Theological Distinctions, Their Collections and Their Effects: The Example of *In Abdiam* and *In Naum*[*]

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Collections of theological distinctions belong to the least investigated texts of medieval theological literature, even if they are quite common in twelfth- and thirteenth-century codices of sermons and theological *miscellanea*. They are neither attractive nor particularly interesting, or even an easy subject to study. Such collections are copied without title, and their editors are unknown; their *incipits* and *explicits* bear almost no information because the size and form of these collections may vary item by item (seemingly according to the mind of their scribes). These collections are aggregates of numerous shorter texts called here "distinctions." The material in the collections has the same pattern but no proper context: it may derive from identified and unidentifiable sources alike, which may be also edited and unedited, dated (from patristic times to the later twelfth century) and undatable, with or without established authorship. The sheer number of such collections in manuscripts (and the very limited number of printed ones) add to the problem of comprehending this text type.

The present contribution addresses three main problems raised by this genre. First it attempts to describe theological distinction as a characteristic form of thought and text simultaneously, common to many theological works of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The collection of theological distinctions is the second subject, a particular text type of this period. These collections served as repositories of decontextualised distinctions, and thus can be considered as special, anonymous *florilegia*. The third part investigates the afterlife of two longer texts (an

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In Abdiam and an *In Naum*) composed from distinctions. The two texts are biblical commentaries, and both suffered similar forms of textual deterioration as their incomplete, differing or fragmented copies show. Through examples from unedited manuscripts, the study explains the failures of the manuscript tradition of these works with the influence of distinction collections as a special, formless and alterable text type.

1. Theological distinctions

"Theological distinction," as this paper uses the term, is a structured unit of thought and text at once, concrete manifestation of an intellectual technique particular to twelfth- and thirteenth-century scholasticism. The function of the distinction was to structure and organise the discourse. A theological distinction is the result of an intellectual act, the *divisio*, that orders several things under one aspect, while also marking the differences between them.[1] An author creates a *divisio* first by "dividing" (*dividere*) a concept, that is, "making distinctions" (*distinguere*) between its various aspects, followed by the clarification of these different aspects.[2] The terms twelfth-century authors commonly use to name this act are *dividere*, *distinguere*, *distinctio*.

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1 For *divisio* as a technique see the *Didascalicon* of Hugh of Saint-Victor, III. x: *Modus legendi in dividendo constat. ... ratione investigamus, ad quam proprie pertinet dividere, quando ab universalibus ad particularia descendimus dividendo et singulorum naturas investigando*; III, xii: *ingenium dividendo investigat et invenit*; VI, xii: *Divisio fit et partitione et investigatione. Partiendo dividimus, quando ea quae confusa sunt, distinguimus* (*PL* 176, cols. 772AD, 809A) ("The method of reading lies in dividing. [...] we investigate by using reason, to which particularly pertains division, when we descend from the universal to the particular by dividing and investigating the nature of the single elements. III, xii: the ingenium investigates and discovers by dividing; VI, xii: Division is made by partition and investigation. We divide things by partition, when we separate the confused elements.")

2 See *In Naum*: *Hic nobis suboritur a latere perutilis divisio, hic nobis quadrifariae divisionis data est occasio.* (*PL* 96, col. 718B) [Here, accidentally, a most useful division emerges; here an opportunity is given to us to make a four-fold division.]. For the joint usage of *distinguere* (hence 'distinction') and *dividere* (hence 'division') in a spiritual work of the period, see Richard of St. Victor's *Beniamin minor* lxxiv: *Possumus tamen illa quae in hac vita haberi potest, Dei cognitionem, tribus gradibus distinguere, et secundum triplicem graduum differentiam per tres coelos dividere.* ("We can distinguish by three grades that cognition of God which is possible in this life, and [we can] divide it into three heavens,

The act of *divisio* manifested itself in a characteristic text type: the *divisio* or *distinctio* (the present paper refers to it as "distinction," or due to its content, "theological distinction"). In written form, a *divisio* produces an immediately discernable, stereotypical pattern. Theological distinctions always contain a declaration of the number of notions drawn together, usually set at the beginning; then follows the elaboration of each individual notion. The following example shows all elements of such a distinction.

> Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum [Isa 6,1] *etc. Tres sunt visiones: Prima a creatura mundi, de qua Apostolus:* Invisibilia Dei a creatura mundi [Rm 1,20] *etc. Secunda a puritate fidei, de qua idem:* Videmus nunc per speculum [1Cor 13,12], *etc. Tertia a claritate Dei et sponsi, de qua idem:* Tunc autem facie ad faciem [ibid.]. [...][3]
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> *I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated*, etc. There are three visions: the first from the creation of the world, about which the Apostle [said], "the invisible things of God from the creation of the world [are clearly seen]" etc. The second from the purity of faith, about which he [said], "We see now through a mirror" etc. The third from the clarity of God and the Bridegroom, on which he [said], "but then face to face."

Here the theme of the distinction, "vision" (of God), is given by the biblical lemma, and the author "divides" the notion of "vision" into three. In other words, he draws together three partly similar notions under the term "vision"—namely, three forms of the cognition of God (from creation, from faith, and the eschatological vision). Each notion is supported by its own biblical reference; even the exegetical origin of the given theological distinction is clearly visible as the three "visions" explain the same biblical verse, Isa 6,1.

A remarkable feature of the theological distinction is that it may be amplified. The individual notions (whose number is defined by the *divisio*) can be elaborated in detail and contrasted to the others, as the

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according to the three-fold difference of those grades.") *PL* 196, col. 53C. This distinction of Richard found its way to the *Canticle* commentary of Thomas Cisterciensis, see *PL* 206, col. 417CD.

3 *Victorine Miscellanea* III, xxii. *PL* 177, col. 646D. If the context does not demand otherwise, the Douay-Rheims translation is used. As the form and extent of theological distinctions are often subject to reduction, and biblical themata are often lost, a more typical, later form of this distinction could be something like this: *Tres sunt visiones. Prima a creatura mundi. Secunda a puritate fidei. Tertia a claritate Dei.*

following example, taken from the rather obscure *De contemplatione* of a Ps.-Hugh of St. Victor, may demonstrate.[4]

> Beatus vir cuius est auxilium abs te, ascensiones in corde suo disposuit [Ps 83:6]. *Tres sunt ascensiones Christi in actu. Nostre quoque tres. Prima in actu. Secunda in affectu. Tercia in intellectu.*
> *Prius enim ascendit Christus in montem. Demum in crucem. Ad ultimum ad patrem. In monte docuit discipulos, in cruce redemit captivos, in celo glorificavit electos.*
> *In monte doctrinam protulit humilitatis. In cruce formam expressit caritatis, in celo coronam prebuit felicitatis.*
> *In monte docendo mundum calcavit, in cruce paciendo infernum spoliavit. Ad patrem ascendendo celum ditavit.*
> *In primo calcavit ignorantiam, in secundo superbiam, in tercio miseriam. Primo celum [read cecum] illuminavit pulsa ignorantia. Secundo superbum humiliavit captivata superbia. Tercio humiliatum felicitavit exterminata miseria. [...]*
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> [*Blessed is the man whose help is from thee: in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps* [Ps 83:6]. Three are the ascents of Christ in action. Ours are also three, being the first in action, the second in affect, the third in intellect. For first Christ ascended the mount, then the cross, finally to the Father. On the mount he taught the disciples; on the cross he redeemed the prisoners; in heaven he glorified the Chosen. On the mount he presented the doctrine of humility; on the

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4 Edited by Roger Baron as *Hugues de St. Victor. De contemplatione et ejus speciebus* (Tournai: Desclée, 1955). Although the edition attributes it to Hugh, the authorship of the work is uncertain. A Ps.-Hugh of St. Victor is now the consensus, a student or follower of Hugh, presumably Victorine himself, see István Bejczy, "*De contemplatione et eius speciebus*. A work falsely attributed to Hugh of Saint-Victor," *Studi Medievali*, 3rd series 45 (2004): 433–43, and R.M.W. Stammberger, "Die Edition der Werke des Hugo von Sankt Viktor (+1141) durch Abt Gilduin von Sankt Viktor (+1155): Eine Rekonstruktion," in *Schrift, Schreiber, Schenker. Studien zur Pariser Abtei Sankt Viktor und den Viktorinern* 1, ed. Rainer Berndt (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005), 173. Quotation from *De contemplatione*, in Paris, BNF, lat. 13577 (text 'S' of Baron), fol. 65ra, cf. ed. Baron 1954, 47. Unlike the other family of the text, edited as the main text by Baron and presented in recent histories of mysticism (see Kurt Ruh, *Geschichte der abendländischen Mystik* 1 (Munich: Beck, 1990), 370–80, and Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, 4 vols., vol. II, *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the Twelfth Century* (New York: Crossroads, 1994), 387–90, in 'S' these lines constitute the beginning of the treatise. Stammberger (*ibid.*) gives the most recent *census* of the known manuscripts of the work: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud. Misc. 409, Paris, BNF, lat. 13577, 14366 14699, and 14872, Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève, 1432, Cambridge, Pembroke College, 9, and Padova, Biblioteca universitaria, 1225.

cross he has shown the figure of charity; in heaven offerred the crown of happiness.
On the mount he trod the world, by teaching; on the cross he despoiled hell, by suffering; by ascending to the Father, he enriched heaven.
In the first [ascent] he trod ignorance; in the second, pride; in the third, misery. By the first one he enlightened the blind, having dispelled ignorance; by the second, he humiliated the proud one, having captured pride; by the third, he made the humiliated happy, by having destroying misery.]

The *divisio* here, connected to a biblical lemma (Ps 83,6), defines Christ's ascents as three, according to three places (the mount, the cross and heaven). Subsequently, the distinction is amplified turn by turn with new modules, that is, his various deeds performed at those places, considered from various aspects. The deeds pertaining to the different places are set in an artificial order and are presented by gradually elaborated parallels: elements of the first branch, pertaining to the ascent to the mount (teaching, trodding the world and ignorance and enlightening), have their counterparts in the two other branches. In other divisions the parallelism is more visible, as the definition of the number, e.g. *tres sunt ... tria sunt ... triplex ...*, is followed by the gradual and parallel elaboration of the single branches: *Prima ... secunda ... tertia ... Prima ... secunda ... tertia.*

These compositional rules are characteristic to theological distinctions and also set it apart from the so-called biblical distinction. Biblical distinction and collections of biblical distinctions are well-established terms in the history of exegesis for a genre emerging in the later twelfth century.[5] The biblical distinction makes distinctions between the different metaphorical meanings of the same word and justifies the different meanings by biblical (or extrabiblical) references. It has its own stereotypical form, similar to a dictionary item (thus different from the theological distinction): it begins with the given word (e.g. "lion"),

5 On the development of the concept of *distinctio* and the evolution of the genre of (biblical) distinctions, see R. H. and M. A. Rouse, "Biblical *Distinctiones* in the Thirteenth Century," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire de moyen âge* 41 (1974): 27–37, and Richard H. and Mary A. Rouse, "*Statim invenire*: Schools, Preachers, and New Attitudes to the Page," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 201–25. The meaning of (theological) "distinction," as the present paper uses, applies to the very earliest examples the Rouses bring for the term "distinction" (taken from Peter Lombard and the Comestor), but does not apply to later examples where the meaning of the term is gradually narrowed to biblical distinctions.

continues with its first metaphorical meaning (e.g. "Christ"), gives its justification with references (e.g. "prevailed the lion of the tribe of Juda" [Rev 5,5]), then presents the second metaphorical meaning with its justification and so on.[6] The first collections of biblical distinctions—the *Summa seu Distinctiones Abel* of Petrus Cantor (d.1197), the *Distinctiones* (or *Summa "Quot modis"*) of Alanus ab Insulis (d.1202), and the *Liber Angelus* of Garnier of Rochefort (d.c.1225)[7]—are contemporaneous with the anonymous collections of theological distinctions.

Another substantial difference between biblical and theological distinctions is that of function. The function of a biblical one is to define the allegorical meanings of a word. Theological distinctions have no such definite function, nor a definite subject, since this kind of distinction is rather a formula used to organise ideas. This functional difference also may explain the different means of their preservation: a collection of biblical distinctions is usually a well-defined corpus with ordered and structured content, attached to an identified author; theological distinction collections are undefined, unordered and often unstructured heaps without author.

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6 As a typical example of the genre, a distinction of Alan of Lille gives the following meanings for the word 'lion,' each justified by biblical references: Christ, the rich man, the devil, the Antichrist, the righteous man (both in this life and after), the robber, the convertite Jew: *Distinctiones*, *PL* 210, col. 835AD. This biblical distinction with all its material could be transformed into a theological one beginning *Septem* (*or* octo) *sunt leones*.

7 A partial edition of the *Distinctiones Abel*, printed as Meliton's *Clavis*, was given by J.-B. Pitra: *Spicilegium Solesmense* vol. III pars i, 1–307 (1865) and *Analecta Sacra, Spicilegio Solesmensi parata*, vol. II, 6–127 (1884). The *Distinctiones* of Alan is edited in *PL* 210, col. 685–1101, Garnier's *Liber (qui dicitur) Angelus* (also attributed to Adam Scotus of Dryburgh OPraem) is printed as Rabanus Maurus' *Allegoriae* (*PL* 112, col. 849–1088). On Alan's work (and also on the problems concerning the so-called biblical distinctions) see Tuija Ainonen's article, "Manuscripts, Editions and Textual Interpretation: Alan of Lille's Distinction Collection Summa 'Quot modis' and the Meaning of Words," in *Methods and the Medievalist*, ed. Marko Lamberg, Jesse Keskiaho et al. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 12–37.

2. Uses of theological distinctions: sermons, collections and individual works

In a twelfth- and thirteenth-century context, theological distinctions were a powerful means to organise ideas. The way the distinction was constructed granted it clarity, brevity and contrast, that is, those elementary features which make something memorable. Distinctions were useful and popular: they appeared in various theological works which demanded effective communication, including didactic works, sermons, and works devoted to the edification of the faithful. In the manuscript material of the period, there are three particular text types where they abound: sermons (usually copied in groups), collections of theological distinctions, and a handful of works composed exclusively from distinctions.

a) Sermons

A typical milieu of theological distinctions are collections of twelfth-century sermons preserved usually in later twelfth- and thirteenth-century codices. The most favoured authors of these collections are, besides the unidentified and anonymous ones, Peter Comestor (or Manducator, d.1179), Peter Lombard (d.1160), Gebuinus Trecensis (Gebuin of Troyes, d.1150), Gaufridus Babuin (Geoffroy Babion, d.1158), sometimes Bernard of Clairvaux (d.1153), and Maurice de Sully (d.1196). Unlike the later scholastic (or thematic) sermons where the mechanic and systematic division of the thema defines the structure, many of these twelfth-century sermons use theological distinctions as the organising principle. In such sermons, distinctions are embedded into a larger context, being anchored with biblical references; they often evolve from the biblical *thema* of the sermon, and the points of division are supported by biblical references.

b) Collections of theological distinctions

Collections of theological distinctions belong to an ambiguous genre. They often appear together with sermons, and present a classification problem for the librarian—manuscript catalogues name this type of text sometimes "theological distinctions," but also "thèmes de sermons," "distinctions," "notes," "extracts," "sententiae" or even "commonplaces." Distinction collections are, basically, mere accumulations of numerous shorter texts (literally dozens to hundreds) which usually have a similar structure. These collections lack everything that made a text structured

at that time: they have neither chapter division nor preface, and no alphabetical or thematical order can be observed. The sole ordering principle seems to be, in better cases, the number: distinctions beginning with the *divisio* based on the same number are grouped together, followed by distinctions beginning with another number. Neither the collections nor their distinctions are linked to any author; the size and quality of these collections vary. The status of these collections also varies: sometimes they receive a prominent place, sometimes they are copied just to fill blank spaces.

The content of these collections is the same: distinctions in a "processed" form, grouped together, often according to the number they are built on. The following sample can represent the entire class: it is taken from a relatively well-ordered collection, containing exclusively distinctions based on the number three, from a thirteenth-century manuscript (London, British Library, Royal 10 C III).[8]

(168va) *Tria sunt hominum genera per tres viros illos designata, scilicet Abraham, Ysaac et Iacob. ... ¶ Tres sunt ascensiones Christi in actu ... ¶ Affectualis ascensio est triplex ... ¶ Triplex est sensus scripturarum, hystoricus, moralis, misticus. Secundum habet triplicem sensum; triplici introductione introducitur anima ad Christum... (169ra) ¶ Tria sunt turbarum genera, una bona, altera mala, tertia media. Prima virtutum, secunda vitiorum, tertia hominum... (169rb) ¶ Tria hominum genera sub habitu religionis degentia psalmista ponit ubi dicit, 'Audiam quid loquatur in me deus'* [Ps 84,9]... (169va) ¶ *Triplex est avaricia. Primum ergo avaricie est immoderate facultatem propriam retinere... ¶ Triplex est misericordia. Prima species est misericordie facultatis erogatio ... ¶ Tres species habet fervor dilectionis. Prima est compassio... ¶ Tria sunt bona coniugii, fides, spes prolis, unitas sacramenti... (169vb) ¶ Tria sunt servorum genera. Quidam sunt fideles, quidam prudentes, quidam fideles pariter et prudentes ... ¶ Practica vita in tres dividitur species, in solitariam, in domesticam, in politicam ... ¶ Tres sunt Christi adventus, primus hystoricus qui precessit in humilitate. Secundus moralis ... ¶ Tres sunt cause persecutionis, ter siquidem in causam ducimur. Primo statur ante hominem. Secundo ante angelum. Tercio ante deum. ...* (170ra) *... ¶ Tribus modis omnis culpa perpetratur sicut in primo Adam didicimus, suggestione, delectatione, consensu... ¶ Per tria peccavit Adam, per mulierem, per serpentem, per arborem..* (170rb) ¶ *Tres sunt cause cur angelus sine spe recuperationis est dampnatus... ¶ Triplex est paupertas. Est paupertas sensus, est census, est spiritus ... ¶ Tria sunt genera electorum. Alii eliguntur ad officium et regnum, alii ad officium tantum, alii ad regnum tantum... ¶ Tres sunt quibus reconciliari debemus, hominibus, angelis, deo. ...* (170va) *... ¶ Triplici*

8 The description of the manuscript can be accessed at the homepage of the British Library (http://www.bl.uk).

morbo laborat genus humanum, principio, medio, fine, id est nativitate, vita, et morte. Nativitas erat immunda, vita perversa, mors perniciosa.[9]

Three are the kinds of men, marked by those three men, namely Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ... ¶ Three are the ascents of Christ in action ... ¶ The affectual ascent is three-fold ... ¶ Three-fold is the sense of the Scripture: historical, moral, mystical. The second one has a three-fold sense; by a three-fold introduction is the soul introduced to Christ ... ¶ Three are the kinds of crowds: one is good, another is evil, the third is neutral. The first [crowd] is of virtues, the second is of vices, the third is of men ... ¶ Three kinds of men wearing religious habits marked the Psalmist where he said, I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me. ... ¶ Three-fold is greed. The first feature of greed is to obtain one's own possessions without restraint ... ¶ Three-fold is mercy. The first kind of mercy is paying out supplies ... ¶ Three are the kinds of passion of love: the first being compassion ... ¶ Three goods has marriage: faith, hope for a child, unity of the sacrament ... ¶ Three are the kinds of servants: some are faithful, some are prudent, some are both faithful and prudent ... ¶ The active life is divided into three kinds, into the solitary, into the domestic, into the political. ... ¶ Three advents has Christ: the first is the historical one which went before, into humility; the second one is the moral one ... ¶ Three causes has persecution, as three times we are dragged into court. The first time we stand in front of man; the second time, in front of an angel; the third time, in front of God. ... ¶ In three ways are all sins perpetrated, as we learned from the case of the first Adam: by suggestion, by enjoyment, by consent ... ¶ Through three things did Adam sin: by the woman, by the serpent, by the tree. ... ¶ Three are the reasons for which the angel is condemned without hope of restitution ... ¶ Three-fold is poverty: there is a poverty of eyes, of wealth, of spirit. ... ¶ Three are the kinds of the chosen. Some are chosen to bear office and reign; others only to bear office, others only to reign ... ¶ There are three things with which we must be reconciled: men, angels, God. ... ¶ From three illnesses does mankind suffer: from the beginning, the middle, the end—that is, by birth, life and death. Birth was unclean, life [is] twisted, and death [is] dangerous.

Although these collections are always copied without name, and the distinctions bear no sign of their origin, in some cases their source can be identified. From the text above, *Triplex est sensus scripturarum* and *Triplici morbo laborat* are from Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153);[10] *Tria sunt turbarum genera* seems to be derived from an inedited sermon by an

9 The list gives only the incipits from the first folios of the collection (which is the fourth such collection in the codex according to the catalogue). It covers five folios and consists of 51 distinctions: London, British Library, Royal 10 C iii, fol. 168va–172va.

10 The first is from *Sermo 92 de diversis*, the other is *Sententiae* series II sent. 31 (SBO vol. 6/1, 346 and 6/2, 32).

anonymous author.[11] *Tres sunt ascensiones Christi* and *Affectualis ascensio est triplex* are distinctions excerpted from the already mentioned *De contemplatione*, while *Tres sunt cause persecutionis* is taken from *In Naum*:[12] both works lack convincing authorship and acceptable dating.

The identification of the sources of these distinctions (and of the sources in other collections) permits one to draw a few conclusions. The first and the most obvious is that (at least some of) these distinctions are not autonomous texts created in order to form such collections, but are rather results of the disintegration of preexistent texts. Many of these short texts are extracted from Christian theological sources of various periods (from Patristic times to the late twelfth century); their sole common point is that they convey an idea which is (or can be) formulated in the form of division. Therefore, such collections can be considered as special *florilegia*, transmitting the once usable thoughts without crediting the authors.

A comparison to the originals shows that in such collections distinctions appear in a "processed" form: taken out of their original context, they are reduced to an acceptable theological idea. The level of reduction may vary. The introducing biblical lemma often disappears; although the basic structure (given by the *divisio*) is kept, less important clauses and biblical references may be abbreviated or entirely jettisoned. The length of such distinctions ranges from one paragraph down to a single sentence; in some cases, different collections preserve variants of the same original distinction, reduced in length or simplified in structure to different degree.

These features outline well the typical problems concerning the entire "genre" of such collections. The question of authorship cannot be posed: instead of an "author" here one can see, without clear contours, excerptor, scribe and editor. Dating is also problematic: a systematic study of the sources of the distinctions may result in a *terminus a quo* and the codex perhaps can give a *terminus ante quem.* Most often, however, such investigations can confirm only what was known already: these collections are usually mid- or late-twelfth-century texts, based on the theological literature written until then, preserved in late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century codices. Another difficulty is the inaccessibility

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[11] Cf. sermon 15 (*sermo ad populum*) of Oxford, Bodleian Library, 807, fol. 105v–106r.

[12] Cf. *In Naum* 45, *PL* 96, col. 727AC.

of these texts. Hundreds of such collections remain in manuscripts, without any classification or census; manuscript catalogues classify them under various names, and offer little or no help. Distinction collections are usually inedited (to modern editors they may seem to be texts without structure or any particular use). One of the very few printed texts which is comparable to this kind of source is the immense, presumably Victorine collection edited as *Miscellanea*.[13] Its distinctions (called *titulus* and *capitulum* in the edition) show many similar features to the unedited theological distinctions in other collections—some of them can be identified as extracts from sermons,[14] and many of them are also present in distinction collections (sometimes in variant forms).[15] Another example is the collection edited as the *Sententiae* of Bernard of Clairvaux, and an anonymous collection edited among his works by Migne.[16]

c) Individual works

Sermons may contain a few theological distinctions, ingrained in their texts; collections contain them by dozens, juxtaposed and decontextualised, without any particular structure. To a third category belong those individual works which are composed exclusively from distinctions, and

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13 Published in seven books among the works of Hugh of St. Victor, *PL* 177, col. 469–900 (books V and VI partly overlap). The first book and perhaps the second are regarded now as Hugonian; the other ones are now seen as anonymous.

14 E.g. *Misc.* III. 27 (*PL* 177, col. 649CD) derives from the popular sermon with the incipit *Vidit Jacob in sompnia scalam ... triplex est visio*, edited by Jean Châtillon as *Sermo 2 anonymi de dedicatione*, in *Galteri a Sancta Victore et quorumdam aliorum Sermones ineditos triginta sex*, CCCM 30 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975); *Misc.* VI. 58 and V. 9 (*PL* 177, col. 842D and 756A) are created from a *Sermon* 125 (*PL* 171, col. 905B/906C).

15 For example, the collection of London, BL, Royal 10 A xii, fol. 123r–127r, gives considerable material from *Misc.* IV, V and VI. For an example of textual variants see *Misc.* V. 89, *Triformis est sanctarum dolor, quia distant de paradiso, quia detinentur in exsilio, qui<a>i differuntur a regno.* ("Three-form is the sorrow of the saints: because they stand apart from Paradise, because they are kept in exile, because they are separated from the Kingdom (of God)," *PL* 177, col. 802) and its manuscript variant: *Triformis est sanctarum dolor. Quia ceciderunt ab eterno. Quia tenentur in exilio. Quia differuntur a regno* ("Three-form is the sorrow of the saints: because they fell out of eternity; because they are kept in exile, because they are separated from the Kingdom [of God]," Paris, BNF, n. a. lat. 658, fol. 44v).

16 For Bernard's *Sententiae* see *PL* 184, cols. 1135–56 (also in SBO VI/2); for the other collection see *PL* 183, cols. 747–58.

have a particular intention. There are remarkably few works among those that have been edited which have the distinctive and unmistakable style given by the mass of theological distinctions.

One such work is the *Canticle* commentary of Thomas Cisterciensis (or Thomas of Perseigne). The immense work, filling a good half of a Patrologia volume by itself, was finished sometime between 1170 and 1189. The studies of D.N. Bell have revealed its compilatory character but its relation to theological distinction collections is uninvestigated.[17] Besides Thomas' commentary there are four more texts composed in a similar way, but without a firmly established authorship or dating. These are the already mentioned treatise *De contemplatione*, and three commentaries on the Minor Prophets: an *In Naum*, an *In Joelem* and an *In Abdiam*.[18] All three commentaries borrow from Hugh of Saint-Victor's

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17 See Maur Standaert, "Thomas le Cistercien," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*, ed. Marcel Viller, Ferdinand Cavallera, and J. de Guibert (Paris: G. Beauchesne et ses fils, 1937), 15, 796–800, and D.N. Bell's articles, especially his "The Commentary on the Song of Songs of Thomas the Cistercian and his Conception of the Image of God," *Citeaux* 28 (1977): 5–25. The commentary, being the only printed work of Thomas, is edited in *PL* 206, col. 9–859.

18 Editions: *In Naum*: *PL* 96, col. 705–58 (as Julianus Toletanus); *In Joelem*: *PL* 175, col. 321–71 (as Hugh of St. Victor); *In Abdiam*: *PL* 175, col. 372–406 (as Hugh of St. Victor); Goy gives a census of the known manuscripts (Rudolf Goy, *Die Überlieferung der Werke Hugos von St. Viktor. Ein Beitrag zur Kommunikationsgeschichte des Mittelalters* [Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1976]); so far, *In Naum* is known to exist in eight manuscripts (seven medieval, one modern), *In Joelem* in four (2 lost copies attested), *In Abdiam* in five. For further information on these commentaries, see: André Wilmart, "Le commentaire sur le prophète Nahum attribué à Julien de Tolède," *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastiaque* 23 (1922): 253–79 (attributing all to Hugh); Damien Van den Eynde, "Les Commentaires sur Joel, Abdias et Nahum attribués à Hugues de Saint-Victor," *Franciscan Studies* 17 (1957): 363–72 (attributing *In Joelem* and *In Abdiam* to Richard, *In Naum* to neither Hugh nor Richard), Roger Baron, "Richard de Saint-Victor est-il l'auteur des commentaries de Nahum, Joel, Abdias?" *Revue Bénédictine* 68 (1958): 118–22 (attributing to a pupil of Hugh other than Richard, transmitting the oral teaching of Hugh); H. J. Pollitt, "The Authorship of the Commentaries on Joel and Obadiah Attributed to Hugh of St. Victor," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 32 (1965): 296–306 (reiterating Van den Eynde). While these authors observed many parallelisms and divergences among the three texts and discovered quotations embedded in the texts, they still failed to consider that whoever (even a Cistercian or Benedictine) possessed the (otherwise quite popular) works of Hugh could have created these texts.

works, and some of the manuscripts (usually by later hands) attributed them to Hugh (d.1141) or Richard of Saint-Victor (d.1173). Research literature is occupied mostly with confirming or invalidating these attributions. The present paper has a limited scope: it considers these works merely as texts constructed from distinctions, and investigates how the theological distinction and its collections (as text types) might have influenced both the perception and the afterlife of these writings.

The three works share a number of unusual features. As commentaries, they are atypical of medieval exegesis. A commentary devoted exclusively to Joel, Nahum or Abdias and copied individually strikes the eye in any manuscript catalogue, since the minor prophets (quite marginal texts for Latin exegesis) were usually commented on together. The size of these commentaries is also unusual. While the minor prophets belong to the shortest texts of the Bible, their commentaries here are disproportionally long: in their edited form, both the *In Joelem* and the incomplete *In Naum* are more than 50 columns, and the *In Abdiam* is around 30 columns. The unusual size is partly a result of the exegetical technique: the *In Joelem* and *In Abdiam* attempt to give a threefold explanation to every line of the text (literal-historical, allegorical and moral-tropological), and the *In Naum* often gives alternative explanations (*aliter*). The explanations of the biblical text in all three commentaries are built from distinctions.

3. Disintegration due to distinctions? The fate of In Abdiam and In Naum

All three commentaries had different but equally irregular textual traditions. The edited texts are printed versions of one single manuscript each, and the manuscripts were never collated, so the following outline of their history can be only conjectural; however, it may reveal some tendencies.[19] Even a small-scale comparison of the printed text and a few manuscripts shows the irregularity of the manuscript tradition of the three commentaries. Copies of the same work differ significantly, their text is sometimes fragmentary and shows such features of deterioration that were clearly not intended by the author.

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[19] Information on all the textual research done can be found in Wilmart's article of 1922, so the history must be conjectured from the manuscripts and catalogues. See the preface to *In Joelem* edited by Wilmart, "Le commentaire," 276–78.

Of the three works, the *In Joelem* presents the smallest problem: it has a prologue which in some manuscripts has been lost. The *In Abdiam* and *In Naum* show more signs of deterioration and changes. Even without a full-scale comparison of the texts, features leading to defective copies are visible: fragmentation, displacement or omission of parts, and the inclusion of different parts instead all occur.

a) *In Abdiam*

In the case of *In Abdiam*, the ending of the text is especially problematic, since it has various *explicits* in different manuscripts.[20] Information on the ending of the text is crucial, and the discrepancy of *explicits* in the catalogues may signal the uncertainty of the scribes (or the librarians) concerning the boundaries of the texts. The ending of *In Abdiam*, in a way, has already been subject to investigations. In the printed edition, the text of *In Abdiam* ends in a commentary on the Lord's Prayer. It is largely transcribed from the *De quinque septenis* of Hugh of Saint-Victor, but, as Van den Eynde pointed out, the comment on the seventh petition deviates from the Hugonian text: it gives a distinction starting *ut alibi diximus multiplex est malum*, and points to a text attributed to Richard.[21]

The manuscripts look much different than the printed text. One manuscript, Paris, BNF, lat. 14519, breaks after the sixth petition so it is shorter than the edited text. Another manuscript is considerably longer: Clm. 631 continues with the Hugonian text on the seventh petition (unlike the edition); then a long unit follows, without any transition, which gives etymologies and tropological interpretations on Old Testament names (most of them, like Efraim, Beniamin, Galaad, Samaria appear in Abd 19–20). Then, without any transition again, follows the author's call to observe the "order of divisions;" this call is followed by

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20 The explicits of the known manuscripts are are as follow: Avignon, BM, 591 fol. 81–95v, *domino filios suos filios arietum* (saec. XIII; the *Cat. gén. dép.* XXVII, 315 misrepresents the end and the explicit of the work); edition in *PL* 175, col. 406D: *per donum sapientiae liberari petimus dicentes, libera nos a malo*; Paris, BNF, lat. 583, fol. 1–22: *convenienter servus ... filios arietum.* (saec. XIII / XIV, described in *Cat. gén. ms. lat.* I, 205 as "*Prophetia Abdiae cum commentario* ... avec additions"); Paris, BNF, lat. 14519, fol. 291–300 (saec. XII / XIII): *mundat illud atque purificat* (= *PL* 175, col. 404D); Munich, Clm, 631, fol. 3–15: *filios dei filios arietum.* For Bruxelles, BR, 1422, fol. 1–9 (saec. XIV) catalogues give no explicit.

21 Van den Eynde, 371, Pollitt, 304; the text is the *Allegoriae* II, ii (*PL* 175, col. 773BC = *Liber exceptionum*, ed. Châtillon, pars II, lib. XI, cap. xii, 455).

the gradual elaboration of the theme of four "divisions," and a closure with Abd 21.[22] Readers of this manuscript cannot know what the "order of divisions" and the four "divisions" refer to. Since there is no previous reference to "division" in the text, something must be missing—certainly contrary to the author's intention. The continuation gives a clue to what happened to the text when the expression *terrae divisio* appears (with the idea of a three-fold judgement).[23] The author's call and the elaboration of four "divisions" are remnants of an elaborated but decapitated distinction, based on a four-fold *divisio* of the word *divisio* itself. What is lost is the most important element of the structure: the *divisio* itself, that is, the opening formula (like *quattuor sunt divisiones*) which establishes the distinction and creates coherence among the various elements.

The following example from the very end of *In Abdiam* helps explain why works composed from distinctions might have suffered such fate at the hands of incompetent scribes. The commentary, at least in the fuller manuscripts, ends with a triplet of short distinctions connected to the idea of three judgements, and the variant of Ps 28:1 (what leads to the explicit *filios arietum*). The left column is the ending of the text according

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22 Clm. 631, fol. 15r (saec. XII): *Diligenter intuere lector ordinem divisionum .... In prima namque divisione ... exercitamur ... in secunda ... in quarta ... feliciter letamur. In prima ergo erudimur, in secunda provocamur, in tercia perficimur, in quarta glorificamur. ... Prima ergo divisio libertatem nobis contulit discipline, secunda libertatem iusticie, tercia libertatem gracie ... Hiis ita compositis ascendent salvatores in montem Syon iudicare montem Esau* [Abd 21]. ("Carefully observe, reader, the order of divisions ... In the first division thus we are exercised ... in the second ... in the fourth ... we happily rejoice. In the first, therefore, we are instructed; in the second, we are called forth; in the third, we become perfect; in the fourth, we become glorified. ... The first division, therefore, brings us the freedom of discipline; the second, freedom of justice; the third, freedom of grace. ... With these things so arranged shall saviours ascend to mount Sion to judge the mount of Esau.")

23 Clm. 631, fol. 15v: *Post terre igitur divisionem et populorum spiritualium professionem ascendunt salvatores, id est apostoli vel apostolici viri in monte Syon in arcem scilicet speculationis, iudicare montem Esau, id est ut iudicent mundi superbiam, carnis concupiscenciam, peccati immundiciam, diaboli versuciam.* ("After the division of the country and the declaration of the spiritual people, saviours shall ascend, that is, apostles or apostolical men, to mount Sion, namely to the stronghold of speculation, to judge the mount of Esau, that is, in order to judge the pride of the world, the concupiscence of body, the impurity of sin, the cunning of the devil.")

to Clm. 631; the right one is the same text from a hitherto unknown[24] manuscript of the same work, Rein, Stiftsbibliothek, 55.

Clm. 631, fol. 15v	Rein, Stiftsbibliothek, 55, fol. 226r
In hoc triplici iudicio illuminantur, proprio scilicet humano divino. Triplici miseria docentur, materiali scilicet, spirituali intellectuali. Triplici solicitudine erudiuntur, mundana scilicet, humana, divina; quod erit deo [read *dei*] *regnum Cana: quia sic illuminati, conati, armati, afferent domino filios* [read *filii*] *dei filios arietum* [Ps 28,1].	*Triplici iudicio illuminamur, proprio, humano, divino. Triplici miseria docemur, materiali, scilicet, spirituali intellectuali. Triplici sollicitudine erudimur, mundana, humana, divina. EXPLICIT. ¶ In verbo tria attenduntur, strepitus, forma, intellectus. Strepitus percussionis, forma vocis, intellectus dictionis. Percussio ad vindictam, vox ad leticiam, dictio refertur ad gratiam. Siquidem vindicta percutit, vox consolatur, dictio erudit.*
In this three-fold judgement they become illuminated, that is, by [their] own judgement, by human, and by divine judgement. They are taught by three-fold misery, that is by a material, a spiritual and an intellectual [misery]. They are instructed by three-fold concern, that is by a mundane, a human one and a divine one: that will be Cana, the kingdom of God, because illuminated, tried and armed in this way, the sons of God will bring to the Lord the offsprings of rams [Ps 28,1].	By three-fold judgement we become illuminated: by [our] own judgement, by human, and by divine judgement. By three-fold misery we are taught: that is, by a material one, a spiritual and an intellectual. By three-fold concern we are instructed: a mundane, a human and a divine one. Explicit. ¶ Three things are observed in the word: the sound, the form, the meaning. The sound of percussion [of the air], the form of the voice, the meaning of the utterance. Percussion refers to vengeance, voice to happiness, utterance to grace: since vengeance strikes, voice consoles, utterance instructs.

The first sentence of the Clm. text gives *In hoc triplici iudicio* since it refers back to *iudicare montem Esau* (Abd. 21); the Rein text gives *Triplici iudicio*, a stereotypical beginning for processed distinctions. The Rein text cuts off the closure of the work (the last lines with the Psalm refer-

[24] In December 2008 I had the luck to identify in Rein, Stiftsbibliothek, 55, the following, hitherto unknown texts: a version of *In Naum* (fol. 168v–215r), followed by a confused selection from the *praefatio* of the same text (fol. 215r–v); a version of *In Abdiam* (fol. 215v–226r) and a fragment of *In Joelem* (fol. 226r–228r). I would like to thank here the generosity of Dr. Walter Steinmetz, librarian of the cloister, for his help in accessing the manuscript.

ence) so that it ends with three distinctions (*triplici iudicio ... triplici miseria ... triplici sollicitudine*); after the word *explicit* (and the paragraph mark) another distinction follows, beginning *In verbo tria*. Its source can be identified. This is the first distinction of the *In Joelem*, another commentary based on distinctions. It explains the first word of the book of Joel, *Verbum*, but usually appears in a different way in the *In Joelem*:

> "*Verbum Domini, quod factum est ad Joel filium Phatuel*" [Joel 1,1]. *HISTORICE. In verbo tria attenduntur: strepitus, forma, intellectus....*[25]
>
> "The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Phatuel." (According to the) historical sense, three things are observed in the word: the sound, the form, the meaning.

The text above is a fragment from the beginning of the *In Joelem*. Its actual form shows that the scribe who copied the text might have already seen a defective copy in front of him. The texts of the two commentaries are copied without intermission: there is no empty space left for the biblical verse or a *titulus* whatsoever. In this form, the commentary is missing the biblical lemma commented: the first distinctions of the *In Joelem* (commenting on the first words of the lemma) lose their function and their text becomes an incoherent series of distinctions.

Not only this section but the entirety of the Rein manuscript shows the consequences of careless scribes. The three commentaries—variants of the *In Naum* and *In Abdiam* and a fragment of *In Joelem*—copied here together form a sixty-folio long, almost undivided text.[26] The monotony of the text is unbroken, even visually. The three texts are copied continuously: no lines left blank between them, no *tituli*, colour initials or miniated lemmas of the commented text break the scrolling distinctions. Copied in this way, the three commentaries are turned into an immense mass of distinctions. It is hard to conceive nowadays what reward there

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25 *PL* 175, col. 321.

26 The nineteenth-century description of the text, by Anton Weis, reads: "Bl. 168v–228r. (*Tractatus, ut videtur, exegeticus super quosdam prophetas*) Anf. Sicut in diuino eloquio cantica simpliciter. Das Ganze ist ohne Aufschriften, doch mit einigen ersichtlichen Unterbrechungen geschrieben, z.B. auf Bl. 215r Explicit. Onus Niniue, mundi conflagratio. Bl. 215v wieder Explicit. Visio Abdie. Abdias interpretatur domini seruus," in *Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Cistercienser-Stifte. Erster Band*, Xenia Bernardina II/1 (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1891), 38. Notice the classification of the text by an unbiased reader.

might have been in copying these texts in such a sinister format that works against readability.

Thus, the commentaries *In Joelem* and *In Abdiam* at least reach their goal: the edited form of *In Joelem* covers the entire book, and the two mentioned manuscripts of *In Abdiam* (both longer than the edited versions), even if they show signs of textual deterioration, give interpretation to the end of the biblical text. The fate of *In Naum* was worse.

b) *In Naum*

The last line of the Book of Nahum in the Bible is 3,19. None of the hitherto known seven medieval manuscripts of *In Naum* reaches that point. Following the fundamental insights of Wilmart (based on five manuscripts and the printed text), the status of the text and the manuscripts can be formulated in the following way.[27] There had been a master manuscript in front of a scribe (or scribes) who copied it carefully to a certain point; this point is rather early compared to the biblical text itself (it is at the end of a distinction explaining *tempestas* from Naum 1,3c *Dominus in tempestate*, "The Lord in tempest"). After this point the scribe changed his strategy: instead of copying, he started to extract the text. These extracts form "une série des notes inédites" (that is, distinctions). This abbreviated recension of *In Naum*, consisting of a partial copy and extracts of the original, exists in two Cistercian manuscripts.[28] Another recension of *In Naum* extends only to the point mentioned; instead of extracts from the text it continues with a collection of theological distinctions.[29] In the printed edition of *In Naum* (based on a Bavarian manuscript), the commentary proper ends with comments on Naum 1,4;

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[27] This account still demands caution for the manuscripts have not yet been collated.

[28] See Wilmart, "Le commentaire," 258–60; the manuscripts are Troyes, BM, 227, fol. 110r–117v (saec. XII), and Auxerre, BM, 10 fol. 78v–91v (saec. XII ex.). The point is the last words of section 66 (*silentium animi, et sponsi laetitia*) of the edition, *PL* 96, col. 737D, marked in Troyes, BM, 227, fol. 117r, by a contemporary hand by the note, *Huiusque ordo expositionis excepta de reliquo.* The first "note inedite" given by Wilmart (*primo namque confitendo*) is yet *In Naum* 85 (col. 752D), a distinction to Naum 1,4b (*flumina ad desertum deducens*).

[29] This recension, together with the subsequent distinction collection (using materials from the Victorine *Miscellanea*), is present in Paris, BNF, lat. 15694, fol. 194vb–202rb (saec. XIII) and Paris, BNF, n. a. lat. 658 fol. 1–43r (saec. XII). Wilmart notes the presence of the collection in Troyes, BM, 838 (?); a similar collection is in Paris, BNF, lat. 14927.

the text continues with extracts from Petrus Chrysologus (d.450).[30] A fourth form of the text, so far the most complete, was discovered by Wilmart in an English codex (containing also *In Joelem*).[31] It gives the edited text to its end (that is, including the Chrysologus extracts) and something more. After the *explicit* of the edited text, written continuously, and without any transition, the reader finds a fragment of the commentary to Naum 1,11a to 1,14c. Its text begins with an allegorical interpretation of 1,11a (*Ex te exibit cogitans contra Dominum malitiam*, "from you shall come forth one that thinks malice against the Lord"), followed by the moral interpretation of the lemma. This beginning is still an abrupt one, for the lemma and the first part of its allegorical explanation is missing (but can be conjectured from internal references).

Judging from these manuscripts, the *In Naum* clearly had a disastrous afterlife. What can be obtained are two large fragments from the beginning of the commentary, explaining Naum 1,1–1,4 and 1,11a–1,14c, interspersed with extracts from Chrysologus. We may only speculate about the size and extent of the lost master copy of *In Naum* which laid open in front the scribe(s). Before the scribe(s) started to extract the text, a considerable amount has already been copied: first the exposition of the "titulus" (meaning Naum 1,1, six words altogether in the Vulgate) then the commentary on Naum 1,2–1,3c (meaning three sentences, with 33 words altogether). The commentary written on these four sentences cover full 32 columns (!) of the *PL* edition. The text of the commentary is inproportionally large if compared to the biblical text explained, and the known manuscripts still preserve only the beginning of the commentary, to a certain point: the remainder is lost.

The scribes of the known manuscripts chose the strategy of copying in full: their efforts ended in incomplete copies. Another possible strategy was extracting or selective copying the entire work. The manuscript Rein, Stiftsbibliothek, 55 contains an unknown copy of *In Naum* whose

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30 The commentary proper ends with section 88 (a moral distinction on numbers 4-5-7-10, *PL* 96, col. 754C). It is remarkable that two manuscripts also have the explicit of the printed edition (*de mercede dispendium, de remissione peccatum*): Manchester, John Rylands Library, lat. 454, fol. 1r–16v (saec. XIII), and Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, B IX 34, fol. 75v–128v (saec. XII ex.).

31 London, British Library, Harleian 658, fol. 138r–163v (saec. XIII), transcriptions in Wilmart, "Le commentaire," 262–65.

scribe followed this latter strategy.[32] The text in the codex seems to be a selective copy made from a manuscript that probably contained the integral text of the *In Naum*. This selective redaction of the *In Naum* covers almost the entire text of Naum (up to 3,18a) with continuous commentary and—contrary to other manuscripts where the text ends abruptly—ends with the word *explicit*. The text of this redaction is not identical with the known ones, though they partly overlap: the extracts from Chrysologus are missing, the commentary on 1,4 to 1,11 is present and so is the commentary to the book from 1,14. Compared to the edited texts, it seems that the scribe-editor sometimes made cursory excerpts from the same model, leaving out much material preserved in the other manuscripts. Excerpting sometimes goes so far that the text is reduced to a mere series of distinctions.[33]

The comparison of two passages may demonstrate the difference of the two scribal strategies, the selective copying (or extracting) and copying in full. The text commented is Naum 1,11, *ex te exivit cogitans contra Dominum malitiam mente pertractans praevaricationem* ("from you shall come forth one that thinks malice against the Lord, contriving treachery in his mind"); the left text is its commentary from the Harleian, the right one from the Rein manuscript.

London, British Library, Harleian 658, fol. 158r = Wilmart 262 (interpolations by Wilmart)	Rein, Stiftsbibliothek, 55, fol. 184v
<Scismatici> solem perspicue refulgentem, luna<m> clare incedentem ... intueri ... Carnales ... deos sibi faciunt ... Malitiam ergo contra dominum cogitavit gentilis et hereticus, praevaricationem carnalis et scismaticus ... primus malitiam cogitavit adorando ydola, secundus venenat confingendo symbola,	Sequitur, *Ex te exibit contra dominum cogitans malitiam* [Naum 1,11a], siquidem de ecclesia heretici, scismatici, ypocrite, carnales exierunt, qui contra dominum malitiam cogitarent. Primi et secundi exeunt mente et corpore, tercii et quarti non corpore sed mente. Nunc moraliter de anima. *Ex te exibit contra dominum cogitans*

[32] Rein, Stiftsbibliothek, 55, fol. 168v–215v. Inc. *Sicut in divino eloquio cantica simpliciter et cantica canticorum* (= *PL* 96, col. 711C); expl. *Sequitur: Dormitaverunt pastores tui rex Assur* [Naum 3,18] ... *multiplex miseria, ad ultimum gehenna, Hec ordine descenditur ad inferna. Explicit.*

[33] See fol. 171v–172r: *Quatuor modis consolatur nos deus* [In Naum 1,44] ... *Tres sunt nobis necesarie advocationes* [1,45] ... *Tria sunt bona coniugii* [1,50] ... *Quatuor modis servitur deo* [1,52] ... *Quatuor sunt quibus firmatur probatur decoratur conservatur ecclesia* [1,57].

tercius praevaricationem salvatoris scindendo tunicam, quartus mundi sequendo concupiscentiam. Haec allegorice dicuntur de ecclesia. Nunc moraliter de anima. Ex te exibit ... Malitia est mali affectata scientia. Haec autem ex boni ...	*malitiam* etc. Malitia est mali affectata scientia. Hec autem ex boni oritur ignorantia. Ignorantia vero duplex est ...
<Schismatics> look at the Sun clearly shining and the Moon brightly rising ... Carnal men ... make gods for themselves ... Therefore, the heathen and the heretic thought malice against the Lord, the carnal and the schismatic [thought] treachery. ... the first thought malice by adoring idols; the second made poison by fabricating creeds; the third [thought] treachery by tearing the tunic of the Saviour; the fourth by following the concupiscence of the world. These are said in the allegorical sense about the Church. Now in the moral sense about the soul. "From you shall come forth" ... Malice is knowledge aiming at evil.	Follows, "From you shall come forth one that thinks malice against the Lord," that is, from the church heretics, schismatics, hypocrites shall come forth, who think malice against the Lord. The first and second ones come forth by mind and body, the third and fourth ones not by body but by mind. Now in the moral sense about the soul. "From you shall come forth one that thinks malice against the Lord" etc. Malice is knowledge aiming at evil. It rises from the ignorance of good. Ignorance is twofold ...

The Harleian version gives a full copy of a broken distinction (this is also the beginning of the larger fragment preserved in the codex). Its beginning with the biblical lemma is missing; the four members of the *divisio* (*gentilis, hereticus, carnalis, scismaticus*) can be only conjectured. The selectively copied Rein text gives the lemma, then a similar list with four members of those who "shall come forth:" *heretici, scismatici, ypocrite, carnales* (giving *ypocritae* instead of *gentiles*), then continues with an identical text (*Nunc moraliter...*). Seemingly the Rein copy gives a structural extract from the beginning of the same distinction, preserving only the core of the idea (and omitting its later ramifications); the Harleian manuscript gives a fuller copy of the original, but it is just a fragment. The Harleian gives, practically, the very end of an elaborated distinction: *scismaticus et carnalis* are the third and fourth member (*tercius et quartus*) of that four-fold *divisio* which is (in abbreviated form) preserved in the other manuscript.

The scrutiny of the two commentaries composed from distinctions permits us to draw some conclusive remarks. Manuscripts of the *In Naum* and *In Abdiam* show similar forms of textual corruption: the texts

exist in variants which significantly differ; the existing text often has omissions, unexpected transitions, and the single manuscripts may include materials absent from other ones. It seems plausible that the same techniques of *divisio* and distinction observed in the composition of these texts led to defects in their transmission.

The authors of these commentaries attempted to explain a short biblical text by the means of distinction, but that technique, howsoever useful in creating sermons and treatises, proved to be ineffective in commenting on pre-existing and coherent texts. Divisions establish structure, and distinctions form a module of text. Sermons and treatises are free creations where such structures and modules can be kept under the author's control. The present commentaries, by choosing distinctions as a means of commenting, give up some control over the exposition. As distinctions are connected to words of the actual biblical lemma, the larger context of the text commented on easily may be blurred, especially without clear indications. In such cases, the texts constructed from distinctions as modules can fall apart to bare modules: the eyes of the unguided reader perceive the commentaries created from distinctions not as commentaries (which had some inherent structure) but as distinction collections (which have no particular structure).

Divisio, as it creates a concentration of attention, originally was a particularly apt means for teaching and learning. The texts discussed in this paper—the *In Abdiam* and *In Naum*, the Canticle commentary of Thomas, the *In Joelem,* and to a certain extent even the *De contemplatione* as well—overuse this technique by employing it almost exclusively. The result is a slight sense of confusion and loss of orientation and attention. This may be an experience common to both the modern and the medieval reader (as the mistakes of the scribes, who executed the existing copies, show).

Even such a cursory investigation of the *In Abdiam* and *In Naum* can detect in the manuscripts innumerable features contrary to any likely intention of an author. Incomplete and non-identical copies, "scribal recensions," ruptures in the text, broken distinctions, texts which are present only in one particular manuscript: these features must be due to scribal intervention (not to a malignant intervention, I assume, only to a clueless one). Manuscript copies ever attest to what the scribe (or the chain of the scribes of subsequent copies) understands of the text of the master copy in front of him.

The faults of manuscripts indicate problems in the perception of the two commentaries as texts. The *In Abdiam* and *In Naum* were copied in a

milieu where distinction collections were not uncommon, and where texts included in such collections were seen as raw material, freely alterable. The two commentaries, built of distinctions but without a strong and clear indication of structure probably looked too similar to distinction collections. The likeness of the two text types (and the freedom granted by distinction collections) might have encouraged the scribes to act not as scribes proper but as users and creators of such collections (that is, excerptors or "editors"). This seems to be the most plausible explanation why, instead of copying, extracting and selective copying occurs in the manuscripts of the two works.

4. Conclusion

Collections of theological distinctions belong to the "period style" of the theology of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These anonymous *florilegia* of theological content document a milieu where *divisio*, a particular technique of treating theological subjects, was common and theological distinction—as the concrete, written result of that technique—was a popular means to organise effective communication in writing.

Theological distinctions have a characteristic pattern, based on a number which "subdivides" the subject, followed by parallel elaboration of the subdivisions. While in twelfth-century sermons such distinctions often organise the development of thoughts, theological distinction collections—often preserved in codices of theological miscellanea or sermons—contain masses of decontextualised distinctions. These collections are unstructured heaps of distinctions, varied in size and constitution, and without any indication of their authorship or sources. It seems also that the actual form and content of an individual collection depended on the scribe.

There exist also a few edited theological works which are constructed from distinctions. Such are the treatise called *De contemplatione* of a Ps.-Hugh of Saint-Victor, and four biblical commentaries written on shorter books of the Old Testament—the *Canticle* commentary of Thomas Cisterciensis and three commentaries on minor prophets, an *In Naum*, *In Joelem*, and *In Abdiam* without firmly established authorship. A small-scale comparison of the accessible printed text of these three commentaries and a few manuscripts of them shows irregularity in the transmission of their texts. This is the most visible in the case of *In Abdiam* and *In Naum*. As a hitherto unknown copy of the three texts in Rein, Stiftsbibliothek, 55

confirms, copies of the same work differ significantly, their text is sometimes fragmentary and shows such features of deterioration that were clearly not intended by the author. The most unusual moment of transmission can be observed in the case of *In Naum*. From the earlier known manuscripts, only improportionally large fragments of the *In Naum* can be obtained, covering just the beginning of the biblical book (Naum 1,1–1,4 and 1,11a–1,14c). By contrast, Rein, Stiftsbibliothek, 55 contains a different version of *In Naum* that covers almost the entire Book of Nahum, although it must be a selective copy from a fuller master copy. The two cases show two unusual and different scribal attitudes: instead of copying the work in its entirety, one copies its beginning in full, then quits copying; the other makes extracts from the full work. In the case of both commentaries, confused or mutilated portions of the text show that some of the scribes of the master copy had already not comprehended the structure and order of these texts.

A plausible explanation for these various attitudes leading to deteriorated texts may be a problem in the perception of these texts. The problem emerged on behalf of the scribes and, I think, it may be explained by the influence of theological distinction collections as a genre or text type. These commentaries were constructed from theological distinctions in a period when theological distinction was a usual form of expression, and when excerpting distinctions from other works, creating and copying distinction collections was not uncommon. The changes made by the scribes to the two texts suggest that the commentaries constructed from distinctions were not perceived as integral, individual works but rather freely alterable raw material—like distinction collections themselves.

Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies:
Composition, Authorship, Use

MEDIUM AEVUM QUOTIDIANUM

SONDERBAND XXXI

Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies: Composition, Authorship, Use

edited by
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