

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

Christopher Thomas John Wilson

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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<sup>ex</sup>). 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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## Abbreviations and Short Titles

AB	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i> , 1- (Brussels, 1882- ).
ActaSS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i> , eds. J. Bolland and G. Henschen (Antwerp, 1643-).
A(HS)	'A' text of the VEME as edited in <i>The Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham</i> , ed. H.E. Salter, 2 vols., Oxford Historical Society 49, 51 (1907-8), II, pp. 257-231.
B(HT)	'B' text, 'Visio monachi de Eynsham', ed. Herbert Thurston, <i>AB</i> 22 (1903), 225-319.
BL	British Library, London.
BN	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis (Turnhout, 1971-).
<i>Chronicon</i>	Helinand of Froidmont, <i>Helinandi Frigidimontis Monachi Chronicon</i> , PL 212, cols. 771-1082.
<i>Collectaneum</i>	<i>Collectaneum Exemplorum et Visionum Clarevallense</i> , ed. Olivier Legendre, CCCM 208 (Turnhout, 2005).
C(RE)	'C' text, <i>The Revelation of the monk of Eynsham</i> , ed. Robert Easting, EETS 318 (Oxford, 2002).
E	London, BL MS Royal 7.D.i.
EETS	Early English Text Society, Original Series 1- (London, 1864-); Extra Series, 1-126 (London, 1867-1935); Supplementary Series 1- (London, 1970-).
<i>Eleven Visions</i>	'Eleven visions connected with the Cistercian monastery of Stratford Langthorne' ed. Christopher J. Holdsworth, <i>Citeaux Commentarii Cistercienses</i> 13 (1962), 185-204.
<i>Exempla</i>	Jacques de Vitry, <i>The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermomes Vulgares of Jacques de Vitry</i> , ed. Thomas F. Crane, Folklore Soc. (New York, 1890).
HE	Bede, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> , ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B Mynors, <i>Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i> (Oxford, 1969).
HS	Robert Mannyng of Brunne, <i>Robert of Brunne's Handlyng Synne</i> , ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS 119, 123 (London, 1901, 1903; rpt. Oxford, 2002).
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica inde ab a. c. 500 usque a a. 1500</i> , ed. G. H. Pertz et al. (Hannover 1826-).
SRM	<i>Scriptorum Rerum Merovingicarum</i> (1937-).
SS	<i>Scriptores</i> (1826-).
MVSH	Adam of Eynsham, <i>Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis</i> , 2 vols., eds. and trans. Decima L. Douie and Hugh Farmer (London, 1961).
P-F	Helinand of Froidmont, 'Édition des titres des chapitres et des notations marginales d'après le ms. du Vatican, Reg. lat. 535', ed. M. Paulmier-Foucart, <i>Spicae</i> 4 (1986), 81-254.
PL	Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina, ed. J. -P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1841-1864).

Reg. Lat.	Rome, Vatican Library Reginensis Latini.
ROT	Bede, <i>The Reckoning of Time</i> , trans. Faith Wallis (Liverpool, 1999; 2nd edition, 2004).
RS	Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores (Rolls Series), 99 vols. (London, 1858-1911, 1964).
SC	Source Chrétiennes 1- (Paris, 1942-).
SCH	Studies in Church History (London/Oxford/Woodbridge, 1964-).
<i>Sermones</i>	Helinand of Froidmont, <i>Helinandi Frigidimontis Monachi Sermones</i> , PL 212, cols.481-534.
TEMA	Thesaurus Exemplorum Medii Aevi, <a href="http://www.gahom.ehess.fr/thema/index">www.gahom.ehess.fr/thema/index</a> .
VEME	Visio monachi de Eynsham.
VG	Visio Gunthelmi.
(A)	'A' text as edited in 'The vision of Gunthelm and other visiones attributed to Peter the Venerable', ed. Giles Constable, <i>Revue bénédictine</i> 66 (1956), 92-114.
(H)	in Helinand of Froidmont, <i>Chronicon</i> , cols.1060C- 1063D.
(V)	in Vincent of Beauvais, <i>Speculum Historiale</i> , 29.6-10.
VT	<i>Visio Tnugdali</i> , ed. Albrecht Wagner (Erlangen, 1882; rpt. Hildesheim, 1989).
<i>Visions</i>	'Le visioni di S. Fursa', ed. M. Ciccarese, <i>Romanobarbarica</i> 8 (1984-5), 231-303.
<i>Vita</i>	<i>Vita virtutesque Fursei Abbatis Latinacensis Passiones</i> , ed. Bruno Krusch MGH SRM IV (Hanover, 1902), 423-440.
W	Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.36.