

Introduction

This volume includes a selection of the works of Thomas Hoccleve (c.1367–1426), one of the most attractive, but also, until recently, one of the more neglected, figures of late Middle English literature.

I Foreword

The volume started life as an edition of the *Series* (as it is called), Hoccleve's major contribution to the genre of the framed narrative collection. Even after I added a number of minor poems, in response to requests for a volume which could better introduce the poetry of Hoccleve to students, the *Series* remained, in length and interest, the chief text of the volume.* Consequently, though the other poems have their own interpretative notes, they figure much less prominently in the Introduction, and are discussed here, for the most part, only in relation to the questions more generally raised by the *Series*.

Readers coming to Hoccleve for the first time may find some of the material in the Introduction and Notes, as well as in the Appendices, not immediately amenable to their literary interests. They may feel daunted by the many Latin quotations, many of them provided by Hoccleve himself, which I have transcribed from the margins of the manuscript copies of his work. We are well used to marginal notes as an aid to interpretation in editions of medieval texts (witness, indeed, the textual glosses I provide for the texts of this edition). Marginalia were also extensively used in the Middle Ages to gloss authoritative Latin works. So, in principle, Hoccleve's marginalia provide a valuable interpretative tool. I say 'in principle' because authors frequently use notes not just to gloss their own texts but also to make claims about their own status, and sometimes even to satirize the whole drive to provide an authoritative interpretation of those texts. (Think, for example, of the glosses provided by T.S. Eliot for his *Waste Land*,

* In the Introduction and the Notes to the present work, Roman numerals (I–VI) before line numbers refer to the minor poems edited here in addition to the *Series*; Roman VII followed by Arabic numerals refers to the main sections of the *Series*.

or Coleridge for his *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*; nearer Chaucer's own time, think of the wonderful way in which Boccaccio plays with the conventions of textual glosses in the margins of his *Teseida*.) The glosses, then, are not a straightforward key to the interpretation of Hoccleve's texts; but they are well worth persevering with.

Beginning readers may also feel that, at least in the middle sections of the Introduction, the attention I give to minute differences of detail between Hoccleve's own copies of his own work, and those of later scribes, obscures the very literary ground on which they themselves need to build. Readers who persevere with those sections of the Introduction (III–V) will find that material treated there, in passing, is often developed more fully in the later, more straightforwardly literary, sections (VIII–IX). This might suggest to them that, if they preferred, they could, in Chaucer's phrase, 'turne over the leef', and focus simply on the later parts of the Introduction, as also on those notes addressing specifically literary matters.

I urge them *not* to do so. The poems edited here all survive in copies made by Hoccleve himself (i.e. holographs), and have been edited here from those copies. Nevertheless, as the Introduction argues, material in the other, non-holograph, copies often derives from earlier drafts by Hoccleve that have not survived. Consequently, as with Langland's various versions of *Piers Plowman* or Chaucer's two attempts at the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*, study of all the manuscript evidence offers a fuller view of Hoccleve's poetic processes than would otherwise be possible. If medieval writers regularly rework their texts, and those who copy their texts do the same, the medieval text is always, in the fullest sense possible, work in progress. (This understanding of the unavoidable provisionality attaching to the production of a text in the Middle Ages has echoes, of course, much nearer our own time, in post-modern literary experiments and theorizings.)

And this fact carries two further consequences of great importance for the study of medieval literature. First, except in purely formal terms, it proves almost impossible to distinguish the roles of author and scribe in the production of a medieval text. As Minnis has shown, St Bonaventura offered a model of literary activity under four headings of increasing sophistication: first, the scribe, the one who copies another person's text without adding anything; then the compiler, the person who combines existing texts and adds no original material; then, the commentator, who adds original material, by way of commentary, to the original text; lastly, the author, who shifts the balance between original and derivative material decisively in favour of the former.¹ Like Chaucer, and for much the same reasons, Hoccleve carefully claims for himself only the humblest literary role, akin to that of the scribe. To see Hoccleve *and* the copyists of his

work in action is, however, to see this claim exposed as the fiction it is. In the same way, the totality of scribal involvement in Hoccleve's work critiques any simple-minded understanding of literature which privileges one literary function, the work of the author, over another, the work of the copyist.

Second, medieval literature is also work in progress across, as well as within, languages. So much medieval literature is translated from texts in other European vernaculars that the translator, as a function of the text, can be mapped onto the Bonaventuran grid, and the translator can be seen variously exercising all of St Bonaventura's roles all the way from that of scribe, when s/he translates as close to word-for-word as possible, to that of author, when a completely new work results from the act of translation. (Thinking only of writing in Latin, St Bonaventura did not feel the need to include translation in his list of scribal activities, though other writers do offer definitions of translation, and translation was the subject of lively debate, throughout the Middle Ages.²) Given a long-standing prejudice against translated works and in favour of original writing, as I note later in the Introduction, we need to keep clearly in view the very positive attitudes in practice to translation generally current in the Middle Ages.

Central to all of these processes, it can readily be inferred, is the question of interpretation. Whether acting as scribe, as author, or as translator, the writer is always interpreting, and interpreting for a fictional or actual reader, the texts on which s/he is working. (And the *Series* provides yet further interpretative aids for the reader in the shape of a Friend who can debate with the poet about the purposes and effects of literary activity.) The medieval text, then, exists as a point of reference in an evolving field which includes medieval, and modern, writers and readers.

I should not wish the foregoing remarks to suggest to the beginning reader that Hoccleve is hard work. Quite the opposite. The *Series* comes across to the reader as directly as anything Chaucer wrote. Even though it cannot match the range of voices and topics in Chaucer's major narrative collection, and wants the latter's organizing idea of pilgrimage as analogue for story-telling and a justification for excess, it does not suffer from comparison with *The Canterbury Tales*. In the *Series*, and in other quasi-autobiographical poems like the 'Male Regle', Hoccleve is as immediately approachable as a poetic persona as Chaucer. Indeed, Hoccleve's 'character'—by which I mean the complex relation between the persona of the narrator and his total environment, literary, political and social—becomes not only the formal occasion but also the informing principle of much of his poetry. It helps to know how much this character depends on existing literary models, especially the works of Chaucer. Consequently, the Introduction, and the Notes, regularly consider Hoccleve's debts to, and rework-

ings of, Chaucerian material. Nevertheless, Hoccleve's distinctive, and attractively lop-sided, slant on those models can be savoured without explicit knowledge of them.

I further argue in the closing pages of this Introduction for Hoccleve as a playfully comic and wittily conceited writer. (If he owes his sense of comedy in part to Chaucer, Hoccleve nevertheless goes further than Chaucer in his feeling for and use of the conceit.) Since I have always enjoyed—as, it is clear, medieval readers enjoyed—the broad-brush strokes of anti-feminist comedy, which colours three sections of the *Series*, I have deliberately included in the anthology Hoccleve's major exercise in (anti-)anti-feminism, the 'Epistre de Cupide'. I have also included, as his most impressive religious piece, a translation from Deguileville's *Pèlerinage*, which allows the reader to savour an understanding of wit, as intellectual dexterity, that links Hoccleve to other religious writers like Langland and, in the seventeenth century, the metaphysical poets.

Hoccleve's interest for students of medieval literature, then, is considerable. The Chaucerian link is readily established: Hoccleve knew Chaucer personally, as he acknowledges in his major work, *The Regement of Princes* (c.1411–12);³ he may even have written some of the link passages in *The Canterbury Tales*.⁴ Scribes copied his work into anthologies of Chaucerian literature, and sometimes ascribed his works to Chaucer; for example, one manuscript copy of *The Canterbury Tales* assigns to the Plowman-pilgrim Hoccleve's narrative of a miracle of the Virgin ('item de beata Virgine', no. V in this anthology); the scribe of the Bannatyne manuscript and the sixteenth-century editor Thynne both thought Chaucer had written Hoccleve's 'Epistre de Cupide' [Letter of Cupid].⁵ Such mistakes are easy to understand. The *Series* clearly recalls *The Canterbury Tales* and Chaucer's earlier experiment with a framed narrative collection, *The Legend of Good Women*, or even *The House of Fame*.⁶ Like Chaucer, too, Hoccleve contributed to an on-going literary culture which depended on, and looked for the patronage of, the greatest people in the land, including, most strikingly, King Henry V and his immediate family.

Also like Chaucer, and in common with many other writers at the close of the Middle Ages, Hoccleve is engagingly self-conscious about his own status as writer, in ways that anticipate the English Renaissance and hark back to the Italian Renaissance in the previous century. And Hoccleve shares with Chaucer a preoccupation with the accurate transmission and interpretation of a writer's own texts. For Hoccleve this resulted, excitingly, in three holograph copies of his minor poems. Moreover, one of his minor works, the 'ars vtilissima [*sic*] sciendi mori' [Most useful art of learning to die], has survived in two holograph versions, and so gives us the chance to see a poet at work revising his text. Additionally, two of the holograph manuscripts

may originally have formed part of a single collection, something resembling a Collected Shorter Poems. . . [and] represent a novelty in the record of [medieval] English poetry: a single-author collection of poems gathered, ordered and copied by the poet himself.⁷

Hoccleve's work has further interest for the reader, in its explicit engagement with the immediate personal circumstances of the poet and the wider social context of his work. Here the contrast with the work of Chaucer is striking. Hoccleve spent his working life as a London-based civil servant, a clerk at the Office of the Privy Seal, and was as ready as Chaucer was reluctant to make his own story the subject of his poetry. From his pages we learn of a mis-spent youth, of a marriage which put paid to chances of ecclesiastical advancement, of constant financial worries, and (c.1414) of a nervous breakdown which exposed the poet to gossip even after he had recovered. We also learn, from Hoccleve's regular reference in his work to his noble readers, of his hopes for their patronage. That he makes so much more of his courtly connections in his poetry than Chaucer did suggests his greater personal insecurity: certainly his lower position in the social pecking order.

Conventional much of this material may be. The convention of soliloquy, for instance, which gives so much point to Hoccleve's writing, especially the first item in the *Series* ('My Compleinte'), has precedent in the *Confessions* of St Augustine and the *Meditations* of St Anselm. Again, the convention of dialogue-as-(self)-discovery, so prominent a feature of the Prologue to the *Regement* and the second item of the *Series* (the 'Dialogue'), as indeed of the whole narrative frame of the *Series*, has precedent in the *Consolatio Philosophiae* of Boethius (d. 524), and, closer to Hoccleve's own time, in the *Horologium Sapientiae* (? 1334) of Henry Suso, of which Hoccleve himself translated a chapter (the already-noted 'ars vtillissima'). Consequently, some critics have argued against reading any Hoccleve text as a simple reflection of the poet's own life. The opposing school of thought argues that poets always write conventionally; that convention is the condition of personal expression; and that, by and large, where Hoccleve's assertions about himself can be checked, they are accurate.⁸ Hoccleve's self-presentation witnesses to a growing interest in the discovery and representation of the individual in the later Middle Ages. His writing therefore becomes another place where we can chart the move from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance.

We must not forget, though, the light touch with which Hoccleve lays himself bare to our scrutiny. If soliloquy is fundamentally serious, a mark of the divided self, dialogue is in principle comic, and there is plenty of comedy in Hoccleve's writing, both when he engages in dialogue with a fictional friend in the frame

of the *Series*, and when, like Chaucer's Clerk, he enters into debate with fictional readers and actual authors of the works he is translating.

But there is more. Hoccleve was ready, as Chaucer was not, to refer directly in his poetry to the troubled and dangerous times in which he lived. Hence he writes both about developments in what would become known as the Hundred Years War with France (*Regement* 5286–397, *Series* VII.2.566–76, 610–16), and about the challenges posed nearer home, to both Church and state, by the growth of the Lollard heresy and its spread of Wycliffite ideas, and also by reaction to the deposition of Richard II, and the usurpation of the former's crown by Henry IV, in 1399.⁹ His public support for conservative religious and political positions was an almost inevitable consequence of his involvement in the machinery of a government which, under Henry IV and still more under Henry V, had identified the Church's interests with its own.¹⁰ This gives a characteristic flavour to his work which may not at first find favour with a modern reader. For example, Hoccleve praises Henry V for bringing the deposed King Richard's bones to Westminster for proper burial in 1413. He does not consider the political implications of Henry's decision: rather, he uses them to comment on the King's religious spirit, and to urge him to remain the champion of orthodoxy against the Lollards.¹¹ But, as recent studies are showing, it is possible to read Hoccleve less straightforwardly: at the very least, his personal situation interacts eccentrically with his desire to function, like his contemporary Lydgate, as an apologist for religious orthodoxy and social conservatism. However we approach the evidence, Hoccleve's writing does not completely succeed in its attempts to paper over its own cracks.

II Previous editions; the scope of the present edition

It is regrettable, then, that the texts on which the poet's growing reputation depends are so difficult to get hold of. They have been available, complete, only in the Early English Text Society (EETS) editions of Furnivall (1892, 1897) and Gollancz (1925). Mitchell and Doyle reissued the first and third of these volumes, with corrections, in a single EETS volume, as *The Minor Poems* (1970). More recently (1968), the major work in the first Furnivall volume, the *Series*, appeared in a dissertation by Pryor. None of these editions carries much information in the way of explanatory footnotes. To be sure, Furnivall included a selection of variant readings from the non-holograph copies of some of the works, and he edited one work, the 'Epistre de Cupide', from a non-holograph copy, but without offering any account of the relation of the manuscripts to each other.

Recent editions of selections by O'Donoghue (1982) and Seymour (1981) have provided more in the way of commentary; in particular, Seymour's notes include important general comments about the complex situation of Hoccleve texts which survive in both holograph and non-holograph copies. But since both editions were aiming to introduce the whole of Hoccleve's work to readers, they were forced to include extracts from both the *Regement* and the *Series*, which gave no very satisfactory idea of either work. More recently, in 1990, Fenster and Erler edited, with a fuller commentary, Hoccleve's 'Epistre de Cupide', alongside the text he was translating, Christine de Pizan's *Epistre au dieu d'amours* (1399) [Epistle of the God of Love]. While acknowledging the existence of the other copies of Hoccleve's translation, however, Fenster and Erler used only the holograph version of the 'Epistre' for their edition. Still more recently, we have had Burrow's (1999) edition of the first two items in the *Series* for EETS. This very scholarly work provides much important information about the relation of the non-holograph copies to one another and to the Hoccleve holograph, and uses Hoccleve's scribal practices elsewhere in the holographs to reconstruct his text where his own copy of it has been lost (the whole of the first item of the *Series* and ll. 1–252 of the second survive in the holograph only in a sixteenth-century copy). But, in so restricting its field of vision, Burrow's work cannot give beginning readers any very clear or easy sense of the scope or significance of the whole work. There is, then, a case to be made—and the Introduction will be making it—for an edition which includes complete texts and also considers, where relevant, all the surviving copies.

Of course, the decision to include only complete texts in this volume, and the consequent exclusion of the *Regement*, mean that this selection is also partial as an introduction to Hoccleve. Of the several poetic genres which Hoccleve attempted, the one to which the *Regement* formally belongs, of advice to princes about the best way to govern themselves and their subjects—a genre of pressing relevance in the turbulent early years of the century, as Fenster's recent study has shown—is present in this anthology only back-handedly, and by implication, when Hoccleve tells us in the 'Dialogue' (VII.2.561–5) that he has decided *not* to attempt the translation of a manual on the art of warfare for King Henry V's brother, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, since the latter knows much more about that art than Hoccleve could teach him. Another major theme, also occurring in the *Regement* and prominent in a number of poems addressed to, or connected with, royalty, is also present here only incidentally: that is, the need for the King to take firm action against the spread of heresy. In other words, this volume does not make much of the specifically political and historical dimension of Hoccleve's work. For that matter, were I now starting afresh on this project, I should be looking to include Hoccleve's letter to the Wycliffite rebel

Oldcastle, for its explicit evocation of the dangerous times in which Hoccleve was writing; as also Hoccleve's wonderfully funny roundel in mock-praise of an ugly mistress (a tradition still active when Shakespeare wrote his sonnet 130 and Donne his 'The Anagram'). But if this anthology encourages the reader to go beyond its confines to the other works of Hoccleve, and in particular *The Regement of Princes*, it will, I think, have served its turn.

And it *does* represent fairly directly a thread which regularly informs Hoccleve's address to the prince, and which figures in much of Hoccleve's minor work: that is, the poet's preoccupation with his own dire financial straits, and hope of being rewarded, if not for his good advice, then for his displays of wit. These preoccupations surface in the wittily semi-autobiographical 'Male Regle' (no. II) addressed to the head of the Exchequer, Lord Furnival, and 'Balade et chanceon' (no. III) addressed to the Under-Treasurer of the Exchequer, Henry Somer.¹²

In another respect, too, the present selection gives a good indication of the range of Hoccleve's work. It includes some of Hoccleve's more striking religious compositions: the 'Conpleynte paramont' (no. I), an allegorized lament by the Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross; a prayer to the crucified Christ and the Virgin Mary (no. IV); the earlier-noted miracle of the Blessed Virgin; two moralized allegories (nos. VII.3, 5) from that huge repository of medieval romance, the *Gesta Romanorum* [Deeds of the Roman Emperors], the first a loose analogue to Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale*, the second the story of the moral education of the prodigal youngest son of a Roman Emperor; the previously-noted translation from Suso about preparing for one's own death (no. VII.4). It cannot be denied that religious literature is an acquired taste these days: still more, literature about preparing for one's death. At the same time, as I hope these pages will show, literary expressions of religious beliefs are a taste worth acquiring.

The modern reader may also need to overcome initial resistance, as earlier implied, to another feature of the texts which, yet again, they share with Chaucer's work: several of them are translations or include translated material. We have already noted Hoccleve's translations of work by major writers (Suso and Christine de Pizan), and from the anonymous but equally important *Gesta Romanorum*. Hoccleve's 'Conpleynte paramont' is also a translation, this time from the influential *Pèlerinage de l'âme* [Pilgrimage of the soul] (c.1358) by Guillaume de Deguileville. Medieval writers like Chaucer and Hoccleve appear to defer to our prejudice in favour of original works when they describe translation as little more than the copying of a text from one language into another. In the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*, for instance, Chaucer defends his translations of Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*, and of *Le roman de la rose* by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, on the grounds that the translator has no creative input in his translation and cannot be held responsible for any offence

caused (*Legend G*-Prol. 340–52).¹³ By this light, Chaucer as translator was functioning exactly like the Chaucerian narrator of *The Canterbury Tales*, a humble scribe who must faithfully report the bawdy tales told during the Canterbury pilgrimage if he does not wish to ‘falsen’ his matter (*CT* I.725–42, 3170–5). In his ‘Dialogue’, Hoccleve takes up a similar line to defend himself against the charge of anti-feminism in his translation of Christine’s *Epistre*. He borrows terms from the translation debate in *The Canterbury Tales* (‘reherce’, ‘reportour’);¹⁴ he also recalls the general situation of the *Legend*, in order to defend his translation of Christine’s *Epistre* against misreading:

therof was I noon auctour.	<i>author</i>
I nas in þat cas but a reportour	
Of folkes tales. As they seide, I wroot.	
I nat affermed it on hem, God woot.	<i>against</i>
Whoso þat shal reherce a mannes sawe	<i>recite; words</i>
As þat he seith moot he seyn and nat varie,	<i>the one. . . the other</i>
For, and he do, he dooth ageyn the lawe	<i>if</i>
Of trouthe. He may tho wordes nat contrarie. . .	<i>those; oppose</i>
Whan I it spak I spak compleynyngly.	<i>in the style of a complaint</i>
I to hem thoghte no repreef ne shame. . . .	<i>wished them; reproof</i>
The book concludith for hem, is no nay. . .	<i>undoubtedly</i>

(VII.2.759–67, 772–3, 779).

I shall have more to say about this passage later, but it would be a mistake to take it too seriously. In a culture which prized Latin learning as much as medieval culture did, and restricted the label of author to established and usually long-dead writers, vernacular writers trying to carve out a space for themselves could not do much more, publicly, than to adopt, like Chaucer and Hoccleve, the humbler roles of scribe/*reportour* and compiler, or the slightly more elevated role of commentator.¹⁵ But in so describing themselves, Chaucer and Hoccleve were also, indirectly, advertising their work and laying claim to the same status that their predecessors enjoyed. Consequently, we do well to remember that for Hoccleve, as for Chaucer before him, the distinction between translated and original writing—between the ‘enditour’ and the ‘translatour’, as Hoccleve himself puts it, in his ‘Inuocacio ad Patrem’—is not regularly observed in practice.¹⁶ Like Chaucer before him, Hoccleve is able to make much in his work of the confusion of literary roles available to him. Here, too, Hoccleve makes common cause with modern theorists of literature and translation who are attempting to undermine what Frantzen has criticized as ‘desire for origins’, and Eagleton ‘the fetish of the primary text’.¹⁷

III The holographs

Our account of Hoccleve's minor poetry needs to begin with the reiteration of an obvious point. Most of the minor poems survive only in the holograph manuscripts made near the end of Hoccleve's life. Hoccleve produced the first of them, Durham University Library Cosin V.III.9, hereafter D, sometime in the period 1419–21; a marginal note to VII.2.543, to be discussed in more detail later, shows that he was still working on the manuscript as late as April 1422. This holograph contains one work, the *Series*, which also survives, in whole or in part, in ten later manuscript copies. The *Series* is a framed narrative collection which, as edited by Furnivall from the holograph, includes the following items: 'My Complaneinte', 'A Dialoge', the first of the moralized *Gesta* narratives, the translation from Suso's *Horologium*, and the second moralized *Gesta* narrative. Completing the Suso translation is another brief translation of material from a reading for All Saints' Day. Mills has recently called this work 'Joys of Heaven', after its subject-matter,¹⁸ but whether or not we should regard it as a separate item in the holograph is not certain, and a better title might be that offered by Bale (1559: 537) and followed by Pits and the annotators of D and Y, 'De caelesti Jerusalem' [concerning the heavenly Jerusalem].

Pryor speculates that Hoccleve composed the *Series* in two stages, first as a shorter collection for the Duke of Gloucester, without the second *Gesta* narrative, and then, with the second *Gesta* narrative added, as an enlarged collection for the Countess of Westmoreland, an aunt by marriage of the Duke.¹⁹ Whether or not this is so, it is clear, as we shall see, that Hoccleve produced at least two versions of the second item in the *Series*, the 'Dialoge': he may then have produced this second version, along with the rest of the *Series*, for the Countess of Westmoreland, for whom he ends the work in D, though not in the non-holograph copies of the work, with a verse dedication. As we shall see, other texts in the *Series* have also undergone revision, perhaps when Hoccleve was preparing the *Series* for submission to the Countess. Since the 'Dialoge' includes complimentary reference to the Duke of Gloucester, it is possible that Hoccleve originally intended that work, and the *Series* as a whole, for him.²⁰

The *Series* owes its shape, in part, to the structure of the poet's earlier work, the *Regement*. In the Prologue to the *Regement*, a solitary narrator meets by chance with, and is helped by, a beggar. Similarly, the first two items of the *Series* show a solitary narrator unable to escape from memories of mental disorder and social rejection—he writes them up compulsively, and they become the first item of the collection ('My Complaneinte')—and then, as a result of his meeting with a friend ('A Dialoge'), enabled to break free from them and start writing for a wider audience once more. Between the second half of the *Regement* and the

remaining items of the *Series* there is also a parallel of sorts. In the former, Hoccleve gives advice to the future Henry V, in part through exemplary narratives. In the latter, narratives of a formally edifying cast also figure prominently. And, of course, as earlier noted (n. 7 above), the *Regement* was regularly linked with the *Series* in non-holograph copies. By contrast with the public agenda of the *Regement*, though, the *Series* has a primarily domestic and personal frame of reference.

D predates by at least a few months, possibly more, Hoccleve's production of the other holographs, California Huntington Library HM 111 and 744, hereafter H1 and H2. We can date these by references, in the titles of several of the poems copied into them, to the death of Henry V,²¹ which means that the copies must have been written after the King's death on 31 August 1422.

H2 begins with hymns to God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Virgin, and continues with the previously-noted miracle of the Virgin (no. V), but follows this religious beginning with comedy, Hoccleve's version of Christine's *Epistre* (no. VI) and three comic 'chaunceons', then with an interspersed 'Balade' in praise of Henry V, and lastly with an offering of a very different colour, a 'lesson of heuynesse', the second holograph copy of Hoccleve's Suso translation. This collection gives a good indication of the overall range of Hoccleve's verse, and seems to have no clearer principle of organization than might be suggested by the voice-over introduction to 'Monty Python's Flying Circus' ('and now for something completely different'): the logic, say, of fragment VII of *The Canterbury Tales*.

Hoccleve structured H1 more clearly about the, generally, noble readers who commissioned his work—for example, the Countess of Hereford, Henry V's aunt, who commissioned the Deguileville translation—or to whom the poet directed poems of praise and petition, and, in the case of a poem to the Lollard rebel Sir John Oldcastle, admonition. Yet here too he also addressed poems to the Virgin Mary with no clear reason discoverable for their inclusion.²²

Equally striking about both H1 and H2 is the fact that Hoccleve composed many of the poems included in them some years earlier: the Deguileville translation before 1413, the date when a translation of the complete *Pèlerinage* was completed; the translation from Christine de Pizan in 1402 (VI.476); the 'Male Regle' in 1405–6.²³ Consequently, we have to allow for the fact that when he made these later copies of his own works he was acting as editor of them. Possibly too, when non-holograph copies of a Hoccleve text exist, they witness to an earlier stage in the composition and transmission of the works: so their evidence may give a fuller picture of Hoccleve's literary activity than we should be able to discover just from the holographs. In any case, even where their readings are scribal rather than authorial, they can usefully show how early readers inter-

puted Hoccleve's poetry. Where, therefore, more than one copy survives of any of the texts edited here, I have considered the evidence of all of them, even though, like earlier editors, I have edited from the holographs and emended only where necessary.²⁴

IV On Hoccleve's scribes

On the face of it, the study of textual relationships does not look a very promising introduction to a volume of poetry. But it is necessary to remind ourselves that the status—the very idea—of a text in a pre-print culture is much more fluid, and more obviously fluid, than that of a printed text. (I say 'obviously' because even printed texts like the novels of Hardy or the plays of Shakespeare do not enjoy as absolute and fixed an identity as we might think.) Consequently, we need to see a Hoccleve poem not so much as a finished product, even when the author has produced the copy himself, but more as a snapshot of an on-going literary process: a point in the complex field of literary relationships constituted by the totality of scribal and readerly activity connected with the work which, for the sake of convenience, we call a poem.²⁵ And when the Hoccleve text is itself translated from another text, we have to reckon with the further intersection of (interference from) another complex field of literary relationships. We need therefore to attend to the total manuscript situation of both Hoccleve's source texts and his translations in order to speak with certainty about the poetry of Hoccleve.

When a translated work survives only in a single holograph copy, and its original likewise only in a single copy, we have no option but to take the two texts at face value. We are not so fortunate with Hoccleve's translations, most of which survive in several copies. Fortunately, fewer than a dozen copies survive of each of Hoccleve's 'Compleynte paramont', 'Epistre', and *Series*, and consequently the task of mapping those texts, though laborious, is not impossible. Nor is it impossibly difficult to map the manuscript traditions of the texts from which Hoccleve translated the 'Balade' for Robert Chichele (IV) and the 'Epistre' (VI): the former survives in one complete and two partial copies; the latter, Christine's *Epistre*, in only six. The originals, however, of other texts here edited—the anonymous *Gesta Romanorum*, the *Horologium Sapientiae* of Henry Suso, the *Pèlerinage de l'âme* of Guillaume de Deguileville—survive in very many more copies, and even when the field of inquiry is restricted to copies known to have circulated in England, and even when modern editions exist, the task is, quite simply, huge.²⁶

Yet the challenge must be faced, if we wish to avoid partiality and sometimes

even error in what we say about the poems. Consider, for example, the first of the *Gesta* narratives in the *Series*. The only critical study thus far to consider this work in any detail, that by Mitchell, compared Hoccleve's copy in D with a Latin version of the story in MS London British Library Harley 2270 (Ha2), 'the most complete manuscript of the Anglo-Latin *Gesta*'. In so privileging Ha2, Mitchell was following an earlier edition, by Wallensköld, of the version of the text in Ha2. The latter had included the Ha2 version, without its concluding moralization, as part of a project to record versions of the medieval legend of the Roman Empress who preserved her chastity against repeated attempt from would-be seducers. In choosing Ha2, Wallensköld seems to have been following the view of J.A. Herbert, when he catalogued the romances in the British Library manuscript collections, that Ha2 was the best copy of a major group of manuscripts produced in England from the fourteenth century onwards.²⁷ Clearly, Hoccleve *could* have used this manuscript. But the 'best representative' of a manuscript tradition, or, in Mitchell's words, the 'most complete manuscript of the Anglo-Latin *Gesta*', is not necessarily, or self-evidently, Hoccleve's source;²⁸ still less is a modern printed edition a self-evidently trustworthy source.²⁹ Consider, for example, the opening words of the tale as preserved in Ha2:

Menelaus in ciuitate Romana regnauit, qui filiam regis Hungarie in vxorem accepit, que erat pulcra et operibus misericordie plena [Menelaus reigned in the city of Rome, and married the daughter of the King of Hungary. She was beautiful and full of the works of mercy]

Here is the version preserved in MS Oxford Bodleian Library Douce 142 (D4) with variants from MSS Oxford Bodleian Library Douce 310 (D5) and London British Library Harley 5369 (Ha4) and Sloane 4039 (Sl):

Gerelaus (Sl Ierelaus) in ciuitate Romana regnauit (Sl *adds* etc.), prudens valde [very prudent], qui filiam regis Vngarie in vxorem accepit, que erat pulcra, et oculis omnium graciosa [and gracious in the eyes of all], et (D5H4 *add* in omnibus) operibus misericordie (Ha4 *om.* misericordie) plena (Sl plena omni misericordia)

I make no attempt to arbitrate between these versions, but it should be immediately apparent that they provide a fuller version of the text than that in Ha2. For this material Hoccleve's copy in D gives us

In the *Romain actes* writen is thus:
Whilom an emperour in the citee

Gesta Romanorum
once

Of Roome regned, clept Iereslaus,	<i>called</i>
Which his noble estat and hy dignitee	
Gouerned wysly; and weddid had he	
The doghtir of the kyng of Vngarie,	
A fair lady <i>to euery mannes ye.</i>	<i>eye</i>
And for þat beautee in womman allone	<i>because</i>
Withouten bontee is nat commendable,	<i>goodness</i>
Shee was therto a vertuous persone,	<i>in addition</i>
And specially pitous and merciablen	<i>compassionate and merciful</i>
In all hir wirkes, which ful couenable	<i>very fitting</i>
And pertinent is vnto wommanhede.	<i>a woman's estate</i>
Mercy causith good renon fer to sprede.	<i>reputation; far</i>
(VII.3.1–14)	

Without the fuller version in D4 and the other manuscripts, we should probably have been forced to conclude that Hoccleve himself came up with the new name for the Emperor, and added the italicized phrase. There is certainly precedent for the change to the Emperor's name, in the many different names given to the Emperor in other versions of the story, including Merelaus and Octavianus, to say nothing of Hoccleve's probable readiness to tamper with the name of the prostitute in the second *Gesta* narrative.³⁰

There is precedent for the added phrase, similarly, in the tendency of verse translations, medieval and post-medieval, to fill out lines with redundant expressions for the sake of rhyme and metre. Characteristically, such material reinforces the meaning of the original by echoing details from it, or draws attention to the translator's mediation of the text by means of asseveration. Hoccleve certainly does this regularly in his translations. The more elaborate the rhyme scheme being followed—as in his translation for Chichele—the more padding that may be needed to secure the rhymes.³¹ (To prove the point, we need only compare Hoccleve's prose versions of the moralizations of the *Gesta Romanorum* stories with his verse versions of the stories themselves.)

But the parallel version in D4 shows, on the contrary, that Hoccleve was, in all probability, acting precisely as he said he was when translating Christine's *Epistre*; not as an 'auctour' but simply as 'a reportour/Of folkes tales [a]s they seide' (VII.2.760–2). That is, Hoccleve's text cannot be understood without detailed reference to the textual traditions of the *Gesta Romanorum*, or at least of the Anglo-Latin copies of the work.³² Admittedly, and regrettably, we have no hard evidence at present to connect Hoccleve's version with any one copy of the Latin—evidence, say, of his ownership of a particular copy of the Latin,

or of the existence of a copy of the Latin which precisely mirrors his translation in respect of significant variation. Consequently, we should probably speak of ‘analogues’ rather than of actual sources for Hoccleve’s work: which carries the further consequence that we need to be tentative in pronouncing on Hoccleve as translator and/or editor-critic of his sources. Even when he seems to be producing a reading of the sources which runs counter to them, the remote possibility exists that he is faithfully following a version of the original in which this counter-version first appeared.³³ The conclusions to be advanced in the following paragraphs therefore are probable rather than certain.

But there is still more to be observed about the quoted material. The holograph calls the Emperor ‘Iereslaus’, which is obviously closer to the ‘Gerelaus’ of D4 and its variants than to the version in Ha2. But ‘Iereslaus’ is not as close to ‘Gerelaus’ as the form found in the non-holograph copies of this text, in all of which the Emperor is called ‘Gerelaus’.³⁴ We have two ways of explaining the discrepancy. The simplest is that the reading ‘Gerelaus’ derives from a version of Hoccleve’s text anterior to D, and that D witnesses to second thoughts by Hoccleve about the Emperor’s name.³⁵

Of course, it would be foolish to build a whole case on the presence or absence of a single letter in a name prone to modification in the Latin text, and there are numerous instances in other Hoccleve texts where all or a significant number of non-holograph manuscripts share a reading which cannot derive from a version of the text anterior to the holograph, and which witness merely to later scribal activity, deliberate or inadvertent. The most dramatic instance of such scribal activity occurs in connection with Hoccleve’s ‘Epistre de Cupide’, where we can show that six of the non-holograph copies derived from a copy which inadvertently miscopied its own exemplar by displacement of leaves.³⁶

In many other instances, too, the holograph readings are closer to those of their sources than those of the other copies. Two examples from Hoccleve’s ‘Conpleynte paramont’ will serve to demonstrate this. In this wonderfully florid lament, the Virgin Mary is begging for help from any and everybody—her ancestors, people who appeared earlier in the Gospel narrative, bystanders at the Crucifixion, the sun, moon and stars and even the earth—to release her son from his cruel torments. In particular, she calls on the woman in Luke 11.27 who once blessed her in her son’s presence:

O womman þat among the peple speak,	<i>spoke</i>
How þat the wombe blessid was þat beer,	<i>bore (Christ)</i>
And the tetes þat yaf to sowken eek	<i>breasts; gave suck also</i>
The sone of God, which on hy hangith heer,	
What seist thou now, why comest thou no neer?	<i>nearer</i>

Why n'art thou heer? O womman, wher art thou
 That nat ne seest my woful wombe now?
 (I.43–9)

For the 'wombe' of l. 49, the non-holograph manuscripts offer two readings, 'body' and 'herte'.³⁷ But 'wombe' must have been the original reading, not only because of the deliberate echo of the earlier line, itself translating the Biblical phrase 'beatus venter' [blessed the womb], but, more simply, because 'ventre' is almost certainly what the copy of Deguileville's text being used by Hoccleve contained.³⁸

Similarly, a little later in the lyric, the scribes of several of the non-holograph manuscripts made very heavy weather of an extremely conceited passage in which the Virgin puns on the etymology of her own name. Hoccleve's own copy, by contrast, preserves the Deguileville conceits very accurately:³⁹

Of sorwe talke may I nat ynow,	<i>enough</i>
Syn fro my name 'I' doon away is now.	<i>since; taken</i>
Wel may men clepe and calle me Mara	<i>call</i>
From hennesforward, so may men me call.	<i>henceforward</i>
How sholde I lenger clept be Maria,	<i>longer called</i>
Syn 'I', which is Ihesus, is fro me fall.	<i>which stands for; fallen</i>
This day al my swetnesse is into gall	
Torned, syn þat 'I', which was the beautee	<i>turned; since</i>
Of my name, this day bynome is me.	<i>is taken from</i>

(I.181–9)

This is wonderfully witty writing, anticipating in the seventeenth century such poems as George Herbert's 'Love-Joy' or 'Jesu'. It focuses principally on the 'I' in Mary's name, which is also the marker to herself of her own selfhood, and at the same time a common manuscript abbreviation for the name of her son Jesus. With the death of her son, therefore, she loses both him and herself, and is left in bitterness, since her name has turned from 'Maria' into 'Mara' (etymologically, 'bitter') with the loss of that 'I'. The scribes of the other copies did not get the point, and mostly produced simpler readings so as to make sense of what they must have seen as a grammatical nonsense: even then, they did not always succeed, as the record of their variants for this line in Appendix 5 will show.

Yet even in the 'Compleynthe paramont', the evidence is not totally in favour of the holograph's readings. Comparison with the French original suggests that both the holograph and the archetype of the *Pilgrimage* copies modified different minor details of Hoccleve's original translation:⁴⁰ that is, both descend inde-

pendently from a common ancestor, and both, in different ways, witness to second thoughts about the best wording for the text. (That is, the version in the holograph shows Hoccleve sometimes revising his original text, at places where the non-holograph copies show the preservation of an earlier version of the translation.) We shall observe this pattern in several of the other translated texts here edited.

In the 'Epistre', for example, we can observe a variation between the holograph and the non-holograph copies in respect of first person pronoun reference in the translation. Christine had used the plural form favoured by royalty at beginning and end of her letter, but in the body of the text had generally preferred the more intimate singular form. The holograph, for the most part, turns these latter into first person plural forms, and creates a fairly consistently royal presence for the speaker throughout. The non-holograph copies, by contrast, preserve the singular form of the pronoun in the middle of the text.⁴¹ The easiest explanation for this variation must be that in copying out his text in the holograph Hoccleve has adapted it: in respect of this form, the non-holograph copies witness better to an earlier version of Hoccleve's text. Hence the inconsistency at VI.221, where the holograph switches from plural to singular pronoun within a single phrase.

It follows that we must take seriously the witness to Hoccleve's text provided by all the manuscripts, holograph and non-holograph alike. That witness, of course, differs from text to text, but a few general points are in order at the outset. (1) D seems to have been more widely read than either of the other holographs. Its copy of the second *Gesta* narrative was used by William Browne in 1614 for his version of the story.⁴² Marginal notes indicate at least four later owners and/or readers of the manuscript.⁴³ Since these notes are absent from the material copied into the manuscript by Stowe in the sixteenth century (the whole of the first item and ll. 1–252 of the second) to replace missing material, it is probable that they predate Stowe's intervention. H1 and H2 attracted no comparable annotations. (2) Subgroups occur within the non-holograph manuscripts, but no one subgroup, much less any single surviving copy of any Hoccleve text, has greater authority than any other for the establishment of Hoccleve's 'first thoughts'. (3) Consequently, I am happiest to use the evidence of the non-holograph manuscripts to establish an earlier version of the text only when they agree unanimously against the holograph version and with the 'source' in respect of significant detail. That agreement, in what follows, I represent by the siglum *H. Since *H has a purely notional existence, I record its forms in modern English.

One text, Hoccleve's translation of the lyric from the Deguileville *Pèlerinage*, the 'Compleynte paramont', presents problems of a very particular and pressing

kind. The non-holograph copies of this work all appear at the appropriate point in a prose translation of the complete *Pèlerinage*, *The Pilgrimage of the Life of the Soul*, dated 1400/1413.⁴⁴ The textual relations of the poem correspond broadly to that of the *Pilgrimage* as a whole. The *Pilgrimage* is a most interesting work, and deserves to be more widely known.⁴⁵ In particular, the translation has responded to the formal intricacies of its original by translating into rhyme royal—the same stanza form used by Hoccleve for the 'Conpleynte paramont'—a number of speeches of the original, which it has inserted into the body of the prose translation at the appropriate points. The presence of the Hoccleve poem in the *Pilgrimage* has occasioned considerable debate about whether Hoccleve wrote some or all of the lyrics, or just the 'Conpleynte paramont'; whether, if so, he or another writer inserted them/it into the text of the *Pilgrimage*; or whether he translated the whole Deguileville work and later excerpted the 'Conpleynte paramont' to send it to the Countess of Hereford. As earlier noted, the holograph is generally more authoritative as a witness to Hoccleve's first thoughts than the copies in the *Pilgrimage*, so it would follow that, if Hoccleve translated the whole *Pilgrimage*, he must have revised the text of the 'Conpleynte paramont' when he added the poem to it. On the other hand, the other poems in the translation were almost certainly not written by Hoccleve, which makes it unlikely that he produced the whole work.⁴⁶ If so, the translator of the *Pilgrimage* must have known of the existence of Hoccleve's poem, and decided to incorporate it into his work. There is a parallel for this practice in the insertion of a lyric by Chaucer, the 'ABC', also a translation from an earlier Deguileville *Pèlerinage* (this time *Le pèlerinage de la vie de l'homme*), into an anonymous Middle English translation of that work.⁴⁷

Even here, our difficulties with the text of the 'Conpleynte paramont' are not completely over. The holograph copy in H1 ends with a phrase which Hoccleve used elsewhere in H1 and H2 to mark the end of a poem: 'c'est tout'. But the copy of the poem in the *Pilgrimage* continues for another five stanzas, also translated without a break from Deguileville's text. These *might* have been written by Hoccleve, and cut from the version he sent the Countess, but their authorship is sufficiently uncertain to warrant their printing here as Appendix 1.⁴⁸

Fortunately, the other texts do not present such a challenge to the reader. The non-holograph copies do, however, have considerable significance for the study of Hoccleve's works, on both micro- and macro-levels (that is, the levels of verbal detail and larger structure). So we may now turn to their evidence, alongside that of the holographs, to see what they have to tell us.

V On Hoccleve's two holograph copies of the 'ars vtillissima'

The readiest place to begin, perhaps, is with the Hoccleve text which survives, as earlier noted, in two holograph copies, D and H2, and the seven non-holograph copies B, C, Ha1, L, R, S, and Y: the chapter translated from Suso's *Horologium* on preparing for one's death. Originally H2 looks to have carried a complete copy of the translation: now only ll. 1–672 survive. D positions the copy relative to the overall frame of the *Series* by reference to it in a previous section (VII.2.205–17), which probably indicates that the text had been composed earlier and was now being prepared for inclusion in the *Series*. The Suso text has clear relevance to major themes and structural principles of the *Series* as a whole: and, indeed, of the whole of Hoccleve's work. Its theme of suffering and death, as we shall see, has the force almost of an obsession with Hoccleve. Similarly, its use of framing and framed dialogues—the first between a disciple figure and Lady Wisdom, the second between the disciple and a young man whom the disciple imagines on the point of death—is a favoured structuring device in the work of Hoccleve, especially in the *Series*, and witnesses to Hoccleve's understanding that dialogue can function as a tool of self-discovery. In H2 the copy comes at the end of the MS, and, as earlier noted, is accommodated very differently to that collection by a pair of verses and a marginal note:

After our song, our mirthe and our gladnesse
Heer folwith a lessoun of heuynesse
Salomon Extrema gaudii luctus occupat etc.
[Prov. 14.12: weeping occupys the ends of joy]

Comparison of these two copies with each other and with Suso's Latin shows that the version in D is generally closer to the Latin than that in H2.⁴⁹ At such points, therefore, D is probably closer to Hoccleve's original than H2: that is, Hoccleve in producing the latter version modified his original in small ways as he went along.⁵⁰ It is not so easy to decide the relation of H2 and D to one another where Hoccleve is not directly translating from Suso's Latin. However, H2's copy yields only three instances of possible superior readings.⁵¹ Just possibly Hoccleve copied the version in H2 directly from D, though it is as likely that 'both copies radiated independently from a single lost exemplar'.⁵²

Though minor, the changes in H2 throw into sharper relief a number of elements in Hoccleve's text. One such set of changes, also noted by Bowers, concerns the time scale of the events depicted and may serve to 'create a greater sense of urgency'—as we shall see, urgency similarly characterizes the *Gesta*

narratives in the *Series*—in their appeal to the disciple-figure, and through him the reader, to repent while there is still time.⁵³ Similar reasoning may account for another change in H2, when (VII.4.322) the young man tells the disciple how he failed to do penance for his sins in the time loaned to him for that purpose; in D, by contrast, he was more secure, in that God *granted* him time in which to repent (cf. Lat. 'concessum').

Another change in H2 possibly witnesses to a greater drive for precision concerning the identity of the imagined young man. At first the narrative presents him unambiguously as a creation of the disciple's imagination (VII.4.87–90), but during the course of his conversation with the disciple he acquires a semi-independent existence, most strikingly when he invites the disciple to a further act of imaginative projection (VII.4.491–7), so that he becomes real relative to the fantasy he triggers. His departure from the scene leaves the disciple as bewildered and uncertain as the audience of a Pirandello play about the boundaries between the real and the fantastic (VII.4.753–4): one of the more exciting elements of what is, up till then, a fairly traditional exposition of the theme 'lerne to dye'. H2 alters a detail in D so as to make plain at the outset the imaginative character of the revelation-experience. In its version, Wisdom instructs the disciple to 'beholde inward [D now, Lat. nunc] the liknesse. . . of a man dyyng and talkyng with thee' (4.85–6).⁵⁴

The changes to D in H2 may thus witness to two subtly different impulses on the part of a copyist of a text: a drive to heighten the effects of the original; a drive to make its meaning clearer. Both practices have ready parallels in medieval and later translation.

We can also see these, or similar, impulses at work in the non-holograph copies of the Suso text. I had hoped, when I began consulting these *H copies of the text, to find readings peculiar to their common ancestor *H and shared with Suso's Latin, so that I could use *H as a third independent witness to Hoccleve's translation, and (even) to produce a critical edition of the translation by recording the agreement of any two of the three versions, in D, H2 and *H, against the third.⁵⁵ Regrettably, I could not do so. *H agrees with D against H2 in most of the earlier-noted instances where the latter introduced error (exceptionally, *H shares an error with H2 at VII.4.220), as also where H2 may have preserved the correct reading. *H also shares a number of readings with H2 against D where the Latin provides no conclusive support for either reading.⁵⁶ It also includes a number of unique readings. Some of these are demonstrably erroneous;⁵⁷ the witness of others is uncertain. I have found only a few places where the *H version may be superior to that in D (they are VII.4.194, discussed below, and VII.4.445), and I am doubtful that they can bear much weight.

Nevertheless, unlikely though readings unique to *H are to be Hoccleve's, its copy of the Suso translation provides striking witness to what an early reader of the text, the scribe of *H, saw in it. *H is often more vigorous in its details than either D or H2. Thus at VII.4.662, where the dying man's breath begins to fail in both D and H2, it is his 'wind' which gives out in *H; again, at VII.4.778, near the end of the work, *H replaces the disciple's 'now wole Y voide [*remove*] fethirbeddes softe' in D (Lat. 'tolle tolle a me lectisterniorum mollitiem' [take away, take away from me the softness of couches])—an expression of the disciple's new-found determination to embrace the rigours of the spiritual life—with the much more dramatic 'o fy upon the featherbeds soft'.

A final change, from 'hardnesse' to 'hardinesse' in the following quotation, is also worth lingering over:

The way of trouthe Y lefte and drow to wrong. *drew*
 On me nat shoon the light of rightwisnesse. *shone*
 The sonne of intellect nat in me sprong. *did not. . . rise*
 Y am weery [H2*H I weery am] of my wroght
 wikkidnesse.
 Y walkid haue weyes of hardnesse[*H hardinesse] *difficulty*
 And of perdition. Nat kowde Y knowe
 The way of God.
 (VII.4.190–6)

This represents Suso's

Erravi a via veritatis, et iustitiae lumen non luxit mihi, et sol intelligentiae non est ortus mihi. Lassatus sum in via iniquitatis et perditionis, et ambulavi vias difficiles; viam autem Domini ignoravi (Künzle 1977: 529)
 [I wandered from the way of truth, and the light of justice did not shine upon me. I have grown weary in the way of iniquity and perdition, and I have walked difficult paths. The way of the Lord I did not know]

Given the insistent repetitions of this passage, it is not easy to decide positively whether 'hardnesse' or 'hardinesse' is Hoccleve's original reading. It remains an outside possibility that the *H variant 'hardinesse' translates 'iniquitatis', in which case it probably reflects an earlier version of the translation by Hoccleve, one which, in respect of this detail, he modified when producing the version in D and H2; more probably, DH2's 'weyes of hardnesse' translates Suso's 'vias difficiles', which means that the *H variant is scribal and not authorial. Either way, though, the *H variant generates a complexity wanting in the other versions and

largely undeveloped in the Latin. Its account of the ways the sinner follows shows the sinner not so much suffering the penalty for his sins as hardening himself in the commission of those same sins.

In one minor respect, the Suso text in *H probably witnesses better to Hoccleve's original than either of the holographs: its glosses. D regularly and H2 occasionally provide marginal Latin glosses to the translation, as a check on the translation and an authorization of it. This feature also occurs elsewhere in the *Series*: in the 'Dialogue', where Hoccleve is translating from the Bible, from 'Bernard' (either Bernard of Cluny, or St Bernard of Clairvaux) and from Geoffrey of Vinsauf;⁵⁸ and in the moralizations to the two stories translated from the *Gesta Romanorum*, when Hoccleve is translating the Bible quotations embedded in the moralizations. The practice, which also characterizes manuscript copies of the *Regement*, presumably witnesses to Hoccleve's desire to provide his works with the paraphernalia of medieval scholarly editorial practice, so as to claim for himself, as Chaucer and Gower had done before him, the status of vernacular author.⁵⁹ The non-holograph copies take the practice much further than either of the holographs.

A notable instance occurs in 'My Complainte', where, in an anticipation of the following dialogue with Hoccleve's friend, and of dialogues later in the *Series*, most notably the Suso text, Hoccleve reads from the *Synonyma* of Isidore of Seville.⁶⁰ In this text, a man lamenting his unfortunate situation is given good advice by the figure of Reason. Hoccleve translates the relevant speeches for us (VII.1.309–71). All *H MSS accompany the translation with extensive glosses from the Isidorean original, and scholars have generally taken the view that Hoccleve was responsible for them.⁶¹

Similarly, where comparison is possible, the glosses from the *Horologium* preserved in *H are sometimes closer to the accompanying verse translations or to Suso's Latin than are those in D.⁶² Sometimes, too, where details are wanting in D, the glosses as preserved in *H stand in a closer relation to the translation than do the printed versions consulted.⁶³ This happens particularly when Suso is quoting from the Bible (e.g. VII.4.622–3, 844–6, 850–8). Given the many variants of these quotations that existed in copies both of the Bible and, probably, of the *Horologium*, it is difficult to decide at what point in the development of Hoccleve's text these last three glosses originated. It is even possible that they were made by a later scribe to bring the gloss into line with Hoccleve's own translation. Nevertheless, they are most likely to have originated with Hoccleve.

VI The holographs versus the other copies: the case of the *Gesta* narratives

Marginal glosses are, it must be admitted, marginal to most readers' interests, but details of other texts in the *Series*, notably the two *Gesta* narratives, are much more important for an understanding of the *Series*: and, what is more, they argue for the probable superiority of *H over D as witness to Hoccleve's first thoughts about those two narratives, since the versions in *H are regularly closer to the analogues consulted, in respect of significant detail, than are those in D.⁶⁴

Some of the changes to *H in D's version of the first *Gesta* story are particularly noteworthy. At one point, not quite midway through the story, the saintly heroine has been banished as the result of a false accusation of murder. In D she rides off towards the east, to the accompaniment of an anxious commentary by the narrator:

What leue þat shee took ne woot I nat,	
Or þat shee fro þat place was ywent—	<i>before; had gone</i>
The book maketh no mencion of that—	
But hir palfray shee herself hath hent,	<i>horse; took</i>
And so foorth rood toward the orient.	
O emperice, our lord God gye thee,	<i>guide</i>
For yit thee folwith more aduersitee.	
(VII.3.428–34)	

For D's weak connective 'so' (432), shared, admittedly, with a subgroup of *H (C2DR), the other manuscripts of *H offer the much more vivid 'sole', which parallels the reading of the analogues (Lat. 'sola'). It seems probable therefore that the holograph reading witnesses to second thoughts on the part of Hoccleve. Given how important solitude is as a theme of the story, and, indeed, of the *Series* as a whole, and given how often Hoccleve stresses the solitude of his protagonists, it is odd that he should have chosen in D to remove so obvious a pointer to this major theme. His modification is the odder since the moralization preserves the detail unchanged in both holograph and other copies at a point where the analogues again provide authority for its presence (VII.3.1039).

Hard on the heels of this change comes another, equally significant. As she rides away, the Empress spies a thief about to be hanged on a gallows, and bargains for his life in return for his service (he will repay her kindness by betraying her). The gallows appears in the holograph 'on hir right hand' (VII.3.435), but in the other MSS on her left hand. This reading, also shared by the analogues, well suggests the 'sinister' nature of the service the thief will

later perform for the Empress: a point strengthened by the detail, shared by all manuscripts, and paralleled in the analogues, that the Empress was journeying 'toward the orient'. Where, therefore, the holograph situates the gallows, on the Empress's right hand, in the south, the non-holograph copies position them on her left hand and in the morally unpromising north. On the face of it, it is surprising that Hoccleve abandoned so obvious a moral marker when revising his text in the holograph. But maybe not: in common with the other moralized narratives of the *Gesta Romanorum*, the narrative of the virtuous Empress is so heavily signposted with moral markers, most of which D and *H share, that the absence of one of them may not be in itself especially significant. (And, of course, simple inattention may be enough to account for this and the previous change to the text in the holograph.)

Another change in the first *Gesta* narrative has a parallel of sorts with that earlier noted in the second holograph copy of the Suso translation. The *H scribes regularly include reference to the temporal context of the narrative, by means principally of the adverb 'now', a word which occurs with great frequency in the tales, not least as a marker of a new development in the narrative. The greater sense of immediacy that results links with a very distinctive element of the narrative, as, indeed, of the *Series* as a whole: haste.⁶⁵ Such changes are most strikingly focused in the single stanza near the start of the story when the wicked brother-in-law, the first of the men to attempt the Empress's virtue, is proposing to hang the Empress by her hair from a tree if she will not yield herself to him:

'But if þat thou consente wilt [*H adds now] to me,	<i>unless</i>
In this foreste as swythe right [*H adds now] wole Y	<i>immediately</i>
Hange thee by thyn heer vpon a tree,	<i>hair</i>
Wher no wight shall thee fynde, and so,' quod he,	<i>person</i>
'Of wikkid deeth thou sterue shalt and die.	<i>you will die a wicked death</i>
Truste on noon [*H adds other] help at al	
[BLSY adds now], ne remedie.	<i>no</i>

(VII.3.219–24)

Whoever was responsible for these changes had a clear sense of the underlying dynamic of the whole volume.⁶⁶

Another notable instance of variation concerns modifications in *H and/or D to Hoccleve's syntax. In the *Series*, as throughout his work, Hoccleve favours distinctive modifications to normal English word order, much in excess of what the constraints of his chosen verse form dictated—and one, it must be admitted, as my marginal glosses will indicate, which does not always make for easy

communication of the sense. These include inversions of subject/direct object and verb, of auxiliary and infinitive/participle/adjective, and of preposition and verb; omission of adverbial 'to' as marker of an infinitive of purpose; position of negative particle before the verb; and a marked preference for absolute constructions modelled on Latin but often introduced into the translation where the analogues lack them.⁶⁷ I have argued elsewhere that these practices witness to Hoccleve's desire to achieve a high style.⁶⁸ We can support this view by observing a striking contrast with Hoccleve's practice in both translated and original prose in the *Series*. In his prose Hoccleve favours the placing of past participles at the end of phrases, but otherwise he hardly has recourse to unfamiliar word order, even though the religious subject-matter of the prose passages might have easily sanctioned recourse to high style. So this 'high' style seems to characterize Hoccleve's poetry rather than his prose. *H regularly, though by no means invariably, modifies the text of D so as to produce a less obviously artificial style.⁶⁹ Here it is not clear which manuscript tradition, D or *H, provides a better witness to the original version. If *H's less artificial style reflects Hoccleve's first thoughts better than D, it would follow that in producing D Hoccleve had actively heightened the syntactic strangenesses of the earlier version. If, on the other hand, the forms in *H witness to later scribal activity, then we must conclude that the *H scribe was trying to play down what he saw as his author's stylistic eccentricities.⁷⁰

The portrait of Hoccleve's friend, so important an element in the development of the *Series*, as we shall see, also undergoes an interesting minor modification in the framing conclusion to the first *Gesta* narrative. As he did with his 'Compleinte', Hoccleve shows Friend his latest work, the first *Gesta* narrative, when, so to say, the ink is barely dry. Friend's reaction, at least as presented in D, is very positive: he questions Hoccleve about the omission of the tale's moralizing conclusion, but he finds the story 'wel vnto [his] lykyng' (VII.3.960). In *H, however, he expresses himself more cautiously: the story has been only 'sumdel' to his pleasure. This reading seems to me not scribal but authorial. If so, it might follow that Hoccleve had second thoughts, when revising the *Series* to submit it to the Countess of Westmoreland, about the role of Friend in his work and possible future readings of that work: though whether Friend grows more or less positive in his response as Hoccleve reworks him is an open question.

A last instance of variation, this time from the second *Gesta* narrative, is also worth noting briefly. Like the first *Gesta* narrative, this story, about the moral education of the prodigal Jonathas, functions by repetition: in this case, of Jonathas's foolish trust in the prostitute Fellicula, with whom he has taken up near the start of the story and who, each time he trusts her with another vital

secret, betrays his trust once more. In the end the prodigal learns his lesson, and, to punish Fellicula, gives her to eat the fruit of a tree which had caused him to become leprous. The result is immediate and gruesome: 'hir wombe opned and out fil eche entraille/ That in hir was'. D accompanies this ending with a little moral: 'thus wrecchidly lo this gyle [*deceitful*] man dyde' (VII.5.664–6). As it stands in D, the latter phrase is a nonsense, since for Hoccleve 'dyde' must mean 'died',⁷¹ and it is Fellicula, not Jonathas, who dies. *H, with support of the analogues, makes clear that the line should read, as Furnivall read it, 'thus wrecchidly, lo, this gyle woman dyde'.

VII *Ordinatio* in the holograph and non-holograph copies of the *Series*

The non-holograph copies of the *Series* have a further importance for the reader at what I earlier called the macro-level of structure, and can show two subtly different ways of presenting the material, for both of which Hoccleve may have been responsible: and, as importantly, can show us ways of reading it.⁷² To start with the holograph first: as edited by Furnivall from D, the *Series* consists of five items, which Furnivall numbers 20–24.⁷³ (1) The first item is 'My Complainte', a name given to it near the beginning of the manuscript (rubric to VII.1.35 in both D and *H) and at the end of all *H manuscripts (rubrics to VII.1.35, VII.2.1).⁷⁴ 'My Complainte' is itself preceded by a five-stanza prologue, so indicated in the rubric to VII.1.35 in all manuscripts. (2) The second item in D is 'A Dialogue' (so all *H MSS; D has the fuller title 'dialogus cum amico' [dialogue with a friend]). The dialogue functions in part as a prologue to the next two items in the anthology, since it includes comment on both. Thereafter, rubrics by Hoccleve authorize Furnivall's division of the rest of the text into: (3) the first of the two *Gesta* narratives, a 'fabula de quadam imperatrice Romana' [story of a certain Roman Empress]. This is followed by a brief linking passage of dialogue between Hoccleve and his friend, which serves to introduce the moral of the previous tale. (4) The moral is linked to the next tale by a rubric: 'explicit moralizacio, et incipit ars vtillissima sciendi mori' [here the moral ends, and the most useful art of knowing how to die begins]; the latter is marked off at the end by 'explicit illa pars per quam sciendum est mori' [here finishes that part by which you may learn to die]. What follows, though it wants rubrics in D, functions as a brief preface to a prose translation of the 'ixe lesson which is rad [read]/ In holy chirche vpon allhalwen [All Saints'] day' (VII.4.925–6), the so-called 'De caelesti Jerusalem'. (5) Lastly, we have a further passage of framing dialogue, which serves as prologue to the second tale from

the *Gesta Romanorum*—it is so described in the rubric to VII.5.85 in D and in the rubric to the first line in all *H manuscripts (for this latter D offers ‘hic additur alia fabula ad instanciam amici mei predilecti assiduam’ [here another story is added at the earnest insistence of my special friend]). After the tale comes a prose moralization of the tale, not set apart from the tale itself by a rubric in D. If we except the rubric at the head of Furnivall’s item 5, D seems to be using these rubrics so as to play down the sense of the anthology’s frame, and throw emphasis on its major individual items.⁷⁵

A similar understanding seems to be operating when four of the non-holograph MSS (BCLY) present the first *Gesta* story as the third chapter of an anthology, and subdivide both it and the following Suso text.⁷⁶ Precedent occurs for both practices: copies of *The Canterbury Tales* sometimes number their individual narrative items as continuous chapters of a book;⁷⁷ long texts like Chaucer’s tales of the Knight, Clerk and Man of Law are regularly sectionalized, and Hoccleve’s *Regement* treats its materials similarly. The removal of individual elements from the frame, and their copying into new manuscript collections, point in a similar direction: here parallels suggest themselves with the religious narratives of *The Canterbury Tales*.⁷⁸ Like the latter, it was the explicitly religious works which were excerpted: the two *Gesta* stories were anthologized three times, and once copied out on their own; the Suso was anthologized twice.⁷⁹ Two of the new anthologies, in D2 and R, join the *Gesta* stories to a copy of the *Regement*, like the non-holograph copies of the whole *Series* themselves. By this linking of the texts they may have sought to foreground the exemplary qualities to be found in all of them; alternatively, the royal associations of the *Gesta* narratives may have suggested their appearance in company with Hoccleve’s manual of instruction for his princely reader.

At the same time, Hoccleve also structures his work, in the holograph, by means of large capital letters, in such a way as to suggest many more sections to the work. In addition to the main units identified by Hoccleve’s rubrics, these capital letters also identify the following subsections: the passage linking the first *Gesta* narrative and its *moralizacio*; the *moralizacio* itself; the passage linking the Suso translation and the next piece, ‘De caelesti Jerusalem’; and the ‘De caelesti Jerusalem’ itself. Strikingly, Hoccleve further subdivides the latter by means of a large capital at a point where he stops translating, and produces a brief summary—original, so far as we can presently tell—of the opposing pains of hell, almost as if he wished to help the reader distinguish his translated from his original writing.

The non-holograph MSS of the *Series* broadly conform to the pattern enunciated in the previous paragraph. They add a number of rubrics, which suggest that the scribe of their common ancestor saw the work’s narrative frame as

playing as important a part as its framed narratives. Thus, in addition to the 'prologues' to items 1 and 5 in D, the non-holograph MSS include rubrics which make the framing dialogue after the first *Gesta* tale the prologue to a new item, the moralization of the tale. They further present the framing speech after the Suso translation as a prologue to another new item, the 'ix lesson þat is red on all halow day'. One manuscript copy (S) indicates the importance of this new item by an illuminated capital on a par with those that it uses to introduce 'My Compleinte' and the 'Dialogue'. Lastly, they mark off the second *Gesta* narrative from its moralization in a way that suggests that this too functions as a separate item.⁸⁰

Later readers also saw the material added to the Suso translation as a separate item in the anthology. Pits' account of Hoccleve's major works, quoted at the head of D, gives pride of place, at the head of the list, to the translation of the ninth lesson for All Saints' Day. He owes to Bale this distinctive understanding of the place of the translation in the *Series*, though Bale's list of Hoccleve's works, copied at the head of one of the *H MSS, Y, puts it in its proper place in the sequence. Bale called the work, as we have noted, 'De caelesti Jerusalem', and gave its opening line as 'tres alias libri partes nunc' [now the three other parts of the book], his version of the first line of what the *H MSS call the prologue to the 'ix lesson þat is red on all halow day': 'The othir iii partes which in this book' (VII.4.918). The offered title presumably derives from the prologue's account of 'the citee/ Called celestial Jerusalem' (VII.4.933–4).⁸¹ Admittedly, Y also carries, above its copy of Bale's list, a later list in English of the works in the manuscript, which reads the 'De caelesti Jerusalem' as an appendix to the Suso translation ('To know how to learn to die with þe 9th lesson on Allhallows Day'). So the status of this text as a separate item remains unclear.

It is interesting that Hoccleve chose to partner or complete the Suso chapter with the 'De caelesti Jerusalem'. Had he been translating from a complete copy of the *Horologium*, which, as we shall see, he probably was not doing, he might have chosen to complete his translation of the 'ars vtillissima' with two earlier chapters in which Suso had produced a fine description of the pains of hell and joys of heaven (I.x–xi). However, a parallel of sorts exists for Hoccleve's practice in a MS (Lichfield Cathedral 16) first noted in this connection by Furnivall; in it the Latin and a Middle English prose translation of the Suso chapter is followed, first, by a copy of the *Pricke of Consience*, and then by Latin, Anglo-Norman and Middle English versions of the ps.-Anselmian *De Quatuordecim Partibus Beatitudinis*.⁸²

VIII Towards an interpretation of the *Series*

But the non-holograph manuscripts of the complete work not only suggest ways in which Hoccleve may have thought of organizing the *Series*: they also show us ways of reading it. This is immediately apparent from the rubrics they provide for the two stories from the *Gesta Romanorum*. The rubrics at the start and end of the first *Gesta* narrative in the non-holograph copies are close to those found in the holograph,⁸³ and they produce a reading of the narrative which focuses upon its literal, ‘historical’, dimension. This is a story about a noble—and, *H adds, a virtuous—empress. The two traditions diverge slightly in their rubrics for the second *Gesta* narrative: D reads it as the story of a wicked woman, the prostitute Fellicula, whereas for *H it is the young man Jonathas, the story’s hero, who is at the story’s heart. D’s version of this second rubric suggests that Hoccleve saw it as a contribution to the anti-feminist debate in which he had previously been implicated by his translation of Christine’s *Epistre*; that of *H reflects more accurately the fictional circumstances of the commissioning of the translation by Friend for his wild young son.

I shall have more to say about both versions later. What is striking about both sets of rubrics is the contrast with their Anglo-Latin analogues. For example, the copy of these narratives in the earlier-noted D5, whose verbal detail otherwise matches Hoccleve’s translation quite closely, provides chapter headings which foreground an allegorical reading of them:

(for Ierelaus) de misericordia Dei super sentenciam suam contra peccatorem [concerning the mercy of God in relation to his judgement against the sinner]

(for Jonathas) de diuersis sibilacionibus siue suggestionibus diaboli contra audienciam verba Dei et vtilitatem, et est bona introduccio [concerning the different whisperings or suggestions of the devil against hearing the words of God and its usefulness, and it offers a good introduction]

We can see an immediate link between Hoccleve’s view of the stories in D and that of the scribe of D5. For the latter, the actions ascribed to God in the first story, and the devil in the second, clearly originate with the good woman of the first narrative and the bad woman of the second: good women and bad are, for him, as for D, the trigger of the narrative and key to its meaning. But the differences are equally striking, and more significant. For the scribe of D5 the stories exist as a stalking-horse for abstract moral teaching; for D and *H, the stories seem to signify, as similar narratives did for Chaucer, as items of (admittedly exemplary) history. More to the point, the lively interest the stories reveal in the

moral situation of their protagonists does not foreclose the question of their own interpretation. Readers, Hoccleve himself included, may find in them whatever speaks to their own situation. This possibly accounts for the initial omission of the moralization of the first *Gesta* narrative, and its subsequent inclusion, according to the rubric in *H, as a separate item, only after Friend has noted its absence.

The non-holograph manuscripts of the *Series* also offer readers another important interpretative key. They all follow the tale of Jonathas with a copy of Lydgate's 'Dance of Death'. Lydgate is not named as translator until the last stanza of the envoy, and the *H scribe may even have thought he was copying another text by Hoccleve: the language and the situation have clear echoes in the *Series*.⁸⁴ At all events, *H seems to have seen the *Series* as organized about the idea of death.⁸⁵ At the emotional, if not the literal, centre of the anthology comes the chapter from Suso, earlier anticipated in the 'Dialogue' where it is described as part, or the whole, of a 'small tretis' and entitled 'Lerne for to dye' (VII.2.205–6). This text attracts to itself in S a cluster of marginal annotations, and a striking illumination, reproduced as the frontispiece of this volume;⁸⁶ it also attracted a very different set of sixteenth-century annotations in D.⁸⁷ As a detail early in the chapter makes plain (VII.4.23–8), the chapter itself stands at the head of a set of four linked chapters (*Horologium* II.ii–v) instructing readers not only how to prepare for death (II.ii) but also how to live (II.iii) and how to prepare themselves, by way of reception of the Eucharist (II.iv) and heart-felt and constant praise of divine wisdom (II.v), for the joys of heaven. At the end of his translation of the first chapter (VII.4.918–24), Hoccleve admits his failure to 'touche' the 'othir iii partes which in this book/Of the tretice of deeth expressid be', which would have been well beyond his 'smal konnyng and symple art'. If he is here referring to *Horologium* II.iii–v, he brings into yet clearer focus the narrow range of the exercise.

Admittedly, the chapter on preparing for one's death enjoyed a widespread independent existence in manuscript, as also in the *Speculum Spiritualium*, sometimes with cuts to the beginning so as to leave it a more obviously free-standing work, and sometimes as part of an anthology organized about the theme of preparing for death;⁸⁸ so Hoccleve may not have known the chapter in its wider context but only in the narrower one, as indeed his earlier description of the text and offered title for it suggest, and would hence have been unable to qualify its unremitting negatives with the positives of Suso's later chapters.⁸⁹ But the fact that he chose to translate the chapter at all—and, moreover, that he translated the whole chapter, with its explicit announcement, at the start, of the more positive material to be discovered in the next three chapters—is significant.

As with the Suso, so throughout the *Series*. Death, and symbolic anticipa-

tions of it—solitude, sickness, misunderstanding—recur with great frequency in the *Series*. Death as a deserved punishment occurs in Suso and the tale of Jonathas; undeserved deaths figure prominently in the other *Gesta* narrative; sickness—deserved and undeserved, mental and physical, part of the divine purpose—appears in every part of the work;⁹⁰ solitude links the narrator of ‘My Compleinte’ with the protagonists of the *Gesta* narratives. To widen the focus of our discussion, solitude also characterizes the protagonists of other texts presented here, like the Virgin at the foot of the Cross in the ‘Conpleynte paramont’ (no. I), or Hoccleve himself in his celebrated ‘Male Regle’ (no. II); it also characterises the relationships of the sexes in Hoccleve’s reworking of Christine de Pizan (no. VI). Fear of death joins the narrator of the ‘Balade’ for Chichele (no. IV) with the protagonist of the Suso translation. Hence the importance of the repeated motif of complaint:⁹¹ of complaint by noble women against their faithless lovers (‘Epistre’); by the Virgin Mary against all the forces, natural and human, that are failing to help her to release her son from his torment (‘Conpleynte paramont’); by Hoccleve himself against his own excesses or his friends’ neglect (‘Male Regle’, ‘My Compleinte’). Complaint almost becomes a poetic style in the translation of Christine de Pizan, as Hoccleve’s later comment on the translation seems to suggest (VII.2.772).

Also relevant in this connection, those important sixteenth-century students of Hoccleve, Stowe and Speght, may even have understood the title of the first item of the *Series* as applying to the whole work. They write of Hoccleve’s enforced recantation for the alleged anti-feminist bias of the ‘Epistre’, in ‘that booke of his, called *Planctus proprius*’ [i.e. ‘My Compleinte’].⁹² If this reference is not a simple error on their part (for the recantation occurs in the ‘Dialogue’, not in the ‘Planctus’), they may be drawing attention to an important thematic principle of the whole work. The production of the whole work, then, would function as a form of complaint, and its completion would witness to the resocializing for which the poet had prayed at the end of the ‘Planctus’ proper.

This solitude explains what we might call the several false endings of the *Series*. Hoccleve offers to end his writing career (VII.2.239–40), as a preparation for the end of his life, with the translation of Suso, which an unnamed ‘devout man’ has urged him to undertake. (As earlier noted, he has considered translating a military manual for the Duke of Gloucester, but decided against it.⁹³) He is not able to start work immediately on the Suso. Friend reminds him of the need to placate the *gentil* female readership to whom his earlier translation of Christine de Pizan had given offence. The commission deflects Hoccleve from his Suso translation: only after he has completed the translation of the first *Gesta* story, within the fictional frame of things, is he able to get to the Suso. And his first ending of the *Gesta* story is itself a false ending, since, as we noted,

his version turns out to be wanting the *moralizacio*, which Friend gets him to add from a copy he personally loans him.⁹⁴ The completion of the Suso is a further narrative tease, since the promised translation is cut short and replaced by the material describing the joys of heaven and the pains of hell: but at all events it offers a sort of *point final* to the work thus far. This ending reinforces the moralized ending of the previous *Gesta* story and contrasts strikingly with the ending of 'My Complainte'. That had seemed to forecast the poet's reintegration into the community, and looked not for death but rather for the return of his old companions (VII.1.391); now, the ending of the Suso seems to leave Hoccleve with nowhere else to go but death and the last things, precisely as he had forecast (VII.2.239–52).

Unlike the comparable ending to Chaucer's more complex framed narrative collection, though, this ending is no sooner in place than it is disrupted by the return of Friend, with a request diametrically opposed to his previous one, for a work which will warn young men, most notably his own son, of the dangers of consorting with prostitutes. Hoccleve's fear that, in so doing, he will antagonize the very readers he was supposed to placate by his earlier translation leads Friend to turn his own earlier arguments on their head, and to endorse arguments very similar to those Hoccleve had previously advanced in his own defence. Hoccleve had argued that the scribe could not be held responsible for the faults of his author, whose work, he was convinced—as indeed it does—'concludi[d] for' women (VII.2.779, cf. VI.463): not only that, but he had actually identified himself with his readers' cause in the way he wrote (VII.2.772). Following Hoccleve, Friend now argues that an author cannot be held responsible for the ways his readers misread his text.

This domestic version of the literary debate in the Prologue to Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, with putative royal readers to set against Chaucer's God of Love, serves once more to foreground the random nature of literary production and interpretation. In particular, it allows for a reading of the *Series* as a further contribution by Hoccleve to the anti-feminist debate.⁹⁵ So to approach the *Series* involves reading the 'Dialogue' as a prologue to the first *Gesta* narrative, and the second *Gesta* narrative as the story of a wicked woman who got her just deserts. Material probably added by Hoccleve to this latter, concerning the obedience and grief of Jonathas's widowed mother, provides a good female role model to set against that of Fellicula, and reinforces this approach to the tale, as does Hoccleve's slyly ironic view of women's abilities, in such situations, to 'putte vnto the flight/Al sorwe and wo and cacche ageyn confort' (VII.5.145–6).

The debate with Friend makes the further important point that 'faciendi plures libros nullus est finis' [of the making of many books there is no end].

Here, though, unlike Hoccleve's account of the process in the *Regement* (988–1029), and Chaucer's in *The House of Fame*, and unlike their ultimate source, the comments by Qoheleth in Ecclesiastes 12.12, Hoccleve does not seem to find the making of books wearisome to the body ('frequens meditacio, carnis afflictio est') or to endorse Qoheleth's view ('finem loquendi pariter omnes audiamus') that writers and readers should end with that vow of silence symbolized by Chaucer's *retracciouns*. The reason is simple. For Hoccleve, paradoxically, books are an item of mental as well of commercial currency, and their circulation joins readers and writers literally no less than metaphorically. Every text referred to in the *Series* is loaned or requested—or, in the case of 'My Compleinte', listened to—by a friend or promised to a patron. Hoccleve is in 'dette' to the Duke of Gloucester for a publication (VII.2.532); he submits D for approval to the Duchess of Westmoreland. Consequently, the *Series* as a whole dramatizes the reintegration into the community of the writer-as-solitary, a theme central both to 'My Compleinte' and to the ensuing dialogue.

In any case, books, both made and read, witness paradoxically to the principle of dialogue which ensures that, this side of death, no reader or writer is ever truly alone. Hence the importance of dialogue as both narrative and thematic element of Hoccleve's work. Hoccleve and the other scribes have a number of ways of indicating this important aspect of the work. Hoccleve makes much use of the paraph mark to distinguish the speakers in the different narratives of which D is composed.⁹⁶ Other scribes could not so use the paraph mark, since they had used it for stanza divisions, but they too draw the reader's attention to dialogue by regular glossing of lines in 'My Compleinte', the 'Dialogue' and the Suso translation so as to make plain the speakers of the glossed lines.⁹⁷

A small detail from the 'Dialogue' further demonstrates the point that there is no end to the making of books. Like the narratives of the *Series* themselves, Hoccleve's framing monologue and dialogues carry frequent reminders of their own temporal dimension: notably, a date at the end of November when 'My Compleinte' was begun (VII.1.17); 'the holy seson. . . of Lente' (VII.2.662), a time of preparation for Easter by acts of self-denial, and the time when the first *Gesta* narrative was undertaken; an unspecified date 'a wike or two' after its completion (VII.3.953), when Friend returns to check on its progress; and the season of Easter, when Friend tells us he read the second *Gesta* narrative which he is now asking Hoccleve to translate (VII.5.4). These references may be as conventional and symbolic as comparable temporal markers in *The Canterbury Tales*; but, as earlier noted, they may also be straightforwardly factual.

One such is a detail from the 'Dialogue', in the course of which Hoccleve allows himself to be seen revising his own text. He has been making a distinction between his own illness, given by God and not caused by himself, and the

ills of society, which proceed from the exercise of individual choice, like murder, extortion, heresy and falsifying of the currency (VII.2.64–72). Reference to falsifying of the currency triggers an attack on those guilty of the crime. If these people don't trim the coins or wash them, so that the purchaser gets less than he thinks he is paying for (VII.2.106–12), they counterfeit coins with 'golde, copir, clothe and tyn' (VII.2.143). King and commons alike suffer from the practice; yet the perpetrators seem to have escaped punishment. This passage reminds us, as only someone in a financially insecure position would feel the need to do, of the economic base of literary activity.⁹⁸ It is interrupted by a stanza which, as Burrow has shown, must have been composed later:⁹⁹

Whanne I this wroot, many men [B a man,	<i>wrote</i>
D me] dide amis	
Thei weied gold, vnhad auctorite.	<i>weighed; without authority</i>
No statute made was þanne as þat nowe is.	
But sithen gold to weie charged nowe ben we,	<i>since; weigh; obliged</i>
Resoun axeth þat it obeied be.	<i>asks</i>
Nowe time it is vnto weiztes vs drawe,	<i>(to) take ourselves</i>
Sithen that the parlement hath maad it a lawe.	<i>since</i>

(VII.2.134–40)

At first sight it appears, as with so much else in the *Series*, that the opening words of this stanza ('whanne I this wroot'), with their frame-breaking reminders of their own textuality, are a further marker of Hoccleve's debt to Chaucer.¹⁰⁰ There is, however, a vital difference between Chaucer's self-presentation as author and Hoccleve's. Even though he is known to have revised at least one of his own works (the Prologue to the *Legend*), Chaucer does not generally admit to doing so. Hoccleve, by contrast, is as ready to let himself be seen working in the now of textual production as he is willing, with his friend, to engage in the serendipitous now of conversation. It would be perfectly in character, then, if the various literary understandings which this Introduction has so far identified in the non-holograph manuscripts were, in fact, second and even third thoughts by Hoccleve about his own work.¹⁰¹

IX Hoccleve and translations

Scribal comment also suggests another way of reading Hoccleve's texts: as translations. Among the rubrics which MSS of the *Series* provide for the accompanying Lydgate piece occur 'verba translatoris' [words of the translator],

for the translator's voice in the first five stanzas (CLY) and final two stanzas ('l'envoy de translateur': all *H manuscripts). This rubric formally distinguishes the translator's voice from that of the author, whose voice it identifies at the start of the translation proper, in stanzas 6–7, by means of the phrase 'verba auctoris' [words of the author] (so all *H MSS). Except formally, though, this careful distinction between the two voices is a fiction: the translator's voice blurs with that of his source even as it frames it, most notably in his use of a mirror metaphor (31, 49), which, as we have seen, Hoccleve also makes much of. Yet more strikingly, the scribe of E completely obliterated the distinction between original and translated work in his copy of the first *Gesta* narrative, and identified Hoccleve as translator ('verba translatoris') in a passage where Hoccleve, so far as we know, is not translating from his source but acting as an author and commenting ironically on the gap between the real world and the ideal world of the story (VII.3.939–45). Here we find that same confusion between authorial and translatorial roles noted earlier. Hoccleve expressly identifies the last three items of the *Series*—four, if we reckon 'De caelesti Jerusalem' as a separate item—as translations (VII.2.211, 825, VII.4.930, VII.5.7, 26) and he talks of other projected translations (VII.2.561). We can further demonstrate the importance of translation for Hoccleve's work by reference to the incipits and explicits of several of them (in the present edition, nos. I, IV, and VI). It is therefore appropriate to recall earlier comments about medieval translation, as a prelude to a few concluding comments on Hoccleve as translator.

Underpinning Hoccleve's achievements in both his translated and many of his original works is a quality which, for want of a better word, we might call wit: the sort of wit you identify in Donne's 'Good Friday Riding Westward' rather than in the comic climaxes of Chaucer's fabliaux. The translations owe their wit in some measure, where they have it, to their sources, and, given that humour is perhaps the most difficult quality of a text to translate, Hoccleve deserves praise for his achievement.¹⁰²

In the Deguileville translation, as earlier implied, the wit resides in the juxtaposition of the Virgin Mary's actual situation at the foot of the Cross and the hindsight enjoyed by the Christian reader. What she experiences as total disaster, the Christian can see as the necessary preliminary to a total triumph. This juxtaposition is a necessary part of any representation of the Crucifixion in which the writer reveals any interest in, or makes any concession to, the human situation of the protagonists. Deguileville goes much further than most medieval writers on the subject, and anticipates the Herbert of 'The Passion'. In the opening stanzas, for example, the Virgin condemns as so much waste of breath—at best, a pious fiction—the graces promised her before the birth of her son: for example,

O Gaubriel, whan þat thou come aplace	<i>into the place</i>
And madest vnto me thi salewyng	<i>salutation</i>
And seidist thus, 'Heil Mary, ful of grace',	
Whi ne had thu gove me warnyng	<i>did not; give</i>
Of þat grace that veyn is and faylyng,	<i>transitory</i>
As thu now seest, and sey it weel beforen?	<i>saw; well before</i>
Sith my ioye is me rafte, my grace is lorne.	<i>since; taken from; lost</i>
(I.29–35)	

Hoccleve not only carries much of Deguileville's wit over into his translation: by means of (probable) additions to the original, he even strengthens it.¹⁰³

Wit is a rather different affair in the major narratives of the *Series*. In the first instance, we have to deal probably with at least one instance, and possibly with two instances, of humorous fictionalizing by Hoccleve of his relation to his sources: that is, the earlier-noted failure to translate the four linked chapters of Suso's *Horologium* as beyond the poet's competence, and the failure initially to translate the moralization of the first *Gesta* narrative because it was missing from the copy the poet was working from. More to the point, we can argue that, in treating his sources, like Chaucer before him, Hoccleve has exposed a latent irony in them and heightened it. I am not sure this feature is at all in evidence in the Suso translation, but it strongly colours the two translations from the *Gesta Romanorum*, especially in places where passages of direct address to the reader and other narratorial comment occur. Such material has no parallel in the analogues consulted, and, given the basically impersonal character of the narration in the analogues, I am pretty certain that all such material is Hoccleve's own invention.¹⁰⁴ The precedent here seems to be Chaucer's example in his two rhyme royal tales closest to Hoccleve's *Gesta* narratives, those of the Man of Law and the Clerk. Like Chaucer, Hoccleve uses these passages of added comment to loosen the unrelenting moral grip of the narratives and to subject to comic scrutiny their insistent idealizations of their protagonists. In the first *Gesta* narrative, Hoccleve never directly satirizes his saintly heroine as Chaucer's Man of Law does his (cf. *CT* II.709–14), but, like Chaucer's Clerk, he casts a critical eye over the remoteness from the present of the events being narrated, and he draws on his earlier translation of Christine de Pizan to undermine the idealizations of the female role offered by her *Epistre* as well as by his immediate source.¹⁰⁵

I have deferred till the end what was probably Hoccleve's first attempt to translate a witty author, Christine de Pizan, because it will be apparent from the concluding words of the previous paragraph, and from remarks earlier in this Introduction, that Hoccleve's engagement with Christine's *Epistre* is almost as

long-standing as with Chaucer's work, and probably co-terminous with his entire poetic career. As earlier noted, the 'Dialogue' explicitly refers to it; the playful anti- (or pro-?) feminist asides in the *Regement* (5104–94) were arguably produced in Christine's shadow.¹⁰⁶ As if that were not enough, the non-holograph copies of both the 'Epistre' and the 'Dialogue' show that other scribes, and sometimes Hoccleve himself, continued the process of dialogue with Christine that he had first started in 1402. Consequently, we can use Hoccleve's on-going response to Christine's wit as a useful point at which to end this Introduction.

Unlike several of the other texts studied in this Introduction, Hoccleve's 'Epistre' has been the subject of on-going and lively critical debate, so I hope the reader will forgive the narrow focus and general feel of the following comments. For students coming to this exciting text for the first time, though, the comments appended by the copyist John Shirley to his copy of the work in Tr1 will possibly give some sense of it.¹⁰⁷ To begin with, Shirley provides a running title for the work, 'a parable [*var.* a gode parable] made by Occleve', which draws clear attention to the difficulties of interpretation generated by the text. Then, Shirley's incipit describes the work as

a lytel traytis made and compyled by Thomas Occleue of þoffice of þe priue seel, specifying þe maners and þe conuersaciouns boope of men and wymmen conuersaunte in þis lytell yle of Albyone.

Shirley's note does not make clear—but maybe he thought the title did—the identity of the principal speaker of the work; nor does it explain the scale or significance of the 'translation' of Christine's France to Hoccleve's 'Albyone'. But it does draw attention to the work's subject-matter (relations between men and women) as also, maybe, by its reference to 'maners. . . and conuersaciouns', to its distinctive blend of comedy and satire. And it draws attention to the central organizing principle of the work—and, as earlier comments have shown, of most of Hoccleve's writing: conversation. Admittedly, the conversations reported by Cupid in Hoccleve's 'Epistre' are pretty much a one-way affair. The men get all the direct speech, the women only indirect speech (VI.10–12, 17, 190–94); the men initiate, the women merely react.

I have written elsewhere, concerning Hoccleve's translation of Christine's wit, that Hoccleve tends to simplify its complexities and to flatten its distinctive contours, so as to produce a wit that is both broader and more traditional. As an obvious indication of this, we might note the vividly idiomatic speech, laced with *double entendres*, that Hoccleve gives his male seducers when they are in male company (fishing, taking a snack, one for the road: VI.100, 102, 109), by contrast with the courtly language they adopt when speaking to their ladies

(VI.29–35). In so Englishing Christine's courtly French idiom, Hoccleve distinguishes the men from the women in the poem more strongly than Christine does: in his 'Epistre' the women get to state their case only in the summary provided by the God of Love, and only in abstract and figurative (courtly?) language. In so presenting their speech, the God of Love makes ironic common cause with the male speakers he is officially condemning. He also identifies himself with the men, and against the women, by adopting their language, and using colloquialisms ('pot by the stele', VI.50), proverbs (VI.184–6) and possibly even euphemisms (VI.144 has been so read), all added by Hoccleve to his text. But colloquial and proverbial language, allied to euphemism, is a common marker, if not a defining feature, of fabliaux.¹⁰⁸ In so moving his original towards fabliau, Hoccleve is clearly simplifying its message: Christine had not distinguished so sharply between the language of the God and of his female complainants.

This simplification of Christine's original by Hoccleve has partly to do, as my earlier study suggested, with Hoccleve's use of Chaucer, principally Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, to gloss Christine, who had very possibly used the *Legend* herself as a gloss on the anti-feminist traditions she was attacking.¹⁰⁹ Hoccleve's recourse to Chaucer in the 'Epistre' contrasts with his use of Chaucer in the 'Dialogue'. In the latter, in the context of a reference to his earlier translation of Christine's work, he reads Christine through the same Chaucerian lens that she herself may have used as a secondary element in her *Epistre: the Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale*. Hoccleve's dependence on the *Legend*, when he was translating the *Epistre*, resulted in a simpler outline of Christine's work than he produced in the 'Dialogue' when he followed Chaucer and cited the Wife of Bath as an 'auctrice' (VII.2.694).

This intersection of Chaucer and Christine also affects the relation of the holograph (H2) and non-holograph (*H) copies. Thus, for example, H2's condemnation of anti-feminist writing as 'wikkid bookes' (VI.197) almost certainly functions as an echo of a phrase in the *Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale*, against *H's tamer 'sorry books'. Similarly, H2's declaration that man's powers are too 'weyk' to declare fittingly the virtue of the Virgin Mary—that icon of female virtue, regularly used to conclude debate and produce a verdict in favour of women—possibly echoes a phrase in the prologue to the *Prioress's Tale*, an echo lost by *H with the adjective 'lean'.¹¹⁰ Whether, however, these echoes were introduced by Hoccleve into the text at a late stage in its transmission or were part of the work from the very beginning there is at present no telling. Other occurrences in the 'Epistre' of the word 'wicked', especially at VI.230, where it is applied to the wicked sayings of the scholars against women, might support the view that its appearance at VI.197 faithfully represents what

Hoccleve wrote in an earlier draft of his text. If so, the version in *H witnesses to scribal second thoughts. On the other hand, Hoccleve's only explicit reference to the Wife of Bath occurs late in his poetic career, so just possibly the echo of the Wife of Bath at this point in H2 witnesses to later alteration by Hoccleve to an earlier text better preserved, in respect of this detail, in *H.

Elsewhere, too, the holograph and non-holograph copies divide over the precise interpretation of the work, specifically in respect of its presentation of what we might call the work's gendered ethical/social elements. Thus Cupid's power in H2 to set 'mennes hertes' on fire (VI.241) becomes in *H a power over 'folkis', of both genders presumably. Here H2 offers a reading, supported elsewhere in the text, of male crimes followed by their own humiliating reversals, most notably when the cynic falls in love. By contrast, *H widens the focus, as Christine had regularly done, to allow all human beings to be equally affected by desire.¹¹¹ Insofar as Hoccleve had restricted women's sexual role to the granting of pity (VI.43, 72), we may feel that this enlargement of the focus in *H cannot have been his.

One of the two instances of female 'pitee' in the text is itself the subject of further variation. At VI.72 women yield to their lovers as an expression of their 'pitee' in H2, but of their 'virtue' in *H, a term used elsewhere by Hoccleve only of the Virgin Mary (VI.405, 407) and as an encouragement to his female readers (VI.455–61) not to behave like prostitutes (VI.262). *H's use of the term is probably not authorial, then, but it complicates the simpler moral diagram H2 is presenting: as, strikingly, does its understanding of the term in VI.457–60. For these lines H2 offers us

Vertu so noble is and worthy in kynde,	(her) nature
þat vice and shee may nat in feere abyde.	together
Shee puttith vice cleene out of mynde.	
Shee fleeth from him, shee leueth him behynde	

and thus effects the same identification of women and virtue that Christine is working hard to create throughout the *Epistre*. *H replaces the feminine pronouns by masculine, and creates a more complex equation of virtue and maleness. This might have endeared the speaker to the early Church fathers, for whom the virtuous woman was often a sort of honorary male,¹¹² but not, possibly, to his female readers. Consequently, one might speculate that the disapproval by *gentil* women of Hoccleve's 'Epistre', which triggers his first translation from the *Gesta Romanorum*, was not simply a fictional effect—though obvious precedent exists for it in Chaucer's production of his *Legend* to atone for the alleged anti-feminist bias of earlier translations—but an actual occurrence, and

that Hoccleve modified the version in H2 in the light of criticism.

Another modification, this time to the text of the 'Dialogue', may show him (re)acting differently. Here Hoccleve finds himself forced to defend his 'Epistre' against criticisms of female readers who are 'swart wrooth' with him for the translation's alleged anti-feminist bias. As part of his defence, Hoccleve recycles material earlier translated from Christine: notably, her use of the Genesis story of the creation of Adam and Eve.¹¹³ Hoccleve uses Genesis 3.15, in which God curses both the woman and the serpent. God places the woman under the power of the man and gives the serpent power to bruise her heel, and grants her the reciprocal power over the serpent to bruise its head, a phrase conventionally applied to the Virgin Mary. This Biblical text was regularly used in pro- and anti-feminist writing. Hoccleve plays a wonderfully devious game with the text—as he had been less able to do when translating the *Epistre*—by applying it to the power modern wives have to break their husbands' heads:

. . . God seide, 'This womman thyn heed *head*
 Breke shal, for thurgh thyn [the serpent's]
 enticement
 Shee hath ybroken my commandement.'
 Now [*H O], syn womman had of [*H on]
 the feend swich might, *since*
 To breke a mannes heed it seemeth light *easy*
 (2.724–8);

a power they make as 'light' of—find it as 'light' to exercise—as, by implication, their husbands do not find it 'light' to endure. The playfulness continues in the following stanza, where, in an echo of the *Prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale*, Hoccleve exposes women's 'reson' as, at best, *ex post facto* rationalization of instinct: 'hir reson axith haue of men maistrie' (VII.2.732, cf. *CT* III.441–2). This exercise of wit has strong overtones of Chaucer, to whom, in its ironic criticism of the male position and, at the same time, its thinly veiled attack on female excess, it is much closer than to Christine.

As with the 'Epistre', variants witness to second thoughts on the part of another scribe or of Hoccleve himself. Where the non-holograph MSS of this text describe how women, in the person of the Virgin Mary, have power over the devil, the holograph allows the bolder inference to be drawn that their power is derived *from* the devil. If the non-holograph reading provides witness to an earlier version by Hoccleve of his own text, it would follow that Hoccleve began traditionally enough, but made this detail of his text more radical in preparing it for its new reader, the Countess of Westmoreland. If, on the other hand, the

non-holograph reading is not Hoccleve's, we have the picture of a scribe who took fright at the boldness of Hoccleve's irony and watered it down. Either way, Hoccleve emerges from this detail as a witty and adventurous writer, who nailed his colours to the anti-feminist mast more boldly in this later work than he was able to do in the holograph copy of the 'Epistre', when he identified virtue with the feminine principle.

X Afterword

A last point is worth making, as an index both of the strengths and of the limitations of this most attractive writer. Leaving on one side the question of Hoccleve's metre, which, as earlier noted (n. 50), scribes seem to have found irregular and attempted to tidy up, the question remains of Hoccleve's language and imagery. We have already noted how Hoccleve's language is strongly marked by its preference for inversions of normal word order, juxtaposed with passages of idiomatic directness. Equally striking is the poet's readiness to operate within a relatively narrow range of verbal commonplaces. The notes will indicate a number of these. In the *Series*, the repeated turns of phrase bind the disparate elements of that work together and generate links in excess of those formally sanctioned by the overarching frame, and in excess of any links this Introduction has been able to suggest. Notwithstanding earlier remarks about the importance of community in Hoccleve's writing—and wit, after all, presupposes the existence of a community of shared understandings—Hoccleve's repetitions seem to me to function as obsessive expressions of an underlying preoccupation, a sense of personal insecurity and isolation. Like the newly bereaved, or like foreigners trying to make headway in a group of native speakers, it sometimes seems as if, for Hoccleve, conversation, like relationships, can only function satisfactorily on a one-to-one basis, as a purely temporary alleviation of a basic isolation. This makes for a striking contrast with Chaucer, whose major poem is organized about, and celebrates, the idea of group, or with Christine de Pizan, who locates and underpins her account of the struggle between the sexes in an awareness of the support offered individuals by their membership of a single-sex group. One might almost see in the solitude of the Hoccleve narrator a precursor of the narrators of Surrey's poems and Shakespeare's sonnets, and a figure who can speak very directly to our own uncertain and privatized age.

Notes

1. For comment on St Bonaventura's formulation of these four levels (better, sites) of authorial activity, see Minnis 1984: 94, Wogan-Browne et al. 1999: Index s.v.
2. For a single example of such a definition, see Johnson 1989: 71 and n. 10; for debates about translation at the end of the fourteenth century, Hudson 1975, Watson 1995.
3. Hoccleve writes about Chaucer in *Regement* ll. 1961–74, 2077–107, 4978–5012 (for a modern edition, see Furnivall 1897).
4. So Lawton 1985: 127–9.
5. In the eighteenth century George Sewall still thought of the 'Epistre' as by Chaucer when he modernized it. (For an edition of his modernization, see Fenster and Erler 1990.)
6. Mills 1996: 107 argues for links of the *Series* with *The House of Fame*.
7. Burrow 1994: 219 [31]. For further comment on these two holographs, see Bowers 1989: 466 and Batt 1996: 7. Similarly, scribes regularly combined into a single volume the *Series*, in whole or in part, and the *Regement*, as if to make an edition of Hoccleve's major works comparable to that by Hoccleve of his minor poems.
8. See, for example, Mitchell 1968: 1–19, Medcalf 1981 and especially Burrow 1981, 1982, 1984.
9. For comment on the Lollards, see Catto 1985, Hudson 1988, Sargent 1992, Watson 1995, and the contributions of Simpson, Hanna III and Justice in Copeland 1996; on the deposition of Richard II, Jacob 1961: 1–65, 94–9, Scattergood 1971: 107–36, Strohm 1992: 75–94; for helpful summary account, Barr 1993: 1–5.
10. On Henry V, for example, as 'prynce of preestes' (for this phrase, from Hoccleve's poem to Oldcastle, see Furnivall and Gollancz 1970: 17), see Haines 1971: 145, Pearsall 1994: 407.
11. For this poem, see Furnivall and Gollancz 1970: 47–9, and, for judicious comment, Strohm 1998: 115–16, 122–3. Hoccleve's orthodoxy was questioned in the sixteenth century by John Bale, who cited a comment by Walsingham that Hoccleve was a follower of Berengarius and Wycliffe, but concealed his Protestant leanings for many years through fear of the Papists (1559: 537). In the seventeenth century Pits recycled the accusation, though unsure of its truth. Bale's comments appear at the head of MS Y, those of Pits at the head of D. On this point see further Toulmin Smith 1882 and Hudson 1988: 286 n. 47; and, for Foxe's post-Reformation linking of Hoccleve and Wycliffe, Cummings 1999: 848.
12. On the barely concealed petitionary impulse behind the *Regement*, e.g. *Regement* 1779–87, 1902–4, cf. Hasler 1990.
13. Quotation from Chaucer is from Benson 1988. Reference to *The Canterbury Tales* is by fragment and line number as given in Benson.
14. On Chaucer as a translator, see Machan 1985, 1989, Cooper 1989, Copeland 1991: 186–201, Olsen 1999. Chaucer was early known as a 'grant translateur', a title given to him by his contemporary Eustache Deschamps. I use the term 'translation debate' loosely, but to read *The Canterbury Tales* as a debate on translation is probably almost as useful (so also Olsen) as to follow Kittredge in reading it as a debate on marriage.
15. For a classic medieval formulation of these literary functions, see above n. 1. I have not sought to apply all four levels to Hoccleve's literary production, though it should be readily apparent that, when Hoccleve reads one work (say, the first *Gesta* narrative) with the assistance of others (the *Epistre* of Christine de Pizan, and the religious romances of *The Canterbury Tales*), he is functioning like a medieval compiler/commentator, as Chaucer

- does, in his *Troilus and Criseyde*, when he uses the *Consolatio Philosophiae* of Boethius to gloss Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato*.
16. For the 'Inuocacio', see Furnivall and Gollancz 1970: 278. For another instance where Hoccleve may be drawing attention to the distinction, see below p. 27; for one where copies of a Lydgate translation do so, below pp. 34–5; for examples of similar practices by other translators, Ellis 1982.
 17. Frantzen 1990 (the title of his book); Eagleton 1977: 72. The modern literature on translation theory is vast: for a few recent examples, see Bassnett 1991, Lefevere 1992, Robinson 1991, Venuti 1995.
 18. Mills 1996: 90.
 19. Pryor 1968: 84.
 20. So Burrow 1994: 216 [28], but see also n. to VII.2.206–45 below.
 21. Furnivall and Gollancz 1970: 8, 39, 41, 62, 308.
 22. Dr Catherine Batt suggests that, even in producing a poem addressed to the Virgin Mary, Hoccleve may have been playing with the conventions of petitionary/epistolary form (private communication).
 23. On the date for the Deguileville translation, see below p. 18; on that for 'Male Regle', Burrow 1994: 220 [32].
 24. In so acting, of course, editors covertly privilege the author's own copy of his text over other copies. In making his own copy the author is also functioning as a scribe of his own text and is as liable to miscopy and/or alter his text as any other scribe.
 25. In this connection, Windeatt's comment on 'the medieval poem' bears repeating: 'for the [modern] editor the medieval poem is. . . something of an aspiration, a hardest idea, somewhere between, behind, or above the network of available scribal variations in any given line' (1979: 139). See also comments on *Piers Plowman* by Kerby-Fulton 1999, esp. pp. 516–17.
 26. With the notable exception of the edition of the *Epistre* by Fenster and Erler, editions of Hoccleve's originals are generally, if in different ways, unhelpful. Künzle's critical edition of the *Horologium*, and Stürzinger's of the *Pèlerinage*, provide few variant readings; the first editor of the Anglo-Norman original of the 'Balade' for Chichele, Sandison (1923), knew it only from an imperfect copy, and its most recent editor, Stokes (1995), edited from two other manuscripts only those portions of the text not included in Sandison's copy-text. As for the *Gesta* narratives, if we except the 1872 edition of Oesterley, of very limited use because it does not refer in any detail to Anglo-Latin textual traditions, we have only editions by Wallensköld and Mitchell, from the same manuscript, of the originals of Hoccleve's two tales. Fortunately, a modern edition of the Anglo-Latin *Gesta* is being undertaken from ten manuscripts of the work by Dr Diane Speed and Dr Philippa Bright.
 27. Mitchell 1968: 86; Wallensköld 1907: 111–16; Ward and Herbert 1883–1910: 3.190.
 28. Admittedly, Mitchell also writes in general terms of Hoccleve's following 'his original, the Anglo-Latin *Gesta*, in a straightforward manner', but he allows the inference to be drawn that this original is not, for practical purposes, distinct from the copy in Ha2.
 29. Notwithstanding this caveat, I have, where possible in this study, used modern editions of originals translated by Hoccleve, especially where editors have provided a selection of variants: I have supplemented their variants as appropriate by reference to other copies of those originals. Where an editor has edited from a single MS, as Wallensköld did, I have consulted other MSS. For the Latin source of the second *Gesta* narrative, available in print only as edited from a single MS in a thesis I have been unable to consult, I have had to work directly from a selection of the MSS.
 30. On this latter point, see n. to VII.5.634–6.
 31. Apart from his prose translations, Hoccleve favours rhyme royal for all his translations except the Chichele text, where he uses an eight-line stanza form, ababbcbc, to match the

- original's abababab. The latter is sustained, as Hoccleve's translation is not, over two eight-line stanzas. See further discussion of the latter in Stokes 1995.
32. Appendix 2A lists the major instances of readings shared by Hoccleve's *Gesta* narrative and the Anglo-Latin copies cited.
 33. For other examples of this process, see Ellis 1994, Weitemeier 1996.
 34. For a list of the non-holograph copies of this work, and comment on their textual relations, see Appendix 4; for variant readings, Appendix 5.
 35. The alternative explanation is more complicated: it requires a scribe who inadvertently or deliberately (because, say, he had access to the Latin source of the text) restored a link with the source which Hoccleve had sundered in the holograph. Cf. comments by Pearsall on authorial revisions by Chaucer to his *Troilus* (1992: 188–9).
 36. For a list of the non-holograph copies of this poem, and comment on their textual relations, see Appendix 4; for variant readings, Appendix 5.
 37. For a list of the non-holograph copies of this poem, and comment on their textual relations, see Appendix 4; for variant readings, Appendix 5.
 38. See Stürzinger 1895: 211.
 39. For other evidence of Hoccleve's awareness of the punning possibilities of proper names see nn. to III.14 (Henry Somer), VII.2.597 (Humphrey), and VII.5.634 (Fellicula).
 40. H1 introduces error in its copy of the text with the rhyme at I.107, an occasional feature of other Hoccleve holographs (see V.80n.); and its readings at I.60, 166 and 240 may be less authoritative than the corresponding *Pilgrimage* MSS readings.
 41. See Appendix 5, variants for VI.219.
 42. Burrow 1994: 242 [54].
 43. Owners and/or readers, all taken from Furnivall's footnotes, include Peter Hardy of Halifax (Furnivall and Gollancz 1970: 123); Thomas Kingston (140); John Hancock and Thomas Carter (both at one point apparently contesting ownership of the book: 156, cf. 181, 183–4); Thomas Hecker (194); and Thomas and William Wilton of Kirkland (187, 203, 218). Two dates are given, 1547 (239) and 1551 (226). The whole book was also read in 1666 by George Davenport (242). Annotations to the Suso translation will be discussed below, p. 30.
 44. The two dates are given in the revision to Furnivall 1892 by Mitchell and Doyle (1970: lxxiii). For the date 1413, held to be more reliable by McGerr 1990: xxv, see Seymour 1981: xiv, and Ward/Herbert 1883–1910: 2.583.
 45. The completion of McGerr's edition of the work, of which so far only Volume 1 has appeared (1990), will surely assist powerfully in realizing this desideratum.
 46. So Burrow 1994: 212 [24] n. 96. For editions of these other poems, see Furnivall 1897: xxiii–lxii, and Smalley 1953.
 47. For this text see Henry 1985: 140–4.
 48. Burrow 1994: 212 [24] n. 95 argues against Hoccleve's authorship on grounds of the difference between their treatment of Deguileville's allegory and that in the body of the poem. Cf. I.35n. Other tests which might have helped decide the question proved inconclusive. These include (i) a comparison of the syntax of the added stanzas with the very distinctive syntax generally favoured by Hoccleve: similarities would strengthen the case for his authorship of the added stanzas; (ii) a comparison of the added stanzas with the body of the 'Compleinte' in respect of the traditions of the French original: a different source for the added stanzas would probably indicate a different translator; (iii) rhymes: the other poems in the *Pilgrimage* rhyme "etymological" -y [and] -ye', which Hoccleve himself avoids (Burrow's n. 96).
 49. For examples, see Appendix 5 (variants for VII.4.85, 205, 220, 297, 322, 393) and note to VII.4.205. Errors in D are few, possibly only VII.4.695 and 738 (rhyme wanting in the latter case). For detailed and important comment on the relation of the two copies to each

- other, which did not refer the two copies to their ultimate source, see Bowers 1989.
50. Pryor 1968: 123 also notes that some of the changes in H2 to the version in D 'give it advantage in rhythmical smoothness'. The drive to improve on what scribes saw as Hoccleve's faulty metrics may also have fuelled changes in non-holograph copies of other works by Hoccleve (for examples, see Appendix 5, variants for I.52, 93); Hoccleve himself admits to 'meetrynge amis' both in his 'Balade to the Duke of York' and in the *envoi* to the copy of the *Regement* presented to the Duke of Bedford (Furnivall 1970: 50, 57).
 51. These are VII.4.231, 628 and the marginal note to 414–16: see variants for these lines in Appendix 5 (and, for 414–16, the relevant note to VII.4).
 52. Bowers 1989: 458, followed by Burrow 1999: 111.
 53. Examples include VII.4.117, 216, 231, 297, 377, 393, noted by Bowers 1989: 453, and Selman 1998: 213, who also notes the following example.
 54. For a similar modification to a passage from the *Horologium* in the late fourteenth-century *Chastising of God's Children*, see Selman 1998: 117.
 55. On the difficulties of any such attempt, see, for example, Greetham 1987. When a work is a translation, though, the source can function at least as a notional point of reference and guarantee of the exercise. Neither Bowers 1989 nor Burrow 1999 refers differences between the two versions to Suso's Latin.
 56. These occur at VII.4.21, 69, 78, 193, 279, 301, 399, 451, 520, 583, 588, 667: see Appendix 5 for these readings.
 57. Errors include VII.4.194, 225, 348, 452, 688, 758, and (probably) 768. All the *H MSS introduce error at 831, possibly by miscopying an ambiguous correct form in *H. At 597 D initially shared H2*H's erroneous omission of 'nat'. Consult Appendix 5 for these readings.
 58. See nn. to VII.2.260–1, 638–41, 722–6.
 59. On this general point see Copeland 1991, Minnis 1984; as applied specifically to Chaucerian glosses, Bowers 1989; as applied to glosses in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, Pearsall 1989.
 60. For the abbreviated version of the *Synonyma* which Hoccleve was almost certainly using, see Burrow 1998.
 61. The glosses are missing in D, but their absence is not necessarily significant, because the whole of its copy of the 'Complainte' and of ll. 1–253 of the 'Dialogue' was at some time lost; D's version of the missing material was added to the manuscript in the sixteenth century by Stowe (according to Seymour 1981: 132, from S or a copy close to it).
 62. For, VII.4.365, 414–16 and nn.; against, 4.556n.; divided, 4.709n.
 63. Variants do occur, but I have been unable to trace them to any MSS of the *Horologium* consulted: these include MSS of the *Speculum Spiritualium*, in Part V of which the relevant Suso material occurs.
 64. It is *prima facie* probable that the following readings of *H (or of selected MSS of *H) have greater authority than the corresponding D readings: VII.3.180, 432, 435, 904, VII.5.420, 424, 546, 666. At VII.3.351 and VII.5.547, by contrast, D appears more authoritative.
 65. For fuller comment on this feature, see n. to VII.5.21.
 66. This change also occurs regularly in the *H copies of the Suso translation, at VII.4.125, 127, 452 (error), 502, 516, 805. Hoccleve made such a change to his Suso text in H2 at 4.371. Some of the changes to the text of the 'Conpleynte paramont' in the non-holograph copies probably have a similar motive, to increase the immediacy of the situation and heighten its emotional appeal to the reader, by the addition of adverbs ('now', 'loo', 'here') and second person pronoun referents: see relevant readings in Appendix 5. On similar scribal changes to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, see Windeatt 1979: 132.
 67. For examples (all from *Series* VII.3, and at places where rhyme was not a consideration) see 362–3, 895 (inversion of subject and verb), 153, 360, 434 (direct object and verb), 42, 46, 92 (auxiliary and infinitive), 72, 84 (auxiliary and participle), 34, 485 (copula and adjec-

- tive), 519, 696 (preposition and verb), 515, 784, 852 (infinitive of purpose without adverbial 'to'), 25, 55, 59, 392 (negative particle preceding verb), 19, 28, 111, 233 (absolute constructions).
68. Ellis 1996: 53–4. On one form of 'high' style, the so-called 'clergial'/'curial' style, see Bornstein 1977, Burnley 1983: 243 n. 18, Burnley 1986.
 69. Examples (all from the first *Gesta* narrative): VII.3.233, 342, 422, 494, 519, 616, 626, 755, 782, 795 (against, 427, 658). I have not listed in Appendix 5 examples of infinitives of purpose where *H supplies adverbial 'to' and D does not, but they are common throughout the *Series*.
 70. These changes are possibly scribal rather than authorial, since a comparison of the two holograph copies of the Suso translation shows that Hoccleve seldom revises his text in ways discussed in this paragraph (exception, VII.4.308). A similar situation obtains with the non-holograph MSS of the 'Compleynthe paramont' and 'Epistre'. On similar changes by scribes to the text of Chaucer's *Troilus*, see Windeatt 1979: 136–8.
 71. On this point, see n. to VII.5.666.
 72. The most recent study of the *Series*, by Mills (1996), does not refer to the manuscript traditions of the work, nor, in any detail, to the translations from Suso and the *Gesta Romanorum*, but its general view of the *Series*, and detailed comments on the 'Compleinte' and 'Dialogue', overlap at several points with my own.
 73. Furnivall's numbers 1–19 were given to the copies of the poems in H1 and (18) the 'Epistre' edited from the copy in F.
 74. For a Latin title, 'planctus proprius', offered by Stowe and followed by Speght, see Furnivall 1970: 92. This title may well be authorial, since the holograph uses Latin throughout for its rubrics and Stowe uses Latin for the introductory rubric to his copy of item 2.
 75. This may explain how the work came to acquire in 1927, from Hammond, the infelicitous title, 'The Series', which it has carried ever since. For a possible earlier title of the work, see below p. 31.
 76. For fuller comment on this point, see Appendix 4.
 77. So Doyle and Parkes 1978: 193.
 78. For further comment on these, see Silvia 1974.
 79. The three stanzas linking the prose and verse sections of the Suso were copied with the rest of that text; otherwise, the framing stanzas were not copied.
 80. Admittedly, the moralizations make only imperfect sense in isolation from the preceding narratives: following the analogues, Hoccleve's moralizations regularly cut short, by means of a repeated 'etc.', the recapitulated narratives on which they depend.
 81. Bale provides Latin incipits for all items in the *Series* except the tale of Jonathas (Poole and Bateson 1902: 448, Bale 1559: 537, drawn to my notice by Hudson 1997: 325); Pits provides English incipits for the 'planctum proprium' and the 'de quadam Jonatha', and Latin incipits for the rest.
 82. On Lichfield Cathedral 16, see Furnivall and Gollancz 1970: xlv–xlvi, Henry and Trotter 1994.
 83. For further detail, see nn. to VII.2.826, VII.3.952.
 84. In particular, the translator offers his work as a mirror to his readers (31; see further VI.179n.) and describes the work as a translation (23, 28) undertaken in response to the 'steryng and... . . . mociou' of others (26, cf. VII.2.234–5). The plainness of the offered translation (28) also has a parallel in Hoccleve (VII.3.977). For an edition of the copy in S, and of a French version close to Lydgate's source, see Hammond 1927.
 85. For an earlier expression of this point, and for similar treatment of much of the material in this section, see von Nolcken 1993, whose important work I discovered only after I had completed my own.
 86. The illustration in S may be part of an evolving iconographic tradition. The translation of

- the same Suso chapter in the Carthusian miscellany Ad6 includes a number of crudely drawn pictures of a dying man in bed menaced, and then stabbed, with a spear by Death, with Christ looking down from heaven. Initially, the disciple figure observes the action; later, he kneels in prayer, as a way of dramatizing the work's spiritual progression.
87. For comment on these annotations, see Appendix 3.
 88. For examples and comment, see Künzle 1977: 194–5, 198, 230–9, 269; for brief comment on the *Speculum*, Edwards 1984: 156, Moyes 1984: 88 and n. 57, Westlake 1993: 21, 52.
 89. Of course, Hoccleve generates his own positive, immediately afterwards, with his translation 'De caelesti Jerusalem'.
 90. The marginalia of 'My Complainte' and the Suso translation reinforce such links by their repeated metaphors of gold tested in the furnace (VII.1.358) and more valuable than philosophical treatises (VII.4.78), and by their repeated reference to the bitterness of death to those who live ill (VII.1.328) as well as to those who live in pleasure (VII.4.108).
 91. The word 'complaint' and its cognates occur at I.31, 245 rubric, II.20, 341–2, VI.11, 16, 190, 277, VII.1.35 (rubric), 259, 285, 317, VII.2.1, 17, 23, 40, 200, 317, 772, VII.4.148, 265, 303, 642, VII.5.240.
 92. Furnivall and Gollancz 1970: 92; cf. Green 1980: 123.
 93. In this sense we may see the *Series* as outgrowing or abandoning the literary model of Hoccleve's earlier *Regement*, as of other earlier poems in which the poet gives advice to his social superiors.
 94. One might have thought this device a palpable fiction to allow Hoccleve to comment on the unstable relation of narrative and interpretative comment to each other. But since the English version of the second *Gesta* narrative preserved in the commonplace book of Richard Hill (c.1520–30) also wants the 'moralite' (Dyboski 1907: xxxv), Hoccleve's claim may just possibly be true. (Dr Diane Speed confirms for me that the *moralizacio* is occasionally missing in other copies of the work too.) If so, we may need to reckon with the possibility of a separate textual tradition for the added *moralizacio*.
 95. On this point see also Batt 1996z: 59.
 96. Paraph marks are used to indicate addressee(s) of the speakers at I.43, 50, 57, 71, 127, 134, 148, 190, 204, 211, 227; to mark off a speech, and draw attention to its subdivisions, at V.57, 64, 71, 75, 80, VII.3.389 (and cf. n.); to indicate citations from classical authors (e.g. VII.2.344) and vivid figures of speech (VII.2.400); and, in the first *Gesta* narrative, to mark passages of apostrophe (VII.3.169, 246, 253) and narratorial comment (VII.3.190). For comment on a comparable structural feature, the capitulum marks in the margins of Hoccleve's 'Epistre', see Fenster and Erler 1990: 205 (n. to l. 8).
 97. See nn. to VII.1.309, VII.2.369, VII.4.15.
 98. Cf. above p. 8 and n. 12. In this context Hoccleve's commonplace use of economic metaphors for spiritual salvation, and repeated reference in his *Gesta* narratives to the financial arrangements of his principal characters, may also acquire special resonance (cf. IV.134n.).
 99. Burrow 1994: 215 [27], 1995: 366–72.
 100. On the importance of textuality as theme in Hoccleve's work, see, for example, Greetham 1989, Simpson 1991.
 101. The most striking instance of a near contemporary writer reissuing second and third thoughts is Langland, on whom see Kerby-Fulton 1999; other such writers include all of the so-called Middle English mystics, and Chaucer himself.
 102. On the difficulties of translating humour, see, for example, Field 1989, Beer 1991.
 103. For fuller comment on this point, see nn. to I.215, 221.
 104. So too Mitchell 1968: 88–9.
 105. For fuller comment on these points, see nn. to VII.3.190–6, 484–97, VII.5.138–47.
 106. For analysis of this material in the *Regement*, see Batt 1996z: 76–7.

107. For further comment on Shirley, see Griffiths and Pearsall 1989 (Index s.v.) and Connolly 1996.
108. For general comment on fabliaux, see Muscatine 1986; and on Chaucerian fabliaux, Hines 1993.
109. Ellis 1996: 38–40.
110. For fuller comment on these Chaucerian echoes, see nn. to VI.197, 407–10; for earlier comment, Ellis 1996: 49, 51.
111. This variation also occurs elsewhere in the poems here edited: see Appendix 5, readings for I.87, VII.4.588, VII.5.9, 207. In the last-cited instance, occurring in a text preoccupied, like the 'Epistre', by the question of relations between the sexes, the variation may be significant.
112. For further comment on this point, see Savage 1994.
113. On Christine's use of the Genesis story, cf. Ellis 1996: 33–6.

Editorial principles

1. The texts have been re-edited from the holographs, and emended where necessary against the non-holograph copies. Material missing from the holograph copies of the 'Conpleynte paramont', 'My Compleinte' and 'A Dialoge' has been supplied from non-holograph copies of the texts: the first from Eg, the second, following Seymour 1981, from S.
2. The texts have been edited with modern capitalization, but the original spelling. Punctuation is also modern, and occasionally as a result simplifies ambiguities of phrasing in the original. Except for Roman numerals, abbreviations are expanded silently, in accordance with Hoccleve's practice with uncontracted forms, so far as this can be determined. Paragraphing of Hoccleve's prose is also modern.
3. Appendix 5 exists principally to facilitate comparison of Hoccleve's holographs with the non-holograph copies of his works. Consequently, it provides a selection of substantive variants from non-holograph copies, in particular of substantive variants common to all of the latter and, presumably, originating in their common ancestor (*H). Since *H has a purely notional existence, these are given in modern spelling. Otherwise, except for major omissions of material, I have not recorded variants peculiar to individual manuscripts. Readings from the sources and analogues of translated works are included (abbreviated 'Fr.' and 'Lat.') for purposes of comparison. For editions of 'Item de Beata Virgine' and 'My Compleinte', full collations exist in the editions of Boyd and Seymour, so my collation supplements theirs, in the latter case by providing variants from D alone or in combination with the other MSS so as to make comparison easier with Furnivall's edition. For the opening six stanzas of the 'Conpleynte paramont' and ll. 1–252 of the 'Dialoge', I provide a fuller collation. Of the many marginal annotations in later hands, only those are noted which directly refer to the text: for the remainder in D, see Furnivall's edition.

A note on Hoccleve's language

In some ways Hoccleve's poetry looks very like Chaucer's, and seems as directly approachable; in other ways, its deliberate inversions of normal word order (noted above p. 24), especially those not called for by metre and rhyme, can present beginner readers with a very real challenge.

1. It can be hard to distinguish noun subjects and objects of verbs when normal word order is disturbed: examples include 'þat knowe mighte it euery creature' (I.96) and 'bite me the crowe' (VII.2.810), where only the context helps us recognize 'euery creature' and 'crow' as subjects and 'it' and 'me' as direct objects of their respective verbs. At VII.2.573–4, yet more strikingly ('Duc Henri, þat so worthy was and good/Folwith this prince, as wel in deede as blood'), we need a knowledge of the historical context to appreciate that Duke Henry is the object of imitation by Duke Humphrey ('this prince'), who is subject of the clause.
2. Less difficulty is created by the omission of infinitives of purpose and impersonal subject pronouns, though the result is sometimes strange enough to give a reader pause; for example, in the lines 'Why souffrest thou him, in the open sighte/Of the folk heer, vnkeuered abyde' (I.137; read 'to abide') and 'from al which song is good men hem to kepe' (II.240, read 'it is good').

As far as possible, I have used modern punctuation and marginal glosses to iron out these difficulties.

‘My Compleinte’ and Other Poems

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