

## **Exegesis in the City: the Chester Plays and earlier Chester writing**

Reverend lordes and ladyes all  
that at this tyme here assembled be,  
by this message understande you shall  
that sometimes there was mayor of this cittie  
Sir John Arnewaye, knyghte, whoe moste worthelye  
contented himselfe to sett out in playe  
the devise of one Rondall, moncke of Chester Abbaye.

This moncke – not moncke-lyke in Scriptures, well seene,  
in stories traveled with the best sorte –  
in pageantes sett forthe apparante to all eyne,  
interminglinge therewith the onely to make sporte  
some thinges not warranted by anye wrytte  
which glad the hartes – he woulde men to take hit. (lls. 1-13)<sup>1</sup>

The Late Banns begin their announcement of a performance of the Chester Whitsun Plays by looking backwards to the plays' legendary origins, attributing the first production of the plays to John Arneway (1268-78), supposed first mayor of the city, and Ranulph Higden, monk of St Werburgh's Abbey (d. 1364) and a prolific author of works theological, grammatical and historical.<sup>2</sup> Higden is implausibly depicted as a putative proto-Protestant martyr, translating the bible into 'a common Englishe tonge' (24) despite the threat of 'burninge, hangeinge, or cuttinge of heade' (25). This 'moncke – not moncke-lyke in Scriptures' (8), this 'moncke – and noe moncke' (24), is central to the Late Banns' attempt to 'to preserve a wholesome, and spiritually profitable, form of recreation still in the process of reformation'.<sup>3</sup>

The Late Banns must date from the plays' revival during the reign of Elizabeth I, when they were performed in 1561, 1567, 1568, 1572 and 1575.<sup>4</sup> Performing the plays became more and more contentious during these two decades,<sup>5</sup> with the puritan clergyman Christopher Goodman compiling his famous list of 'absurdities' in 1572 and the plays rescheduled in

1575 from the liturgically-freighted Whitsun to the safe secular time of Midsummer.<sup>6</sup> If Clopper is correct that the late Banns were read before the mayor and council in 1572, then they may have been instrumental in ensuring the survival of the cycle.<sup>7</sup> Their masterful if wholly mendacious rhetoric was particularly suited to this act of persuasion. The Late Banns skilfully mediate not only between pre- and post-reformation religious sensibilities, praising Higden's brave translation of scripture while censuring certain aspects of the content and vocabulary as belonging 'to the tyme of ignorance' (39), but also between the civic and religious authorities. Though the Benedictine Abbey of St Werburgh had been dissolved on 20 January 1540, it was reconstituted as a cathedral on 26 July 1541; several of the former monks obtained new positions in the diocesan hierarchy.<sup>8</sup> By depicting the initial performance of the plays as a joint initiative between the mayoralty and the monastery, the Late Banns solicit the cathedral's involvement in the post-reformation plays.<sup>9</sup>

It is the figure of Higden that enables the Late Banns to navigate the fraught spiritual and jurisdictional geographies of post-Reformation Chester. Taking their lead, this article uses another Chester (or perhaps Cheshire) monk and author, Lucian, to explore how the Chester Plays negotiate the changing spiritual economy of the sixteenth century. Lucian's mammoth late-twelfth-century urban encomium, *De laude Cestrie*, uses Chester's topography to teach, compel and beseech his Cestrian audience to understand, appreciate and praise God's generosity in creating the city – as Deus himself says at the very opening of the cycle, 'all the likeinge in this lordshipp / be laude to my laudacion' (1.2-3).

This article accordingly compares how *De laude Cestrie* and the Chester Cycle as urban texts which use exegesis to educate and edify. It examines the Chester Plays' use of urban space, before turning to the role of the Expositor, and his likely significance in performances from

the 1560s and 1570s. I begin with an account of Lucian's text, since it will be unfamiliar to many readers.

### **Lucian's *De laude Cestrie***

The text which Lucian called *De laude Cestrie* ('On the glory of Chester') is just over 82,000 words long.<sup>10</sup> It is a massive testament to Lucian's faith that 'nothing on earth is done without a voice cause' (Job 5:6), that, to a trained observer, urban topography and local history can reveal the very nature of God.

The text proper begins with some reflections on the value of studying place and history.

Lucian then describes how he was inspired to write by an unnamed canon of St John's. This canon inspired him to consider the etymology of Chester (*Cestria*), which Lucian explains derives from *cis tria* ('threefold'), relating the name to the merits of Chester's bishop, archdeacon and clergy; to its lords, citizens and monks; and to the supplies which come from Ireland, Wales and England. Lucian describes Chester's location, natural resources, trading partners and street plan in vivid detail, encouraging its citizens to notice how generously God has provided for the city. Lucian's description culminates by encouraging anyone standing in the marketplace to look east to St John's Cathedral, west to St Peter's, north to the Benedictine monastery of St Werburgh and south to St Michael's.

Lucian proceeds by explaining the spiritual significance of the dedication of each church.

Lucian begins with St John's, explaining that John the Baptist should be honoured because of his close relationship with Christ and his virginity and martyrdom. Lucian then imagines John introducing St Peter. Lucian's discussion of St Peter's includes a lengthy comparison of Chester and Rome which emphasises that Peter (and the Pope) is a most fitting guardian for Chester. Lucian turns from the eastern and western churches, St John's and St Peter's, to the

northern and southern churches, St Werburgh's and St Michael's, by recounting the story of the widow of Sarephta collecting sticks (3Kings 17:8-24), which was traditionally taken to refer to the beams which formed the cross on which Christ was crucified. Lucian comments:<sup>11</sup>

Comodet itaque nobis hec duo ligna, ut tradamus unum precursori Domini atque ipsius portario, alterum uero committamus Virgini et Arcangelo.

And so he [God] provides us these two pieces of wood so that we can give one to the precursor of God and to his gatekeeper and so that we can give the other to the Virgin and the Archangel.

With this neat transition, he moves to discuss St Werburgh's. St Werburgh is admirable first and foremost because she was a virgin. Lucian argues that virgins are fertile in spiritual works, emphasising Werburgh's willingness to intercede with God on behalf of Cestrians. This is manifest in the vigilance of the monks of the monastery dedicated to St Werburgh. Finally, Lucian turns to St Michael's, meditating on St Michael's status as an archangel and the nature of angels' heavenly home. He discourses on the creation of the angels and their nine orders, suggesting that, since Michael overthrew Satan, he is readily able to defend Chester.

Lucian next turns to the various houses in Chester dedicated to Mary, beginning with some general reflections on the Virgin. Focusing specifically on the nunnery, Lucian compares the nuns to Amazons, identifying the spiritual weapons wielded by the nuns. Lucian then recapitulates his argument, adding a few further things, once again thanking his patron and defending his work against those who might carp.

The final two-fifths of Lucian's text are devoted to the proper organisation of the church. His comments are never explicitly related to Chester, but they apply implicitly. He begins by

comparing priests to monks, and argues that bishops owe a duty of care to monks. He then looks within the abbey, at the duties of the abbot, the prior, and the sub-prior. Eventually Lucian fittingly turns his attention to the final things, briefly describing purgatory, hell and heaven and then the Day of Judgement. His emphasis on the rewards due to Mary, Michael and John the Baptist neatly closes the text.

We know nothing about Lucian except what we can infer from *De laude Cestrie*. It is clear that he was a monk, and it has usually been assumed he was a monk of St Werburgh's. There is however no positive evidence in favour of this conjecture and some which might tell against it.<sup>12</sup> He may, in fact, have been a Cistercian monk from Combermere, an abbey twenty-five miles south-west of Chester.<sup>13</sup> The text can be dated between 1195 and 1200 on the evidence of the manuscript, which appears to be autograph, and contains an Easter Table which begins in 1195 and annals which record events from 1199 and 1200. The work has never been printed in full, but a partial edition and translation is now available as part of the Mapping Medieval Chester website and I am working on a full edition.<sup>14</sup>

*De laude Cestrie* seems to have had an extremely limited circulation, and the surviving manuscript, conceivably a presentation copy, is perhaps the only copy ever to have existed. It is therefore extremely unlikely it was known to anyone involved with the Chester Plays during Elizabeth's reign. Not even the local antiquarian Robert Rogers (d. 1595) seems to have been familiar with the text.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, it is a self-consciously monastic work which seeks by expounding Chester's urban topography to nourish the piety of the city's inhabitants, and, as such, is an excellent comparison for the Chester Cycle, as conceived by the post-Reformation Banns.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Chester Plays and Chester Space**

The fundamental premise of *De laude Cestrie* is that, though mortal life is mud, lowland and prison compared to the exalted existence of the elect in heaven, the physical topography of Chester can, when interpreted through the lens of the bible, reveal God's nature and divine plan.<sup>17</sup> The Chester Cycle shares with Lucian the confidence that the city can be the locus of spiritual learning.

I have described Lucian's 'spatial hermeneutics' in more detail elsewhere, but it will be helpful to give one or two examples here of the way in which he reads urban space.<sup>18</sup> The first passage concerns the crossroads at the centre of the city, which was also the location of the marketplace in the twelfth century.<sup>19</sup>

Habet eciam plateas duas equilineas et excellentes in modum benedictae crucis, per transuersum sibi obuias et se transeuntes, quae deinceps fiant quattuor ex duabus, capita sua consummantes in quattuor portis, mystice ostendens atque magnifice, magni Regis inhabitantem gratiam se habere, qui legem geminam noui ac ueteris testamenti per misterium sanctae crucis impletam ostendit, in quattuor euangelistis [...] Hoc simul intuendum quam congrue in medio urbis, parili positione cunctorum, forum uoluit esse uenaliū rerum, ubi, mercium copia complacite precipue uictualium, notus ueniat uel ignotus, precium porrigens, referens alimentum. Nimirum ad exemplum panis eterni de celo uenientis, qui natus secundum prophetas *in medio orbis et umbilico terre*, omnibus mundi nationibus pari propinquitate uoluit apparere. Illud precipue prudens aliquis gaudenter attendat, quod Deus omnipotens paterna bonitate prospexit, et ad salutem ciuium, altius et eminentius ordinauit.

Chester also has two perfectly straight streets intersecting like the blessed cross, which form four roads, culminating at the four gates, mystically revealing that the grace of the Great King dwells in the very city, who, through the four evangelists, showed the twin law of the old and new testaments to be completed through the mystery of the holy cross [...] It is also worth understanding how fitting it is that, all things being equal, a marketplace for the selling of things should be placed in the middle of the city, where, with an abundance of merchandise, particularly food available, a native or a foreigner may come to buy provisions. Doubtlessly, as with the eternal bread which came from heaven which, according to the prophets, was formed in *the centre of the earth*, God wanted to supply all nations of the world equally. Let everyone wise observe this joyfully because almighty God provided for us with paternal goodness, and arranged fully and nobly for the prosperity of the citizens.

Lucian exploits spatial and numerical patterns here: the crossroads is cross-shaped, the two streets that intersect to form it are the two testaments, and the four roads that lead from it are the four gospels. All function as a reminder of Christ's incarnation. The position of the marketplace likewise reflects the historical circumstances of incarnation. Christ, the 'eternal bread which came from heaven' (see Jn 6:59), was, as it was prophesied, born 'in the centre of the earth' (see Ez 5:5, Ps 73:12). To the prophets, 'the centre of the earth' denoted Jerusalem, but to Lucian it applies to the relative position of the marketplace within the city. Chester becomes a microcosm of the world as Lucian equates the historical moment of Christ's birth in Jerusalem with contemporary life in Chester. As God has it at the opening of the Tanners' Play, 'hit is, yt was, it shal be thus' (1.4).

In my second example, Lucian advocates a tropological interpretation of the three roads that lead east from Chester:<sup>20</sup>

Intendat Cestriae habitator, exeunti portam orientalem, qualiter ei trinus uiarum trames aperitur et pulcra super locorum uocabulis, que se offerunt, consideracio inuenitur; nec solum pulcra, set etiam iocunda. Nam progressus paululum a ciuitate si directus incedit, statim a fronte uenientem locus excipit, quem nominant Villam Christi; si uero flectit ad dexteram alter locus, quem uocant incole, Veterem Vadum; si autem uertitur ad sinistram, uenitur ad locum, quem de latibulis insidiantium, recte dicunt Vallem Demonum.

Vt autem nos ex manifesta re utamur morali ratione consequenter omnia occurrunt, quia Christum inuenit uerum orientem, qui recte tendit; qui declinat in dexteram contra scripturam prohibentem deuiasse ad ultimum se probabit; qui flectit in leuam, lesionem uitare non poterit. Errores autem contrarios hinc inde sic accipiamus, ut errantium dextera uideatur esse superba iusticia, leua autem segnis morum custodia et in qualibet harum deuius, a dextris mordeatur a draconibus, a sinistris spoliatur a latronibus, ut experimento tactus in reliquum rectus discat incedere et pro sua salute deuia declinare. Legitur enim, inter uicia contraria, medius limes uirtus est (cp. Horace, *Epistulae* 1. 18. 9). Et noster Iohannes: *dirigite uiam Domini, rectas facite inquit semitas Dei nostri* (Lk 3:4), quia, qui ambulat simpliciter, ambulat confidenter. Et sepe felicius ac melius ualefacit humanis rebus simplex et innocens uita quam uersutus sensus et alta sapientia. Nam qui, per confidentiam meriti uel contumaciam sullimis ingenii, regiam inter errores medios uiam relinquit, superbos anfractus in gaudium non transmittit, qui ad dextram uel leuam temere declinauit. Vnde colligitur nichil utilius, nichil melius, quam in

progressu uiarum uelut in porta urbium recte incedere ac recte uiuere, quia per linearum ductum itineris ad lucem tenditur orientis.

The inhabitant of Chester should notice, leaving the East Gate, how three roads are presented to him and how they and their names prove to be beautiful subjects for consideration; indeed, not only beautiful, but also congenial. For if he walks a little way directly out of the city, a place immediately appears in front which they call the village of Christ; if he turns to the right, another place appears which they call the Old Ford; if however he turns to the left, he has come to the place which they rightly call the Valley of Demons, since it is a hiding place for robbers.

We may use this to show that everything happens as a consequence of a moral reason since he finds Christ to be the true east, who goes straightly; he who strays to the right in defiance of scripture will show himself to have strayed at the Day of Judgement; he who turns to the left, will not be able to avoid injury. We should admit two sources of error, in that to the right is excessive sternness and to the left is the lax preservation of morals and harmed whatever way he deviates, to the right bitten by dragons, to the left robbed by thieves, the righteous man learns by practice to go straight ahead in the future and, for his health, to avoid detours. It is read, indeed, that *between two evils the middle path is virtue* (cp. Horace, *Epistulae* 1. 18. 9). And John says in the scriptures *make straight the way of the Lord, make straight his paths* (Lk 3:4), because he who walks innocently, walks confidently. And often a life led simply and innocently will end more happily than one led in accordance with cunning and ambitious intelligence. For he who through an obstinate belief in his exalted understanding abandons the royal highway for the uncertainties either side, straying to the left or the right, does not tread these proud diversions in joy. From this nothing more useful is learnt than to advance straight through streets and the gates of cities and to live rightly because one comes to the true east through a journey travelled straight.

Lucian's word play on the names of three villages to the east of Chester – Christleton, Aldford and Hoole Heath – enables him to interpret the traveller's option on leaving the East Gate as a moral choice between laxity, sternness and the middle way and thus provide a powerful warning to anyone contemplating straying from the way of the Lord. For Lucian, then, city space is a constant source of edification for the observant inhabitant. The Chester Cycle contains far fewer references to specific features of Cestrian topography, but likewise asserts the possibility for spiritual learning in the city.



While recent work has explored the ways in which the Chester Plays gained meaning when performed in particular locations around the city, references to city life in the texts themselves have not been the subject of particular critical focus, in part because the urban topography features so seldom in the plays.<sup>21</sup> Discovering how prominently Chester locations featured in the scripts used in the performances of the 1560s and 1570s is not easy. The most thorough textual witnesses to the Chester cycle are all more than twenty years later than the final performance, and no witness presents a text fully compatible with any of the surviving contemporary accounts of the plays. It is therefore with reluctance that I rely on H, the manuscript taken by Lumiansky and Mills as the base text for their Early English Text Society edition.

Precise references to specifically Cestrian space are rare. Octavian promises Preco 'the highest horse besydes Broughton' (6.279) as a reward for his assistance in coordinating the census, probably a sarcastic reference to the gallows which stood in the eastern suburb of the city. The Shepherds feast on local delicacies including 'butter that bought was in Blacon' (7.115), a village two miles north-west of Chester, and 'ale of Halton' (7.117), ten miles north-east of Chester. Before Jesus raises Lazarus in the Glovers' Play, he says:

For worldes light I am verey,  
and whoesoe followeth me, sooth to saye,  
hee may goe no Chester waye,  
for light in him is dight. (13.353-6)

While H's 'thester' is almost certainly the original reading, 'Chester' is an intriguing error,<sup>22</sup> that betrays no great love for the city and accords with the negative image urban life elsewhere in the cycle, most forcibly expressed through the damned ale wife at the end of the Cooks' Harrowing of Hell.<sup>23</sup> She confesses she was 'sometyme a taverner, / a gentle gossippe and a tapster' (17.285-6), before stating:

Tavernes, tapsters of this cittye  
shalbe promoted here with mee  
for breakinge statutes of this contrye,  
hurtinge the commonwealth. (17.300-4)

The deictic 'this cittye' can only refer to Chester, where Mayor Henry Gee had legislated against tapsters in 1541.<sup>24</sup> Thus, as Mary Wack has argued, the play 'works as an ideological justification of the restrictive legislation barring them from their customary trade'.<sup>25</sup> The play's association of urban life with drinking, loose talk, deceit and hangovers also finds expression in the third pageant, where Noah's wife remains stubbornly attached to the town and her gossips and refuses to board the ark (3.200). The ale wife's ongoing popularity (the mayor specially demanded her presence at the midsummer festival of 1614)<sup>26</sup> may suggest Cestrians were also somewhat proud of their reputation for bad behaviour.

The ready equation between urban life and sin which these particular plays encourage is problematised by the willingness of the cycle to redesignate Cestrian space as biblical space. In the Wrights' nativity, the pageant wagon is Rome at one moment (6.275), Bethlehem the next (6.456, 473). In the Corvisers' Entry into Jerusalem, it becomes Jerusalem to stage what is perhaps the archetypal city entry. Some plays also co-opted the streets surrounding the pageant wagon into the performance space. In the Cappers' play, Balaak tells Balaam to observe 'Godes people all in feare. / Cittye, castle and ryvere' (5.274-5). According to the stage directions, Balaam then turns south, north and finally east (5.279SD, 303D, 319SD), on each occasion refusing to curse the people. Looking north, he even comments on the 'fayre wonninge' (5.304) and concludes that 'God made all this, / his folke to lyve in joye and blys' (5.309). In the Skinners' Resurrection, Peter and John leave the stage looking for Jesus, 'hic per aliam viam ille per alteram' (18.420SD). The willingness of the Cycle to co-opt the city

as performance space shares Lucian's confidence that the city can be the site of spiritual learning, despite its degeneracy.

The plays therefore engage with Cestrian space in several ways. First, the pageant wagon and surrounding streets are redesignated as historical time and space: one day the Israel Balaak insists Balaham curses, the next the Jerusalem that welcomes Christ. The inevitable use of deictic language like 'here' and 'this' makes this is almost an automatic consequence of staging biblical drama. This differs from Lucian's *De laude Cestrie*, where Cestrian topography retains its autonomy, but is interpreted through a biblical lens. When the plays do make their rare use of local colour – Blacon butter, Hatton ale, the gallows at Broughton, the peccadillos of the city's tapsters – they domesticate biblical time and space, asserting that it is commensurate with contemporary time, space and mores. Yet while the Chester Plays happily redesignate Chester as Israel, they never attempt to read Cestrian space in light of this equation; Balaam's 'halles, chambers ... valles woodes, grasse growinge / fayre yordes, and eke ryvere' (5.305-7) remain convenient abstractions rather than genuine features of Chester's topography. Though they do so in different ways, both Lucian's *De laude Cestrie* and the Chester Cycle connect the contemporary city with biblical time and space, a necessity of their shared use of traditional exegetical methods. Lucian's use of these sophisticated methods in a Latin text written for a coterie audience of literate Cestrians ran no risks but its employment in the Cycle ran counter to the intellectual conservatism of royally-authorised protestant exegesis in the 1570s, and brought the plays criticism from the puritan Goodman.

### **Lucian and the Expositor**

As the extensive quotations in the previous section made clear, much of *De laude Cestrie* is devoted to exegesis. It is therefore natural to compare Lucian with the expository character who appears in five of the Chester Plays.<sup>27</sup> Stage directions refer to him as either an expositor

or a doctor. His duties include explaining the allegorical significance of Old Testament stories like Abraham and Isaac, interpreting signs and prophecies, and summarising intervening action which would be too lengthy to present dramatically. The manuscripts give no indication how he should be costumed, but – given his role in the plays – it is natural to assume that he wore some kind of clerical dress. This was indeed how most of the pageants chose to present him in the performance in Toronto in May 2010.

In this section, I explore the Expositor's role in the plays, suggesting that the Cycle acknowledges some doubt about the validity of biblical exegesis. Nonetheless, the Expositor's exegesis in the plays, particularly the Barbers' Play of Abraham, are considerably more intellectually adventurous than the simple typological equations and moral lessons drawn from the story in official Elizabethan texts like the Bishops' Bible and the *Sermons or Homilies*. A passage from Lucian's *De laude Cestrie* serve to open the discussion.

Lucian's implied readership is a narrow elite, the literate inhabitants of Chester, though there are hints that he hoped his ideas would circulate more widely in the city through the preaching and pastoral efforts of his readers.<sup>28</sup> Lucian's exegetical methods are illustrated by the following passage:<sup>29</sup>

Itaque lector meus attendat, qualiter ipsa domina nostra uirginum Virgo, quam, sicut res docent, duas habere memorie sue basilicas diximus infra muros urbis, terciam sibi constitui placuit extra muros, uicinam ecclesiae Iohannis Domini precursoris, pulcro ueraciter ordine, gestorum plenissima ratione. Nempe apud Nazareth Galilee, olim saluata ab archangelo, cum concepisset de spiritu sancto plena gaudiorum, propter salutem orbis terrarum, *exurgens cum festinatione abiit in montana* (Luke 1:39) *et intrauit domum Zacharie et salutauit Elisabeth* (Luke 1:40) cognatum suam. Nimirum ex celesti nuncio et comuni gaudio omnium conditorum suaue nimis ac sullime editura colloquium, pariter et seni ac prouecte mulieri ipsa expedior et liberior, faciliior et fecundior, quamuis altior et eminentior tamen uirgo iuuenula, prebitura pietatis obsequium, iam in suo portans utero filium, qui postea lauit pedes apostolorum.

Iustissime igitur atque pulcherrime apud nostram Cestriam, pro sua matre matri Domini quasi refundens uicem suae in Christo familie, inspirauit Iohannes Baptista consuetudinem, ut festis temporibus atque dominicis diebus, coris incedentibus et uocibus dulcissimis resonantibus, gloriosae uirginis ac Domini genitricis ecclesiam deuotissime satagant uisitare et consuetis officiis pro more uenerabilis cleri, ad Eterni Regis gloriam officiosissime salutare. Veraciter tanquam diceret Baptista clarissimus sibi ministrantibus rebus simul et rationibus: 'Quia tria uidentur in temporibus, semel, sepe, ac semper, per humilitatem et iusticiam contendere satagamus, et reddamus regine celi officii et gratie fecundissimum fenus, ut crescentibus comodis, quia semel in terris dignata est meam matrem salutare, nos ei sepe curemus dignissimas laudes salutando refundere, quatinus eius gloriosis precibus mereamur in celis, semper et aeternaliter himnos nostros cum angelis sociare'.

Therefore let my reader carefully notice how this lady, our Virgin of virgins, whom, in accordance with the facts, we said has two churches within the walls dedicated to her, was happy to establish a third outside the walls near the church of John, precursor of the Lord, a truly beautiful location with great historical significance. Certainly at Nazareth in Galilee, having been greeted by the Archangel Gabriel when full of joy concerning the holy spirit and the salvation of the entire world *Mary went into the hill country with haste* (Luke 1:39) *and she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth* (Luke 1:40), her kinswoman. Evidently she had a most sweet and sublime conversation with the pregnant woman because of the heavenly messenger and the common joy of all creation, though compared to the aged woman she was more unencumbered and free, more fecund and fertile, and though a young virgin, higher and more eminent, who would behave with pious obedience carrying in her womb her son who later washed the feet of the apostles.

Therefore, thanking Christ for the fortune of his family like his mother thanking the mother of the Lord, John the Baptist very properly and beautifully established a custom in Chester, by which on holy days and Sundays, with choirs proceeding and their very sweet voices resounding they visit the church of the glorious Virgin and mother of the Lord with great devotion and with the formalities typical of that venerable clergy most dutifully visit them to the glory of the eternal king. It is as if the most illustrious Baptist had spoken to those attending to him in both word and deed: 'We must try to act with meekness and justness because this may be seen three times in history: once, often and always. We should pay back the queen of heaven with most fruitful kindness and goodwill when, with increasing benefit, we undertake to lavish most fitting praise on her by visiting, since she once on earth deigned to greet my mother, so that we may earn her glorious prayers in heaven to always and eternally share our hymns with angels'.

This passage describes a weekly liturgical procession from St John's Cathedral to the church of St Mary on the Hill, which has been considered the precursor of the later Corpus Christ

procession.<sup>30</sup> Lucian begins by directing his reader to this detail of local ceremonial (*lector meus attendat*), asserting its importance lies in its 'great historical significance'. For Lucian, the procession is a type of Mary's visit to John's mother when newly pregnant with Jesus, but, by insisting John the Baptist himself instituted the procession in Chester, he vivifies and historicises the typological interpretation. Such divine coincidences (which Lucian elsewhere calls 'a sacred offering and a charming mystery [which] comfort men's spirits and encourages contemplation')<sup>31</sup> are a mainstay of *De laude Cestrie*. Lucian ventriloquises John to assert the significance of Mary's visit 'once, often and always', explaining his meaning in a marginal note: 'once, often, always: the first in mountainous Judea, the second in Chester, the third in eternity'.<sup>32</sup> The events are thus important historically to Mary and Elizabeth (in mountainous Judea), tropologically to the canons of St John's and people of Chester (who 'should pay pay back the queen of heaven with most fruitful kindness and goodwill') and anagogically (present-day ceremonial will permit us to 'eternally share our hymns with angels'). Lucian's interpretation of the procession collapses time (past, present and future) and space (Judea, Chester, heaven), just as the plays must in their attempt to stage the whole span of Christian history in three days on Chester's streets. For both, typology, tropology and anagogy are essential tools. Unlike Lucian, the Chester Plays show some anxiety about their use.

The Expositor, who most often wields these tools in the Chester Cycle, is polite, learned and somewhat pompous.<sup>33</sup> He addresses his audience as 'lordinges' (4.113, 193, 460 etc), devotes himself to instructing the 'unlearned' (4.113), and is careful not to outstay his welcome (5.45-8). He is a caring pastor who prays for his listeners (4.476-83), but, particularly in the Clothworkers' Play of Antichrist's prophets, a pastor who insists on his hieratic status. He understands the prophecies; the audience must 'beleeve ... fullye withouten weene' his interpretations (22.37). Several features of the plays conspire to reduce his authority. In the

Cappers' Play of Moses and Balaam and Balaak, the Doctor's final words are those of a theatrical impresario:

Prayenge you all, both east and west  
where that yee goe, to speake the best.  
The byrth of Christe, feare and honest,  
here shall yee see; and fare ye well. (5.448-51)

These words could be seen as a tongue-in-cheek prophecy of next day's performance of Christ's nativity, a less-than-serious counterpart to the procession of prophets that close the play in MS H, and they align the otherwise humourless expositor with Goobett-on-the-Greene who announces the Barbers' Play of Abraham (4.1-16).<sup>34</sup> More damaging to the Expositor's integrity is the Doctor who appears in the Vintners' Play of Herod. This doctor, described by Herod as 'my clarke' (8.232), represents 'the chief priests and the scribes of the people' (Mt 2:4), who are summoned by Herod to predict where Jesus had been born. The Doctor acknowledges the instability of his position in his opening speech:

Nay, my lord, bee ye bould;  
I trowe noe prophetes before would  
write anythinge your hart to could  
or your right to denye.  
But syth your grace at this tyme would  
that I the prophets declare should,  
of Christes comminge as they have tould,  
the trueth to certyfie,  
I beseech your ryall majestee  
with patience of your benignitie  
the trueth to here, and pardone mee  
there sayenges to declare. (8.245-56)

Some exegetes, the Doctor implies, would bend the truth to placate a tyrant's ear, a supposition confirmed when a doctor later appears among Antichrist's retinue (23.420, 432-9). When the Doctor does interpret the prophecies forthrightly in accordance with tradition,

Herod responds by breaking his sword, blaspheming and tearing up the doctor's books (8.350-1). The Doctor's words and the action of the play cast material doubt on the validity of exegesis in the Cycle.

Several of these hints were developed during the performance of the plays in Toronto in May 2010. The Expositor was almost invariably dressed in priestly or academic dress and often carried a book.<sup>35</sup> In the University of Toledo's production of the Bouchers' *Woman Taken in Adultery*, the book was an outsized copy of the *Glossa ordinaria*, which the Expositor held open and gestured towards as she spoke. Herod's violence towards the Doctor and her books was vividly depicted in the University of Waterloo's *Herod*. While the University of Saskatchewan offered a static (and perhaps authentic) interpretation of the Prophets of Antichrist,<sup>36</sup> two plays memorably portrayed tensions in the characterisation of the Expositor. In Ryerson University's *Abraham and Isaac and Moses and the Law*,<sup>37</sup> God, who otherwise faced the audience, turned his back when the Expositor addressed the audience, before the Expositor reciprocated by looking irritated when God spoke. In Shenandoah University's *Nativity*, the Expositor's fellow cast members decided to drag him off stage as his list of 'other miracles ... that befell that ilke daye / that Jesus Christ was borne' (6.568, 570-1) threatened to continue without end. We cannot say whether such anticlericalism was a part of the performances in the 1560s and 1570s, but there are hints in the text that the Expositor was a problematic character.

The Expositor lives up to this billing by employing a much wider variety of exegetical methodologies than are found in royally-authorised exegesis from the 1570s. Neither mainstream protestants nor puritans like Goodman found the practice of exegesis in itself objectionable, though Goodman disagreed with many of the Expositor's specific interpretations. The simplest method utilised by the Expositor is historical narrative, which he



uses, for example, in his proleptic summary of the carving of the new tablets of the law (5.41-64). However, even narrative is to some degree interpretive, as is evident from Goodman's objection that 'the Ark [is] called a Shrine' in this speech (5.61). The Expositor extends this method when interpreting prophecies, which is his role in the procession of prophets uniquely preserved in MS H's version of Balaam and Balaak and in the Prophets of Antichrist.<sup>38</sup> To interpret the messianic prophecies of the former, the Expositor shows how the New Testament fulfills the Old Testament, even suggesting that some prophecies are too simple to need explanation (App 1B.205-6, 369-71). This allegorical model also underlies the Doctor's attempts to connect Christ's temptation in the wilderness with Adam's temptation in paradise, a self-acknowledged borrowing from Gregory's *Homilia in evangelia* (12.169-216). By contrast, the Expositor adopts an anagogical method in interpreting the apocalyptic prophecies of the Prophets of Antichrist, reading – for example – the 'little horn' of Dan 7:8 as 'Antechriste' (22.161), an interpretation he shared with Bullinger, Luther and Oecolampadius (who further explained that this Antichrist was the Pope), but not Calvin, who believed that all Daniel's prophecies has been fulfilled before Christ's birth or shortly thereafter.<sup>39</sup> This anagogical method could also lead to Goodman's disfavour, and 'the exposition of Malachy's prophecy concerning Enoch and Elias approving a religious life' and 'the exposition of Iohn's revelation that Enoch and Elias are in paradise in the flesh' appear on his list of absurdities. The Expositor also makes limited use of tropological interpretation in the plays, most memorably when he explains that the miraculous withering and healing of the midwife Salome's hands as she tries to test Mary's virginity shows 'that unbeleefe is a fowle sinne' (6.721).

We can gain some sense of the significance of the Expositor's explanatory endeavours by comparing his interventions in the Barbers' Play of Abraham with licensed sixteenth-century

exegesis of these episodes. No other English cycle narrates the story of Melchizedek and the covenant and circumcision. The Expositor interprets the bread and wine Melchizedek gives to Abraham as a type of the Eucharist (4.113-43), circumcision as a type of baptism (4.194-208), and Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac as a prefiguration of the incarnation (4.460-75). Neither the Geneva Bible (1560), nor the Bishops' Bible (1568) nor the *Sermons or Homilies appointed to be read in Churches* (enlarged version, 1571) explicitly offer a sacramental interpretation of these episodes, instead offering the well-worn typological equation of Isaac and Christ, first expounded by Paul in his Letter to the Romans, and a simple, moral gloss.<sup>40</sup> The Bishops' Bible explicitly denies a sacramental interpretation of Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek, explaining he offered the bread and wine 'for to refreshe Abram and his soldiers, and not make any oblation'.<sup>41</sup> In the *Sermons*, Abraham is offered as an exemplum of faith, and his victory over the five kings as evidence that 'GOD doth oftentimes prosper iust and lawfull enemies'.<sup>42</sup> For the compilers of the Geneva Bible, circumcision was a sign 'to shewe that all that is begotten of man is corrupt and must be mortified', and Abraham's example showed 'the onley way to ouercome all tentations is to rest vpon Gods prouidence'.<sup>43</sup>

The practice of allegorical exegesis in the sixteenth century cannot be labelled 'Protestant', 'Catholic' or anywhere in between. For all its emphasis on reform and rupture, sixteenth-century exegesis still relied on late medieval methods.<sup>44</sup> Expository figures, like Bale's Prolocutor, appeared in protestant drama. There was also variation between different protestant factions regarding exegetical theory and practice: one of the bishops' major objections to the Geneva Bible was the 'divers prejudicial notes' notes.<sup>45</sup> Yet the predominant reliance of authorised protestant exegesis on a simple, moral interpretation of the Abraham and Isaac episode, combined with the puritan Goodman's persistent objections to the

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Expositor's ideas, confirm the ambiguity regarding the practice of exegesis ingrained in the Plays, and suggest the Cycle's debt to medieval and therefore catholic exegetical practice was one reason they were problematic to stage in the 1570s.

### **The Chester Plays and Mapping Medieval Chester**

Inspired by the fictitious account of the Whitsun Plays' origins offered in the Late Banns, this article has explored the intersections between the exegetical practices of Lucian's *De laude Cestrie* and the Chester Plays. In this concluding section, I want to use the resources developed by the Mapping Medieval Chester project to suggest some further lines of enquiry regarding the Cycle's status as a Cestrian text.

The Mapping Medieval Chester project, which ran for one academic year (2008-9), was a collaboration between an urban geographer, three medieval literature specialists and several experts in digital humanities, funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council. It produced a website ([www.medievalchester.ac.uk](http://www.medievalchester.ac.uk)) containing a variety of resources, including partial editions of Lucian's *De laude Cestrie*, Henry Bradshaw's *Life of St Werburghe*, a series of Welsh and Latin poems relating to Chester, and new static and interactive maps of the medieval city. The project's objective was to explore the relationship between literary and geographical mappings and it is accordingly possible to move dynamically between the texts and the interactive map. The website's indices of people and places reconstruct the cultural framework which medieval Cestrian writers shared.

The Chester Cycle was excluded on the grounds of its length and complex textual history, as well as our lack of expertise. In retrospect, I think this was a wise decision, since the plays contain very few specific references to Cestrian topography, and neither generic references like Balaam's 'halles' and 'chambers' (5.305) nor deictic references to the temporary position

of pageant wagons could readily be mapped according to our methodologies. The website is nonetheless an invaluable resource for contextualising the plays and assessing the extent to which they partake in a distinctively Cestrian literary tradition, the existence of which is posited by both Mapping Medieval Chester and Robert W. Barrett, Jr.'s recent *Against All England*.

This essay has shown that there are similarities between Lucian's twelfth-century *De laude Cestrie* and the Chester Cycle, but the other texts edited on the website provide equally fertile material for investigation. Writing about the Shepherds' Play, with its stereotypical depiction of the Welsh pastors Hannekynn, Harvy and Tudd eating leeks (7.156) and practising magic (7.19-20), David Mills suggests:<sup>46</sup>

The shepherds are amusing incomers and their presence in Chester serves to define the civic community negatively as 'non-Welsh'. But they are presented affectionately, not as foolish country folk.

The texts edited on the website evince a complex relationship between the Welsh and Chester. Poems like Tudor Penllyn's *I Reinallt ap Gruffudd o'r Tŵr* ('To Rheinallt ap Gruffudd ap Bleddyn of the Tower'), a bloodthirsty encomium to an attack on the men of Chester at Mold in 1464, and Guto'r Glyn's *I Wiliam Herbert* ('To William Herbert') are indicative of fifteenth-century Welsh hostility to Chester. At the same time, Welsh pilgrims were frequent visitors to St John's Cathedral and its relic of the true cross, as Maredudd ap Rhys's *I'r Groes o Gaer* ('Poem to the Cross at Chester') records. The ambivalence of Chester's attitude to the Welsh is evident from Henry Bradshaw's *Life of St Werburghe*, where Bradshaw emphasises the role of the British in founding and converting Chester, before explaining that from the time of King Alfred they 'euer to the saxons ha[d] inwarde hate'.<sup>47</sup> These complex local attitudes problematise understanding the characterisation of the Welsh shepherds as simply 'amusing'.

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Welsh poems like Lewys Glyn Cothi's 'Dychan i Wŷr o Gaer' ('Satire on the Men of Chester'), which opens by petitioning Rheinallt fab Gruffydd fab Bleddyn to slaughter fifty Cestrians in revenge for the theft of Lewys's possessions, show just how fraught ethnic tensions between the English and the Welsh could be. With its slurs on Chester's untrustworthy mayor and licentious, bisexual monks, this poem depicts a very different city hierarchy to the Late Banns with their reverent description of the Chester Cycle as a pious collaboration between Higden and Arneway. Bradshaw, like Higden a Benedictine monk of St Werburgh's, fails to mention the mayor once, and is unhesitating in his insistence that the city's elites owe their first loyalty to St Werburgh and her monastery. Lucian, with his second threefold interpretation of *Cestria* as 'the honesty of her nobles, the faith of her citizens, the religion of her monks', shares the Late Banns' affirmation of the value of collaboration between the Chester's civic and religious institutions. This similarity and the others detailed in this paper confirm the Chester Plays' status as a Chester text.

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<sup>1</sup> I cite the Late Banns from R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills, *The Chester Mystery Cycle: essays and documents* (Chapel Hill, 1983), 272-310.

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All references to the Chester Plays are to R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills, eds., *The Chester Cycle*, EETS s. s. 3, 9 (London, 1974-86).

<sup>2</sup> For Higden's oeuvre, see Richard Sharpe, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland Before 1540*, Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin 1 (Turnhout, 1997), 453-4.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Whitfield White, 'Reforming Mysteries' End: a new look at Protestant intervention in English provincial drama', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29 (1999), 135.

<sup>4</sup> For a more elaborate account of their composition, see Lawrence M. Clopper, 'The History and Development of the Chester Cycle', *Modern Philology* 75 (1978), 235-40.

<sup>5</sup> See, in particular, Richard K. Emmerson, 'Contextualising Performance: the reception of the Chester *Antichrist*', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29 (1999).

<sup>6</sup> For the 'absurdities', see Elizabeth Baldwin, Lawrence M. Clopper, and David Mills, *Cheshire including Chester*, 2 vols., Records of Early English Drama (London, 2007), 147-8.

<sup>7</sup> Clopper, 'The History and Development of the Chester Cycle', 240.

<sup>8</sup> R. V. H. Burne, *Chester Cathedral: from its founding by Henry VIII to the accession of Queen Victoria* (London, 1958), 1-5.

<sup>9</sup> In 1572, the clergy built a 'mansyon' over the abbey gates, and gave beer to the players: Baldwin, Clopper, and Mills, *REED Cheshire*, 1.137.

<sup>10</sup> I cite from my own partial edition and translation, Mapping Medieval Chester Project ([www.medievalchester.ac.uk](http://www.medievalchester.ac.uk), accessed 25 August, 2010) by excerpt number. I cite from the single extant manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 672, whenever the passage is not included in my edition.

<sup>11</sup> *De laude Cestrie*, excerpt 22

<sup>12</sup> For example 'ideo miramur cestrenses monacos' (*De laude*, fol. 60r); 'da eis gustum' (fol. 61v). Had Lucian been a monk of St Werburgh's, he is unlikely to have written the former sentence, and would probably have written 'da nobis gustum' instead of 'da eis gustum'.

<sup>13</sup> I raise this possibility in Mark Faulkner, 'The Spatial Hermeneutics of Lucian's *De laude Cestrie*', in *Mapping the Medieval City: space, place and identity in Chester c. 1200-1500*, ed. Catherine A. M. Clarke (Cardiff, forthcoming).

<sup>14</sup> This supersedes M. V. Taylor, *Extracts from the MS. Liber Luciani De laude Cestrie written about the year 1195 and now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire 64 (Chester, 1912).

Two short passages (corresponding to excerpts 27, 'in una comes caput ciuium ... lucere in terris uitam angelorum', and 28, 'iustissime igitur atque pulcherrime ... ad eterni regis gloriam officiosissime salutare' on the Mapping Medieval Chester website) are edited and translated in Baldwin, Clopper, and Mills, *REED Cheshire*, 2.35-6, 2.922-3, 2.94. The explanatory notes on these passage are questionable: *miraculum* means 'marvel' and has nothing to do with 'unruly or disruptive games'. Likewise, *preliatur* refers to spiritual struggle against temptation not 'dancing or some kind of spring festival in a churchyard'.

<sup>15</sup> David Mills, *Recycling the Cycle: the city of Chester and its Whitsun Plays*, Studies in Early English Drama 4 (Toronto, 1998), 53.

<sup>16</sup> For further discussion of *De laude*'s aims, see Catherine A. M. Clarke, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England, 700-1400* (Cambridge, 2006), John Doran, 'Authority and Care: the significance of Rome in twelfth-century Chester', in *Roma Felix: formation and reflections of medieval Rome*, ed. Éamonn Ó Carragáin and Carol Neuman de Vegvar (Aldershot, 2007), Robert W. Barrett, Jr., *Against All England: regional identity and Cheshire writing*, ReFormations (Notre Dame, 2009), 29-43, as well as the materials on the Mapping Medieval Chester website.

<sup>17</sup> See my 'Lucian's *De laude Cestrie*: introduction', Mapping Medieval Chester Project ([www.medievalchester.ac.uk](http://www.medievalchester.ac.uk), accessed 25 August, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Faulkner, 'Spatial Hermeneutics'.

<sup>19</sup> *De laude Cestrie*, excerpt 9.

<sup>20</sup> *De laude Cestrie*, excerpt 25.

<sup>21</sup> One exception is Mills, *Recycling the Cycle*, 173-8. For the former approach, see, for example, Barrett, *Against All England*, 59-95.

<sup>22</sup> See Jn 11:9-10. Confusion of **t** and **c** is explicable palaeographically.

<sup>23</sup> On the character of the ale wife, see R. M. Lumiansky, 'Comedy and Theme in the Chester *Harrowing of Hell*', *Tulane Studies in English* 10 (1960), Mary Wack, 'Women, Work, and Plays in an English Medieval Town', in *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: women's alliances in early modern England*, ed. Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (Oxford, 1999).

<sup>24</sup> Rupert H. Morris, *Chester in the Plantagenet and Tudor Reigns* (Chester, [1894]), 425.

<sup>25</sup> Wack, 'Women, Work, and Plays', 42.

<sup>26</sup> David Mills, 'Who are Our Customers? The audience for Chester's plays', *Medieval English Theatre* 20 (1998), 114.

<sup>27</sup> In general, see David Mills, 'Brought to Book: Chester's Expositor and his Kin', in *The Narrator, the Expositor and the Prompter in European Medieval Theatre*, ed. Philip Butterworth, *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe 17* (Turnhout, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> The literate inhabitant is addressed in *De laude Cestrie*, extract 19: 'may the learned inhabitant observe the voice of the Lord' (*prudenter aduertat saltem literatus habitator Domini uocem*). In extract 24, Lucian explains 'I have judged these four gates worth depicting, o city of Chester, so that what the reader has in books, the inhabitant may hold in his gaze and memory' (*haec de quattuor portis tuis pingenda credidi ciuitas Cestria, ut quod habet lector in litera, teneat habitator in oculis et memoria*). The subjunctive *teneat* suggests that Lucian expects the inhabitant to learn from the reader.

<sup>29</sup> *De laude Cestrie*, extract 25. I have modified the text and the translation slightly.

<sup>30</sup> Baldwin, Clopper, and Mills, *REED Cheshire*, 2.994.

<sup>31</sup> 'Sollempne munus, suaue misterium [quod] confortat animos et pascit intuitum': *De laude Cestrie*, excerpt 9.

<sup>32</sup> 'Semel, sepe, semper: unum montanis Iudee, alterum Cestrie, tercium in eternitate'. I have emended my translation from the website.

<sup>33</sup> He does not have a monopoly on their use: the Three Kings explain the significance of the frankincense, myrrh and gold themselves (9.88-95, 96-103, 104-11), while Christ is allowed to expound the meaning of Jn 11:9-10 (13.349-56).

<sup>34</sup> This observation invalidates the suggestion that Goobett's name serves to prevent possible identification with the Expositor: Richard Axton, *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1974), 185.

<sup>35</sup> Many of the Expositors were female. I do not know the purpose of these casting decisions.

<sup>36</sup> Mills imagines him speaking in front of a silent tableau: Mills, 'Brought to Book', 316.

<sup>37</sup> Alexandra Johnston's 2010 text joined 4.289-475 with 5.1-96.

<sup>38</sup> On this genre, see Robert A. Brawer, 'The Form and Function of the Prophetic Procession in the Middle English Cycle Play', *Annuaire Medievale* 13 (1972).

<sup>39</sup> Richard A. Muller, 'The Hermeneutic of Promise and Fulfillment in Calvin's Exegesis of the Old Testament Prophecies of the Kingdom', in *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. David C. Steinmetz (Durham, N. C., 1990), 71.

<sup>40</sup> Geneva's paraphrase of Gen 22 baldly states 'Izhák is a figure of Christ' (sig. c. i<sup>v</sup>), but this is not developed in the notes. The *Sermons* imply that Abraham's faith was bolstered by his confidence that God 'was able by his omnipotent power to raye [Isaac] from death', a detail that seems to propose the same equation: Mary Ellen Rickey and Thomas B. Stroup, *Certaine Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the Time of Queen Elizabeth I (1547-1571): a facsimile reproduction of the edition of 1623* (Gainesville, FL, 1968), 24.

<sup>41</sup> *The Holy Byble, conteyning the Olde and Nevve Testament wherevnto is ioyned the whole seruice, vsed in the Church of England*, (London, 1577), 7v.

<sup>42</sup> Rickey and Stroup, *Certain Sermons*, 24, 301. In general, see Luc Borot, 'The Bible and Protestant Inculturation in the *Homilies* of the Church of England', in *The Bible in the Renaissance: essays on biblical commentary and translation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries*, ed. Richard Griffiths, *St Andrews Studies in Reformation History* (Aldershot, 2001).

<sup>43</sup> Lloyd E. Berry, *The Geneva Bible: a facsimile of the 1560 edition* (Madison, 1969), sig. b. iii (r), c. i(v)

<sup>44</sup> David C. Steinmetz, 'Calvin and the Patristic Exegesis of Paul', in *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. David C. Steinmetz (Durham, N. C., 1990), Richard A. Muller, 'Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: the view from the Middle Ages', in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: essays presented to David C. Steinmetz in honor of his sixtieth birthday*, ed. Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson (Grand Rapids, MI, 1996).

<sup>45</sup> David Daniell, *The Bible in English: its history and influence* (New Haven, 2003), 341.

<sup>46</sup> Mills, *Recycling the Cycle*, 177.

<sup>47</sup> Henry Bradshaw, *Life of St Werburghe* ed. Catherine A. M. Clarke, Mapping Medieval Chester Project ([www.medievalchester.ac.uk](http://www.medievalchester.ac.uk), accessed 27 August, 2010), 2.687.