

PEARL, FITT VIII

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Abstract: Fitt VIII reveals much information about larger textual structures in *Pearl*. Its Christian Platonist adaptation of 1 Corinthians 12 envisions Paul's metaphor of the body of Christ in terms of circles of different sizes. At this transition in the dialogue the dreamer reveals and the maiden addresses his confusion of heavenly for earthly hierarchy; she explains that her crown in no way detracts from Mary's or other maidens' crowns. A statement about each maiden wishing others' crowns were worth five crowns contributes to a symmetrical, nested arrangement of references to Five, Three, and Two within the dialogue.

Introduction

Fitt VIII serves as a transition between important sections of *Pearl*. Like similar transitions in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, where for example the plan of hell is revealed in *Inferno* 11 between visions of upper and middle hell, Fitt VIII offers a concise overview of the larger structures it bounds.

To understand how Fitt VIII serves as a transitional structure it is first necessary to understand how the nesting arrangement of the three main landscapes in *Pearl* (addressed in my commentary on Fitt II in this volume) is mirrored in the nesting arrangement of the fitts devoted to those landscapes. The setting of the first and final fitts of *Pearl* in the *erber* as well as the setting of the fitts just following the first fitt (II-IV) and just preceding the final fitt (XVII-XIX) in Eden and the New Jerusalem respectively creates nested pairings of corresponding portions of the text. The central dialogue section (Fitts V-XVI) is in turn nested within the descriptions of Eden and New Jerusalem, and within the dialogue is nested the paraphrase of the parable of the vineyard (IX-X), another landscape at the center of the poem. This nesting arrangement of landscapes as a textual structure mirrors on a larger scale the pairs of link words in the first

and last lines of most stanzas and the pairs of words that appear in the first and last lines of the entire poem as well as other similar textual bracketing structures on different scales (including pairs of half-lines in each line and pairs of words in the same part of speech within some lines).

Within this nesting textual structure Fitt VIII is the last fitt of the dialogue section that precedes the central paraphrase of the vineyard parable which divides the dialogue into two halves. The recursive, scaling, circular geometry described in Fitt VIII resembles the geometry of the pentangle in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in a transitional passage (619-55) between portions of that poem devoted to the first two of its three main settings (Arthur's court, Bertilak's castle, and the Green Chapel).

Since most of the dialogue section addresses matters regarding the pearl maiden's relationship to the heavenly court, it seems appropriate that it is the centermost textual structure just as the vision-within-a-vision of the heavenly court is nested at the center of the visions of Eden and of the *erber*: the dreamer dreams of Eden while he sleeps in the *erber*, then he is granted a vision of the New Jerusalem from his position in Eden. The dialogue begins in Fitt V with two speeches by the dreamer (241-52, 279-88) about the maiden's identity, his reasons to believe she is there, and his plan to join her. After each of these speeches the maiden criticizes it in a speech of her own (257-76, 289-324). A third speech by the dreamer (325-36) and one by the maiden (337-60) in Fitt VI address his ability to assess her status.

Fitt VII, whose link word is *blysse*, begins with the dreamer's statement that the pearl has been both his *blysse* and his *bale* (373) and the *grounde of alle my blysse* (372) and ends with his question and the maiden's response about her current *astate* (393-420). The maiden replies that the *grounde of alle my blysse* is *My Lorde þe Lamb*, specifically *Hys prese, hys prys, and hys parage* (407-8, 419). The discussion of *blysse* in Fitt VII lays the groundwork for the focus of Fitt VIII, whose first word is *Blysful*. Fitt VIII continues the discussion of the maiden's *astate* with particular attention to the inability of members of the heavenly court to resent or envy each other. My commentary on Fitt II traces stages of decrease in the dreamer's grief (increase in impassibility and therefore joy) and of increase in his agility (and presumably his subtlety) in response to increasingly bright, agile, and subtle landscapes; as in the *Comedy* the dreamer appears to acquire incremental increases in the gifts of the

glorified body (clarity, impassibility, agility, and subtlety) as he passes through landscapes associated with greater increments of those gifts.¹ Fitt VIII features Mary as *myrrest May* (435), the most impassible of maidens; she anticipates the Lamb who is the most impassible figure of all, with *glentez glorious glade* despite his wounds at the climactic finale of the dreamer's vision of the heavenly city (1141-44), and whose sight and sound increase the dreamer's joy: "Delyt me drof in y3e and ere" (1153). The importance of the gifts of the glorified body in the depiction of characters in *Pearl* has been described before,² but not the incremental increase in these gifts associated with each stage of the dreamer's journey; my commentaries on Fitts II and VIII draw attention to these incremental increases, which support the notion that the *Comedy* influenced *Pearl*.

Like his paraphrases of the vineyard parable in Matthew's gospel and of the description of the heavenly city in the Apocalypse, in Fitt VIII the poet makes 1 Corinthians 12 consistent with the recursive, self-similar, scaling geometry of Platonist procession (emanation) and regression (reversion, return).³ He does it in part by

¹ Manuele Gagnolati, *Experiencing the Afterlife: Soul and Body in Dante and Medieval Culture* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), especially 168, 174. In the *Comedy* the association between settings and different increments of gifts of the glorified body is most obvious in the description of the angelic circles in *Paradiso* 28. The concentric angelic circles move more quickly and shine more brightly the closer they are to the central point, inverting the hierarchy of agility and clarity of the nine celestial spheres they mirror (lines 22-39). A pattern of increases in the brightness of Beatrice's smile as she and Dante ascend from heaven to heaven reflects a corresponding pattern of increases in impassibility. Dante experiences an incremental increase in these gifts each time he rises to a new celestial sphere.

² Kevin Marti, "Traditional Characteristics of the Resurrected Body in *Pearl*," *Viator* 24 (1993): 311-35.

³ Near the end of his *Republic* Plato's comparison of the eight whorls Er sees in his dream to "boxes that fit into one another" shows that their structure is recursive, self-similar, and scaling; trans. Paul Shorey, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato Including the Letters*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 840-41. In the dream of Scipio described in bk. 6, sec. 17 of Cicero's *Republic* the recursive, self-similar, scaling structure of the nine concentric spheres of the cosmos is similar. Macrobius describes a similar structure in chapters 17-22 of bk. 1 of his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, especially in his comparison of the

adding to his Pauline source the circular image of a ring on an arm or a finger and an implicit circular image of a crown on the head. Fitt VIII prepares for the paraphrase of the vineyard parable by explaining the distribution of heavenly reward in terms of scaling, circular recursion: a *rawe* of workers figures as a circle because the first hired are paid last, each receiving a circular penny (545-48).

Because the Platonist foundation for the poet's handling of recursion in numbers, in the geometry of the circle and sphere, and in the body is more obvious in Fitt VIII than elsewhere in the poem, this commentary will continue the discussion begun in my commentary on Fitt II of the correspondence between the stages of the vision and the stages of the ascent of the soul at death and the resurrection of the body in Christian Platonism. My commentary on Fitt II defines and cites sources for various Platonist concepts applied to Fitt VIII here. The absence of negative emotions among members of Christ's body results from their advanced stage of regression, the Platonist process whereby the soul gradually acquires a dematerialized state during its ascent after death; this process underlies the Christian Platonist scheme of resurrection.

The link word *courtaysye* and its variants build on the maiden's statement that the dreamer is *uncortayse* for lacking the faith to believe what he cannot see (303). The recurrence of *courtaysye* in Fitt VIII creates a pattern that shows how differently the dreamer and maiden understand the meaning of the word. E. V. Gordon notes that the application of the secular ideal of *courtaysye* to theology predates *Pearl* (xxxii-xxxiii).

Among its other observations, then, this commentary brings particular focus to small-scale mirror images in Fitt VIII of larger poetic structures and to Platonist traditions that clarify those images.

Commentary

'Blysful', quod I, 'may þys be trwe?
Dysplese3 not if I speke errorr.'⁴ (421-22)

concentric spheres to concentric circles in ch. 21; trans. William Harris Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 155-84, especially 175-76. Dietrich Mahnke traces the notion of concentric spheres from the ancient Greeks to the German romantics in *Unendliche Sphäre und Allmittelpunkt: Beiträge zur Genealogie der mathematischen Mystik* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1937); pages 144-215 discuss medieval sources of the tradition.

⁴ All quotations from *Pearl*, including the entirety of Fitt VIII, are from the edition by E. V. Gordon, *Pearl* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953).

These opening lines respond to the previous stanza, in which the maiden answers the dreamer's query regarding her *astate* (393), the *stage* of her *blysfyl lyf* (409-10). By echoing the link word of Fitt VII, *blysse*, the first line of Fitt VIII focuses even more attention on the central concern of the prior fitt, especially the maiden's statement about her *maryage* to *my Lorde þe Lambe* (413-14), whereby he "Corounde me queene in blysse to brede / In lenghe of dayeþ þat euer schal wage" (415-16). In Fitt VII the maiden wishes *blysse* for the dreamer, stating that he is welcome to walk and stay here "For now þy speche is to me dere" (397-400); improvement in his use of language appears to increase his agility and impassibility (and therefore bliss). The statement is related to the sequence of incremental improvements in the impassibility of the dreamer, recalling how walking through Eden and gazing at paradise while walking along the stream increase his bliss and anticipating the greatest bliss, the *Delyt* from the sight and sound of the heavenly city that prompts his attempt to cross the stream (1153).

The most important word in the question that begins Fitt VIII is *trwe*: the dreamer asks the maiden whether what she has just stated can be true. In her response *trwe* (460) describes relations among members of the body of Christ that justify the *stage* of her *blysfyl lyf*. The meaning of *trwe* shifts from "accurate" to "steadfastly" (Gordon). She uses it to describe an ideal relationship among body parts in terms of a relationship among three circles of three different sizes. Both occurrences of *trwe* prepare for her later assertion that "al is trawþe that he con dresse" (495) in response to the dreamer's objection that being made queen on the first day is *to dere a date* (493). Her invocation of *trauþe* follows her statement that "Per is no date of hys godnesse" (493). In the first line of Fitt VIII, then, *trwe* introduces an extended treatment of balanced relationships within a circular, recursive, self-similar structure that mirrors the pentangle in *Sir Gawain*, likewise identified as a symbol of *trauþe* (626). The fitt shows that the *trauþe* governing the geometry of the body of Christ orders its disorder, suiting it for paradise.

After the dreamer questions the maiden's statement about the degree of her bliss he expresses concern that his speech not displease her, a line echoed in the third line of the last stanza: "Bot my speche þat yow ne greue." In this and other ways the first and last stanzas of Fitt VIII, spoken by the dreamer, mirror each other and frame the three central stanzas in which the maiden describes the lack of suffering in heaven. The first and last stanzas begin with a single

word spoken by the dreamer followed by *quod I*. The resulting circular form of Fitt VIII mirrors the circular form of the entire poem, whose first and last lines contain the words *pay(e)* and *perl(e)*. The dreamer's expressed concern that he not displease her reflects his memory of her critical response in 289-324 to his speech in 279-88; his subsequent speech begins with a parallel expressed concern that his words not anger God (362-63). In the one-stanza speeches that begin and end Fitt VIII the dreamer shows an inability to understand the recursive, scaling, microcosmic hierarchy of the heavenly court; he therefore does not understand that he did not lose the pearl in the *erber* and that he cannot cross the stream prior to death. The middle three stanzas of Fitt VIII are the maiden's first attempt to correct his misunderstanding of hierarchy. Her next attempt is her paraphrase of Matthew's vineyard parable after Fitt VIII.

Art þou the quene of heueneȝ blwe,
Þat al þys worlde schal do honour?
We leuen on Marye þat grace of grewe,
Þat ber a barne of vyrgyn flour;
Þe crowne fro hyr quo moȝt remwe
Bot ho hir passed in sum fauour?
(423-28)

These two questions by the dreamer provide the reasoning behind his first question in this stanza. The maiden's assertion that she is married to Christ makes him wonder if she has displaced Mary as queen of heaven. The first of these two questions goes to the thematic heart of the fitt; *quen* and/or *kyng* and variants accompany the link word *courtaysye* and its variants in the first and last lines of most stanzas and elsewhere in Fitt VIII. As in many fitts here the link word and accompanying words highlight the difference between the earthly perspective of the dreamer and the heavenly perspective of the maiden. Other obvious examples are *Jerusalem* in Fitt XIV and *mote* in Fitt XVI, which draw attention to the dreamer's confusion regarding the earthly and heavenly cities with the same name. In her speech here and in her paraphrase of the vineyard parable the maiden attempts to show him that he does not understand hierarchy because he confuses earthly *courtaysye* with heavenly *courtaysye*.

The *blwe* color of the heavens recalls the *blwe* which is one of the three colors of the blooms of the *spyse3* growing from the *spot* where the pearl was lost in the *erber* (27) as well as the “Holtewode3 . . . / Of bolle3 as blwe as ble of Ynde” in Eden (76), where the dreamer also encounters *spyse* (104).

The phrase *al pys worlde* in the first stanza mirrors *in worlde* (476) in stanza five. It anticipates *alle pys worlde* (824) in Fitt XIV, where it refers to the sins of mankind paid for by the *Lombe . . . trwe* (822) who “Hymself ne wro3t neuer 3et non” (825). The phrase *in worlde* (476) recalls the similar phrase regarding Eden’s location (“I ne wyste in þis worlde quere þat hit wace,” 65) and the maiden’s complaint about the dreamer’s first speech, that he understands not one of his three statements (“Pou ne woste in worlde quat on dot3 mene,” 293). It anticipates the maiden’s statement that her *blysse* exceeds that gained by anyone *in þe worlde* (579) and that thanks to Christ’s sacrifice nothing *in þe worlde rounde* (657) stands between humans and the *blysse* that Adam’s sin made inaccessible. In other references the *worlde* becomes *broun* at the end of the day in the vineyard parable (537) and the maiden describes her death as a departure from the *worlde wete* (761); she counsels the dreamer to forsake the *worlde wode* (743) as she has done. The reference to the *worlde rounde* aligns the sequence of shifting meanings of *worlde*, including “mankind” and “earth,” with its spherical geometry, much as the spherical pearl is aligned with a sequence of shifting meanings. The references to *worlde*, especially *al pys worlde* (424) in relation to Mary and Christ, reflect the Platonist conception of both God and the created world that mirrors him as spheres.⁵

The phrases *grace of grewe* and *of vyrgyn flour* recall the references to growing plants and their blooms in the *erber* (27-28) and anticipate the trees that miraculously produce fruit all year in the heavenly city (1077-79). The Incarnation and the grace it makes possible figure here as a plant-like growth, the product of virginity associated in the *erber* with blooms over the maiden’s grave. The plant growth in heaven is an unnatural, perfect blooming that is static, moving, and growing at the same time.

The references to plant growth in the *erber*, Eden and the heavenly city figure forth the Incarnation as a miraculous transformation of all nature.

⁵ Kevin Marti, *Body, Heart, and Text in the Pearl-Poet* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1991) 17.

The implication in this first stanza that the maiden has inappropriately removed Mary's crown, like the reference to her being made queen at such a young age in the last stanza (474), is linked to the *worlde* that is *rounde*. The round crown symbolizes rulership over the world, including over vegetation, so the crown features floral decoration (208), recalling the blooms of the *erber*.⁶

Now, for synglerty o hyr dousour,
 We calle hyr Fenyx of Arraby,
 Pat freles fleze of hyr fasor,
 Lyk to the Quen of cortaysye.'
 (429-32)

Like the final quatrains of many stanzas in *Pearl*, including all stanzas in Fitts II and VIII, this final quatrain condenses the themes of the first two quatrains. The dreamer thinks the *synglerty* of Mary precludes the possibility of any other queen in heaven. His inability to comprehend the nature of that *synglerty* recalls his difficulty understanding the relationship between other *gemmez gaye* and the pearl lost in the *erber*: in the first stanza of the poem he says he “sette hyr sengeley in synglere” because “Ne proued I neuer her precios pere.” The dream helps him to comprehend that loss by showing that *synglerty* does not rule out the possibility of a *pere* (cf. *parage*, 419). These references to singularity, recalling the first one describing the *rounde* (5) pearl, follow mention of the *worlde* elsewhere called *rounde*, references preparing for the explanation of the relationship of One to Five two stanzas later. His misunderstanding of singularity results from his misunderstanding of the relationship between the monad (One) and the numbers that in Platonist tradition are contained by and proceed from the monad. The unique *dousour* of Mary in heaven recalls the fragrance of blooms in the *erber* that puts the dreamer into a *slepyng-slazte* (59) and the fragrance from the fruit of Eden that has the effect of food on the dreamer (87-88).

⁶ Vegetation metaphors, particular those involving seeds and flowers, figure prominently in medieval theological discussion of the gifts of the glorified body, especially in Aquinas' understanding of the seed metaphor in 1 Corinthians 15. The seeds that flower in Dante's *Paradiso* reflect Aquinas' teaching; Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 232-40, 302.

Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron as well as Charles G. Osgood note that the identification of the phoenix with Mary is an unusual variation on its conventional association with Christ;⁷ this variation in this first stanza is consistent with the shift of focus from female to male authority in the course of Fitt VIII. The reference to *Arraby* indicates that the phoenix and Virgin, like the pearl, are *Oute of oryent* (3). Both are created *freles* by their *fasor*, their flawlessness associated with agility (*fleze*). Mary Vincent Hillmann notes a parallel focus on the phoenix as the creator's beautiful work in the Anglo-Saxon homily *Phoenix*.⁸ Andrew and Waldron emend *freles* ("flawless" or, according to Israel Gollancz, "immaculate of form") to read *fereles* ("without equal"), but both words are consistent with the context; *fereles* contrasts with *ferē*, which recurs elsewhere (89, 884, 616, 1105).⁹ Osgood notes that the phoenix is also a symbol of the resurrection of Christ and man. Fire, the subtlest, brightest, and most agile of the four elements is associated with the glorified body in the *Comedy* (in lines 118-20 of *Paradiso* 33 and in the bright appearance of Beatrice and other souls in spheres of paradise above the moon, whose glorification anticipates their resurrection), and is consistent with the immaculate form of Mary.

The Anglo-Saxon *Phoenix* bears on *Pearl* in other ways as well. In it the land the phoenix inhabits in the Orient resembles Eden as described in Fitt II. Both are changeless landscapes featuring a plain, waterways, and beautiful fragrance. Like the pearl maidens the phoenix sings a song humans cannot sing.¹⁰

In *Pearl* the reversal of the rhyme scheme of the first two quatrains of each stanza in its final quatrain is the prosodic mirror image of the reversal of the order of the hiring of three groups of vineyard workers when they form a line to be paid (545-48). That reversal is of a piece with the reversal in word order whereby link words typically serve as both the first alliterating word and the final

⁷ Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron, *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript: Pearl, Cleanness, Patience, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 5th ed. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007). Charles G. Osgood, *The Pearl: A Middle English Poem* (Boston: Heath, 1906).

⁸ *The Pearl: Mediaeval Text with a Literal Translation and Interpretation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967).

⁹ Israel Gollancz, ed., *Pearl* (New York: Cooper Square, 1966). First published 1891 by David Nutt; citation is from Cooper Square edition.

¹⁰ "The Phoenix," in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, ed. and trans. R. K. Gordon, rev. ed. (London: Dent, 1954), 240, 242.

rhyming word in a stanza and whereby the order of link words and the recurring words that accompany them is sometimes reversed in adjacent lines (for example, in 432-33 and 444-45 the order of the link word variants on *cortaysye* and the accompanying words *Quen/ kyndom* is reversed).

‘Cortayse Quen’, penne sayde þat gaye,
 Knelande to grounde, folde vp hyr face,
 ‘Makele3 Moder and myryest May,
 Blessed bygyenner of vch a grace!’
 (433-36)

In this fitt one reflection of larger poetic structures is the maiden’s sequence of vertical movements in 434-37: She kneels *to grounde*, she *folde vp hyr face*, and *ros ho vp*. (The maiden’s gesture of obeisance is clear in *Knelande to grounde*, less so in *folde vp hyr face*, which A. C. Cawley glosses as “her face upturned,”¹¹ Sarah Stanbury glosses as “folds her face in her hands,”¹² and Hillmann translates as “her face concealed.”) The sequence mirrors at this transition a sequence of vertical movements down and up throughout the poem, including: the pearl that *fro me sprange* (13), *doun drof* (30) and *trendeled doun* (41); the dreamer that *felle* (57) and whose spirit *sprang* (61) in the *erber*; the features of Eden that *feier con ryse* the further the dreamer walks (103); his walk along the stream until he sees the maiden (*Down . . . I bowed*, 125-26); their ascent to the *heued* of the stream (*Bow vp*, 974); the descent of the heavenly city (*keued*, 981); the *prossyoun* (1096) of maidens compared to the moon that *con rys* (1093); the ascent of the maiden from the stream to the heavenly city (1145-48); and the dreamer’s plunge into the stream (1153-63). This sequence of vertical movements resembles a sequence of Platonist processions or regressions, discussed in my commentary on Fitt II.

The first quatrain of the maiden’s three-stanza response to the dreamer’s speech is a prayer to Mary. Her first two words reverse the order of the link word and *Quen* (*Quen of cortaysye*) that ends the preceding stanza. She begins her response to the accusation of having usurped Mary’s position by praying to her and simultaneously showing obeisance with a bodily gesture. The first line identifies the maiden as the speaker after a linking phrase

¹¹ *Pearl*; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (London: Dent, 1962).

¹² *Pearl* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 2001).

identifying the person she addresses, much as the first line of stanza one identifies the dreamer as the speaker following identification of his audience in the link word. The prayer and gesture demonstrate her subjection to Mary before she addresses the dreamer.

The reference to the maiden as *þat gaye* recalls the *gemmez gaye* (7) among which she is judged prior to the *erber* description and the *gardyn gracios gaye* (260) the dreamer first sees her in just across the stream from Eden; it anticipates the *garlande gaye* (1186) which is the heavenly city in which the dreamer finally sees her dwell and in which Christ is a *gay juelle* (1124). The *garlande gaye* she inhabits is contrasted with the *doel-doungoun* (1187) inhabited by the dreamer, based on the Platonist notion of the body as prison.¹³ The recurrence of *gaye* draws attention to the transformational symbolism whereby a jewel morphs into crystal cliffs (74), gravel (81), a maiden, the heavenly city, and Christ. The earthly pearl is thus transformed in stages into a more and more heavenly pearl.

Makelez Moder and myryest May are attributes of Mary conventional in Middle English poetry, as Osgood notes. Within the hierarchy of impassibility in *Pearl* Mary is the *myriest May*. In the poem *makelez*, a conventional punning word as in the Middle English lyric “I Sing of a Maiden,” means “mateless,” “matchless,” and/or “spotless.”¹⁴ Line 436 recalls line 425: all grace begins and grows from Mary in the form of Christ because her position is paradoxical. Both virgin and mother, she creates her own creator.

Penne ros ho vp and con restay,
And speke me towarde in þat space:
‘Sir, fele here porchase3 and fonge3 pray,
Bot supplantore3 none wythinne þys place.
(437-40)

The fact that the raising of the maiden’s face anticipates that of her body (cf. *folde vp hyr face* in 434 and *ros ho vp* in 437) prepares for her explanation of the relationship between the head and body of Christ two stanzas later. It may also anticipate her later instruction to the dreamer that he “Bow up towarde þys borne3 heued” (974) in order

¹³ Pierre Courcelle, “Tradition platonicienne et traditions chrétiennes du corps-prison,” *Revue des études latines* 43 (1966 for 1965): 406-43.

¹⁴ From gloss on *makeles* in line two of “I Sing of a Maiden” by Thomas J. Garbáty, ed., *Medieval English Literature* (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1984), 661.

to see the heavenly city, after which both he and she move upwards on opposite sides of the stream until they reach the *heued* or source of the stream (974-80). In *Pearl* vertical movement occurs in relation to hills: the dreamer *felle* and the pearl *down drof* on the *huyle* in the *erber*; both the pearl and his spirit spring from him on the *huyle* in the *erber*; the lowering of the maiden's body followed by the raising of her face and then whole body occurs at the *fote* of the *crystal clyffe* where he first sees her (159-61); the movement of dreamer and maiden towards the *heued* of the stream is clearly upwards; the city descends onto the hill (980-81); the procession *con ryse* in that city (1093); and the maiden joins it on the hill (1147-48). These vertical movements up and down mirror each other on different scales.

Gollancz calls line 439 “an idiomatic way of saying ‘many find here the prey they seek,’”; *prey* appears to refer to heavenly reward. The verb pair *porchaseȝ and fongeȝ* links the two halves of one line.

Pat emperise al heuenȝ hatȝ,
 And vrȝe and helle, in her bayly;
 Of erytage ȝet non wyl ho chace,
 For ho is Quen of cortaysye.
 (441-44)

The final quatrain of stanza two explains why there are no *supplantoreȝ* in heaven. Like the final quatrain of the other stanzas in this fitt, this quatrain emphasizes the top of a hierarchy by adding a new resonance to the linking word or phrase. The final quatrain of the first stanza in this fitt shows that Mary is queen of courtesy by virtue of the *synglerty* she shares with the phoenix. The final quatrain of this second stanza justifies the same title by specifying the scope of her *bayly*, which encompasses *al heuenȝ* as well as the noun pair *vrȝe and helle*. Osgood calls *emperise* “One of the commonest mediaeval epithets of the Virgin”; like *courtaysye*, here *emperise* reflects established theological application of a secular concept.¹⁵ The plural noun in the phrase *al heuenȝ* recalls *quene of heueneȝ* (423) and suggests a scheme of multiple heavens consistent with *Paradiso* and the Apostle Paul's account in 2 Corinthians 12. The word *non* (443), literally “no one,” contributes to the pattern of references to One (for example, in lines 293, 378, 551, 557, 860, 864, 953) and to

¹⁵ Andrew and Waldron indicate both secular and theological applications of *courtaysye* in the works of the Pearl poet, 311.

conditions without exception, including other occurrences of *non* (215, 455, 544, 700, 812, 825) throughout the poem. Like the final quatrain of the previous stanza, this quatrain emphasizes the uniqueness of the *courtaysye* possessed by someone whose court surpasses all others.

This final quatrain is a good illustration of the flexibility of the alliterative scheme in *Pearl*. Line 441 combines an alliterating initial *h* with alliterating initial vowels (*e* in *emprise* and *a* in *al*); by convention all vowels alliterate with each other. In 442 the alliterating initial vowels in *And*, *and*, and *in* are unusual; conjunctions and prepositions alliterate less frequently than other parts of speech. Line 443 is structured according to patterns of assonance (*erytage* and *zet*; *Of*, *non*, and *ho*; *erytage* and *chace*) rather than alliteration. Line 444, like the final lines of the first and especially the third stanzas, features a scheme of near-alliteration wherein the initial consonants of *ho*, *Quen*, and *cortaysye* represent different sounds that nonetheless resemble each other.

‘The court of þe kyndom of God alyue
Hat3 a property in hytself beyng;
Alle þat may þerinne aryue
Of alle the reme is quen oþer kyng,
(445-48)

Just as 433 reverses the order of *Quen* and *courtaysye* in 432, 445 reverses the order of *Quen* and *cortaysye* in 444 except “king” substitutes for “queen” in *kyndom*. The shift from *Quen* to *kyndom* anticipates the first occurrence of *kyng* in the poem three lines later, in the noun pair *quen oþer kyng*. The noun pair recurs at the end of stanza four, where the phrase *kyng and quene* accompanies *courtaysye*; at the end of stanza five *courtaysé* pairs with *kyng*. So the royal words accompanying the link word *courtaysye* and its variants shift from *Quen* to *kyndom* to *quen oþer kyng* to *kyng and quene* to *kyng*. But *kyndom*, unlike the other royal words in this list, is in the first line of its stanza, a shift from *Quen* in the first line of the preceding stanza. In the first line of stanza four the reference to *Saynt Poule* continues the shift towards masculine authority. And in the first line of stanza five the dreamer’s two separate references to himself as *I* place the dreamer himself in this succession of male authorities mentioned instead of the Queen. These shifts in the words referring to persons accompanying the link word *courtaysye* correspond with a similar,

gradual shift in gender reference within the other lines in the stanzas. The gradual shift in emphasis by way of variations in link words and accompanying words is therefore a kind of *précis* or epitome of the content of the entire stanzas these words begin and end; the link words, as noted, also establish the alliterative scheme in the first lines and the rhyme in the last lines. In this sense the themes and structure of each stanza are an extension of those in its first and last lines, each of which resembles a Platonist terminus¹⁶ and serves an important mnemotechnical role.

The phrase *court of þe kyndom of God alyue* shifts the emphasis from the *cortaysye* of the queen to the court as kingdom. *God alyue*, who is king, is the living God; the pairing of *Jesu* and *my Lady* in 453 is consistent with the shift towards male authority in the stanza. All of stanza four describes the structure of the body of *Jesu Kryst* (458); the title *Kryst* added in this second occurrence of *Jesu* emphasizes his authority even more. So *God alyue* is the resurrected, living Christ and also the individual believers who are members of his body. *God alyue* also signals a shift in focus from the pearl maiden's relationship to Mary to the relationship between the resurrected Christ and the members of his body.

The phrase *property in hytself beyng* (446, glossed as “special virtue inherent in itself” by Cawley) suggests something exclusive to and inherent in the nature of the court. The technical term *property*, like *pretermynable* (596, Osgood, liii), *poynnt deteryminable* (594), and *prosessyoun* (1096) reflect medieval adaptation of Platonist terminology.¹⁷ The phrase applies to a feature of heaven that receives a precise numerical (450-51) and geometrical (465-66)

¹⁶ In Platonist cosmology all geometrical figures proceed from their termini (a line from a point, a surface from a line, and a solid from a surface) just as all numbers proceed from One (the monad) and just as human souls proceed from celestial bodies in the course of acquiring a corporeal shell during their descent to earth. Macrobius, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, 96-101, 106-107, 124-37. Martianus Capella, *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, trans. William Harris Stahl and Richard Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977): 2:35, 264-66.

¹⁷ Christian Schäfer discusses the importance of Platonist technical terminology among authors of the third through sixth centuries; some of this terminology was transmitted, directly or indirectly, to medieval authors writing much later. *The Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite: An Introduction to the Structure and the Content of the Treatise On the Divine Names* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 4.

description. As stanza four shows, the relationships among the members of this court figure as relationships among body parts of the resurrected Christ. The two references to *alle* in 447-48 contribute to the technical precision of the description. To understand the special *property* of this court is to understand how statements in these two adjacent lines containing *alle* mirror each other: just as all new arrivals to the court through death or resurrection become kings or queens, each member of the court is king or queen of all of the members of the court. Presumably the distinction between king and queen is determined solely by the gender of each new arrival, such that the earthly superiority of king over queen does not apply to new arrivals, who are each others' equals. But Mary, the *meryest May*, ranks above the pearl maiden though both wear a crown. And the next stanza implies that as head of the body of the church Christ ranks above its other members even if an arm or a finger wears the counterpart of a crown in the form of a ring. The shift in Fitt VIII from *Quen*, with an emphasis on Mary, to *kyng*, with an emphasis on Christ, also establishes the superiority of Christ over Mary. So in this most egalitarian of royal courts a hierarchy nonetheless prevails. The unique *property* of the court here anticipates the description of the unique *propertez* (752) of the pearl maiden herself following her reference to the breast pearl as *lyke the reme of heuenesse clere* in connection with its presence *inmyddez my breste* (740).

The dreamer's vision of the heavenly city in Fitts XVI-XIX like that in its Apocalypse source includes only one king, Christ at the center of his throne (835; cf. Apocalypse 5:6), and makes no reference to Mary, but the poet changes the sex of the other inhabitants of the city who appear with Christ: they are male in the Apocalypse (14:4) but female in *Pearl* (869-72, 1099-100). The maiden's reference to the "Lambe3 vyue3 . . . As in þe Apocalyppe3 hit is sene" (785-87) and her statement that each soul in the city "Is to þat Lombe a worthyly wyf" (846) are consistent with this change. But her assertion that all new arrivals in the city are made *quen oþer kyng* (448) and the reference to *aldermen* (1119) show that Christ is not the only male in the city.

And neuer oþer 3et schal de pryue,
Bot vchon fayn of oþere3 hafyng,

And wolde her corouneȝ wern worþe þo fyue,
If possible were her mendyng.
(449-52)

The second quatrain of stanza three explains an aspect of the property of this court that is of a piece with the fact that all new arrivals are king or queen over all others: the fact that a new arrival can *neuer* (like *alle* and *non*, *neuer* allows for no exceptions) *depryve* any other member. No matter how many new arrivals are made king or queen, the kingship or queenship of individual members of this court remains undiluted, including Mary's queenship.

The reference to Five in line 448 integrates this passage into a symmetrical pattern of references to Five, Three, and Two that create a sequence of nested structures within the dialogue section.

Lines 450-52 describe an aspect of the emotional state of these court members resulting from their shared regal status. If any member's *mendyng* were possible, each member would wish that each other member's crown were worth five crowns (Osgood glosses *þo fyve* as "five of those"). The value of each of their crowns reflects their current state of virtue, which cannot be surpassed. Andrew and Waldron note that this figurative use of Five is idiomatic and also occurs in *Troilus and Criseyde*. The parallel statement in 849-50 (the only other occurrence of *fyf fyue* in the poem) that each maiden wishes each other maiden were five maidens, like this one, is consistent with impassibility, here expressed as the incapacity to experience any decrease in bliss: "Bot vchon enle we wolde were fyf-- / Pe mo the myryer, so God me blesse." The joy of the members of this court increases with each new arrival: "Pe mo þe myryer" (850), with Mary always the *myryst May* (435). The statement in 1114-15 describing court members' subtlety is consistent with both references to Five: though there are many of them, there is no overcrowding ("Paȝ þay wern fele, no pres in plyt").

These statements reflect the basis of medieval resurrection theology in Platonist regression, a fact generally unacknowledged by scholars; the relations among court members reflect the relationship between the numbers and the monad, which contains all numbers and exists outside the material constraints of space. The parallel between wishing each member's crown were worth five crowns and wishing each pearl maiden were five maidens is based on the Platonist understanding of the procession of numbers from the spherical or circular monad and of the head as a spherical

microcosm of both the body and the universe. These teachings were transmitted to the medieval West by Chalcidius in his commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*.¹⁸

There is a similar parallel between two statements regarding the relation of One to Three, again one in each half of the dialogue: "Pre wordez hat3 þou spoken at ene: / Vnavysed, for soþe, wern alle pre. / Þou ne woste in worlde quat on dot3 mene . . ." (291-93; cf. *þrydde*, 299) and

In Ierusalem þus my lemman swete
Twye3 for lombe wat3 taken þare,
By trw recorde of ayþer prophete,
For mode so meke and al hys fare.
The þryde tyme is þerto ful mete,
In Apokelype3 wryten ful 3are . . .
(829-34)

Both are statements about the relation of One to Three as a principle of textual structure; in both *þrydde/þryd* occurs along with reference to One (*ene, on*) and Two (*Twye3*). The fact that the three assertions (*wordez* as microcosms of statements) that comprise the dreamer's opening statement, all spoken *at ene*, are all false is a function of the fact that he does not understand a single one of them. Likewise the fact that Christ's sacrifice at Jerusalem is truly recorded by two prophets means that the third record, in the Apocalypse, must be true as well. So the same relation of the monad to a number that governs the hierarchy of the maidens governs textual hierarchy. Related to the dreamer's inability to understand one of his own words is the human inability to sing a single *þoynt* sung by the heavenly court (891) or enter a single *fote* into that court (970); these are conditions without exceptions.

Contributing to this same symmetrical pattern are four references to the relationship between One and Two, two references in each half of the dialogue (in 483 and 555 of the first half and in 674 and 949 of the second half), as a way of explaining the nature of heavenly reward. These are the only places where *two* occurs in the

¹⁸ *Timaeus*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, in *Collected Dialogues of Plato*, 1173. Chalcidius, *Timaeus: A Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus*, ed. J. H. Waszink, in *Plato latinus*, ed. Raymond Klubansky (London: Warburg Institute, 1962), 4:40, 228.

poem. In the first, the dreamer expresses his amazement that despite her having *lyfed not two zer in oure pede* (483) the maiden is made queen *on þe fyrst day* (486). In the second, some vineyard workers complain that each worker is paid a penny (*vchon inlyche a peny*, 546), including those that worked *bot on oure* (551), restated in 555 as *not hourez two*, a clear parallel to *not two zer* (483). In the third, the maiden’s reference to *Two men* underscores the similar access to Christ enjoyed by both the *ryztwys man* and the *harmlez hapel* (674-76). In the fourth, the maiden explains that the dreamer confuses *motez two*, the Old and New Jerusalem, in terms of the relationship between *þat on* (cf. *at ene*) and *þat oper* in two lines with paired prepositional phrases: “In þat on oure pes wat3 made at ene / . . . In þat oper is no3t bot pes to glene” (949-55).

These references to Five and Three together with a pair of references to Two in each half of the dialogue create nesting structures within the dialogue that mirror the nesting landscape structures framing the dialogue which, as the Introduction explains, are of a piece with bracketing effects associated with recurring words and phrases.

Bot my Lady of quom Jesu con spryng,
 Ho halde3 þe empire ouer vus ful hy3e;
 And þat dyplese3 non of oure gyng,
 For ho is Quene of cortaysye.
 (453-56)

Like the other final quatrains in Fitt VIII this one stresses hierarchical importance, here as in the first two as an aspect of the status of Mary. *Bot* indicates that what follows qualifies what precedes it, and this final quatrain makes it clear that the special authority Mary exercises over this otherwise egalitarian court derives from the fact that “Jesu con spryng” from her. The phrase *con spryng* recalls the fact that the dream began after the pearl *sprange* (13) from the dreamer and the dreamer’s spirit *sprang* from his body (61); the dreamer’s experience, like Dante’s, mirrors Christ’s resurrection and ascent to heaven. It also recalls the *spryngande spyce3* that “vp ne sponne / Of þat precios perle” (35-36) in the *erber*. The court members’ feelings about each other described in the preceding lines are consistent with their feelings about the authority bestowed upon the queen of courtesy: it *dyplese3 non*. Christ is *ful hy3e*, the top of the vertical hierarchy of upward and downward movements.

Of courtaisye, as sayt3 Saynt Poule,
Al arn we membre3 of Jesu Kryst:
As heued and arme and legg and naule
Temen to hys body ful trwe and tryste,
(457-60)

Stanza four adapts the scheme of *courtaysye* developed thus far in Fitt VIII such that here the link word epitomizes a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 12: the hierarchy in the court of heaven is consistent with Paul's metaphor of the relation of Christ to individual Christians based on the relations among more and less exalted body parts. This use of a brief paraphrase of one biblical passage to introduce a lengthy paraphrase of another biblical passage resembles the use of a paraphrase of the Beatitudes to prepare for a paraphrase of the Jonah story in *Patience*. *Al* here recalls *alle* in 447-48: all new arrivals are king or queen of the entire realm because all are members of Christ. Much as the first three stanzas explain Mary's special authority in terms of the bodily relation of mother to child in childbearing, this stanza explains relations among individual Christians in terms of their common share in Christ's body. Though *naule* has been taken to refer to a finger- or toenail, most editors translate it as "navel,"¹⁹ so that it contributes to a pattern of central figures that include the pearl in the middle of the maiden's breast (221-22, 740) and the Lamb in the middle of the throne (835). But probably the reference is deliberately ambiguous; *naule* ends a line that moves from the head to the extremities.

This stanza offers parallels with the description of the pentangle in *Sir Gawain: courtaysye* (653) is one of the five virtues associated with the fifth point of the pentangle and *trwe* is cognate with the *trawpe* (626) the entire pentangle represents. While *fynger* in 466 is a closer parallel to the *fvue fyngres* (641) associated with the second point of the pentangle, *arme and legg and naule* parallel the wounds of Christ (642) associated with the third point and *heued* may correspond with the *fvue wyttez* (640) of the first point. The adjective pair *trwe and tryste* might as easily apply to the interconnectedness of

¹⁹ For example, Cawley, Gollancz and Hillmann translate it as "navel," as does William Vantuono in *Pearl: An Edition with Verse Translation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). Osgood disagrees without offering a specific alternative, and Gordon takes it to mean "nail." Andrew and Waldron translate it as "belly."

the five groups of five things represented by the pentangle. Gordon's emendation of MS. *tyste* to *tryste* ("faithfully"), unlike Osgood's emendation to *tyzte*, is (as Gordon notes) consistent with the frequent appearance of *true and tryste* in Middle English, but William Vantuono argues that *tyste* in the sense of "joined" or "woven together" fits the context. The phrase describes connections among parts of the body of Christ in language that could also describe the setting of a jewel, anticipating the references to Christ being *as trwe as ston* (822), to the dreamer's *trwe entent* (1191) after he returns to the *erber*, and to the *trw recorde of ayber prophete* (831) that confirms Christ's sacrifice in Jerusalem. Within the general pattern of word pairings 459 stands out, with four nouns each joined to the next by *and*, two nouns in each half-line. The word *ful* (like *al*, *neuer*, and *non*) refers to a condition without exception, much as do the phrases *wythouten spot* in Fitt I and *wythouten mote* in Fitt XVI.

The reference to the relationship of the *heued* to the body here parallels references to relationships between the *heued* or *hed(e)* and other things where the word recurs. The *heued* (974) of the stream, its source, is the vantage point for the vision of the heavenly city. The maiden's crown is described in terms of the absence of other *werle* or circle on her head: "To hed had ho non other werle" (209). The dreamer's reference to "My hede vpon þat hylle" (1172) associates his head with the place where the pearl was lost.

Ry3t so is vch a Krysten sawle
 A longande lym to the Mayster of myste.
 Penne loke what hate oþer any gawle
 Is tached oþer tyzed þy lymme3 bytwyste.
 (461-64)

The word *vch* continues the pattern of words specifying a condition without exception. Just as the pearl is "So rounde, so reken in vche araye" (5), "vch a Krysten sawle" is a "longande lym to the Mayster." Each Christian soul serves as a body part; the maiden refers not only to the body of the *Mayster* but also the body of the disembodied dreamer (*þy lymme3*). Osgood and Gollancz take *myste* to mean *myzte* "might," but *myste* in the sense of "spiritual mysteries" (Gordon, Vantuono) is more consistent with 1 Corinthians 12. The maiden's instruction that the dreamer *loke* to the structure of his own body is consistent with the references to the effect of seeing the dreamscapes on the dreamer (for example, 85-86, 121-48, 169-84,

1153-56). The *hate oþer any gawle* he is told to look for does not exist here, another condition without exception. No member of the heavenly court feels any resentment towards any other member, any more than one of the dreamer's limbs can resent another limb. The technical language of 464, which includes the adjective pair *tached oþer tyzed* and is consonant with a jeweler's craft, resembles the technical language used to describe the pentangle in *Sir Gawain*, an *endeles knot* (630) each of whose lines "vmbelappez and loukez in oþer" (628). The members of the body of Christ are as interdependent and as mutually intertwined as the lines and points of the pentangle. The previous stanza's assertion that each maiden wishes each other maiden's crown were worth five crowns is consistent with this parallel, since each of the five points of the pentangle is associated with a group of five things. The interdependence of parts of the recursive, scaling geometry of the pentangle mirrors the interdependence of parts of Christ's body.

Py heued hatz nauþer greme ne gryste,
 On arme oþer fynger þaʒ þou ber byʒe.
 So fare we alle wyth luf and lyste
 To kyng and quene by cortaysye.
 (465-68)

Like the other final quatrains in this *fitt* this one focuses on the top of a hierarchy, here the *heued*, just mentioned in 459. Unless the *heued* is one of the *lymmes*, from the middle quatrain to the final quatrain there is a shift from a focus on relationships among limbs to a focus on relationships between head and limbs. An analogous shift occurs between the middle and final quatrains of stanza three, from relationships among members of the court of heaven in general to the specific relationship between Mary and the other members. Middle English words for "head" and "brains" link all three of the poem's main settings: The narrator falls down and sleeps with his *hede vpon þat hylle* (1172) in the *erber* because the odor from the blooms reaches his *hernez* (58). Moving alongside the stream fills his *brayneʒ* with bliss (126). He sees the crown on the maiden's *hed* (209) in his vision of her from Eden. The two references to *heued* in this stanza clarify relationships in the New Jerusalem, which the dreamer views after arriving at the *heued* (974) of the stream.

The head's ability to feel *nauther greme ne gryste* parallels the lack of *hate oþer any gawle* among the limbs, a further development of the

handling of emotional relationships in this court by way of yet another in a sequence of noun pairs that includes *arme oþer fynger, luf and lyste*, and *kyng and quene*. The *luf and lyste* among court members contrasts with *hate oþer any gawle* and with *greme ne gryste*. Vantuono glosses *lyste* as “happiness,” consistent with seeing Fitt VIII as developing the treatment of *blysse* in Fitt VII. *So fare we alle* contributes to the sequence of conditions without exception. The word *fare* suggests that the court members’ movement is a function of their emotional relationships,²⁰ especially in light of the occurrence of the word as part of the description of the dreamer’s experience of Eden (*I con fare*, 147; cf. 129); *fare* also refers to the demeanor of the Lamb in Jerusalem (832). The conception of the spherical head as microcosm of the body underlies the reference to the *byze* on arm or finger which causes the head no resentment. This relationship comes by way of the equivalence of the sphere and the circle with the monad and God in Christian Platonism. In this passage the implicit circular crown on the head and the circular rings on two smaller scales worn by the arm or finger are consistent with Platonist schemes of emanation (procession) and regression. Here each Christian is a monad, a microcosm of the group of all Christians comprising the body of Christ, so that like Christ and Mary each member of the heavenly court wears a crown. This fitt describes a heavenly hierarchy resembling a bodily hierarchy in which the superiority of Christ and Mary is complicated through a nested involution of circles within circles; the equal status of all members of the Christian body results from the fact that each resembles the head. As part of this microcosmic figuration each maiden figures as a pearl but also bears many pearls as ornaments with the most important one in the middle of the breast. The tripartite hierarchy of different-sized circles here parallels the hierarchy of three ranks of nobility referred to in 489-92, where the dreamer contends that the rank of *countes* or *lady* suits the maiden better than *quene*; his statement that the maiden was *nerre þen aunte or nece* (233) is similar. The relationships within the triad of circles of different sizes in this paraphrase parallel the relationships among the three nested main settings in *Pearl*.

²⁰ Augustine offers a similar explanation for the absence of envy among Christians in heaven, following a discussion of their bodily movement; he observes that in a human body the finger does not want to be the eye, in *City of God*, bk. 22, ch. 30.

‘Cortaysé’, quod I, ‘I leue,
And charyté grete, be yow among,
Bot my speche þat yow ne greue,
(469-71)

As mentioned, 471 echoes 422 in a way that creates a frame for the maiden’s discussion of emotional relationships in the heavenly city, and here the dreamer elaborates further on the theme. A difference from stanza one is the dreamer’s use of the plural pronoun *yow* in 470 and 471 (cf. *þou* in 423) before switching back to the singular pronouns *Þyselƿ* and *þe* in 473 and 474. There is then a sequence of persons he is concerned not to displease with his words, from *my Lorde* (362) to the pearl maiden (421-23) to the collective members of the court (470-71). The sequence culminates in the use of the link word *þaye* with reference again to Christ in the sense of “please” regarding the dreamer’s movement in Fitt XX; there the dreamer states: “Hit payed hym not þat I so flonc / Ouer meruelous mere3 . . . (1165-66).

The fact that *Cortaysé* in 469 differs in spelling from all other occurrences of the link word might be attributed to the influence on the scribe of *charyté* in the next line. Whether the spelling of *Cortaysé* is scribal or not, together with *charyté* it creates a unique noun pair. It is important to consider this unique spelling of the link word in the context of the spelling of the other occurrences of the link word closest to it which may represent an important shift emendation can obscure. In the manuscript *cortaysye* appears in 480 and 481, in which lines Gollancz emends to *cortaysye*, though Cawley, Gordon, Stanbury and Vantuono emend in both lines to *cortaysé*. The emendation to *cortaysye* in 480 and 481 makes the word consistent with the rhyme scheme, whereas the more common emendation creates a shift from *cortaysye* in 469 to *cortaysé* in the final three occurrences of the link word. Emendation of one kind or the other in 480 and 481 makes sense since the adjective *cortaysye* is inconsistent with the rhyme scheme and syntax. But the manuscript spellings of the last four occurrences of the link word are anticipated by the manuscript spelling of the link word in 433 and may reflect a broad shift towards greater consonance with *charité*. Such a shift creates a new, concluding resonance for the link word with the key Christian concept of *caritas*. It is noteworthy that this concluding and perhaps summative resonance occurs within a speech by the dreamer rather than the maiden. Lines 469-70 constitute a concession to the

maiden's argument right before the dreamer again questions it, a concession missing from the first stanza.

Only line 472, overlooked by the scribe, is missing from the poem's unique manuscript.

Pyself in heuen ouer hyȝ þou heue,
 To make þe quen that watȝ so ȝonge.
 What more honour moȝte he acheue
 Þat hade endured in worlde stronge,
 And lyued in penaunce hys lyueȝ longe
 Wyth bodily bale hym blysse to byye?
 What more worschyp moȝt he fonge
 Þen corounde be kyng by cortaysé?
 (473-80)

Despite the progress in the dreamer's understanding of the maiden's status indicated by the first lines of the fifth stanza, in the last two quatrains of the stanza he begins a further development, continued in the first stanza of the next fitt, of the objection to the maiden's queenship he raises in the first stanza. Line 473 contributes to the pattern of references to vertical movement in the poem, and *heue* recalls the maiden's sharp criticism of the dreamer's language early in the dialogue ("Deme now þyself if þou con dayly / As man to God wordeȝ schulde heue," 313-14), lines that rebuke the dreamer for improperly sending his words upwards. Though she makes it clear in the previous fitt that the Lord himself took her in marriage and crowned her queen despite her tender age (412-15), he accuses her of having inappropriately made herself queen. It is an especially striking example of the obtuseness of this dreamer. The phrase *so ȝonge* here recalls her words *ful ȝong and tender of age* (412) and anticipates his statement of her age as *not two ȝer* (483).

The masculine pronouns in what follows (*he*, 475; *hys*, 477; *hym*, 478; *he*, emended by Gollancz, Gordon, Osgood and Stanbury from *ho*, 479) consolidate the shift from feminine to masculine referents in the course of the fitt as described above, climaxing with *kyng* at the end of the fitt.

The gist of the dreamer's objection here and in the next stanza is that someone not yet two years old who could not know God or pray to him could not possibly have higher status in heaven than someone who has undergone great suffering through a long life of penance. Rather than being made queen upon arrival in heaven, he

posits, she should occupy a lower rank of nobility. The notion he invokes that *bodily bale* on earth makes possible heavenly *blysse* is a medieval theological commonplace, whereby a *tempus flendi* (time of weeping) on earth makes possible a *tempus ridendi* (time of laughing) in heaven, and vice versa.²¹ Here this invocation of orthodox doctrine brings to a kind of climax the multifaceted treatment of emotion in Fitts VII and VIII for which the references to the noun pair *bale* and *blysse* in 373 and 478 serve as a kind of frame. The notion that *blysse* is something one can *byye* prepares for the treatment of achieving salvation in terms of labor for money in the paraphrase of the vineyard parable that follows. The final two occurrences of the link word (480, 481) are associated with the notion of earned reward the dreamer outlines here. He says that to be crowned king in heaven after a lifetime of penance is an appropriate form of courtesy and that if what the maiden says is true the courtesy of heaven is too easy to achieve. The second line of Fitt IX, “Ȝyf hyt be soth that þou coneȝ saye,” recalls the question “may þys be trwe?” in the first line of Fitt VIII, in another of the ways the lines near its beginning and end create a frame for Fitt VIII.

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²¹ Kevin Marti, “Dante’s ‘Baptism’ and the Theology of the Body in ‘Purgatorio’ 1-2,” *Traditio* 45 (1989/90): 169-90.