The dissemination of visions of the otherworld in England and northern France c.1150-c.1321

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.
Abstract

This thesis examines the dissemination of visions of the otherworld in the long thirteenth century (c.1150-1321) by analysing the work of one enthusiast for such visions, Helinand of Froidmont, and studying the later transmission of three, contrasting accounts: the vision of the monk of Eynsham (c.1196), the vision of St. Fursa (c.656) and the vision of Gunthelm (s.xii). It relies on a close reading and comparison of different versions of these visions as they appear in exempla collections, religious miscellanies, history chronicles and sermons. In considering the process of redaction, it corrects two imbalances in the recent scholarship: a focus on searching for, then discussing ‘authorial’ versions of the narratives and a tendency among students of literature to treat visions of the otherworld as an independent sub-genre, prefiguring Dante’s later masterpiece.

Instead, by looking at the different responses of a number of authors and compilers to visions of the otherworld, this thesis shows how they interacted with other elements of religious culture. On one hand it reveals how all medieval editors altered the narratives that they inherited to fit the needs and rules of genre. These rules had an important influence on how visions were spread and received by different audiences. On the other, it explains how individual authors demonstrated personal or communal theological and political motivation for altering visions. In doing so, it notes a divergence in the way that older monastic communities and travelling preachers responded to the stories. By explaining these variations, this study uncovers a range of complex reactions to trends in thirteenth-century eschatology (particularly the development of the doctrine of Purgatory) and how they interacted with wider religious concerns such as pastoral care. Finally, it shows how an examination of the pattern of a vision’s dissemination can lead to a re-consideration of the earlier texts themselves and the religious milieu from which they emerged.
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Any insight offered below is thanks to the support of those listed above. Any mistakes or errors are the sole responsibility of the author.
## Abbreviations and Short Titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title and Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Analecta Bollandiana, 1- (Brussels, 1882-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library, London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCM</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis (Turnhout, 1971-).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronicon</td>
<td>Helinand of Froidmont, Helinandi Frigidimontis Monachi Chronicon, PL 212, cols. 771-1082.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectaneum</td>
<td>Collectaneum Exemplorum et Visionum Clarevalense, ed. Olivier Legendre, CCCM 208 (Turnhout, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>London, BL MS Royal 7.D.i.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleven Visions</td>
<td>‘Eleven visions connected with the Cistercian monastery of Stratford Langthorne’ ed. Christopher J. Holdsworth, Citeaux Commentarii Cistercienses 13 (1962), 185-204.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGH</td>
<td>Monumenta Germaniae Historica inde ab a. c. 500 usque a a. 1500, ed. G. H. Pertz et al. (Hannover 1826-).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRM</td>
<td>Scriptorum Rerum Merovingicarum (1937-).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Scriptorum (1826-).</td>
</tr>
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SC Source Chrétiennes 1- (Paris, 1942-).

SCH Studies in Church History (London/Oxford/Woodbridge, 1964-).


VEME Visio monachi de Eynsham.

VG Visio Gunthelmi.


(H) in Helinand of Froidmont, *Chronicon*, cols.1060C–1063D.

(V) in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale*, 29.6-10.


W Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.36.