

# THE *CLOUD*-AUTHOR AND HENDRIK HERP: ASPIRATORY PRAYER IN MS DOUCE 262

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Although Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 262 (early sixteenth century) is one of the better known manuscripts which contain texts by the late fourteenth-century *Cloud*-author, not least because of its production at the London Charterhouse and its annotation by James Grenehalgh, the other treatises copied into the manuscript have thus far been given little attention.<sup>2</sup> This essay will explore the presence of those treatises, in particular the *Directorium quoddam breuissimum mentis in deum* of Hendrik Herp, with a view to determining the implications of their selection and juxtaposition alongside the *Cloud* treatises. Does their presence shed new light upon the way in which the *Cloud*-author was interpreted and prioritised within an early sixteenth-century Carthusian milieu? Can we trace an interest in a particular form of ‘aspiratory’ prayer across the texts assembled in the manuscript?

In order to begin to answer these questions, it is first necessary to gain a better acquaintance with the contents of Douce 262.<sup>3</sup> These were copied in two phases by two different scribes who were both London Carthusians. In around 1500, the first scribe, William Tregooze, copied the first three items in the codex: *The Cloud of Unknowing* (fol. 2r), an unattributed *Expositio* on Pseudo-Dionysius’s *De mystica theologia* (fol. 119r) which is in fact an extract from the third book of Hugh of Balma’s *Viae Syon lugent*, and a treatise titled *De septem gradibus contemplationis* (fol. 128r), attributed to Bonaventure but written by Thomas Gallus.<sup>4</sup> These complications of attribution are intensified by the fact that James Grenehalgh, the contemporary Carthusian annotator of the *Cloud* treatise, seems to have believed the *Cloud* to be by Walter Hilton.<sup>5</sup> In the early sixteenth century then, Carthusian readers of

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is published OA under the Creative Commons licence BY-NC-ND, with generous financial support from the Swiss National Science Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> For Grenehalgh, see Michael G. Sargent, *James Grenehalgh as Textual Critic* (Salzburg, 1984); for MS Douce 262, see Rosemary Lees, *The Negative Language of the Dionysian School of Mystical Theology: An Approach to the Cloud of Unknowing*, 2 vols (Salzburg, 1983), I, pp. 213–14, 304–6. James Walsh gives a brief account of these additional treatises and a translation of the extract from Hugh of Balma’s *Viae Syon lugent* in *The Pursuit of Wisdom, and Other Works*, ed. James Walsh (New York, 1988), pp. 287–313, but says very little about the *Directorium* of Hendrik Herp, which is my subject here.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Hunt and Falconer Madan, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, 7 vols (Oxford, 1897), IV, pp. 571–2; [https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript\\_4609](https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_4609).

<sup>4</sup> On fol. 188v, a contemporary note states ‘Scriptor huius libri erat d. Willelmus Tregooz professor istius domus videlicet Londoniarum Cart.’

<sup>5</sup> In the margin of fol. 34v (*Cloud*, ch. 15), where the *Cloud*-author describes himself as a

Douce 262 may have thought they were encountering a combination of Augustinian and Franciscan authors (Hugh of Balma's works were also habitually attributed to Bonaventure in the late medieval period).

This ostensible Franciscan orientation carried over into the second phase of copying, undertaken by Andrew Boorde (1490?–1549) some twenty years later.<sup>6</sup> Boorde began by adding a short, apparently original Middle English text titled *When a solle begynyth to fele grace* (fol. 132v) to the pre-existing collection. He followed this with the *Directorium quoddam breuissimum mentis in deum ad consequendam vite perfectionem* (c. 1460) (fol. 134r) of Hendrik Herp, a Franciscan author from the Low Countries, and concluded with a further *Cloud*-author text, *The Book of Privy Counselling* (fol. 139v), consciously crafting a mystical anthology bookended by the two major *Cloud*-author texts. This foray into mystical theology appears to have left Boorde unmoved. Within a year of copying Douce 262, he left the London Charterhouse, later resurfacing as a confidential agent for Thomas Cromwell, a physician, and a prolific traveller and writer. Boorde authored a variety of books in the 1530s and 1540s including *The Introduction of Knowledge*, a guidebook to Christendom instructing the reader on its languages, local customs and currencies, and *A Compendyous Regyment or a Dyetary of Helth*.<sup>7</sup> As the titles of his books indicate, he had moved from the virtues of 'unknowing' to quite the opposite extreme.

Ian Doyle and Michael Sargent assess Douce 262 as one of a small group of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century *Cloud*-author manuscripts linked to the charterhouses of the metropolis. This group additionally comprises Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 221, containing Richard Methley's Latin translations of the *Cloud of Unknowing* and Marguerite Porete's *Mirror of Simple Souls*, copied by William Darker of Sheen; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 576, combining four members of the *Cloud* corpus with Hilton's *Of Angels' Song*; and Parkminster, St Hugh's Charterhouse, MS D.176 (containing only the *Cloud* and *Privy Counselling*), copied, possibly from Douce 262, by William Exemewe, procurator of London, whose career later took a very different turn to Boorde's, culminating in martyrdom at Tyburn in 1535.<sup>8</sup>

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sinner, Grenehalgh notes 'O Hilton sanctissime magna erat humilitas tua'. Helen Gardner, 'Walter Hilton and the Authorship of the *Cloud of Unknowing*', *Review of English Studies* 9.34 (1933), 129–47 (p. 132); John P. H. Clark, *The Cloud of Unknowing: An Introduction*, 3 vols, Analecta Cartusiana 119 (Salzburg, 1995), I, pp. 13–14.

<sup>6</sup> Boorde names himself at the end of Herp's *Directorium* (fol. 139v), and at the end of the *Book of Privy Counselling*: 'Explicit epistola deuotua conscripta per manum dompni andree boorde' (fol. 153r).

<sup>7</sup> See Elizabeth Jane Furdell, 'Boorde, Andrew (c. 1490-1549)', *Oxford DNB*; *The fyrst Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge made by Andrew Borde, A Compendyous Regyment or a Dyetary of Helth*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, EETS e.s. 10 (Dublin, 1870); Cathy Shrank, *Writing the Nation in Reformation England, 1530-1580* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 27–64.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Sargent, 'The Transmission by the English Carthusians of some Late Medieval Spiritual Writings', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 27 (1976), 225–40 (p. 238); A. I. Doyle, 'A Survey of the Origins and Circulation of Theological Writings in English in the 14th, 15th and early 16th Centuries' (University of Cambridge, unpublished Ph.D. diss., 1953), pp. 276–80; Lees, *Negative Language*, pp. 400–6. James Grenehalgh added annotations to two of the manuscripts from this group: Douce 262 and Pembroke 221. Vincent Gillespie has recently speculated that Pembroke 221 may have moved to Syon Abbey at some point, citing the 'tb' monogram suggestive of the Syon librarian, Thomas Betson, on its binding:

Douce 262 participates in this close-knit London group; however, it also has distinct features of its own, situating the *Cloud*-author texts within a strongly Continental context. In particular, it is by far the most explicitly *Pseudo-Dionysian* manuscript of the four, calibrating the *Cloud*-author with reference to Hugh of Balma and Thomas Gallus, the two key contributors to the medieval Dionysian commentary tradition. The Dionysian contours of the *Cloud*-author's theology are also made explicit in the two manuscript 'Cloud-author anthologies' which include *Deonise Hid Diuinite*, his translation of Pseudo-Dionysius's *De mystica theologia*,<sup>9</sup> and, more obliquely, in the short compilation known as the *Via ad contemplacionem*, which splices extracts from Hugh's *Viae Syon lugent* with passages from the *Cloud*-author treatises amongst others.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, out of all the manuscripts we retain, it is arguably Douce 262 that brings the *Cloud*-author's Dionysian credentials into strongest relief.

But what does Hendrik Herp's *Directorium quoddam breuissimum* contribute to this Dionysian colouring? And, yet more pressingly, who was Hendrik Herp? Herp (c. 1410–77) began his religious career as a rector within the Brethren of the Common Life at Gouda and Delft, falling under the influence of Jan Ruusbroec's spiritual philosophy and writings. However, after travelling to Rome in 1450, he entered the Franciscan Order, subsequently heading the Franciscan convents of Mechelen and Antwerp in Belgium and founding further convents before being appointed Provincial at Cologne in 1470.<sup>11</sup> His prolific output includes the *Speculum aureum de praeceptis divinae legis*, the *Eden contemplativorum*, a *Soliloquia super Cantica*, several volumes of sermons, and, most famously, the Middle Dutch *Spiegel der volcomenheit* (*Mirror of Perfection*) (1455–60), which seems to envisage a female readership, containing a dedication to Isabella of Portugal, Duchess of Burgundy, and addressing a 'gheminde dochter' (beloved daughter).<sup>12</sup> This work pairs twelve initial steps of mortification with a three-stage mystical progress partially derived from Ruusbroec, which guides the devotee through the active, 'spiritual contemplative' and 'superessential contemplative' lives, each divided into further sub-stages of preparation, adornment and enjoyment. Recent scholars have characterised Herp as a compiler rather than an originator, synthesizing the mystical theology of the

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'Preaching to the Choir: Another Look at English Carthusian Transmission of Vernacular Spiritual Writings', in *The Capital's Charterhouses and the Record of English Carthusianism*, ed. Julian Luxford (Toronto, 2023), pp. 152–204 (p. 174 n. 74). For more on Pembroke 221, see Denis Renevey's essay in this volume.

<sup>9</sup> British Library, MS Harley 674 and Cambridge University Library, MS Kk.vi.26.

<sup>10</sup> This compilation survives, in longer and shorter forms, in British Library, MS Additional 37790 (Amherst) and MS Additional 37049 (the Carthusian miscellany). P. S. Jolliffe, 'Two Tracts on the Contemplative Life', *Mediaeval Studies* 37 (1975), 85–121; Marleen Cré, *Vernacular Mysticism in the Charterhouse* (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 239–45.

<sup>11</sup> Marieke Abram, 'Popularized Philosophy in Hendrik Herp's Mystical Guide, the *Spiegel der volcomenheit*', in *The Popularization of Philosophy in Medieval Islam, Judaism, and Christianity*, ed. Marieke Abram, Steven Harvey and Lukas Muehlethaler (Turnhout, 2022), pp. 247–65 (p. 247); William Short, 'Hendrik Herp: *The Mirror of Perfection* or *Directory of Contemplatives*', *Franciscan Studies* 64 (2006), 407–33 (pp. 408–9); Anna Dłabačová, *Literatuur en observanzie: De 'Spiegel der volcomenheit' van Hendrik Herp en de dynamiek van laatmiddeleeuwse tekstverspreiding* (Hilversum, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Abram, 'Popularized Philosophy', p. 248; Hendrik Herp, *Spiegel der volcomenheit*, ed. Lucidius Verschueren, 2 vols (Antwerp, 1931).

fourteenth-century Low Countries and Germany, in particular that of Ruusbroec, Jordaens and Tauler, with the twelfth- and thirteenth-century writings of Hugh of Balma, Bonaventure and the Victorines, for an ambitious lay readership.<sup>13</sup> Herp's *oeuvre* retains the approach to Pseudo-Dionysius taken by many of these writers, fusing the Areopagite's cerebral approach with the sensuality of the Song of Songs, and sketching a 'superessential' experience of contemplation characterised by burning love and blinding light in which the soul unites with God.

Largely due to the enthusiasm with which it was taken up by Continental publishing houses and promulgated amongst Franciscan and Carthusian readers, Herp's *Spiegel der volcomenheit* became an important vehicle for the transfer of late medieval mystical theology to the early modern world. As well as being translated and printed in German in the 1470s, it was translated into Latin by the Dutch Carthusian intellectual, Petrus Blomevenna (1466–1536) at the beginning of the sixteenth century and published by St Barbara's Charterhouse, Cologne, where Blomevenna had become prior, as the *Directorium aureum contemplativorum* in 1509. This Latin translation is accompanied by a translator's prologue which may also shed some light on the rationale behind Richard Methley's Carthusian translation of the *Cloud of Unknowing* into Latin in the 1490s.<sup>14</sup> Striking a markedly conservative note, it justifies the shift into Latin by noting that few laypeople were capable of understanding the 'noble spiritual matters' of the *Spiegel*, while good Latinists who held the vernacular in contempt would equally be incapable of deriving pleasure from the *Spiegel* in its Middle Dutch form.<sup>15</sup>

Despite this disparagement, the *Spiegel* quickly transferred into further vernaculars, including a Portuguese translation in 1533 and a Spanish translation in 1551.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, in 1538, the Cologne Charterhouse thought it worth their while to publish a compendium of Herp's Latin writings together with Blomevenna's Latin translation of the *Spiegel*, under the title *Theologia mystica cum speculativa, tum praecipue affectiva*. This compendium needs to be viewed in context. Under the priorates of Blomevenna and Gerard Kalkbrenner, the Cologne Charterhouse became a centre for the publication and dissemination of *Devotio moderna* theology as a Counter-Reformation tool; in particular, Latin editions and translations of the works of Denys the Carthusian, Ruusbroec, Suso and Tauler.<sup>17</sup> The 1538 edition of Herp was envisaged as part of this anti-Protestant campaign, and the links between Herp and his Flemish and German precursors, and their identification as proponents

<sup>13</sup> Bernard McGinn, 'Mystical Handbooks of the Late Middle Ages', *Acta Theologica*, Supplementum 33 (2022), 73–88; Abram, 'Popularized Philosophy', pp. 250–1; Kurt Ruh, *Die niederländische Mystik des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1999), p. 221.

<sup>14</sup> Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 221. For further discussion of Methley's Latin translation, see Denis Renevey's essay in this volume.

<sup>15</sup> Blomevenna, 'Prologus translatoris', in Herp, *Spiegel*, ed. Verschuere, pp. 1a–15; Abram, 'Popularized Philosophy', p. 257.

<sup>16</sup> Jean Orcibal, 'Les traductions du *Spiegel* de Henri Herp en italien, portugais et espagnol', in *Dr L. Reyens-Album*, ed. Albert Ampe (Antwerp, 1984), pp. 257–68.

<sup>17</sup> Gérald Chaix, *Reforme et contre-reforme catholique: recherche sur la chartreuse de Cologne au XVI siècle* (Salzburg, 1981); Werner Schäfke (ed.), *Die Kölner Kartause um 1500* (Cologne, 1991); Rob Faesen, 'Christ's Wounded Body, Sorrowful Soul and Joyful Spirit: The Interpretation of Christ's Passion in a Forgotten 16th-Century Classic of Mystical Literature', *Religions* 13.4 (2022), 365–76.

of a common strain of Pseudo-Dionysian theology, are made plain in its Preface, where the Carthusian Dietrich Loher writes:

Those matters which Dionysius the Areopagite left behind for us in Greek beneath the dark veil of his words, and then John Ruusbroec and Tauler also left concerning mystical theology, though more clearly expressed in German, our Harphius (Herp) here hands on to you, most generous reader, in a more pleasant style as a compendium.<sup>18</sup>

Here, Herp is not only the most recent in an ever-clarifying line of Pseudo-Dionysian exponents, he also offers the most stylistically pleasurable encounter with the discipline. He is both clear and aesthetically agreeable.

How does this information affect our assessment of Douce 262? First, it means that we can add Herp's name to the list of Pseudo-Dionysian theologians copied in this manuscript (the *Cloud*-author, Gallus, Hugh of Balma, Herp), giving it a uniformly Pseudo-Dionysian bent.<sup>19</sup> As already remarked, this is easily the most Pseudo-Dionysian textual context for the *Cloud*-author in the entire corpus of surviving manuscripts. Second, Herp's Ruusbroecian credentials add ballast to the sense that late medieval English Carthusians perceived the apophatic theology of the *Cloud*-author and Ruusbroec as fundamentally compatible and wished to set the two alongside one another. This perception is made explicit in Pembroke 221, in which Methley's Latin translation of the *Cloud* is copied in tandem with his Latin translation of Porete's *Mirror of Simple Soules* which is erroneously ascribed to 'Russhbroke qui sint prior de ordine cartusiensi' (Ruusbroec who is a prior of the Carthusian order), and the two texts are occasionally cross-referenced with one another in their margins. Apparently perceiving Ruusbroec as a Carthusian prior, the monastic team that produced Pembroke 221 seem to have wished to create a codex that showcased fourteenth-century Carthusian mystical theology from England and the Low Countries and drew attention to its harmonies of content.<sup>20</sup> To set this in a larger context, the *Cloud of Unknowing* is aligned in its extant manuscripts with just two other works of Continental mysticism. It appears in two manuscripts alongside excerpts from Raymond of Capua's *Life of St Catherine of Siena* and the *Orchard*

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in McGinn, 'Mystical Handbooks', p. 83, citing E. Gullick and O. De Veghel, 'Herp (Henri de; Harphius)', in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, ed. Marcel Viller, 17 vols (Paris, 1937–95), VII (1969), pp. 351–66 (p. 351). Loher was professed as monk at Cologne and later became prior of Buxheim Charterhouse.

<sup>19</sup> As we shall see, the short, anonymous treatise *When a solle begynyth* also contains Pseudo-Dionysian features.

<sup>20</sup> John Clark remarks that the Carthusians were instrumental in making Ruusbroec known in England: *Cloud of Unknowing*, I, p. 84; See also Roger Lovatt, *The Influence of Religious Literature of Germany and the Low Countries on English Spirituality*, Analecta Cartusiana 321, 2 vols (Salzburg, 2015), II, pp. 94–113; Michael Sargent, 'The Heneage Manuscript of *Calculus de Perfectione Filiorum Dei* and the Middle English *Treatise of Perfection of the Sons of God*', *Ons geestelijk Erf* 59 (1985), 533–59; Michael Sargent, 'Ruusbroec in England: *The Chastising of God's Children* and Related Works', in *Historia et Spiritualitas Cartusianensis*, ed. Jan de Grauwe (Destelbergen, 1983), pp. 303–12; Michael Sargent, 'The Annihilation of Marguerite Porete', *Viator* 28 (1997), 253–79; Cré, *Vernacular Mysticism*, pp. 123–63.

of *Syon*,<sup>21</sup> and, in another manuscript, with the *De adherendo Deo* (c. 1410) of the Bavarian Benedictine, John of Kastl, which was generally attributed to Albertus Magnus in the late medieval period.<sup>22</sup> Herp's *Directorium* is significantly the most recent work of Continental mysticism to be inscribed alongside the *Cloud* texts, suggesting both that the London Carthusians actively sought out contemporary Continental writing within the Pseudo-Dionysian tradition, and that they were keen to read and engage with the *Cloud* with reference to these new voices.<sup>23</sup>

But exactly which work by Herp is copied into Douce 262? At six parchment leaves it is clearly too brief to be the entire *Directorium aureum contemplativorum*. It transpires that the *Directorium quoddam breuissimum* in Douce 262, elsewhere titled the *Prima collatio*, was published as a stand-alone treatise attributed to Herp, by Philippe Pigouchet (Paris, 1491), and again by Guy Marchant (Paris, 1499), significantly predating Blomevenna's Latin translation of the *Spiegel der volcomenheit* and its publication in 1509. We remain ignorant of the identity of its Latin translator, although a 1922 article by Marcel Viller reveals the existence of three late fifteenth-century manuscripts of the text prior to 1491, which attribute it to 'Johannes Bourcelli', a Franciscan friar from the convent of Nijmegen. Viller duly suggests that Herp may have been Bourcelli's spiritual director and have called upon him to produce a Latin resumé of his spiritual philosophy.<sup>24</sup> Be that as it may, the *Directorium breuissimum* certainly travelled forward as an integral part of Herp's *oeuvre*. The 1509 Cologne edition of Blomevenna's Latin *Directorium aureum contemplativorum* includes it as the first of *Collationes tres* accompanying the text.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, in the 1538 Cologne edition of Herp's *Theologia mystica*, the *Collationes tres* comprise Book 2, part 5, following on from the *Directorium aureum contemplativorum* which comprises Book 2, parts 1–4.<sup>26</sup> In the Table of Contents of this edition, these *Collationes* are described as an *epitome* of the preceding parts: 'Collationes tres praecedentis libri sensum quasi per Epitomen paucis absolvens,

<sup>21</sup> Oxford, University College, MS 14; London, British Library, MS Royal 17.D.V.

<sup>22</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 856 (alongside the anonymous Latin translation of the *Cloud*). A second copy of *De adherendo Deo* appears in the late fifteenth-century Carthusian manuscript, Bodleian MS Lat. th. d. 27, a Latin miscellany of mystical and visionary theology including texts and extracts from Hugh of St-Victor, Anselm, Aelred of Rievaulx, James of Milan, Hugo Ripelinus, Henry Suso, Walter Hilton, Richard Rolle, Roger of Waltham, William Flete, Bridget of Sweden, Elizabeth of Schonau, and John Norton.

<sup>23</sup> The same holds true for the London Carthusians' interest in the works of the Dutch mystical author, Denys the Carthusian (c. 1402–71). Vincent Gillespie notes that, in 1532, Prior John Houghton of the London Charterhouse wrote to Dietrich Loher at the Cologne Charterhouse asking him to send ten copies of Denys's printed works, and also speculates that the previous prior, John Batmanson (1529–31) may have written the prefatory epistle to Loher included in the Cologne 1532 edition of Denys's *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*: 'Preaching to the Choir', pp. 172–3.

<sup>24</sup> Marcel Viller, 'Harphius ou Bourcelli? La *Prima Collatio* de la *Theologia Mystica*', *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 3 (1922), 155–62 (p. 162). Two more manuscripts of the *Directorium breuissimum* have since come to light, and three candidates have been suggested as Bourcelli: <https://applejack.science.ru.nl/franciscanauthors/franautj.htm#JohannesBourcelli>

<sup>25</sup> British Library main catalogue (Gen. Ref. Collection 3834.1.3). Henri Herp, *Trois conférences spirituelles*, intro. and notes, Georgette Epiney-Burgard (Geneva, 1983). The *Collationes tres* have been published in a French translation: Henri Herp, *Trois conférences spirituelles*, intro. et notes, Georgette Epiney-Burgard (Genève, 1983).

<sup>26</sup> Zurich, ZB, Alte Drucke und Rara, 1.13 /G.

Pars V', while the rubric at the head of the *Prima collatio* draws specific attention to its teaching on aspiratory prayer: 'Quomodo per ignitas aspirationes atque alia quaedam media ad perfectissimum Dei amorem perueniatur' (How through ardent aspirations and certain other means one arrives at the most perfect love of God).

Before exploring this topic in more depth, it is worthwhile surveying further evidence of Herp's textual presence in late medieval England and briefly speculating about how Andrew Boorde might have lain hands on one of the manuscripts or early editions of the *Directorium breuissimum*.<sup>27</sup> We are aware of six works by Herp in total, all focused in London and its environs: two extant manuscripts, and four attestations, two of which come from the library catalogue of the Syon Brethren.<sup>28</sup> Herp seems to have been known mainly for his sermons and exposition of the Ten Commandments, and, apart from Douce 262, there is no other mention of the *Directorium breuissimum* in England, although it is tempting to wonder whether the attestation to a 'directorium aureum in printe' in the possession of the London Charterhouse, loaned to Mount Grace in 1519–20, could not have some bearing on Andrew Boorde's exemplar. Given that the Cologne 1509 edition of the *Directorium aureum* included the *Collationes tres*, as indeed did the Antwerp 1516 edition printed by Hendrick Eckert, it is possible that Boorde could have copied the *Directorium breuissimum* or *Prima collatio* into Douce 262 from one of these 'printe' books at the London Charterhouse.<sup>29</sup> Theoretically, the London Carthusians could have possessed either the Cologne or the Antwerp edition in around 1520; however, given their links with the Cologne Carthusian publishing house, and the frequent exchanges of books between the two houses in the early sixteenth century, it seems more probable that the exemplar in question was the Cologne 1509 first edition. If this is what happened, then the decision of Boorde and his monastic colleagues to shift Herp's treatise back from print to manuscript and embed it amongst English contemplative texts within a codex which was solely intended for in-house reading comes across as a conservative manoeuvre. Vincent Gillespie remarks on the London Charterhouse's slowness to adapt to the new technology of printing, and this decision seems to bear that out.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Since there is no evidence that any of the extant late fifteenth-century manuscripts ever travelled to England, one of the early editions seems a more likely candidate as Boorde's exemplar. The Paris edition of 1499 diverges in several small details from the Latin text in Douce 262 and was probably not its source.

<sup>28</sup> The two extant manuscripts are Douce 262 and British Library, MS Add. 63787, a copy of Herp's *Speculum aureum decem praeceptorum Dei*, which was bequeathed by William Morland (d. 1492), prebendary of St Paul's and canon of St Stephen's chapel, Westminster, to St Stephen's chapel. The four attestations are: *Sermones de tempore et de sancti* and *Speculum aureum decem praeceptorum Dei*, Registrum of Library of Syon Brethren (c. 1500–24); *Speculum aureum decem praeceptorum Dei*, Winchester College (List of Books in Fromond's Chapel, 1556); and 'directorium aureum in printe', London Charterhouse (Loans to Mount Grace, 1519–20). *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain 3* online database: <http://mlgb3.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/> These figures are broadly similar to those for the writings of Marguerite Porete and Jan Ruusbroec in England, but markedly less than for Henry Suso and Thomas à Kempis. See Lovatt, *Influence of the Religious Literature*, II, pp. 165–71.

<sup>29</sup> I have consulted the Cologne 1509 edition in the British Library (Gen. Ref. Collection 3834.I.3), and the Antwerp 1516 edition in Oxford, Corpus Christi College Library, Rare Books, del.1.7.

<sup>30</sup> Gillespie, 'Preaching to the Choir', pp. 172–3. See further, Vincent Gillespie, 'Syon and

In the second half of this essay we will take a closer look at the content of Herp's *Directorium breuissimum* with a view to ascertaining how it relates to the other texts in Douce 262. In particular, we will propose that Herp's focus on aspiratory prayer potentially provides an important key to the priorities and preoccupations of the codex as a whole.

The *Directorium breuissimum* opens by stating that those who want to strive towards the perfect life by means of contemplation should be aware that two paths are available to them: the scholastic path, engaging the understanding, in which the creator is deduced from his creatures, and the mystical path, which is easier and quicker:

In qua divinus dionisius constituit aliarum virtutum perfectionem, utens in operatione sua *via affectiva*, que consurgit potius per *aspiraciones* quam per meditationes (ch. 1).

[In which the divine Dionysius established the perfection of the other virtues, using the *affective path* in his operations, which rises by *aspirations* rather than by meditations.]<sup>31</sup>

Herp goes on to write that, in order to kindle the fire in their hearts required to follow this affective path, disciples should undertake three kinds of meditative exercise focused on Christ's passion. After a while, however, these preparatory meditations will no longer be necessary and the heart will kindle spontaneously towards God whenever it wishes. Out of this root of kindling arises the tree of perfection which consists in aspiration towards unity, by means of love, with God who is infinite love. This aspiration entails both ecstasy and agony (chapters 2–3). Chapter 4 explains when and how one should practise these aspirations:

... debet fidelis anima in quouis loco et tempore, ambulando, sedendo, iacendo, etiam commodendo assuescere semper ad dilectum *aspiraciones* mentales et quandoque etiam vocales emittere, formando ad oraciones debitas quas Augustinus *iaculatorias*<sup>32</sup> vocat utpote dicendo: 'O amor meus, O sola spes mea: O totum refugium meum et omne desiderium meum, Ihesu amantissime ... O anima anime, O vita anime mee ... me tibi totum offero, totum toti, unum uni, unicum uncio ...' ... que crebro revoluit anima devota. Et dicuntur proprie *aspiraciones* (ch. 4).

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the English Market for Continental Printed Books: The Incunable Phase', in *Syon Abbey and its Books*, ed. E. A. Jones and Alexandra Walsham (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 104–28.

<sup>31</sup> Herp, *Directorium quoddam breuissimum* (Paris: Marchant, 1499), Universiteitsbibliotheek Gent, BHSL. Res.0474/-6. <https://books.google.be/books?vid=GENT900000177065&printsec=frontcover&hl=nl#v=onepage&q&f=false/> Given that this edition occasionally contains small differences at the level of individual words from the version in Douce 262, all quotations have been checked against the manuscript. Translation: 1915 transcript and translation by Miss E. G. Parker, Bibliotheca Ostleriana 7572, McGill Library, Canada, no page numbers. My italics. Sir William Ostler (d. 1919), who commissioned the translation, was an eminent physician and professor of medicine who collected books on the history of medicine. He clearly came to the *Directorium* in Douce 262 as a result of his interest in Andrew Boorde's medical writings, and writes on the first page of this transcript: 'I had this copied thinking at first it was by Borde [sic] himself. It is an interesting statement of mysticism.'

<sup>32</sup> *iaculator, ari*: to throw, cast, hurl, shoot (Chambers Murray Latin–English Dictionary).

[the faithful soul, in whatever place and time, walking, sitting, lying, even eating, should become accustomed to send forth mental *aspirations* toward love, and sometimes vocal ones as well, forming them into the prayers called *ejaculations* by Augustine, and saying ‘O my love; O sole hope of mine; O my entire refuge and my desire, most loving Jesus ... O soul of my soul; O life of my soul ... I offer my whole self to thy whole self, one to one, one only to one only ...’ The devout soul repeats (such prayers) many times. They are rightly called *aspirations*.]<sup>33</sup>

Chapter 5 describes the apophatic outcome of these aspiratory prayers: they cause images to be put to one side, along with the contemplation of God’s qualities of goodness, power, wisdom, etc., creating the conditions for an entry into inner silence where agency passes from creature to creator. The centrality of these prayers to Herp’s contemplative philosophy, and to the *Directorium breuissimum* in particular, is well conveyed by its subtitle in the *Theologia mystica* (1538): ‘Quomodo per ignitas aspirationes atque alia quaedam media ad perfectissimum Dei amorem perueniatur. Collatio 1’ [How by ardent aspirations and certain other means one arrives at the most perfect love of God. Collation 1]. Herp is by no means the first contemplative theologian to advocate the practice of aspiratory prayer (*togeeestinghet* in Middle Dutch), but he is repeatedly painted as the one who gives it the most definitive role in his portrayal of the spiritual life.<sup>34</sup>

What exactly are these aspirations, and what is the implication of their inclusion in Douce 262? To extrapolate initially from Herp’s own description in chapter 4, it is clear that they are perceived as short, repetitious prayers, likened to repeated breaths (Lat. *aspirare*: to breathe upon or to blow), which are cast or hurled towards God (Lat. *iaculatio*: a casting or shooting) either mentally or vocally. They can be practised throughout the day alongside domestic occupations granting access to an apophatic experience of the divine. Herp quotes Augustine as an authority for the practice, and indeed, Augustine and Cassian are the most frequently cited early sources for aspirations, although Augustine refers further back to the prayers of the Desert Fathers: ‘orationes, sed eas tamen breuissimas, et raptim quodammodo jaculatas’ (their prayers, however, were very short, and shot out suddenly in a way). It also seems likely that key scriptural verses, such as Ecclesiasticus 35.21 (‘The prayer of the humble shall pierce the clouds’) and Matthew 6.7 (‘When you pray, do not use many words like the pagans’) provided the ultimate inspiration.<sup>35</sup> Vansteenberghé’s invaluable discussion of the term in 1937 highlights their source in the affective faculty and their spontaneous production as a consequence of heartfelt love and desire. He also notes how often they are likened to spears, javelins and arrows in order to foreground the speed and precision with which they penetrate the heart of God.<sup>36</sup> Herp comments on how *easy* and *quick* it is to attain contemplative

<sup>33</sup> My italics.

<sup>34</sup> Canisius Janssen, ‘L’oraison aspirative chez Herp et chez ses prédécesseurs’, *Carmelus* 3 (1956), 19–48.

<sup>35</sup> Augustine, *Epist.* 20, n. 20, *PL* 33, 502: cited in Edmond Vansteenberghé, ‘Aspirations’, in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, 1 (1937), pp. 1017–25 (1017, 1020). Vansteenberghé also equates them with acclamations such as ‘Maranatha’ used within the early church. Alastair Bennett, ‘*Brevis oratio penetrat Celum*: Proverbs, Prayers, and Lay Understanding in Late Medieval England’, *New Medieval Literatures* 14 (2012), 127–63 (pp. 131–2, 138–9).

<sup>36</sup> Bennett additionally cites various Middle English texts which produce variations on this military image of short prayer, including *Piers Plowman*: ‘Percen wip a Paternoster be paleys

union once the practice has become habituated, and this too becomes a part of the conventional cluster of outcomes associated with the prayer.

Canisius Janssen defines four phases within the development of aspiratory prayer pre-Reformation.<sup>37</sup> The first consists of scattered references to the practice in the New Testament and Church Fathers, in particular Augustine. The second takes place in the third book and *Difficile quaestio* of the *Viae Syon lugent* of Hugh of Balma, the late thirteenth-century Carthusian prior of Meyriat. Here, in the course of commenting on Pseudo-Dionysius's *Theologia mystica*, Hugh writes at length on the unpremeditated upsurge (*consurrectio*) of the *affectus* towards God through love and desire, and opposes this 'easy', 'instantaneous' mystical path to the scholastic journey. He intermittently terms this upsurge an aspiration, and offers advice on the position of the body (standing and facing upward) and the time and place where these affective aspirations should be practised.<sup>38</sup> The third phase concerns mystical authors writing in the wake and under the influence of Hugh of Balma. Janssen cites Guigo de Ponte, the *Cloud*-author and Denys the Carthusian (1402–71) as his main examples, while Thom Mertens also adds Gerlach Peters (d. 1411) and Hendrik Mande (d. 1431), two adherents of the Flemish *Devotio moderna*.<sup>39</sup> As we can see, interest in the discipline is building in the Low Countries across the fifteenth century. Thus it comes as no surprise that, fourth and finally, Janssen pinpoints the *oeuvre* of Hendrik Herp, in particular the *Spieghel der volcomenheit*, as the summation of this medieval tradition; here, he writes, aspiratory prayer functions as a keystone of the contemplative life.

Janssen ends his survey with Herp, but in fact, Herp's *Theologia mystica* proved an important vehicle for carrying the practice of aspiration forward to a variety of Counter-Reformation theologians. Sixteenth-century Dutch spiritual writers such as Blossius, Nicholas van Esch and Constantin de Barbanson latched eagerly onto Herp's structure and formulation of the *via contemplativa*. Blossius writes, 'Tendre vers Dieu par de frequentes aspirations ou oraisons jaculatoires et par de brulant desirs, y joindre la veritable mortification et abnegation, tel est le moyen assuré de parvenir promptement et facilement à la perfection.'<sup>40</sup> At a greater remove, the discipline also animated the thought of several seventeenth-century Italian and French Catholic theologians sufficiently to be included in the titles of their works. Examples include Giovanni Stefano Ferrari, *Porta all'eternita battuta dalle orationi iaculatorie* (Venice, 1647), Jean de Saint-Samson, *Opuscula: De oratione aspirativa* (Lyon, 1654), Giovanni Bona, *Via compendii ad Deum per motus anagogicos et orationes jaculatorias* (1657) and Pietro Francesco Orta, *Orazioni giaculatorie di molti santi* (Italy, 1706). Scrolling back in time to the decades immediately preceding the copying of Douce 262, it is also tempting to see in the Latin treatises

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of heuene' (B.10.468); *The Myroure of Oure Ladye*: 'we oughte to lyfte vp the longe spered of feruente desyre of oure hartes styeng vp to god'; *Dives and Pauper*, and *Fasciculus Morum*. 'Brevis oratio', pp. 137, 140–1, 144.

<sup>37</sup> Janssen, 'L'oraison aspirative'.

<sup>38</sup> Hugh of Balma, *Viae Syon lugent (The Roads to Zion Mourn)*, in *Carthusian Spirituality*, trans. Dennis Martin (New York, 1997), pp. 148–9, 155–70. For discussion of aspiratory prayer in Hugh, see pp. 35–8.

<sup>39</sup> Thom Mertens, 'Het Aspiratieve Gebed Bij Hendrik Mande: Invloed van Hugo de Balma?', *Ons geestelijk erf* 58 (1984), 300–21.

<sup>40</sup> Blossius, *Institution spirituelle* (Paris, 1927), p. 105, quoted in Vansteenbergh, 'Aspirations', p. 1022. My italics.

of the Yorkshire Carthusian, Richard Methley, outpourings of aspiratory sentiment intended to ignite and elevate the *affectus*, even if Methley never explicitly invokes that term. In the *Scola amoris languidi*, he writes:

Nam in primis sepius commendaui spiritum meum deo dicens In manus tuas, aut vocaliter, aut (quod magis puto) spiritualiter. Sed inualescente languore amoris vix cogitare potui formans in spiritu hec verba: Amor, Amor, Amor. Et tandem deficiens ab hac forma exspectaui quoniam totaliter spiritum exspirare possem: A, A, A, tantummodo aut consimili modo canens pocius quam clamans in spiritu pre gaudio.

[At first I kept commending my spirit to God by saying ‘Into your hands’, either vocally or (as I suspect) mentally. But as the languor of love grew more intense, I could hardly think and I only formed in my spirit the word *Amor, Amor, Amor!* Love, love, love! Finally, as I fell away even from that formula; I waited for the moment when I could totally breathe forth my spirit. Then I could only sing (rather than shout) *Ah, ah, ah*, or something like that, in my spiritual joy.]<sup>41</sup>

The influence of Richard Rolle and the *Cloud*-author is clear in this passage, but our improved understanding of aspiration additionally enables us to speculate that these short, breathy repetitions probably also draw upon that prayer tradition.

It is now time to return to Douce 262. As we have seen, Andrew Boorde opts to add Herp’s *Directorium breuissimum*, with its lengthy descriptions of aspiratory prayer, to a manuscript that already contains the *Cloud of Unknowing*, an extract from Hugh of Balma’s *Viae Syon lugent*, and Gallus’s *De septem gradibus contemplationis*. Some of these initial texts will now repay a closer look. The extract from the *Viae Syon lugent* comes from the last part of the third book setting out the Unitive Way via a commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius’s *Theologia mystica*.<sup>42</sup> The extract begins with an interpretation of Pseudo-Dionysius’s instruction to Timothy to ‘ignite consurge ad eius unionem quae est super omnem substantiam et cognitionem’ (surge up without knowing to that union with him who is above all substance and knowledge).<sup>43</sup> Hugh writes:

Unde ista consurrectio, quae per ignorantiam dicitur, nihil aliud est nisi immediate moveri per ardorem amoris ... sine etiam motu intelligentiae concomitante, ut solus adfectus tangat.

[Now this upsurge (*consurrectio*), which is said to take place through unknowing, is nothing other than to be directly moved through the ardour of love ... without even any accompanying movement from the understanding; so that it has to do solely with movements of the *affectus*.]<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> James Hogg (ed.), ‘The *Scola amoris languidi* of Richard Methley of Mount Grace Charterhouse from Trinity College Cambridge MS O.2.56’, in *Kartäusermystik und -Mystiker*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 55, vol. 2 (Salzburg, 1981), pp. 138–65 (p. 146); *The Works of Richard Methley*, trans. Barbara Newman (Collegeville, 2021), p. 22. This passage is also discussed in Denis Renevey’s essay in this volume.

<sup>42</sup> More precisely, the extract comes from Bk 3, chs 82–112 (*Carthusian Spirituality*, pp. 141–54).

<sup>43</sup> Hugues de Balma, *Théologie mystique*, ed. and trans. Francis Ruello, *Source chrétiennes* 408, 2 vols (Paris, 1995), II, p. 132; *Carthusian Spirituality*, p. 141.

<sup>44</sup> Hugues, *Théologie*, II, pp. 132–4; *Carthusian Spirituality*, p. 141.

A few paragraphs later, expanding on the need to separate the affection from the intellect to achieve this upsurge, he continues:

Quod exemplo materiali videri potest, scilicet in *aspiratione et respiratione* anhelitus, quia sicut ex interioribus sine omni deliberatione procedit ista emissio, sic, sine deliberatione, adfectus ignitus ... tendit ad illum cui soli perfectius uniri desiderat ... et promptitudine coadiutus, ut mira velocitudo motuum, citius etiam quam cogitari valeat, recte ad instar *aspirantis et respirantis* consurgat.

[(The character of this upsurge) can be seen in the physical example of breathing in and out (*aspiratione et respiratione*), for just as respiration takes place from within a person without any preceding deliberation, so too the *adfectus* is ignited without deliberation ... (stretching) towards him to whom it yearns to be united ... aided by such suddenness that with surprising speed of movement, more rapidly than thought, it surges straight up, like the process of breathing in and out (*aspirantis et respirantis*).]<sup>45</sup>

Once the hindrance of the intellect has been successfully removed:

Tunc libera ipsa adfectiva, veluti quaedam avicula, solis pennis adfectionum ardentium provecta, tanta libertate perfruiter ut *quotiescumque vult* ardentissime, moveatur in Deum.

[The affective spirit freed from her chains is like a bird carried aloft on the wings of ardent affection alone. She enjoys such great freedom that she can be moved ardently into God *as often as she wishes*.]<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, this upsurge correlates with a reduction in the words of prayer:

Nunc autem ab inferioribus ad supremum ascendens, secundum mensuram ascensionis contrahitur, et post omnem ascensionem totus sine voce erit et totus unietur ineffabiliter.

[Ascending now from lower things to the highest, one becomes more and more contracted at each degree of the ascent, until, after the entire ascent one is completely without voice, totally united, speechless.]<sup>47</sup>

Most of the main elements in the tradition of medieval aspiratory prayer are established here: in particular, the association with the breath, the lack of premeditation, the suddenness of the upsurge, the preference for minimal words of prayer, and the habituation that will eventually enable the soul to be unified with God whenever she or he wishes. In fact, it would appear that the London Carthusians have deliberately opted for the portion of the *Viae Syon lugent* that deals in some detail with this practice.

Tregooze and his collaborators place this extract immediately after the *Cloud of Unknowing* in Douce 262. Not only does this represent the *Cloud* as part of a tradition of Pseudo-Dionysian theology and exposition, it also suggests that the famous information about stirring the heart towards God through a one-word prayer within the *Cloud* can be cross-referenced with Hugh's discussion of *consurrectio*

<sup>45</sup> Hugues, *Théologie*, II, p. 160; *Carthusian Spirituality*, p. 149. My italics.

<sup>46</sup> Hugues, *Théologie*, II, p. 166; *Carthusian Spirituality*, p. 151. My italics.

<sup>47</sup> Hugues, *Théologie*, II, p. 160; *Carthusian Spirituality*, p. 150.

and aspirations. Let us look more closely at some of the instances in which the *Cloud*-author discusses these elements. In chapters 3 and 4, he writes:

Lift up þin herte unto God wiþ a meek steryng of loue ... þis is þe schortest werke of alle þat man may ymagyn ... for 3if it be trewlich conceyued, it is bot a *sodeyn steryng*, & as it were *vnavisid*, *speedly springing* unto God as sparcle fro þe cole.<sup>48</sup>

In chapters 7, 37, and 39–41, this work of affective stirring is linked with short prayer:

What tyme þat þou purposest þee to þis werk ... take þee bot a litil worde of o silable; for so it is betir þen of two, for euer þe schorter it is, þe betir it acordeþ wiþ þe werk of þe spirite. & soche a worde is þis worde GOD or þis worde LOUE ... þis worde schal be þi scheeld & *þi spere* ... wiþ þis worde þou schalt *bete* on þis cloude & þis derknes.<sup>49</sup>

(Such prayers) risen euermore *sodenly* vnto God, *wiþoutyn* any meenes or any *premeditacion* in special comyng before, or going þerwiþ ... A man or a womman, affraied ... *sodenly* in þe hei3t of his speryt he is *dreuyn upon hast* & upon nede for to crie or for to prey after help ... þerfore he *brestitþ up hidously* wiþ a grete spirit, & cryeþ bot a litil worde of o silable, as is þis worde FIIR or þis worde OUTE ... herfore it is wretyn þat schort preier peersiþ heuen.<sup>50</sup>

But alþof þe schortnes of preier be greetly comendid here, neuerþeles þe oftnes of preier is neuer þe raþer refreynid ... it schuld *neuer sees* (cease) tyl þe tyme were þat it had fully getyn þat þat it longid after ... Crye þan goostly euer upon one: ‘Synne, synne, synne; oute, oute, oute!’ ... in þis werk schalt þou holde no mesure; for I wolde þat þou schuldest *neuer seese* of þis werk þe whiles þou leuyst.<sup>51</sup>

Here, more explicitly than in Hugh’s Latin text, the upsurge of the *affectus* is accompanied by a vocal cry. However, we should note the same suddenness, the same lack of premeditation, the same sense of convulsion or ejaculation (*brestitþ up hidously*), the same exhortation to unceasing repetition, and the same focus on verbal brevity. The selection and positioning of the extract from the *Viae Syon lugent* immediately following the *Cloud* comes across as a sophisticated and considered manoeuvre on the part of the London Charterhouse scriptorium, designed to draw attention to the Latinate tradition of Dionysian commentary which informs the vernacular text, in particular, with regard to the practice of *consurrectio* and aspiration.

<sup>48</sup> *The Cloud of Unknowing and Related Treatises*, ed. Phyllis Hodgson, Analecta Cartusiana 3 (Salzburg, 1982), pp. 9.12, 10.5, 12.22–4. My italics. See Hugues, *Théologie*, II, p. 170; *Carthusian Spirituality*, p. 152: ‘Per istam diuturniorum motuum anagogicorum consurrectionem, magis ac magis adfectus extenditur, et, quasi quibusdam flammeis scintillis, mens purgatur efficacius’ [Through this upsurge of longer-lasting anagogic movement, the *affectus* extends itself more and more, and the human spirit is cleansed more effectively by fiery sparks].

<sup>49</sup> *Cloud*, ed. Hodgson, pp. 15.24, 15.31–4, 15.37–9. My italics.

<sup>50</sup> *Cloud*, ed. Hodgson, p. 41.5–7, 41.13–16, 41.19–21, 41.27–8. My italics. Bennett describes how, in other vernacular writings, the *brevis oratio* is often associated with catechetical prayers such as the *Paternoster*, *Credo* and *Ave Maria*: ‘*Brevis Oratio*’, p. 137.

<sup>51</sup> *Cloud*, ed. Hodgson, pp. 43.12–16, 43.30, 44.22–4. My italics.

Nor does this considered response to the *Cloud* terminate with Tregooze and his collaborators. Returning to Douce 262 some twenty years later, Andrew Boorde seems immediately to have realised the preoccupations binding the texts together. He resolves to extend and update these preoccupations. Initially he adds the short, apparently original Middle English treatise titled *When a solle begynnyth to fele grace*. This treatise is only three paragraphs long, but even within this short span we can tell how closely it correlates to the themes of Hugh of Balma and the *Cloud*-author, essentially offering a structural synopsis of the three-fold path. Through grace, the soul sorrows for its sin, and puts itself through confession, contrition and penance. Feeling eased by this, it then experiences sweetness from reading, praying and listening to sermons, and becomes intent on conforming its will to God's will. Seeing this, God sweetly stirs its love and compassion. As it meditates upon Christ's passion and the joys of heaven:

Sodenly God sendyth in to þe soll a bornyng loue of desyer so faruantly þat all bodyly my3th faylyth & þe corrupt body fallyth to þe er3th. Then thynkyth he of no ioy ne payne, neþer of syne ne on þe passyon of Christ ne of our Lady, nor of nothyng in heuyn in hell ne in er3th, but only on God. Not wat God ys in kynd and maner, but þat God ys all hys desyer. Lo, þat for abundans of loue þat ys in þe hart þe mouth spekyth: 'hart, hart, hart', or 'God, God, God' ... He felyth God in hym self and he in God. So glad ys the soll & body then þat marvell yt ys þat þe hart of man brekyth not and leppyth not owt of þe mowth for loue in to God.<sup>52</sup>

Here again, following after the more rudimentary parts of the religious curriculum, we see the sudden upsurge of the *affectus*, leading to an apophatic focus on God's being rather than his qualities and attributes. In response to that upsurge, the soul utters repeated, one-syllable aspirations derived directly from the heart. While the triads of aspirations clearly derive from the *Cloud*, the focus upon the heart responds to a more fifteenth-century devotional script, which enters the lexis of English contemplation via *The Boke of Gostely Grace* of Mechthild of Hackeborn, *The Doctrine of the Hert*, and others.<sup>53</sup> It is salutary to realise what a small part the heart plays in the contemplative psychology of the *Cloud*-author.

In the last paragraph of the treatise, the author again draws from the *Cloud*, representing God toying with the soul by pretending discourteously to ignore his lover in a game of courtly hide-and-seek. This game is finally resolved when God lovingly

<sup>52</sup> Douce 262, fols 133r–v. My transcription; punctuation and capitalisation added. This last line finds a close counterpart in Richard Methley's *Refectorium salutis*, ch. 7, where, after fainting from an 'impetum amoris rabidissimum' (impetuous impulse of love), he is suddenly compelled into utterance: 'Et ipso tripudio cordis videbatur michi quod meum cor per os exilire vellet' [Because of the way my heart was dancing, I thought it wanted to leap out through my mouth]. James Hogg (ed.), 'A Mystical Diary: the *Refectorium salutis* of Richard Methley of Mount Grace Charterhouse', in *Kartäusermystik und -Mystiker*, Analecta Cartusiana 55 (Salzburg, 1981), I, pp. 208–38 (p. 218). *Works of Richard Methley*, trans. Newman, p. 99. For both lines, see Psalm 44:1 (Vulgate).

<sup>53</sup> For a discussion of the heart imaginary in Mechthild's *Boke*, and other Middle English translations, see my 'Church and House: Mechthild of Hackeborn's Architectural Imaginary in its Fifteenth-Century Religious Context', in Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa and Anne Mouron (eds), *A Companion to The Boke of Gostely Grace: The Middle English Translation and its European Vernacular Contexts* (Liverpool, 2024), pp. 149–68.

takes up the soul ‘& pottyth hym in to þe mydyst of hys hart’,<sup>54</sup> a much more reassuring, less radical resolution than the *Cloud*-author’s instruction to remain indefinitely suspended within a cloud. Following this vernacular synopsis of the contemplative journey, Boorde then reaches out for the most *contemporary* Continental treatise in the codex, Herp’s *Directorium breuissimum*, containing the most explicit and up-to-date references to aspiratory prayer. As discussed above, this may have been converted back into manuscript from one of the stand-alone Paris print editions of the 1490s, or from the Cologne 1509 edition of the *Directorium aureum*. Either way, it shows Boorde and his team purposefully selecting a second epitome of contemplative practice that updates and develops Hugh of Balma’s account of aspiration in the first half of the codex, as well as offering an explanatory gloss to the loving cries of ‘God, God, God’ in *When a solle begynyth to fele grace* and, at a greater distance, the *Cloud of Unknowing*.

The links between Herp’s *Directorium breuissimum* and Hugh’s *Viae Syon lugent* repay even closer attention. Bernard McGinn emphasises the degree to which Herp’s *Directorium aureum* functions as a ‘mystical handbook’, combining and reshaping expressions and images from earlier writers such as Hugh of Balma, Jan Ruusbroec and Willem Jordaens.<sup>55</sup> Comparing Herp’s *Directorium breuissimum* directly with the *Viae Syon lugent* (and looking more broadly than the passage extracted in Douce 262), it becomes clear that certain lines and images have been lifted directly from the earlier text. To provide just one substantial example: in both the *Prologue* and the *Difficile quaestio* (D.40) of the *Viae Syon lugent*, Hugh offers an analogy for the curriculum of meditations that form a necessary preliminary to the aspirative upsurge of the soul but can be discarded subsequently. To construct an arched building or bridge, one must first build a framework of wood to support the stones; once, however, the stone walls have been fixed in place, the wooden framework can be removed since the stone arches will then stand immovably by themselves. This analogy is repeated, almost word for word, in chapter 3 of Herp’s *Directorium breuissimum*.<sup>56</sup>

These parallels add to our sense of the *purposefulness* of Boorde’s choice. In selecting Herp’s *Directorium breuissimum* he consciously chooses a text which cross-references with the *Viae Syon lugent* and, to some extent, epitomises it. He is an intelligent and discerning reader of medieval Pseudo-Dionysian writing. He wants the *Cloud of Unknowing* to be read and interpreted, not only with reference to an older, thirteenth-century tradition of commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius’s *Mystical Theology*, but also with reference to its fifteenth-century continuation, which shines a stronger light on the contemplative discipline of aspiration. To cement its application to the *Cloud*-author he adds, at the end of the codex, the *Book of Privy Counselling*.

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<sup>54</sup> Douce 262, fol. 133v. See *Cloud*, ed. Hodgson, chs 46–7; René Tixier, “‘Good gamesumli pley’: les jeux de l’amour dans *The Cloud of Unknowing*”, in *Caliban* 24 (1987), 5–25. In the *Cloud*, interestingly, it is the feminine soul who demurely hides her desire from God. Here, drawing upon the evasive lover of the Song of Songs 5:6, it is God who plays hard to get. The final placing of the soul in God’s heart is far closer to visionary writers such as Mechthild of Hackeborn than to the Pseudo-Dionysian tradition.

<sup>55</sup> McGinn, ‘Mystical Handbooks’, pp. 73–88.

<sup>56</sup> Further examples include a close identity between the opening sentences of Herp’s *Directorium breuissimum* and *Viae Syon lugent*, *Difficile quaestio*, C.27, C.31. In both texts there are two paths to the perfect life: one scholastic and common, utilising the understanding; and one mystical, easy and short, established by Dionysius, utilising the *affectus*.

An interest in aspiratory prayer runs like a red thread throughout Douce 262. In the first half, Tregooze selects a long extract from the *Viae Syon lugent* which effectively glosses the *Cloud*-author's description of the unceasing *werk* of one-syllable prayer in the preceding treatise. In the second half, some twenty years later, Boorde adds an additional epitome of the same kind of *werk*, possibly marginally re-nuanced in the light of Richard Methley's mystical writings. In addition, he also takes the unprecedented step of seeking out a more modern interlocutor – one of the most contemporary mystical theologians from the Low Countries – who can bring to the collection a more systematic and explicit account of aspiratory practice. In the first two decades of the sixteenth century, the London Carthusians are not only interested in establishing a lineage of Pseudo-Dionysian theology, passing from Thomas Gallus and Hugh of Balma to the *Cloud*-author and Hendrik Herp, they are also interested in building a many-angled picture of aspiration and applying it retrospectively to items from the *Cloud* corpus. The insights to be gleaned from this codex may have ramifications for how we think about other contemporary productions from the London scriptorium, and for how we interpret the as yet insufficiently studied prose voice of Methley's Latin *oeuvre*.