15]; *PR*, p. 92.

and 1377, later gaining his doctorate.¹⁰¹ Fishlake's literary tastes were influenced by his membership of the 'Arundel circle', a group of largely northern clerks who studied and worked in Cambridge whilst serving Arundel as bishop of Ely, who moved north when he was translated to the episcopate of York in 1388.¹⁰² The circle included Cambridge friars, who 'would have worked with Arundel's Ely clerks and been valued for their theological knowledge and pastoral skills'.¹⁰³ Carmelites were very influential in the Cambridge theological community, and in 1377, at Arundel's personal request, Fishlake preached at the Ely diocesan synod.¹⁰⁴ Pole was another member of this tight-knit network of friends and colleagues, as was Hilton.¹⁰⁵ It seems probable that the 'positions which [Hilton] takes must reflect some of the cross-currents in contemporary theology'.¹⁰⁶ Carmelite theologians were particularly active in Cambridge, and it is quite possible that Hilton's vernacular theology of the 'mixed life' was influenced by the friars, whose preaching and ministry demonstrated that contemplation was not restricted to monks, but within the reach of all.¹⁰⁷ It may be possible to find in Hilton the influence of the Carmelite Thomas Maldon, doctor of theology and prior of the Cambridge house in the early 1370s, and writer of *questiones* on topics such as the proper conducting of the pastoral office and the spiritual understanding of scripture.¹⁰⁸ East Anglian prelates rated the Carmelites and their writing highly. William Grey, Bishop of Ely (d. 1478), had a collection of texts that included Maldon's *Lectura in Ps. 118*, an exposition of the first 48 verses of the psalm (now Oxford, Balliol College, MS 80, ff. 190r–232r).¹⁰⁹ As we shall observe in the study of Misyn, Arundel's clerks were responsible for supervising the piety and ensuring the orthodoxy of spirituality in the diocese of York, where they helped to promote the 'mixed life', a programme in which Hilton's works played a significant part. Fishlake's work should be viewed as a Carmelite contribution to the Arundel circle's spiritual programme.

¹⁰¹ *Manual*, IX, p. 3076; Bale, MS Bodley 73, f. 79; Rawlinson MS C 397, f. 8v.

¹⁰² This close-knit circle of friends was a significant power base for orthodoxy, and its intellectual milieu allowed the promotion of Carmelite scholars. On Arundel's circle, and its great influence on the religious sentiment and literature of York, see *PV*, p. 174 ff.; Dobson, 'The Residuary Canons'.

¹⁰³ *PV*, p. 183.

¹⁰⁴ Cambridge, University Library, Reg. Consist. 1373–81, f. 72; *PV*, pp. 183, 189–90; Clark, 'Late Fourteenth', p. 7; Aston, *Thomas Arundel*, pp. 74–5.

¹⁰⁵ *PV*, pp. 175, 179–81. Hilton was probably a canon lawyer at the Ely diocesan consistory court in Cambridge.

¹⁰⁶ Clark, in *CIB*, II, p. 125; 'Late Fourteenth', p. 7 ff.

¹⁰⁷ On the links between Hilton and the Cambridge Carmelites, see Clark, 'Late Fourteenth', p. 7–10, 13–14; *CIB*, II, pp. 125–67; Hussey, 'Latin and English'; *PV*, pp. 183 & 189–9, 213–4.

¹⁰⁸ *BRUC*, p. 385; Clark, in *CIB*, II, pp. 137, 165.

¹⁰⁹ Clark, in *CIB*, II, p.p. 125–6

The work of Fishlake shows that the Carmelites had a particular regard for Hilton's brand of vernacular theology.¹¹⁰ Like many of the texts read, written or translated by medieval Carmelites, Hilton's writing addresses the important debate in the medieval church about the perceived conflict between the active and contemplative lives, which had exercised the Carmelites ever since their migration west. The Whitefriars concern about their own paradoxical position of being solitary contemplatives living in community and working within the world made Hilton's text eminently suitable for translation. Fishlake's translation of *The Scale* shows that a Carmelite considered Hilton's vernacular theology to be as beneficial for the Latinate clergy as it was for a female recluse.

Fishlake's translation of Hilton illustrates a number of important points regarding Carmelite literary activity. It shows a real interest and influence in contemporary theological developments, a regard for anchoritic literature, and a desire to promote English spirituality amongst readers at home or abroad. The provenance of extant manuscripts informs us that Carmelite writings were circulated internally around the order, and also copied by other groups. In particular, Fishlake highlights the Carmelite desire for 'mixed life' literature that blended the ideals of mendicancy, and contemplation. All these aspects of Carmelite literature re-emerge in the writings of Richard Misyn.

Thomas Ashburne

Another Carmelite worth mentioning alongside Fishlake as a possible translator of religious texts from English into Latin, and a possible inspiration for Misyn, is Thomas Ashburne (fl. 1384).¹¹¹ He joined the Carmelites at Northampton where in 1384 he wrote a theological poem, *De Contemptu Mundi* ('On despising the world') lamenting the lack of religious devotion among rulers, and pointing out the astrological reflection of the state of the world.¹¹² Ashburne perhaps translated into Latin the hugely popular northern poem *The Prick of Conscience*, falsely ascribed to Richard Rolle.¹¹³ As we have seen in the case of Maidstone, Carmelites were sometimes involved in the translation of texts that the Lollards had interpolated to suit their own theology. *The Prick of Conscience* was one such text,¹¹⁴ though whether such translations were an attempt to reclaim orthodoxy,

¹¹⁰ Clark & Dorward, pp. xi & 18–19.

¹¹¹ *DNB*, XIX, p. 655; *ECP*, p. 4; *TC*, p. 58.

¹¹² This poem was sadly lost in the fire of 1731, but had been preserved in the Cotton Library, MS Vitellius F. xiii. 1, [see Thomas Smith, pp. 103–4, 158].

¹¹³ A later hand in MS Cotton App. VII ascribes the translation to Ashburne, which Allen states cannot be absolutely denied, but seems equally insupportable [p. 381]. On *The Prick of Conscience*, see *Manual*, VII, pp. 2268–70; *Manual*, IX, pp. 3055, 3067; Lewis & McIntosh; Deanesly, p. vii; Clay, p. 176.

¹¹⁴ Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, pp. 208, 210–11; Justice, in Wallace, pp. 682 & 686.

or whether they actually provoked reinterpretation by the friar-hating Lollards is hard to state with certainty. If Ashburne was in fact responsible for the translation, then his is the first known Carmelite engagement with a text then thought to have been by Rolle. Even if Ashburne did not translate *The Prick of Conscience*, then the short allegorical English poem that preceded the work may have been by him.¹¹⁵ Ashburne's interest in a moral and penitential work such as *The Prick of Conscience* would stand alongside the fact of his being licensed to hear confessions in Lincoln diocese on 11 February 1350,¹¹⁶ and demonstrates yet again the Carmelite interest in vernacular penitential texts.

Alan of Lynn

Another Carmelite active in pastoral and literary work was Master Alan of Lynn (c.1348–1432).¹¹⁷ Lynn was a notable and prolific Carmelite scholar born in Bishop's (now King's) Lynn, where he entered the Carmelite house. He studied in Cambridge not long after Fishlake, eventually lecturing on patristics and the Bible, and incepting as Doctor of Theology before 1410. He is recorded as having been *lector* at Cambridge from before 1407, lecturing in that year in the *studium* of the Norwich convent. There he worked primarily as a compiler of numerous indices or tables of contents (*tabulae*) for the large library, probably for the benefit of his students. Only two of Lynn's indices survive: an alphabetical index to Bersuire's commentary,¹¹⁸ and a *tabula* of Bridget of Sweden's *Revelations*.¹¹⁹ However, Bale's research tells us that Lynn wrote numerous treatises and exegetical works in Latin, now lost,¹²⁰ as well as indices which included the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux, John Baconthorpe, the Church Fathers, Philip Ribot's *De Peculiaribus Gestis Carmelitarum*, and the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Stimulus Amoris*. Though he wrote little original work himself,¹²¹ he had a voracious appetite for cataloguing works of mysticism. His examinations of popular spirituality are important for our survey of Carmelites interested in vernacular theology.

¹¹⁵ *SW*, p. 178.

¹¹⁶ Lincoln, Lincolnshire Archives Office, Reg. Gynewell, (Reg. IXC, f. 46).

¹¹⁷ *DNB*, I, p. 214; *BRUC*, pp. 381–2; *TC*, pp. 58–59; Wogan-Browne, *et al*, p. 91 n. 135; Sharpe, Entry 75, p. 33; Clark, 'Late Fourteenth', pp. 13–4; *SW*, p. 200; *SWA*, pp. 196–7; Bale, MS Harley 3838, f. 92, MS Bodley 73, ff. 2, 119.

¹¹⁸ *Tabula super 'Reductorio morali totius Biblie' Petri Berchorii'*, London, British Library MS Royal 3 D iii, f. 1 ff. [*ROE*, II, p. 152].

¹¹⁹ Oxford, Lincoln College, MS lat. 69, ff. 197 ff.

¹²⁰ Bale says he saw over fifty works by Lynn in the Carmelite convent in Norwich, and knew of others in libraries he had not visited [*Scriptorum*, I, pp. 551–3]. Bale recorded the incipits of each of Lynn's works in his notebook [MS Bodley 73, ff. 2, 40, 197v, 200v, 204v–205].

¹²¹ His two major original works, now lost, were recorded by Bale [MS Bodley 73, ff. 139, 208] and included *Sermones notabiles*. Kempe records attending Lynn's divinely inspired sermons, [*BMK*, Book I, Chapter 89].

Lynn's interest in spirituality was not restricted to the authorised mystics found in the library at Norwich. His conversations with his contemporary townswoman, Margery Kempe (b. 1373), show his interest in the female spirituality of fifteenth-century East Anglia. Their relationship tells us about the type of lay religious experience that interested fifteenth-century Whitefriars, and the influence they had upon the piety of the mercantile class, including its women.¹²² Like many other Carmelites involved in the direction of women, Lynn acted as one of Kempe's spiritual advisors. He not only initiated an enquiry into Margery's survival of a falling beam,¹²³ but also 'supportyd hir in hir wepyng and in hir crying and also enformyd hir in qwestyons of Scriptur whan sche woolde any askyn hym'.¹²⁴ Kempe's peculiar brand of autonomous female spirituality intrigued Lynn, who allegedly found her conversation 'gostly and fruteful',¹²⁵ and was aided in his preaching through her intercession.¹²⁶ However, the friendship between Kempe and Lynn earned the disapproval of the Carmelite provincial Thomas Netter, who declared that 'he schulde no mor spekyn wyth hir, ne enformyn hir in no textys of scriptur'.¹²⁷ Significantly, when Lynn and Kempe were reunited, they shared a dinner 'sawcyd and sawryd with talys of holy scriptur'.¹²⁸ This is evidence that at least some Carmelites went against the norms of orthodoxy in their desire to instruct women in the Bible.

Netter's initial prohibition is understandable in its historical and geographical context. In the early fifteenth century, East Anglia and the East Midlands (especially Norwich and Leicester) saw a number of Lollard heresy trials.¹²⁹ The possession and reading of the Bible in the vernacular was itself a potentially heretical act, and though Carmelites were renowned as opponents of the Lollards, and Lynn himself had a reputation as an opponent of Wyclif, presumably his Bible discussions with Kempe took place in English. Netter presumably feared that the order's reputation for orthodoxy could be besmirched if its doctors of theology

¹²² I am grateful to Dr. Yoshikawa for making available to me her study of Carmelite influence in Kempe's spirituality. See also Yoshikawa, in Renevey & Whitehead, pp. 177–95; Gallyon, pp. 123–38.

¹²³ *BMK*, Book I, Ch. 9.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, Ch. 69.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, Ch. 89.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, Ch. 69. On Netter's attitude to women reading the Bible, see Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, p. 65.

¹²⁸ *BMK*, Book I, Ch. 70. Kempe was finally reunited with Alan of Lynn when he was due to 'dinyng in towne wyth a worschipful woman which had takyn the mentyl and the ryng'. Lynn's guidance of a vowess (a widow who vowed never to remarry) is another example of Carmelite interest in female spirituality.

¹²⁹ On the trials, particularly those ordered by Bishop William Alnwick (whom Misyn would have known when Alnwick was translated to Lincoln from 1436–49), see Tanner, *Heresy Trials*; Hudson, *Selections*, Text 5 and accompanying notes; Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, pp. 71–99. As Harvey points out (p. 291), bishop Alnwick was also in possession of a copy of Netter's *Doctrinale*, showing a link between Carmelite theology and diocesan prosecution of heresy.

consorted with the likes of Kempe, who was constantly dogged by accusations of heresy.¹³⁰

Carmelites were aware that spirituality and literacy became increasingly linked in the later Middle Ages. Given Lynn's interest in the cataloguing of religious experience, it seems likely that he was the 'Whyte Frer [who] proferyd hir [Kempe] to wryten freely yf sche wold' her 'tribulacyons and hir felingys'.¹³¹ However, Kempe's fear of committing her actions and thoughts to vellum in an age of increasingly conservative spirituality prevented her from accepting the services of the Carmelite amanuensis, who perhaps wished to record her story as a test of her orthodoxy. Lynn's interest in the religious experiences of laywomen makes for an interesting comparison with Misyn.

Kempe was equally interested in the activities of Carmelites, and from her descriptions of meetings with several Whitefriars it is probable that she knew of their reputation as the most actively anti-Lollard of the orders. In constructing her 'autohagiography',¹³² Kempe surrounded herself with Carmelites of strong orthodox credentials. When criticised by clergymen, Kempe calls upon the support of 'a worshipful doctowr of divinite, a White Frer, a solem clerk and elde doctowr, and a wel aprevyd',¹³³ presumably Alan of Lynn. Another meeting with Lynn took place whilst Kempe was en route to gain the Archbishop of Canterbury's letter and seal as proof of her orthodoxy.¹³⁴ In Norwich, Kempe preceded her meeting with Julian of Norwich by visiting the Carmelite William Southfield (d. 1414), 'a good man and an holy levar', revered during his lifetime for his orthodox devotion, and visions of the Virgin.¹³⁵ In Bristol, Kempe dined with the Carmelite Thomas Peverel, who as 'bischof of Worcetyr' (1407–1419) had been responsible for John Badby's conviction and burning as a Lollard in 1410.¹³⁶ It is probable from a reference to Smithfield that Kempe was aware of the fate of Badby, the second Lollard to be executed at the site.¹³⁷ Describing his nemesis's hospitality, gifts

¹³⁰ Part of Netter's objection to Lynn's involvement with Kempe may have been that she did not conform to the accepted models of female religious life. Indeed, a monk at Canterbury told Kempe 'I wold thow wer cloyd in an hows of ston' [*BMK*, Book I, Ch. 13], that is to say, her spirituality might be recognised if she conformed to the life of an anchoress. Wynkyn de Worde printed extracts from her *Book* referring to her as an anchoress [Gillespie, 'Dial M', p. 247]. As the following analysis of Misyn shows, Netter may well have been less condemnatory of Lynn's relationship with Kempe had it been more like that of Misyn and his anchoress-reader.

¹³¹ *BMK*, Preface; Wogan-Browne, *et al*, p. 85.

¹³² Wogan-Browne, *et al*, p. 84.

¹³³ *BMK*, Book I, Ch. 61.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, Ch. 55.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, Ch. 18; *ECP*, p. 4; *TC*, p. 58

¹³⁶ *BMK*, Book I, Ch. 45 [see note to line 3592 in Windeatt's translation].

¹³⁷ Kempe (ed.) Staley, note to Book I, Ch. 16, line 825.

and blessing to her is Kempe's attempt to ally herself with the Carmelite forces of religious conservatism.

Kempe's self-professed orthodoxy is further underlined by the texts she informs us she heard read to her: 'Hyltons boke', 'Bridis boke', 'Stimulus amoris', and 'Incendium Amoris'.¹³⁸ All these were either indexed by Lynn or translated by other Carmelites, and it demonstrates that the Whitefriars' devotional reading closely resembled, and probably influenced, that of the laity. The educated and literate air Kempe sought for herself by listing texts written and read by Whitefriars may also have impressed any audience familiar with the Carmelites' academic reputation. In an attempt to assert her orthodoxy, and to promote herself as a well-educated woman, Kempe's contacts and choice of reading matter place her firmly in an identifiably Carmelite textual community.

Thomas Netter

Though Thomas Netter of (Saffron) Walden (c.1372–1430) wrote exclusively in Latin, we have already seen his influence upon the Carmelite textual community and its interest in vernacular theology. Any account of Carmelite writings must make reference to Netter's activities.¹³⁹

Entering the order at Hitchin, Netter trained at the London *studium* and probably became *baccalaureus* in Oxford c.1403, gaining his doctorate c.1410. Carmelite Provincial between 1414 and 1430, Netter has been called the last great medieval theologian, and 'the most distinguished friar of any order between the age of Ockham and the Dissolution'.¹⁴⁰ Netter wrote the vast *Doctrinale antiquitatum fidei ecclesiae Catholicae*, a three-volume text that expounded church teaching in opposition to Wyclif and Huss. The *Doctrinale* effectively became the church's 'official anti-Wycliffite statement'.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ *BMK*, Book I, Chapters 17, 58 & 62. Alan of Lynn indexed Bridget's *Revelations* and the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Stimulus Amoris*. We have already discussed Fishlake's interest in Hilton's *Scale*, and Misyn's translation into English of Rolle's *Incendium* will be the focus of Chapter Two. On the significance of these texts to Kempe, see Windeatt's introduction to his ME edition, pp. 9–18, and his Modern English translation, pp. 15–22.

¹³⁹ Poskitt, in *CIB*, I, p. 166; Sheppard, pp. 45–6; Alban; Shirley, pp. lxx–lxxii; Fleming, in Wallace, p. 352; *Wyclif and his Followers*, no. 13, p. 13; *NCE*, X, p. 363. On Netter's anti-Lollard career, see Turner, Ch. 4; *DNB*, XIV, pp. 231–4; *BRUO*, pp. 1343–4; Fleming, in Wallace, p. 352; Sharpe, Entry 1799, pp. 671–2; *Wyclif and his followers*, no. 89, p. 56; *PR*, *passim*. Netter acted as confessor and envoy to kings Henry V and VI. Netter's correspondence is extremely helpful in gleaming details of medieval Carmelite life and work. Bale quoted extracts from a collection of 164 *epistolae* in his notebook [Bodleian MS Bodley 73, ff. 94v–103v; Sharpe, p. 671]. Alban has translated some letters [*CIB*, II, pp. 343–80] and a new translation is forthcoming. Letter V [*CIB*, II, p. 346] informs us Netter also wrote in Latin a *vade meum* text for aristocrats, now lost.

¹⁴⁰ *ROE*, II, p. 146.

¹⁴¹ Genet, in Dobson, *The Church, Politics*, p. 31.

Manuscripts of Netter's *Doctrinale* are useful in telling us about the *modus operandi* of fifteenth-century Carmelite textual production.¹⁴² As Copsey observes, Netter's work was in high demand, and a number of Carmelites are known to have copied this text for dissemination.¹⁴³ Eight illuminated manuscripts of the *Doctrinale*, probably produced in a Carmelite house, show that the Whitefriars were skilled book producers. They could create academic texts as beautiful as liturgical ones, which were circulated both within the order, and sold outside it.¹⁴⁴ Like Carthusians, fifteenth-century Carmelites had the means, the skills, and the motivation to copy and disseminate works of religious instruction.

Netter's work is often called the last major work of Carmelite literature in the Middle Ages, yet it must have had great impact upon two other Whitefriars who remain overlooked, Richard Misyn, and Thomas Scrope.

Thomas Scrope

Thomas Scrope, alias Bradley,¹⁴⁵ is the final and most colourful author to be considered in this overview of medieval Carmelite literature. Until his death in 1491 at the age of nearly a hundred, he preached throughout the countryside, earning him a saintly reputation. He was probably the illegitimate grandson of Sir Richard le Scrope, first baron of Bolton (1327–1403), a family remarkable for their political power and literary patronage.¹⁴⁶ Having completed his studies and been ordained before 1425, Scrope lived a life of apostolic zeal as an itinerant and apocalyptic preacher, until (like Alan of Lynn) he provoked Netter's disapproval.¹⁴⁷ Scrope subsequently lived as a recluse in a cell in the Carmelite friary in Norwich

¹⁴² Scott, II, p. 187 ff.

¹⁴³ Copsey states that 'during the first half of the fifteenth century, eighteen Carmelites are known to have been engaged in copying manuscripts', including the *Doctrinale* [Scott, II, p. 187], though he does not list them ['Simon Stock', p. 673]. Roger Alban (d. 1453+) is one of them [Sharpe, Entry 1544, p. 580; Edden, 'Marian Devotion', p. 101]. On the diffusion of the *Doctrinale*, see M. M. Harvey.

¹⁴⁴ Scott, I, pp. 26–7, II, pp. 187–89. Production quality seems to have been a recurrent preoccupation for Netter [Letters V & XXVIII, in *CIB*, II, pp. 346, 362]. The Carmelites produced liturgical books of exceptional quality. The London Carmelites were partly responsible for the (now reconstructed) Carmelite Missal, probably written at their convent before 1391 [Rickert, p. 23; *ROE*, II, p. 279; Edden, 'The Mantle', p. 78; Scott, II, pp. 24–30]. Naturally, liturgical texts were *sine qua non* for Carmelites, who could not function without them. The production and circulation processes for liturgical texts are worth further analysis than this thesis can afford. Fr. Boyce has been the most prominent student of Carmelite ritual, though his focus has been liturgical rather than bibliographic.

¹⁴⁵ Named after his birthplace in Leicestershire, where the Scopes were prominent landowners. *DNB*, XVII, pp. 1085–6; Sheppard, pp. 39–40; McCaffrey, pp. 86, 261–2; *CLMN*, pp. 59–60; *Scriptorum*, I, pp. 629–30; Ware, I, pp. 261–2; Copsey, *English and Irish Medieval Carmelite Bishops*, p. 6; *CPL*, IX, p. 241; *HBC*, p. 317; Bale, MS Bodley 73, f. 1; Sharpe, Entry 1827, pp. 679–80; *SW*, pp. 209–11; *EIA*, p. 52; 'Simon Stock', p. 659, n. 28.

¹⁴⁶ Warren, p. 211. The full significance of the Scrope family will become apparent in Chapter Two. On the family see *PV*, *passim*, though Hughes calls Scrope 'Richard', not Thomas (*PV*, p. 116).

¹⁴⁷ Clay, p. 163.

from 1425 until approximately twenty years later.¹⁴⁸ As a recluse (either an anchorite or hermit), Scrope was living in a dramatic way the contemplative vocation of his order. Tanner highlights the Carmelite anchorites who for him ‘represent an interesting return to the original traditions’ of the order.¹⁴⁹ During this time, (approximately when Misyn was writing), Scrope occupied himself in the composition and copying of books and sermons.¹⁵⁰

Scrope was interested in vernacular theology, owning and annotating a copy of Lavenham’s *Litil Tretys*.¹⁵¹ His own contribution to the Carmelite corpus of vernacular literature survives in one fifteenth-century manuscript, London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 192.¹⁵² This simple yet beautiful manuscript contains two English works.

The first is Scrope’s translation of an anonymous rule for hermits attributed to Pope St. Linus, entitled (in a sixteenth-century hand) ‘The Booke of the institution and proper deeds of religious Carmelites’.¹⁵³ The text deals with pope Linus’s supposed ordinances on the solitary life, which are somewhat reminiscent of the Albertine Rule. The text concludes with the phrase ‘This is þe charge of an hermyztis lyffe’. Though this text is not Carmelite in origin, Scrope and the sixteenth-century annotator (probably Bale), saw it as being applicable to the order. The text would have had obvious appeal to Scrope who tried to recapture what he perceived to be the earliest model of Carmelite life by rejecting his

¹⁴⁸ There is some confusion as to whether Scrope ended his anchoritic life in 1441 or 1446 [*CLMN*, p. 198; *Scriptorium*, I, pp. 629–630; Clay, p. 163; Warren, p. 211 n. 61].

¹⁴⁹ *CLMN*, p. 59.

¹⁵⁰ During his seclusion Scrope wrote his *Chronicon* [Bale, MS Harley 3838, f. 107v; Sheppard, p. 33 n. 4; *SW*, p. 210]. In 1441, at his family’s suggestion he wrote *Informatio et Supplicatio*, a defence of the Carmelite order addressed to the pope.

¹⁵¹ London, British Library MS Harley 211, [Van Zutphen, pp. xxxv–vi – see p. 9 above]. Scrope’s name appears twice [ff. 174, 191v]. Scrope’s ownership demonstrates an internal interest in the order’s vernacular literature.

¹⁵² Pickering & O’Mara, *IMEP*, XIII, p. 15; James & Jenkins, pp. 300–302; Todd, p. 124; *Manual*, II, ‘Rule of St. Linus’ & ‘Institutions and Special Deeds of Religious Carmelites’, pp. 479–81, 659; *ECD*, p. 206. Although the translator is not named, Scrope was almost certainly responsible [f. 45v announces the text as *Liber Thome Scrope episcopi Dromoren*, and f. 46v contains a brief note on Scrope in a seventeenth-century hand]. The two ME items are written in three hands, of which the two responsible for the latter have been localised respectively in Suffolk and Norfolk [*LALME*, LP 4635 and 4636; *IMEP*, XIII, p. 15]. Scrope’s dedication of the translation to his prior at Norwich is evidence that vernacular texts circulated within the order. The dedication, now lost, was recorded by Bale [MS Harley 3838, f. 108], who owned the manuscript [inscription, f. 1r – cf. James, p. 302].

¹⁵³ London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 192, f. 46 [*IMEP*, XIII, p. 15; Clay, p. 88; Warren, pp. 103, 211 n., 296–7; *Manual*, II, p. 659; *IPMEP*, p. 437]. Known as the Lambeth Rule (though properly a charge rather than an actual *regula*) written for male lay anchorites in the thirteenth century. On the popularity of such eremitic rules, see *PV*, p. 64. Oliger [pp. 243–268] transcribed the rule for hermits from this manuscript and provided a facsimile of f. 46. It is also edited and introduced by Kenny. Edden is currently working on an edition of Scrope’s ME translation of the *Institution* for the EETS.

community in favour of an anchorhold. We shall see that this anchoritic spirituality was simultaneously influencing Misyn's work.

The second vernacular work in the Lambeth manuscript, written in the 1430s, is Scrope's literal translation of a very significant history of the Carmelite order compiled in Latin between 1379 and 1391 by the Spanish provincial Felipe Ribot, *Libri decem de institutione et de peculiaribus gestis religiosorum Carmelitarum*. This text – part of what modern scholars call the *Ribot Collection* – dealt with the spiritual life and ideals of the Carmelites from the order's supposed Old Testament beginnings until the papal revision of the Rule. The collection was divided into four parts, and though Ribot claimed to be the editor of four individual texts, ascribable to clerics from the fifth century onwards, modern scholarship believes that Ribot or a contemporary wrote the entire collection.¹⁵⁴

Whatever the date(s) of the Ribot collection, the fact of its emergence in the late fourteenth century is highly significant, since it shows the Carmelites' growing interest in their own history, and a literary recourse to what they considered to be the founding principles of the order. By 1420 the Ribot collection had come to be considered so important a history that Thomas Netter wrote to the prior general, John Grossi, requesting a copy of the book of John XLIV [the Ribot collection], 'qui liber magni pretii et honoris esset apud nos, maxime si emi posset ut haberetur in vetusta scriptura'.¹⁵⁵ This letter implies that the English province did not own a copy of the Ribot collection until Netter's request, though it was known and valued, and within a decade or so a copy had reached the Norwich convent, where Scrope translated it as *The Ten Bookys of the Instytucionys and Specyal Dedys of Relygyows Carmelitys* [f. 47], and where Alan of Lynn indexed it (presumably from the same copy). Though Scrope wrote several accounts of the early history and spirituality of the order, his translation of the *Institutione* was the only one in English. We might expect his purpose in doing so was to promote Carmelite ideals beyond the order. In fact, Scrope dedicated the Lambeth manuscript text to his prior at Norwich,¹⁵⁶ which suggests that Carmelites regularly read vernacular texts by the end of the fifteenth century.

Conclusion

¹⁵⁴ On Ribot's collection, see Shepard, p. 39; *MCH*, p. 11; Smet, 'The Perfection', p. 179; Egan in *CIB*, I, p. 98 ff. The Latin text of the *Institutione*, which James [p. 300] called the *Speculum Carmelitarum* of Phillipi Riboti, has been edited by Paul Chandler (University of Toronto thesis, 1991).

¹⁵⁵ 'a book which would be of great value and honour to us if it could be purchased for us in ancient script.' [Alban, in *CIB*, II, p. 362; Egan, *CIB*, I, p. 95]. Netter no doubt felt that having the history written in 'ancient script' added antiquity and authenticity to the volume.

¹⁵⁶ The dedication is lost but was recorded by Bale [MS Harley 3838, f. 108].

Bale bound Scrope's translation alongside the Latin text of the *Institution* in the Lambeth manuscript – a physical demonstration of the status accorded to vernacular writings by the end of the Middle Ages.¹⁵⁷ In between the two [f. 43v], Bale wrote a list of 27 Carmelite bishops, concluding with the names of Scrope–Bradley, and Richard Misyn. Both Carmelites held the bishopric of Dromore at the same time.¹⁵⁸ Both Carmelites were writers, and were demonstrably 'Carmelite' in their interests.

From this limited overview of Carmelite writers, it is possible to extract important themes and patterns in the authorship, production, circulation, and readership of Carmelite literature. Carmelite writings show an interest in the desert origins of the order, and 'the body of writing in which Carmelite friars reflected on their own history and identity suggests a spirituality much indebted to the memory of those hermits.'¹⁵⁹ However, Whitefriars were equally interested in copying, collecting, cataloguing and translating contemporary texts from across the theological spectrum. The Carmelites were not only interested in scholastic theology, but also 'vernacular theology'. They were keenly interested in the spirituality of their day, including that of women and anchorites. Whitefriars were aware of the dangers of heretical spirituality, and policed the bounds of orthodoxy with both scholastic and vernacular texts. Study of English Carmelite writings exposes a vibrant textual community that circulated books within its own bounds, as well as importing and exporting them. Misyn's texts can best be appreciated within this textual community and literary tradition.

¹⁵⁷ Dr. Edden informs me that Scrope is unlikely to have used the Latin copy in this manuscript for his translation.

¹⁵⁸ Scrope was consecrated as bishop in 1450, and from this date he acted as suffragan in Norwich between 1450–77, and in Canterbury in 1469 [Norfolk & Norwich Record Office, Reg. Lyhert, Reg/6/11, ff. 214–5; Stubbs, p. 205; Eubel, II, p. 162; *HBC*, p. 349]. Scrope–Bradley was still using the title 'Bishop of Dromore' when his confrater Misyn came to the bishopric.

¹⁵⁹ Edden, 'The Mantle', p. 83.

CHAPTER TWO

CARMELITE LITERATURE IN DEPTH: THE WRITINGS OF RICHARD MISYN, O. Carm.

This chapter focuses in depth upon one fifteenth-century Carmelite writer, Richard Misyn (d. 1462), who translated into English the *De Emendatio Vitae* and *Incendium Amoris* by Richard Rolle of Hampole (c.1290–1349). Close analysis of Misyn's work, and external evidence, shows his awareness of social and literary concerns within his order and local society.

Misyn and his audience – biographical details

Misyn¹⁶⁰ joined the Carmelites at Lincoln where he received his basic instruction, before furthering his studies at the *studium* in York,¹⁶¹ then the second city of England. Misyn was ordained acolyte in York on 11 March 1419, subdeacon on 23 Dec 1419, and deacon on 17 May 1421.¹⁶² He proceeded to university, possibly Oxford (within Lincoln diocese), before returning to his filial house. In Lincoln Misyn translated Rolle's *Emendatio Vitae*¹⁶³ in 1434. A year later he translated Rolle's *Incendium Amoris* at the request of an anchoress, Margaret Heslington, by which time – manuscript colophons inform us – he was prior at Lincoln and holder of the Bachelor of Theology degree.

It is strange that Misyn called himself Bachelor of Theology for the first time in 1435, and not in the colophon of the *Emendatio* translation. Since Misyn studied at the York *studium* c.1419–21, and probably gained a licentiate (an internal award in theology), he would normally be exempt as a friar from the university's Bachelor of Arts course. Ordinarily, he would have gained his Bachelor of Theology within three or four years, that is, by c.1425.¹⁶⁴ Either Misyn felt it unnecessary to state his academic credentials in the earlier text, or else delayed claiming his degree until the mid-1430s. What Misyn did between 1425 and 1434 is unknown, though he probably returned to lecture at the York *studium*.¹⁶⁵

The later events of Misyn's life have some bearing on his literary activities, and inform us about the circles he moved in. In a papal letter of 15 November 1441 he

¹⁶⁰ *DNB*, XIII, p. 504; *BRUO*, p. 1286. I am grateful to Fr. Copsey for providing me with his biography of Misyn written for the forthcoming *New DNB*.

¹⁶¹ On the York friary, see studies listed by Copsey in *CIB*, I, p. 250; McCaffrey, pp. 257–60; Greatrex, in Smith, *The Church in Medieval York*, pp. 69–73; Raine, pp. 62–5. On the fifteenth-century church in York see Dobson, 'The City of York', in Ford, pp. 201–13, and literature listed by Gillespie, 'Cura Pastoralis', p. 181 n. 99.

¹⁶² York, Borthwick Institute, Reg. Bowet (Reg. 18), ff. 402, 404v, 409v.

¹⁶³ Sometimes entitled *Regula vivendi (Rule of Life)*, *Emendatio peccatoris*, *Vehiculum Vitae*, or *Duodecim capitula [Manual]*, IX, p. 3064; Sargent, 'The Transmission', p. 232 n.3.].

¹⁶⁴ For information on the length of time required for each stage of study, see Copsey's forthcoming article.

¹⁶⁵ On the office of *lector*, see *MM*, pp. 262, 299.

was granted ‘Dispensation to him a priest and a chaplain of Henry, earl of Northumberland, to receive and hold for life any benefice with cure, wont to be governed by secular clerks.’¹⁶⁶ Misyn’s right – despite his status as a religious – to hold a benefice as private chaplain to Henry Percy, second Earl of Northumberland and Lord High Constable,¹⁶⁷ shows his patronage by one of the leading families of England. The Percy family had supported the Carmelites since they formed their first hermitage c.1242 at Hulne,¹⁶⁸ on the outskirts of Alnwick where the Percys were feudal lords.¹⁶⁹ The family were considered founders of the convent in York,¹⁷⁰ where their residence, Percy Inn, was adjacent to the Whitefriars.¹⁷¹

Misyn was admitted as rector of Edlaston, Derbyshire on November 18th 1443,¹⁷² but it was probably a benefice he resigned in 1446 when he took the post of perpetual rector of Colwich, Staffordshire.¹⁷³ His appointment as “inquisitor and prosecutor for apostate” (fugitive) friars sometime between 1446–56, shows his role in the government and regulation of Whitefriars.¹⁷⁴

Because of his status in the Percy entourage, and his post at Colwich, it is probable that Misyn came to the attention of William Booth (bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, 1447–1452). When Booth was translated to the Archbishopric of York (1452–1464),¹⁷⁵ Misyn was appointed as a suffragan bishop in that city (1458–62). Misyn was given the See of Dromore in County Down, Ireland, on 29 July 1457 by papal appointment. Dromore was such a poor diocese that Misyn was twice granted permission by the Pope to retain the parish of Colwich, along with his bishopric.¹⁷⁶

Misyn’s activities in York extended to membership of one of its most exclusive guilds. ‘Frater Ricardus Mysyn, suffragenus, ordinis Fratrum Carmelitarum’ is recorded ‘in primis’ as the first person admitted to the Guild of Corpus Christi in 1461–2.¹⁷⁷ Misyn’s membership is significant for a number of reasons. It shows Carmelite involvement in the guild that organised the city’s decorous Corpus

¹⁶⁶ *CPL*, IX, pp. 210–211. Misyn probably appointed a vicar to administer the parish for him, as was quite usual. Misyn gained financially from the appointment. This practice, often considered an abuse in the late medieval church, was common amongst Carmelites from this period [Sheppard, pp. 47–8].

¹⁶⁷ *DNB*, XV, pp. 850–3; *Burke’s Peerage*, p. 1998.

¹⁶⁸ Egan, in *CIB*, I, pp. 39, 90–91, 89.

¹⁶⁹ *Burke’s Peerage*, p. 1998.

¹⁷⁰ Egan, in *CIB*, I, p. 85.

¹⁷¹ Raine, pp. 108–9.

¹⁷² Lichfield Joint Record Office, Reg. Heyworth (B/A/1/9), ff. 92v, 94v.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, f. 71; Reg. Hales (B/A/1/12), f. 40; Harley MS 1819, f. 200v.

¹⁷⁴ British Library MS Harley 1819, f. 200v. On the recurring problem of apostasy, see *TC*, p. 71; Logan.

¹⁷⁵ *BRUC*, p. 73; Jones, pp. 4–5; *HBC*, pp. 254, 282.

¹⁷⁶ Eubel, II, p. 162; Ware, I, p. 260; *HBC*, p. 350; Stubbs, p. 206; *CPL*, XI, pp. 172, 322.

¹⁷⁷ Skaife, p. 62.

Christi celebrations.¹⁷⁸ The guild combated heresy by promoting the doctrine of Christ's true presence in the Eucharist.¹⁷⁹ Carmelites, who propagated the cult of Corpus Christi in the face of Lollard detraction, featured prominently as guild members.¹⁸⁰ The guild had another significance for Misyn; the addressee of his translation, Margaret Heslington, was a member when Misyn was probably lecturing at the *studium*.¹⁸¹ It was not unusual for anchorites to be guild members, and some guilds patronised them.¹⁸²

Since Misyn did not join the guild until after Heslington's death it seems unlikely he knew her through its activities. However, their mutual membership reveals something of the milieu in which they lived and worshipped. The guild only admitted clergy and laity of good character.¹⁸³ These men and women of social and intellectual distinction included leading book-owners of the Diocese of York; merchants, abbots, bishops, and royalty.¹⁸⁴

An artefact of York Minster provides further evidence of Misyn's involvement with the guild. His name is inscribed on the mazer bowl known as Archbishop Scrope's Indulgence Cup:

*+ Recharde arche beschope Scrope grantes on to all tho that drinkis of this cope xlti dayis of pardun. Robert Gubsun. Beschope Musin grantes in same forme afore saide Xlti dayis to pardun. Robert Stensall.*¹⁸⁵

The bowl belonged to the Corpus Christi Guild before passing to the Cordwainers' (shoe-makers) Company. Misyn must have come into contact with the

¹⁷⁸ The guild was founded by 'chaplains and other worthy parsons, both secular and regular' [Skaife, p. v] in 1408, showing collaboration between secular clergy and private religious in Arundel's 'circle' (though Arundel had been translated to Canterbury in 1396, his clerics mostly remained in York). The guild was supervised by Arundel's clerks and other Minster clergy [PV, p. 192]. On the guild's development see Crouch.

¹⁷⁹ See the discourse on Eucharistic doctrine that prefaces the list of members [Skaife, pp. 1–6].

¹⁸⁰ Carmelites were notable defenders of orthodox Eucharistic teaching. In 1382, Peter Stokes, O. Carm. was due to condemn Wyclif's teachings (and defend the doctrines of the Eucharist and transubstantiation) on the significant date of Corpus Christi [Catto, in Catto & Evans, pp. 214–6; Flood, pp. 175–7]. Ten Carmelites were admitted to the Corpus Christi Guild between 1430 and 1469 [Page, III, p. 293, n. 32], including two in the same year as Misyn [Skaife, p. 62].

¹⁸¹ Hughes [PV, p. 110] claims that Heslington was a member of the guild from 1428. Actually, 'Dom. Isab. Heslyngton, reclusa' is listed in 1429/30 [Skaife, p. 29]. This is one of numerous errors in Hughes's otherwise interesting study. The surname, date, and title of recluse indicate that she is the anchoress Misyn knew. Isabel was probably Heslington's baptismal name, and Margaret derived from the Church she was attached to – just as Julian of Norwich took her name from the church of St. Julian in Conisford.

¹⁸² Warren, pp. 184, 192, 207.

¹⁸³ Fifth ordinance, [Skaife, pp. vi & 7].

¹⁸⁴ Skaife, p. xii.

¹⁸⁵ Poole & Hugall, p. 197; Fellow & Hope, p. 311 ff.

Cordwainers' Guild of St. Mary the Blessed Virgin since the confraternity met in the Carmelite friary.¹⁸⁶ Since the Cordwainers were one of the guilds responsible for the York cycle of mystery plays at Corpus Christi, it is possible that Carmelites were somehow involved with the city's drama.¹⁸⁷ Misyn's involvement with the guilds shows that York Carmelites were deeply involved in town life, and the spiritual edification of its citizens.

Alongside his Episcopal duties in York, Misyn was rector of East Leake, Nottinghamshire, in January 1459,¹⁸⁸ and in July of that year he was collated as warden of St. John the Baptist's Hospital in Ripon.¹⁸⁹ Misyn remained in frequent contact with all four orders of friars, performing ordinations in each York house.¹⁹⁰ Misyn was rector of Birstall in Yorkshire¹⁹¹ until his death in September 1462, when according to Bale he was buried in the York convent.¹⁹²

We now turn to Misyn's addressee, 'Margarete Heslyngton, recluse' [104/9–10].¹⁹³ Since patronymics became more important in later medieval surnames, 'Heslington' probably denotes a family name rather than a place. Nevertheless, the proximity of Heslington (the only English village so named) to York suggests a provenance from there. York was a fruitful home for recluses in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries,¹⁹⁴ and would therefore be a natural place to locate Heslington.

York testamentary records indeed reveal that Heslington lived as an anchoress in the churchyard of St. Margaret's Church, Walmgate, within a few hundred metres of the Carmelite convent. She received the generous support of several York citizens in their wills, and died in 1439.¹⁹⁵

Heslington's membership of the Corpus Christi Guild suggests she came from an affluent family. Anchoresses often came from the governing classes. If Misyn was in York in the late 1420's, his prestige as a lecturer may have introduced him

¹⁸⁶ On the Cordwainers (*allutari* in Latin) see Raine, pp. 65, 102; Crouch, pp. 136–137. Testators of the guild made thirty bequests to the Carmelites between 1402 and 1527 [Crouch, p. 129], making them 'the most popular in testamentary terms' of all the city's mendicant convents [Crouch, p. 133]. Several guild members were buried in the friary. Sellers prints the Cordwainers' ordinances in French (undated) and Latin (1417), pp. 72–74, 187–197.

¹⁸⁷ The Cordwainers' play, *The Agony in the Garden and the Betrayal*, (ed.) Beadle pp. 234–42. Although 'it was never the duty of the Corpus Christi Guild to present the [Mystery] Play', the performance 'had become attached to the Corpus Christi procession' [White, p. 2] and was thus influenced by the guild.

¹⁸⁸ York, Borthwick Institute, Reg. Booth (MS Reg. 20), ff. 85, 99v.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 49.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 434v–451v.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, ff. 17v, 22.

¹⁹² MS Harley 3838, f. 40; MS Bodley 73, f. 1. *HBC* puts Misyn's death as 1463.

¹⁹³ All references to Misyn's text [page/line] come from Harvey's edition.

¹⁹⁴ Warren, pp. 39, 242–253.

¹⁹⁵ Raine, p. 108; Warren, pp. 244–5; York, Borthwick Institute, Probate Registry, Will 3, f. 590.

into Heslington's social or spiritual circle. Since book production in the Middle Ages was expensive, it is even possible that Heslington paid Misyn for his translation, thus reviving the practice among the early friars of earning income from 'manual' labour.¹⁹⁶

Misyn's relationship with Heslington is only known from his writing activity. In 1434 he wrote the *mendynge of lyfe* [105/6], a translation of Rolle's *Emendatio Vitae*. He translated Rolle's *Incendium Amoris* a year later, calling it *be fyre of lufe* [1/9], and calling himself hermit, Carmelite, and Bachelor of Theology [68/29–30].¹⁹⁷

There are three extant manuscripts of Misyn's translation.¹⁹⁸ Palaeographers and codicologists date all three to the 1440s–50s.¹⁹⁹ The two translations are found side-by-side in each, with identical prologues and colophons identifying Misyn as translator and Heslington as recipient. It is necessary to understand their textual history before analysing Misyn's translations.

British Library MS Additional 37790 (Amherst Manuscript)

Misyn's translations (ff. 1–95) hold pride of place as the first texts within this important *florilegium* of religious treatises.²⁰⁰ The translation of *Emendatio Vitae* [ff. 1r–18r] ends with the colophon

*Thus endis the xij Chapetrs off Richarde Hampole Into englyis translate be
ffrere Rycharde Msyn to in fformacion off Crystyn saules Anno Domini
millimo cccc xxxiiij. [131/3–5]*

¹⁹⁶ *MM*, pp. 250, 255. On the support of friars by the burgher class, see *PV*, p. 50.

¹⁹⁷ *SW*, pp. 204–5; *SWA*, p. 197; IPMEP, 92; *Manual*, IX, p. 3055. The Latin text of the *Incendium* is edited by Deanesly, and the *Emendatio* by Watson. Numerous twentieth-century Modern English editions of both are listed in Lagorio & Bradley, pp. 57–9; *Manual*, IX, pp. 3411–2. According to Colledge & Walsh writing in 1978 [ME edition of *Julian*, p. 4 n. 13], Margaret Amassian was re-editing both the *fyre* and the *mendynge*, and re-examining their attribution to Misyn. Although she stated that a critical edition of the *Emendatio* translation was near completion (*Manuscripta* 23, p. 68 n. 5), I have not heard any further details, and whilst Harvey is certainly in need of revision I see no reason to doubt the attribution of the translation to Misyn (though probably of the manuscripts themselves). In anticipation of a revised edition, Laing has listed errors in Appendix 1 of her article [see p. 219 n. 4].

¹⁹⁸ Not two as Watson states ['Richard Rolle', p. 312 n. 1].

¹⁹⁹ *Manual*, IX, p. 3423; Laing, p. 189.

²⁰⁰ Comper, p. xxxiii; Cré, in Renevey & Whitehead, p. 57 n. 1; Colledge & Walsh's ME edition of *Julian*, pp. 1–5; *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum*, pp. 153–6; *Julian's Shewings*, (ed.) Crampton, p. 19; Pezzini; Glasscoe; Bazire & Colledge, pp. 9–11; Gillespie, 'Dial M', p. 246; Laing, p. 220 n. 8. Cré's recent thesis is the most thorough study of the manuscript.

Misyn's translation of the *Incendium* follows immediately (ff. 18v–95r). In the other two manuscripts, the *fyer* precedes the *mendynge*, but Amherst's scribe placed Misyn's works in correct chronological order.²⁰¹

The accompanying translations in Amherst shed light on the kind of material deemed complementary to Misyn's work. Misyn occurs alongside an English translation of the *Epistola aurea* (ff. 95v–6v) falsely attributed to St. Bernard, and *The Chastising of God's Children*. Selections from some of Rolle's English works (*Ego Dormio* and *The Form of Living*) also feature (ff. 132r–5v). The manuscript contains, uniquely, the short text of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love* (ff. 97r–115r). The manuscript contains the unique English version of *The Treatise of Perfection of the Sons of God* (ff. 115r–30r), a translation of the Latin version of the Dutch text by the Carthusian Jan van Ruusbroec.²⁰² Amherst also contains a fragment of a Middle English translation of Suso's *Horologium Sapientiae* (ff. 135v–6v),²⁰³ the 'M. N.' version of the *Mirror of Simple Souls* (ff. 137r–225r) by Marguerite Porète,²⁰⁴ and a note on the *Liber celestis* (II, 16) of St. Bridget of Sweden (ff. 236v–237r, cropped).²⁰⁵

The manuscript's physical properties help ascertain details about its use. The Amherst manuscript measures 26.6 x 18 cm,²⁰⁶ probably too small for public oration,²⁰⁷ but perfect for comfortable private reading. With the exception of some patristic writings on the contemplative life (ff. 226–34r), the manuscript is largely written in English. Though the scribe rubricated Latin, the overall impression created by the translations is of a readership more comfortable with English.²⁰⁸ The manuscript was written by one hand in Anglicana script, possibly within a monastic *scriptorium*.²⁰⁹

²⁰¹ Cré gives a thematic account for the Amherst ordering, p. 59. Theologically speaking, the *Emendatio* lays the ground rules for the Christian life and introduces the themes which occupy Rolle in the *Incendium*.

²⁰² *Manual*, IX, p. 3124, 3466.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 3125–7, 3466–7.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3117–9, 3462; Sargent 'The Transmission', pp. 238–9.

²⁰⁵ Pezzini; Ellis, 'Flores ad fabricandam'.

²⁰⁶ Pezzini, p. 292.

²⁰⁷ Comper [p. xxxii] believed that Misyn's translation may have been read aloud, rather than privately, because she perceived the text repetitive. No manuscript apparatus suggests that Misyn's translation was primarily aurally received. Rolle himself was aware of his text reaching 'herars or redars' [96/23]. Misyn's translations were part of the *devotio moderna's* shifting emphasis towards private reading.

²⁰⁸ The inclusion of a few Latin texts need not necessarily point to a male readership. Nearly all the texts were originally written for women. The Vernon manuscript is another compilation mostly in English with a few Latin and French texts that some women would have been able to read. The Vernon manuscript, which contains Maidstone's *Penitential Psalms*, Hilton works, and anchoritic texts addressed to women, was probably read by devout laywomen or a community of nuns – see Riddy, in Meale, pp. 104–27; *RMPP*, p. 17; *PV*, p. 213; Clark, 'Late Fourteenth', pp. 7–8; Pearsall.

²⁰⁹ Pezzini, [p. 292] and Colledge & Walsh [ME edition of Julian, pp. 1–2] argue that Amherst was probably the product of a monastic scriptorium. According to Laing [pp. 189, 220 n. 10], the scribe was also responsible

The Amherst manuscript's presentation and contents lead many to believe that it is a Carthusian production, its texts appealing to that order's interest in vernacular theological works.²¹⁰ The materials show thematic unity, and a progression of theological complexity, suggesting that it may have been a handbook for the contemplative and reclusive life. The *fyer* deals with the life of the contemplative solitary. Julian's is an anchoritic text. The mystical theology of van Ruusbroec is directed towards an anchorite. The *Chastising* was written for a female religious, probably by a Carthusian advisor, just as the Dominican Suso wrote for a female religious. The *Mirror of Simple Souls* also deals with stages of contemplation. Though the Amherst texts were originally addressed to female recipients, they were disseminated to an interested wider public, which probably included Carthusians.²¹¹ Misyn's *fyer* is the most heavily annotated text in Amherst,²¹² and annotations by James Grenehalgh prove that it was once in Carthusian ownership.²¹³

The inclusion of attributed Carmelite and Dominican materials in a Carthusian compilation shows the monks were interested in the literary activities of the friars. The manuscript also demonstrates the rapid Carthusian accumulation of Carmelite literature. Misyn's translations are the most recent works in the compilation. Since the scribal hands of all three manuscripts suggest that they were made 'within five, or at most ten, years of the original composition',²¹⁴ we can conclude that Misyn's work was copied outside the Carmelite order before or soon after Heslington's death in 1439, and before Misyn was suffragan in York.

Yale University MS Beinecke 331

The Yale manuscript places Misyn's translations (ff. 1r–136v) alongside a verse life of St. John of Bridlington,²¹⁵ and a sixteenth-century poem. As with the Amherst manuscript, the accompanying texts explain the context in which Misyn

for British Library MS Egerton 2006 and St. John's College Cambridge MS 189. The materials in Amherst would point to either a female reader, or a Carthusian production. If it was a Carthusian compilation, then it could not have been made in a scriptorium, since the *Consuetudines Cartusiae* required each monk to have copying implements in his cell rather than in a common room, [Bell, in Hellinga & Trapp, pp. 235–6; Cannon, in Wallace, p. 319.]

²¹⁰ Amherst meets the Carthusian desire for firsthand accounts of raw and immediate religious experience. This is why the compilation contains Julian's Short Text, which is more about personal experience than the 'more ramified and theologically more sophisticated Long Text' [Gillespie, 'Dial M', pp. 245–6]; Cré, *passim*.

²¹¹ Cré, in Renevey & Whitehead, p. 45 ff.

²¹² Cré, p. 22.

²¹³ Sargent, *James Grenehalgh*; Colledge & Walsh ME edition of Julian, p. 3.

²¹⁴ Laing, p. 189.

²¹⁵ *IMEV Supplement* (ed. Robbins & Cutler), Entry 4105.5. The text is edited by Amassian, 'A Verse Life', and commented upon by Sleeth. A catalogue description is available at the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library's website: <http://webtext.library.yale.edu/beinflat/pre1600/MS331.HTM>

was read. The collation of the *fyer* alongside a verse life of Bridlington (d. 1379) suggests an interest in northern saintly figures. Like Rolle, Bridlington was a Yorkshire man revered for his piety.²¹⁶ Canonized in 1401, Misyn would have been well aware of Bridlington's cult. The Bridlington poem almost certainly predates Misyn's translation,²¹⁷ and it is possible the poem was collated with Misyn because of Carmelite interest in Bridlington.²¹⁸ The attraction to a Carmelite is plain. The poem focuses upon a religious who, like the Whitefriars, combined communal life [f. 170, line 12] with a desire for contemplative solitude [f. 172, line 6; f. 174, line 17].

The collation of Rolle and Bridlington materials may also have political implications. In 1402 a friar was hanged for quoting Bridlington's *Prophecy*, 'in an apparently pro-Yorkist manner'.²¹⁹ Archbishop Scrope of York, responsible for Bridlington's canonization, was executed three years later for his support of the Yorkist cause.²²⁰ The friar's execution shows disapproval of some mendicant interpretations of Bridlington's writings. Whilst there is nothing overtly political in the verse life, placing it alongside Misyn's Rolle translations shows distinct interest in northern eremitic spirituality.

Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 236

Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 236 dates from between 1435 and 1450 and is written in the same fifteenth-century hand throughout.²²¹ The quality of Corpus is high, the first page beautifully ornamented with gold gilt.²²² It contains only Misyn's translations.

The relationship between the Misyn manuscripts

Laing has studied all three manuscripts containing Misyn, and shown that they are closely related, linguistically and textually.²²³ Combining her research with biographical data on Misyn and Heslington, and an appreciation of the cultural context in which they lived, can inform us about the Carmelite's literary activities.

²¹⁶ Farmer, p. 231; Socii Bollandiani, p. 644; Fros, p. 484; Purvis, *St John of Bridlington*; Grosjean; Laing, p. 205.

²¹⁷ Amassian, 'A Verse Life', p. 137.

²¹⁸ 'Versus Prophetici per Priorem de Brydlington' were copied alongside Ashburne's prophetic poem [Smith, *Catalogue*, p. 104]. Bale was also interested in Bridlington [Amassian, 'A Verse Life', p. 138].

²¹⁹ Rigg, p. 268.

²²⁰ Rolle, Bridlington and Scrope were 'leaders of the contemplative movement' in Yorkshire [*PV*, p. 3], a movement in which Misyn played a role. Misyn's name was aligned with Scrope's on the York mazer bowl. On political prophecy, see Coote.

²²¹ *IMEP*, VIII, p. 29; Coxe, II, (iv), pp. 97–8; Harvey p. ix. It cannot date before 1435, as *Manual*, IX, p. 3423 suggests.

²²² Alexander & Temple, Entry 531, p. 52; Harvey, p. ix.

²²³ Laing, p. 210.

Laing's dialectal study reveals that each of the three manuscripts is the work of a scribe working alone. Linguistic profiles conclude that 'whatever the dialect of Misyn's original texts ... the three copies of his tracts were all made by Lincolnshire scribes'.²²⁴ The Corpus scribe's dialect can be located in Lincoln itself,²²⁵ and 'it is no surprise that Misyn's work should have been copied in that city at a time not long after they were written there.'²²⁶ However, the Corpus text cannot be Misyn's autograph. A comparison between early sections of the *fyer* against later sections, and the *mendynge*, reveals that the early part is 'a linguistic mixture made up of components from the... scribe's own dialect and that of his exemplar.'²²⁷ In other words, although a Lincoln scribe wrote Corpus, the *Mischsprache* (dialectal mixture) reveals he copied a manuscript written by a scribe from a different linguistic region. The gradual change in dialect shows that the Corpus scribe, who took 'a little time to work into his task', was an exact copyist who combined his own usage with that of his exemplar.²²⁸ The Corpus scribe's exemplar has been lost, but the extraction of 'foreign' dialectal features from the early part of his manuscript shows that the exemplar was written in northwest Lincolnshire, to the north of Gainsborough.²²⁹ It seems unlikely that this exemplar was Misyn's autograph either, since that would presumably be in a Lincoln dialect.²³⁰ More likely is that Corpus's exemplar 'went through at least one stage of copying in a dialect from somewhere other than Lincoln'.²³¹

The dedication to Heslington would suggest that she owned Misyn's autograph, though it is more than likely that Misyn would copy such a substantial work before parting with the original.²³² All the extant manuscripts contain the dedication to Heslington; so the exemplar for the Corpus manuscript derived from either her own manuscript in York, or from a Carmelite manuscript that copied the

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

²²⁵ LALME I:153; LP 16 [*IMEP*, VIII, p. 29].

²²⁶ Laing, p. 190.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 199–202.

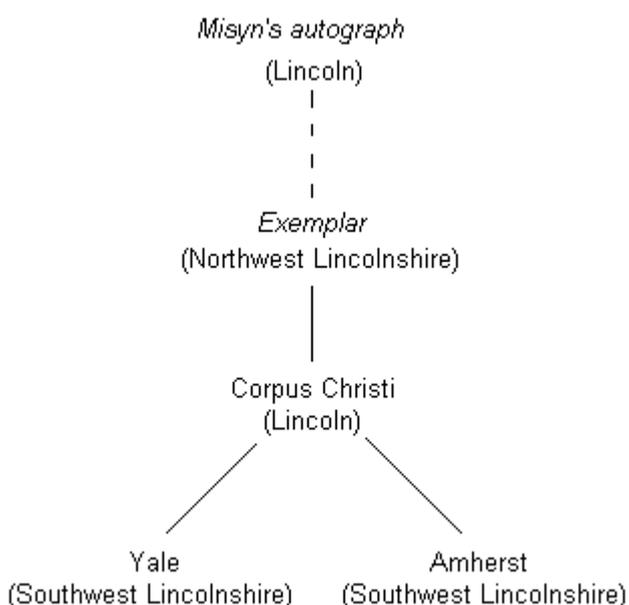
²³⁰ It is possible, of course, that Misyn wrote in another dialect, but whilst Laing is 'uncertain whether Misyn was originally from Lincoln' [p. 189], his presence there is only likely if it was his filial house.

²³¹ Laing, p. 208.

²³² Netter certainly did this [Alban, in *CIB*, II, p. 346]. It seems likely that Carmelites in York or Lincoln could have made copies. Carmelite convents were often in the vicinity of book producing areas. The Boston friary was near Book Lane [Foster, p. 43]. The Carmelite *studium generale* helped attract the London bookmen to Fleet Street [Christianson, in Hellinga & Trapp, p. 129]. *Doctrinale* manuscripts may have been produced at the London convent. With its Minster clergy and guilds, York was a major centre for book traffic [Raine, pp. 34–5], and the production and acquisition of pastoral texts [Gillespie, 'Cura Pastoralis', pp. 178, 180]. On York book production, see Friedman.

dedication verbatim. Alternatively, the colophons could have been added to account for how a copyist came to possess the text.

By studying the dialect and textual practice of the Yale and Amherst scribes, Laing comes to the ‘inescapable conclusion’ that these two manuscripts were directly copied from the Corpus text.²³³ Yale and Amherst are therefore at least third generation copies of Misyn’s original. Laing locates the Yale scribe in ‘the point where Lincs, Leics and Notts meet’,²³⁴ and places the Amherst scribe (whose dialect can be checked against his other known productions) close-by in the Grantham area of southwest Lincolnshire.²³⁵ From Laing’s analysis, it is possible to create a stemma for the Misyn manuscripts.



Corpus is the most accurate (though not perfect) copy,²³⁶ and the other two manuscripts share the Corpus scribe’s uncorrected errors.²³⁷ Linguistically, the Amherst scribe parallels his exemplar better than the Yale scribe, whose text is more erroneous²³⁸ but more readable, because as a ‘translator’ rather than a ‘transcriber’, his is a freer copy.²³⁹ The Amherst scribe is extremely accurate, his copy being ‘almost identical’ to his exemplar.²⁴⁰ Carthusian copying from an archetypal manuscript is not unheard of.²⁴¹ All three manuscripts show a degree

²³³ Laing, pp. 195, 199, 216–9, 221 n. 26.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

²³⁸ Laing lists some errors, p. 222, n. 31.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 206, 220 n. 10, 221 n. 20; Comper, p. xxxiii.

²⁴¹ Erler, in Hellinga & Trapp, pp. 516–7.

of uniformity and standardized presentation typical of Carthusian productions.²⁴² This ‘Carthusian zeal for accuracy’²⁴³ is further evidence for the Carthusian production of the Amherst manuscript, and would account for the retention of Misyn’s prologue and the faithful *mis-en-page* of the colophons in their precise forms. Why all the manuscripts maintain the attribution to Misyn is discussed below. Intriguingly the Amherst scribe seems to have copied the Rolle texts with more accuracy than the others,²⁴⁴ suggesting a heightened respect for the purity of Rolle’s text, or indeed Misyn’s repute.

Though the Amherst scribe is demonstrably Carthusian, we cannot automatically conclude that the Yale and Corpus scribes were also. The Corpus manuscript was copied from a north Lincolnshire exemplar, and whilst it seems unlikely that a Lincoln Carmelite would need to copy Misyn from a manuscript outside Lincoln, the text’s Lincoln dialect suggests the scribe was possibly a Carmelite from Misyn’s own town.²⁴⁵ Furthermore, since this manuscript contains only Misyn’s translations it can be said to be of ‘undiluted’ Carmelite interest.

Analysis of Misyn’s work

Having studied the manuscripts in which Misyn’s translations are preserved, we can analyse the contents of the *fyer* and *mendynge*. Why should a Carmelite have thought it meritorious to translate Rolle at a recluse’s request? The ‘hermit of Hampole’ was arguably the most popular and influential of all medieval English mystics.²⁴⁶ The fact that the original Latin text of the *Emendatio* is found in ninety extant manuscripts,²⁴⁷ and the *Incendium* in over forty (about half of which contain the long version as used by Misyn) is proof of Rolle’s enormous popularity amongst the Latin readers of the Middle Ages.²⁴⁸ However, whilst Misyn’s translation of the *Emendatio* is one of seven English versions,²⁴⁹ Misyn’s *fyer* is

²⁴² It was usual for Carthusian manuscripts to have a ‘considerable degree of similarity in layout and apparatus’ [Gillespie, ‘Vernacular books’, p. 331].

²⁴³ Cré, in Renevey and Whitehead, p. 47; Sargent, *James Grenehalgh*, p. 18 ff.

²⁴⁴ As observed by Amassian, quoted by Colledge and Walsh [ME edition of *Julian*, pp. 1–2].

²⁴⁵ Though there was no Charterhouse in Lincoln, scribes could move far from their place of origin [Laing, pp. 209, 223 n. 44].

²⁴⁶ Studies in Rolle’s spirituality and cult include Horstmann, Allen, Deanesly, Nuth, *PV*, Dyas, and Watson. The best texts on the manuscripts, subject matter, and sources of the *Incendium* are Deanesly’s introduction, and Watson’s literary analysis in *Richard Rolle*. Moyes’s edition of the *Expositio* places Rolle in his historical context.

²⁴⁷ The *Emendatio* was probably the most widely disseminated Rolle text, and most wide spread para-monastic rule in England [*Manual*, IX, p. 3064]. On the dissemination of Rolle, see *PV*; Gillespie, ‘Vernacular books’, p. 321.

²⁴⁸ On the Latin manuscripts see Watson, *Richard Rolle*, p. 312, n. 1; Deanesly, pp. 1–37.

²⁴⁹ It appears from Misyn’s act of translation that he did not know of the other translations of the ubiquitous Latin text, at least some of which probably pre-date his work [*Manual*, IX, pp. 3424; 3065; Laing, p. 188]. Non-Misyn translations are listed by Allen, pp. 213–20, 231–43.

the only known medieval translation of Rolle's *Incendium*, making it all the more significant.²⁵⁰ Given the *Incendium*'s status as 'the most important and representative'²⁵¹ of Rolle's Latin treatises, and the high demand for Rolle's work in general, the lack of translations other than Misyn's needs accounting for.

Misyn as a defender of orthodoxy

There is evidence within Misyn's translation to suggest that access to Rolle's text was controlled. Misyn prefaced his translation of Rolle's *Incendium* prologue with his own, in a dedicatory epistle preserved in all three manuscripts. This was not a casual addition. Whilst Rolle's prologue acts as an 'audacious' foregrounding of his own authority, rooted in experience rather than traditional sources,²⁵² Misyn's prologue makes it plain the translator eschews all authority. Indeed, though Misyn wrote his prologue in the first person, he does not identify himself at all, and we do not learn Misyn's name until the colophon of Book I:

*Explicit liber primus Incendij Amoris Ricardi Hampole heremite, translatus a latino in Anglicum per fratrem Ricardum Misyn heremitam & ordinis carmelitarum Ac sacre theologie bachalareum, Anno domini Millesimo ccccxxv. [68/27–30]*²⁵³

Though this colophon identifies the author and translator, the reader has to wait until the colophon of Book II to learn anything about the circumstances in which it was written:

*Explicit liber de Incendio Amoris, Ricardi Hampole heremite, translatus in Anglicum instancijs domine Margarete Heslyngton, recluse, per fratrem Ricardum Misyn, sacre theologie bachalaureum, tunc Priorem Lyncolniensem, ordinis carmelitarum, Anno domini M.CCCCxxv. in festo translacionis sancti Martini Episcopi, quod est iij nonas Iulij, per dictum fratrem Ricardum Misyn scriptum & correctum. [104/8–14]*²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ Laing, p. 188. As already mentioned, Kempe tells of having been read to from the *Incendium*, so unless a priest translated a Latin version for her as he read, a translation must have existed. It would be pleasing to imagine that a copy of Misyn's translation might have reached his Carmelite brethren in Lynn before the end of the 1430s. Kempe began dictation of her book in 1436, a year after Misyn's *fyer* was written.

²⁵¹ Deanesly, p. v.

²⁵² Watson, 'Richard Rolle', pp. 115–7; Deanesly, p. 38.

²⁵³ 'Here ends Book I of The Fire of Love by Richard Hampole, hermit, translated from Latin into English by friar Richard Misyn, hermit and Carmelite, and Bachelor of Theology, AD 1435.'

²⁵⁴ 'Here ends the Book of The Fire of Love, of Richard Hampole, hermit, translated into English at the instigation of Dame Margaret Heslington, recluse, by friar Richard Misyn, Bachelor of Theology, at that time

Without the colophons, no reader after Heslington would have been able to identify Misyn as the translator. Misyn was keen not to name himself until the very end of the *fyer*. Authorial attribution might therefore seem supplementary to the work, not integral. However, even if the colophons were written by a later copyist, and not by Misyn, their retention in all three manuscripts represents a significant attribution of authorship, and the only attempt by Misyn or his scribes to construct for him a ‘bibliographic ego’.²⁵⁵ We have no reason to doubt that the translations were in fact by him. Indeed external biographical information makes it practically undeniable. Even if Misyn did not write the colophons himself, a later scribe knew of his relationship with Heslington, and the scribes of all three extant manuscripts felt this compositional information important enough to retain. Moreover, retaining the colophon claim that each copy was written and corrected by Misyn suggests a desire to lend them authenticity, as does naming the translator twice, alongside his *auctor*, and his order.²⁵⁶ Just as Misyn probably never saw or corrected the three extant manuscripts, it is incredible that Heslington should have owned all three. Given the expense of manuscripts, one might expect the dedication to be omitted, or reworded to the owner’s own name, as commonly happened with copies of devotional books, including Rolle.²⁵⁷ The retention of Misyn and Heslington’s names was clearly deliberate.

The extant manuscripts show that Misyn’s authorship of the *mendynge* and the *fyer* could be attributed. Nevertheless, the prologue shows Misyn’s keenness that all credit for the text should be given to ‘þis haly man Richard Hampole’ [1/8], even though Rolle does not identify himself in his prologue either.²⁵⁸ Misyn’s deference shows that Carmelites recognized the hermit of Hampole’s *auctorite* by the fifteenth century. Misyn’s self-defacement from the prologue places responsibility for the teachings on the *Incendium* solely on Rolle’s shoulders, though in a phrase typical of the medieval humility topos, Misyn claimed to be ‘emonge lettyrd men sympellest’ [1/4], and that any errors should be attributed to

Prior of Lincoln, of the Order of Carmelites, in 1435, on the feast of the translation of St. Martin, Bishop, that is, the 4th nones of July, written and corrected by the said friar Richard Misyn.’

²⁵⁵ This term is interpreted by Kerby-Fulton as ‘authorial intrusion which serves to establish, protect, and/or market – not simply glorify – the author’ [p. 69].

²⁵⁶ Comper believed that none of the scribes had ‘sufficient discretion to omit Misyn’s personal note’ in the colophon [p. xxxiv]. A more generous interpretation would be that the scribes wished to retain the name of Misyn as an indication of its value, and as mark of respect for his work and the academic reputation of his order.

²⁵⁷ Gillespie, ‘Vernacular books’, pp. 327–8.

²⁵⁸ There was a ‘late medieval interest in, or expectation of, authorial authenticity’ [Kerby-Fulton, p. 71], which may account for Misyn’s desire to highlight Rolle, and the statement that Misyn himself corrected the text.

his 'vnconnyng' [1/14]. Given his extensive education this is little more than rhetoric, but an important piece of rhetoric. It shows that Misyn anticipated his text circulating to critical readers beyond Heslington's anchorhold, and demonstrates a concern to apologise in advance for 'any þing mys-sayd' [1/13].

Misyn's *apologia* and reticence in identifying himself can be accounted for by the climate of censorship and control that existed in fifteenth-century England. A comparison can be made between Misyn's strategy and that of a Carthusian contemporary at Sheen. Writing a 'prefacyon' to the *Speculum Devotorum*²⁵⁹ (c.1415–25), also for a 'Gostly syster' [2] and 'soulys that cunne not or lytyl undyrstonde Latyn' [56–7], the anonymous monk was at pains to defer all credit [37–9], accept all errors as his own [39–40], and state that 'the entent of hym that dede hyt was ful goode' [54–5].

Another useful Carthusian comparison is Nicholas Love's translation of the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*.²⁶⁰ Misyn's advice to Heslington to keep 'sum holy lesun' [1/18] at hand as a ward against sin and error is reminiscent of the beginning of the *Mirror*, in which the reader is encouraged to imitate St. Cecilia, who 'bare alwey þe gospel of criste hidde in her breste'.²⁶¹ Love's *Mirror* was the only Carthusian text widely and actively disseminated by the order.²⁶² It was promoted in the fight against Lollardy, and 'licensed' by Arundel (when Archbishop of Canterbury) in the wake of the *Constitutions* he had promulgated by 1407 and formally issued in 1409.²⁶³ Arundel's statutes were designed to eradicate Lollardy through the prohibition of 'all sorts of theological thinking and writing in the vernacular',²⁶⁴ and would have impinged upon Misyn in a number of ways.

Firstly, the *Constitutions* would have ensured the orthodoxy of the Whitefriar's education. As we have already seen, the Carmelites had been frontline combatants against Lollardy from the 1380s. Carmelite educational orthodoxy was upheld by the requirement of the *Constitutions* for monthly inquiry into the views of every

²⁵⁹ Wogan-Browne, *et al*, pp. 73–8.

²⁶⁰ *Manual*, IX, pp. 3103–6. The *Speculum Devotorum* was written in response to Love's text [Wogan-Browne, *et al*, pp. 73–4].

²⁶¹ Sargent (ed.), *Nicholas Love's Mirror*, p. 11, lines 25–6. Thomas Betson, the scribe of the Syon catalogue, prefaced his *Right Profitable Treatise* with Jerome's command that those in the service of God should have 'euer bokes in your handes' [Gillespie, 'Dial M', p. 260].

²⁶² Gillespie, 'Dial M', p. 248.

²⁶³ 'hereticorum siue lollardorum confutacionem' [Sargent, 7/22]. On the use of Love's text to promote orthodoxy, see the introduction to Sargent's edition, Gillespie, 'Cura Pastoralis', p. 172, 'Vernacular books', p. 322–4.; Oguro *et al*; *PR*, pp. 437–440. On the *Constitutions*, see Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change'; Nuth, p. 32.

²⁶⁴ Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 826. On the precautions a medieval author had to take in such circumstances, see Kerby-Fulton, p. 70; Watson, in Wogan-Browne, *et al*, pp. 339–45.

student at Oxford,²⁶⁵ where Misyn probably studied. These enquiries almost certainly extended to the friars who, though somewhat detached from the university, nevertheless came under its regulations.²⁶⁶

The environment of York would have been as influential on Misyn as Oxford. In York, Love's text received support from the clerks in Arundel's 'circle', who almost certainly interacted with Carmelites at the *studium*. As a student in York, Misyn may have recognised the potential of such texts as vehicles for orthodoxy. Misyn does not appear to have received a 'nihil obstat' licence for his text from diocesan authorities as Love did. Misyn did not have to seek approval for his text because of the Carmelites' exemption from Episcopal jurisdiction, and their reputation for upholding the *fida verita*.²⁶⁷ Misyn's Carmelite credentials in the colophons may actually have functioned as a licence, and would account for its retention in copies that Heslington did not own. Even prior to his creation as a bishop, Misyn's name functioned as a certificate with semi-Episcopal authority.

Writing his *fyer* and *mendynge* twenty-five years after the *Constitutions*, Lollardy was still a concern for Misyn, and his fellow Carmelites who compiled the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum* in the same decade. Though 'the series of orthodox refutations of Wyclif in Latin was concluded with the death of Thomas Netter in 1430',²⁶⁸ vernacular texts continued to confront the heresiarch's teachings, which lingered in that decade and beyond.²⁶⁹ Misyn's *fyer*, Love's *Mirror*, and the *Speculum Devotorum* all reveal a post-Arundelian concern with asserting church teachings in the vernacular.

Misyn may have been aware that Rolle's writings had been appropriated by the Lollards, and translated the *Emendatio* and *Incendium* before heretical interpolations could be made. Misyn's declaration that 'to reforme I make protestacyon, with entent no þinge to wryte ne say agayns þe faith or determinacion of holy kyrk, god to wytnes' [1/14–16], can be read as warning heretics capable of writing not to challenge church teaching, or even to correct possible errors in his text. Alternatively, this statement is a further 'apologia', swearing loyalty to 'holy kyrk'. Living in Lincoln, Misyn probably would have known about the punishments Bishop Alnwick exacted at the heresy trials he

²⁶⁵ Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 827.

²⁶⁶ Poskitt, in *CIB*, I, p. 157.

²⁶⁷ As Doyle points out, most members of religious orders 'required the command or permission of the religious superior' before writing 'for any purpose' ['Publication', p. 110]. As prior of his convent at Lincoln, Misyn would not have to consult any superior before producing the *fyre*.

²⁶⁸ *PR*, p. 447.

²⁶⁹ Hudson, in *PR* (particularly Chapters 9 & 10), shows that Wycliffite thought survived and re-emerged at various points in the fifteenth century. See also John A. F. Thomson.

oversaw whilst bishop of Norwich.²⁷⁰ Misyn's prologue shows he was aware of the religious and political consequences of writing.

One of the ways in which Arundel tried to control heresy was to prohibit religious debate outside the universities.²⁷¹ However, since Wycliffism had emerged in Oxford itself, Article 6 of the *Constitutions* declared: 'we will and command, that no book or treatise made by John Wickliff, or others whomsoever, about that time, or since, or hereafter to be made'.²⁷² Writing in 1434 and 1435, this stipulation would have been applicable to Misyn. However, the Whitefriar got around the clause by translating a work that pre-dated Wyclif.²⁷³ Watson has shown that because of the *Constitutions*, most texts written between 1410–1500 were translations or derivations of other works.²⁷⁴ Whilst few texts during this period were original, the *Constitutions* stimulated production of orthodox vernacular texts, such as Misyn's.²⁷⁵ The possible dangers in writing Rolle's theology in the vernacular were foremost in Misyn's mind, since he felt obliged to point out in his preface that 'The whilk boke, in sentence ne substance I þink to chaunge, bot treuly aftyr myn vnderstandynge to wryte it in gude exposicione' [1/9–11].²⁷⁶ Misyn's prologue reveals he was concerned not only by the threat heresy posed to his audience, but also that by changing the language of Rolle's *Incendium* he could be accused of heresy himself.²⁷⁷

Orthodoxy and the language of Misyn's translations

Despite Misyn's desire not to alter the text in any way, translation requires a certain amount of interpretation and innovation. Translations thus constitute an important part of medieval Carmelite literature. However, it must be admitted that Misyn's promise not to alter the text in sentence or substance resulted in rather lacklustre prose. Misyn's fear of altering Rolle's work made his translation extremely faithful to the original, to the point of being awkwardly literal.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁰ Deanesly, pp. 117–8; *DNB*, I, pp. 343–5.

²⁷¹ Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 827.

²⁷² Foxe's translation in *Acts and Monuments*, quoted in Watson, 'Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 827, n. 13.

²⁷³ Watson believes the *Incendium* was composed before 1343 [*Richard Rolle*, p. 277–8].

²⁷⁴ Watson, 'Middle English mystics', in Wallace, p. 560 n. 64.

²⁷⁵ Watson includes Misyn's translations in his listing of vernacular theological texts in the Appendix to 'Censorship and Cultural Change', p. 863.

²⁷⁶ Cf. the translator of the *Mirror of Our Lady* (1420–50), in Wogan-Browne, *et al*, p. 260, lines 65–8.

²⁷⁷ 'Misyn was, on the whole, less suspicious of Rolle's doctrine than of his own mistranslation of it' [Cré, p. 89].

²⁷⁸ According to the Beinecke library catalogue website, Michael Sargent is preparing an edition of the *Incendium* and *Emendatio* with the Latin and ME texts on facing pages, allowing a greater comparison. According to Lagorio & Bradley [p. 59], there exists 'a painstaking investigation of Misyn's translations, vis-à-vis the original works, and a discussion of Rolle's Latin style', which unfortunately I have not been able to see:

Misyn's translation is unimaginative and 'clunky', and comparison with Fishlake's excellent translation of *The Scale* suggests that Carmelites were less at ease writing theology in English. Scrope's English translation of Ribot is also awkward, but not to the extent of Misyn's prose. In his 'slavish adherence to the words of the original, Misyn's translation runs counter to the norm'²⁷⁹ of fifteenth-century translators, to the extent that Misyn is used as an illustration of bad practice.²⁸⁰ The 'unnaturalness'²⁸¹ of Misyn's cumbersome syntax fails to recreate Rolle's characteristic balance and alliteration, suggesting that Misyn is more concerned with Rolle's theology than his stylistic effects.²⁸² Some of Misyn's translation is nonsensical because parts of Rolle have been omitted.²⁸³ One seventeenth-century annotator of the Yale manuscript found Misyn's prose so incomprehensible that he rewrote whole passages.²⁸⁴

Nevertheless, the poor scansion of Misyn's translation is not due to a lack of artistic flair. As Laing points out, artistically Misyn's own prologue is more successful than the ensuing translation.²⁸⁵ Misyn's fears about translating theology from Latin into English account for his 'conscious effort to Latinize his expression', and attempt 'to give his English a classical turn'.²⁸⁶ As Workman admits, whilst these concerns at best encouraged a 'blindly mechanical' translation procedure,²⁸⁷ in Misyn's prose 'one at least feels a purpose if not a system'.²⁸⁸ Misyn seems to have been caught between his purpose of promoting Rolle's Latin teachings in English, and a fear of doing so. He was all too aware of the fact that 'because of the nature of language to give shape to thought, vernacular expression of ideas created new theological and linguistic possibilities'.²⁸⁹

Whilst Misyn's prose is not the best example of fifteenth-century vernacular style, his project nevertheless allowed 'redars' [1/11] greater access to the theological literature of his day, and the prior's contribution to the corpus of vernacular theology should not be overlooked. As Millet says of anchoritic literature in the centuries preceding Misyn, 'in the texts produced for recluses...

Eugen Schnell, *Die Traktate des Richard Rolle von Hampole Incendium Amoris und Emendatio Vitae und deren Übersetzung durch Richard Misyn*, (Borna-Leipzig: Universitätsverlag von R. Naske, 1932).

²⁷⁹ Laing, p. 221 n. 21.

²⁸⁰ Workman, pp. 96–101.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

²⁸² On Rolle's style see Workman, p. 2; Watson, *Richard Rolle*. On Misyn's prose, see Cré, pp. 71–90.

²⁸³ Laing, p. 194. Harvey's edition supplies omissions in square brackets.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

²⁸⁵ Laing, p. 191.

²⁸⁶ Workman, p. 100.

²⁸⁷ Workman, p. 96. Cf. Cré, p. 73.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

²⁸⁹ Nuth, p. 29.

we see not only the recording in writing of works originally intended for oral delivery, but the development of something still closer to our modern concept of 'literature', vernacular works composed with readers rather than hearers in mind'.²⁹⁰

Writing in English, for readers or hearers, was often perceived as evidence of seditious leanings in the early fifteenth century. Article 7 of the *Constitutions* forbade the translation of the scriptures into the vernacular, and 'any vernacular religious work produced from the 1380s on... was liable to be treated with circumspection by orthodox readers'.²⁹¹ However, it would seem that in the use of the vernacular, the Carmelites were surprisingly pragmatic. Alan of Lynn's Bible discussions with Kempe took place after the *Constitutions*, but must have involved the vernacular. Misyn similarly felt that the translation of Rolle's Latin text was of benefit to Heslington and others 'þat curiuste of latyn vnderstandes nocht' [1/3–4]. But such a project was not undertaken lightly. Misyn warned his audience not to stray beyond the bounds of church teaching, 'for drede þou erre, namely in slyke þinges þat touches þe .xij. artikils of þi fayth, als of þe holy Trinite, & oþer dyuers, als in þis holy boke filouynge is to oure lernynge connyngly wrytyn' [2/1–4]. Whilst the *fyer* was not a coterie text, the prologue is evidence that Misyn addressed a wider audience with hesitation. He presumably agreed with Rolle that 'hard sentens to disputars & witty men be longe tyme vsyd in holy doctrine be left' [121/10–12].

Misyn's warnings against heresy only preface the *fyer*, not the *mendynge*, which was written 'to informacioun of Cristyn sauls' [131/4–5]. The absence of such warnings from the shorter text suggests that Misyn perceived a greater danger in translating the theologically more complex *Incendium*, in which Rolle describes a life not regulated by the magisterium authority of the church.²⁹² It is significant that in all three manuscripts, the colophon of the theologically straightforward *mendynge* is in English, whilst the colophons of both books of the *fyer* are in Latin, to lend a more 'respectable' and scholarly air. The year's gap between his two translations may have been a period in which Misyn could assess the impact of the earlier text, before translating the more complicated longer treatise. Misyn may also have been conscious that although anchoresses were generally renowned for their orthodoxy, Lollard anchoresses were not unheard of.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ Millett, in Meale, p. 99.

²⁹¹ Watson, 'The Composition', p. 665. Watson lists a number of critical writings on this subject, of which should be highlighted Hudson, 'Lollardy: The English Heresy?', in *Lollards and their Books*, pp. 141–63.

²⁹² On Rolle's 'invention of authority', see Watson's study of that title.

²⁹³ Watson, 'The Composition', p. 666; Warren, pp. 79–80.

Rolle's voice in Carmelite debates over the solitary life

If there is a dominant theme in the *Incendium* and the *Emendatio* it is praise of the solitary life.²⁹⁴ It is understandable that the Carmelite order, with its 'strong emphasis on solitude and silence... separation and detachment, which allowed space for contemplation even within a life which included some aspects of an active apostolate'²⁹⁵ should have been interested in Rolle's spirituality. For example, Rolle's emphasis on the need for quiet, particularly in order to experience 'heet', 'songe' and 'suetnes' [33/8 & 9] finds echoes with the stipulations on silence in the Carmelite Rule. Other sections of the *fyer* have particularly Carmelite resonance. Rolle refers to the joy of contemplative lovers as sweeter than 'hony & hony-kombe' [32/14]. This phrase may have reminded a Carmelite of the praise bestowed upon the order's early contemplatives by Jacques de Vitry, Bishop of Acre (1216–28), who wrote in his *History of Jerusalem* that men 'in imitation of the holy anchorite the prophet Elijah, led solitary lives on Mount Carmel... where in little comb-like cells, those bees of the lord laid up sweet spiritual honey' [Ch. 27].²⁹⁶

Misyn's texts are similar to Lavenham's *Litil Tretys* in their provision of basic Christian doctrine. The *mendynge* discusses how one may turn to Christ, and in the *fyer* Rolle offers basic theological teaching on such diverse matters as the Trinity [chapters VII and VIII in Misyn], 'þe way of penance' [43/11], the 'profett & worþines of prayer and meditacioun' [46/22], and the distinction between 'veniall' and 'deedly syn' [50/7]. What differentiates the *fyer* from books on the vices and virtues is Rolle's mixing of didactic instruction with exalted descriptions of his own personal experience as a solitary. In Rolle's view, the solitary's life is independent of, and more perfect than, the prelate's. Therefore, the prelate, 'men contemplatyue before þame-self suld sett, & before god þer bettyrs þame hald, þame-self not trouand worþi to be gyfen to contemplacyon, bot if paraunter goddis grace to þat þame wald enspyr' [9/13–17]. Rolle instructs that a recluse 'allone sothely sal he sytt... with odyr not syngand, ne psalms rede' [72/22–3]. However, 'not ilk man þus suld do, bot he to qwhome it is gyffen, & qwhat hym likys lat hym fulfill, for of þe holy goste he is led' [72/23–5]. Rolle's declarations on the limitations of the communal life and the praise of the solitary in large sections of the *Incendium* find echoes in the Albertine Rule and Ribot's *Institutione*.

Rolle's teachings predated the fourteenth-century developments in the theology of the 'Mixed Life'. To Rolle, divinely-inspired solitaries are closest to

²⁹⁴ Cré, p. 63.

²⁹⁵ Edden, 'The Mantle', p. 83.

²⁹⁶ Jacques de Vitry, *The History of Jerusalem*, quoted in *TC*, p. 3.

God, and ‘In lufe of lyfe euerlastyng, men contemplatyue hily þat ar brynde þai ar forsoth as hyst in luflyest byrnyng, & miryest of þe lufer euerlastyng, so þat þai seldum or neuer gos vtward to warldly besynes, nor zit tak þe dignite of worschpy or prelacy’ [8/6–9]. Rolle’s praise of the contemplative life does not seem to accept any integration with the active, as favoured by Carmelites.²⁹⁷ Thomas Scrope probably saw a correlation between his own life, and Rolle’s example of St. Cuthbert, who went ‘fro hys byschopryk to Ankyr’ [30/17–18], but Heslington’s vocation concurs more with Rolle’s description of the solitary life than Misyn’s. It seems surprising that Misyn, as a prior, should have translated a text that said that he could not simultaneously hold office and be a contemplative. Yet Misyn’s desire for the status of solitary is plain in his self-labelling as ‘hermit’ [68/29]. ‘Hermits of Mount Carmel’ was an ancient name given to the Carmelites,²⁹⁸ and though it was dropped from the order’s official title before 1435, Misyn retained it in his colophon. The title ‘hermit’, applied to both Rolle and Misyn in the same colophons, had the specific technical sense in the medieval church of a solitary not tied to an anchorhold but free to roam about. Misyn’s use of the term perhaps reflects his self-perception as both a solitary and a peripatetic friar.

We have already identified in medieval Carmelite literature a characteristic interest in the order’s desert roots. As Edden observes, ‘the urban friars of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were unable to follow the life-style of their forebears in their desert cells. Some Carmelite writing of the period reflects this new life’.²⁹⁹ The Carmelite interest in Rolle reveals nostalgia for the purely eremitic life. Misyn was not the only Carmelite who found inspiration in Rolle’s spirituality. We have already speculated that Ashburne perhaps translated a poem he believed to be a Rolle text, and Carmelite verse such as Maidstone’s *Penitential Psalms* was sometimes confused with Rolle.³⁰⁰ Copies of Rolle’s *Incendium* and *Emendatio* are known to have been in the Carmelite library at the *studium generale* in London.³⁰¹ A florilegium, Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library MS 218 (c.1400), exposes Carmelite admiration for the hermit of Hampole.³⁰² Its four Latin Rolle texts include the *Emendatio Vitae* and *Incendium Amoris*. The appearance of Carmelite friars in some of the numerous miniatures (ff. 89, 101)

²⁹⁷ In discussing the respective merits of the active and contemplative lives, Rolle distinguishes those engaged in pastoral ministry such as preaching from pure contemplatives [49/14].

²⁹⁸ Fleming, in Wallace, p. 349. The order’s titles are listed chronologically in Boaga, pp. 24–5.

²⁹⁹ Edden, ‘The Mantle’, pp. 82–3.

³⁰⁰ *Manual*, IX, p. 3067.

³⁰¹ Humphreys, *The Friars’ Libraries*, pp. 186–7.

³⁰² Thomson, *Catalogue*, pp. 177–179.

suggests that the manuscript was a Carmelite production,³⁰³ and that the order was used to copying Rolle texts. Given the manuscript's current location it would be pleasant to speculate that this manuscript was the copy Misyn worked from.

Misyn's copy is more likely to have been a manuscript with layout and division more in keeping with his own. One manuscript of the long text of the *Incendium*, Cambridge University Library MS Dd.v.64 includes chapter-headings that are 'translated almost verbatim in Richard Misyn's version'.³⁰⁴ Moreover, this manuscript contains exactly the same opening and chapter-headings in the *Emendatio* as in Misyn's *mendynge*.³⁰⁵ Since only two other manuscripts give chapter-headings at all it would seem that this manuscript, which was in York in the seventeenth century, could contend as Misyn's copy. Moreover, like Misyn, the scribe of this manuscript divided the *Incendium* into two books, of thirty chapters plus twelve. Misyn's consists of thirty-one plus twelve, but since he counts Rolle's prologue as the first chapter, this would correspond perfectly. This manuscript also contains Rolle's *The Form of Living*, addressed to 'margaritam anachoritam' (f. 85), and *Ego Dormio*.³⁰⁶ Another possible source manuscript is Cambridge, Emmanuel College MS 35,³⁰⁷ which also contains Misyn's chapter-headings, but as a 'tabula' rather than between each section. This manuscript is particularly interesting because it contains both the short and long versions of the *Incendium*, and was owned by one of Arundel's clerks in York, John Newton (d. 1414), a bibliophile and treasurer of the Minster.³⁰⁸ The Bridgettine Joan Sewell and the Carthusian James Grenehalgh later annotated his manuscript.³⁰⁹ The other manuscript containing chapter-headings numbered like Misyn's *fyer* is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS 861.³¹⁰ This also contains the *Emendatio* and other Rolle texts.

Carmelite 'appropriation' of Rolle in a time of decline

One of the limits on the popularity of Rolle's Latin treatises 'was the fact that Rolle on principle belonged to no religious order, which would have been

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 179; Scott, I, p. 66 n. 17; Sargent discusses this manuscript in connection with Carthusian interest in Rolle in 'The Transmission', p. 232 n. 3. Moyes (editor of Rolle's *Expositio*) states the manuscript may have come from the continent [I, p. 71].

³⁰⁴ Deanesly, p. 7.

³⁰⁵ This is revealed by comparison between Harvey's edition of the *mendynge* and Watson's edition of the *Emendatio*, which is based on Cambridge MSS Dd.v.64 and Kk.vi.20.

³⁰⁶ Rolle, (ed.) Allen, pp. 132–42; 152–83.

³⁰⁷ Deanesly, pp. 12–15.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 63 ff.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 78–83.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

interested in preserving his works'.³¹¹ Indeed, although Rolle's writings show that he was influenced by mendicant, especially Franciscan, spirituality,³¹² his *Incendium* contains strong criticism of religious. Misyn's translations reveal a Carmelite desire to establish Rolle firmly within the canon of religious literature. Misyn's interest in Rolle also demonstrates a Carmelite desire to appropriate the hermit of Hampole as one of their own. Rolle's *Incendium* can't be called a Carmelite work, but in terms of imagery and content there are a number of parallels between Rolle's spirituality and that of the Whitefriars. The *Officium* biography of Rolle's life compiled by the nuns of Hampole in 1381³¹³ describes how he made a habit out of his sister's dress. The Carmelites had changed their own habit, and developed legends surrounding their scapular.³¹⁴ According to the *Officium*, Rolle adopted the hermit's life of contemplation, and gave spiritual advice to women, as later Carmelites did. In dedicating his text to Heslington, Misyn would have remembered Rolle's correspondence with female recluses such as Margaret Kirkeby.

To fully understand the Carmelite interest in Rolle, we must look at the historical context in which Misyn was writing, and his order's general preoccupation with eremitism in the early fifteenth century.

Misyn was writing in a period when little remarkable seems to have happened within the Carmelite order in England, Knowles remarking that 'the seventy years that followed the death of... Netter... make up the darkest period in the history of the English friars'.³¹⁵ There is a *prima facie* link between this decline and various changes in the order's lifestyle, the only upshot of which was the production of texts by Misyn and Scrope. Misyn's translations can be seen as the last fruits of fifty years of prolific literary output, written only two–three years after Pope Eugenius IV mitigated the Rule for the second time with his bull *Romani Pontifices Providentia*. This bull, issued in 1432, relaxed the Carmelite lifestyle in matters of perpetual abstinence from meat, fasting, and enclosure. It allowed the Whitefriars to vacate their cells and wander around the convent freely when not occupied in community duty,³¹⁶ a communal life that had been disintegrating for a number of years.³¹⁷

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

³¹² Nuth, p. 36.

³¹³ *Manual*, IX, p. 3051; Deanesly, p. 37; Nuth, p. 36.

³¹⁴ The Carmelites exchanged the striped mantle for a white one in the 1280s [*TC*, pp. 21–2]. On the legends surrounding the Scapular, see Copsey, 'Simon Stock'.

³¹⁵ *ROE*, III, p. 52.

³¹⁶ Sheppard, pp. 36–7; *TC*, pp. 72–3; *NCE*, III, p. 118.

³¹⁷ *TC*, pp. 70–71. It is likely that Misyn would have been well aware of the calls for the mitigation of the Rule made by the 1430 General Chapter at Nantes [see Alban, in *CIB*, II, p. 368].

The full impact of Chapter XV of the *fyer* is best understood in this context. The criticism of ‘rynnars aboute, þat ar sclauderes of hermyts’ [32/2–3], and *girovagi* or vagabonds³¹⁸ who ‘trow þame–self be þe warld may ryn & be contemplatyf’ [76/21–2] might have had uncomfortable and immediate echoes for a Carmelite readership. On the other hand, could Misyn have read Rolle as validating and legitimizing the recent changes in the order? Traditionalists stated that hermits should practice ‘stabilitas’, and be fixed in one place. Rolle’s contradiction, that ‘cellis forsoth to leue for cause reasonable, to harmetis is not ill’ [35/22–3] may be read as justifying the Carmelites’ recent acceptance of vacating cells.

The full significance, to a Carmelite, of Rolle’s criticism of ‘comon lyff’ [29/4], can also be appreciated in the context of the 1432 mitigation. Rolle’s distaste for communal worship and living with others finds resonances in the order’s debates about fraternal life. Yet his image of solitaries who ‘þof all emongis men full fare þa dwell, zit fro heuenly desyrs þai stumbyll not’ [29/35–6], may have encouraged Whitefriars in their efforts to integrate the communal and the solitary life.

As inquisitor for apostate friars, Misyn had an interest in upholding community life. Misyn translated Rolle’s description of the solitary who has relinquished the ‘communi habitu’³¹⁹ as forsaking ‘comon clethinge of þe warld’ [29/30], rather than spurning ‘the habit of the community’.³²⁰ ‘Habitus’ could refer to one’s manner of living, as well as dress, and Misyn’s lexical choice of the latter interpretation is telling.³²¹

The *fyer* could also have been read as supportive of the 1432 relaxation of the Carmelites’ more ascetic practices. Rolle criticises those who think they cannot please God ‘bot if þa castis be to mikyl abstinens & vnmesurde nakydnes’ [94/21–2] and advises against ‘to mykill abstinence’ [25/30]. Rolle’s balanced criticism of ‘vnwyse abstinence’ [113/33] would have particular significance after the relaxation of the *regula*. Much of the *Incendium* and an entire chapter of the *Emendatio* could be read as approving the Whitefriars’ life of voluntary poverty.

As well as reading Misyn’s translations in the wake of the 1432 mitigation, it is possible to see them as part of the Carmelites’ growing interest in eremitic texts. It is no coincidence that a few years before Misyn translated Rolle, a text was rediscovered in the order that called for a return to desert solitude. In his encyclical letter, the *Ignea Sagitta* (*Flaming Arrow*), Nicholas the Frenchman, prior general from 1265, called for the preservation of the primitive traditions of Mount

³¹⁸ Wolters, p. 87, n. 4; Deanesly, pp. 39–40, 183 n.

³¹⁹ Deanesly, p. 180.

³²⁰ Wolters, p. 83.

³²¹ Langland’s description of the ‘habite as an heremite unholy of werkes’ [*Piers Plowman*, B–Text, l.3] captures the ambiguity of the term.

Carmel.³²² Written in 1272, this text was lost for many years, but re-circulated within the order from c.1411.³²³ Though the *Ignea* comprised the thoughts of just one author concerning the essence of the order's charism, its popularity shows a continuing Carmelite preoccupation with how they should live. Indeed, the revived interest in the *Ignea* during Misyn's novitiate along with the dissemination of the 'Ribot collection' may have been formative. Whether Misyn knew of the *Ignea* or not, his translation of Rolle is one of several fifteenth-century texts circulating within the order that promoted the solitary life. As highlighted in Chapter One, from the early fifteenth century the English province accumulated books about the order's desert history.

The Carmelite desire for a return to its eremitic roots can also account for the precise dating of the colophon to the feast of St. Martin. Such details are often significant. Martin of Tours (c.316–397), a very popular saint in the Middle Ages, was a bishop noted for his great encouragement of monasticism.³²⁴ Martin, the founder of a community of monk-hermits, was portrayed as an eremitic figure in the widely popular *Vitas Patrum*, published by Wynkyn de Worde in 1495 (shortly after Scrope-Bradley's death). As a champion of orthodoxy in doctrinal disputes, Martin may also have inspired the Carmelites.³²⁵ Even as a bishop Martin continued to live in his cell, which may have inspired Misyn in his calling as prelate and hermit. Perhaps the dating of the colophon to the translation of St. Martin is a pun on Misyn's act of translation.

The early fifteenth century was a watershed in Carmelite literary production when interest in a new type of contemplative literature emerged. Scholastic output began to decline, and writers such as Misyn and Scrope experimented with a new brand of reclusive Carmelitism that was lived in anchorholds, rather than friaries. Misyn's writing for Heslington can be seen as regulating this new expression of the Carmelite solitary life.

Carmelites and Anchorites

Anchorites in England have a long history. Like the Carmelites, they can be traced back to the desert hermits of antiquity.³²⁶ Throughout the Middle Ages,

³²² Sheppard, pp. 19–21; *TC*, p. 18; *MM*, p. 272; *ROE*, II, pp. 198–9. An extract is reproduced in *MM*, p. 272. The complete text is edited by Staring, and translated by Edwards.

³²³ Copsey, 'The *Ignea Sagitta*'; *EIA*, p. 46. Because of this date, most critical discussions of it are anachronistic.

³²⁴ *Book of Saints*, pp. 377–8; Farmer, pp. 287–8.

³²⁵ Martin features in miniatures in the 'Reconstructed Carmelite Missal', f. 159 [Scott, II, p. 25].

³²⁶ On solitaries in medieval England see Clay; Warren; Gilchrist, *Contemplation*, pp. 157–208; Jantzen, pp. 28–50; Nuth, pp. 19–22.

monks and nuns, and eventually laypersons in pursuit of the contemplative life lived in 'Ankers' (*inclusorium*).

Anchorites were important in the Carmelite order's sense of identity, reminding the friars of their own contemplative roots. Carmelites dissatisfied with communal life spent a while as anchorites, including George or Gregory Ripley,³²⁷ and Thomas Scrope. From about 1425, the order produced records about the quasi-mythical saint Simon Stock, an early prior general, visionary, and recluse.³²⁸ Though Stock was supposedly a thirteenth-century English saint, his cult only seems to have reached England in the early fifteenth century.³²⁹ The interest in him at the time Misyn was writing is symptomatic of the order's quest for contemplative exemplars.

Misyn wrote for Heslington in the well-established tradition of providing rules and guides for anchorites.³³⁰ However, Heslington's request of a copy of Rolle demonstrates that she was not content with the anchoritic texts already available, and was interested in the contemporary spirituality of York. We have already noted that in calling Heslington a 'recluse', Misyn framed his relationship with her in similar terms to the 'spiritual friendship' between Rolle and Margaret Kirkby.³³¹

This was not simply a literary device, since works of anchoritic guidance 'seem to have been genuine responses to requests for such a guide.'³³² Misyn did indeed know Heslington, and wrote in response 'to þe askynge of þi desyre' [1/1–2]. Clay rightly stated that 'the works of Richard Rolle and Walter Hilton were much appreciated by anchoresses, who were often well-educated women',³³³ and the Carmelite interest in both authors is indicative of the order's awareness of anchoritic and literary movements in England.

Little study has been done on the provision of guidance for solitaries in the middle to late medieval period, particularly from a Carmelite perspective. Nevertheless, English and continental examples establish the existence of fruitful interactions between Carmelites and recluses, and what is known can be extrapolated to shed light on the dynamic of Misyn's relationship with Heslington. One of the earliest known female Carmelite recluses was blessed Jane (or Joan) of

³²⁷ Clay, p. 172; Warren, pp. 24, 221 n.

³²⁸ Clay, p. 171.

³²⁹ Copsey, 'Simon Stock'.

³³⁰ Texts written for female solitaries are listed in Hilton (ed.) Bestul, p. 2; Warren, pp. 103, 294–8; Savage & Watson, pp. 44–45.

³³¹ 'Margaretam de Kyrkby, reclusam', Incipit of *The Form of Living*, in Rolle, (ed.) Ogilvie-Thomson, p. 3. On Rolle and Kirkby's relationship, see Warren, pp. 212–3. On spiritual friendship between men and women, which was of great concern to Rolle [Misyn Book II, chapter IX], see Fleming, in Wallace, p. 363; *Manual*, IX, p. 3050.

³³² Warren, p. 103.

³³³ Clay, p. 177.

Toulouse (d. 1286).³³⁴ Bale claimed that Simon Stock affiliated her to the order as a tertiary, and though there is no evidence for this, it is significant that the order linked the cults of two recluses. Even if Misyn and Heslington did not know of Jane's cult, she exemplifies a general culture of female solitaries affiliated to the order.

The Carmelites had no nuns in pre-Reformation England, and Carmelite sisterhoods were not approved by the papacy until 1452.³³⁵ This did not mean, however, that Carmelite spirituality had no appeal to women in medieval England. Some lay people were affiliated to the family of the order by letters of confraternity,³³⁶ and Jane of Toulouse demonstrates that female solitaries were recognised as members of the order's *confraternitas*³³⁷ living according to the direction and possibly even the Rule of Carmelites. Rolle himself followed no guide or rule that we know of, but Misyn transformed Rolle's autobiographical mysticism into a model or 'rewl of lyfyng' [105/6–7] for Heslington, dealing with the interior life rather than external regulations.³³⁸ His translation might even be seen as extending 'honorary membership' of the order to the anchoress.

Recluses contemporary with Heslington lived under the spiritual direction of Carmelites. Emma Stapleton lived as a Carmelite anchoress at the Whitefriars' convent in Norwich from 1421 until her burial in the Whitefriars' Church in 1442.³³⁹ The Norwich convent had two anchorages used throughout the fifteenth century,³⁴⁰ one for a man (inhabited by Scrope) and one for a woman.

Carmelite recluses were seemingly professed before the provincial of the order. As provincial between 1414 and 1430, Netter veiled Stapleton,³⁴¹ and may well have conducted Heslington's profession.³⁴² Enclosure allowed the anchoress to live a reclusive life, but also meant the Carmelites could monitor her religious sentiment. It was far easier for the Carmelites to regulate Stapleton and

³³⁴ Daniele & Smet, in Saggi, *et al*, pp. 44, 136–7; Baurens; *CC*, pp. 14–15; *TC*, pp. 88–89; Sheppard, pp. 39 & 79; *Book of Saints*, p. 293. The earliest known Carmelite anchorite, Franco Lippi (d. 1291), was admitted as a lay-brother [*TC*, p. 27; *Book of Saints*, p. 227].

³³⁵ *RHME*, pp. 53–4; Egan, 'The Spirituality', p. 56; *TC*, pp. 89–90; *CC*, pp. 7–18

³³⁶ *ECD*, p. 219; *CC*, p. 11; *MM*, p. 270.

³³⁷ That is, 'added to the fraternity', in a variety of possible ways; *CC*, pp. 10–11.

³³⁸ Cré, p. 62.

³³⁹ British Library MS Harley 1819, f. 197; Clay, p. 137; *CC*, p. 17; Cutts, p. 129; Ashdown–Hill, p. 13; Warren, p. 213; Gilchrist, *Contemplation*, p. 184; Ashdown–Hill, p. 5.

³⁴⁰ There are records of legacies given to the anchor at the house as late as 1494 [Cutts, p. 129.]

³⁴¹ Clay, p. 93; McCaffrey, p. 87. Bale listed anchorites influenced by Netter and the order [MS Bodley 73; *Scriptorium*, I, p. 565]. On Netter's support of eremitic life, see Alban in *CIB*, II, p. 370 ff.

³⁴² This would account for why she does not feature in the diocesan register. The enquiry into the solitary's life and enclosure required Episcopal approval, and was recorded in the bishop's register [Darwin, p. 49]. However, 'Carmelite' anchoresses were presumably exempt from Episcopal control [Owen, p. 123], and friars would probably carry out discernment and formation themselves. Misyn's text may have formed part of this.

Heslington than it was to control the ‘freelance religious mystic’³⁴³ Margery Kempe.

The provincial appointed the most able Carmelites as counsellors to anchoresses – in the case of Stapleton none less than the prior, sub-prior, and three other members of the convent.³⁴⁴ Stapleton ‘must have been considered a person of some consequence because she was placed under the spiritual guidance of one of their more learned friars, a man named Adam Hemlyngton who had received a doctorate in theology from Oxford’³⁴⁵ by 1414. Hemlyngton was a writer, and at one time Master of the Carmelite School of Theology at Paris.³⁴⁶ Another of Stapleton’s Carmelite counsellors, John Thorpe, was probably also connected to the Arundel circle.³⁴⁷ Stapleton’s example suggests the role of spiritual guide for anchoresses was reserved for senior members of the Carmelite order. This was true of Heslington and Prior Misyn.

Like many anchoresses, Dame Emma was indeed a ‘person of consequence’, being the daughter of Sir Miles Stapleton of Bedale and Ingham.³⁴⁸ Sir Miles was part of a rich and influential family in Norfolk and Yorkshire,³⁴⁹ and a patron of book production.³⁵⁰ He had been in close contact with Julian of Norwich, as executor of a will that had benefited her. Whilst it is an overstatement to say that Dame Emma was ‘Julian’s follower’,³⁵¹ it seems probable that Emma knew of Julian. Norwich had more recluses than any other city in England in the middle years of the fifteenth century, and it would not be a ‘geographical fallacy’ to suggest that the Carmelites directing Emma would have been aware of the anchoritic movement in the city.³⁵²

The fact that anchoresses such as Stapleton were immured within convent boundaries suggests that they were valued additions to the contemplative community, and not only because of the financial benefits of supporting aristocratic women. The relationship between anchoresses and Carmelites was symbiotic; the Whitefriars provided the recluse with spiritual direction, and she sustained them by adding to the order’s ‘spiritual treasury’ of prayer. Both relied

³⁴³ Gallyon, p. 132.

³⁴⁴ *Scriptorium*, I, p. 565; *CLMN*, p. 63; Clay, p. 137.

³⁴⁵ Warren, p. 213; Bale, MS Harley 3838, ff. 89v, 186v.

³⁴⁶ *BRUO*, p. 906; Sharpe, Entry 23, p. 16; Zimmerman, *Monumenta*, I, p. 407; *CLMN*, p. 191.

³⁴⁷ *PV*, p. 213.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁴⁹ Warren, p. 209 ff; *PV*, p. 89. Sir John Stapleton, son and heir of Joan and Sir Miles Stapleton [*DNB*, XV, pp. 97–8] became a member of the Guild of Corpus Christi in 1455, shortly before Misyn.

³⁵⁰ *PV*, p. 32. Another member of the Stapleton family, Agnes, left contemplative texts to religious houses in her will, including *The Chastising of God’s Children*, a Psalter, a primer, *Stimulus Amoris*, and *The Prick of Conscience* [Bazire & Colledge, p. 38].

³⁵¹ *PV*, p. 213.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 90; Warren, p. 214.

upon the generosity of others for physical sustenance. Towns afforded more support for the recluse than rural communities,³⁵³ and anchoresses sought support for their deserts in the urban environment, just as friars had done. As monastic orders declined from the fourteenth century, the contemplatives in the cities – friars and anchorites – became popular.³⁵⁴ Even when Carmelite communities declined in the fifteenth century, Carmelite anchorites flourished.

Stapleton and Heslington contradict the statement that ‘English solitaries often had no links to established religious orders or specific monasteries’.³⁵⁵ A striking feature of the link is that anchoresses seem to have been guided by Carmelites in academic centres where the order had *studia* (Jane at Toulouse, Stapleton at Norwich, and Heslington at York). Anchorites seem to have been important at Cambridge, Oxford, and York, for academic, social or religious reasons.³⁵⁶ The academic milieu seems to have nurtured anchorites with literature. The literature Whitefriars produced for anchoresses exemplifies how eremitism was perceived as an essential quality of Carmelite spirituality, of which anchoresses (and eventually nuns) were the inheritors.³⁵⁷

The significance of Misyn’s translations becomes more apparent in this anchoritic climate. Though the solitary life of the friars was continually under threat, Misyn was keen to instruct another – outside of the convent, but within the order’s confraternity – of the benefits of solitary life. Encouraging the anchoritic way of life allowed Misyn to live Carmelite spirituality by proxy. Misyn perceived in Heslington some imitation of the heroism and holiness of the early hermits of Carmel. Their relationship is a classic example of how ‘the popularity of the solitary life in England gave rise to a significant body of literature written to aid its practitioners, particularly anchoresses’.³⁵⁸

There is no evidence that the original *Incendium* was ever targeted at women – its Latin would seem to preclude this.³⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the text was eminently suitable for anchoresses, given its echoes with the ritual of enclosure. Rolle’s repetitive insistence on the need to die to the world, and the desirability of death would have special resonance for Heslington, whose immurement ceremony would have echoed the funeral rite.³⁶⁰

³⁵³ Warren, p. 39.

³⁵⁴ Gilchrist, *Contemplation*, p. 208.

³⁵⁵ Nuth, p. 19.

³⁵⁶ *PV*, p. 113.

³⁵⁷ ‘Carmelite Solitaries’ in Anson, pp. 140–158.

³⁵⁸ Nuth, p. 19.

³⁵⁹ The *Incendium* was addressed to ‘bredyr’ [33/27 & 37/26].

³⁶⁰ Crampton’s edition of *Julian*, p. 9; Clay, Appendix A.

We might expect Rolle's misogyny to have dissuaded anchoresses from reading his *Incendium*, but Misyn's translation of it into English at a woman's request disempowered the language of patriarchal authority and rendered it a more femino-centric text. Just as women 'socialise Rolle into writing his vernacular epistles, whose spirituality obliges the elusive and eccentric solitary to discover his own capacity for teaching in English',³⁶¹ so Misyn's translation effectively 'feminised' the *Incendium*, and vastly widened its readership to include women

Contemplative spirituality beyond the convent – challenges to society

Misyn's translations of the *Emendatio* and the *Incendium* can best be seen in the light of the Carmelite desire to make contemplative and eremitical spirituality available to audiences outside the convents and universities. The text Misyn chose to translate appealed to those not schooled professionally. Although Rolle's thought is not strictly anti-intellectual (he wrote for a Latinate audience), his *Incendium* makes strong criticism of 'disputacion vnprofetabill' [13/19–20] such as might be found in the schools of Oxford, which he had abandoned.³⁶² Rolle's statement that 'an olde wyfe of goddis lufe is more expert, & les of wardly likynge, þen þe grete devin, whos stody is vayne' [13/26–7] is closely translated by Misyn, himself a scholar writing for a woman's benefit. Misyn's translation can be taken as evidence that he, like Rolle, did not consider it possible for the contemplative to be taught by those 'bolnyd with foldyn Argumentis' [74/25] in the schools. Just as Rolle addressed his *Incendium* to the 'non philosophis, non mundi sapientibus, non magnis theologicis infinitis quescionibus implicatis, sed rudibus et indoctis',³⁶³ Misyn wrote his *fyer* for 'all redars' [1/11], and 'for edificacyon of many saules' [1/6]. In this way, Misyn's prologue can be seen as mimicking Rolle's literary mission to extend contemplative spirituality beyond its usual boundaries.

Rolle's criticism of prelates and scholars was dangerous to promote after the *Constitutions*. Like the Carmelites who continually fought to justify their existence, Rolle's 'self-authorization' justified his experiences and teachings, independent of the church hierarchy. Misyn was interested in Rolle's independence of thought, but the danger of translating such texts was that they encouraged independence in others. When translating Rolle's statement 'þat lufer[s] of endles lufe of þer inward maister myȝt be taght to speek better þen þai of men taght' [74/26–8], Misyn must have been conscious that the notion of inner teaching, autonomous from church control, was of serious concern to many

³⁶¹ Riddy, in Meale, p. 107.

³⁶² Nuth, p. 23; Deanesly, p. 38.

³⁶³ Deanesly, p. 147.

fifteenth-century theologians, keen to practise *probatio* and *discretio* on independent female religious experience.

Misyn seems to have perceived reading and meditating upon holy books as a means of regulating Heslington's autonomy, and shielding her from error. The *fyer* states that 'it is full gude truly to despisyng of þis warld, desyre of þe heuenly kyngdome [&] desyre of cristis lufe, & to þe hatyng of syn, bisy redinge or holy bokis behaldyng' [70/23–6].³⁶⁴ However, Rolle points out that contemplative experiences are not to be described in any 'docturs wrytynge' [72/17]. This distinction between devotional and scholastic books has implications for Carmelites. We see in Misyn's translation of Rolle an educated Carmelite's turning away from 'docturs wrytynge' towards a more personal, private, and sensory spirituality.

Rolle's abandonment of his studies in the pursuit of the eremitic life is the antithesis of the Carmelites who deliberately mitigated their life of solitude in order to establish themselves in the universities. Rolle's mockery of the vain scholar who is 'a foyle, & not wis' [13/29] is one of several instances in the *fyer* where the text might be seen as subverting Misyn's own position as a Whitefriar, and challenging the social order of the day. Rolle – a layman to whose authority Misyn submits – is also critical of the pretensions of church dignitaries 'glad in byschoppys aray' [22/32]. Rolle states that prelates rank lower in the church than contemplatives, the former being 'siluer' and the latter 'gold' [49/2 & 4]. Whilst Rolle's hierarchical ordering of the spiritual life is not unconventional, it is nevertheless radical in its implications.³⁶⁵ It elevates the contemplative, such as Heslington, above senior clergy, such as Misyn. Furthermore, by translating Rolle at Heslington's request, Misyn essentially became her clerk. Heslington must have been a powerful patron to commission a text from such a high-ranking cleric, and shows that not only Carthusians had links with 'the posh and powerful'.³⁶⁶ Heslington is one of a number of fifteenth-century laypersons that could demand written spiritual direction from the cleric of their choosing.³⁶⁷ I agree with Riddy that 'we should not assume that women were merely passive recipients of books, or that they could not have taken the initiative in the process of translating from Latin into the vernacular... In the relation between the male clerks and their women readers it must often have been difficult to tell who followed and who

³⁶⁴ Cf. advice on holy reading in the prologue to the *Mirror of Our Lady*, Book II [Wogan-Browne, *et al*, pp. 261–3].

³⁶⁵ Watson, *Richard Rolle*, pp. 7–18.

³⁶⁶ Hanna, p. 27.

³⁶⁷ Cf. Edmund Leversedge's text, which 'witnesses to lay selectivity in the choice of parochial clergy to approach for advice over spiritual matters' [Gillespie, 'Dial M', p. 248].

led.’³⁶⁸ The opening sentence of Misyn’s prologue suggests that Heslington played a dynamic role in the translation of the *Incendium*. Misyn’s respect for Heslington is evident, and the two presumably enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship.

Carmelite promotion of Rolle in a Yorkshire context

Finally, as well as recognising that Misyn wrote within the context of Carmelite and anchoritic eremiticism, we must see his translations in the context of a spiritual and literary movement in the north of England. As Hughes states, ‘most of the devotional works which were copied and circulated throughout England in the fifteenth century were originally composed or translated by men who lived and worked in the area administered by the archbishop of York’.³⁶⁹ Misyn’s *fyer* was read in York, and that city’s environment must have been hugely influential during his formation.

During Misyn’s formation, the clergy of York were notable for their book owning and producing activities. The Minster was an ecclesiastical training centre where learning and contemplation flourished. The clerks, many of them members of Arundel’s circle, continued a pastoral programme in the diocese of York that had been initiated by Archbishop Thoresby. Integral to the programme was the provision of instructive texts and pastoral manuals, such as the *Pupilla oculi*. Leading nobility and clergy in the diocese of York also owned and distributed copies of Rolle, and were instrumental in the promotion of his cult.³⁷⁰

That Misyn should have been interested in producing a version of Rolle is not astonishing since ‘friars were among the most assiduous of medieval literary popularizers and translators’.³⁷¹ It is even less surprising when seen in the religious and literary climate of early fifteenth-century York. Misyn’s rendering of Rolle in the vernacular had at least the potential of making Rolle widely read, and not only supported the Carmelite anchoritic movement, but also contributed to the corpus of pastoral and Rollean texts in Yorkshire.³⁷²

³⁶⁸ Riddy, in Meale, p. 107.

³⁶⁹ *PV*, p. 1.

³⁷⁰ Details about the York province come from a variety of studies; *PV*, *passim* (especially p. 192 ff.); Dobson, ‘The Residuary Canons’; Gillespie, ‘Cura Pastoralis’, p. 180; Deanesly, pp. vii–viii; Wogan–Browne *et al*, p. 336

³⁷¹ Fleming, in Wallace, p. 350.

³⁷² Archbishop Booth and his suffragan granted an indulgence to readers of the *Incendium* in a Carthusian manuscript [Deanesly, pp. 8–9; Sargent, ‘The Transmission’, p. 233]. Whilst Deanesly [pp. 8, 89] identifies the ‘Suffraganeus Ebor’ as John, bishop of Philippopolis, a suffragan from 1446–58, I do not see why ‘Suffraganeus’ could not equally refer to Misyn, acting in the same capacity, during the same period, a number of years after having translated the *Incendium* himself.

Pastorally, Misyn's translation functioned as a penitential aid. Misyn's prologue tells us that Heslington requested the translation 'couetyng a-sethe to make' [1/2], that is, she wished to use the translation in preparation for confession,³⁷³ perhaps not unlike readers of Maidstone's *Penitential Psalms*. Misyn's *fyer* can be seen as one of a number of fifteenth-century texts that taught readers in York 'how to integrate their personal meditations with social responsibilities, conformity to the sacraments of the church, especially to compulsory annual confession, and the performance of penitential satisfaction'.³⁷⁴

In their pastoral concern, York clergy saw in Rolle's theology much that was spiritually beneficial. On the other hand, the combination of satire, autobiography, polemic, social commentary, gospel analysis, and mystical experiences in the *Incendium* made his work difficult to control. Arundel and his successors perceived the potential dangers of the 'enthusiasm' of the Rolle cult, and the burgeoning eremitic movement.³⁷⁵ They were keen to distinguish 'between the genuine piety of recluses... and either irresponsible emotional enthusiasm, or the heretical beliefs of the Lollards'.³⁷⁶ We have already noted Misyn's concerns over heresy. His translation also reveals concern about Rolle's more extreme language and imagery. In her study of the Amherst manuscript, Cré shows that although Misyn largely kept his promise not to alter the text, he shared contemporary concerns about Rolle's theology. For example, Misyn occasionally added to the text to clarify Rolle's meaning in English, and subtly curbed the more excessive aspects of Rolle's language by removing some superlatives.³⁷⁷

Despite these changes, Misyn largely admired his *auctour*, and felt Rolle's theology to be beneficial for Heslington and others. Though the *Incendium's* discussions of *calor* (heat), *dulcor* (sweetness), and *canor* (spiritual song) are more than a little indebted to the affective piety of mendicants,³⁷⁸ Rolle's passionate and zealous tone never becomes intemperate or extremist. Rolle's idiosyncratic brand of piety combines the affective with more sophisticated and scholastic theology. Cré contends that the texts in Amherst are arranged 'in ascending order of interpretative difficulty',³⁷⁹ Rolle's texts being the least theologically complex.³⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Misyn's translation of the *Incendium* represents a

³⁷³ 'a-sethe', meaning 'reconciliation', comes from the Old English *sæd*.

³⁷⁴ *PV*, p. 2. On penitential piety in the north, see Hughes, *The Religious Life of Richard III*.

³⁷⁵ *PV*, p. 90.

³⁷⁶ *PV*, p. 174. On the concerns Hilton and the *Cloud*-author expressed about Rolle, see Cré, pp. 73–90.

³⁷⁷ Cré, pp. 71–90.

³⁷⁸ On the promotion of affective piety by the mendicant movement, see Baker, pp. 15–39; Gibson, pp. 70–112; Nuth, pp. 17–18; McGinn, *The Flowering*, pp. 79 ff; Watson, *Richard Rolle*, pp. 18–27; *PV*, pp. 284–92.

³⁷⁹ Cré, p. 9.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 59–61.

desire to provide a woman with a more theologically mature,³⁸¹ and more learned text than the visionary literature usually circulated amongst women.³⁸² By toning down the language of Rolle's sensory experiences, Misyn emphasised the contemplative elements of the text. As well as raising the intellectual possibilities for women readers, Misyn's translation took Rolle's *Incendium* from the restricted world of 'the recluse or hermit, and the members of contemplative religious orders'³⁸³ to the laity at large. We know that Misyn anticipated the *fyer* circulating beyond Heslington's anchorhold to the increasingly literate laity, because he wrote 'for edificacyon of many saules' [1/6].

We have yet to consider fully how Misyn's texts circulated. We know from the colophons that Misyn composed the *fyer* in Lincoln, and that Heslington read it in York. We have no internal evidence of where the *mendynge* was written, but Lincoln, the York *studium*, Oxford or the London *studium generale* all seem possible locations.

We do not know whether Heslington possessed a copy of the *mendynge*, but it is preserved in all three manuscripts. It may be that Heslington commissioned the *fyer* having read Misyn's *mendynge* the year before, and this would suggest an element of reader response in Carmelite literary circles. Copying both Misyn texts together suggests that either Heslington owned a copy of both (which seems likely, given the thematic links between them), or that the Carthusian copyists gathered two separate translations. To produce the Amherst manuscript (and possibly copies further up the stemma), Carthusians must have had access to a copy of Misyn, by being in communication with either the Carmelites of Lincoln, with Heslington in York, or other intermediaries. It is useful to speculate how the texts were transmitted from the convent or the anchorhold to the Charterhouse. Literary historians have shown how texts 'trickled-down' from religious orders to the laity,³⁸⁴ but did the process work in reverse? Carthusians did actively seek out copies of vernacular theological texts originally owned or written by the laity.³⁸⁵ By writing for someone outside the direct daily control of the Whitefriars, Misyn

³⁸¹ Watson argues that the *Incendium* is perhaps Rolle's first major 'mature' work, in which Rolle 'finds his voice' as an *auctor*, [Richard Rolle, pp. 113–141].

³⁸² Rolle, Hilton and the *Ancrene Wisse* author were cautious in their approach to visionary experiences [Watson, 'The Composition', p. 647]. For an introduction to medieval women's visionary literature, see Petroff. We have already noted that Kempe tried to lend herself an educated air by referring to the *Incendium*. Since Heslington specifically asked for Rolle's text, female readers must have wanted access to quasi-academic texts previously denied them by language restrictions.

³⁸³ Deanesly, p. v.

³⁸⁴ Gillespie, 'Cura Pastoralis', p. 177, 'Dial M', p. 249.

³⁸⁵ See the literature on the order noted in Chapter One, especially Gillespie, 'Dial M' and 'Cura Pastoralis'. The fact that the Carthusians acquired texts by Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich shows their interest in gathering vernacular theology penned by women.

opened his text to potential wide dissemination.³⁸⁶ The Carthusians may have received a copy from Misyn, from a Carmelite library, or perhaps Heslington bequeathed it to them, since solitaries often donated books to religious orders.³⁸⁷

We know with certainty from the Amherst manuscript that the Carmelites shared the Carthusians' taste for the works of Rolle,³⁸⁸ and the promotion of eremiticism. Cré states that 'the references in Rolle's *Fire of Love* to the 'wyldyrnes' must have found double resonance amongst a Carthusian audience, as Carthusian houses were often referred to as 'heremi', deserts, or the wilderness',³⁸⁹ and that since all the texts in Amherst deal with the solitary life, it was 'eminently suitable for a Carthusian audience'.³⁹⁰ Though undoubtedly true, this is equally applicable to the order of the original translator, which saw itself as continuing the eremitical desert tradition.³⁹¹

A striking feature that links Misyn's translations to many of the surviving pastoral manuals read in the diocese of York is that they share a similar dialect – not of York itself – but that of the northeast Midlands, probably Lincolnshire. There were strong links between the city of York and the county of Lincolnshire, which may well account for the transmission of texts between the two places.³⁹² Gillespie wonders whether the composition of such works was 'the result of some collaboration between the Carthusians and the secular diocesan authorities'.³⁹³ Equally plausible is some collaboration between Carthusians and Carmelites. The Charterhouse of Epworth in Axholme stood less than ten miles north of Gainsborough, in the region where Laing located the lost exemplar manuscript.³⁹⁴ Carthusians there could conceivably have obtained Misyn's prose from either Mount Grace or York, or the neighbouring friaries of Doncaster, Hull, or Lincoln. Carthusians could have disseminated Misyn's translations southward to the Charterhouse of Beauvale, very near to the Nottingham Carmelite convent, and near the region where both Yale and Amherst scribes have been located.³⁹⁵ Whilst

³⁸⁶ Doyle, 'Publication', p. 110–11. Living outside the convent, Heslington must have been less controlled by the Carmelites than Stapleton.

³⁸⁷ Erler, in Hellinga & Trapp, *passim*; Dutton, in Smith & Taylor, pp. 41–54; Gillespie, 'Cura Pastoralis', 173. Even though Bridgettine nuns were enclosed, not unlike Heslington, they were able to 'act as the catalysts for the transmission of texts into the wider community' ['Dial M', p. 250].

³⁸⁸ Sargent, *James Grenehalgh*, p. 37 ff.; 'The Transmission', pp. 231–5; Cré, pp. 20–22.

³⁸⁹ Cré, in Renevey and Whitehead, p. 49.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³⁹¹ The sixteenth-century reform of the Carmelites revived the practice of establishing houses called 'Deserts', [Edwards, *The Rule*, p.39].

³⁹² Gillespie, 'Cura Pastoralis', p. 180 n. 98.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

³⁹⁴ *RHME*, map 2 and p. 79.

³⁹⁵ Cré [p. 50] posits Beauvale as a possible location for the Amherst scribe. Whilst admitting that 'we cannot of course know the actual geographic movements of texts or scribes merely from a study of textual dialects',

Carthusian houses in the north were geographically (and culturally) close to Carmelite foundations, this theory of transmission can be nothing more than informed speculation. It is possible that dissemination of the *fyer* and *mendynge* was done in conjunction with the chantry priests of York Minster.³⁹⁶ These priests would perhaps have known Misyn and Heslington as eminent members of York society.

Amongst the most assiduous promoters of the Rolle cult were the ubiquitous Scrope and Stapleton families, who flourished especially in Yorkshire and East Anglia. The Scrope family was notable for its patronage of solitaries, and probably supported Rolle during his life.³⁹⁷ Emma Stapleton became an anchoress herself. We have already noted that her family were serious book owners, and like the Scropes, the Stapletons owned autograph copies of Rolle.³⁹⁸ Both families were in an ideal position to acquire and disseminate Rolle's texts in the North and East Anglia.³⁹⁹ Before succeeding Arundel to the See of York, Richard Scrope was bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and was perhaps responsible for overseeing the copying of Hilton and Rolle texts in the cathedral's scriptorium.⁴⁰⁰

A number of Scropes were members of Arundel's circle at Ely and York, and were probably responsible for the introduction of Rolle's work to that group.⁴⁰¹ Since the circle included Carmelites, it is possible that these families introduced the order to Rolle. Secular family members may also have been influential. A number of Scropes, and Emma Stapleton's father, were Knights of the Garter,⁴⁰² and would thus have come into contact with Carmelites active at court. Both the Scropes and Stapletons were supportive of the friars in York, and like Heslington and Misyn, were members of the Corpus Christi Guild.⁴⁰³ Thomas Scrope is an embodiment of the strong links between the Carmelites and leading Yorkshire nobility. Since both the Scrope and Stapleton families supported the anchoress at Walmgate,⁴⁰⁴ Misyn's translations for Heslington may have been encouraged by such patrons.

Laing [p. 208] says 'it would be pleasing to conjecture, however, that the manuscript C [Corpus] found its way to Grantham or some nearby place where it was independently copied by two local scribes'.

³⁹⁶ On combined dissemination see Gillespie, 'Cura Pastoralis', p. 180; Sargent's edition of Love, p. xxv. On the role of the Carthusians in disseminating Rolle and Hilton see Gillespie 'Dial M', p. 242.

³⁹⁷ *PV*, pp. 90, 202; Cutts, p. 125.

³⁹⁸ *PV*, p. 91; Clay, p. 175; Cavanaugh pp. 769–777.

³⁹⁹ *PV*, p. 203; Rolle (ed.) Moyes, I, p. 82.

⁴⁰⁰ Clark, 'Late Fourteenth', pp. 7–8; *PV*, pp. 213–14.

⁴⁰¹ *PV*, pp. 91, 178, 203; Deanesly, p. 65.

⁴⁰² *PV*, p. 33.

⁴⁰³ *PV*, pp. 50, 192.

⁴⁰⁴ In 1465, Lady Margaret Stapleton made a donation to Heslington's successor amongst the 'Anachoritis in Walmgate et Fisshergate' (*Test.* II, p. 271). When Henry Scrope died in 1455, he also left money to Heslington's successor [Warren, p. 201].

Conclusion

Whereas Fishlake's translation of Hilton's *Scale* into Latin thirty years before Misyn had made theology in English available to the international church, Misyn wished to make English theological treatises in Latin available to the *illiterati*. I think that after a thorough textual, palaeographic, and linguistic study of Misyn's work in its religious and socio-political context, one cannot take the saccharine and transhistorical view that Misyn's translation 'has embodied and preserved for us the simple faith and enthusiastic love of the generation for which it was written'.⁴⁰⁵ Misyn was aware that his faith was not simple, but had a very real impact upon his life, and upon his readers. Misyn's translations were written with an awareness of events occurring in his order and society at large, and in Rolle and Heslington he sought to rediscover something of the Carmelites' contemplative identity.

⁴⁰⁵ Comper, p. xxxi.

CONCLUSION

Examining Carmelite writing in general, and Richard Misyn in particular, allows conclusions to be made about the nature of medieval Carmelite literary activity in England.

The Whitefriars' academic reputation was integral to their identity.⁴⁰⁶ The movement of student friars established a textual network of communities. More study is needed on the circulation of texts by students, and the influence Carmelite scholasticism had upon vernacular writings.

The university environment influenced all the writers considered in this thesis. It is striking that the Cambridge-educated Fishlake rendered the respected and orthodox theology of Hilton into the formal language of Latin, whereas Misyn, probably an Oxford graduate who had experienced Arundel's *Constitutions*, translated the more eccentric *Incendium* into English. Though the Carmelite order was renowned for its orthodoxy, Misyn translated a heterogeneous text so vague in its aims, broad in scope, and incoherent in discourse.⁴⁰⁷ Carmelite authors were very conscious of language. Fishlake's Latin translation made Hilton's English theology internationally readable. Misyn wrote for those without Latin. Maidstone combined Latin and English.

The universities were not the only centres of Carmelite literary activity. Whitefriars served the governing classes as confessors and counsellors, courtiers and bishops. Despite this, the view pervades that in England the Carmelites 'became more popular than elsewhere in Europe, but it was never an influential order'.⁴⁰⁸ This does not concur with the contemporary criticism of one Lollard detractor: 'Et Carmelitas tanquam falsos hermitas sunt confessores dominorum sententijs dominarum et seductores ipsorum sunt animarum'.⁴⁰⁹ Carmelites are better known among medievalists through such antifraternal sentiment,⁴¹⁰ yet such criticism highlights the power Whitefriars are perceived to have wielded. Study of the Carmelites' courtly activities would throw further light on their

⁴⁰⁶ 'For the four major orders of mendicant friars it remained as axiomatic in the fifteenth as it had been in the thirteenth century that successful participation in university learning at Oxford and elsewhere was crucial to their influence, their well-being and their self-regard' [Dobson, in Catto & Evans, p. 539].

⁴⁰⁷ Watson, *Richard Rolle*, p. 118; Deanesly, pp. 41–2.

⁴⁰⁸ Cutts, p. 44.

⁴⁰⁹ 'And as for the Carmelites, those so-called false hermits, they are the confessors to lords and ladies, and the seducers of their souls'. Recorded by Bale, MS Bodley 73, f. 139v. This sentiment is echoed almost verbatim in the vernacular antifraternal poem *Jack Upland*, line 79.

⁴¹⁰ Contemporary criticism of the medieval Carmelites is found in *Pierce the Ploughman's Crede* [(ed.) Barr, pp. 75–8, lines 339–417], and the macaronic poem 'Flen, flyys, and freris' [*JMEV*, Entry 808]. It also occurs in Middle Scots writing such as *Ane murelandis man of uplandis mak* [Dunbar, p. 31, line 43 ff.] and *Ane Satyre of The Thrie Estatis* [Lindsay, p. 95, line 2621]. On antifraternalism see Szittyá; Fleming, in Wallace, pp. 374–5; Hanna, 'The Difficulty', p. 333; Miller, pp. 235–68.

literary influence, particularly their political poetry. This thesis has focussed upon the universities and York as centres of Carmelite activity, but the London convent merits greater study. It housed the *studia generalia*, was the centre for much of Maidstone and Netter's writing, and produced manuscripts such as the 'reconstructed' Carmelite missal and *Doctrinale*. Carmelite literary activity flourished in metropolitan environments such as London, York, and Lincoln.

As well as being involved in the affairs of church and state, Carmelites of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries engaged in the pastoral care of the laity at large. Whilst some reworked tried and tested genres – the vices and virtues, the penitential Psalms – others were attracted to contemporary vernacular theology. Lynn and Lavenham were interested in women's visionary literature that had come to England from the continent from the 1390s,⁴¹¹ though they never translated such texts into English. Misyn and Fishlake's engagement with the writings of Hilton and Rolle shows a different Carmelite preoccupation with an insular, English model of (para-)mystical spirituality. The eclectic literary tastes of the English Carmelite province may be accounted for geographically. Whereas Carmelite writers from East Anglia (Lavenham, Lynn) were influenced by the continental contemplative tradition, those from the north-east (Fishlake, Misyn) were more interested in local eremitical and monastic traditions.

By meeting the demand for theological texts in the vernacular, Carmelite writers encouraged a certain democratization of spiritual experience.⁴¹² As part of his evangelical calling to preach and teach, Misyn promoted theological reflection amongst the laity. By providing hospitality to religious confraternities, and literature to anchorites, Whitefriars opened the gates to greater lay involvement in the contemplative life of the church. Misyn's translations are 'evidence of the order promoting mysticism',⁴¹³ or at least the encouragement of lay participation in the Carmelite charism. Educated and high-ranking Carmelites provided spiritual direction to women such as Kempe, Heslington, and Stapleton, the last two being evidence that the Carmelites had an interest in promoting the solitary contemplative life amongst women in the fifteenth century.⁴¹⁴ The literature of Misyn and Scrope shows a desire among later medieval Carmelites to keep alive the order's contemplative roots.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹¹ Watson, 'The Composition', pp. 647, 653 ff. On the reception of continental mystics in England, see Voaden.

⁴¹² 'One of the effects of the mendicant movement as a whole was to greatly expand, through lay associations and confraternities, the traditional conception of what a "religious" might be' [Fleming, in Wallace, p. 356].

⁴¹³ Edden, 'The Mantle', p. 82.

⁴¹⁴ Sheppard, pp. 38–9.

⁴¹⁵ Edden, 'The Mantle', p. 82.

Carmelites engaged with vernacular theology in the full knowledge that to do so was potentially dangerous in their religious climate. Misyn followed the anti-heretical agenda set up by previous literary Whitefriars, and in this respect his writing was typically 'Carmelite'.

Further study remains to be done into the mechanisms for commissioning and circulating Carmelite texts. The dissemination of Fishlake's translation, and the copying of Misyn's, reveals a movement of texts between Carmelites and Carthusians.⁴¹⁶ The partial reliance of the Carthusians on the literary activities of the Whitefriars should highlight, rather than detract from, their place in 'the landscape of medieval religious books'.⁴¹⁷ More research also needs doing into the acquisition of Carmelite texts by orders other than the Carthusians.⁴¹⁸ Carmelites seem to have catered for both an internal and external bibliographic market, circulating books between houses, and accepting commissions from the likes of Heslington. Study into the activities of Carmelites as book collectors would also be invaluable.

Much work remains to be done on the practices and implications of Carmelite literature, even if Nicholas the Frenchman criticised 'presumptuous individuals, desirous of vainglory, who busy themselves prating to other people whatever they chance to find in the parchments'.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁶ Cré, pp. 22 n. 35, 70–1.

⁴¹⁷ Gillespie, 'Dial M', p. 242 n. 4.

⁴¹⁸ There is speculation that the Benedictine monks of Worcester Cathedral Priory commissioned a Carmelite compilation, now Oxford, Bodleian Library Auct. F. inf. 1.3 [Edden, 'Marian devotion', pp. 101–2]. Dr. Greatrex informs me that Scrope–Bradley gifted a copy of the *Libellus de institutione fratrum Carmelitarum ordinis* to the Benedictine John de Blakeney [Cambridge University Library MS Ff.6.11, f. 1 – *Catalogue... Cambridge*, II, p. 515] demonstrating the direct dissemination of Carmelite literature to other orders. Benedictines also circulated Netter's *Doctrinale* (Harvey, p. 282).

⁴¹⁹ Certe sunt nonnulli ita praesumptuosi, vanam gloriam appetentes, ut quidquid repererint in membranis populo garrere satagant, alios docere volentes, quae et ipsi nesciunt etignorant [*Ignea Sagitta*, Capitulum IV].

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