

**KISSING COUSINS:**  
**The Four Daughters of God and the Visitation**  
**in the N. Town *Mary Play***  
***Meg Twycross***

*Misericordia et Veritas obviauerunt sibi; Justitia et Pax osculatae sunt.* Psalm 84: 11 (Vulgate)

‘Mercy and Truth have met each other: Justice and Peace have kissed.’  
(Douai/Rheims)

*Et intravit in domum Zacchariae et salutavit Elisabeth.* (Luke 1:40)  
‘And she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth.’

It is of course appropriate that a play about the early life of the Blessed Virgin Mary should end with the episode of the Visitation. After all, this is the setting for the Magnificat, her great canticle of praise and thanks for the Incarnation. Many paintings of the Annunciation are paired with one of the Visitation, ‘its confirmation, as it were’.<sup>1</sup> But it was not, inevitably, until we performed it that I noticed the strong *visual* link between the embrace of reconciliation of the Four Daughters of God and the cousinly embrace of Mary and Elizabeth. Yet why should this be a meaningful parallel? Apart from being a same-sex embrace, narratively the pairs have not much in common. Pamela Sheingorn, in a recent judiciously-theorised discussion of embraces in medieval religious art and theatre, discusses both, but classifies them quite differently: Mary and Elizabeth participate in an ‘equal embrace’ which can however become a ‘subservient embrace’ on Elizabeth’s part; the Four Daughters are engaged in a ‘loveday’ embrace of reconciliation.<sup>2</sup> Mary and Elizabeth were not at odds, and therefore had no need to be reconciled. Was this just an accidental motif in a play which after all deals largely with the affection between members of a family, whether earthly or celestial? Was it even a self-engineered accident, as following an instinct that the play was strongly liturgical in tone, I had choreographed both on the kiss of peace?<sup>3</sup>

It appears not. There is a recorded medieval typology which links the two episodes. It was not included in those familiar canonical works of European typology of the later Middle Ages (and at the time of the writing of the N. Town *Mary Play*), the *Biblia Pauperum* or the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*. In fact, neither the *Biblia* nor the *Speculum* in their printed versions include the Visitation in their main New Testament sequence of

antitypes. The *Speculum* treats of it in its pendant section on the Seven Joys of the Virgin, but the types there relate more to Mary's virginal pregnancy — the Burning Bush, the Hortus Conclusus, Abishag — than to her meeting with Elizabeth.<sup>4</sup> But though these are the sources we normally go to for information, they were not the only typological programmes current in the Middle Ages: moreover, they seem to have been largely continental in popularity before the printed versions made them a universal pattern-book favourite.<sup>5</sup> There was another, apparently mainly English, programme current from the twelfth century onwards, which specifically linked the meeting and embrace of the Four Daughters of God with the meeting and embrace of Mary and Elizabeth in the Visitation. It was sufficiently popular and long-lasting in England, and, as we shall see, in the right part of the country, to make it possible or even likely that the playwright intended his audience to make the thematic link.

Its earliest recorded pictorial representation in England is in the typological stained glass of Canterbury Cathedral, the programme probably completed between the fire of 1174, and 1184.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately the glass in the first typological window, North Choir Aisle 16, is now missing and the window itself blocked up, but three late-medieval written records of it remain.<sup>7</sup> These manuscripts all describe the subject matter of the windows and the *tituli* which, by analogy with the surviving typological windows, must have framed the panels: a double communication in words and image typical of typological works. They conveniently tell us how we are to understand the link between the antitype and its types.

Madeleine Caviness has reconstructed the layout of the window.<sup>8</sup> It would have had four circular panels arranged in a vertical row, containing the New Testament scenes of the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, and the Annunciation to the Shepherds. Flanking these and offset downwards were one pair each of semicircular panels containing the corresponding Old Testament types. The Annunciation has Moses and the Burning Bush and Gideon's Fleece; the Visitation has Mercy and Truth on one side, and Righteousness and Peace on the other.

The *titulus* for the Visitation scene was *Salutacio Marie & Elizabeth*. The types had longer *tituli* in leonine hexameters relating the central scene to its precursor. These not only identify the scene, but explain the thematic relationship between type and antitype. The Canterbury *titulus* for the meeting of Mercy and Truth was:

Plaude puer puero virgo vetule quia vero  
Obviat hic pietas veteri dat lex nova metas.

'Boy-child greet boy-child, virgin [greet] old woman: because here Mercy (*pietas*)<sup>9</sup> meets Truth, the New Law sets boundaries to the Old.'

For the embrace of Justice<sup>10</sup> and Peace, the verse is:

Applaudit regi precursor gratia legi  
Oscula iusticie dat pax cognata Marie.

'The forerunner greets the king, Grace the Law; Peace kisses Justice, her cousin [kisses] Mary.'

The action of meeting and greeting is broken down, as it is in the psalm, into two gestures: first the encounter (*Misericordia et Veritas obviaverunt sibi*), then the embrace (*Justitia et Pax osculate sunt*).

The typology is conveyed by the structure of the lines as well as the content. Each line contains two contrasting pairs; three of the four pairs share a verb. We are left to deduce which New Testament person represents which Old Testament personification. Looked at purely structurally, the verses balance out like this:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Object</i>	<i>Action</i>
Boy	Boy	Greeting
Young woman	Old woman	Greeting
Mercy	Truth	Meeting
New Law	Old Law	Limiting

Leaving out the (undifferentiated) children for the moment, Mary/Mercy/the New Law are linked together as agents of the action: she 'saluted Elizabeth'. The other parallels match thematically: because Mary is a young woman she 'becomes' the New Law; she 'becomes' Mercy partly because, as the Magnificat emphasises, the New Law is characterised by Mercy.<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth is thus equated with Truth and the Old Law: she is the recipient of the action recorded in the Gospel. The one additional motif is that of the New Law 'setting limits' to the Old: visually this could refer to the embracing arms. If so, the limits are friendly ones.

The second type is less clearly dichotomised. At first glance, the typological pairs do not seem to match: we have to assume that each pair of lines are balanced chiastically:

Subject	Object	Action	
John	Christ	Greeting	<i>but</i>
Grace	The [Old] Law	Greeting	
Peace	Righteousness	Kissing	<i>but</i>
Elizabeth	Mary	Kissing	

Here the shifting balance, whether or not dictated by the rhyme scheme, emphasises mutuality: John/the Old Law and Christ/Grace greet each other, Mary/Peace and Elizabeth/Righteousness kiss each other. But both John and Elizabeth as agents are reacting to action initiated by Mary in the first scene. (In the Gospel, Elizabeth and Mary are not explicitly said to embrace, but the scene is represented like this in art from quite early on, and the typology would tend to reinforce this.)<sup>12</sup>

The equation here of Truth and Righteousness with the Old Law, Mercy and Peace with the New,<sup>13</sup> suggests that the inventor of the programme is thinking of the well-known narrative allegory of the Four Daughters of God based on Psalm 84:11, initiated by Hugh of St Victor c.1120, and rounded out and popularised by St Bernard in his *Sermon on the Annunciation* c.1140. It was retold and elaborated by Robert Grossteste in his *Chasteau d'Amour*, and by Pseudo-Bonaventure in the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, which, together with the *Charter of the Abbey of the Holy Ghost*, is the source of the N. Town 'Parliament'.<sup>14</sup> In fact, neither Hugh nor Bernard (nor indeed any of their followers) *specifically* identify the opposition of the Daughters with the clash between the Old Law and the New, though Bernard may hint at this when he makes the Father as Judge write with his finger in the earth: *Porro Judex inclinans se, digito scribebat in terra*, a gesture taken from the story of the Woman Taken in Adultery.<sup>15</sup> It is however implicit in the placing of the debate as the catalyst for the Redemption, and the strongly legal flavour of the arguments of Veritas and Justitia, which employ the 'Latin' theology of the Atonement.<sup>16</sup> Justice particularly is presented as the retributive Mosaic 'letter of the law'.<sup>17</sup>

There are however two invisible players in this typology. Both the *tituli* draw attention to the fact that though Mary and Elizabeth are significant in themselves, their major significance at this moment derives from the fact that they are both pregnant. The children in their wombs are to be more important players in the drama of salvation: so much so that they are visualised as taking an active part in the meeting. Luke reports that when Mary spoke to Elizabeth, the six-month foetus John kicked his mother. Elizabeth is made to interpret this as a joyful act of recognition:

41. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42. And she cried out with a loud voice and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my lord should come unto me?

44. For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.

The sequence of events in verse 41, and the perceived difference of status between mothers and children, led to the explanation that John was the real agent of Elizabeth's inspiration:

Deinde repleta est etiam ejus mater Elisabeth Spiritu Sancto, per filium et meritis filii. Non prius repleta est mater, quam filius, sed filius repletus replet et matrem.<sup>18</sup>

'Thereupon his mother Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, through her son and by the merits of her son. The mother was not filled before the son, but the son, being filled, then filled the mother ...'

thus echoing the process of the Incarnation, and the relationship between Mary and the Christ Child. But conversely, since the children could not, being in the womb, speak for themselves, the mothers become important as their spokespersons. The children as it were ventriloquise through their mothers.

Filius intus latens docet quid mater exterius agere debeat; spiritus enim infantis, non valentis clamare, nec loqui voce propria, fecit clamare matrem voce magna.<sup>19</sup>

'The son, lying hidden within, teaches what the mother ought to do outwardly: for the spirit of the infant, not being able to call out, or to speak with his own voice, made his mother call out with a great voice.'

The children are reduced to 'speaking' by gesture: *non voce, sed motu* ('not by voice, but by movement').<sup>20</sup> In some paintings, the infants are shown in a glory in the wombs of their mothers, the Christ Child raising a hand in blessing, the foetal John kneeling in homage to him.<sup>21</sup> In N. Town 'the infant in my womb leaped for joy' has become,

Anon as I herd of ȝou þis holy gretynge,  
Mekest mayden and þe modyr of God, Mary,  
Be ȝour breþ þe Holy Gost vs was inspyryng  
þat þe child in my body enjoyd gretly  
And turnyd down on his knes to oure God reverently:  
Whom ȝe bere in ȝour body, þis veryly I ken ...<sup>22</sup>

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John here is previewing his later and more famous greeting in John 1:29:

Et tunc primo, Præcursorem suum Jesus prophetam fecit, qui in utero exiliens, ejus adventum evangelizavit, et præcursionis suæ officium inchoavit, quasi etiam intra matris viscera jam clamavit,  
*Ecce Agnus dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi.*<sup>23</sup>

'And then first, Jesus made his forerunner a prophet, who, leaping up in the womb, proclaimed His Coming, and began his rôle as forerunner, just as if, even in his mother's bowels, he was already calling, Behold the Lamb of God: behold Him that taketh away the sins of the world'.

In the *titulus*, his rôle is also stated to be that of *precursor*, the forerunner, the 'last and greatest of the prophets'.<sup>24</sup> We shall see this idea developed at more length a little later on. For the time being, however, the Canterbury *tituli* merely hint at a more developed rôle for the children. Pictorially, the window emphasises the relationship between their mothers, reflected in the gender of the Four Daughters.

The same grouping appears about a century later in the Peterborough Psalter (Brussels Bibliothèque Royale MS 9961-2), dated by Lucy Freeman Sandler to between 1299-1318.<sup>25</sup> Folio 10 is divided into four scenes, with accompanying *tituli* (see PLATE 1). The two New Testament scenes, the Annunciation and Visitation, are on the right hand side of the page: flanking them on the left are their types. This is a slight misnomer, as the 'type' of the Annunciation turns out to be a group of four prophets, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Moses, and Gideon, with their attributes, all gazing up towards a Christ half-figure: their individual written prophecies overflow from their frame into and around the Annunciation's space, so that it is difficult to disentangle them. On the left of the Visitation is a group of the Four Daughters, also with attributes (PLATE 2): each pair has an individual couplet, but these also spill across into the Visitation's pictorial space, so that the couplet relating Misericordia and Veritas to their antitype are under the Four Daughters, while those for Justitia and Pax are under the Visitation:

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Plate 1: Brussels B.R. MS 9961-2: The Peterborough Psalter fol 10<sup>r</sup>:  
The Annunciation, the Visitation, and their types.  
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Plate 2: The Peterborough Psalter (fol 10<sup>r</sup>, detail):  
The Four Daughters of God and the Visitation.  
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Plaude puerperio. uirgo uetule quia uero  
 Obviat hic pietas, veteri dat lex nova metas.  
 Oscula iusticie. dat pax. cognata marie.  
 Applaudet regi. precursor gracia legi.

Apart from a mistake in the second word, which makes a nonsense of the syntax, and the rearrangement of lines 3 and 4, the verses are clearly the same as at Canterbury.

There are two more enticing potential examples of this Visitation typology in accounts of paintings in East Anglia, both now lost. While it would be difficult to prove that the N. Town playwright or playwrights had seen the Peterborough Psalter, or even the window at Canterbury, it might seem very possible that he was familiar with images in two of the most impressive cathedrals in his region. M.R. James suggested in 1895 that the typological paintings in the Peterborough Psalter were direct copies of a programme of panel paintings once set into the choir stalls in the Abbey at Peterborough, and dated by him 'about 1160 A.D'.<sup>26</sup> The account of these by Gunton, the seventeenth-century antiquarian, in his *History of Peterborough Cathedral* (1686) cites exactly the same verses as in the Psalter, and identifies the first couplet (*Plaude puerperio ...*) as being 'Under the Pictures of Mary and Elizabeth'.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately for this theory, however, his identification is somewhat suspect, as the whole run of paintings he records as being on the South side of the Choir are Old Testament types or prophecies of the Incarnation: Isaiah saying *Ecce virgo concipiet*, the Burning Bush, Gideon's Fleece, Aaron's Rod, and Nebuchanezzar's Dream of the stone cut from the mountain without hands. None of them are New Testament antitypes. Gunton's description 'Pictures of Mary and Elizabeth', with the Mercy and Truth couplet, is followed by 'Another by it', which has the Justice and Peace couplet. It seems probable that the 'Mary and Elizabeth' painting was in fact one of Mercy and Truth. In this case there would not be a direct connection between the Visitation and the Four Daughters, as there is in the Psalter: and indeed Lucy Freeman Sandler has since modified James's suggestions, especially with regard to the supposed layout, redated the stalls to between 1233 and 1245, and come to the decision that 'It is doubtful whether the Psalter miniatures were directly copied from the panel paintings at all'.<sup>28</sup> They would therefore not be available as a visual source for a fifteenth-century playwright: however, both *tituli*, confusingly in the context, definitely refer to the Visitation.

M.R. James also suggested that the Visitation featured with the meeting of Pax and Justitia in a series of typological paintings in *circuli* ('roundels?') at the altar of the Virgin in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral Church of Bury St Edmund's, destroyed by fire in 1465: even more enticing for those who would like to link the N. Town Plays with Bury.<sup>29</sup> However, this seems to have been based on a similar mistake. James summarises the matter of the third roundel as

*In tercio.*

Pax and Justitia meet.

The Visitation.

The manuscript source of this information, however, College of Arms MS Arundel 30, does not appear to identify this scene as the Visitation. It merely reports the wording of the inscriptions in the cathedral, not their subject-matter, and Avril Henry's transcription<sup>30</sup> reads:

*In tercio.*

Pax cum iustitia gaudet pariente maria.

Cum puer accessit quem virgo puerpera gessit.

'In the third.

Peace rejoices with Justice when Mary gives birth,  
when the boy whom the Virgin who had given birth [in labour?]  
bore approached.'

This could at a pinch be read as a Visitation link, but it really only speaks of the approach of the Christ Child, and the emphasis on Mary's virgin childbirth suggests that this is meant for a Nativity typology.

The Bury St Edmunds *titulus* is not the same as the Peterborough one, but belongs to another early medieval English typological programme, exemplified by 'The Eton Roundels' edited by Avril Henry.<sup>31</sup> In this ('The Eton Roundels', the Worcester Chapter House inscriptions, and various other 'quotations' on artefacts and in the subordinate images of the Sherborne Missal), the programme is abbreviated, the Visitation does not feature as an antitype, and the Four Daughters have been re-routed to being types of the Espousal of Christ and the Church. This is also an Advent theme, and we shall return briefly to it.

Despite the emphasis on visual parallels, typology depended quite heavily on words to explain its parallels. The *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, for example, could be described either as a picture book with a lengthy commentary, or a long poem with mnemonic illustrations. The

corresponding text for the twelfth/thirteenth-century English typologies is the elaborate Latin work, without illustrations, known as *Pictor in Carmine* ('The Painter in Verse').<sup>32</sup> M.R. James located thirteen manuscripts of this, 'All but two ... of the thirteenth century, and all ... of English origin'.<sup>33</sup> *Pictor* starts with a prose preface condemning the 'foolish pictures' and 'misshapen monstrosities' of Romanesque fantasy art which sounds exactly like the diatribe of the venerable Jorge of Burgos in *The Name of the Rose*, and which presumably came from the same source, Bernard's *Apologia to William of St Thierry*.<sup>34</sup> He proposes as a decent alternative a selection of typological incidents from the Old and New Testaments, of which he provides a lavish menu. He then drafts a choice of couplets (*bini uersus*) for each type, apparently suggesting that the artist should make his own selection from among them: for the antitype, which is more familiar, he says, it is sufficient to write the names of the personages (which indeed is what happens in the surviving examples).<sup>35</sup> These verses add up to a substantial volume.

Not being limited by the layout of a page or a window, *Pictor* apparently allowed himself to collect as many types as he felt appropriate for each antitype: the Annunciation holds the record with 21 (including the Maiden and the Unicorn), with the Crucifixion as runner up with 17, the Baptism third with 14, and the Nativity and the Choosing of the Twelve Apostles joint fourth with 13 each; the standard number is however two or four. The Visitation is, interestingly, split into four episodes: Mary going into the mountains, the salutation of Mary and Elizabeth, the Magnificat, and the birth of John the Baptist. In the contents list under *Salutant se inuicem Maria et Elisabeth* there are four typologies:

Moyses et Aaron sibi obuiantes in monte dei oscula iungunt.

Duo Cherubin obumbrantes propiciatorium respiciunt se inuicem at  
alis contingunt.

Misericordia et ueritas obuiauerunt sibi.

Iusticia et Pax osculate sunt.

The body of the text is written in the same Leonine hexameters (with internal rhymes) as the *tituli* in Canterbury and the Peterborough Psalter, and in 'The Eton Roundels' group, though none of them actually quotes here from *Pictor*. (I have not made a complete comparison of all the *tituli* and the *Pictor* verses, which is a thesis in itself.) The following transcription is based on Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson C 67 (thirteenth century, from

Hereford Cathedral) fol. 32<sup>v</sup>-33<sup>r</sup>, checked against MSS Rawlinson A 425 and MS Digby 65 (both also thirteenth century):<sup>36</sup>

*Misericordia et ueritas obuiauerunt sibi.*  
Obuia fit uero pietas . non ore seuero :  
Que lex immittit : dum gratia lora remittit .  
Verum commutat sua iura . piumque salutat :  
Vt miles regem . cum lenit gratia legem .  
Ius legis strictum cessit . pietate relictum :  
Dum uocem uerbum . dum dulce reuisit acerbum .  
Dura quod inuoluit lex compede : gratia soluit :  
Dum simul applaudunt pueri . quos uiscera claudunt .  
Prisca noue morem lex gessit . passa fauorem :  
Dum regi miles artus tremefecit aniles  
Adueniente noua : data lex mitescere discit :  
Cum sinus Elisabeth gaudente Iohanne tremiscit .  
Veri iudicij flectit compassio normam  
Lex ewangelii dum suscipit obuia formam .  
Veri iudicij compassio mitigat arcum :  
Cum graue legis onus reddit noua gratia parcum .

*'Mercy and Truth have met each other (Psalm 84)*

Mercy (*Pietas*)<sup>37</sup> comes to meet Truth (*Verum*), [who wears] no stern expression,

Which the Law allows, when Grace relaxes the reins;  
Truth commutes its rights, and greets the Merciful One<sup>38</sup>  
As a knight does a king, when Grace makes the Law relent;  
The rigid code of the Law has withdrawn, abandoned by Mercy,  
When the Word reviews the Voice,<sup>39</sup> when the sweet replaces the sour;

What the unyielding Law trammels with a fetter, Grace sets free,  
When the boy-children, whom the wombs shut in, greet each other simultaneously;

The ancient Law accomplished the will of the New, having experienced favour

When the knight made the old woman's frame tremble before the king;

At the coming of the New [Law], the prescribed Law learns to become gentle,

When the womb of Elizabeth trembles with the rejoicing John.

Compassion deflects the measuring rule of True Judgement  
 When the Law, encountering her, takes on [upholds?] the form of  
 the Gospel;  
 Compassion unbends the bow of True Judgement  
 When New Grace renders the burden of the heavy Law light.'

*Iusticia et pax oscula sunt.*  
 Ivsticiam nectit sibi pax . et ad oscula flectit :  
 Quos data lex pungit : dum gratia mulcet et ungit.  
 Iusticiam uisit pax . et dans oscula risit :  
 Lege subinductum dum tersit gratia luctum .  
 Mitior ut cedat : pax oscula iusticie dat :  
 Cum ueterem mollit noua lex . et onus graue tollit .  
 Pax cum iusticia componit . et oscula defert :  
 Cum noua lex ueteri pietatis uiscera prefert .  
 Paci iusticia fauet . usa prioribus annis  
 Id christo presente notat caro mota iohannis

*'Justice and Peace have kissed.*  
 Peace entwines Justice to herself and bends to kiss [her];  
 When Grace soothes and anoints those whom prescribed Law  
 stings;  
 Peace visits Justice, and, kissing [her], laughs;  
 When Grace has wiped away the lamentation instituted by Law.  
 So that she should become gentler, Peace gives kisses to Justice  
 When the New Law makes the Old gentle, and takes away the  
 heavy burden;  
 Peace comes to terms with Justice, and tenders kisses  
 When the New Law displays the bowels of compassion to the Old.  
 Justice, employed in former years, honours Peace,  
 A thing which the flesh of John indicates [when it is] moved at the  
 presence of Christ.'

Pictor is a difficult text, not only because of its convoluted syntax, but because it assumes a prior knowledge of the typological interpretations, and is dense with verbal allusion and word-play,<sup>40</sup> both to the Bible and to standard exegesis, some of which, such as his allusions to Bede, he probably got through the liturgy. It points to the complexity of reference that was already in place: and this is useful, because if we can trace his main sources, we can trace the main lines of his thinking. These are not always necessarily as self-coherent as we might have liked.

The meeting of Misericordia and Veritas is largely expressed in terms of the encounter of two legal systems: the word *lex* ('law') predominates (eight times) with *ius* and *iudicium*. Truth is virtually equated with the Law and Judgement (*veri iudicium*),<sup>41</sup> in opposition to Grace, who is therefore equated with Misericordia, and by implication the New Law: ... *misericordia, quae Novum illuminat testamentum, et rigorem veteris legis extenuat* ('Mercy, which illuminates the New Testament, and lessens the rigour of the Old Law').<sup>42</sup> As the Old Law, Truth has legal rights (*iura* — either promulgated laws, or conditions which have been sworn to by her or in her favour); she acts according to given laws (*data lex* — the law of Moses: John 1:17)<sup>43</sup> administered according to an unbending yardstick (*norma*), and keeps control with a tight rein (*lorum*). In her original persona, she is rigid and constraining (*ius ... strictum*), unyielding of aspect (*ore seuero*) and even sour (*acerbum*), trammelling those in her charge with a fetter (*compede*), and exacting retribution with her bow (*arcum*).

But at the approach of Misericordia/Grace, all this changes. Her countenance softens, she learns to become gentle (*mitescere discit*): her bow is unbent,<sup>44</sup> her fetters loosened,<sup>45</sup> and she gives up her rights freely. Though literally the verses describe the release of those under her jurisdiction, the impression is that she too is being released from the burden of having to act as 'the heavy law', and is relieved and glad to be so. She not only does the will of the New Law, she appears to be transmuted into it: *Lex ewangelii dum suscipit obuia formam*.<sup>46</sup> Strict legality becomes Equity.

This is developed in the next section, on the embrace of Justice and Peace. It is clearly a kiss of peace: *Pax cum iusticia componit*. Peace is the instigator; she tenders the kiss. She is emollient, almost cajoling, caressing Justice into a softer mode. Again, Peace is identified with Grace, curative where Justice/the Old Law has wounded (a possible reference to Synagogue's spear?), wiping away the tears Justice has caused (Revelation 21:4; John 16:20). She also fuses with Mercy, and probably also with Mary, in the word-play on the *viscera pietatis*, 'the bowels of compassion', which refers forward to the Benedictus (Luke 2:78) *per viscera misericordiae Dei nostri*, translated by the Authorised Version as 'the tender mercy of our God' but more correctly by Douai/Rheims as 'the bowels of the mercy of our God'.<sup>47</sup>

There is a tension here, which could easily lead us to misidentify the rôles of the two figures, between the sense of opposition set up by the structure of the verse, which seems to set Truth against Mercy and Justice against Peace, and the action it describes, where the one is transformed by

the other while still keeping her own identity. This sense of opposition goes back to the structure of the verse in the Psalm, and was enhanced by Hugh of St Victor and Bernard when they developed it into a debate. Debates are meant to clarify the issues they explore by setting them in opposition, with the result that we often remember the opposition without remembering the reconciliation at the end. Bernard indeed introduces his as a *gravis contentio inter virtutes*, in which they are said to be *interpellantes*.<sup>48</sup> It is very easy to see it and its derivatives as a battle between the ‘vengeable’<sup>49</sup> sister and the kindly one, in which the kindly one wins, or at least wins a larger share of God’s favour: an assumption which seems to have been made by the author of *The Castle of Perseverance*<sup>50</sup> when he makes God declare that He will adopt:

*Alle pes, sum treuthe, and sum ryth,  
And most of my mercy.*

3572–3

In one way, this is an accurate reading, if seen (as here) in the context of Man’s inability to win heaven justly through his own merits, or (as in the Bernardine debate) to rescue himself from the state of alienation brought about by Original Sin. It is misleading if it seems to suggest that one virtue is more valuable than another. Earlier commentators on Psalm 84, before Bernard, stress the embrace rather than the contention, and see it not as one of reconciliation, but as expressing a necessary interdependence. (This will become thematically important for us later.) Augustine, for example, stresses that Justice and Peace are inseparable:

Fac iustitiam et habebis pacem ... Si enim non amaueris iustitiam, pacem non habebis; amant se duo ista, iustitia et pax ... Vis pacem? ... Ama et iustitiam; quia duae amicae sunt iustitia et pax, ipsae se osculantur; si amicam pacis non amaueris, non te amabit ipsa pax, nec ueniet ad te.<sup>51</sup>

‘Do justice, and you will possess peace ... For if you do not love justice, you will not possess peace: they love each other, those two, justice and peace ... Do you want peace? ... Then love justice as well, because Justice and Peace are two friends, they kiss each other; if you do not love Peace’s friend, Peace herself will not love you, nor will she come to you.’

*Augustine Enarrationes in Psalms*

Indeed, as the exposition of the Psalm attributed to Bede makes clear, Justice is the necessary precursor of Peace:

Sunt enim hae duæ virtutes quasi duæ sorores, quia altera non vult venire sine altera. Si quis ergo justitiam offenderit, pacem non habebit; quia non veniet pax, si non præcedat justitia.<sup>52</sup>

'For these two virtues are like two sisters, because one of them does not want to come without the other. Thus if anyone should offend Justice, he will not have Peace, because Peace will not come, unless she is preceded by Justice.'

(?Pseudo) Bede *De psalmorum libro exegesis: In Psalmum LXXXIV*

These two passages focus not on the opposition but on the embrace. The way in which you read the scene depends very much on what you see in it: is it the meeting of *two figures*, or the *meeting of two figures*? Are you concentrating on defining the two as separate, or on the action in which they are engaged?

It has to be said that as contrasted figures, Mary and Elizabeth do not fit the typology particularly well. (Or vice versa: the type seems to have taken over centre stage from the antitype, and to be forcing an interpretation on it.) It has little or nothing to do with them as characters on a naturalistic/historical level. Nothing in the Gospels suggests that Elizabeth was more truthful or law-abiding than Mary (commentators go out of their way to emphasise how Mary wished to be bound by all the observances of the Mosaic Law), or that Mary was necessarily more merciful or peaceful than Elizabeth, except in so far as she excelled all women. The fact that Mary is spiritually of higher status than Elizabeth might be relevant, though dangerously so, as it would tend to reinforce the 'Mercy and Peace are more important than Justice and Truth' assumption: but again, the Magnificat shows her humility, in *quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ suæ* ('because He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden'), and the naturalistic/moral school of interpretation beloved by writers like Pseudo-Bonaventure emphasise Mary's natural humility, both in going to visit Elizabeth instead of vice versa, and in offering to serve Elizabeth through the later days of her pregnancy.<sup>53</sup> All these added complexities merely serve to fog the clarity of the comparison. Elizabeth was older than Mary, and thus could be allegorised as the Old Law,<sup>54</sup> just as the elder sister Leah became the Old Law and Rachel the New, but that is about as far as one can go.<sup>55</sup>

In fact, *Pictor* does not refer to Mary and Elizabeth at all as independent entities, and Mary not at all by name: Elizabeth is mentioned merely as a vehicle who is physically shaken by the reaction of John to the approach of

his King. He concentrates instead on the two children *in utero*. They, it appears, clarify for him the meaning of the action. The importance of the scene lies not in any correspondences between the women themselves and their counterparts, but in the pivotal moment it records. Within their mothers John the Baptist and Christ meet, and a new state of things is inaugurated.

Veritas meets Misericordia: John meets Christ *ut miles regem* ('as a knight does a king'); interestingly, this image seems to have come from Bede, who presumably would have seen it as warrior and Anglo-Saxon lord, but he uses it of the status of the mothers, to emphasise the humility of Mary — *Quis dubitet matrem regis aeterni jure matri militis preferendam?* ('Who doubts that the mother of the eternal king is not to be preferred by right before the mother of a warrior?')<sup>56</sup> — a preferment which she gracefully sets aside. John is subordinated to Christ: but not in the same way as Truth in the debate might be seen to be subordinated to Mercy, because we meet them at a different stage in the narrative, when the decision has been taken and the process of salvation has swung into action.

The Voice encounters the Word. The scribe of MS Rawlinson C 67, anxious that his reader should understand the allusion, has glossed *vox* as iohannes and *verbum* as Christus. Bede had explained why John is the

*Vox clamantis in deserto: Parate viam Domini*, etc. Constat quia unigenitus Filius Verbum Patris vocatur, Joanne attestante, qui ait: *In principio erat verbum, et verbum erit apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum* (Joann. 1). Et ex ipsa nostra locutione cognoscimus quia prius vox sonat, ut verbum postmodum possit audiri. Joanne ergo vox a propheta vocatur, quia verbum præcedit. Adventum itaque dominicum præcurrrens vox dicitur, quia per eius ministerium Patris verbum ab hominibus auditur.<sup>57</sup>

'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: *Prepare ye the way of the Lord* etc. It is agreed that the only-begotten Son is called the Word of the Father, to which John [the Evangelist] bears witness, who says: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (John 1). From our own speech we know that the voice sounds first, so that afterwards the word may be heard. John therefore is called a 'Voice' because as a prophet he went before the Word. He is called a Voice, as forerunner of the Coming of the Lord, because the Word of the Father was heard by men through his ministry.'

In his exposition of Luke, Bede also makes great play with the relevance of John as voice to Zacharias' dumbness.<sup>58</sup> Later commentators on Luke enjoy themselves with the idea of the Voice who cannot speak, and the prophet who prophesies in the womb, and to Elizabeth speaking *voce magna* 'with a loud voice'.<sup>59</sup> The important thing here is that it highlights the concept of prophecy, and introduces John the Baptist's other rôle. As Luke has Christ say of him, he is 'a prophet, and more than a prophet' because 'This is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee',<sup>60</sup> as his father had prophesied:

et tu puer propheta Altissimi vocaberis,  
praebis enim ante faciem Domini parare vias eius.      Luke 1 16-17

'And thou child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou  
shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.

To give knowledge of salvation to his people, unto the remission of  
their sins.'

He is a bridge figure between the Old Testament and the New. He prepares the way of the Lord by calling on the people, *Paenitentiam agite; appropinquavit enim regnum caelorum* ('Do penance: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' Matthew 3:2)

There was another, older interpretation of Psalm 84 (in fact, Hugh of St Victor's original allegory began with it), and we can see it inevitably converging upon John the Baptist. The verse following the meeting of the Four Daughters reads, *Veritas de terra orta est et iustitia de caelo prospexit* ('Truth is sprung out of the earth, and justice hath looked down from heaven': Psalm 84:12), and the last verse of the psalm, *Iustitia ante eum ambulabit et ponet in via gressus suos* ('Justice shall walk before him: and shall set his steps in the way': Psalm 84:14). Augustine gave two readings of verse 12: one with Christ as Divine Truth born of the earthly Virgin, offering the sacrifice which enabled Divine Grace to justify mankind (a completely different reading of Justice); the other also an allegory of redemption through justification, but instigated by mankind's repentance. When Man, being made of earth, realises his sins, he engenders truth, for Man is sinful: when he repents and confesses them, divine Justice is empowered to look down and justify him, like the Publican in the parable.<sup>61</sup> (Bede takes this interpretation up, and it is enshrined in the *Glossa Ordinaria*, and Peter Lombard's standard *Commentary on the Psalms*: Hugh of St Victor actually begins his disputation between Truth and Mercy with it).<sup>62</sup>

Augustine's commentary on verse 14 is a variation on the same theme. Justice in this case is the same as Truth: it consists in being just to yourself by truly recognising your sin and punishing your wicked self for it, so that God may make you good. This confession of sins is therefore the direct way to God:

Ideo et Iohannes cum baptizaret in aqua paenitentiae, et uellet ad se uenire paenitentes de suis prioribus factis, hoc dicebat: *Parate viam Domino, rectas facite semitas eius ...*<sup>63</sup>

'For this reason John, when he baptised in the water of repentance, and wanted those who repented of their previous deeds to come to him, would say this: *Prepare ye the way of the Lord: make straight his paths ...*'

This realisation of sin and consequent repentance, the message of John the Baptist, before the Coming of the Lord is the theme of the self-preparation of Advent. An Advent Sermon of the Cistercian Guerric, Abbot of Igny (1070–1157, a follower of Bernard), on *Quomodo proficiendum in paranda via Domino* ('How we are to prepare the way of the Lord'), weaves all these strands together in an ingenious web:

*Parate viam Domino* (Isa. XL, 3) ... Psalmista ... docet: *Incipite, inquit, Domino in confessione* (Psal. CXLVI, 7). Ipse ad poenitentiam superbum inclinat, ut vocem clamantis in deserto viamque parari jubentis, et unde incipiendum sit ostendentis, audiat: *Poenitentiam agite; appropinquabit enim regnum coelorum* (Matth. III, 2). Huic sententia consonat Salomonis, qui manifesta definitione rudes instruit, dicens: *Initium viae bonae, facere justa* (Prov. XVI, 5). Quid est enim justa facere, nisi poenitentiam agere? nisi de nobisipsis quod Deo debemus exigere, et quod rapuimus exsolvere? Haec est justitia quae ante Dominum ambulat, viamque ei placitam parat, sicut scriptum est: *Justitia ante eum ambulabit, et ponet in via gressus suos* (Psal. LXXXIV, 14). Sicut enim Joannes Jesum, sic poenitentia gratiam praecedit; illam scilicet gratiam, qua post satisfactionem reconciliati, suscipimus in osculo pacis. In hac siquidem poenitentiae via, grato atque hilari occursu obviant sibi, seseque osculantur justitia et pax; justitia scilicet hominis se punientis, et pax Dei ignoscens: laetumque ac jucundum celebrant in osculo sancto foedus reconciliationis.<sup>64</sup>

*'Prepare ye the way of the Lord (Isaiah 40:3) ... The Psalmist ... teaches [the necessity of confession]: Begin, he says, to the Lord in confession (Psalm 16:7). He himself inclines the proud man to repentance, so that he hears the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ordering [us] to prepare a way, and showing where one is to begin: Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt 3:2). The opinion of Solomon agrees with this, who instructs the simple with a clear statement, saying, The beginning of a good way is to do justice (Proverbs 16:5). What is it to do justice, if not to repent? if not to exact from ourselves what we owe to God, and to make restitution of what we have seized? This is the Justice which walks before God, and prepares a pleasing way for him, as it is written Justice shall walk before him; and shall set his steps in the way (Psalm 84:14). For thus John walked before Jesus, as Repentance must before Grace, that Grace which, reconciled after making satisfaction, we receive<sup>65</sup> in the kiss of peace. For in this path of Repentance, they meet together at a joyous and laughing run, and Justice and Peace kiss each other, Justice, that is to say, in man punishing himself, and Peace in God forgiving it: they celebrate a happy and cheerful pact of reconciliation in a holy kiss.'*

The other major theme of Advent is prophecy, and John the Baptist is its dominating figure. In the Sarum and York Missals, his message is told and retold in the Gospels for the first three weeks in Advent. Then, in the fourth week, as the actual Incarnation becomes imminent, they return to the historical, narrative level, taken from Luke. On the Wednesday, the first Ember Day, the Gospel is the account of the Annunciation; on the Friday, the second Ember Day, it is the Visitation; on the Saturday, the third Ember day, it is the beginning of John's ministry. And on the Friday, Gradual and the Offertory are both taken from Psalm 84.<sup>66</sup>

In Peter Comestor's Fifth Sermon on Advent he notes

*Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi, justitia et pax osculatae sunt (Psal. LXXXIV). Hujus prophetiae non nisi in quarta septimana Adventus Domini meminit Ecclesia, quia praemissis tribus recolit desiderium Patrum antiquorum Christi adventum desiderantium.<sup>67</sup>*

'The Church calls this prophecy to mind only in the fourth week in Advent, because in the three previous weeks she reviews the longing of the ancient Patriarchs desiring the coming of Christ.'

The first three weeks are given over to expectation, preparation, and longing: in the final days the longed-for reconciliation between God and

Man has begun, though its manifestation is still in the womb. This Psalm, recording the reconciliation on a tropological level, is reserved for one of these final days: and the fact that it is linked with the narrative of the Visitation means that there would be a permanent liturgical reminder that the two go together.<sup>68</sup>

The return to the narrative level focuses our attention again on Mary and Elizabeth. Though *Pictor* seems to dismiss them as little more than vehicles for their unborn children, that is not what the Gospel suggests. They come over as human as well as types. Their pregnancy is real and recognisable: we can both wince in sympathy with Elizabeth and share her delight. Even the male commentators' fanciful variations on what the baby was actually doing — 'kneeling down' (presumably turning over?) or dancing a jig (*tripudiavit*,<sup>69</sup> which sounds exhaustingly energetic for his mother) — are pardonable everyday exaggerations. Bede makes a distinction between the reaction of Elizabeth and the reaction of John which is meant to show the superior spiritual understanding of the children, but which tacitly recognises the human level on which we perceive the mothers:

*Et factum est ut audivit salutationem Mariæ Elisabeth, exsultavit infans in utero eius, et repleta est Spiritu Sancto Elisabeth. Vide distinctionem, singulorumque verborum proprietates. Vocem prior Elisabeth audivit, sed Joannes prior gratiam sensit. Illa naturæ ordine audivit, iste exultavit ratione mysterii. Illa Mariæ, iste Domini sensit adventum. Ista gratiam loquuntur, illi intus operantur, pietatisque mysterium maternis adoriantur profectibus, duplice miraculo prophetant matres spiritu parvolorum. Exsultavit infans, et mater repleta est.<sup>70</sup>*

*'And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. See the distinction, and the connotations of the individual words. Elizabeth was the first to hear the voice, but John was the first to feel the grace. She heard in the course of nature; he leaped for joy by reason of the mystery. She recognised the coming of Mary, he recognised the coming of the Lord. The women spoke of grace; they worked inwardly, and set in motion the mystery of mercy by employing their mothers, and in a double miracle the mothers prophesied through the spirit of their little ones.'*

The mothers prophesy: Elizabeth recognising what Mary is, Mary giving thanks in the Magnificat. Bede points out that up to this moment, both had been silent about their pregnancies, Mary because it was God's mystery and not to be divulged, Elizabeth, who 'hid herself five months' (Luke 1:24), because she was embarrassed at being pregnant so late in life (Ludolphus later suggests that this was because she thought it would be attributed to an improper sexuality):<sup>71</sup>

Erubescebat Elisabeth onus parientis, quandiu nesciebat mysterium religionis. Sed quæ occultabat se quia conceperat filium, jactare se coepit quia generabat propheta. Et quæ ante erubescebat benedicit, et quæ dubitabat ante firmatur.<sup>72</sup>

'Elizabeth was embarrassed at the burden of pregnancy, as long as she did not know the hidden mystery of faith. But though she hid herself because she had conceived a son, she begins to boast because she has engendered a prophet. And she blesses what she had previously blushed for: and affirms what before she had doubted.'

This detail probably explains the puzzling little addition in the N. Town *Mary Play* where the two women sit down and solemnly exchange brief accounts of the occasion of their conceiving, Elizabeth ending rather lamely, 'And þus of my concepcyon I haue tolde ȝow sum' (line 1491), before they launch into the Magnificat. It is not in Nicholas Love, or his source, and confirms the suspicion that the N. Town playwright was better read in the commentaries than one might at first think necessary.

Mary is prompted to the Magnificat by Elizabeth's recognition,

quam quia cognovit mysterium per Spiritum Sactum cognovisse, intelligens Dominum illud revelari velle, Deumque magnificat, id est, magnum in operibus ejus laudat et prædicat.<sup>73</sup>

'because she recognised that she (Elizabeth) knew the mystery through the Holy Spirit, and understanding that the Lord wishes it to be revealed, magnifies God, that is, praises and proclaims that He is great in His works.'

*To prophesy* here means 'to speak with divine inspiration'; rather than 'to foretell the future'. Because Elizabeth *was filled with the Holy Ghost*, and *cried out with a loud voice*, she is a *prophetissa*.<sup>74</sup> This *prophetice donum* ('gift of prophecy') makes her recognise in Mary 'the mother of My Lord': *Prophetico repleta spiritu genetricem ad se adventasse Salvatoris intellexit* ('Filled with a prophetic spirit, she understood that it was the mother of the

Saviour who was coming to her'). But Bede also sees the other meaning of prophecy in verse 45: *Et beata quae credidit; quoniam perficiuntur ea quae dicta sunt ei a Domino* ('And blessed is she that believed, because there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord'): <sup>75</sup> through the Spirit she knows of past, present, and future: past, of what the angel had told Mary; present, that Mary is the mother of the Redeemer, and future, that the promised things will come to pass.<sup>76</sup> Gertrud Schiller remarks that in cathedral sculpture from the thirteenth century onwards, Elizabeth's 'expression is sometimes that of a seer — which explains why the celebrated thirteenth-century Bamberg figure was called a sibyl until it became clear that it was from a Visitation group'.<sup>77</sup>

Besides this, Elizabeth has a theatrical history as a prophet in her own right. In the Pseudo-Augustine sermon *Contra Judaeos, Paganos et Arianos Sermo de Symbolo*, the source of the various versions of the liturgical *Ordo Prophetarum*, the penultimate in the list of witness are *parentes Iohannis, Zacharias et Elisabeth, iuuenes steriles, in senecta fecundi [qui] dicant ... testimonium Christo* ('the parents of John, Zacharias and Elizabeth, barren in youth, fertile in old age, [who] will speak testifying to Christ').

Ipsique matri et virgini, Helisabeth ait: *Vnde mili hoc ut ueniat Mater Domini ad me? Ecce enim ut facta est uox salutationis tue in auribus meis, exultavit in gaudio infans in utero meo. Intelligens enim Iohannes matrem Domini sui uenisse ad suam matrem inter ipsas angustias uteri adhuc positus, motu salutauit quem uoce non poterat.*<sup>78</sup>

'To that same Mother and Virgin, Elizabeth said, "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy". For John, realising that the mother of his Lord had come to his mother, still placed in the narrow confines of the womb, greeted Him with movement since he could not with voice.'

(A motif we have met already.) The last of the prophets in the Sermon is of course John the Baptist himself. In some later versions of the *Processus* (Laon, Limoges), Zacharias disappears, but Elizabeth (*femineo habitu, pregnans*) remains an apparently essential figure.<sup>79</sup> She does not appear in the English mystery cycle Prophets' Plays, presumably because she has a more extended spot in the narrative of the Visitation, just as Simeon and the Baptist, the other New Testament Prophets, have their own episodes in

the cycles. But the N. Town *Mary Play* almost goes out of its way to insist on her prophetic rôle.

Its source, the Pseudo-Bonaventure *Meditationes Vitae Christi* speaks conventionally of Elizabeth's *Benedicta tu inter mulieres* as prophecy: *illa prophetice locuta est*, or as Nicholas Love has it, 'she spake and prophecied'.<sup>80</sup> In N. Town she plays an antiphonal translator's part in the Magnificat, which Mary describes as 'This psalme of prophesye seyd betwen vs tweyn' (line 1538). Contemplacio goes one further and even credits Elizabeth with joint prophetic composition of the Benedictus, which is not in his source.<sup>81</sup>

He [Zacharias] and Elizabeth prophesyed as þus,  
They mad Benedictus them beforne ...

1582

It is uncertain how the original play was intended to end: the manuscript offers two possible choices. Peter Meredith suggests that 'It seems likely that neither represents the original ending of the play, which perhaps consisted simply of Contemplacio's speech'.<sup>82</sup> The second offering, however, would fit in with this version of Elizabeth. The play ends, before Contemplacio's epilogue, with Elizabeth urging Zacharias to

ryse up I beseke ȝow,  
And go we to þe temple now fast  
To wurchep God with þat we mow  
And thank hym bothe — this is my cast —  
Of þe tyme that is comyng now.  
For now is cum mercy and venjauns is past:  
God wyl be born for mannes prow  
To bryng us to blysse þat euer xal last.<sup>83</sup>

28

In the context of Advent prophecy which seems to have been set up, this would make Elizabeth the formal link, like a more extended Prophets Play, between the action of the play and the promised future. The *Mary Play* is an Advent play, not necessarily in its time of performance, of which we know nothing, but in its matter and mode.<sup>84</sup> The second half, starting with Contemplacio's impersonation of the prophets, is particularly strongly so: and the Visitation is its logical conclusion.

Is there, however, any evidence, apart from the liturgy of Advent Ember Friday and the existence of a body of available Patristic writings and other commentaries, that the typology linking the Four Daughters to the Visitation was still alive in the mid-fifteenth century, and available to the author of the N. Town *Mary Play*? He may have been familiar with *Pictor in Carmine*, but it seems unlikely. Would the original audience have had



Plate 3: SS Peter and Paul, Salle, Norfolk: The Visitation with the Four Daughters of God.

Photo: Meg Twyross

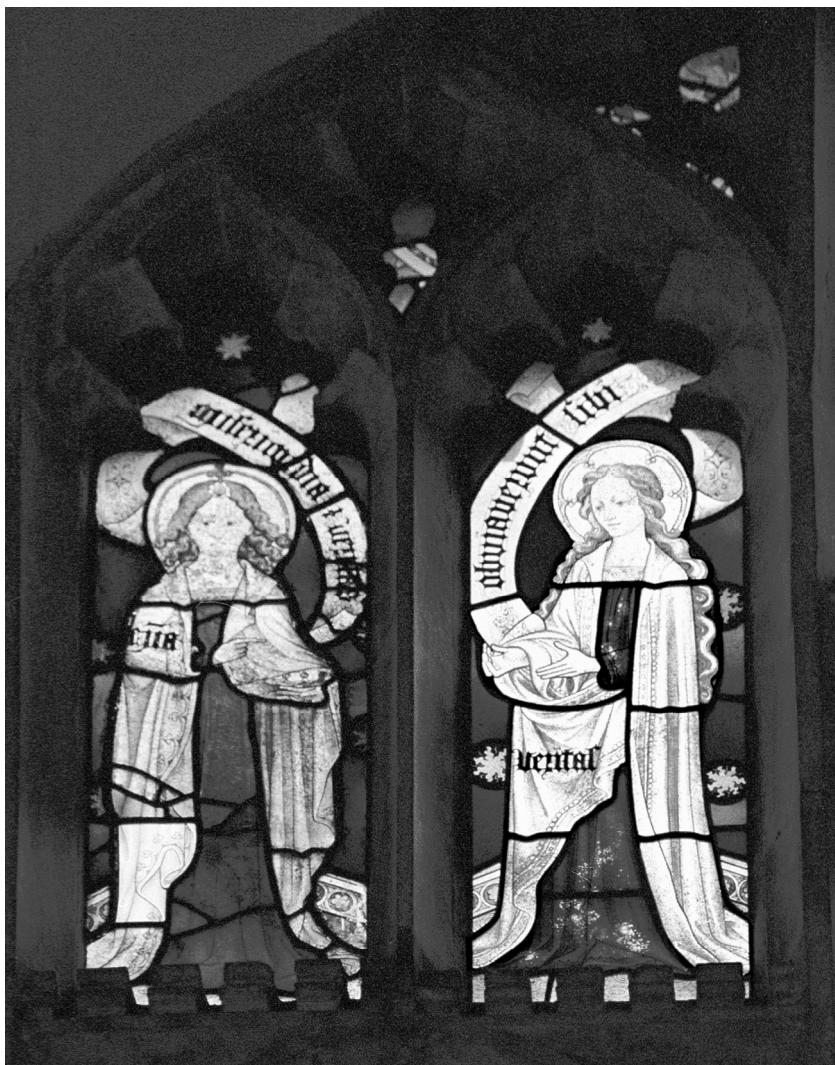


Plate 4: Salle, Norfolk: Misericordia and Veritas

*Photo: Meg Twycross*

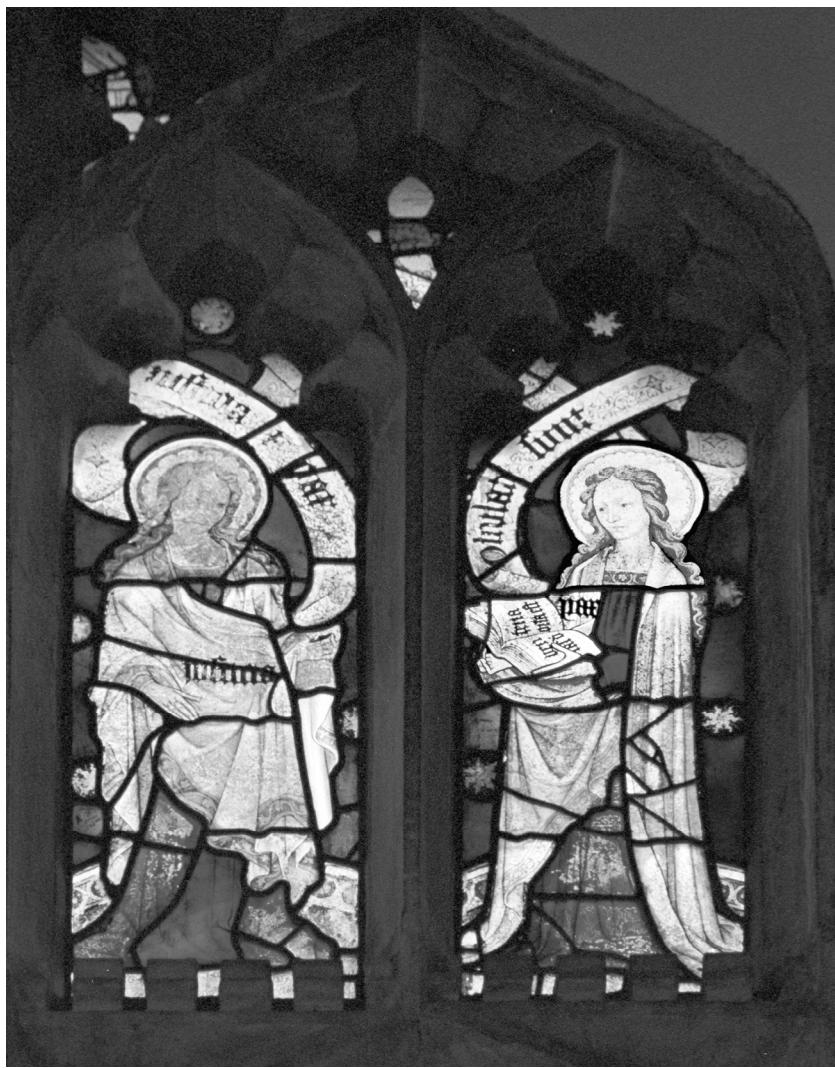


Plate 5: Sale, Norfolk: Justitia and Pax.

*Photo: Meg Twycross*



Plate 6: Salle, Norfolk: Mary and Elizabeth. Apparently mostly modern: Mary based on Justitia (reversed), Elizabeth adapted from Pax (reversed)

*Photo: Meg Twycross*

any inkling of it, or would they just, like us, see a visual shadow in the two embraces?

On current evidence this must remain an unsolved mystery. There are various dead ends. If we are looking for reinforcements of the link, Books of Hours at first seem promising. An image of the Visitation usually appears in French and some Netherlandish Books of Hours illustrating Lauds, while Psalm 84 is recited in the following Hour of Prime, which could suggest some sort of link by juxtaposition, and familiarise it to a lay audience: but in English Books of Hours the illustrations of the Life (or Joys) of Mary are generally replaced by scenes from the Passion. Then the feast of the Visitation (2 July) as such was a late one in the West, instituted only in 1389.<sup>85</sup> It does not seem to have been particularly popular in England at the time in which we are interested: and in any case it does not include Psalm 84.

However, the visual motif does seem to have lingered on in East Anglia, to judge from one and possibly a half pieces of evidence. In the Church of SS Peter and Paul at Salle, Norfolk, the second window in the east range of the North Transept has in its tracery figures of Mercy and Truth on the one side, and Justice and Peace on the other flanking the Visitation in the centre (PLATES 3, 4, 5, and 6). David J. King, working on the *Corpus Vitrearum* for Norfolk, dates the old glass in the North Transept to the 1440s, as does Richard Marks.<sup>86</sup> Inevitably the usefulness of this particular window as evidence rests on the amount of restoration (done in 1912, by Bryans of London, in a restoration of the transept), of which I am uncertain. In 1930, M.R. James reported that when he saw the figures in 1884 they consisted of 'Mercy and Truth (gone), and Righteousness and Peace meeting, with the appropriate Psalm verse'.<sup>87</sup> He does not mention whether the Visitation was there. King, however, implies that the Visitation is part of the old glass:

The old glass of the north transept, also of the 1440's, is likewise of iconographical interest, though very much restored. It is in the tracery over the excellent modern Jesse window by Hensman ... and represents the Visitation accompanied by personifications of the meeting of Mercy and Truth, Justice and Peace, following Psalm 85, v.10, the text of which is in the scrolls they carry.

The extent of the restoration is difficult to gauge without getting up close to the window. Judging purely from my photographs, Truth, described by James as 'gone', is completely restored, though very sympathetically. Mercy

appears to have acquired the head of an archangel, but it looks original, and certainly matches the rest of the figure (lines of collar, neck, etc.), which also looks largely original, so she may always have had it. Justice has what looks like an original and somewhat decayed head and possibly a fair percentage of other original glass: Peace, facing her and confusingly carrying a book open at *Veritas de terra orta est* (which however suggests, if it is original, that the designer knew about the extended exegesis), looks to have been fairly heavily restored, though some of her lettering looks original. Mary and Elizabeth look suspiciously well-restored, apart possibly from the word *Magnificat* in Mary's scroll. For further information we shall presumably have to wait for the *Corpus Vitrearum* volume: but the main problem here is whether the Visitation was originally a part of the programme, and if not, why a nineteenth-century restorer would have thought it was appropriate. The odds, on present information, seem to be for the motif to be original though most of the glass is not.

In the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity at Tattershall all the remaining glass which has not been pillaged by other institutions has been collected into the East Window. Among the figures which were originally in the tracery lights of one window (though which is not known) are the figures of the Four Daughters, each as a separate figure under an arch. Misericordia faces Pax, both labelled [PLATE 7]. Now separated from them into a different light but paired, and from the same cartoons, are Veritas (labelled *Vertas*) and Justitia (damaged and the label missing).<sup>88</sup> They are crowned and sceptred, and the Justice/Mercy figure holds up its hand in a speaking gesture. (Neither in Salle nor in Tattershall are they dressed in different colours, as in *The Castle of Perseverance*, however.) They are not recorded in the glazing accounts, and there is no way of telling what their original position in the church was, or if they were associated with a picture of the Visitation, though as Richard Marks points out, since they were tracery figures 'the connection must have been with the contents of the main lights'. The main typological programme at Tattershall was taken from the blockbook *Biblia Pauperum*, so if these were typological in function they must belong to an older tradition.

They may have belonged to the window *de historia magnificat*<sup>89</sup> for which John Wymondeswold of Peterborough was paid in 1482, and which contained 102 square feet of glass.<sup>90</sup> The Magnificat Window (1501) in Great Malvern Priory consists of 'a series of eleven "Joys of Mary" arranged as illustrations of the verses of her canticle',<sup>91</sup> which appear as *tituli* to each of the scenes, with an accompanying *Gaude ...* verse. The Visitation has

*salutari meo* and *Gaude pregnans divino radio*. It is not, however, arranged typologically. It is of course possible that the *historia magnificat* was not a full sequence of this kind, but a shorthand way of referring to a Visitation with banderoles quoting the Magnificat, though the Creed window which was paid for at the same time, a standard one with twelve Prophets and twelve Apostles, measured 94 square feet, much the same size, so probably we are talking about a more complex Magnificat window too. Either way, Salle at least suggests that in East Anglia the Four Daughters were iconographically alive and well in the fifteenth century, and possibly still related to the Visitation.

I am not trying to suggest that the Bernardine theme of the debate of the Four Daughters is not the major version of Psalm 84 verse 11 in the play, or indeed in late medieval literature and theatre in general. Concerned as it is with the springs of the Redemption, it is a highly adaptable scene, and can be used at various chronological points in salvation history. In St Bernard, followed by the *N. Town Mary Play* and its sources, it is related to the Annunciation as the moment of Incarnation, though their first appearance in the sermon is at Man's Creation and Fall. It can become an episode at the Crucifixion and Resurrection, as in *Piers Plowman*.<sup>92</sup> It can move out of chronological time: in *The Castle of Perseverance* it is related ahistorically to the Particular Judgement of the human soul; in Chandler's *Liber Apologeticus* to the redemption of mankind through repentance, as in the Augustine-based exegesis.<sup>93</sup> The same happens in the visual arts,<sup>94</sup> especially in the early sixteenth-century cycles of Brussels tapestries, where

the allegory is combined with the Fall of Man, the Plan of Redemption, the Conflict of the Virtues and Vices, and the Warfare of a Christian Knight ...<sup>95</sup>

But we should not let the elaborated allegorical version become so dominant that it blinds us to other continuing interpretations. For instance, Francis Chew noticed that in the sixteenth-century (French) Pierpont Morgan MS 69, the Four Daughters appear facing the Visitation in one opening, but declared that

There is no traditional or doctrinal connection between the meeting of the Virgin Mary and St Elizabeth and the meeting of the Four Virtues. Yet ... the meeting and greeting and postures of the two groups has led to the juxtaposition of the two scenes, facing each other on opposite pages. This illustration of the Four Daughters

shows how the contamination of the medieval tradition with Renaissance classicism has degraded the subject almost into meaninglessness.<sup>96</sup>

On the contrary, it shows the continuation of a variant tradition. To sum up: there was a visual link between the Four Virtues of Psalm 84:11 and the Visitation, strong enough to make it a twelfth-century typology, though apparently mainly English. *Pictor in Carmine* alerts us to a background of biblical exegesis which draws on the developed debate allegories of Hugh of St Victor/Bernard of Clairvaux, but which is also aware of other patterns of reference. These make use of other verses in Psalm 84 which speak of Justice, Mercy, and Truth. One strong and early motif is that of repentance as a necessary precursor of justification by Grace, and this links up, also early on, with the rôle of John the Baptist as precursor of Christ. This naturally belongs to the liturgical season of Advent, where we find the episode of the Visitation and Psalm 84 sharing the Mass for Friday in Ember Week. Commentaries and sermons on Luke, especially those of Bede, which are regularly used as liturgical homilies, emphasise not only the inspirational relationship between Mary and Elizabeth and their infant children, who are foregrounded in *Pictor* to the virtual obliteration of their mothers, but also Elizabeth's rôle as a prophet, a rôle that is also picked up in various versions of the *Ordo Prophetarum*. This may throw some light on her treatment in the *Mary Play*, which seems to emphasise her function as a prophet. If this seems a tenuous and complex web of argument, I can only say that it is matched by most of the commentaries and sermons to which I have been led. It was a medieval way of thinking. There is also a small amount of iconographical evidence which suggests that the motif may still have been there, if only subliminally, in the right time and at the right place for these connections to have been made by the playwright of the *Mary Play* and, possibly, his audience.

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#### *Acknowledgements*

I would like warmly to thank Richard Beadle for transcribing the relevant passages from the Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 300 of *Pictor in carmine* for

me, and Alison Samuels for struggling with me over the translation of *Pictor's* convoluted syntax and recondite vocabulary.

## NOTES

1. Gertrud Schiller *Iconography of Christian Art* translated Janet Seligman, 2 vols (Lund Humphries, London, 1971) 1 55.
2. Pamela Sheingorn 'The Bodily Embrace or Embracing the Body: Gesture and Gender in Late Medieval Culture' in *The Stage as Mirror: Civic Theatre in Late Medieval Europe* edited Alan E. Knight (Brewer, Cambridge, 1997) 51–90: reference to Mary and Elizabeth on 59, to the Four Daughters on 85–9. This article might be considered a pendant to Dr Sheingorn's.
3. See Adrian Fortescue *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described* (Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, London, 1930) 30. 'The KISS OF PEACE at Mass is given in this way. The two persons stand facing each other with hands joined. The one who is to receive the kiss bows. Then the one who gives it lays his hands on the shoulders of the other; the receiver puts his arms under those of him who gives it. Each bows the head over the left shoulder of the other. The one who gives the kiss says *Pax tecum*. The other answers *Et cum spiritu tuo*. Then they stand again with joined hands facing each other and both bow.' This is the attitude of many paintings of Mary and Elizabeth. The position of the arms therefore does not indicate subordination, but who initiated the embrace. The iconography of the Visitation where Mary kneels to Elizabeth is said by Schiller to be fifteenth-century and mainly Italian.
4. *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* edited J. Lutz and P. Perdrizet, 2 vols (Hiersemann, Leipzig, 1907) 1 97; *The Mirour of Mans Saluacioun, A Middle English Translation of 'Speculum Humanae Salvationis'* edited Avril Henry (Scolar, Aldershot, 1986) 219.
5. *Biblia Pauperum* edited Avril Henry (Scolar, Aldershot, 1987) 4: *The Eton Roundels: Eton College MS 177* edited Avril Henry (Scolar, Aldershot, 1990) 17: 'Biblia Pauperum had no English version, nor are any of its manuscripts known to have been produced in this country'.
6. Madeline Harrison Caviness *The Windows of Christ Church Cathedral Canterbury* (Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi Great Britain 2: Oxford UP for the British Academy, Oxford, 1981) 78.
7. Caviness *Canterbury* 78: description of window 83–85. The MSS are Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 400 (late thirteenth century), Canterbury Cathedral Archives MS C246 (early fourteenth century: now missing but survives in printed editions), and Oxford Corpus Christi College MS 256 (first half of fifteenth century).
8. Caviness *Canterbury* plate 59 fig. 147.

9. The Latin reflects the semantic change of the word *pietas* from the classical 'attitude of dutiful respect' to the gods or members of one's family, ancestor of our *piety*, to the merciful attitude of God towards us, and thus our attitude to our fellow men: 'Pitē, that passes alle poyntes' (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* line 654). See *OED* svv *Piety*, *Pity*. Here it is clearly used as a synonym for *Misericordia*.
10. There are similar problems with the English *Rihtwisness*, which is used in Middle English to translate the Latin *Justitia*, and whose main semantic field referred to 'Justice, fairness, impartiality ... Mosaic law, the precepts of God' (see *MED* sv *right-wisnes*). I have translated *Justitia* by 'Justice'.
11. Luke 1:50, 54. Mary is also known as the *mater misericordiae* 'moder of mercy' (N. Town *Mary Play* line 1401): see Peter Meredith's note to line 9 in his edition: *The 'Mary Play' from the N. town Manuscript* edited Peter Meredith (University of Exeter Press, 1997: reissue of Longman edition, London, 1987) 86. It was familiar from the popular antiphon *Salve regina, mater misericordiae* possibly by Hermann the Cripple (1013-1054: see Joseph Connolly *Hymns of the Roman Liturgy* (Longmans Green, London, 1957) 46-7).
12. Schiller *Iconography* 55.
13. They are called the Old Law and the New Law, and the other terminology here suggests that the contrast between the two is seen in a quasi-legal context. But in other cases Old Law and New Law seem to be used much more loosely to refer merely to Old and New Dispensations, or even Old and New Testaments. Compare Henry *The Mirour of Mans Saluacioune* 35:

Take hede in ilka chapitle the certein guyse es this,  
That of the New Law forthemast a sothe rehered is  
To whilk sothe suwyngly out of the Testament Old  
Thre stories ilk after other appliables shall be tolde ...
14. The standard works on this motif are Hope Traver *The Four Daughters of God* (Bryn Mawr College Monographs 6: Philadelphia, 1907) and Francis Chew *The Virtues Reconciled* (University of Toronto Press, 1970). Both are concerned with the narrative allegory, Traver from a purely literary/theological point of view, Chew with a bias towards iconography and the Renaissance.
15. John 8:7: *Iesus autem inclinans se deorsum digito scribebat in terra.*
16. Gustaf Aulen *Christus Victor* (SPCK, London, 1970; reissue of 1931 edition) chapter 5 and 146; C.W. Marx *The Devil's Rights and the Redemption in the Literature of Medieval England* (Brewer, Cambridge, 1995). Marx discusses the Debate of the Four Daughters on pages 58-9.
17. 2 Corinthians 3:6: 'For the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth.' St Paul's major statement of the Old and New Covenants is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, especially in his discussion of Jeremiah 31: 31-34 in chapters 8-10.

18. Ludolphus of Saxony *Vita Jesu Christi* edited L.M. Rigolot 2 vols (Societas Generali Librariae Catholicae, Paris and Brussels, 1878) 1 49. He is reworking the standard passage from Bede's *Exposition on Luke* (PL 92 col. 320).
19. Ludolphus 49–50.
20. Ludolphus 49.
21. Schiller *Iconography* 56 and fig.133: mid-Rhine, c. 1410–20, Centraal Museum Utrecht. See also *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie* edited Engelbert Kirschbaum and others, 8 vols (Herder, Rome/Freiburg/Basel/Vienna, 1968–76) sv *Ratschluss der Erlösung*. He illustrates the painting by Konrad Witz (1430–40) now in Berlin, which shows the Son agreeing to the Incarnation on the left (though not with the debate of the Four Daughters), with the Visitation (with visible foetuses) on the right.
22. Meredith *Mary Play* 79.
23. Ludolphus 49.
24. St Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologie* 53: *The Life of Christ* edited and translated Samuel Parsons OP and Albert Pinheiro OP (Blackfriars with Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1971) 5–6: *Joannes non solum fuit propheta, sed plus quam propheta, ut dicitur Matt. Fuit enim terminus legis et initium Evangelii.* 'John was not only a prophet, but more than a prophet, for he was the end of the Law and the beginning of the Gospel'. See Matthew 11:9, Luke 16:16.
25. Lucy Freeman Sandler *The Peterborough Psalter in Brussels and Other Fenland Manuscripts* (Harvey Miller, London, 1974) 110.
26. M.R. James 'On the Paintings Formerly in the Choir at Peterborough' *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 9:2 (1897) 178–94: 182.
27. James 'Peterborough' 180.
28. Sandler *Peterborough Psalter* 43.
29. M.R. James *On The Abbey of S. Edmund at Bury* (Cambridge UP for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, 1895) 142–3 and 192–3.
30. Henry Eton *Roundels* 72.
31. Henry Eton *Roundels* 71–3 and *passim*.
32. M.R. James 'Pictor in Carmine' *Archaeologia* 94 (1951) 141–166.
33. James 'Pictor' 143–4; Henry Eton *Roundels* 15 points out that it 'belonged to at least five English cathedrals or religious houses'.
34. Umberto Eco *The Name of the Rose* translated William Weaver (Secker and Warburg, London, 1980) 79–80; St Bernard of Clairvaux *Apologia to William of St Thierry* in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux, Volume 1: Treatises 1* (Cistercian Fathers Series 1: Irish University Press, Shannon, 1970) 66. The *Apologia* was written in 1125.

35. James 'Pictor' 142.
36. M.R. James's 'best' manuscript, Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 300, appears to be less accurate, with a proportion of mismanaged rhymes, let alone some patches of virtually untranslatable text where the three Oxford MSS I have consulted make sense, e.g. *inmitat* for *inmitit* (line 2), *gessco* for *gessit* (line 9), *tremescit* for *tremefecit* (line 10).
37. See note 9.
38. *Veritas* has become *Verum* and thus changed grammatical gender: it is difficult to decide whether *pium* refers equally (as a neuter) to *Pietas/Misericordia*, or (as masculine accusative) to its embodiment in Christ. In English one has to decide one way or the other: in the Latin it can be left open.
39. *Vox, Verbum*: see below for discussion.
40. *Pictor* makes use of the semantic range of the Latin in a way which is unreproducible in English, where the temptation is to plump either for the literal translation, which in English does not evoke the metaphor, or for one of the metaphors, which then makes no literal sense in English. His allusions to the Bible are complicated by his habit of synonym hunting, so that one gets a familiar text with one word changed: for example, the *viscera misericordiae* (Luke 1:78 etc.) turn into the *viscera pietatis*. He also indulges the habit of selective quotation, so that his allusions sometimes do not fit their origins in every respect: for example the *lex data* reference to John 1:17, which however goes on to align Truth and Grace, instead of opposing them, as he appears to be doing here. Anyone embarking on an edition of *Pictor* is setting out on a long journey through Concordances and the Patrologia.
41. *Iustitia illa est quae est in confessione peccatorum: ueritas ipsa est* ('Justice is that one which exists in the confession of sins: she is Truth herself') from PL 210: Alain of Lille *Summa de Arte praedicatoria*, a convenient preachers' dictionary of major Biblical terms and their possible interpretations, drawn from the accepted commentators. Under *Veritas* (cols 996–7), he identifies *Veritas* with *Justitia*: *Dicitur et justitia, unde 'Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi', id est in Christo convenerunt misericordia et justitia* ('it is called [equated with] Justice, whence [we have] 'Mercy and truth are met together', that is, mercy and justice come together in Christ.') He goes on to refer to the First and Second Comings: the First was characterised by mercy, the Second will be characterised by justice. Augustine (*Enarrationes in Psalms* 1175: Psalm 84, verse 16) equates the two, in a different context, to which we shall return.

It is in any case difficult to make Truth work against Mercy, which would make Mercy untruthful, unless one redefines her borders somewhat. Bernard and his followers effectively read her as 'the letter of the Law', and 'God's given word', not as absolute truth.

42. Alain of Lille *Summa* column 149, sv *Misericordia*. He again quotes *Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi ...* with the comment, *Debet enim justitia misericordiam quoddammodo osculari, ut ipsa a tramite misericordiae non recedat, et misericordia justitiae lineam non evadat* ('For Justice ought, so to speak, to kiss Mercy, so that she shall not depart from the path of Mercy, and Mercy should not swerve from the straight line of Justice'). Is this the source of Pictor's *norma*?

43. *Quia lex per Mosen data est: gratia et veritas per Ihesum Christum facta est* ('For the law was given by Moses: grace and truth came by Jesus Christ').

44. Possibly a reference to Revelation 6:2, the Rider on the White Horse, usually identified with Christ as avenger: maybe also a pun on the rainbow of the Covenant (Genesis 9:16)? As the Chester Noah play points out, the rainbow points away from mankind.

45. Psalm 145:7 *Dominus solvit compeditos* ('The Lord looseth them that are fettered'). This immediately clashes with the usual meaning of *solvere* in this context: *Non venio solvere legem, sed adimplere* ('I am not come to destroy [the Law], but to fulfil': Matt.5:17).

46. *Suscipere* has a range of meanings starting from the concrete 'under-take': it can mean 'to take up, embrace' (both literally and metaphorically), 'to uphold a person, or adopt a role or an idea, to receive as a guest, to undertake a task': in the Vulgate, it is usually used of supporting or raising up.. The reference may be to Luke 1:54 (from the Magnificat), *suscepit Israhel puerum suum memorari misericordiae* ('he hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of His mercy' — AV 'He remembering His mercy, hath holpen his servant Israel'). There is probably also a reference to Isaiah 47:10 *Suscepimus Deus misericordiam tuam in medio templi tui* ('We have received Thy mercy, O God, in the midst of Thy temple': Introit for the Feast of the Purification).

*Forma* can mean both a physical shape and a Platonic Form: in the Vulgate it is usually used of physical form or appearance, often 'beauty' (Isaiah 52:14): the most obvious reference is to Phil. 2:7 *sed semet ipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens* ('But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant'). One might imagine a double meaning here: physically the Law (Elizabeth/Truth) embraces/receives the physical embodiment of the Gospel (Mary/Mercy); tropologically the Law adopts the essence of the Gospel. Syntactically *ewangelii* must go with *formam*: but for a moment or two it sounds as if it belongs to *lex*, so that we have a merging of both worlds.

Christ is of course also the Truth (John 14:6).

47. See also Colossians 3:12. Bernard starts the debate of the Four Daughters when Peace and Mercy *pio quodam susurrio paterna pulsantes viscera loquebantur* ('spoke, striking the(ir) Father's bowels with a sort of reverent whisper') PL 183 col. 387.

48. PL 183 col. 387: *gravis quaedam inter virtutes videtur orta contentio* ‘a certain serious conflict appears to have arisen between the Virtues’; *Forte enim interpellantibus tale dicatur dedisse responsum* (‘Perhaps [He] may be said to have given a response like this to the contestants’) col. 387.

49. ‘Systyr Ryghtwysnes, ȝe are to vengeabyl’ (N. Town *Mary Play* 1167). Bernard speaks of Truth and Justice as *perseverantibus ... in ultione* (PL 183 col. 387).

50. Augustine *Enarrationes in Psalmos* LI-C (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 39: Brepols, Turnholt, 1956) 1172.

51. *The Macro Plays* edited Mark Eccles EETS 262 (1969) 108.

52. Pseudo-Bede in *Bedae Venerabilis Opera Exegetica ... Dubia et spuria*: PL 93 col. 939.

53. See Bede *In Lucae Evangelium Expositio* (PL 92 col. 320); *Homilia II* (PL 94 col. 15).

54. Bede suggests, in the context of the conception of John, that Elizabeth might be seen as the Old Law and Zacharias as the Jewish priesthood,: they were ‘just before God’ (Luke 1:6), because they kept the commandments of the Law, which are good in themselves, but because the Law had grown old, and the priesthood was split with ambition and schism, they were unable to produce effective ‘offspring’ : *Bedae Venerabilis Opera: In Lucae Evangelium Expositio Liber 1* (PL 92, cols 314-15).

55. They belong to the same family, and their relationship is obviously loving: but that suits the Augustine/Bede view rather than the *contentio* pattern.

56. Bede *Homiliae* (PL 94 col. 15): *Homily 2*, described as *In festo Visitationis beatæ Mariæ*, but in fact an Advent sermon.

57. Bede *Exegetica Genuina: In Marci Evangelium Expositio*: PL 92 col. 135.

58. Bede *In Lucae Evangelium Expositio Liber 1*: PL 92 col. 324.

59. Ludolphus *Vita Jesu Christi* (see note 18) 50. Elizabeth cried with a loud voice *quia illum in utero tenebat qui vox Verbi erat*. He quotes Anselm urging his sister to contemplate *sterilis et virginis ... complexum, et salutationis officium, in quo servulus Dominum, præco judicem, vox Verbum, inter anilia viscera conclusus, in Virginis utero clausum agnovit, et indicibili gaudio prophetavit*: Ludolphus *Vita* 52.

The Feast of the Visitation, though prescribed in 1389, did not take a particular hold in England (see R.W. Pfaff *New Liturgical Feasts in Later Medieval England* (Oxford University Press, London, 1970) 40–61), but the late Sarum and York Breviaries both include a Sequence containing the verse:

Vox non loquens exultavit  
ad verbi presentiam;  
sed Elizabeth expavit  
matris excellentiam,

benedictamque clamavit  
fructus affluentiam.

‘The speechless Voice rejoiced at the presence of the Word; but Elizabeth was terrified at the excellence of [his] mother, and called the abundance of her fruit blessed.’

*Breviarium ad Usum Insignis Ecclesiae Sarum* edited Francis Procter and Christopher Wordsworth (Cambridge UP, 1886) cols 393-4; *Breviarium ad Usum Insignis Ecclesie Eboracensis* edited Mr. Lawley, 2 vols (Surtees Society 71 and 75: 1880 for 1871 (sic ?1881) and 1883 for 1882) 2 col. 738.

60. Luke 7:26-7: *Sed quid existis videre prophetam? utique dico vobis et plus quam prophetam. Hic est de quo scriptum est: ecce mitto angelum meum ante faciem tuam, qui praeparabit viam tuam ante te.* (‘But what went you out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.’)
61. Augustine *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 1173-4. See note 16.
62. *Glossa Ordinaria* (attributed to Walafrid Strabo) PL 113 col. 983: ‘*Veritas de terra orta est: Confessio de homine, ut se accuset etc. [Augustine] usque ad data est justificatio confitentis.*
63. Bede *De Psalmorum Libro Exegeses* PL 93 col. 939.  
Hugh of St Victor *Adnotationes Elucidatoria in Quosdam Psalmos David:* Cap. 63: *Misericordia, et veritas, qua disceptatione sibi mutuo obviam venerint ...* PL 177 col. 623.  
Peter Lombard *Commentarius in Psalmos Davidicos:* PL 191 col. 798.
64. Augustine *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 1175:  
*Iustitia illa est quae est in confessione peccatorum: ueritas enim ipsa est. Iustus enim debes esse in te, ut punias te; ipsa est prima hominis iustitia, ut punias te malum, et faciat te Deus bonum. Quia ergo ipsa est prima hominis iustitia, ipsa fit uia Deo, ut ueniat ad te Deus; ibi illi fac uiam, in confessione peccatorum.*  
‘That Justice is the one which exists in the confession of sinners: for it is Truth herself. For you must be just in yourself, so that you punish yourself: that is the first Justice of man, that you should punish yourself, being wicked; and God will make you good. Because that is the first Justice of Man, she herself is made the path to God, so that God may come to you: make a path there for him, in the confession of sinners.’
65. Guerrici Abbatis Igniacensis *Discipuli S. Bernardi Sermones per Annum: De Adventu Domini Sermo V. Quomodo proficiendum in paranda via Domino.* PL 185 cols 26-27.

Guerric also applies Psalm 84 to the Purification, where Simeon and Anna reflect Truth and Justice, Jesus and Mary Mercy and Peace (PL 185 cols 70-1).

65. There is a sense of 'embrace', 'take up' in *suscipere* which is difficult to translate without giving the wrong impression.

66. Gradual: *Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam: et salutare tuum da nobis* (verse 8).  
*Benedixisti Domine terram tuam: avertisti captivitatem Jacob* (verse 2: opening verse).  
Offertory: *Deus, tu conversus vivicabis nos : et plebs tua lætabitur in te: ostende nobis,*  
*Domine, misericordiam tuam, et salutare tuum da nobis* (verses 7 & 8).  
V. *Benedixisti Domine terram tuam: avertisti captivitatem Jacob: remisisti iniquitatem plebis tuæ* (verses 2&3a).  
V. *Misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi: veritas de terra orta est, et justitia de coelo prospexit* (verses 11a and 12).  
*Missale ad Usum Insignis et Praeclaræ Ecclesiæ Sarum* edited F.H. Dickinson (Pitsligo, Burntisland, 1861,1883) columns 32-3.

67. Petri Comestoris *Sermones: Sermo V De Eodem Adventu Domini;* PL 198 col. 1737. Sermon on the text *Ascendet Dominus super nubem levem, et ingredietur Aegyptum, et movebuntur simulacra Aegypti* (Isaiah 19:1), dated by Migne 1179. He speaks at length of the Four Daughters and their rôles in man's creation and salvation.

68. I am not enough of a liturgiologist to know whether their proximity in the liturgy led to their exegesis in this context, or vice versa. The Breviary prescribes the Homily by Bede, which would reinforce all the other material we have been looking at.

The N. Town *Mary Play* is strongly liturgical in mood: this comes over even more strongly in performance, where the amount of singing and ritual is striking. I remarked some time ago on the surprising formality of N. Town where one might, in the tradition of affective piety, expect a more naturalistic emotive style of writing: 'Books for the Unlearned' in *Drama and Religion* edited James Redmond (Themes in Drama 5: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 65-110, especially 80-81. In this play the intimacy and affection between the two women is communicated by the actors and their relationship; the words move from formality to 'naturalism' and back in what looks on the page in a disconcerting way, but which works in performance.

69. Ludolphus *Vita Jesu Christi* 49: *exsultando et saltando tripudiavit, ac quosdam gestus ad similitudinem exsultantis repræsentatavit.*

70. Bede *In Luce Evangelium Expositio*: PL 92 col. 320. The same idea is repeated more briefly in his *Advent Homily 2* (PL 94 cols 15-16).

71. Ludolphus *Vita Jesu Christi* 30

et quia senex erat, præ verecundia occultabat se mensibus *quinque*, donec Maria conciperet, et foetus ejus exsultans cum gaudio prophetaret. Licit enim de conceptu et de ablato opprobrio sterilitatis gauderet, propter anilem tamen ætatem aliquantulum erubesceret, ne in senectute videretur libidine vacasse.

'And because she was old, she hid herself five months, until Mary had conceived, and her foetus, leaping with joy, prophesied. For it is permissible that she should have rejoiced in her conceiving and the taking away of the reproach of her barrenness, nevertheless she was a little ashamed because of her advanced age, lest she should have seemed to have given way to lust in her old age.'

72. Bede *In Lucæ Evangelium Expositio*: PL 92 col. 321. Ludolphus *Vita Jesu Christi* 51.73. Ludolphus *Vita Jesu Christi* 51.74. Bede *Homily 2*: PL 94 col. 17. In an elaboration of the Eva/Ave motif, he also makes the point that *Bene autem vel Domini vel Joannis exortum matres prophetando præveniunt, ut sicut peccatum a mulieribus coepit, ita etiam bona a mulieribus incipiant, et quæ per unius deceptionem periit, duabus certatim præconantibus mundo vita reddatur* ('And [it is] well that their mothers anticipate the rise of both the Lord and of John by prophesying, since, as sin began from women, so also did good things come into existence from women, and that thing, life, which perished through the deception of one [woman], should be restored to the world by two, striving together in prophecy'): *In Lucæ Evangelium Expositio*: PL 92 col. 323.

## 75. The Authorised Version (quoted here) is actually a more accurate translation of the Vulgate text than the Douai, which makes Elizabeth address Mary directly: 'Blessed art thou who hast believed ...'

76. Bede *Homily 2*: PL 94 col. 17.77. Schiller *Iconography of Christian Art* 55.78. Karl Young *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, 2 vols (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1933) 2 128–9.

## 79. Young 141, 145, 148.

80. Nicholas Love *The Mirrour of the Blessed Lyf of Jesu Christ* edited Lawrence F. Powell (Roxburghe Club: Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1908) 38. *Meditationes Vitæ Christi: Bonaventura Opera Omnia* edited A.C. Peltier (Vives, Paris, 1868) 12 516.81. The *Meditationes*, like Luke, attribute it only to Zacharias (Luke 1:67; *Meditationes* 518).

82. *Mary Play* 134.
83. *Mary Play* 137.
84. Medieval religious plays tend to be associated with the liturgy and the liturgical year, even when they are no longer liturgical plays as such. The same may be said of many cycles in art. Caviness *Canterbury* 80 suggests that the typological windows there 'may best be viewed as a liturgical cycle, comprising Advent, Lent, and Easter festivals ... Up to [the beginning of Lent] the commentary provided by the types, which are chiefly selected from the Old Testament, is largely allegorical'.
85. See note 57. It was however apparently a favourite of Lady Margaret Beaufort, owner of Tattershall after Ralph Baron Cromwell: Pfaff *New Liturgical Feasts* 48, 52.
86. David J. King *Stained Glass Tours around Norfolk Churches* (The Norfolk Society, 1974) 22. Richard Marks *The Stained Glass of the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity, Tattershall* (Lincs.) (Garland, New York and London, 1984: facsimile reprint of Courtauld Institute PhD thesis, 1975) 237.
87. M.R. James *Suffolk and Norfolk: A Perambulation of the Two Counties*, illustrated by G.E. Chambers (Dent, London, 1930; reprinted Alastair Press, Bury St Edmunds, 1987) 165. It is possible that they were related to the 'figure of the Virgin from a Coronation' in the adjoining window. For the restoration, see Walter Parsons Salle: *The History of a Norfolk Parish* (Jarrold, Norwich, 1937) 46, though he says nothing more about the original glass.
88. Marks *Tattershall* 269, 271, plates 21a, 21b, and 22]
89. Marks *Tattershall* 33, 233
90. Marks *Tattershall* 33.
91. G. McKnight Rushforth *Medieval Christian Imagery as illustrated by the painted windows of Great Malvern Priory Church, Worcestershire* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1936) 369, 378.
92. *Piers Plowman* Passus 18, 112–259, 407–423, where, in suspense, they observe the Harrowing of Hell and rejoice and are reconciled at the Resurrection.
93. Thomas Chaundler *Liber Apologeticus* edited Doris Enright-Clark Shoukri (MHRA & Renaissance Society of America, London and New York, 1974). She discusses the debate on 19–21. For the debate of the Four Daughters in *The Castle of Perseverance*, see *The Macro Plays* edited Mark Eccles EETS 262 (1969) lines 3129–3593. At the end, God emphasises the importance of Mercy at the Last Judgement, but it is Mercy as demonstrated by mankind in doing the Seven Corporal Works.
94. There is no room here to give a full analysis of this: see Chew *The Virtues Reconciled, passim*. The Lambeth Bible (London, Lambeth Palace MS 3, fol.

198r) refers them to the Incarnation by presenting them as two branches of a Jesse Tree of which Mary is the stem (Schiller *Iconography* 1 19 and Fig. 35), where they are part of a balanced composition suggesting the fulfilment of prophecy. The Sherborne Missal depicts Justice and Peace, complete with *tituli* from the Eton Roundels group, in medallions in the frame of its Crucifixion: Henry *Eton Roundels* 65; *The Sherborne Missal* facsimile with an introduction by J.A. Herbert (Roxburghe Club, Oxford, 1920) plate 22. For a family of French Books of Hours manuscript illuminations showing the Four Daughters and the Annunciation, see Margaret Manion *The Wharncliffe Hours* (Thames and Hudson, London, 1981) 58–59 and 89.

95. Chew *The Virtues Reconciled* 64. See Anna Gray Bennett *Five Centuries of Tapestry from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco* (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and Chronicle Books, 1992) 54–77.
96. Chew *The Virtues Reconciled* 63–64.