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3. "O, why ne had y lerned for to die?":
Lerne for to Dye and the Author's Death in Thomas Hoccleve's *Series*

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Few modern readers have considered any more of the work we call Thomas Hoccleve's *Series* (c. 1421-26) than its closely associated opening parts, the "Prologue" and Hoccleve's "Complaint."1 Admittedly, Hoccleve studies remain rudimentary.2 Admittedly too, the highly personalized nature of these parts helps ensure their appeal today.3 That modern readers have been slow to consider the *Series* a whole, however, must also be because in its fiction as well as in fact it encourages us to think of it as no more than a manuscript miscellany. It consists of what is indeed a series of texts, five old, six or so new. Together, these fall loosely into sections (I count five), each adding to the last in what could be an indefinitely extendible process. The old texts represent Hoccleve's renderings of various existing works from Latin into English. And the new texts show Hoccleve or a version of Hoccleve actually assembling the book we are reading.4 It is not a process that ever seems to have involved much advance planning on his part; rather, his book seems to be coming together mainly thanks to whim and to whatever exemplars he happened to have access at a particular time. And although this book more than once seems on the point of ending, assembling it is not a process Hoccleve ever seems to have completed.

We are learning there are lots of things we should not trust about Hoccleve, however. As D.C. Greetham has shown, we should not trust his narrator when he says he was a poor metrist, for example, or when in the *Series* he claims he was no more than a reporter of other people's stories.5 And in the case of the *Series*, we should not trust his text. The first time we read the "Prologue" and the "Complaint," for example, we think they are spoken. But as J.A. Burrow has pointed out, we have to revise our assumptions at the beginning of the next part, the "Dialogue with a Friend."6 For when the friend asks

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Hoccleve what he has been doing just as he is finishing the "Complaint," Hoccleve does not say he has spent the morning complaining. He reads the "Complaint" to him (p. 110, lines 15-17).7 Had Hoccleve so disturbed his fiction only here we might say he had been nodding. But later in the "Dialogue," his outburst to his friend about coin-clippers (pp. 113-117, lines 99-198) proves similarly written, and this time long written: "When I this wrote/ many me dyd amyse," Hoccleve suddenly remarks of the passage to the friend (p. 115, line 134). Clearly, we should not rely on first impressions when reading this work.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that it has been the readers most aware of Hoccleve's untrustworthiness who have gone furthest towards reading the *Series* as a whole.8 Greetham does not finally discuss this work in any detail. But Burrow finds in it a coherent, though partly implied, narrative about its author. In 1982 he suggested that the *Series* enacts "the progress of that rehabilitation in society which Hoccleve, after his wild infirmity and its unhappy aftermath, so longs for,"9 and in 1984 he argued that Hoccleve had designed it as a means of demonstrating this rehabilitation:

The *Series* is...designed both to affirm his recovery and also, by its very existence, to prove it by showing that he can indeed talk sense again.... Hoccleve sees the writing and publication of his latest book as an important stage in the process by which he may finally be rehabilitated after his illness and its long aftermath. Furthermore, the book itself seems to trace the steps of such a rehabilitation.... It begins in solitary alienation, and it ends with the resumption (albeit hesitant) of a social role proper to a man of fifty-three.[10]

He may not go so far as to see the *Series* as a completed whole, therefore, but he does see it as a work whose whole transcends its parts.

There can be no doubt that by alerting us to the presence of this kind of semi-implied autobiographical narrative in the *Series* Burrow has greatly enhanced our understanding of this work. There can be no doubt too that the particular narrative he describes importantly helps hold this work together. Especially in its opening texts Hoccleve's narrator does reveal himself obsessed with his alienation from his friends. And its later texts bear clear witness to his reintegration into society. The *Series* grows out of complex and conflicted thinking, however, and this is not the only narrative of this kind that it contains. In what follows I will be describing another such narrative, one that like Burrow's helps hold the whole together but one, I believe, that Hoccleve deployed relatively deliberately. First I will describe the text that more than any other was responsible for generating this narrative. This is the second of the old texts Hoccleve renders within the *Series*, the one he calls *Lerne for to Dye*

The Text

Hoccleve nowhere identifies *Lerne for to Dye* apart from giving it this title (p. 117, line 206); thanks to Benjamin P. Kurtz we know it to have been the *Ars moriendi* chapter of Henry Suso's *Horologium sapientiae* (completed c. 1334).[11] This chapter had first appeared in Suso's explicitly meditative work in German, his *Büchlein der ewigen Weisheit* (1327-8). It was in the form it took in the more discursive *Horologium* that the chapter became generally known in Europe, however. [12] It reached England probably in c. 1375, where it quickly spread.[13] Hoccleve seems to have known it in a reduced version of the *Horologium* which consisted of this and the work's next three chapters; they describe how to live spiritually, how to receive Christ in the sacrament, and how to praise God respectively.[14] But Hoccleve was by no means unusual in choosing to isolate this one chapter for treatment,[15] and the only thing that seems to have been unusual about his rendering it into English was his decision to use verse.[16]

In being attracted to such a text Hoccleve reveals himself very much a child of his age. When he was working on the *Series*, the *Ars moriendi* was establishing itself as an important independent genre, one obviously associable with what might seem late medieval culture's obsessive concern with death.[17] For those interested in English culture, the genre is normally typified by *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, which was the first translation into English of the early fifteenth-century work probably most responsible for defining the genre in the first place, the *Tractatus artis bene moriendi*.[18] The text seeks to teach us how to die well: in successive chapters it deals with the temptations that afflict the dying man, lists the questions he ought to be asked, provides him with prayers, tells those attending him how to help him by arranging that images of the Crucifix or Our Lady always be before him, for example[19]--and provides the attendants with prayers to say over him.[20] It is, as Sister Mary Catharine O'Connor has put it, "a complete and intelligible guide to the business of dying, a method to be learned while one is in good health and kept at one's fingers' ends for use in that all-important and inescapable hour."[21]

Although earlier in date than the texts that primarily defined the *Ars moriendi*, Suso's chapter both contributed to these and traveled with them.[22] It consists of a dialogue between *Discipulus*,clearly a version of Suso himself, and *Aeterna Sapientia*, male despite the name, who embodies aspects of Christ. It begins with *Sapientia* (Sapience in

Hoccleve's translation), pointing out that the Disciple would often have died already if God had not granted him time in which to repent and learn Sapience's doctrine (p. 180, lines 71-77).23 Sapience then agrees to tell the Disciple about the four things most profitable for all men to know, especially how to die (the other three things will be the subject of the *Horologium*'s next three chapters). He instructs the Disciple to consider the image of someone about to die unprepared; the image the Disciple conjures up is that of his own alter-ego, a fair young man of thirty. This *Similitudo mortis* (Image in Hoccleve's translation; later writers will term its equivalent *Moriens*), fully expecting to be headed straight for hell, bewails the suddenness and imminence of its death, and regrets its failure to prepare adequately:

O, why ne had y lerned for to die?

Why was y nat ferd of goddes maugree?

What eilid me / to bathe in swich folie?

Why nadde reson / goten the maistrie

Of me? (p. 188, lines 282-86)

The Disciple advises it to repent, but the Image is now far too paralyzed with fear to be able to do so. The Image urges those present (us, I presume, although in later *Ars moriendi* tradition death was to be a highly social event)24 to let it be an example to them (p. 189, line 295), and it urges the Disciple to prepare for death in good time first by repenting and renouncing all worldly things, and then by frequently meditating as he is at present (p. 196, lines 477-90). It advises him to imagine his soul lamenting its friendlessness in Purgatory (p. 197, lines 491-514); the Disciple agrees that a dying man's friends, by deceiving him with false hopes of recovery, regularly reveal themselves enemies to his soul (p. 198, lines 533-46). Panic-stricken by the physical signs of its approaching death, by the devils hovering about, and by the fires of purgatory already before its eyes, the Image finally dies, but not before describing the souls it sees there blaming their friends for their plight:

By youre desires inordinat,

And eeke of othir mo / our self han we

Brought in-to this plyt and wrecchid estat. (p. 205, lines 715-17)

The chapter ends with the terrified Disciple resolving to learn to die, and with Sapience reminding him that at the very end he should trust in the Passion.

As far as I know, modern readers have not read the *Series* with its old texts particularly in mind. Greetham has noted that these "react to, and are the product of, emotional and psychological disturbances."25 But he has not explored the insight. And Burrow pays little attention to the old texts, referring to them as "existing on a different plane of reality," or as "set back or recessed in the fictive space."26 The *Series* comes from a period much interested in how new books are generated out of old, however. The insight that "out of olde feldes, as men seyth,/ Cometh al this newe corn" (*Parliament of Fowls*, lines 22-23) had helped drive Chaucer's reformulation of the love vision, and his successors (among whom Hoccleve prominently counts) continued to thematize this insight through the fifteenth century.27 But where Chaucer had offered his new books as having first come to him in the form of dreams partly generated by what he had read before falling asleep, his successors' new books came to them while they were awake. Although in the *Kingis Quair* (c. 1434-35?)

James I of Scotland reads Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* while waiting to sleep, for example, he does not represent himself as actually falling asleep before starting his own book, and although in the *Testament of Cresseid* Robert Henryson (*fl.* c. 1490) reads *Troilus and Criseyde* to shorten the winter night he does not fall asleep before treating his "uther quair." When these successors dreamed, it tended to be briefly, of the authors whose texts they were reworking (Aesop in Henryson's *Morall Fabillis*, Mapheus Vegius in Book xiii of Gavin Douglas' translation of the *Aeneid*). Like these successors, Hoccleve does not dream the *Series*, and perhaps surprisingly he has no authorizing dreams within it. But its opening texts proclaim its affinities with the Chaucerian dream form.

Like the opening lines of many a medieval dream poem, thus, Hoccleve's "Prologue" is seasonal and features a narrator whose half-articulated troubles mean he cannot sleep.28 The season is not the spring usual to this poetry, however, but late November, and the narrator has not been pondering cliches about love but rather cliches about the instability of the world and how all men must die. There is accordingly no suggestion that his troubles derive from incipient or unrequited love. The suggestion is that they derive from his eclipsed condition since his last illness: no longer does he enjoy the favor that once shone on him (p. 96, lines 22-4). But they still mean that like an unhappy lover he no longer wants to live (lines 26-8). We expect him, like Chaucer's narrator in the *Book of the Duchess*, to give an account of a book (Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* would be a likely candidate),29 and then to work through his troubles in a dream partly generated by this account.30 But instead of doing these things, he bursts on the next morning into his "Complaint": "here endythe my prologe, and folowythe my complaynt" (p. 96).

The "Complaint" opens (as a complaint should) with its narrator complaining in this case complaining about his friends' refusal to believe that ever since All Hallows' Day five years previously he has been cured of the mental illness that had suddenly afflicted him (p. 97, lines 55-56). Some three quarters of the way through, though (p. 106, line 309 ff.), he does give an account of a book. Admittedly, it is a book he read not at night but "(t)his othar day" (line 309). But like a book he might have read before falling asleep, it is one he knows only in part, in his case because its owner claimed it back unexpectedly (p. 108, lines 372-75). And like a book in a Chaucerian dream poem, this book proves to have helped generate the present text, prologue and all.

Scholars have long accepted that this book was a convenient fiction.31 But Hoccleve tells us enough about it for A. G. Rigg to have been able to show that it was Isidore of Seville's *Synonyma* or *De lamentatione animae dolentis*, a work that like Boethius' seems for the Middle Ages to have constituted a paradigmatic example of *consolatio*.32 Hoccleve's reading of Isidore's text is markedly partial: not only has he not read it all, but he has entirely ignored important features of what he has read the book's deliberate rhetorical repetitiveness, for example. What he focuses on is Reason reasoning a "hevy man / wofull and

angwysshiows" (p. 106, line 316) out of his near despair by persuading him that through suffering can come eternal joy. We expect an account of the man's response to Reason, but Hoccleve does not give this, presumably because in his fiction at least he never managed to read it.33 Instead, he allows what could have been the man's response to merge with one of his own.34 He dismisses his sorow ("farwell my sorow / I caste it to the cok" [p. 109, line 386]), hopes God will effect the return of his friends (lines 390-92), and then, just as Isidore's "hevy man" might have done, praises God for having given him the chance to repent:

he gave me wit / and he toke it away

when that he se / that I it mys dyspente,

and gave agayne / when it was to his pay,

he grauntyd me / my giltes to repente,

and hens-forwarde / to set myne entente,

vnto his deitie / to do plesaunce,

and to amend / my synfull governaunce.

lawde and honore / and thanke vnto the be,

lorde god. (pp. 109-10, lines 400-408)

However casually constructed these texts might at first have seemed, Hoccleve must from the first have been composing a *consolatio* partly generated by Isidore's book. As good readers of the *Series*, we should now re-read them with this book in mind.

The opening parts of the *Series* direct us to read it as we would a Chaucerian dream poem, therefore, with its old books very much in mind. Doubtless, it would be telling for us to read it with all of them in mind at once. It makes sense to start with *Lerne for to Dye*, however, for this seems to have been particularly important both to Hoccleve and to his narrator. The rendering of Suso's chapter is the only work that appears in both the *Series* and the collection Hoccleve made of his earlier poetry in San Marino, California, Huntington Library MS HM 744/111.35 We are not sure of the relative dates of these collections, but they both seem to have belonged to the last four or five years of Hoccleve's life and there are good reasons for regarding the *Series* as the later.36 *Lerne for to Dye* therefore seems to have been antecedently important to Hoccleve as he turned to this later collection. And it was certainly important to his narrator before he started his work in this collection.

This version of Hoccleve first mentions *Lerne for to Dye* in the "Dialogue with a Friend," where he tells his friend he intends to render it as his next literary project (p. 117, lines 204-11). He makes it sound at first as if he has recently happened upon it ("in latyn have I sene / a small tretise" [line 205]); it gradually emerges, however (pp. 125-26, lines 439-48), that he must have

decided to treat it some time before he started work on the texts we are reading ("Trustith wel this pourpos is nat sodeyn" [line 439]), and probably well before he even thought of the *Series* ("A man in his conceit / may serchee & see/ In .ve. yeer / what he do may, pardee" (lines 445-46)). He also assigns it a higher spiritual value than he does any of the other old texts he will treat. He tells his friend he is taking on the task of rendering it at the urging of "a devout man" (p. 118, line 235). He conflates rendering it with his own preparation for death (p. 117, lines 214-17). He hopes his rendering will encourage others to prepare for death in good time (p. 118, lines 218-31). And he plans a climactic position for this rendering in his own life:

And whan that [translating it] endyd is / I nevar thinke,

more in englyshe aftar / be occupied;

I may not labowr / as I dyd, and swinke; ...

The night approchethe / it is fer past none. (p. 118, lines 239-41, 245)

Although the directives are clear that we should read the *Series* with *Lerne for to Dye* in mind, it is unlikely that many of Hoccleve's contemporaries were able to do this right away. Admittedly, Suso's chapter was fairly widely disseminated by the 1420s. Even so, few readers could have known it before encountering Hoccleve's rendering. When these readers first took up the *Series*, therefore, *Lerne for to* could only have affected how they read its later parts. But this does not mean it would never have affected their reading of the work as a whole. Hoccleve may have made us this work's very first readers, privy to the processes whereby he assembled it, but as we have seen in the case of the "Prologue" and "Complaint" he also expected us to be its last readers, able to revise and re-revise our initial understanding of it in the light of information he has initially withheld.37

Reading the Series

As we have seen, when we first read the *Series*' "Prologue" we expect it to open into a dream. In the light of *Lerne for to Dye*, however, we realize it is not irrelevant in a book that will feature an *Ars moriendi* that its "Prologue" is set in late November, and that its narrator no longer wants to live. It is also not irrelevant that this narrator has been busy pondering cliches about death. But instead of letting these prompt him into preparing for death, as a text like *Lerne for to Dye* would have held he should, he has been relating them mainly with what will prove to be his worldly condition. We may at first accept that the troubles he hints at are indeed those involving the loss of patrons and friends that he deals with in the "Complaint." But retrospectively we realize that what he really needed to do on that late November evening was learn to die.

In much the same way, although Hoccleve's "Complaint" reads first as a complaint, later as a *consolatio* partly generated by Isidore's text, we realize

retrospectively that its narrative also partly works like Suso's. In first desiring to die and in then reasoning himself out of his despair, Hoccleve undoubtedly resembles Isidore's "hevy man." But like Suso's Image, which hated discipline in its youth (p. 190, lines 312-14) and which allowed all its thirty years to pass without ever having conformed with the will of God (p. 192, lines 377-85), Hoccleve's younger self was "ryotows" (p. 97, line 67), with friends we can assume were similarly riotous (p. 98, lines 75-76). Like Image too (p. 183, lines 141-47), he was unexpectedly separated from his former way of life:

Some tyme I wend / as lite as any man,

for to have fall / in-to that wildenesse

but god, whan that hym list / may, wole and can,

helthe with-drawe. (p. 99, lines 106-109)

And like Suso's Disciple (and the later Everyman, at least in dramatic time), he has had a reprieve. In referring to the period since his illness as one in which to repent he may be using terms Isidore's Reason would have approved. But they are also ones the writers of the *Artes moriendi* would have liked. As these writers make clear, those about to die were regularly asked what they would do if they recovered. I quote from *The Book of the Craft of Dying*'s list of questions for "all crysten men bothe seculers and religiouse":

> Porposist þou verrily and art in full wyll to amende the, and þou myght leve lenger, and neuer to synne more dedly wittyngly and with þi will, and rather þan þou woldist offend god dedly eny more, to leve and lese wylfully all erþely þingis were þei neuer so lefe to the, and also the lyf of þi body therto; and forthermore þou prayest god to yeve the grace to contynue in this purpose? (p. 413)38

Were those questioned to answer in the affirmative ("The seke man seiþe, 3e" [p. 413]), therefore, they would have promised to use any time left to them in just the way Hoccleve finally realizes he should have been using his.

Had the *Series* ended with the "Complaint," as for a while it seems about to do, we would probably have assumed that Hoccleve did finally act on the realization he expresses in its last lines before dying on cue at the end of the year. But the *Series* has hardly started yet. We may suspect as we start reading the "Dialogue with a Friend" that this part will be about Hoccleve's last moments in this world. We may also suspect that the "one" who comes knocking at Hoccleve's door at the beginning of this text (p. 110, line 2) will be Death, a figure Hoccleve's seasonal prologue has prepared us for, and one who knocks at other doors in Middle English literature in *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*, for example.39 But it is no more than one of Hoccleve's worldly friends ("This man was my good frynde / of farn a-gon, / that I speke of" [p. 110, lines 8-

9]), and the "Dialogue" shows no last moments but only an impromptu conversation between friends. If Hoccleve is ever going to translate his realization into appropriate action, it does not promise to be here.

Yet as we read on we may start suspecting that Hoccleve has already effected such a translation. As we have seen, although the "Prologue" and "Complaint" at first seem casually constructed, Hoccleve must from the first have been composing the *consolatio* they represent. Given their religious conclusion, it may be that by doing this he has already performed his penitential exercise as Chaucer perhaps did when he composed the *Parson's Tale*.40 It surely would not have occurred to us to consider such a possibility while we still believed his *consolatio* merely spoken, or even after we first learned it was written. But when the friend lets it slip that the "Dialogue" is taking place not on the November morning when Hoccleve says he first burst into his "Complaint" (p. 96, line 35) but in Lent of what must have been the following year (p. 133, lines 662-64), we realize Hoccleve has invested the past several months of his reprieve into composing it. The question of whether this has represented a good use of his time begins to seem more pressing.

When Hoccleve reads his "Complaint" to his friend, the friend advises him against publishing it, on the ground that it might stir up memories best forgotten (p. 111, lines 25-32). If like the friend we consider this text to be primarily autobiographical, we will therefore probably decide that in composing it Hoccleve has not been using his time at all well. But Hoccleve anticipates recent debate by claiming a primarily exemplary force for this text:

so would I now / vpon that othar syde

wist were / how our lord Ihesu, which is gyde

to all relefe / and may all hertes cure,

relevyd hathe me / synfull creature. (p. 112, lines 60-63)[41]

So he would claim that he has been using his time quite well. Yet he does not altogether want us to agree with him. For by the time we realize we should be thinking about this matter he has also let us know that he had first decided to render *Lerne for to Dye* before he ever started the *Series*. We should already have deduced, therefore, that he has been working on what we have just been reading at the expense of getting on with Suso's text. And however exemplary the "Complaint," composing it could hardly have kept his mind as relentlessly on his approaching death as rendering such an *Ars moriendi* would have done. Hoccleve, we must finally decide, has not been using his time nearly as well as he might.

Hoccleve's excuse for having put off rendering *Lerne for to Dye* is that he has been testing whether he was up to the task:

I haue a tyme resonable abide

Or that I thoghte in this laboure me;

And al to preeue my self, I so dide. (p. 126, lines 442-44)

But the excuse hardly stands in view of the cliches he rehearsed in his "Prologue" about the instability of the world and the inevitability of death, and it entirely collapses when he reveals that death is an event he has every reason to expect imminently:

Of age am I fifty winter and thre;

Ripenesse of dethe / fast vpon me hastethe;

My lymes sumdell / now vnweldy be;

all my syght apperithe faste, and wastithe,

and my conceyte / a dayes now / not tastethe

as it hathe done / in yeres precedent;

now all a-nother is my sentement. (p. 119, lines 246-52)

Admittedly, he seems fully determined to work on this text at the beginning of the "Dialogue," so for a while we keep expecting to encounter his rendering at any line. But already before the "Dialogue" ends, we see him again allowing himself to be distracted from the task. We do not know exactly what was involved when he let this happen on previous occasions. But this time his friend has much to answer for.

Readers who have commented on Hoccleve's friend have approved of him. Pryor refers to how the friend's side of the conversation is "built upon the frankness, and also the tact, of an affectionate intimacy of long standing,"[42] and Burrow also thinks highly of him: "Hoccleve's 'rehabilitation' in the *Series* comes about largely through the agency of that unnamed friend who visits him, comforts and advises him, lends him books, and finally sets the seal on his recovery by asking for his help."[43] Yet there are indications that this friend does not amount to much, even in relation only to Hoccleve's worldly self. Granted, he was probably among those Hoccleve refers to in the "Complaint" who went on pilgrimage when he first became ill (p. 97, lines 46-49). He may even have been better about seeing Hoccleve than Hoccleve himself claims: the friend refers in the "Dialogue" to having spoken with Hoccleve in the previous September or so (p. 129, lines 528-34), when according to his "Complaint" Hoccleve seems to have considered himself completely isolated. As Hoccleve's "good frynde / of farn a-gon," however, he must also have been among the "olde ffrindshipe" of Hoccleve's dissolute youth (p. 97, line 68), and as such among those Hoccleve thinks dropped him after his illness (p. 97, lines 68-70). And for all his professed interest in Hoccleve's writing, he proves not to have read much of it as we shall see, he has never read Hoccleve's *Letter of Cupid* (c. 1402), and we never see him read his rendering of *Lerne for to Dye*. We

should not be surprised, therefore, when in relation to Hoccleve's spiritual self this friend proves to be of just the kind the *Artes moriendi* regularly warn against.[44]

As Philippe Ariès has argued, the late medieval obsession with death stems partly from the culture's attempt to pretend to itself that its values were not becoming increasingly secular.[45] On the one hand, the culture found itself particularly subject to what Ariès terms a "passionate love of life."[46] On the other, it wanted to convince itself that the worldly things it found so attractive were finally without value. It is just this kind of conflicted thinking, I believe, that lies behind the treatment of the dying man's friends in the *Artes moriendi*. These texts strain towards accepting that such friends can be of real value. They describe them as able to help in the dying man's last great struggle:

Like as the health of every man consisteth in the end, let every man then much busily take heed to purvey him for to come to a good end, whiles that he hath time and leisure. To this might much well serve a fellow and true friend, devout and comendable, which in his last end may assist him truly; and that he comfort and courage him in steadfastness of the faith, with good patience and devotion, with good confidence and perseverance.[47]

They even increasingly address these friends.[48] But this does not mean that the texts do not also try to undermine the friends. They lump them together with the dying man's family and goods and make them temptations to Avarice, the sin currently replacing Pride as chief of the Seven:[49]

The Vth temptacion þat temptith & greuyth most carnall men & seculer men is ouer-much occupacion & besynesse abou3t outward temporall þingis as her wyfes, her children, her carnall frendes, and wordely riches and other þingis þat þei haue loued inordinatly before. For he þat will dey wyll & surely, most vtterly & fully put oute of hys mynde all temporall & outward þingis, & plenerly commytt hym-selfe all to god.[50]

They see them as tools of the devil: in one of the illustrations in an *Ars moriendi* block book (c. 1450) a demon is pointing to the dying man's friends, and a scroll above its head reads "prouideas amicis" ("may you get friends").51 They show the friends as regularly setting out to get the dying man's goods.52

Hoccleve's friend is surely the product of exactly this kind of conflicted thinking. He is undoubtedly attractive and helpful in the ways Pryor and Burrow suggest. He also seems motivated at least for a while by a real, if ultimately misplaced, concern for Hoccleve's well-being. It is because the friend believes quite conventionally that overwork first caused Hoccleve's

illness (p. 121, lines 302-308) that he questions whether Hoccleve is physically and mentally up to the task of rendering this text.53 And it is seemingly because he is concerned about how Hoccleve will keep body and soul together that he later reminds him of the book he owes the Duke of Gloucester (p. 129, lines 532-34). That Hoccleve accuses him of being a bad friend in this part of their exchange seems grossly unfair, therefore (pp. 121-23, lines 316-68), particularly given Hoccleve's obviously confused notions about what constitutes true friendship: "A verray freend yeueth credence & feith / Vn-to his freend / what so he speke & wryte" (p. 122, lines 332-33). But worldliness will out, and when advising Hoccleve about what to include in the Duke's book the friend begins to reveal his real frivolity. For then, far from suggesting that this might be a good place for *Lerne for to Dye*, he trivializes everything Hoccleve has been saying about his need to repent. He jokes that as it is Lent (p. 133, line 662), Hoccleve should write a penitential piece making up for how his *Letter of Cupid* has offended the ladies.54 And just how great a threat such a friend can pose is indicated by the alacrity with which Hoccleve agrees to this new project, as well as by the pseudo-penitential language he adopts when doing this:

A tale eek / which I in the Romayn deedis

Now late sy / in honur & plesance

Of yow, my ladyes /--as I moot needis,

Or take my way / for fere in-to ffrance,--

Thogh I nat shapen be / to prike or prance,--

Wole I translate / and þat shal pourge, I hope,

My gilt / as cleene / as keuerchiefs dooth sope. (p. 139, lines 820-26)

As Suso's Disciple would have put it: "Thus bodyes freendes been maad enemys/ To the soule" (p. 198, lines 540-41).

Partly thanks to the bad offices of Hoccleve's friend, therefore, what follows the "Complaint" is not *Lerne for to Dye* but a series of other texts. First there is the "Dialogue" itself, a work we have probably always suspected of being written, although Hoccleve only confirms this of the passage about coin-clippers. At its end comes an envoy (p. 139, lines 806-26) dedicating Hoccleve's next piece, his rendering of the tale from the *Gesta Romanorum*, not to God but to the ladies. Then comes the tale, that of the Emperor Jerelaus' Wife.55 Then follows a brief section in which Hoccleve's friend (of all people) notes the absence of the tale's moralization and provides Hoccleve with an exemplar containing it. And then, the moralization is, on the advice of the friend, rendered into English prose "hoomly and pleyn" (p. 174, line 25). The author of the *Series* may be demonstrating his worldly rehabilitation, but he is also not getting on with what he should be getting on with. We are surprised and perhaps relieved, therefore, when immediately following this section we find the text we have been waiting for, Hoccleve's rendering of *Lerne for to Dye*.56

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The section we have just read has obviously helped confirm any impression the *Series* might give of having been casually assembled. But retrospectively we will find that as usual Hoccleve has worked with greater deliberation than his text seems to want us to think. Penelope B. R. Doob has suggested that the significance to Hoccleve of the tale of the Emperor Jereslaus' Wife lies in its emphasis "on the disease produced by sin and on confession as a cure."57 But by including the tale's moralization seemingly so very much by chance Hoccleve has thrown this part of his text into particularly high relief. It is surely important to the *Series* that the main emphasis of this moralization is less on curing sin than on the conflict between man's soul and his "wrecchid flessh" (p. 175). And it is surely also important that at one point this conflict anticipates a pattern of apparent progress leading to no real change; in the *Series*' next two sections we will see Hoccleve conforming to this pattern.

Because I have been using Hoccleve's rendering of *Lerne for to Dye* to represent Suso's text, I have so far implied that he followed Suso closely. But his translation is by no means impartial. With our access to the *Horologium* we can easily document the various small changes whereby he made this text his own. As Kurtz put it in 1925:

But our simple and direct-minded poet has again and again brought into the lofty sentences of Suso phrases of personal revelation, especially of remorse and fear. These notes have gone far to humanize the poem, to make its mysticism breathe the breath not of Suso's counterfeit Image of Death, but of the simple and timid soul that once walked in the mire from Paul's to Westminster.58

But even without such access we could deduce that Hoccleve's own narrative must have exerted pressure on his rendering. Hoccleve may not have changed Suso's text in any obvious way by making either the Disciple or the Image his own age, for example. But when the latter laments its unpreparedness for death (as pp. 182-83, lines 113-47) or its misspent youth (as pp. 184-90, lines 170-322), any reader of the *Series* thus far must suspect that Hoccleve has closely identified with him.59 The traffic between old and new in such texts is far from one-way.

Had the night Hoccleve referred to when he first spoke of rendering *Lerne for to Dye* (p. 118, line 245) drawn to a close with the completion of this text, we would have had no trouble in accepting that Hoccleve finally managed to die well. But the *Series* still has some way to go. What is now in question is whether its author was able to maintain his penitent state. Probably the best thing for him to have done under the circumstances would have been what Caxton seems to have done later in the century and work on further *Artes moriendi*.60 Given that he may not have had ready access to a supply of such texts, however, the next best thing for him to have done would surely have been

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to translate the other three parts of Suso's book. These might not have kept his mind as focused on the idea of his coming death as the writers of fifteenth-century *Artes moriendi* would have liked, but they could have helped him trust finally in the Passion as Sapience recommended. But instead of doing this Hoccleve tells us that translating these parts would have been too much for a fool like himself (p. 212, lines 918-24). So he renders into prose that part of the lesson for All Hallows' Day that tells of the joys of heaven.61

Although the implication probably is that Hoccleve should have continued translating Suso, had the piece on heaven closed the *Series* we would still have assumed he died well. The piece commemorates the day on which he was first cured (p. 97, lines 55-56) and describes a place free of the poverty, illness and dishonor he has revealed himself as so subject to here (p. 213). Its closing sentences (of which the second is Hoccleve's own) provide a fitting message for his work as a whole:

And therfore, who-so desirith to haue the merites euere lastynge / he moot de-lyte him to gete hem thurgh goode and vertuous wirkes / That is the path and the streight way to blisse endelees / the which he vs grante, þat boghte vs with his precious blood. Amen! Amen! (pp. 214-15)62

And by invading his own introductory verse, the passage allows him to speak with a preacher's authority:

How greet ioie and blisse / is shapen to hem

þat so shuln passe hens / vp to the Citee

Callid celestial, Ierusalem.

Aftir our might and possibilitee

Let vs considere. (p. 212, lines 932-26)

What follows the piece is not closure, however, but rather a paragraph on the pains of hell. The *Series* is refusing to allow its author to close on so conventionally satisfying a note.

Kurtz, the one modern reader who has commented on the paragraph on hell, is not complimentary: "The last paragraph, judging from the slovenly way in which it pictures the pains of Hell by suggesting that they are the opposites of the pleasures of the New Jerusalem as just described, we may surmise to be Hoccleve's invention."63 Even this paragraph could have provided the *Series* with a satisfying ending, however. Its slovenliness we could have put down to the haste occasioned by the onset of death. And like the piece on heaven it could have provided the whole with a fitting final message:

And sikirly, syn god of his hy grace and benigne courtesie hath yeuen vs libertee and standith in our choys and eleccioun; to grete fooles been

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we / but if we cheese the bettre part / which part, god of his infynyt goodnesse graunte vs alle to cheese / Amen! (p. 215)

Although this time Hoccleve actually says he wanted the *Series* to end, however (p. 215, line 1), again his text will not allow this. What follows this time is a section in which Hoccleve's friend talks him into rendering another tale, that of Jonathas and Fellicula, from the *Gesta Romanorum*.

It might seem at first that the differences between the scenes involving the friends would outweigh the similarities. Hoccleve has learned to die. And the friend now seems to have good moral reason for asking him to render this tale the friend thinks it just the thing to teach riotous young men like his son to keep away from prostitutes (p. 216, lines 8-28). However, it emerges that what is really worrying him is that his son might be squandering his worldly goods (lines 15-21). And when Hoccleve asks how he can possibly render such a tale and still appease the ladies (p. 217, lines 36-59), and the friend claims that only wicked women will disapprove of such a rendering (pp. 217-18, lines 60-77), they are both clearly back to their earlier frivolity. Despite apparent progress, little has changed.

It was just such a pattern of behavior that the moralization to the tale of the Emperor Jereslaus' Wife anticipated. In the tale, the Emperor's wife first resisted his brother's attempts to seduce her (pp. 142-44, lines 64-133) and then pardoned him (pp. 144-46, lines 134-82). According to the moralization, this signifies the soul resisting the flesh's attempts to make it sin and then cleansing it in preparation for Easter communion (p. 175). But in the tale the brother immediately returned to seducing the wife (pp. 147-48, lines 197-238). So the moralization goes on to deplore the frequency with which sinners regress even after having been cleansed in this way (p. 175). So far Hoccleve has not mentioned Easter. But his friend now reveals that it has in fact come and gone:

"Thomas," he seide / "at Estren that was last,

I redde a tale / which y am agast

To preye thee, for the laboures sake

That thow haast had / for to translate & make." (p. 216, lines 4-7)

And because he also refers to Hoccleve's earlier rendering from the *Gesta Romanorum* (p. 216, lines 29-30) we can assume this was the Easter following the Lent of the "Dialogue." So it was partly in preparation for this that the penitential cleansing of the *Series*' last section took place. And Hoccleve is now returning to what the moralization terms "Delectacion of synne" (p. 175). Like one of the "grete fooles" of the paragraph on hell, he is failing to choose the better part.

It is probably fortunate for him, therefore, that before we see his complete

regression, his text intervenes. No reader has observed that, like a number of late medieval English texts, the *Series* works through balanced sections towards and away from a center.64 Its center is provided by *Lerne for to Dye*, which is balanced by the pieces on heaven and hell. Outside this lies the section consisting of the "Dialogue with a Friend" and the ensuing tale of Jereslaus' Wife with its moralization. This is balanced by the present section, also consisting of a dialogue with the friend, the ensuing tale and its moralization (as Hoccleve is now working with his friend's exemplar, there is no problem about his obtaining this). Instead of now providing a further section outside this to balance Hoccleve's "Prologue" and "Complaint," however, the *Series* abruptly ends, apart from a single stanza dedicating the whole to Lady Westmoreland.65 Textually at least its author has died.66

The *Series* has been far too conflicted a work finally to end on any unambiguously positive note. That does not mean that it ends on an unambiguously negative one, however. Given Hoccleve's own vacillating history, it can hardly be by coincidence that the representative of mankind in the tale of Jonathas is seduced by the representative of the flesh not just once but repeatedly (p. 241). So it is perhaps also not by coincidence that the book Hoccleve has been making of his own life ends with Jonathas rising up from "the lappe of carnalitee or flesshlyhede" (p. 241) and entering his true country:

and to his paramour, þat is to seyn, his flessh, he purueieth watir of contricioun & fruyt of penance and sharpnesse / for which the flessh / þat is to seyn, carnel or flesshly affeccion, sterueth and dieth / and the man purchaceth & getith by penitence the goodes þat were lost / and so he gooth in to his Contree, þat is to seyn, the Regne of heuene: to which god of his grace brynge vs all. Amen! (p. 242)

But the book contains no omniscient narrator to confirm that Hoccleve too finally entered this country.

When we read the *Series* with *Lerne for to Dye* in mind, thus, we find it held together by a narrative treating its author's own preparation for death. As we have noted, it is not a narrative that has particularly struck modern readers. It may well have been more immediately evident to their medieval predecessors, however. The *Series* survives complete or almost complete in Hoccleve's autograph manuscript, Durham University Library MS Cosin V. iii. 9, and in five non-autograph manuscripts.67 In all five of the latter it is followed by the earlier version of John Lydgate's *Dance Macabre* (c. 1426-29).68 In a final envoy Lydgate unambiguously claims this as his ("Haue me excusid / my name is Iohn Lidgate," line 670).69 At least three of these manuscripts nevertheless treat Lydgate's text as if it were part of the *Series*.70 Inspired by the *Series*' own self-representation, the reader first responsible for juxtaposing these texts could have been simply creating a manuscript miscellany of his own.71 But it remains

most unlikely that he would have read the *Series* itself as anything other than a text about death. And by inviting his readers to consider Lydgate's work about the coming of death immediately after the *Series*, he was in effect providing Hoccleve's work with exactly the kind of closure Hoccleve himself might have provided had he represented himself as still able to do this.72

As Philippa Tristram has observed in her discussion of medieval treatments of mortality and the grave, modern readers tend to find such subjects offensive.73 So the narrative I have been describing will probably not prove particularly appealing. It is no less sensitive to concerns Hoccleve's narrator is explicit about than Burrow's more worldly narrative is, however, and it has the advantage over that narrative of taking into account some of the *Series*' old books. It is also a narrative Hoccleve seems to have deployed more deliberately than he did the one about his worldly rehabilitation. His narrator had once hoped that by rendering Suso's chapter he would encourage his readers to learn to die:

man may in this tretis / here-aftarward,

yf that hym lyke / rede and beholde,

consyder and se well / that it is full hard delay accompts / tyll lyfe begyne to colde;

short tyme is then / of his offencis olde

to make a iust / and trewe rekenynge;

sharpnes of peyne / is there-to great hindringe. (p. 118, lines 225-31)

Because he has so involved us in the story of how he himself learned to die, his words could equally well refer to the *Series* as a whole.

Notes

1. M. C. Seymour refers to this work as Hoccleve's "sequence of poems" (*Selections from Hoccleve* [Oxford, 1981], pp. xiv, xvii, 132); it is nevertheless likely that the term "Series" used by Eleanor Prescott Hammond in her *English Verse between Chaucer and Surrey* (1927; repr. New York, 1969), p. 57, will remain standard.
2. For annotated bibliography, see Jerome Mitchell, *Thomas Hoccleve: A Study in Early Fifteenth-Century English Poetic* (Urbana, 1968), pp. 125-45, supplemented by his "Hoccleve Studies, 1965-81," in *Fifteenth-Century Studies: Recent Essays*, ed. Robert F. Yeager (Hamden, Conn., 1984), pp. 49-63; see further William Matthews, "Thomas Hoccleve," in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500*, ed. Albert E. Hartung, vol. 3 (New Haven, 1972), pp. 746-56, 903-8.
3. On the modern preference for Hoccleve's more personalized texts, see Stephen Medcalf, "Inner and Outer," in *The Later Middle Ages*, ed. Stephen Medcalf (London, 1981), pp. 123-40, especially p. 140; Derek

Brewer, *English Gothic Literature* (London, 1983), p. 133; David Lawton, "Dullness and the Fifteenth Century," *English Literary History* 54 (1987), 761-99 at p. 763.
4. Ed. Frederick J. Furnivall and I. Gollancz, revised Jerome Mitchell and A. I. Doyle, *Hoccleve's Works: The Minor Poems*, Early English Text Society, E.S. 61, 73 (London, 1892, 1925, rev. ed., one vol., 1970); see further Mary Ruth Pryor, "Thomas Hoccleve's *Series*: An Edition of MS Durham Cosin V iii 9" (Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1968).
5. D. C. Greetham, "Self-Referential Artifacts: Hoccleve's Persona as a Literary Device," *Modern Philology* 87 (1989), 242-51, at p. 242.
6. "Hoccleve's *Series*: Experience and Books," in *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, ed. Yeager, pp. 259-73, at pp. 262-63.
7. All references to the *Series* will be to Mitchell and Doyle's revised edition by page and, in the case of the verse texts, line.
8. See also John M. Bowers, "Hoccleve's Huntington Holographs: The First 'Collected Poems' in English," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 15 (1989), 27-51, at pp. 39-40.
9. J. A. Burrow, "Autobiographical Poetry in the Middle Ages: The Case of Thomas Hoccleve," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 78 (1982), 389-412, at p. 404.
10. Burrow, "Hoccleve's *Series*," pp. 260, 268.
11. Benjamin P. Kurtz, "The Source of Occleve's *Lerne to Dye*," *Modern Language Notes* 38 (1923), 337-40.
12. On the relation between these works, see Eric Colledge, "The Büchlein der ewigen Weisheit and the Horologium sapientiae," *Dominican Studies* 6 (1953), 77-89. Most scholars now agree the vernacular work preceded the one in Latin: see Pius Kunzle, O. P., *Heinrich Seuses Horologium sapientiae*, Spicilegium Friburgense 23 (Freiburg, Switzerland, 1977), pp. 28-54. The chapter is the second of the second part of the *Horologium* (ed. Kunzle, pp. 526-40).
13. On its fortunes in England, see A. I. Doyle, "A Survey of the Origins and Circulation of theological writings in English in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth centuries with special consideration of the part of the clergy therein," 2 vols. (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge,

1953), 1, pp. 212-18; Roger Lovatt, "The Influence of the Religious Literature of Germany and the Low Countries on English Spirituality c. 1350-1475" (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1965), part of whose discussion now appears in his "Henry Suso and the Medieval Mystical Tradition in England," in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England. Papers read at Dartington Hall, July 1982* (Exeter, 1982), pp. 47-62.

14. Lovatt suggests Hoccleve must have been using "some form of *ars moriendi* anthology which happened to include this particular chapter" ("Henry Suso," p. 55); for the view followed here, see Elizabeth Psakis

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Armstrong, "Heinrich Suso's *Horologium sapientiae*: A Recently Discovered Excerpt," *Manuscripta* 12 (1968), 101-103.

15. A reduced version of the *Horologium*, but one including the whole of its *Ars moriendi* chapter (apart from some insignificant omissions), appeared in English prose probably late in the fourteenth-century, and certainly before 1419, as *The Seven Points of True Love and Everlasting Wisdom* (ed. K. Horstmann, "*Orologium sapientiae* or *The Seven Poyntes of Trewe Wisdom*, aus MS. Douce 114, *Anglia* 10 [1888], pp. 323-89); on its probable date, see Lovatt, "Henry Suso," p. 48. This text circulated fairly widely in the fifteenth century, as did its version of the *Ars moriendi* chapter, the latter sometimes in anthologies of such material (as, for example, in Cambridge, University Library MS Ff. v. 45 or London, British Library MS Harley 1706 and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 322). The fifteenth century also saw at least two further English prose renderings of this chapter. One of these, in Lichfield Cathedral MS 16 (first half of the fifteenth century), is preceded in the manuscript by a copy of Suso's chapter in Latin and renders it faithfully. The other, in Glasgow, Hunterian MS 496 (perhaps late fourteenth century) and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 789 (first half of the fifteenth century), partly abandons Suso's personal mode, coming from a homilist addressing "Thou redere" (MS Bodley 789, fol. 123v), and in it Suso's Disciple features first as a hypothetical "vnprofitable counfortour" (fol. 126v), and later as "sum freend" (fol. 129v) and "another freend" (fol. 136v) of the Image.

16. On at least two occasions, brief extracts from the *Horologium* were rendered into English verse (Lovatt, "Henry Suso," p. 53); normally, however, renderings of this work were in prose. For an early fifteenth-century poem in English on how to die, see *Twenty-Six Political and Other Poems from the Oxford MSS. Digby 102 and Douce 322*, ed. J. Kail, Early English Text Society O.S. 124 (London, 1904), pp. 27-31. As Sister Mary Catharine O'Connor notes too, John Skelton wrote such a work; this is likely to have been in verse (*The Art of Dying Well: The Development of the Ars moriendi* [New York, 1966], p. 179).

17. The best-known account of this fifteenth-century concern and its possible causes is J. Huizinga's in *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (1924, English translation New York, 1954), especially pp. 138-51. Useful recent accounts include Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 67-113, 309-55; Kathleen Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Berkeley, 1973), pp. 1-11, 48-95; Philippa Tristram, *Figures of Life and Death in Medieval English Literature* (London, 1976), pp. 152-83; Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death (L'Homme devant la mort)*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York, 1981), pp. 106-39. On the history and dissemination of the genre, see Rainer Rudolf, *Ars moriendi: von der*

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kunst des Heilsamen Lebens und Sterbens, Forschungen zur volkskunde, 39 (Cologne, 1957); on its history in England, see Nancy Lee Beaty, *The Craft of Dying: A Study of the Literary Tradition of the Ars moriendi in England* (New Haven, 1970); Adele Chene-Williams, "Vivre sa mort et mourir sa vie: l'art de mourir au XVe siecle," in *Le Sentiment de la Mort au Moyen Age*, ed. Claude Sutto (Montreal, 1979), pp. 171-82; David William Atkinson, *The English ars moriendi, Renaissance and Baroque Texts and Studies* 5 (New York, 1992), pp. xi-xxv.

18. On the *Tractatus*, see O'Connor, *Art*; O'Connor speculates that it was composed in Latin at the Council of Constance in 1414-18, and that it reached England shortly after this (p. 54). On its responsibility for establishing the genre see Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, p. 1; Atkinson, *The English ars moriendi*, p. i. All references to *The Book of the Craft of Dying* will be to the edition by C. Horstman in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole and his Followers*, 2 vols. (London, 1896), 2: 406-20; it has also been modernized by Frances M. M. Comper in *The Book of the Craft of Dying and Other Early English Tracts concerning Death* (London, 1917), pp. 2-51, and edited by Atkinson in *The English ars moriendi*, pp. 1-20. It is relatively well known to those interested in medieval English literature because it has regularly been referred to in conjunction with *Everyman*: see, for example, Donald F. Duclow, "*Everyman* and the *Ars moriendi*: Fifteenth-Century Ceremonies of Dying," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 6 (1983), 93-113; Phoebe S. Spinrad, "The Last Temptation of *Everyman*," *Philological Quarterly* 64 (1985), 185-94. For a discussion of this play that refers to other *Artes moriendi*, including those being discussed here, see Helen S. Thomas, "Some Analogues of *Everyman*," *Mississippi Quarterly* 16 (1963), 97-103.

19. In what may be a Wycliffite version of the *Visitatio infirmorum*, a text containing such a injunction (ed. from Oxford, University College MS 97 by Horstman, *Yorkshire Writers*, 2, pp. 449-53), the sick man is enjoined to remember that the image is not God (pp. 452-53).

20. For fuller descriptions of this text, see Beaty, *Craft*, pp. 7-34; Duclow, "*Everyman*," pp. 94-103; Spinrad, "Last Temptation," pp. 186-88.

21. O'Connor, *Art*, p. 5.

22. On its influence on the *Tractatus*, for example, see O'Connor, *Art*, pp. 18-20; in its Latin version it traveled with other *Artes moriendi* in, for example, Oxford, Merton College MS 204 and University College MS 4.

23. Except where otherwise indicated, all references to Suso's chapter will be to Hoccleve's rendering, ed. Mitchell and Doyle. See n. 4, above.

24. Ariès remarks on the many supernatural beings normally present in the bedroom (*Hour*, p. 108); Beaty notes how the author transfers his attention from the dying man to "the Christians now presumed to have gathered around the deathbed" (*Craft*, p. 6). On this point, see further

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Duclow, "*Everyman*," p. 97.

25. Greetham, "Self-Referential Artifacts," p. 247.

26. Burrow, "Hoccleve's *Series*," p. 265; "The Poet and the Book," in *Genres, Themes, and Images in English Literature from the Fourteenth to the Fifteenth Century*, The J. A. W. Bennett Memorial Lectures, Perugia, 1986, ed. Piero Boitani and Anna Torti (Tubingen, 1988), pp. 230-45, at pp. 243-44.

27. On the relationship between old and new in Chaucer's dream poems see Piero Boitani, "Old books brought to life in dreams: *The Book of the*

Duchess, the *House of Fame*, the *Parliament of Fowls*," in *The Cambridge Chaucer Companion*, ed. Piero Boitani and Jill Mann (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 39-57; see also Michael D. Cherniss, *Boethian Apocalypse: Studies in Middle English Vision Poetry* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1987), especially pp. 228-29; and Robert R. Edwards, *The Dream of Chaucer: Representation and Reflection in the Early Narratives* (Durham, NC, 1989), especially pp. 68-73, 130-34.

28. On Hoccleve's use of a similar strategy in his *Regement of Princes*, see Judith M. Davidoff, *Beginning Well: Framing Fictions in Late Middle English Poetry* (Rutherford, 1988), pp. 93-4; Anna Torti, *The Glass of Form: Mirroring Structures from Chaucer to Skelton* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 87-106.

29. Lillian Feder finds Hoccleve closer to Boethius than to Isidore of Seville, the author of the book he does finally describe; see *Madness in Literature* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 104-105.

30. For discussion of how medieval dreamers work through their troubles see, for example, Davidoff, *Beginning Well*, pp. 60-80, 101-125; J. Stephen Russell, *The English Dream Vision: Anatomy of a Form* (Columbus, Ohio, 1988), pp. 5, 115-17.

31. Pryor, for example, refers to it as "a supposed book" and notes that it looks as if it were imagined ("Hoccleve's *Series*," pp. 25, 72).

32. A. G. Rigg, "Hoccleve's *Complaint* and Isidore of Seville," *Speculum* 45 (1970), 564-74.

33. For Isidore's text, see PL 83: 825-68; as Rigg demonstrates ("Hoccleve's *Complaint*," p. 570), Hoccleve stops following this in col. 834. For responses by the man to Reason see, for example, cols. 837, 839.

34. In the part of Durham MS Cosin V. iii. 9 supplied by thesixteenth-century chronicler, John Stowe, a marginal note identifies this man as Thomas (leaf 7v).

35. On the relation between these collections, see further Bowers, "Hoccleve's Huntington Holographs," and the same author's "Hoccleve's Two Copies of *Lerne to Dye*: Implications for Textual Critics," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 83 (1989), 437-72.

36. Bowers, "Hoccleve's Huntington Holographs," pp. 38-42.

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37. For discussion of the need for such a "revisionary reading process" in a dream poem, see Donald W. Rowe, *Through Nature to Eternity: Chaucer's "Legend of Good Women"* (Lincoln, Neb., 1988), especially p. 135.

38. On the wide distribution of lists of questions see O'Connor, *Art*, pp. 33-36.

39. See further J. A. Burrow, *The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 70-71.

40. Such undertakings seem regularly to have been considered in this way; see Olive Sayce, "Chaucer's 'Retractions': The Conclusion of the *Canterbury Tales* and its Place in Literary Tradition," *Medium Ævum* 40 (1971), 230-48, at p. 238; Lee W. Patterson, "The 'Parson's Tale' and the Quitting of the *Canterbury Tales*," *Traditio* 34 (1978), 331-80, at p. 380. On the compilation of a *florilegium* of tracts on the art of dying associable with its author's entry into the Carthusian order in c. 1458, see Roger Lovatt, "John Blacman: Biographer of Henry VI," in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 415-44, especially pp. 426-28.

41. Until Eva M. Thornley demonstrated the conventionality of Hoccleve's *Male Regle* in "The Middle English Penitential Lyric and Hoccleve's Autobiographical Poetry," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 68 (1967), 295-321, readers tended to accept those parts of Hoccleve's poetry featuring himself as spontaneously autobiographical. Later readers questioned this: see, for example, Penelope B. R. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children: Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature* (New Haven, 1974), pp. 226-29; Feder, *Madness*, pp. 101-9. Given recent findings about how conventional all our self-representations tend to be in, for example, *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney (Princeton, 1980); Susanna Egan, *Patterns of Experience in Autobiography* (Chapel Hill, 1984), however, it is hardly surprising that recent readers of Hoccleve have been seeking compromises: see, for example, Medcalf, "Inner and Outer"; Burrow, "Autobiographical Poetry"; Stephan Kohl, "More than Virtues and Vices; Self-Analysis in Hoccleve's 'Autobiographies'," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 14 (1988), 115-127.

42. Pryor, "Hoccleve's *Series*," p. 75.

43. Burrow, "Autobiographical Poetry," p. 404.

44. The topic of friendship is prominently treated in the section on dying in Jean Gerson's *Opusculum tripartitum* (written before 1408), the most important source of the *Tractatus*: for the relevant passage, see Comper, *Book*, pp. 89-90; it is also regularly treated in later works. On the treatment of this topic in a related work, see John Conley, "The Doctrine of Friendship in *Everyman*," *Speculum* 44 (1969), 374-82.

45. Ariès, *Hour*, pp. 128-39.

46. Ariès, *Hour*, p. 130.

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47. *The Art and Craft to Know Well to Die*, ed. Comper, *Book*, p. 87.

48. On this point, see further O'Connor, *Art*, pp. 5-7.

49. On this replacement, see Thomas F. van Laan, "*Everyman*: A Structural Analysis," *PMLA* 78 (1963), 465-75, at p. 468 and n. 12.

50. *The Book of the Craft of Dying*, p. 412.

51. On these illustrations, see further O'Connor, *Art*, pp. 115-24.

52. See, for example, *The Lamentation of the Dying Creature*, ed. Comper, *Book*, p. 152.

53. Study conventionally leads to melancholy madness; see Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children*, p. 225.

54. Like the debate over whether the "Complaint" is autobiographical that Hoccleve anticipates at the beginning of the "Dialogue," he here anticipates a debate over whether his *Letter of Cupid* is anti-feminist. John V. Fleming argues that it preserves the anti-anti-feminism of its source: "Hoccleve's 'Letter of Cupid' and the 'Quarrel' over the *Roman de la Rose*," *Medium Ævum* 40 (1971), 21-40. Diane Bornstein claims that Hoccleve has so undermined his source as to produce an antifeminist work: "Anti-Feminism in Thomas Hoccleve's Translation of Christine de Pizan's *Epistre au dieu d'amours*," *English Language Notes* 19 (1981-82), 7-14.

55. On Hoccleve's treatment of the *Gesta Romanorum*, see Pryor, "Hoccleve's *Series*," pp. 95-113; Mitchell, *Hoccleve*, pp. 43-47 (on the version of the *Gesta* used), and 86-95.

56. On the effect here, see further Burrow, "Hoccleve's *Series*," p. 266.
57. Doob, *Nebuchadnezzar's Children*, p. 213.
58. Kurtz, "The Relation of Occleve's *Lerne to Dye* to its Source," *PMLA* 40 (1925), 252-75, at p. 270; see also Mitchell, *Hoccleve*, p. 42, and Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, p. 331-32. For sympathetic discussion of the translation, see Pryor, "Hoccleve's *Series*," pp. 85-95.
59. As does Lovatt, who thinks Hoccleve's version accurately mirrors his remorseful later years ("Henry Suso," p. 47), or Burrow, who sees in Suso's description of the dying man a reflection of the poet's own sense of isolation ("Hoccleve's *Series*," p. 269).
60. Perhaps inspired by the death in 1489 of a Maud Caxton who may have been his wife, Caxton seems to have suspended work on *The Fayttes of Arms* until he had finished *The Arte and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye* (1490); see O'Connor, *Art*, p. 1, n. 2. Caxton then seems to have worked on a shorter version of *The Arte and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye*, the *Ars moriendi* (1491), and then (the last book he seems to have printed) his *Boke of Divers Ghostly Matters* (1491), in which he placed a copy of the Middle English prose adaptation of Suso's *Horologium sapientiae*. Like Hoccleve, however, he seems to have been unable to keep this activity up until the end: according to Wynkyn de Worde it was a translation of the *Vitae patrum* that he finished on the day he died (see further Edmund Childs, *William Caxton. A Portrait in a Background* [London, 1976], pp. 179-80).

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61. Including this may not have been quite as arbitrary as he makes it seem: in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Add. A 268, for example, a version of the *Tractatus* is followed by a text on the joys of heaven.
62. On Hoccleve's treatment of his source here, see Benjamin P. Kurtz, "The Prose of Occleve's *Lerne to Dye*," *Modern Language Notes* 39 (1924), 56-57.
63. Kurtz, "Prose of Occleve's *Lerne to Dye*," p. 57.
64. On this structure in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *The Knight's Tale*, see Helen Cooper, *The Canterbury Tales* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 73-75.
65. Durham University Library MS Cosin V. iii. 9, leaf 95. As Furnivall points out, Lady Westmoreland was probably Joan, the daughter of John of Gaunt by Katherine Swinford (*Hoccleve's Works*, p. xxv).
66. It has been suggested, as by Seymour, that it was in consequence of Hoccleve's having sent a copy of the *Series* to the Duke of Gloucester that he received a corrody tenable at the priory of Southwick, Hants., on 4 July 1424 (*Selections*, p. xiv). If Hoccleve did indeed send a copy to the Duke, and if this copy contained all the works by Hoccleve I have been discussing, it would seem that the death the *Series* implies did not take place immediately after Hoccleve wrote the moralization to the "Tale of Jonathas." As Pryor points out, however, the Duke's copy could have appropriately contained only the material up to the end of *Lerne for to Dye* with its prose additions ("Hoccleve's *Series*," pp. 83-84), in which case the implied death in the *Series* might have coincided more closely with Hoccleve's real one. On 1426-27 as the probable date of Hoccleve's death, see A. L. Brown's notice of H. S. Bennett's *Six Medieval Men and Women* (1955) in *Review of English Studies*, n. s. 8 (1957), 217-18, and Richard Firth Green, "Three Fifteenth-Century Notes," *English Language Notes* 14 (1976-77), 14-17, at p. 14.
67. In Durham the first part is missing and is supplied in John Stowe's hand. The five non-autograph manuscripts are Oxford, Bodleian Library MSS Arch Selden supra 53 (second quarter of the fifteenth century); Bodley 221 (mid fifteenth century); Laud misc. 735 (second half of the fifteenth century); Coventry Corporation Record Office MS Accession 325/1 (middle or third quarter of the fifteenth century; on this manuscript and for the dates of Laud and Bodley, see A. I. Doyle and George B. Pace, "A New Chaucer Manuscript," *PMLA* 83 [1968], 22-34); and Yale University Library MS 493 [c. 1440]; on this manuscript see A. S. G. Edwards, "Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*: A Further Manuscript," *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions* 5, Part 1 [1978], 32). I am grateful to the keepers of manuscripts in the Bodleian and Beinecke Libraries for granting me access to their collections and to Professor Anne Hudson for answering my further questions about the Bodleian manuscripts.

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68. The version of Lydgate's *Dance Macabre* that appears in these manuscripts has been edited by Hammond, *English Verse*, pp. 124-42, from which I quote; for the different versions, see *The Dance of Death*, ed. Florence Warren, with introduction, notes, etc. by Beatrice White, Early English Text Society, O.S. 181 (London, 1931), pp. 2-77. On Lydgate's poem and its tradition see, for example, Woolf, *English Religious Lyric*, pp. 347-52; Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London, 1970), pp. 177-79.
69. Doyle notes that in the Coventry manuscript the place for Lydgate's name is here left blank (Doyle and Pace, "A New Chaucer Manuscript," p. 24).
70. In Bodley, Laud, and Yale. Burrow observes that this is true of all five of these manuscripts ("Hoccleve's *Series*," p. 273, n. 12); Hudson has observed that the lay-out in Selden could imply that Lydgate's poem is a new work (private correspondence).
71. Lovatt suggests that he was making a "brief English verse anthology" treating death; see "Henry Suso," p. 56.
72. For the suggestion that a medieval compiler might have treated Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* similarly, see David Lawton, "Chaucer's Two Ways: The Pilgrimage Frame of *The Canterbury Tales*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 9 (1987), 3-40, at p. 21.
73. Tristram, *Figures of Life and Death*, p. 182.