

Introduction

Life of the Author

In his account of the life of Guillaume de Deguileville, Edmond Faral (1952) points out that most of the facts we have about the poet are found in his three dream-vision poems: *Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* (*Vie¹*) and its second version (*Vie²*); *Le Pèlerinage de l'âme*, an account of the soul's journey to Hell, Purgatory and Paradise; and *Le Pèlerinage de Jhesuchrist*, a life of Jesus as the ideal pilgrim. In *Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine*, when Grace leads the Pilgrim to her house, in order to provide him with the staff and scrip he will need for his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, she tells him that she had established her house, the Church, 1330 years ago (ll. 397-400). When the Pilgrim is confronted at the beginning of his journey by Rude Wit (*Rude Entendement*), Lady Reason intervenes to help him on the basis of a commission from Grace that is dated 1331 (l. 5256). Later, when the Pilgrim asks Lady Reason why he is not strong enough to wear the armor of virtue, she tells him that he has been made weak by serving his body, to whose needs he has been attending for thirty-six years (ll. 5775-5782). A little further on, she points out that he is a noble creature, a son of God, and that he must not think of himself as the son of Thomas de Deguileville (ll. 5963-65). We may conclude, then, that Thomas de Deguileville was the poet's father, that Guillaume was born in 1294 or 1295, and that he wrote the first version of the *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* in 1330-31.

The second version of the poem confirms these facts and provides some additional information: he says that his dream took place in 1330 and he tells us he has spent twenty-five years at Chaalis since then. It is clear, then, that he composed the second recension in 1355, that he had then been a monk for thirty-nine years, and that he had entered the monastery at Chaalis in 1316 at

the age of twenty-one or twenty-two. He was of Norman origin; his family was from the village of Digulleville, near Beaumont-Hague in Manche (Langlois 1928, 203). Abbé Goujet (1745) asserts that Degulleville came from Paris, but he was drawing upon the *Bibliotheca scriptorium Ordinis Cisterciensis* of Charles de Visch, and Langlois remarks that de Visch's source for this information is not known (203). Langlois further points out that there is no direct evidence for Goujet's conclusion that Degulleville eventually became the prior of the abbey at Chaalis, but he traces to the early fifteenth century the origins of the tradition that Degulleville was a "prieur" (204).

The poems give us a number of clues, of course, as to Degulleville's character and even his physical appearance, although there is always the danger of confusing the poet with the pilgrim. But one detail that may perhaps be relied upon is that he was physically a large man. At one point in *Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine*, Grace chides the pilgrim for not being able to fit into the gambeson she has provided for him: she tells him that he is too big, he has "too much fat under [his] wings" and he is "too well-stuffed" (ll. 3920ff.). After Grace has summoned the maidservant Memory to carry his armor for him, the pilgrim berates himself for being unable to bear the weight of the armor of virtue, even though he is built like a champion and strong enough to carry both the armor and the maidservant (ll. 5080ff.). This kind of self-deprecating humor is typical of the narrator, and it is remarkably similar to Chaucer's comic depiction of the physique of his pilgrim *persona* in the *Prologue to The Tale of Sir Thopas* (ll. 695-704). Neither poet is likely to have included such details if they were manifestly at odds with their actual appearance.

Finally, *Le Pèlerinage de l'âme* must have been written after 1355, since it refers to a passage that occurs only in the second recension of the first Pilgrimage. In this second recension, Degulleville says that he is over sixty years old (Stürzinger, 1895, vii). Since the date 1358 is mentioned in *Le Pèlerinage de Jhesuchrist*, Degulleville lived until he was at least sixty-four.

Artistic Achievement

The popularity of Degulleville's pilgrimage-narratives during the later Middle Ages is indicated by the fact that they are found in eighty-two French manuscripts (Dunn-Wood 1985, 5), some twenty-two of which contain all three pilgrimages (Wharey 1904, 11). By far the most widely represented is the first version of *Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* (*Vie*¹), the subject of the present translation, which is found in at least fifty-three manuscripts, while the second recension (*Vie*²) is found in nine (Stürzinger 1893, ix-xii). The wide distribution of the work is evidenced by Lydgate's translation into English verse of *Vie*², Chaucer's translation of the Pilgrim's ABC prayer to the Virgin, an anonymous Middle English prose translation of *Vie*¹, as well as translations in German verse and prose, Spanish, Dutch, and even Latin. Sections of *Vie*¹ and *Âme* were apparently adapted for dramatic presentation (Langlois 1928, 207). In his prologue to *Vie*², written some twenty-five years later than *Vie*¹, Degulleville himself expresses both astonishment and some distress at the way his first pilgrimage was taken up and circulated so widely, without his authorization, and he tells us that the second version is an effort to reconstruct his poem and present it in a final, corrected form. Nevertheless, the first version is generally acknowledged to be the better poem, more direct and forceful in its expression and lacking the elaborate self-explanation of the second version (Tuve 1966, 147).

Even at this distance, it is not hard to account for the great popularity of Degulleville's original *Pèlerinage* in its own time and its persistence as a literary influence in succeeding centuries. It is specifically addressed to a wide audience of laypersons, including the rich and the poor, the wise and the foolish, both women and men, who are all *pelerins et pelerines*, and its brisk vernacular moves easily from the high style of literary allusion and evocation of authority to pungent satire on contemporary customs and characters, from witty debates on philosophical and theological issues to pithy aphorisms and succinct formulations of practical wisdom. And throughout the work, the element of game is everywhere: the verses are filled with puns and word-play, the allegorical figures are presented as puzzles to be solved on the basis of their features and their array, the audience is confronted

with strange dissonances and unexpected correspondences among the icons of vice and virtue, and there are even tests of memory and comprehension embedded in the ongoing dialogue between the Pilgrim and his sometimes exasperated guides, Grace and Reason. Even in the Pilgrim's most difficult trials, the sense of play is never far distant. The naive Pilgrim-narrator is a continuing source of comic effect, an amusing bumbler whose apparent denseness only a modern critic could confuse with Deguileville himself (see Lofthouse 1935, 175).

At the same time, the *Pèlerinage* is a deeply serious work, employing the vernacular idiom to engage, with directness and energy, important spiritual and philosophical issues. Mary in Deguileville's audience must have found refreshing and sympathetic his emphasis, expressed through Reason and Grace, on the role of charity and kindness in pastoral matters and his spirited attacks on corrupt bishops, hypocritical clergy, decadent aristocrats, and crooked professionals of all kinds. But above all, the *Pèlerinage* presents a story, a narrative of choices and consequences, adventures and outcomes, in which people from a wide variety of situations might find a mirror of their own concerns and experience.

Unfortunately, the *Pèlerinage* has until recently shared the modern critical fortunes of allegory in general. With the ascendancy of symbolism so firmly established in the nineteenth century and so vigorously pursued in the early twentieth century, the entire genre of allegory, and religious allegory in particular, fell into disfavor. Although Joseph Delacorte published an analysis of the three pilgrimages in 1932 and appended to it a brief commentary on Deguileville's work in relation to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, critics have for the most part been content to summarize the *Pèlerinage*, to look at the illustrations of the manuscripts (Praget 1896, 207) or to dismiss it with comments that its characters are not "lifelike" (Wharey, 60), that it "parades" encyclopedic knowledge (Lofthouse, 175), or that it hopelessly muddles the autobiographical and the allegorical modes (Faral, 12). In more recent years, however, critics have begun to take a new look at allegorical fiction and to find interest and challenge in its implications for literature. Scholarly interest in Deguileville in particular is evidenced by new editions of the anonymous Middle English prose translation (Avril Henry 1985

and 1988) and of the 1490 Spanish translation by Vincente de Mazuelo (Maryjane Dunn-Wood 1985), as well as of a fifteenth-century English prose version of *Le Pèlerinage de l'âme* (Rosemarie P. McGerr 1990).

Part of the reason for looking with renewed interest at *Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* is the development of new critical approaches to the theoretical foundations of allegory, particularly in the work of Charles Williams (1943), Morton Bloomfield (1952), Robert Worth Frank Jr. (1953), Edward Honig (1959), Angus Fletcher (1964), J. I. Wimsatt (1970), Maureen Quilligan (1979), Stephen Greenblatt (1981), Carolyn Van Dyke (1985), and Jon Whitman (1987). Van Dyke describes poststructuralist discussion of allegory as arguing that "allegory's indirect signification is actually the property of all language, for no statement is open and direct" (27). Out of this complex and highly technical discussion has come a gradual displacement of long-accepted definitions and descriptions of the genre, principally the notion that allegory, as Angus Fletcher puts it, "says one thing and means another" (2). This view is based in part on the authority of classical rhetoricians, such as Quintilian, who said that allegory "presents either one thing in words and another in meaning, or even something quite opposed" (*Institutio Oratoria*, VIII, vi, 44). But Frank, building on the analysis of Camp (1942), argues that in personification allegory, "Characters are never allegoric. They are literal; they mean what their names say they mean" (243). Van Dyke cites Williams, Frank, and Bloomfield, among others, in articulating the position that if a text "says one thing and means another, it both says and means two things. And . . . a text that says and means two things must say and mean one complex thing" (42).

This deeper sense of the way allegorical structures work and of the discourse they present has given further impetus to what has amounted to a fundamental reevaluation of the *Pèlerinage* as a formative example of medieval allegory. With Rosemond Tuve's sympathetic and wide-ranging study (1966) the *Pèlerinage* began to receive the kind of serious treatment commensurate with its earlier widespread popularity and influence. In her view, Deguileville's presentation of the great allegorical theme of human life as a journey of the soul is "perhaps the most striking and well shaped of medieval treatments of the plain total subject" (145). Tuve

addresses one of the central difficulties with some modern critical approaches to allegory, the tendency to look for qualities and characteristics more typical of nineteenth- and twentieth-century fictional narrative. She criticizes Muscatine (1953) and others for reading medieval allegory (in this case, the *Roman de la Rose*) as an early form of the psychological novel: "This substitution of psychological naturalism for metaphorical action is an unfortunate narrowing, influenced by the combined overimportance of the novel and of psychological description. The *Roman de la Rose* is a vastly larger work than any novel could be" (248 n.10). Like the *Roman*, which Deguileville says he read carefully just before he had his dream, the *Pèlerinage* is a discursive fiction, setting forth ideas in a narrative framework that makes it possible to comprehend and remember them. Its approach is not "psychological" in the modern sense, nor is it merely an assignment of abstract values to a variety of half-formed pictorial figures; it is a subtle arrangement of images and figures that is both a narrative and a complex rhetorical discourse.

Other recent studies of the *Pèlerinage* have clarified the ways in which medieval allegory deals with image and figure. In his study of Chaucer's use of imagery, V. A. Kolve (1984) discusses the *Pèlerinage* at some length as an example of "the ways in which mental images were honored in medieval thought as a means of knowing—of coming to knowledge," pointing out that "literary images likewise reflect a reality not limited to the present and the material; they too represent the suprasensual in the form of a figure to be contemplated with the inner eye" (31). Avril Henry's analysis of the structure of the poem reveals a complex architecture of ideas and symbols focused on the sacramental system (1986 i and ii). Susan Hagen (1990) has shown that the *Pèlerinage* is a working fiction, deliberately designed to occupy the mind in study, learning, and recollection through an elaborate system of visual images. Set within the allegorical framework of the poem, these images are not fixed parts of a static array, but elements of a dynamic interaction among values in an emerging pattern of thought and action.

When these figurative elements are juxtaposed, the possibilities for patterns of meaning are multiplied significantly. Even the simplest allegorical figure set beside another, or explored for its own possibilities through speech and gesture, can convey a richness

of meaning not encompassed by the expectation of one-for-one correspondences. The play of allegorical fiction involves these conjunctions and the likenesses and differences that arise from them. The author may name some likenesses and differences, and hint at others, but the form itself leaves room for "excess" meaning, to be discovered by the audience.

Kolve's analysis of what he calls "visual imagery" has established some basic terms of the strategy proposed by medieval allegory for reading the text of the world and of the self. In this strategy, visual images are "a means of knowing, of poetic making, and of Christian remembering" (11). In the threefold medieval model of human understanding, the Imagination works to transform sensory images into mental images, to be contemplated by Reason and recorded by Memory. In the process of assimilation, images are discerned to have an *intentio*, a consequence (positive or negative) for the perceiver. As recorded by Memory, images thus have an affective as well as an informative aspect. They have, in Kolve's terms, "the capacity both to remind and move the soul" (45). In this capacity, they are deeply connected to the question of what is to be done and what is to be avoided, the essential moral concern.

The *Pèlerinage* aims at more than instruction in doctrine or exhortation to virtue. As a narrative of redemption, it recounts an experience of revelation and discovery. It is grounded in a theological tradition that shapes its aesthetic, and it is informed by a sense of beauty that is expressed in the Pilgrim's compelling vision of a realm beyond the sea, beyond time and mortality, yet somehow perceptible in the mirror of the world and in the mirror of the mind. The delight aimed at in the poem arises from the discovery of this realm of heavenly beauty, from the gradual and ever more luminous revelation of its presence and force. The human pilgrimage is a journey to a realm of wonderful and startling beauty, a place that is both the heavenly city and the world itself, transformed by the light of Grace and Reason. And in its turn this world transforms the Pilgrim who travels through it. The *Pèlerinage* is an account of what Augustine calls *peregrinatio* (*De doctrina christiana*, I, iv, 4), the journey of the soul seeking to return to its homeland. On this journey the soul is engaged in a continuing exegesis of the world without and the world within, reading

creation for signs of its origin and destiny. The soul itself, as an *imago dei*, emerges as a primary sign in this text.

The allegory begins with the Pilgrim's vision of the city of Jerusalem in a mirror in his cell, and this image impels him through the narrative of his pilgrimage and through the world of other images he encounters on his way. As the primary and controlling image of the poem, its *intentio* for the Pilgrim is that of the highest good. He is moved by this image to go to the holy city, where he hopes to find great joy and peace. He carries the image with him on his journey in a mirror set atop the staff of Hope that he is given by Grace. In this mirror the Pilgrim can "see clearly all the distant lands" and especially the city of Jerusalem exactly as he had seen it before in the mirror (ll. 3439-3450). As Grace explains to him, this mirror is Jesus Christ, a mirror without flaw, in which all human beings can see themselves reflected (ll. 3691-96). The Pilgrim can see his way to the city through the mirror of Jesus, in whom he can see himself as an *imago dei*. Holding fast to the staff of Hope and to this image of himself is the surest way to arrive at the holy city.

As he sets out, the Pilgrim is introduced by Grace to the sacraments, and he is marked with signs that define his true nature and serve as constant reminders of it throughout his journey. He is baptized and anointed with holy oils; he is confirmed and marked with the *Tau*, the sign of the cross; he is given armor to wear, signifying the virtues that should sustain him as he travels. In this way, he is inscribed with the signs that mark the way to Jerusalem, and he is set up as a mirror in which the audience can see a reflection of its own *peregrinatio*.

On the journey, both the world and the self are systems of signs to be studied for what they may reveal of the true path of redemption. The Pilgrim asks the allegorical figures he encounters who they are, what their names are and what they do. He interrogates them to discover their true meaning, to discern their *intentio*, their relation to his return, the end of his *peregrinatio*. This questioning is especially useful to the Pilgrim, since the figures he encounters are not the simple, univocal images that are often thought to constitute a personification allegory but figures that are ambiguous and mysterious. In fact, in the details of their descriptions some of the evil figures mirror the images of the

virtues to which they are opposed. Seen together, these figures and their counterparts appear not so much polar opposites as double images, defined and clarified partly in relation to each other. Reading them rightly depends upon noticing the similarities and differences that constitute their meaning.

The power to read images rightly is reflected in the power to read language rightly. After Grace gives him the scrip of Faith and the staff of Hope, the Pilgrim meets the first of many figures who will obstruct his path. He is accosted by Rude Wit (*Rude Entendement*, or "natural understanding"), who tries to take away his scrip and staff on the basis of a misreading of Scripture. Reason comes to show the Pilgrim that this arrogant churl cannot understand Scripture because he does not know the difference between the name of a thing and the thing itself: he confuses Lady Reason (*Dame Raison*) with the *raison*, the false measure, or "ration," used by crooked millers to cheat the people. His error is the confusion of signifier with signified, and the instruction of the Pilgrim in this matter confirms that language is somehow double, just as the other signs in the text of the world are double.

In his next adventure the Pilgrim learns that he himself is double as well. This doubleness, with its attendant problems and ambiguities, is very dramatically presented when the Pilgrim is released from his body with the help of Lady Reason. He has been puzzled as to why he has not been able to wear the armor of virtue, while the maidservant Memory carries it with ease. Lady Reason tells him, "You have two wills, and you are of two minds" (l. 5918). He has been weighed down and weakened, she says, by the burden of caring for his enemy, his body.

Reason describes the relation between soul and body in a series of similes: the soul in the body is like the sun hidden behind a cloud, like the flame in a lantern, like the pilot of a boat. These similes are developed elaborately to show how the physical body, frail and corruptible, can appear to contain the immortal soul, which is born of God, not of any earthly father and mother. In the deep and continuing conflict between body and soul the Pilgrim must struggle constantly to maintain his ascendancy and control. He is Samson and the body is Delilah; Reason tells him: "It will bind you, if you let it, and shear off all your hair, and when it knows your secrets it will reveal them to the Philistines" (ll. 6011-13).

Seen in terms of the doubleness of language, this set of images reveals a deeper paradox at the heart of the pilgrim allegory: language, like the body, is somehow truth-bearing, conveying an eternal and transcendent reality, yet it is at the same time deceptive, unreliable, and even corrupt. This is not a new concern: As Marcia Colish points out, St. Augustine, in *De trinitate*, struggles with "the difficulty of comprehending the changeless Godhead through changeable human speech" (1968, 74).

In a fallen world, language is fallen as well. The doubleness so prevalent in the poem reflects two important and related questions: How is it possible to understand the plan of redemption as it is revealed in the material universe? and How is it possible for human language to convey the plan of redemption, to effect spiritual change and growth, and to express the ineffable nature of the transcendent? The Fall impaired the ability to read images rightly, and the work of redemption begins with the restoration of this power. In its fallen state the soul fails to distinguish the image from what it signifies, cannot see itself as an image, and regards as ends those things that are means to an end. In the mirror of the world, the truth is both revealed and obscured, precisely because it is a world of images, dark and ambiguous, and the soul sees "as in a glass darkly."

The implications of this paradox for the journey of the Pilgrim are made clearer as his path divides before him and he must make a choice as to whether to follow the path that leads by Idleness or the one that leads by Labor. Idleness is figured as a beautiful young woman who promises to lead him to pleasures and pastimes; Labor is represented by a simple craftsman who makes and repairs mats and who promises only work. The two roads appear to be the same, except for the hedge that runs between them, the Hedge of Penitence. At the instigation of the body, the Pilgrim misreads the signs before him and misinterprets their *intentiones*. The roads are not alike, although they appear to be, and the path of Idleness leads not to delight but to sorrow.

These twin paths, marked by signs whose moral valences are the reverse of their outward markings, suggest the nature of the difficulty the Pilgrim will have throughout his journey: a double vision arising from his double nature and leading to misinterpretations of the images he sees. The ambiguities of his

situation are characteristic of Augustine's *peregrinatio*, for that term suggests a wandering as well as a journey of return. Upon taking the path proposed by Idleness, he encounters her mother, Sloth, the first in a sequence of meetings with the seven deadly sins. She entangles him in the cords of Lethargy (Negligence and Despair) and stuns him with the poleaxe of Apathy. The Pilgrim's state of spiritual confusion and consequent *emut* is reminiscent of that of Boethius in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, who has cast aside the armor provided for him, and who has fallen into a "lethargy" because he has "forgotten himself a little" [*sui paulisper oblitus est*] (Stewart 136, my translation). Like Boethius, the Pilgrim has forgotten who and what he is, and how he fits into the order of Providence. More particularly, he has forgotten his nature as an *imago dei*.

Assaulted in turn by the other deadly sins and their companions, his remembrance of his true nature is threatened again and again. The deadly sins adopt two main strategies: they hide their true natures from the Pilgrim by means of various disguises; and they seek to entrap him in false worship. Pride rides on Flattery and carries the horn of Vainglory and the club of Obstinance (the same club carried by Rude Wit). She hides herself in the mantle of Hypocrisy, and in hiding herself from the Pilgrim, she attempts to hide him from himself as well. The danger of false worship is presented in the encounter with Avarice, who has on her head a maunet, an idol named for Mahomet, which she worships as a god. When she tries to make the Pilgrim worship this image of worldly wealth and power, he resists strongly, saying that he is of noble and free lineage and he must not, therefore, do homage to an idol that is blind and deaf and dumb. His resistance is grounded in his recognition of the idol as a graven image, and of his recollection of himself as an *imago dei*.

The essential temptation represented by Avarice and the other deadly sins is the temptation to see the self and the world as idols. Read rightly as images, the self and the world become signs capable of guiding the soul on the path of redemption. As idols, they represent a rigid literalism, forestalling movement and entrapping the soul in the servitude of false worship. The return of the pilgrim soul to its rightful inheritance is thus a liberation from idolatry as well as a restoration of freedom.

Grace rescues the Pilgrim from the clutches of the deadly sins, who have taken away his staff of Hope (but not the scrip of Faith), and she gives him the ABC prayer to the Virgin, which he recites. In this prayer the Pilgrim asks the Virgin to be his advocate in the court of Judgment. His situation is again ambiguous: he is sinful and unworthy; yet he can rightly claim salvation as his inheritance; he does not deserve the merciful intervention of the Virgin, yet he asks for it in the confidence that it will be granted. This prayer begins the final transformation of the Pilgrim and the world of signs by first transforming the letters of the alphabet, the basic elements of words and language. The alphabet becomes a matrix of new meaning, informed by the vital role of the Virgin in the drama of redemption.

At this point, the outlines of the vision that opens the poem begin to reemerge. This clarification involves recapitulations of action and reappearances of images, now seen in terms of connections and similarities. The Pilgrim is immersed in the bath formed by the tears that flow from the eye in the rock of repentance. It is a second Baptism, Grace tells him, but he is only partially restored to spiritual health because he does not remain in it long enough.

The restoration of the Pilgrim's original vision continues when he arrives at the Sea of the World. There he meets Heresy, who is running backwards and who is, like Rude Wit, unable to read scripture rightly, because she has only one eye. Like Rude Wit, she tries to take away the Pilgrim's scrip, but he strikes her with his staff and drives her off. Grace reappears to explain that the Sea of the World is stirred up with tempests caused by the bellows of Pride. Some people are able to fly above the sea for a brief time, but others are weighed down by the sack of Avarice, tangled in the weeds of worldly concerns, blindfolded by earthly beauty. Satan roves the shore, a fowler casting nets and cords, like Sloth, to entrap those who would fly to Heaven. He is a fisherman, too, fishing for souls with his line of temptation. He carries the horn of Pride, and he hooks pilgrims in the same way as Detraction. He is a spider, like Avarice with her eight arms. He deceives a son so that he kills his father, severing the bonds of love as Anger does with her saw of Hatred. He is a wolf that kills sheep, like Gluttony, and he wears a false face, like Venus, the icon of Lust.

Youth, who is able to soar on her feathered feet, carries the Pilgrim up to a new perspective (like Chaucer's eagle, in *The House of Fame*, II, 529ff.) and shows him the other perils of the sea: Syres, the sandbank of Self-will; Scylla, the Rocks of Adversity; Charybdis, the whirlpool of Worldliness; Bithlaxsus, the quicksand of Prosperity; and the Siren of Pleasure. His flight is interrupted by Tribulation, the blacksmith as well as the goldsmith of God, who makes good metals better and bad metals worse. She has a double commission: one is from God, to restore the vision of those who have been blindfolded by prosperity; the other is from Satan, to take away the scrip and staff, the Faith and Hope, of all those who are making the pilgrimage to the heavenly city. Tribulation works, she says, according to what she finds in the human heart.

Abandoned by Youth and cast into the sea, the Pilgrim clings to his staff and he is brought by Tribulation to the shore, where he finds the Ship of Religion and enters it at the prompting of Grace. He is dubbed by the doorkeeper, Fear of the Lord, with a lead mace, a transformation of the poleaxe of Sloth that stunned him earlier. This dubbing, however, opens his eyes to a new picture of the virtues: he sees them now acting within the religious life. The deployment of images in this picture is quite complex, linking allegorical figures to previous iconographic details. Some of these figures carry pieces of armor signifying the virtues they represent. These virtues are not named at first but must be recognized by the Pilgrim (and by the audience) from their earlier appearances. Some figures appear in new roles, and others transform images associated with the vices. Charity is there, giving shelter to the poor and feeding them, acting out the testament of peace she read at the beginning of the poem. Obedience carries cords and ties in order to bind Self-will, recalling but transforming the cords and ties of Sloth. Discipline carries the shield of Prudence and the file of Reproof of Evil, a reappearance of the file that Anger had perversely used earlier to put teeth on her saw of Hatred.

Voluntary Poverty, singing as she works, is naked except for a gambeson, the *point* of Patience. Her companion, carrying a staff and making the beds, is Lady Purity, who wears the gauntlets of Continence. Study carries honeyed food, placed on parchment so that it will not fall on the arid pathway, like the seed in the parable, but will nurture the faithful like the seed scattered by the

holy teachers in the pilgrim's original vision of the heavenly city. The mistress of the refectory is Abstinence, wearing the gorget of Sobriety; Prayer has wings to carry messages to God; and Worship wakes the King of Heaven when he sleeps by playing the organ and blowing the horn of Latria—an elegant doubling and transformation of the horn of Pride carried by Satan.

In a remarkable foreshortening, the Pilgrim now encounters Infirmy and Old Age, sent by Death to warn him of her approach. Old Age has feet of lead, unlike the feathered feet of Youth, and although she is slow, she says, "I have nevertheless caught up with you." Old Age and Infirmy attack him on both sides, just as he was assaulted earlier by Betrayal and Detraction, the two vices who ride upon Envy. In these desperate straits Misericord comforts him. She holds the cord of the bow of heaven, so that God cannot shoot the arrow of justice against mankind. She changes the bow into the rainbow of peace and reconciliation, and she uses the cord to rescue the suffering, pulling them from the depths of their misery. She offers her breast to the Pilgrim on his sickbed, and she tells him that milk is blood transformed: those who are angry have only red blood in them but her mother, Charity, heats this blood of anger and turns it into the milk of human kindness. She binds her cord to his bed and draws him to the infirmary.

In the end, Death comes and climbs up on his bed, carrying a scythe in her hand, an ironic echo of the scythe (Homicide) carried by Anger. Grace intervenes one last time to prepare the pilgrim for his entrance through the narrow gate, the same gate he saw so long ago in the mirror. If he is stripped naked he will enter the heavenly city, like the poor in his original vision. Just as Death is about to cut down his life, he hears the abbey clock ringing for matins, and he awakes to find himself all in a sweat. He arises to write down what he remembers of his dream, but he does not put down all of it, for that would be too long. The narrative of his vision has come full circle: the Pilgrim has arrived at the gate of the city whose image had first set him on his journey.

His passage through a world of signs to the sign that moved him first is neither simple nor straightforward. The allegory of his pilgrimage is marked by strange disjunctions as well as unexpected likenesses: apparent opposites are complements; virtue and vice are somehow linked, although they are radically at odds. The truth of

these relations is illuminated by Grace and Reason, and their meaning for the pilgrim is established through the compassion and mediation of the Virgin. But this decoding of the world and the self is, in a way, a further encoding, one that approaches more closely, but never wholly attains, the transcendent reality it represents.

Degulleville shows that he is aware of the limitations of his vision and of the discourse in which it is recounted, for "in dreaming," he says, "the complete truth may not be made known." But his allegory attempts to bridge what Paul Ricoeur calls "the abyss that opens up between the eternal *Verbum* and the temporal *vox*" (1984, 29). His representation of the doubleness and complexity of the human *peregrinatio* constitutes an *enigma*, a rhetorical trope that Augustine classifies as a type of allegory (*De trinitate*, XV, ix, 15-16; *PL*, 42, 1068-69). For Augustine, Colish says, "an *enigma*, like any other figure of speech, and like speech itself, is designed to communicate information. Its built-in difficulties thus enhance, rather than reduce, its expressive power. In attempting to convey the infinite incomprehensibility of God, then, an *enigma* is a most suitable *vox significans rem*" (79). In *Le Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* Degulleville found a voice well-suited to the complex matter of the pilgrim soul and its journey to the Heavenly City of Jerusalem.

Sources and Influences

Degulleville tells us that his dream-vision was prompted by reading and studying closely *Le Roman de la Rose*. Although at first glance a poem devoted to the pursuit of erotic love seems an unlikely model for an account of a pious pilgrimage to the Heavenly Jerusalem, Degulleville drew from the *Roman* two elements most important to his poem: a metaphor and a method. Both the *Roman* and the *Pèlerinage* share the metaphor of life as a quest for an ideal state of being; and they both use the allegorical framework built upon the metaphor of quest to support extended comments on important intellectual and spiritual questions as well as wide-ranging satirical observations on contemporary life and mores.

The basic metaphor of Degulleville's allegory, life as a pilgrimage, came to him from other sources as well, of course,

especially from St. Paul (whom he quotes at the very beginning of the poem) and from St. Augustine. The discourse of the poem is deeply rooted in the Church Fathers and in the Scriptures, and he draws from these sources not only theological and moral arguments but vivid images and *exempla*. The theme of the heavenly city naturally drew him to the prophets, especially Ezekiel and Isaiah, as well as to the Book of Revelation. And he found in the historical books of the Bible stories that illuminate his own narrative. Classical sources include Aristotle, whom he summons up for a debate with Lady Wisdom on the metaphysics of the Eucharist, and to whom he frequently refers on a variety of philosophical issues (see the textual notes for particular references) as well as mythical materials, such as Scylla and Charybdis, that he may have found in a number of places.

It is very likely that he knew the work of Boethius, given the immense popularity of the *Consolation of Philosophy*. The metaphysics of the *Consolation*, the central figure of Dame Philosophy (an analogue of Lady Reason) and the deployment of dream-vision allegory are precedents for Deguileville. As for Dante, there is little evidence of direct influence, despite Delacotte's account of some remarkable similarities (1932), but the reach of *The Divine Comedy* is always difficult to delimit. Deguileville's pilgrimage is, however, a more earthly journey than Dante's great visionary poem, and Deguileville seems far too sensible in any case to have tried to imitate or surpass that model. He does write deliberately and emphatically in the vernacular, however, and in this respect he follows Dante's lead. In view of S. L. Galpin's study of the sources of *Le Pèlerinage de l'ame* (1910), there can be little doubt that, like Dante, he was familiar with early Christian and medieval dream-vision materials, through the works of Gregory of Tours, Gregory the Great, Bede, Boniface, Vincent de Beauvais, and Jacobus de Voragine. His general knowledge of the received tradition of wisdom and learning is extensive and detailed, and though this is sometimes the subject of exuberant display, it is more often carefully integrated with the controlling trope of pilgrimage and discovery.

The influence of a work like the *Pèlerinage*, which has at its core a metaphor of such weight and power, cannot be assessed only in terms of allusions and appropriations of specific materials.

Its wide dissemination and frequent translation in its own era offer evidence of the energy of its initial impulse, but the enduring effects of its imaginative achievement can be seen in later centuries as well.

Deguileville's influence on the leading English poets of the medieval period is easy to trace, if not to measure. Lydgate's painstaking and lavish translation of *Vie*² is an indication of the appeal of Deguileville's vision. The anonymous Middle English translation is only now coming to be recognized as a significant achievement both in its own right and as a continuing influence on the cultural developments of the later Middle Ages and early Renaissance. Chaucer's attention to Deguileville, evidenced most obviously in his translation of the ABC prayer, is likely to have been more focused and intense than has so far been described. His sensibility is, in many ways, more like that of Deguileville than that of Dante, for example. Although he does not share Deguileville's rather harsh asceticism, he might have found congenial the sort of rough and ready talk of the road that marks the *Pèlerinage*. We know that he borrowed the ending of the poem, the dreamer awakened by the bell of the abbey clock, for his first dream-vision poem, *The Book of the Duchess*, but it is even more significant that in Deguileville's pilgrimage motif and striking allegorical figures, especially those of the seven deadly sins, he may have found some of the material he adapted to such brilliant effect in *The Canterbury Tales*. He would certainly have encountered in the *Pèlerinage* examples of very pointed satirical commentary on corrupt clergy, crooked lawyers, subservient court officials and other functionaries—the sort of "estates satire" that Jill Mann (1973) has identified as a major influence on both the form and content of Chaucer's portraits of the Canterbury pilgrims. When both poems are considered together it is difficult to look at the portrait of the Pardoner without recalling the picture of Avartice, for example, complete with fake relics and false piety. And it is difficult to think of a number of Chaucer's pilgrims and characters, without calling to mind some of Deguileville's lively portrayals of vices and virtues. And the sometimes bumbling Pilgrim-narrator of the *Pèlerinage* suggests that an important element of Deguileville's influence on Chaucer is the use of the naive narrator, a device both poets exploit to great advantage. Deguileville's Pilgrim, like Chaucer's

pilgrim *persona* in *The Canterbury Tales* and the innocent narrator of his earlier dream-vision poems, is both a rich source of humor and an elegant trope through which the audience is drawn into the progress of the narrative and the unfolding of its discourse.

The spirit of Deguileville's allegorical fiction and the power of its metaphorical language persisted through the Renaissance and beyond. F. M. Padelford (1931) and Rosemond Tuve (1966) have analyzed in detail the influence of the *Pèlerinage* on Spenser, particularly in the similarities between the Pilgrim and the Red Cross Knight: these figures have in common, among other things, the armor of virtue, the encounter with Error (Rude Wit) and the struggle with the Deadly Sins, Nathaniel Hill (1858), in his comparative study of Deguileville's *Pèlerinage* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, sets forth the many parallels and connections between the works. J. B. Wharey (1904) tends to confirm, through the details of his (and Bunyan's) vigorous denials, what Hill's study assumes: that Bunyan was probably familiar with an English version of the *Pèlerinage* and used it as the basis for his work.

The Canterbury Tales, *The Faerie Queene* and *Pilgrim's Progress* have had their own far-ranging effects, of course, but these can be attributed in no small measure to the power of their central theme: the idea of life as a spiritual journey. And there was a substantial and original literary presentation of that theme to draw upon in Deguileville's *Pèlerinage*. Through its influence on such works as these, it shaped the experience of many generations of readers, who followed in imagination the path laid out long before in this vision of a pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Editorial Policy for This Translation

This translation is based on the 1893 Roxburghe Club edition of the French original by J. J. Stürzinger, who chose MS *t* (*Bibliothèque Nationale fr.* 1818) as his text, providing a comprehensive set of variants from ten of the fifty-three manuscripts he lists. Copies of this edition are rare and I have used a microfilm copy of an example in the Boston Athenæum. I have followed Stürzinger's text closely and where I have adopted variant readings I have indicated this in the notes. Since the first version of the

Pèlerinage is decidedly a poem meant for oral delivery, I have not given the rubrics of MS *t* that identify speakers and characters, nor the Appendix (from MS *L*), which serves as kind of summary and index; identifying the figures encountered by the Pilgrim is part of the experience of the poem for the audience Deguileville addresses. In citations of the original, I have adapted Stürzinger's system of markings to my use of italics for quotations from the French:

1. parentheses () enclose letters of MS *t* that should be omitted;
2. brackets [] enclose letters or words that are added from other MSS;
3. roman letters indicate words substituted from other MSS;
4. partial roman letters fill in abbreviations.

The list of manuscripts in the Bibliography is based on that of Dunn-Wood, whose extensive account draws upon the work of Stürzinger, Wharey, Faral, Tuve and others. The list is not intended to be complete; as Tuve observes, there may be some manuscripts, especially of prose translations, hidden under such designations as "The Romance of the Monk" (149 n. 6). Scriptural quotations are taken from *The New American Bible*, except for those instances where the Vulgate helps to clarify Deguileville's allusion, and I have used the abbreviations contained in this bible for scriptural references. Unless otherwise noted, citations of Avril Henry's edition of the Middle English Anonymous (ME Anon) prose translation of *Vie*¹ are to the textual notes (Volume 2, 1988), which contain extensive comments on Deguileville's scriptural, patristic and literary allusions, and sort out many difficult passages in the French.

I have not attempted to duplicate Deguileville's crafty, pun-filled, octosyllabic couplets, but I have tried to convey in prose some of the plain vigor and directness of his expression, while occasionally shadowing its exuberant word-play. I have punctuated freely, omitting connectives when this seemed not to disturb the flow of ideas or distort the relation among them. Singular pronouns requiring gender distinctions in English have been pluralized in general descriptions of human behavior and response. Gender distinctions present particular difficulties in the translation of allegory, and I have resolved these as far as I can by moving to the

neuter pronoun when Degulleville seems not to focus on a masculine or feminine allegorical figure. I have occasionally changed word order and reduced some of the poet's triplets and quadruplets to lesser catalogues, but not where I could find a real distinction to articulate. Sometimes I have maintained phrases that are somewhat less than smooth in English because they track particular formulations of ideas Degulleville seems to have had in mind. Regularizing these expressions would merely have added to the store of what inevitably is not "carried across" in a translation. That store, that remainder, tends to confirm translators in their regard for the poet, while it enhances their sense of how much has been left unsaid.

Abbreviations

Godefroy: Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française.

ME Anon: The anonymous Middle English prose translation of *Vie*¹.
See Henry (1985).

OED: The Oxford English Dictionary. 2d ed.

PL: Migne, J. -P., ed., Patrologiae Cursus Completus . . . Series Latina.

PG: Migne, J. -P., ed., Patrologiae Cursus Completus . . . Series Graeca.

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