Stephen Bateman, *The trauayled Pylgrime* (London: Henry Denham, 1569; *STC* 1585)

Stephen Bateman, or Batman (c. 1542–1584), is mainly known for his monumental translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *Batman uppon Bartholome, his booke De proprietatis rerum, newly corrected, enlarged and amended* (1582; *STC* 1538), a work that is only the final culmination of the encyclopaedic and eclectic interests that directed his activities as an author, clergyman and limner. Apprenticed by a scholar rather than university educated, his thought and work is characterised by a peculiar, sometimes idiosyncratic independent-mindedness and eclecticism. 1

Minister of St Mary Aldermansbury in the late 1560s, he entered the service of Matthew Parker sometime in 1569 or 1570, becoming instituted to the rectory of St Mary, Newington Butts in January 1570, and holding in plurality a living at Merstham, Surrey, from February 1571. 2

His antiquarian interests must have played a crucial part in his collaboration with Parker, and Bateman later claimed in *The doome warning all men to the judgemente* (1581; *STC* 1582) to have collected some 6,700 books on Parker’s behalf. Although the figure seems improbable, and is generally taken to refer to printed books rather than manuscripts, there are at least twenty-three surviving medieval manuscripts from Parker’s collection that are annotated in Bateman’s own hand. 3

Bateman’s *The Travayled Pylgrime* (1569; *STC* 1585) is one of two Elizabethan translations of Olivier de La Marche’s Burgundian chivalric allegory, *Le Chevalier Délibéré*, originally written in 1483, first appearing in print in 1488. 4

La Marche’s work proved to be very successful throughout the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, circulating in both manuscript (sixteen surviving copies) and several illustrated printed editions. 5 It was particularly successful in Spain, being also one of Charles V’s favourite works, and was first translated by Hernando de Acuña as *El Caballero Determinado*, running through several editions, and later reworked by Jeronimo de Urrea. 6 Bateman’s very free translation, however, omits to mention the existence of any such source, and due to the liberties Bateman takes with his text it is difficult to establish definitively whether he was using a French or Spanish copy. The later translation from 1594 made by Lewes Lewkenor, as *The Resolved Gentleman* (*STC* 15139), is based on Acuña, and the translator also points out the scarcity of printed copies of the La Marche’s original in England in his preface (sig. A4f). *The Travayled Pylgrime* itself only went through one edition, but given its attractive woodcuts and combination of chivalric allegory and apocalyptic prophecy, has been invoked as a source for Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*. 7

The *Travayled Pylgrime* may be seen as belonging to the long-lived and highly adaptable tradition of the ‘pilgrimage of life genre’, ultimately going back to Guillaume Deguileville’s *Pèlerinage de Vie Humaine* (1331–55). 8

The work is thus built around two fundamental metaphors: that of the journey, in this case the chivalric quest, and that of the *psychomachia*, or spiritual struggle. Bateman clearly alters the terms of the quest, however, elaborating the basic model to articulate a conception of the Christian life as an allegorical journey that is characteristically post-Reformation, and is strongly shaped by the context of English Protestantism. Deguileville had devised a quest that was largely paradigmatic and timeless, relating the adventures of an Everyman who after an initial vision of the New Jerusalem sets out to reach the Celestial City. After a basic instruction in Christian doctrine and the sacraments delivered by his guide ‘Grace Dieu’, the Pilgrim

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8. The inclusion of Elizabeth among the protagonists of the pageant/tournament opposing the
sets out on his journey, encountering the personified Seven Deadly Sins, later boarding the Ship of Religion in the company of various personified theological and spiritual abstractions, finally reaching his destination in a monastery, a pre-figuration of the Holy City. La Marche had already subtly altered this framework, turning Duguèville's paradigmatic narrative of sin and redemption into a semi-autobiographical narrative of a knighthood errantry through a desolate wasteland, situated in a particular historical moment. For La Marche it was largely the decline of his own patrons, the Valois Dukes of Burgundy, that made a successful completion of the 'pilgrimage of human life' impossible. His quest is accordingly pervaded by a melancholic awareness of the futility of human existence, and becomes in the end a meditation on human mortality triggered by the demise of the Dukes at the hands of Atropos, or Death personified.

Bateman's narrative inherits the bleak mood of La Marche's allegory, but clearly restores a more orthodox and confident eschatological framework to the human pilgrimage. The journey begins with an evocation of Adam's Fall (sig. Bii), but swiftly moves on to evoking the coming of the 'newe Adam' (ibid.), restoring the path leading fallen humankind back to its original divine likeness. Bateman accordingly declares in his epistle that he is writing the work 'by way of friendly exhortation, exhorting every faithfull Christian, to have such regard to this their Pilgrimage here on earth, that in the lyfe to come, they may enjoy the happie gaine of endless felicitie' (sig. A3r).

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The course of Bateman's narrative follows La Marche's text only broadly, maintaining most episodes in the sequence, but often radically altering the tone and meaning of the knight's adventures. The protagonist first encounters Thought (sig. Bii), instructing the pilgrim about the voyage he has undertaken and the nature of his enemies, Dolor and Debilitie, emissaries of Atropos or Death. He is then equipped with an allegorical armour and a horse named Will, and sets out through the 'goodly greene [of] worldly pleasure' (sig. Biii). He is soon assailed by Disagreement (sig. Cii) and rescued by Understanding (sig. Ciii), who proceeds to administer a lengthy instruction (siggs Ciii–Civ). After resuming his journey his horse Will begins to run astray, but such excesses are quickly curbed by Age, to whom the pilgrim eventually yields (sig. Fii). The pilgrim however once more deviates from the straight and narrow path, and finds himself at the 'palace of disordered livers' (sig. Gii), and is tempted to indulge in idleness and lechery until he recovers his senses thanks to the intervention of Memory (sig. Giii). The setting now changes to a positively apocalyptic landscape, as the protagonist approaches the desert of Old Age (siggs Giii–Hii), where he is again tempted but rescued and comforted by Memory, reminding him of the ultimate destination of his journey.

After these meanderings, the pilgrim finds himself in the actual centrepiece of Bateman's allegory, as a spectator of an extended tournament opposing Dolor and Debilitie to the Tudor monarchs (siggs Iii–III). La Marche had here provided a similar tournament opposing his Valois patrons to the invincible emissaries of Death, and launched into a long lament about the decline of the House of Burgundy and its chivalric traditions. Bateman, however, rather than commemorating an extinct dynasty, is celebrating the rise of the Tudor monarchs, whose deaths come to be seen as so many martyrs for the cause of True Religion, in a manner closely reminiscent of John Foxe's Acts and Monuments. Bateman passes in review all the Tudor monarchs starting with Henry VIII, harbinger of the Reformation with Tudor Monarchs to Atropos in fact implies her assimilation to the series of martyrs for the Protestant cause, in a manner analogous to her treatment in Foxe's Acts and Monuments; see the 1563 Edition, part 5.iii, pp. 1722-31 (corrected pagination), [http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/foxe/single/book12/12_1563_1722.html]


13. The classic source for the notion of the radical 'falseness' of man, entailing a depravity of the senses, infection of the will and loss of discernment, is to be found in Luther's and Calvin's work on the Pauline epistles, Romans and Galatians in particular. See for instance Calvin, Institutes, II.1.8-9, ed. John McNeill, Vol. I (London: S.C.M. Press, 1961), pp. 250-3.


18. It can hardly be a coincidence that Bateman would explain madness as the result of an uncontrolled imagination, see Bateman upon Bartholome, Bk. VII, ch. 6. On the status of
his break from the papacy (sig. IIi), followed by young Edward VI, who steers the country clear of a relapse into old superstitions. Edward’s premature death (sig. Ki) and the advent of the Catholic Mary, ‘the bitter floure’ (sig. Lii), are interpreted by Bateman as divine punishments for the sinful ways of the English nation. After a visit to further monuments of mortality (sig. Liii), designed to warn the pilgrim and the readers to persevere in the righteous ways of True Religion, Bateman launches into a panegyric of Elizabeth’s reign (sig. Liii). The allegory ends by again turning the reader’s attention towards the fate of the individual pilgrim, and describes his preparations for the final encounter with Atropos (sig. Ni–Niiii). Again the mood here crucially differs from the source: where La Marche articulates an incapacity or unwillingness to discern a higher meaning behind the senseless onslaught of death, Bateman’s awareness of mortality is as it were ‘redeemed’ by his belief in a providential and teleological order of human history.

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It will be immediately apparent from the preceding summary that much in the basic structure of this narrative is traditional; however, both La Marche and Bateman use a traditional form to new ends. La Marche had already modified the paradigm of the ‘pilgrimage of life’ by situating it in a precise historical moment, and by adding an enhanced personal preoccupation with mortality to the allegory. Bateman inherits and further modifies these innovations, consolidating the historistic development of the allegory in particular. The middle section of the work, a triumphalist historical pageant glorifying the Tudor dynasty, lies at the heart of Bateman’s project, as he closely intertwines the destiny of his pilgrim with that of England’s monarchs and the whole of the commonwealth they preside over. Crucially, the journey is no longer strictly individual, but takes place within the wider frame of a collective, national history.

This integration of the course of individual human life within the course of collective national history is clearly sustained by the efforts of the contemporary historico-apocalyptic exegetes. Bale, Foxe, as well as Bateman’s patron Matthew Parker, were all involved in the task of unearthing a hidden, providential teleology under the cloak of recent political and religious turmoil. Scrutinising human history in the hope of recovering clues concerning a perpetually evolving apocalyptic scenario, the process was rooted in the belief that Henry VIII’s split from the Roman Church was the first episode of a prolonged eschatological battle opposing the forces of the True Church to those of the Church of Antichrist. First established by John Bale in his The Image of Bothe Churches (first ed. 1545; STC 1296.5), this polarisation was to become the basis of an ongoing, incremental process of exegesis of human history. Contemporary events were scrutinised in the search for clues concerning the exact scenario of the Last Days, and became elements in an all-encompassing scheme of prophetic prognostication. About to face its imminent exhaustion, human history was thus thoroughly unfolded and explained.

Alongside such historico-political developments of the allegory, Bateman also injects his text with a characteristically Protestant spirituality, again elaborating the idea of a fundamental polarisation of the Churches of Christ and Antichrist. Antipapal rhetoric also plays an important role elsewhere in Bateman’s oeuvre, such as in A Christall glasse of christian reformation (1569; STC 1581), where he draws from traditional medieval vice-virtue iconography to mount an attack on the Church of Rome, thus combining traditional moral didacticism with confessional polemic. Both in the Glasse and the Travayled Pylgrime Bateman warns his readers about the misleading sophistries of the Roman Church, and insists on the crucial need to discriminate between the authentic allegories of the spirit and the counterfeit ‘papist’ allegories, or the ‘craftie illusions of Sathan, by coloured imaginactions’ (sig. Ciii, marginal gloss):

Herein is plainly shewed unto all, the estate of every degree by order of picture and signification, to the intent, that thereby every christian Reader may the better see the disordred abuses which daily raveth amongst us [...] that thereby every Christian may the better beware the deceivable suggestions of Sathan (Christall Glasse, sig. Aiiv).

As Bateman again repeats in the epistle to his Golden Booke of the Leaden Goddes (1577; STC 1583), a work ‘wherein is described the vayne imaginations of Heathen Pagans, and counterfaict Christians’ (title page), only the reformed Christians live ‘in the cleare light of the gospel’ and can thank the Reformation for ‘the openinge of our eyes and understandings’.

Given these epistemological implications, the chivalric psychomachia becomes in Bateman’s hands a metaphor for the Reformation controversy itself, and signifies the efforts of the individual pilgrim to resist the sophistries of Roman religion
in the imminence of the Second Coming: ‘so arme your selues with the armour of God, considering that Sathan is moste buiest and full of rage in this oure tyme, as Saincte John in hys reuelation dothe manifestly expresse’ (sig. Aiii’). Correspondingly, Bateman also puts great weight on the individual, interior experience of the spiritual pilgrimage. As a result of the Reformation controversy, the metaphorical significance of the spiritual battle itself has subtly shifted: given the increasing isolation of the individual conscience consequent upon the breakdown of a clearly identifiable ecclesiastical authority, and the corresponding focus on spiritual introspection, the new enemies of the Christian soldier are not so much the Deadly Sins, vices and temptations, as the powers of illusion and deception that threaten to mislead the individual engaged in a process of intellectual discrimination between truth and falsity. As John King has pointed out, while the medieval Everyman could rely on Good Works without having to engage in a process of epistemological enquiry, the emphasis in the reformed tradition was precisely on the ‘passive’, inward process of intellectual discrimination.12

Bateman’s translation may thus in many ways also be seen as a process of ‘re-formation’ of a pre-existing medieval, and therefore ‘Catholic’ source. Bateman preserves La Marche’s emphasis on the tortuosity and occasional aimlessness of his knight’s path, but cleverly transforms it into a theological point. Bateman’s pilgrim never gives the impression of being fully in control of his quest. Caught up in incidents and encounters whose significance and agency often elude him, he seems to be carried along by an impetus that is not entirely his own. His horse Will is unruly (sig. Biii’), and collapses altogether before the end of the journey (sigs Ni’ and Niil’), as if to epitomise the insufficiency and unreliability of the ‘infected’ human will. But whereas in the Chevalier Délibéré this powerlessness of the individual will only signifies fatalism and despair in the face of the invincible tyranny of Atropos, Bateman reads this helplessness theatologically, as a testimony to the insufficiency of the individual will when measured against the overwhelming power of divine Grace.13 His pilgrim’s powerlessness and apparent loss of orientation implicitly signify for Bateman the presence of a wider, albeit as yet inscrutable, providentially orchestrated plan, and thus confirm man’s dependence on divine Grace:14 ‘Yelde thou thy selfe with all thy griefes, to the eternall king, And call for grace while thou hast space, to Joue he will thee bring’ (sig. Gii’).

The impression of labyrinthine disorientation inherited from the source is equally perceived through the filter of the new theology, and now becomes a figure of the increased epistemological uncertainty preventing the pilgrim’s advance on his journey. This fits with the altered perception of the pilgrimage motif in Reformation England, as sketched by Barbara Lewalski. Already implicit in Bateman’s choice of his source is an understanding of the Christian pilgrimage as a tortuous, unsteady journey characterised by many setbacks, relapses, delusions and frustrations rather than a smooth, steady and clearly structured progression through predetermined stages of spiritual development. The discontinuity and fragmentation of the various stages of the pilgrim’s progression function as expressions of the new Protestant insistence on man’s post-lapsarian corruption of reason and understanding as well as depravity of the senses, leading to an endemic loss of discernment and orientation on his journey. Despite his choice of Understanding as the pilgrim’s guide, Bateman shares this radical Calvinist scepticism concerning the reliability of human reason, as he articulates it in the epistle to the reader in The doome warning all men to the judgeme*nte: ‘I warne thee that thou use not mans reason in searching out Gods workes, for the marvellous workes of the Lord are greate and incomprehensible’ (sig. ¶iii’). By subtly deconstructing and fragmenting the older model of the pilgrimage of life as an orderly progression, Bateman anticipates later developments to be found for instance in the Protestant Emblem Books, sonnet cycles such as that of Henry Lok’s Sundry Christian Passions, and the seventeenth-century religious lyric.15

Bateman’s pilgrimage is thus in many ways suspended between spiritual introspection, even isolation, on the one hand, and the urge to inscribe individual human existence within a wider, teleological and apocalyptic pattern of history. This tension remains unresolved even at the end of the pilgrim’s quest, projecting the reader’s gaze into an open-ended future. Ultimately, neither the process of spiritual introspection nor a detailed study of an apocalyptic history are felt to yield any certainty concerning the future destiny of the collective pilgrimage of the True Church and commonwealth. Returning to his preoccupation with individual mortality and an uncertain future at the end of the work, Bateman abandons the triumphalist tone he strikes in his praise of Elizabeth’s reign. Despite his search for a reassuring, definitive apocalyptic narrative framed by the advent of the Tudor dynasty, Bateman points forward, beyond history itself, longing for an ultimate eschatological consummation.

As a consequence, the understanding of human mortality in Bateman undergoes a radical shift compared to La Marche. The experience of death, both on a personal and collective plane, is now accepted rather than abhorred: ‘All things created must changed be by mortall law no doute’ (sig. Iiii’), ‘Thus with my selfe I did agree, with Age to be content’ (sig. Gi’). Bateman’s meditation on Death is not designed to generate uncontrolled panic in the face of its meaninglessness and invincibility, but much like the Protestant adaptations of the traditional ars moriendi, is intended rather to promote its acceptance and understanding as part of a wider and as yet only partially discernible scheme of providential meaning.16 Death, in a complete inversion of La Marche’s perspective, is understood as the moment of deliverance from a ‘Laberinth...
of endlesse woes’ (sig. Hiiir), and is eagerly anticipated rather than dreaded: ‘Wherewith that I would make an ende, of this my travayled time, / The soner then to ende this race of cankered yre and crime’ (sig. Niiiv).

Finally, Bateman’s transcendentalism is the result of a disillusion with his own process of exegesis of both history and allegory. His general scepticism and hesitancy concerning the reliability of the medieval – and ‘Catholic’ – allegorical mode he inherits and adopts, spreads a veil of epistemological uncertainty over his entire oeuvre. This has weighty implications for the ‘readability’ of Bateman’s allegory and his view of the world at large, as it implies a radically sceptical understanding of the human imagination, which in many ways anticipates later debates reflected in particular in Spenser’s Faerie Queene. Despite the epistemological ‘reformation’ of the ‘Christall Glasse’, deliverance from doubt and opacity can be brought about only by direct divine intervention, and the individual himself remains entirely powerless to effect this shift through the strength of his own understanding. It is only beyond the threshold of death, in an indefinite apocalyptic future, that the fullness of meaning Bateman is longing for becomes attainable: ‘The life I meane which lasteth still, in the supernal throne, Where Gods elect in rest doth dwell’ (sig. Eii r). And only Christ himself on his Second Coming can restore the link between fallen man and his original divine likeness, beyond the reflecting operation of the dark glass from 1 Corinthians 13. 12, bringing man ‘face to face’ with God: ‘Then after death you soone shal see, The christall glasse of light to shine. Which glasse is Christ our Saviour’ (The Christall Glasse, sig. Xiiiir).

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