Paratexts are an agent as well as a symptom of the cultural changes that affect the production and reading of religious texts. This essay is about paratextuality en mouvance. It involves three textual representatives of the vernacular English tradition of the Meditationes vitae Christi: Nicholas Love’s Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ (c. 1410); the 1606 Douai edition (and partial adaptation/modernisation) of Love’s work printed by C. Boscard; and the 1622 revision of the Mirror by the lay recusant, polemicist and book smuggler John Heigham, published by him in St Omer, and also printed by Boscard.1

The Meditationes vitae Christi was one of the most important works of Latin devotional literature in medieval Europe, and it enjoyed a huge number of translations in many vernaculars, including English.2 Love's rendering

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2 For the Meditationes vitae Christi, see Opera omnia sancti Bonaventurai, ed. A.C. Peltier, 15 vols. (Paris: 1864–1871), XII (1868) 509–630, here 510. This edition, which from now on will be cited by page number in the main body of the text, is used by Sargent for his edition of the
was born into an early fifteenth-century world dominated by the Church’s drive against Lollardy, and it accordingly adds anti-Wycliffite polemic and an appended Treatise on the Sacrament, in the form of an orthodox defence of the Eucharist. Many copies of the work also contain a memorandum that around the year 1410 Love presented his work to Archbishop Arundel, Chancellor of England and persecutor of Lollards. Arundel publically commended the work as a set text for the whole nation to the confutation of false Lollards and heretics. Love's work exists in more manuscripts than any prose Middle English religious work other than the Wycliffite Bible, and it enjoyed many early prints. It was a culturally central and highly mainstream text for which there was clearly much demand and a longstanding public well into the sixteenth century.3

Paradoxically, however, in the early seventeenth century, the *Mirror* was both central and marginal: central inasmuch as it still reflected a perfectly routine mainstream Catholic tradition of meditating on the life of Christ under the supervision of a priestly guide narrating, moralising, drawing affective lessons and inviting the imagining reader into the *mise-en-scène* of the spiritual work; marginal, in being now suspiciously papist-looking to a Protestant England, and now appealing to a restricted and enfeebled readership of disempowered Catholics. Both the 1606 and the 1622 Pseudo-Bonaventuran works were texts consigned to the margins: anglophone groups of assorted laity and religious exiled to the French-speaking Spanish Netherlands—in other words people like Heigham and the community of Poor Clares to whom he addressed his

*Mirror* because it is nearer to what Love used than any other modern edition. St Bonaventure has not for a long time been thought of as the author of the *Meditationes*, but his association with the work has left it with a 'pseudo-Bonaventuran' identity, despite John de Caulibus, a Franciscan of San Gimignano, generally being cited as the author of the work, originally made in Latin. More recently, however, Sarah McNamer has argued that the earliest version was not in Latin but in Italian, and probably by a woman; see McNamer A., “The Origins of the *Meditationes vitae Christi*”, *Speculum* 84 (2009) 905–955. Peter Tóth and David Falvay have, however, taken a different view and brought to light another authorial possibility, a certain James of Cortona; see Tóth P. – Falvay D., “From the Apostle Peter to Bonaventure the Cardinal: Rethinking the Date and Authorship of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*”, in Kelly S. – Westphall A. (eds.), *The Pseudo-Bonaventuran Lives of Christ. Exploring the Middle English Tradition* (Turnhout: forthcoming, 2015). For a wide-ranging and up-to-date collection of studies of the medieval English pseudo-Bonaventuran tradition, see Johnson I. – Westphall A. (eds.), *The Pseudo-Bonaventuran Lives of Christ. Exploring the Middle English Tradition* (Turnhout: 2013).

3 For this, and further information, see in general the introduction of Sargent's edition of Love's *Mirror*. See also the Queen's University Belfast-St Andrews Geographies of Orthodoxy Arts and Humanities Research Council project web site at: http://www.qub.ac.uk/geographies-of-orthodoxy/.