INTRODUCTION

The *Psychomachia*, by Aurelius Prudentius Clemens (348–ca.410 C.E.), is a Late Antique poem with profound influence through the Middle Ages into the early modern era. Consistently regarded as a canonical text of Christian learning, the poem depicts the struggle of personified virtues and vices for possession of the human soul. From early on, this allegorical ‘soul battle’ generated a tradition of illustration and commentary. The Weitz glosses, the subject of this study, are a significant part of that tradition. Glosses, by nature, say as much about the age in which they were written as they do about the text upon which they comment. Composed in a later historical period than that of the text, they supply an apparently much-needed explanation—a bridge, as it were, from the work they designate as authoritative to the reader whom they are intended to inform. In particular, the early medieval glosses to the *Psychomachia* foreground spiritual battle as one of the central events of a Christian life and say how it was perceived and thought to be waged. They are a primary historical source for how the poem was in fact understood and interpreted by its early medieval audience. They provide a window to the reception of Prudentius in the Early Middle Ages.

While it is widely acknowledged that study of the Late Antique writers formed an integral part of the early medieval curriculum (we know, for example, that poets like Sedulius, Arator, Prosper and Prudentius were highly valued), the reasons for their popularity have often not been elucidated in any detail. This work attempts such an elucidation by focusing on a particular tradition of glosses on the *Psychomachia* and by studying their importance for the late Carolingian and Ottonian periods. The glosses chosen for study belong to the Weitz or German tradition, which comprises Latin and German annotations found in numerous manuscripts dating from the ninth to the thirteenth century and scattered throughout Alemannia, Bavaria and the Rhineland.¹ The Weitz glosses, reaching a high point in

¹ There is also a French/English tradition of Prudentius glosses. This tradition will not be the focus of my research.
their development in the tenth and eleventh centuries, confirm the importance of Prudentius in the German schools. They show how the poet was read and why, highlight his significance in the early medieval curriculum and help explain the high status his work enjoyed in the early Middle Ages.

The centrality of Prudentius in the Carolingian and Ottonian worlds is remarkable: he was not only regarded as canonical, he was also singled out by many as the most Christian of authors. His popularity is attested, for example, in the numerous instances in which he is used to refute heresy and in the sheer number of Old High German glosses that his works attracted—more than any other non-biblical author in the early medieval period. A combination of orthodox status and poetic appeal would seem responsible. In particular, the vivid dramatisation of good against evil played out in a biblically structured narrative that epitomizes a number of key biblical stories accounts for the appeal of the *Psychomachia*. Hence the glosses, especially the interpretative ones, are of value to the historian concerned with how Carolingian and Ottonian intellectuals construed this 500 year-old intermediary. They highlight the significance of this work, seen as a kind of Bible by its early medieval commentators.

Indeed, the Weitz glosses reveal that the poem was viewed, above all, by the tenth- and eleventh-century glossators as a work of moral instruction and as a miniature Bible because of its definite biblical structure (The poem begins with references to a number of Genesis stories and ends with allusions to the Apocalypse). The glossators emphasise this biblical context by drawing on well-known biblical commentaries to interpret the beginning and end of the work. For example, they excerpt from Jerome’s *Hebraicae quaestiones in libro gene- sesos* and *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* to elucidate the Genesis stories in the *Psychomachia* and from Bede’s treatise on the Apocalypse to annotate the Apocalypse imagery at the end of the poem.

The glosses also act as a template for bringing tradition to bear on the training of the young. The Weitz annotations provide a compendium of encyclopaedic data and Christian exegesis. They offer an insight into the authorities regarded as standard. Pointing outwards through external links and references, they allow us to map the intellectual environment of the annotators, and so also the literary concerns and cultural horizons of some of the prominent centres of learning in the late Carolingian and early Ottonian worlds.
Moreover, the tradition of learning as attested in the glosses may be formulaic and prescriptive but is nevertheless often innovative in its application. We see such innovation, for example, when Bede’s treatise on the Apocalypse, a standard work, is appositely used to explain the Apocalypse imagery at the end of the poem. Bede is used by the glossators of the *Psychomachia* to understand the meaning of the final section of the poem.

Uses of tradition in the Weitz glosses also help elucidate the complex problem of what exactly we mean by ‘source’ in the context of authorities drawing on other authorities. The glosses exemplify the ways in which sources are mediated, digested in epitomes or excerpted in grammatical treatises, exegetical writings, commentaries, encyclopaedic compendia, and florilegia of all kinds. For example, a citation from Bede could be excerpted from intermediaries like Hrabanus or Smaragdus; a quotation from Isidore from a medieval glossary. In the Weitz annotations, figures such as Bede and Isidore become commentators on the poem and so the means by which a rich inheritance stretching back to the antiquarian preoccupations of Pliny and Solinus, and forward to the Carolingian interests of Hrabanus and Smaragdus, is brought to bear.

The pedagogical intent of the Weitz glosses is obvious, but I argue that the current controversy over whether the intended locus was classroom or library is something of a distraction. What matters in the case of the Weitz glosses is the didactic function in elucidating the meaning of the poem and providing instruction in Christian imagery, wherever the instruction took place. For my research, the significant matter is how those tenets were modulated in the glosses. How the glosses teach and what they teach is the subject of this study. The Weitz glosses, representing an important moment in the history of early medieval thought, elucidate exegetical habits of mind.

Moreover, glosses, in general, have often been studied as quarries for the lexical, grammatical, syntactical and vernacular learning of the time, especially as important linguistic witnesses for Old High German, Old English or Old Irish. As many scholars have recently pointed out, however, the focus of such interest has tended to be on a truncated corpus of the glosses, which excluded the Latin commentary. In the case of the Weitz glosses, when both the Latin and

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2 Michael Lapidge, ‘Old English Glossography: The Latin Context,’ in *Anglo-*
German glosses are viewed as part of a single entity. We see that quite a wide range of material is offered, from grammatical and linguistic detail to biblical allusions, references to authorities and exegesis. This book takes the linguistic studies as preliminary to its analysis of how the glossators of the Psychomachia, while establishing the literal level of the text, also added their allegorical interpretations to this allegorical poem. It begins with a survey of the various kinds of glosses found in the Weitz tradition and then proceeds to concentrate on the exegetical commentary. This book touches briefly on the function of the vernacular glosses and transcribes them in the edition. The primary focus is the Latin glosses, which are more extensive than the Old High German ones. A more detailed analysis of the Old High German glosses awaits further attention.

As for the Weitz glosses themselves, they are neither random nor spontaneous accretions but part of a commentary tradition found in numerous manuscripts spread throughout the East Frankish world. Even at the basic level of the lexical gloss we consistently find patterns of reference to other sources as well as repetitions of the very same glosses in several manuscripts. This consistency is borne out by the palaeographical evidence. In many of the Weitz manuscripts text and gloss are written in the same hand, indicating that both were copied from an exemplar.

The Weitz glosses, however, are also accretive, and therefore not subject to the normal constraints of a set text. On the one hand, they offer an accumulation of knowledge and ideas frozen in time. In this sense, they appear to provide the historian with a valuable moment of stasis. On the other hand they offer a snapshot of process. Indeed, glosses, by their very nature, pose many problems. Unlike set texts, they can add or omit material. They can be gleaned from a variety of sources: a single annotated exemplar, a number of glossed manuscripts, glossaries or glossae collectae. In addition, there is usually a great deal of cross-fertilization between different gloss traditions. This raises a further important issue: how can we speak of different

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texts of annotations when glosses by their nature are accretive and exemplify the kinds of editorial nightmares that make them hard to edit and categorise? The discovery of a normative text is alien to the study of glosses. Such difficulties make the composition of a clear stemma almost impossible. One is forced to consider the specific, to ponder the case of each set of glosses, and to investigate its origins, influence and particular relevance for the school or library in which it was found. As Hofman says, “A gloss commentary in any particular manuscript... represents the preoccupation of a single (group of) user(s).” My edition addresses these complexities by providing a diplomatic transcription of a number of different sets of Weitz glosses. It also seeks to indicate similarities between different texts of glosses and so point to the existence of a definite Weitz tradition.

The book comprises four chapters of discussion, an introduction to the edition and the edition itself.

Chapter One focuses on the importance of Prudentius in the early Middle Ages, enlarging upon the points made earlier about the centrality of the poet in the Carolingian and Ottonian worlds. It acts by way of introduction to the glosses.

The second chapter has two sections. The first details the history of scholarship regarding the Prudentius manuscripts to date, then examines the different gloss traditions found in these codices, and finally describes the origin and distribution of the Weitz annotations. The second section gives a description of the individual Weitz manuscripts that I consulted. Chapter Two shows that the Weitz manuscripts were (a) produced mainly in East Frankish centres in the tenth and eleventh centuries and (b) circulated frequently in ecclesiastical centres closely associated with the Lotharingian reform movement.

Chapter Three examines the functions of the glosses. Here I redirect attention away from the philological concerns of conventional glossing studies toward mainstream intellectual history. My study focuses on glosses from many different functional perspectives: as grammatical and linguistic tools, as etymological and encyclopaedic compendia, as allegorical and exegetical commentary.

Chapter Four studies the sources of the glosses. I outline five principal categories of source materials consulted by the annotators of

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the *Psychomachia*: (1) grammatical works, (2) glossaries, (3) encyclopaedic compendia, (4) the Bible and (5) patristic and early medieval bibli- cal commentaries. I show how these sources are part of an inherited tradition of learning—how the glossed *Psychomachia* comprises a nodal point where tradition is manifested.

In the introduction to the edition (following Chapter Four) I outline the editorial principles of my transcription, giving details on the glosses, orthography, punctuation, lemmata, expansion of abbreviations etc. My edition comprises a diplomatic transcription of lemmata and glosses on Prudentius’ *Psychomachia* from three manuscripts: (1) London, British Library Add 34248; (2) Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm lat. 14395; (3) Cologne, Dombibliothek 81. The manuscripts are selected on the grounds that they transmit full sets of glosses. No attempt, however, is made to find a normative text. For the Old High German glosses I rely primarily on Steinmeyer and Sievers. For the transcription of the Latin glosses in the London manuscript I draw heavily on the seventeenth-century edition of Johannes Weitz. His edition, however, does not include all the glosses in the London manuscript. I show how different sets of glosses, related to one another and part of the same tradition of glossing, represent important commentaries on the poem.

In conclusion, the glosses supply clues as to the intellectual concerns and literary horizons of some of the prominent centres of learning in the late Carolingian and early Ottonian worlds. They confirm the general importance of Prudentius in the early medieval curriculum and provide a window to the high status of the poet in the early Middle Ages. They represent a significant moment in the history of early medieval thought, when annotators sought to assimilate this Late Antique poem into their intellectual mainstream. This study attempts to illuminate this moment in European intellectual history by focusing on the glosses and their early medieval audiences.